ENGAGING THE HIGH-RISE IN GERMAN MEDIA CULTURE –
ASPECTS OF VERTICAL LIVING FROM 1945 TO 2020

by

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the way high-rise living was portrayed and documented in the press, in interactive gaming environments and fictional storytelling in West Germany between 1945 and 2020. I argue that the figure of the high-rise in West Germany served not only as a departure from the material destruction after WWII, but also as an ideological marker of a new start. This argument builds on existing research on architecture in a medial understanding, as storage as well as processor and transmitter of history. In the particular case of West Germany, these aspects are concerned with questions of memory and exile, but also with segregation and mobility. The chapters show how the cultural and social perception of the high-rise changed over the course of time. My second and third chapters focus on press outlets, which deployed photography as well as narrative strategies in order to highlight the idea of a fresh start after the war, marked by the new high-rise architecture. Chapter Four employs the genre of children’s literature in order to show the significance of segregation of indoor and outdoor spaces and its concluding ascriptions of function. Chapter Five examines an early interactive game console Game&Watch, and the game environments which rely heavily on the high-rise as a driver of the gameplay. I illustrate how the game environments and game setups filter the negative aspects of the new architecture and build it into the gameplay. Finally, Chapter Six concludes with a discussion of negative reporting in a current media context. I introduce the spatial idiosyncrasies of surveillance and liminality of the high-rise mass dwelling by analysing the narrative strategies employed in Karosh Taha’s novel Beschreibung einer Krabbenwanderung.

In sum, these mechanisms of memory making, exile, segregation and mobility show the underlying tropes of the high-rise’s enmeshment with spatial effects and history.
Lay Summary

This thesis investigates the modes of media translation of mass dwellings which were implemented after WWII in Germany. With special attention to West Germany and the cultural reception of high-rise, the thesis seeks to retrace the historical connotations of the high-rise from welcomed housing solution to stigmatized building block.

The first two chapters of the thesis analyse press articles from the 1950s and 1960s. The articles suggest that the high-rise initially acquired positive connotations, as a housing solution whose links to the National Socialist past were systematically neglected. The following chapters focus on the spatial and social consequences of high-rise living represented in media culture. These consequences are reflected in children’s literature, handheld gaming consoles as well as novels with a specific focus on exile and surveillance. The dissertation strives to show how enmeshed the material construction of the high-rise is with the history and future of its inhabitants.
Preface

This dissertation represents the original, independent scholarly work of the author, Dorothee Leesing.

The rights for the images of the layout and design of the newspaper pages used in Chapter Two and Three could not be determined. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung sells rights only on a temporary basis, whereas the publication in cIRcle requires non-temporary rights. Therefore, the version for the first review includes the figures, and the published version for the creative commons will have those depictions removed.

Excerpts of the chapters have been presented in various iterations at the Bergen Summer Research School 2018, EndNotes of UBC’s English Department, 2019, “Taking Up Spaces” of SFU’s English Department 2019, “Schul(d)en” at UC Berkeley, 2020, “Disruptive Materialities” at UBC, 2020, AHVA 43rd Annual Graduate Symposium “Decadence: Flows of Abundance and Decay” of the Art History Department 2020 and “Postmigrant Aesthetics – How to narrate a future Europe?”, originally planned as a panel for the CES at Reykjavik, European Culture Research Network for the CES Conference 2020 and held online. The author is a member of the UBC Excellence Cluster in Migration and grateful for the help she has received in several colloquiums.

All translations that include both the original German version as well as the translated English version are made by the author.
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The following abbreviations have been used in the thesis:

BeK - Beschreibung einer Krabbenwanderung
FAZ - Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung
FRG – Federal Republic of Germany
GDR – German Democratic Republic
G&W – Game&Watch
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To my compassionate, curious and courageous mother!
Chapter 1: Introduction

If you run into a stranded whale, this animal is not well. It lies where it doesn't belong, it should be back in the water. But the animal is so big that nobody can help it. The whale is in a hopeless situation [...] There is this congress hall, this shopping centre, this social housing... There lies this piece of city like a gigantic dead or nearly dead animal. And nobody knows what to do with it.¹

1.1 Beginnings

The German Architecture Museum in Frankfurt started its rescue project of modernist brutalist buildings in 2017 with the exhibition “SOS Brutalism.”² Included in the rescue mission were modernist high-rises. Like many European countries, Germany relied on a modernist infrastructure in the form of administrative buildings as well as high-rise mass dwellings (Großwohnsiedlungen). The exhibition’s message invited a conversation about a type of architecture that had gained a bad reputation, had been marked as unaesthetic, cold, and merciless. At the same time, “SOS Brutalism” brought attention to the innovative material and conceptual aspects of the buildings the movement had produced.

https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/ihme-zentrum-in-hannover-wohnen-ueber-broeckelndem-beton.976.de.html?dram%3Aarticle_id=464776&fbclid=IwAR35QUqQvBD1btE92t1HOR9YzT-Tjw62GFJy9v8EdvxIBtm5YXUuwejo
² As per their website https://www.dam-online.de/, see also the project’s website sosbrutalism.org, illustrating the state of brutalist buildings and documenting brutalist building locations on a global map.
The exhibition featured international modernist architecture. Amongst them, both East and West Germany’s high-rise architecture: buildings constructed to accommodate police stations, schools, and hospitals, but also massive building blocks, designed for the general population.

For the case of West and East Germany, high-rises were built in the decades following the widespread destruction and displacement of WWII. The high-rise mass dwellings were an efficient solution to the lack of shelter, a fabricated concept of home and belonging, and a new architectural and cultural proposition to replace a traditionally “German” visual urban imprint after the end of National Socialism. The high-rises and brutalist architecture brought relief to a nation that had become homeless in a material as well as an ideological sense.

However, the housing solution saw its reputation altered particularly in the case of West Germany: What was received as functional, affordable, resistant, unifying, progressive, and modern in the 1960s, turned in the public opinion into a sinister, unpleasant, and uncontrollable image in the late twentieth and twenty-first century.

1.2 Main Objectives and Goals of the Thesis

My main object of analysis is the media representation of the particular case of West German high-rise mass dwellings. In contrast to its East German counterpart, which has benefitted from widespread scholarly attention, the ideological and metaphorical function of West German high-rise architecture appears less affiliated with the presence of high-rise mass dwellings both in scholarly literature as well as in the public mind. Yet, high-rise mass dwellings are an integral part of housing politics as well as the urban imprint in every West German city. With this thesis I

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3 Bircken and Hampel. Architektur und Literatur in der deutschsprachigen Literatur.
will emphasize the importance of some of the spatial and cultural contexts and its concluding media representation in order to fill a gap in the current research. By focusing on cultural, media and literary aspects of the high-rise, I will show how this specific type of architecture functioned as a connector between the war and postwar eras, and how it became ideologically connected with ideas of non-sedentarism, mobility and permeability.

The modern high-rise was implemented in the destroyed city centres in the form of department stores, government offices and hospitals. The buildings changed the look of the city centres, as their development partly intersected with attempts to reconstruct historical buildings. At the same time, high-rise living was promoted and eventually carried out throughout the late 1950s and 1960s in the form of high-rise mass dwellings. Both of these forms were addressed in the mass media and triggered public reactions, as types of newly implemented architecture of considerable size that were impossible to overlook.

I argue that the relevance of the high-rise in a media context is twofold. Not only can its material form be understood as a medium that transmits, processes and stores historical information. It is also necessary to understand it as part of a feedback loop in which the high-rise also becomes a media object whose reception is reflected and applied in the press, in games and literature in order to re-materialize undefinable notions of memory, exile, mobility, and surveillance.

My intervention is located at the intersection between sociology, media and literary studies. From this perspective, I will cover aspects pertaining to the presentation of the high-rise in the West German periodical press during the 1950s and 60s. While in the twenty-first century the German high-rise acquires a predominantly negative reputation, I argue that the situation during the first two post-war decades appears to be drastically different. I will show that the
high-rise links National Socialist and postwar year planning agendas. The connections become apparent at the level of spatial display and rhetoric of positive reception, despite the insistence on a false notion of a fresh start: the misconception of Germany as a *tabula rasa*, a blank canvas in the years immediately after the war. In a second step, I investigate spatial figures in narrative media, literary texts, as well as interactive mobile games. Here, I hypothesize that spatial constructs such as the playground, the elevator, the balcony and their vertical dimension offset reshaped narratives intertwined with its recent traumatic past, as well as new definitions of spatial segregation. As scholars such as Paul Virilio (1996), Stephen Graham (2012) and Liam Young (2019) have pointed out, verticality becomes a fixture in the development of politics and identity during the postwar decades.\(^4\)

With the aid of cultural and literary analysis, I identify markers that are particular to the postwar history of West Germany. Hereby, I aim to place the high-rise at the interface of social and material contexts and reiterate aspects of space-vs. place-making.

### 1.3 Preconditions

#### 1.3.1 Germany’s Material Structures after 1945

German destruction was widespread and self-inflicted; as a consequence, the cities and the morale of the people were diminished. This marks the difference of the German case of WWII destruction: in contrast to countries that suffered widespread destruction by the German troops, such as England, the Netherlands, France and Poland, Germany proclaimed its moment after the war as the *Zero Hour (Stunde Null).*\(^5\) This term was used in order to mark a new start disengaged

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5 Brockmann, *German Literary Culture at the Zero Hour*, 3.
from any former links with National Socialism. The Zero Hour marked therefore not only material devastation, but also the inner destruction of tradition, national heritage, and the (outward) departure from a positive relation to its past.

High-rise mass dwellings were built in order to fill the vacuum this complete destruction had left on both a material as well as a psychological level. In the literary realm, the answer to the material and psychological trauma was Trümmerliteratur. This movement addresses the visual and emotional impact of the collapse of built environments and as a consequence, their moral destruction. One of the stylistic means applied regularly in Trümmerliteratur is the personification of the city as a wounded human.

Along these lines, the author Marie Luise Kaschnitz describes the rubble landscape of postwar Frankfurt in 1945 as a “verzerrte Grimasse” (a distorted grimace) in her poem Return to Frankfurt. Kaschnitz articulates what the (re-)construction of the cities felt like by comparing their materiality of steel and concrete to an uncontrollable, artificial form of dwelling, influenced by the mechanisms of war. “And meanwhile Giants come/steel on truss and wheel,/and press out of tubes and edges/ us a readymade city, / and guide us to meals/and cook the future/and let us forget all/that was.”\(^6\) The personification of architecture identifies the materiality of the high-rise with a cultural symbol of homelessness, and what a reconstructed city meant to those living in it.

For a so-called Tätervolk, a nation of perpetrators, the debate around the literary reception of the events of destruction has been marked by controversy. In Luftkrieg und Literatur, (On the Natural History of Destruction), German author W.G. Sebald (1999) points out that: “Die in der Geschichte bis dahin einzigartige Vernichtungsaktion ist in die Annalen der

\(^6\) In: Drewitz, Städte 1945, 78.
neu sich konstituierenden Nation nur in Form vager Verallgemeinerungen eingegangen” (“The action of annihilation, unique in history until then, has entered the annals of the newly constituted nation only in the form of vague generalizations”).

This claim was widely debated in Germany upon the publication of Sebald’s novel, and met with both approval and furore over what many considered to be a justified consequence. Nevertheless, as Silke Horstkotte (2003) suggests, there is a considerable corpus of works that address the event and aftermath of the destruction, and that Sebald’s conclusion points not to their absence, but their lack of public reception.

Still, considering the full extent of the devastation, there are rather few prominent literary voices addressing the destruction and construction of new housing projects against the background of the physical and metaphysical annihilation of a sense of home. The concluding mixture of shame, guilt, trauma and hardship might have contributed to the urge to indulge in forgetfulness. Thus, there was little public interest in accessing, let alone recording, the traumatic memories of war and destruction.

Those who did write about these phenomena – both as outsiders and insiders, foreigners and Germans returning to their hometowns – note the difficulty of finding words to describe and imagine the effects of destruction. Anthologies that collect the reactions upon encountering Germany’s destruction and reconstruction talk about the impossibility to find words for the visual and emotional response. Writing about Nuremberg, Hermann Kesten notes that a reunion with his hometown is impossible, since it only consists of relics: “Nürnberg gab es nicht mehr. Da standen nur noch ausgebombte Reliquien. Ausgebombt war also auch …mein halbes Leben.”

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7 Sebald, Luftkrieg und Literatur, 11.
8 Horstkotte, “Rezension zu: Hage, Volker: Zeugen der Zerstörung.“
9 Drewitz, Städte 1945; Hage, Zeugen der Zerstörung.
(Nuremberg did not exist anymore. All there was left were bombed out relics. Thus, bombed out was … half of my life lived). The authors’ identities and implicitly their reality, were based on the reception of a neighbourhood, city or landscape which had been unrecognizably altered. The destruction of built environment meant a dramatic erasure of their identities and the reality in which they were grounded. Paul Schallück emphasizes that the destruction of Cologne resembles a gigantic ship that has been turned upside down: “[Ich fahre in den] Kölner Hauptbahnhof hinein, in den Leib eines Riesenschiffes, das Kiel aufwärts in einem schmutzigen Meer versunken war.” (“I am entering] Cologne Station, into the body of a gigantic boat, which has been turned upside down and sunken into a dirty ocean). Hans Erich Nossack mentions the alienation he feels upon witnessing the destruction of Hamburg: “Nicht die Leiche der Stadt, nicht ein totes Bekanntes, das zu uns sprach: Ach gestern, als ich noch lebte, war ich deine Heimat” (“Not the corpse of the city, not a dead entity who said to us, 'Alas, yesterday, when I was alive, I was your home”). Upon visiting Germany, British writer Stephen Spender describes, from an outsider’s perspective, the destroyed houses of Cologne as dead people with open mouths: “houses whose windows look hollow and blackened – like the open mouth of a charred corpse.” Spender writes that not only the complete destruction of infrastructure and housing appears like a wound that cannot close, but also that the relationship between country

11 Schallück, “Qui non vidit Coloniam…”, 65-73.
12 Nossack, Der Untergang, 43.
13 Spender, European Witness, 12. “Actually, there are a few habitable buildings left in Cologne; three hundred in all, I am told. On passes through street after street of houses whose windows look hollow and blackened – like the open mouth of a charred corpse; behind these windows there is nothing except floors, furniture, bits of rag, books, all dropped to the bottom of the building to form there a sodden mass.”
and people appears “dismembered.”  

Swiss author Max Frisch describes both the people as well as the houses as “automated ruins,” the translated title of his essay *Ferngesteuerte Ruinen.*

What these authors have in common is the attempt to describe a destroyed city in the midst of an identity crisis. By personifying material structures, they seek words that might express the sense of total annihilation. In turn, the destruction of architecture redirects attention towards what is still functional and mobile: processes of nature, fighting their own battle of survival and regaining strength and order.

Against this background, high-rises emerged as a new form of architecture, promising a welcome shift toward a new aesthetic as well as the very access to dwelling. The new aesthetic of the modern mass dwellings was visually impactful by its sheer size and height. Displayed as a possibility for detachment from a tainted past, high-rise dwellings signaled the rise out of the ashes, after a decade of war and postwar life in German cities’ bunkers and basements, and years of brownouts during the war.

The destroyed cities were defined by new material iterations of “home”. Although they only provided housing to eight percent of West Germany’s inhabitants, the high-rise mass dwelling represented a significant landmark. In an age of metropolitan densification, it becomes important to explore spatial representations from a media perspective.

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14 Spender, 15. “The ruin of the city is reflected in the internal ruin of its inhabitants [...]. The people who live there seem quite dissociated from Cologne. They resemble rather a tribe of wanderers who have discovered a ruined city in a desert and who are camping there, living in the cellars and hunting amongst the ruins for the booty, relics of a dead civilization.”; “Everything has stopped here, that fusion of the past within the present, integrated into architecture, which forms the organic life of a city, a life quite distant from that of the inhabitants who are, after all, only using a city as a waiting-room on their journey through time: that long, gigantic life of a city has been killed. The city is dead and the inhabitants only haunt the cellars and basements.”

15 Frisch, „Ferngesteuerte Ruinen“, 182.

1.3.2 The High-Rise Dwelling (Großwohnsiedlung)

The high-rise mass dwelling is an international phenomenon, but each country developed its own discourse strategies and approaches to it.17 Gigantic building complexes were implemented as a main staple of West and East Germany’s housing structure after the war in order to provide housing after the destruction of most urban centers, and to provide space for the millions of refugees from the former Eastern territories of the German Reich under National Socialism. Thus, these two historical circumstances are the two main accelerators of the quantitative dimension of the Großwohnsiedlung, and thereby the distinguishing feature for the special case of Germany and the high-rise.

High-rise architecture represents an unprecedented spatial and social configuration for the urban restructuring of German cities after the war. The new architectural configuration carries markers of a medium: it is a medium in the sense of processing, storing, and transmitting historical, political, environmental, and human aspects; it is deeply influential for social proceedings, and therefore also applied in media itself as a marker for the special social context that this architecture triggered. At the same time, it is a meaningful image for a nation that had spent six years in basements and bunkers and aspired to lift itself out of the literal and figurative brownouts of the Nazi regime. I therefore claim that the high-rise carries emotional links to WWII which are distinct for Germany.

This thesis focuses on the high-rise defined as a multi-story block that houses a high quantity of units and dwellers. Nevertheless, in Germany, the word Großwohnsiedlung (mass dwelling) has more specific connotations. Großwohnsiedlungen are marked by their sheer size—

a mega object that houses up to 50,000 people in one development. But the numbers and various configurations also account for different sizes, as “low” as 500 units. This lower count definition focuses on an aesthetic and historical perspective which takes into account the era when they were built (1960s and 1970s), as well as the outdoor spaces and their overall appearance. Their social structure is defined by rented apartments, a high proportion of which are publicly subsidized.

The dimensions of some of the biggest West German high-rise estates are impressive: Hamburg-Neuwiedenthal with 13,000 units and 32,000 inhabitants, Bremen-Vahr with 11,800 units and 27,000 inhabitants, Köln-Chorweiler with 20,000 units and 48,000 inhabitants signal a mega-object that changed the configuration of society and landscape within a few years. Smaller units, in cities like Frankfurt am Main’s Nordweststadt with 7,500 units, or in towns like Dietzenbach, Offenbach am Rhein or Göttingen show that units over 1,000 people still create a distinct space that garnered media attention but was also reproduced in cultural products as a spatial and social phenomenon.

1.3.3 East and West Germany and its Literary Scholarship

Few other architectural concepts have been the object of such an intense emotional debate as the high-rise dwellings Germany constructed after the war. The parallel political systems had two different approaches to housing during the postwar generations. East Germany stands out with a much higher density of high-rise mass dwellings, and the academic reception of the East German

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18 Schubert, "Hochhäuser in Hamburg", 231.
21 An interesting project with all developments and numbers of high-rise dwellings can be found at “machmapazda.com”, collected by Tobias Nagel.
housing system is therefore well established.\textsuperscript{22} The \textit{Großwohnsiedlungen} of East Germany and the \textit{Khrushchyovka} of the Soviet Union are well explored.\textsuperscript{23}

Instead, my thesis builds on urban studies research to focus on West German cities whose narratological function and ascriptions in relation to high-rises are less covered in cultural studies of architecture. Although the West German high-rise developments are fewer and less widespread, every German city and many towns have been impacted by the introduction of high-rise mass dwellings which had a landmark function within the established city- and townscapes.\textsuperscript{24} The unprecedented scale of destruction in many West German cities through major airstrikes in cities and industrial hubs such as Dortmund, Hannover, Hamburg, Cologne, Stuttgart and Frankfurt offered chances for a deep restructuring of urban architecture.

Though the current densification and housing shortages in growing metropoles have sparked a renewed conversation about large-scale projects, the implementation of large-scale housing projects which were seen during the 1950s and 1960s in West Germany came to a screeching halt in the 1980s. I therefore inquire into what was problematic about the design that stopped its implementation in the 1980s, and in which way that was reflected and perpetuated by its media display.

\textsuperscript{22} Bircken, and Hampel. \textit{Architektur und Literatur in der deutschsprachigen Literatur nach 1945}.
\textsuperscript{23} Choate, “From ‘Stalinkas’ to ‘Khrushchevkas’”.
1.4 Literature Review

1.4.1 Fundamental Readings

Literary texts that focus on architecture find themselves at an intersection of cultural studies, sociology, as well as literary studies. The intersectionality of architecture and its representation in the media are reflected in e.g. Joachim Fischer and Heike Delitz (2009).

Critical approaches to the multifaceted subject of architecture involve interventions from the fields of social history, gender studies, and cultural studies. This complex web of interactions of both material and affective aspects is coined by Heike Delitz as a “Gefüge”—a complex texture. She identifies this “Gefüge” in three categories: the material (minerals, metals, and wood); the natural (plants, animals and humans along with their interactions); as well as the symbolic (discourses, photography, and plans).

Delitz references Cornelius Castoriadis, who emphasizes that in a medial understanding of architecture, the built space is a mode in which the social-historical unfolds itself.

Architecture is material as well as medial, and therefore the object of interpretations, tales, and social processes. This articulation also implies a medial understanding of architecture, as Delitz claims in Architektur als Medium des Sozialen: Ein Vorschlag zur Neubegründung der Architektursoziologie. (Architecture as a Medium of the Social: a Suggestion of Reconfiguration the Sociology of Architecture).

In conclusion, a multifaceted

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25 Fischer and Delitz, Die Architektur der Gesellschaft.
26 Schöttker, Raumerfahrung und Geschichtserkenntnis, 137-162.
30 Castoriadis, Crossroads in the Labyrinth, 370, In: Delitz, Architektur als Medium des Sozialen, 8.
31 Fischer and Delitz, Die Architektur der Gesellschaft, 349. „Wie alle Technologien und nichtsprachlichen Substanzen“ sind sie Objekte der Interpretation, Repräsentation und Erzählung. Im Bau realisieren sich Erzählungen; ein Gebäude kann aber auch eine Erzählung unterstützen, sie hängt an ihm, an seiner Materialität.“
32 Delitz. „Architektur als Medium des Sozialen“, 8.
approach is essential in order to understand how the material form of architecture shapes social interactions, and operates as a platform of projections. My thesis will follow the same principle.

As an example of a discourse along the lines proposed by Heike Delitz, Andreas Bernard offers a multimedia cultural studies approach in his book *Lifted* by focusing on the cultural history of the elevator. He explores the historical as well as social and technological development of this essential technology for multi-story buildings.33

In its exploration of different media—visual, literary, journalism, cultural and interactive games—my thesis aims to address spatial idiosyncrasies and thereby track a paradigm shift from an enthusiastic approval to rejection.

Anthony Vidler presents the introspective elements of the uncanny, traumatic and negative in the context of Anglo-American contexts.34 The discussed trilogy by Peter Sloterdijk’s (*Sphären*), showcases a multifaceted approach to architecture and its relation to social concepts.35 Sloterdijk’s trilogy touches peripherally on the endemic quality of apartment blocks but leaves aside the socio-historical context, which this thesis tries to take into consideration.36

In 1949, at a time when Europe and especially Germany stood at crossroads, considering how to proceed with regard to the process of city building, writer Theodor Adorno pointed towards the inherent importance of architecture as a social medium. In this discussion of the *Mietskaserne*, a mass dwelling concept that represents the *fin de siècle* version of the

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34 Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny*.
35 Sloterdijk, *Sphären: Blasen, Globen, Schäume*.
36 Sloterdijk, 569. “Wir definieren das Apartment als atomare oder elementare egosphärische Form – folglich als die zelluläre Weltblase, aus deren massenhafter Wiederholung die individualisierten Schäume entstehen“.
Großwohnsiedlung, Adorno shows the intersection between socio-historical factors and material conditions.\textsuperscript{37}

Detlev Schöttker introduces the term Architekturvergessenheit, architecture’s neglect. Schöttker decries the lack of a focus on architecture in literary works and media studies and points out that both social and material aspects have been neglected in the spatial turn in literary studies.\textsuperscript{38} One of the issues, according to Schöttker, is the absence of realistic representations of architecture in literary works and the textual omission of concrete detail, whether technical, financial or material. Authors have not addressed those “real life problems” that are core to architectural studies, as Schöttker claims. He names Thomas Bernhard’s Korrektur (1975) as an example of a text which centered around architectural concerns, yet neglecting the aforementioned aspects. According to Schöttker, literary studies discovered the city in the 1960s as a poetic subject but focused mainly on landscape.\textsuperscript{39}

Conclusively, as Ryan Bishop argues, architecture must be understood as a medium that takes all connectors of broadcast technology into account: “The city speaks to us, as do its buildings, and it tells us how to interpret it and what it says. After all, this is broadcast technology”.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{37} Adorno, “Städtebau und Gesellschaftsordnung“, 222, as mentioned in Schöttker, 5.
\textsuperscript{38} Schöttker, “Architekturtheorie zwischen Gesellschafts- und Kulturtheorie“, 3.
\textsuperscript{39} Schöttker, 4.
\textsuperscript{40} Bishop, “The Vertical Order Has Come to an End”, 76.
1.4.2 Architecture in (West) German Literature

There are a handful of prominent West German-language texts that place the high-rise and its verticality at the center of the plot. Some of the major works are Walter Helmut Fritz (Abweichung, 1965) and Ingeborg Drewitz’ Das Hochhaus (1975), as well as novels which mention the protagonist’s upbringing in high-rise mass dwellings such as Christiane F.’s Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo (1979). East German novels that explicitly describe the new mode of high-rise living, such as Alfred Wellm’s Morisco (1988), or Brigitte Reimann’s Franziska Linkerhand (1974).

A conference proceeding published by Margrid Bircken and Heide Hampel (2005) focusses mainly on East German publications. It showcases an in-depth analysis of literary texts and their connections to the realignment of spatial and cultural developments. The East German fictional canon is represented by several prominent writers who made the high-rise dwellings their central theme. As Curtis Swope (2013) points out, Brigitte Reimann’s Franziska Linkerhand (1974) can be regarded as a central work engaging with the political and urban reconfiguration of East Germany and its mass dwellings.

In West Germany, both academic reception but also literary production have treated the high-rise as a subject on the periphery. Recent art historical and photographic books take the high-rise as a media element into consideration. It is photographers like Karl Hugo Schmölz who have centered the high-rise around its social history through its visual representation. Arne Schmitt also aligns his analysis of postwar Germany with the help of a photo essay, which

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41 Bircken, and Hampel. Architektur und Literatur in der deutschsprachigen Literatur nach 1945.
portrays the high-rise mass dwellings of West Germany in black and white photography, adding to conversation on the visual impression and sociological consequences of this specific architecture.\textsuperscript{44,45} Focusing on the treatment of architecture as memory medium, Kathleen James-Chakraborty (2018) discusses aspects of the pre- as well as postwar years.\textsuperscript{46}

Susanne Vees-Gulani’s monograph on aerial warfare and trauma in German literature adheres to its succeeding materiality in the form of architecture and memory making. Vees-Gulani describes the difference between reconstructing buildings which were considered cultural heritage (such as the Goethe house in Frankfurt), in contrast to buildings which were not rebuilt (such as the synagogue).\textsuperscript{47}

The special case of the high-rise as medium in West Germany remains to be covered by aspects which this thesis strives to address.

\subsection{1.5 Contribution to the Field}

In a steadily growing movement of urbanization and densification, the high-rise appears to be the most important factor. In mobile societies of the twentieth and twenty-first century, the consequences of spatial settings and placemaking are crucial.

\textsuperscript{44} Schmitt, \textit{Wenn Gesinnung Form wird}. As mentioned in Wintgens, „Rezension zu: Schmitt, Arne: Wenn Gesinnung Form wird“.
\textsuperscript{45} As Benedikt Wintgens mentions in his H-Soz review on Arne Schmitt’s photo essay, postwar West Germany’s brutalism leads into a psychological dilemma. „Denn für Arne Schmitt ist die Bauweise der Nachkriegszeit – so zweckdienlich wie unnahbar – nicht bloß häßlich. In seinen Augen führt sie geradewegs in die Depression.“ (“For Arne Schmitt, post-war architecture - as utilitarian as it is unapproachable - is not merely ugly. In his eyes, it leads straight to depression”)
\textsuperscript{46} James-Chakraborty, \textit{Modernism as Memory}, 4.
\textsuperscript{47} Vees-Gulani, \textit{Trauma and Guilt}, 39-68.
This thesis offers a contribution to a broad area of investigation on the high-rise in West Germany and beyond. Focusing on the West German aspects, it functions as an addition towards the established academic conversations on the former East German housing projects.

The thesis acknowledges that the implementation in West Germany happened on a rather low quantitative level, at the same time, its metaphorical and medial representation and effect can be identified as significant. On the important topic of segregation of societies, the architecture and representation of the mode of dwelling is central to an understanding of shaping society—in its past, present, and future importance.

1.6 Methodology

This thesis strives to facilitate the conversation between the cultural background and the media display of the high-rise in West Germany. As Martino Stierli mentions in his introduction to Zwischen Architektur und literarischer Imagination, architecture serves as a media text. A focus on inter- as well as transmedial aspects in the interface of architecture, literature, and imagination showcases the value of architecture beyond its materiality, as Martino Stierli argues. Architecture, he concludes, assigns a specific episteme that is signified in different media. Stierli stresses the convergence between textual semantics and the materiality of buildings, which is marked by a necessary approach via intermedial analysis.

48 Beyer, et al. Zwischen Architektur und literarischer Imagination, 14. “Der Fokus auf inter- und transmediale Aspekte im Spannungsfeld zwischen Architektur, Literatur und Imagination zeigt auf, dass sich die Architektur nicht auf die Summe des Gebauten reduzieren lässt. Vielmehr bezeichnet sie ein spezifisches Epistem, das in unterschiedlichen Medien zum Ausdruck kommt.” (“The Focus on inter- and transmedial aspects in the field of tension between architecture, literature and imagination shows that the architecture cannot be reduced to the sum of the building. Rather, it denotes a specific epistem that is expressed in various media.”)
49 Beyer et al., 14.
50 Beyer et al., 14. He also calls this the epistemological equilibrium (epistemologischer Schwebezustand)
51 Beyer et al., 13.
utopias are not only material utopias, but also social utopias (or dystopias) manifested in its urban iteration.\textsuperscript{52} This thesis progresses along the lines of Beyer’s claim that the hybrid understanding of architecture, image, and text is central for the utopian architecture.\textsuperscript{53}

More broadly speaking, as mentioned in the \textit{Handbook of Media and Communication Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies}—media “make representations of and insights into reality available, as articulated in text, image, and sound”.\textsuperscript{54} Each of the literary primary sources, as represented in the different media and literary texts, requires a specific methodological angle, which I elaborate at the beginning of each respective chapter. The overall methodological approach is a discursive close reading in the context of literary analysis, which strives to connect a specific medial understanding with a cultural material product.\textsuperscript{55}

\section*{1.7 Outline of the Thesis}

The second chapter uses a collection of texts of \textit{Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung} articles, with additions from \textit{Der Spiegel} in order to show the visual representation the high-rise received. I show how this was an effort in the postwar era of the 1950s to signal a new start for the country. In order to demonstrate the temporal illusion of a completely new start of both German cities and German consciousness, I demonstrate how photography and rephotography was applied to communicate the notion of a fresh start.

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{52} Beyer et al., 15.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Beyer et al., 15. „Das hybride und intermediale Zusammenspiel von Architektur (-darstellung), Bild und Text ist für die architektonische Utopie konstitutiv”
\item \textsuperscript{54} Jensen, \textit{A Handbook of Media and Communication Research}, 1.
\item \textsuperscript{55} See e.g. Castells, et al., \textit{A Comprehensive Review of Mobile Media in a Global and Cross-Cultural Perspective}; Perron and Wolf, \textit{The Video Game Theory Reader}; Salen and Zimmerman, \textit{Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals}.
\end{itemize}
In the third chapter, I use the same collection of texts in order to lay out how intertwined the 1950s were with the past, and that (in contrast to what media reports tried to demonstrate) continuities of personnel and material iterations were evident between the National Socialist past and the West German new present.

Subsequently, I evaluate the high-rise in the genre of children’s literature as representative for West Germany by contrasting similar high-rise-specific books from 1966 and 1980. Illustrated by authors who identified the high-rise as a special form of dwelling with an inherent discordance, the analysis of the high-rise in children’s literature will reveal spatial attributes that redefine inside and outside.

Choosing one of the first mobile gaming consoles and interactive fictional narrative device Nintendo’s Game & Watch, I determine the high-rise’s existential dread via its function as a game environment. The findings implicate a fear of the vertical nature of the high-rise. Furthermore, the high-rise presents an uncontrollable place that has to be tamed, which evokes both elemental, spatial, as well as quantitative dread. In a second step, I connect the games’ aspects of mobility and space-time relations. By putting this into the socio-cultural context of the postwar era, I bridge the gap between the elemental and media understanding of the high-rise.

In the last chapter, I will show how the current state of the mass dwelling in Germany is marked by social ascriptions. This reiterates the core stance of the thesis, underlining place- vs. space-making practices in postwar times. Applying media analysis and a concluding example of post-migrant literature that uses the high-rise as a narratological function, I show how the definitions of inside and outside in the high-rise’s specific places appear fragmented and prohibit good place-making practices.
Chapter 2: The High-Rise in the Press Photography of the 1950s:

Progress as a Sign of Detachment from the Past

2.1 Introduction

In 1977, Susan Sontag took a swing at Marcel Proust’s enthusiastic obsession with the effects on memory of the invention of photography. “[Photographs are] not so much an instrument of memory as an invention of it or a replacement.” 56 Between Proust’s enthusiasm and Sontag’s skepticism lay more than sixty years of the evolution of photography. 57 The time in between the two statements had shaped memory culture with several world wars, and poignant political revolutions. Photography had altered the way one could remember the past—but also the present, as Sontag affirmed.

Whatever had been documented since the late nineteenth century could be compared to its former state, contrasting months, weeks, or decades. Comparing the visual past with the visual present had never been as easy before the invention of photography—and gave new ways of access to memory. What only used to be verbally communicated through generations, now became a powerful media impression accessible to the masses.

Comparing a “before” and an “after” of a photographed image only becomes interesting after a significant change in the portrayed subject. Typical subjects of the before-and-after comparison are visual impressions of structures—landscapes, humanscapes, cityscapes. In

56 Sontag, On Photography, 128.
comparison of the “before” and “after”, two photographs create the effect of the passing of time and the complex processes which mark change.58

Germany’s housing structure underwent massive alterations within a short span of time. The consequences of WWII were the perfect opportunity for comparison between “before” and “after” of profoundly altered cityscapes. With special attention to new architectural and urban design introduced into the cityscape, I will now look at its premises and the shifts from positive to negative reporting, focusing on the visual components of journalistic photography.

With Germany’s particular relationship to its past, the visual power of newspaper photography underlined the impossible riddle it attempted to achieve in the 1950s: the detachment of its National Socialist past by focusing on an aspired, innovative future that would not only solve the housing shortage, but would at the same time mark a visual new beginning. On the contrary, in the course of the postwar decades, high-rise structures started to gain a homogenously negative connotations which last until today. In the following, I will outline the application of before-and-after photography in the newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung.

2.1.1 Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung as Arbiter of Past and Present

On a visual level, the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ) is known for not including an image on its title page until 2007.59 The ban on the usage of front-page photography points towards the FAZ desire to emphasize the integrity,60 conservatism, and the reliability of the paper.61 The FAZ

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59 Asmus. “So titelte die Presse über den Terror am 11. September”. There are 33 instances, e.g. the assassination of Kennedy (1969), re-unification of Germany (1989) or 9/11 (2001).
60 Deuse, “Alter Wein in neuen Schläuchen”.
distinguishes itself from tabloids and underlines its intellectual, conservative, and objective value system from its reputation as “Leitmedium.” (“Newspaper of Record”). This choice shows the tendency of FAZ in general: the paper aims to address a conservative audience, and attempts to exude reliability in its reporting.

After the war, the newly founded FAZ curated an image of the newspaper that catered to intellectual and financial elites. The FAZ defines itself as a “liberal conservative/conservative-liberal” newspaper. It launched its first edition on November 1, 1949. It is the second most widely internationally distributed German newspaper, reaching 128 countries in the early twenty-first century.

The relationship between politicians and FAZ journalists has always been close. With its relation to the Federal Ministry of Economics, the business section contributed to the mediatization of economic politics in postwar FRG. Financing West Germany’s housing plan favored economic interest in private investors giving tax incentives. The FAZ and its ties to the conservative political elite had therefore an economic interest in attracting and promoting the high-rise to its readers, possible future investors of high-rise dwellings. But besides this economic reason, the amount of decisions which had to be made in Germany’s rubble cities were

\[\text{Kutzner, "Das Wirtschaftsressort der Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung", 488.}\]
\[\text{Kutzner, "Das Wirtschaftsressort der Frankfurter Allgemeinen", 489.}\]
\[\text{Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, “Alles über die Zeitung”, 8.}\]
\[\text{Smith, “European Newspapers: Europe’s top Papers”. These figures pertaining the paper version of the newspaper are from 2002, and obviously less significant in the digital era.}\]
\[\text{NA. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. “Alles über die Zeitung”; also Ely, “The ‘Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung’”, 81-121.}\]
\[\text{Kutzner, 488.}\]
\[\text{Frampton, Die Architektur der Moderne, 229-235.}\]
knitted to more than just mere infrastructure: rebuilding Germany not only had a material component, but as much an ideological message. Transmitting Germany as a country focusing on new beginnings was one of the main intentions and needs of the population. This vast change of mind of an entire population had to be communicated visually. Photography—and especially before-and-after photography—represents a powerful tool of the postwar era, as I will show.

2.1.2 Before-and-After Photography

In the twenty-first century, almost all infrastructures in the western hemisphere are documented visually by internet services, such as Google Maps and Instagram. Photography and visual memory making has become a normalized part of everyday life.

In contrast to this, the postwar years had no personal TV nor digital media at hand, but newspaper photography was the main visual medium widely accessible besides the access to news shows in cinemas. As the only readily available visual distributed media of the 1950s, the newspaper and its photography were important for the display of what the FRG wanted to be and what the circumstances of destruction and rebuilding were like in the reproduced reality of the photograph.

The FAZ has always been aware of the power of the photograph, being very particular about its quantitative application of photography. Therefore, any usage of a photograph whether in large scale or in high quantity draws attention to the article, and a high density of photographs

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71 Vrancken, “Photography Against the Anthropocene: The Anthotype as a Call for Action.” 91-109. Interestingly, Germany’s regulations regarding Google Street View allow for blurring the view of private property and real estate. Only a fraction of the country has been documented due to privacy concerns.

72 Schulz, Moderne Zeiten; also Wilke, Medienkultur der 50er Jahre.
is rare. Regarding the high-rises, the appearance of photographs in order to demonstrate the new architecture as normal and/or positive therefore stood out as noticeable in its sheer visuality.

The collection of articles which I looked at features a random selection of longform articles with the tag word “Hochhaus” from 1949 to 1969. Although the reporting done on high-rises is represented in the two decades both negatively and positively, the manual investigation suggests three phases of how the high-rise was received. The three periods are first marked by positive, then mixed, and concludingly negative reporting after 1965. The suggestion of the three phases require further quantitative research in order to confirm the suggested tendency and can be an interesting point of departure for further research.

Photographic representation is often featured in single photos of the high-rises, but only in the 1950s, the before-and-after photographic montage is applied in the articles. It helped to underline the positive, or, in some instances also negative effect of the urban restructuring, as I will show in the analysis.

Bear and Albers state in their anthology on the history of before-and-after photography, “Much of the anticipatory framework of before-and-after photography relies upon imagining a future ‘after’ at the moment the ‘before’ half is conceived […] Individual photographs only become paired retrospectively, in the wake of an unexpected and traumatic event.” 73 For Germany, that was the mass destruction of the housing structures.

Photography in German newspapers became more popular around the turn of the century, and one could argue that the level of change which entitles before-and-after photography had never reached the capacity of the WWII destructions. 74 Cities had dramatically changed in the

74 Pensold, Vom Pressezeichner zum Pressefotografen; also Jacobi, Die Pressefotografie, 28.
late nineteenth century, but as a relatively new invention in the late nineteenth century, the urban
documentation had not manifested in widespread photography yet. The 1950s were one of the
first times in which a before-and-after photographic comparison was possible, since press
photography had only broadly existed in mainstream media since the 1910s.75

The collage or side-by-side possibility of newspaper columns made it easy to display the
past and assumed future next to each other.76 The frame contains a moment and sets the object
free from its temporal restrictions. Photography alters memory, it also alters the present, as Susan
Sontag remarked on the enlightened reception of photography.77

The nostalgic orientation of before-and-after photography for structures is often a
backwards one—the critique of the “now” in contrast to the nostalgic past. The newspaper
photography of the 1950s and 1960s utilized the photograph in order to juxtapose them with the
photography of destruction in order to present the high-rises as a positive contrast to the
devastating construction. As logical as this might sound, the visual power exuding from these
comparisons allows for no dissent. The photograph of the “now” is the praised, a much better
formula in contrast to the past, showcasing the sovereignty of the present. This mechanism is
unusual for before-and-after photography, in which nostalgia, in most instances, refers to a
positively connotated past.

75 One of the main events in the evolution of press photography are the invention of the Halbtondruckverfahren (half
tone printing) by Georg Meissenbach (1882), and the possibility to wire photography by Arthur Korn in 1904, as
well as the foundation of the first photography agency in 1898 by George Grantham Bain. Bauernschmitt, and Ebert,
Handbuch des Fotojournalismus, 5-39.
76 Germany went through various periods of memory upon the air raids. These localized reviews of the victims of
the destruction were often tangled up in between memory culture and right-wing interests, as outlined by Jörg
Arnold in Allied Air War and Urban Destruction, 321. “Although there were considerable differences in the
intensity of commemorative activity, by and large the commemorative cycles that have been identified for Kassel
and Magdeburg could be observed.”
77 Sontag, On Photography, 128.
Photography revolutionized not only the way we memorized things, but also how we perceived reality. Photography as evidence had gained a new status: now, prison guards did not need to remember an inmate’s face, but a photograph served as the strongest indicator of someone’s identity. It also distributed visual knowledge beyond time and space in the form of newspapers. The photograph would evoke emotions, which were sanitized from its sensual perception: a photograph was clear of sounds, smells, and temperature and offered therefore an assumed neutrality.

Before-and-after photography has become popular in the postwar era as evidence and has seen a broad application in certain fields as qualitative data. Specifically, Geology, Geography and most recently Urban Studies have made use of comparing photographs taken under the same conditions and from the same angles. The term most widely used with these specific parameters is *rephotography*.

The term *rephotography* was coined by the American geologist and photographer Mark Klett. It describes taking a photograph from the same vantage point, angle, time, and light of day. This term is preferred in its application for landscape observations. This technique represents a more refined definition of before-and-after photography. Rephotography facilitates possible comparisons, or blurred incorporations of the image due to its specifications.

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83 Klett, “Rephotography in landscape research.”, 114.
Rephotography has been used to evaluate geological data and landscape analysis, but it also has seen a wide application in the urban context, especially since the digital revolution, and its parallel rapid development of cityscapes. Both in the popular context, as well as in academic application, this technique has been applied in order to document the changing city, and the implications of socioeconomic power, heritage, and urban planning, which the comparisons imply.

William Handley argues that rephotography is an integral element of the Anthropocene theory. He points out that without comparing (visual) data overtime, an Anthropocene perception would not be possible. Bear and Albers apply the term *before-and-after photography* (instead of *rephotography*), and show in their definitions the parallels to Klett’s definition of rephotography: “paired images to represent change: whether affirmatively, as in the results of makeovers, social reforms or medical interventions, or negatively, in the destruction of the environment by the impacts of war or natural disasters.” In contrast, before-and-after photography is not bound to the exact same depiction, angle, time of day, but uses the same mechanisms of rephotography: comparing two situations with the help of photography.

In the following, I identify a collection of articles of the *FAZ* reporting on high-rise developments with photography, and in which way they position themselves in the suggested

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85 Lyons, “Camera Copia: Reflections on Rephotography in the Instagram Age.”
88 Handley, 154.
89 Bear, and Albers *Before-and-After Photography: Histories and Contexts.*
framework of reversed nostalgia—praising the present by comparing it with the past. The *FAZ* before-and-after and rephotography present the high-rise as the better option in contrast to the obviously devastating war destruction.

### 2.2 Methodology: Qualitative Content Analysis of Newspaper Articles

Newspapers are a distinct news outlet, where region, target audience, coincidental audience, authors, photographers, editors and general subjective perception funnel into a network of intentions. At the same time, the newspaper was the most up to date and most widely distributed visual medium of the 1950s, since the majority of people neither had access to a TV nor went to the cinema every day during the postwar years.\(^{90}\) Therefore, newspaper photography had a strong influence as the only easily available and accessible visual medium of the 1950s in Germany. Here I apply the method of content and visual analysis in order to focus on the application of photography of the high-rise in Germany in the newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* in the postwar period.\(^{91}\)

Two scopes are necessary for a more precise determination of the conducted research. For a first step, the textual content analysis will focus on the tropes mentioned in the articles, captions, and titles. For a second step, I will focus on an analysis of the usage of high-rise images in the articles and their relation to time.\(^{92}\)

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\(^{90}\) Hagenah, *Alte und neue Medien: zum Wandel der Medienpublika in Deutschland seit den 1950er Jahren*.\(^{91}\) Krippendorff, *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. He indicates the history of content analysis as the key tool of literary and media studies.\(^{92}\) In connection with this, a further look into chronopolitics and memory making becomes important: a rebranding of the past in order to move into a repeated future. First mentioned by Wallis, “Chronopolitics: The Impact of Time Perspectives on the Dynamics of Change”, 102–108.
2.3 Before: Germany’s Housing Structure, 1945

A total of 4.8 million of 18.8 million dwellings in Germany were destroyed at the end of WWII, with many of the cities bombed and historical structures destroyed. Assuming that the identity aspect of European cities manifests itself in the “face” of the historically grown centre, Germany was confronted with a vast destruction of its historical look.

Mass dwellings (Großwohnsiedlungen) on a grand scale were not an invention but rather a more widespread phenomenon of the postwar era. Although not a German phenomenon at all—mass dwellings exist around the world—these buildings can be placed in a cultural discussion that carries different connotations for each country. In Scandinavia, they were the symbol of the Scandinavian welfare state; in the GDR and USSR the estates and high-rises were the symbol of a new socialist configuration; in France, the banlieues were constructed for a changing social class, and in Britain the necessities for the postwar generation were represented by its configuration in housing estates.

The destruction of Germany’s cities was beyond the scale of any other European country and, therefore, the scale of its housing projects was unprecedented. Millions of refugees from eastern regions and millions of people who became homeless due to the destruction of cities had to be housed. But foremost, a departure from the National Socialist past was a big aspiration of...

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97 Leick, et. Al. “Out of the Ashes. A new Look at Germany’s Postwar Reconstruction” [...] the 1960s, an average of 570,000 apartments were being built annually -- the record was 714,000, in 1973. Between 50,000 and 150,000 single-family homes were likewise constructed each year. In all, no fewer than 5.3 million new apartments were built in West Germany in the first 15 years after the war.”
any visual or political communication, which makes the case of the FRG’s housing projects a particularly interesting field of study.

This temporal situation, where a seemingly new architecture is displayed as a fresh start, is at the base of this chapter of news photography. Newspaper photography, with its daily display of contemporary and past depictions became a powerful (visual) tool to influence a collective identity and memory.

2.4 After: To Rebuild or Modernize?

2.4.1 Frankfurt – Erase the Past to Erase Memory

“Say how it began” (Sage, wie es begann) is the opening phrase of Marie Luise Kaschnitz’s poem “Rückkehr nach Frankfurt” (Return to Frankfurt), written in 1947. Kaschnitz pushes the reader into the temporal loop of memory and reflection of beginnings and endings, and by that, into reflections of “before” and “after.” “Wie sah sie dich an/ Aus ihren erloschenen Augen, /Die Stadt?“ (How did she look at you / From her extinct eyes,/ The city?) Only two years after the end of WWII, Kaschnitz arrives home to a city she anthropomorphizes as a dying woman.

She continues the poem with: “Und was sagte der Mund, /Dieser zerrissene Mund, /Erwachend, was sprach der Mund?” (And what did the mouth say, /This torn mouth, /Awakening, what did the mouth say?) This depiction of the city as a wounded and dying woman could be read as a projection of the author onto her destroyed home, a place of “sunken things” which new constructions would replace in the two decades of the FRG’s postwar era. Kaschnitz activates another sense but the visual one: the sound of the rubble triggers her memory of a city

98 Bate, “The Memory of Photography”, 243.
which has disappeared, evoking different senses in order to access memory. "Und wie hörtest du’s klingen /Dir unterm Fuß /Aus den versunkenen Dingen?" (And how did you hear it sound /under the foot /From the sunken things?). 99

Many European cities had seen mass destruction, but Frankfurt’s visual appearance went through four ideological stages which demanded visual markers of change. In a relatively brief time, Frankfurt had gone through many architectural stages. From a medieval urban centre (before 1933) to a Nazi stronghold (1933–1945) to a rubble city (1941–1960s), and finally to a modernist skyscraper city (1960s until today). 100 Within less than thirty years, the landscape of the city changed dramatically, which made the cityscape unrecognizable to those who had witnessed it before the 1950s. 101

The end of National Socialism was parallel to the destruction of the historically grown German old city centres—architectural structures in most city centres, as well as in Frankfurt, were now rubble landscapes. “Rund 70% der Wohnhäuser waren zerstört, in der Innenstadt sogar 90%. Die gotische Altstadt war ein einziges Trümmerfeld. Kein Haus stand mehr. Der Römer war völlig ausgebrannt. 80.000 Wohnungen waren zerstört.”102 (Around 70% of the residential buildings had been destroyed, in the inner city even 90%. The Gothic old town was a single field of rubble. No house stood any more. The Romer was completely burnt out. 80,000 apartments were destroyed.)

Paralleling the face of a city with its value system and history, and eventually, an urban identity, influenced the decision whether to rebuild or to redesign. The abrupt break between the

99 Kaschnitz, “Rückkehr nach Frankfurt”.
100 Freyberg, Der gespaltenen Fortschritt, 12-16.
101 This phenomenon is applicable to most German cities above 250,000 inhabitants, see also Bode, 9-10.
102 Rebentisch, Frankfurt im Bombenhagel und Feuersturm, 67.
National Socialist regime, and the new German history was asking for visual markers. The reconstruction and extension of the city of Frankfurt was necessary to house refugees and homeless people, at the same time, remaining structures were deliberately torn down.

With Frankfurt’s (and on a bigger scale the FRG’s) housing destruction, the biggest question was whether to rebuild or re-design after 1945,¹⁰³ and how to communicate a break with National Socialism. The before-and-after photography is capable of providing stark contrasts. Before-and-after photography creates documentation, which decides in its binary approach for a suggestive memory culture. In the instance of the FRG, the 1950s marked the new developments as an effective break with the past by emphasizing the problematic past in contrast with an aspired, new future.

2.4.2 Frankfurt’s Modernity and Academic Reception

The topic of how to rebuild Germany was part of the academic conversation after the war.¹⁰⁴ Major figures of the Frankfurt School like Hannah Arendt, Theodor Adorno, and Jürgen Habermas published on the topic of re-building and modernization, and in which way the meaning of the architectural choices became quintessential a marker of a disjointed past.¹⁰⁵

Habermas evaluated in his 1985 Arch+ article the modern state of the FRG and asked the question whether the postwar cityscapes reveal “Scheußlichkeiten” (hideousness), “das wahre

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¹⁰³ Camprag, “Frankfurt and Rotterdam : Skylines as Embodiment of a Global City”, 27.
¹⁰⁴ There is vast literature and research on the topic of each of the respective authors which could fill an entire chapter. This short summary serves to situate it in the academic conversation at the time.
Gesicht der Moderne“ (the true face of modernity), or whether they are “Verfälschungen ihres wahren Geistes“ (falsifications of their true spirit), pointing towards the neo-gothic style some cities decided for, but also its modernization.  

Although Habermas gave no absolute answer to his rhetorical question, he underlines in his article the notion that questioned the popular belief that Germany had renewed itself—with whatever worse alternative.

Much more direct, Adorno stresses that rebuilding the cities to a former cityscape would be trying to revive former times and evokes the important question of what “re-building” means after National Socialism. “Der Gedanke, daß nach diesem Krieg das Leben »normal« weitergehen oder gar die Kultur “wiederaufgebaut” werden könnte—als wäre nicht der Wiederaufbau von Kultur allein schon deren Negation—, ist idiotisch."

Adorno represents the postwar attitude of building architecture that should differ from the traditional look of German architecture. His statement underlines that Germany was stuck in a predicament, in which neither backwards nor forwards were possible. The solution lay in altering the past to make it suitable for the future.

Hannah Arendt describes modern buildings as an escape from the past. She emphasizes that Germany presented itself in a new look, in order to mark National Socialism as an event of the past. Upon commenting on modern architecture, she stresses that Germany appears seemingly freed of the ballast of the past. The rebuilt cities appeal to her as “von den

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106 Habermas, Moderne und Postmoderne Architektur, 25. See also Schöttker, 5.
107 Adorno, 225, see also Schöttker, 5.
Belastungen der jüngsten Vergangenheit scheinbar freien Welt”¹⁰⁹ (A world seemingly free from the burdens of the recent past). Habermas, Adorno, and Arendt identified the application of modern architecture as a means to pave over the continuities of personnel after WWII. ¹¹⁰

The representation of modernity means therefore not only a visual impression, but much more the displayed idea of a particular understanding of the future: refined materials that are detached from the traditional building materials such as wood, clay, and bricks replaced with concrete, glass, and steel. Historically grown centres were either destroyed or what had remained was torn down in order to be replaced by tall buildings free of ornaments and pathos of a national idea.¹¹¹

2.5 The High-Rise in 1950s FAZ

2.5.1 “1951 war ein großes Baujahr für Frankfurt”

Figure 2-1 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It contained the image description “Der Platz an der Hauptwache nach einer Zerstörung und während des Wiederaufbaus im Jahre 1951”. The two pictures of the article display two very similar vantage points: the first one shows the destroyed view of a church tower, and the second one right next to it from an almost

¹⁰⁹ Arendt, Besuch in Deutschland, 41.
¹¹⁰ See the Chapter Three on continuities.
identical vantage point shows the restored church tower as well as a 6 storey modern department store in the far background. Original source:

Figure 2–1: Möbius, Monica. “1951 war ein großes Baujahr für Frankfurt”. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 31 December 1951. Photograph: Christian.

The city of Frankfurt completely altered its appearance after the war. As the author of the article “1951 war ein großes Baujahr für Frankfurt” points out, a lot of changes had been made to its former appearance before and after the war. The timeline he addresses points towards several instances: on the one hand, the photographs mentions the last 6 years: from destroyed city to rebuilt city. On the other other, the author makes mention of a longer timeline: the great-grandparents would be baffled if they saw the altered silhouette. “Da ist zum ersten die Silhouette der Stadt. Unsere Urgroßeltern würden staunen, wenn sie sähen, was heute aus dieser Silhouette wird.“ (“First, there's the silhouette of the city. Our great-grandparents would be amazed if they saw what happens to this silhouette today.”) Here, the links both towards a pre-war era of the great grandparents’ generation, and the short time span of the postwar era show both a positive interpretation. The high-rise is presented as part of the necessary, unavoidable path of the reconstruction, which no “good will” can alter.


(“With all good will, one cannot get any further with the reconstruction of what has always been familiar. New social and economic forms also create a new urban
expression, and so today, next to the beautifully newly covered gable roofs of St. Catherine's Church and Carmelite Church, the new forms of the office high-rises stand out next to the flatter covered two town hall towers.

The subtle criticism is not phrased as opposition, but as the only possible way to represent both “social and economic forms of urban expression”. It describes the political divide as outlined by the Frankfurt School representatives. The modern building style is perceived as a novelty that creates a new urban expression, and therefore a new society which subtly signals the distance from National Socialism. The traditionally restored buildings of the Katharinenkirche are described as beautiful, especially in combination with the new high-rises, which one can see on the left side of the second picture. The new buildings are performative in the sense that they mark a re-formulation of the traditional city which represents a past that has to be forgotten.

This article points out how popularized the process of restructuring and modernization in the early 1960s had been. One could see it as a representation of the early years of rebuilding Germany, in which the dire need to communicate “new social” forms was also approached by the discussion of altered architecture.

2.5.2 Cologne: Issues with Reconstruction

Figure 2-2 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It contained a full size screen shot of the respective newspaper page, featuring two pictures: one of them centered showing the rebuilt towers of the cathedral, as well as the restored bridge. In the bottom fifth of the page, the second
picture features the cityscape of the destroyed city, in the foreground a procession of a group of nuns. Original source:

Figure 2–2: Schmitt-Rost, Hans. “Stadt am Strom – Köln”. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 17 April 1954. Photographs: Claasen.

On Saturday, April 17, 1954 the FAZ pointed out the problem with rebuilding German city centres. Cologne was facing the same problems almost all cities were confronted with after the war: the dreams of the city planners vs. private and public interest of how to design the ruined cities after the war. The article summarizes the difficulty of planning new structures in destroyed city centres: “In den Trümmerfeldern der zerstörten Großstädte konnte man nicht willkürlich neu planen. Das hat sich nach dem Kriege sehr schnell herausgestellt.”112 (“In the rubble fields of the destroyed cities, it was not possible to re-plan arbitrarily. This became apparent very quickly after the war.”)

Despite the discussion and assumed finger-pointing at Cologne in order to make a point for Frankfurt’s special approach, the editors choose the format of two pictures to underline their message to the reader. The before-and-after photography does not qualify as a rephotography due to the difference in depiction, landscape, and angle as outlined by Klett’s definition—yet, the point of post-war destruction vs. rebuilt structure emphasizes the message of the necessity and convenience of reconstruction or redesign as a before-and-after photography.113

112 Schmitt-Rost, „Stadt am Strom – Köln“.
113 Klett, After the Ruins.
The timeline of the pictures focuses on the past ten years, and therefore redirects the nostalgia for the past towards a positively connotated reinvention of the future. In the “after,” we see the city of Cologne with a restored bridge and the Cologne cathedral in the background.

In the other, the choice for the “before” is an emotionalized picture about the destruction of the city centre, close to the cathedral, which was captured during a procession of nuns from their convent. The religious trope—the nuns processioning through the destroyed city—carries the limiter of destruction, desperation, and basic necessities, while the picture of the “now,” with its restored infrastructure emphasizes the ideals of transport and progress.

This example illustrates that progress is good and (naturally) better than the former destroyed structures. The article focuses on the altered housing structures and the changes it both implies and causes. The 1950s visual language applies the photographs of the traumatic destruction to underline the success of the present 1950s. The before-and-after photography is therefore an inadvertent pointer towards the political will for emotionalizing any building and restructuring processes in favour of the future.

2.5.3 “Eschenheimer Turm in der Zange”

One of the outliers when it comes to the photographic before-and-after photography illustrates an existing opinion which became more and more mainstream in the 1960s.

Figure 2-3 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It featured the upper half of the newspaper page, containing two pictures: on the left, a smaller picture with the view of the Eschenheimer tower from below, featuring three storey houses, on the right, a different angle of
the street, featuring a car, as well as two modern buildings with more than eight storeys in close proximity to the tower. Original source:


“Der Eschenheimer Turm in der Zange. Moderne Bauten verdrängen seine Idylle” is the title of the article and a representation for a contrary usage of rephotography of reporting about the high-rise. The author engages with the new high-rises from a different vantage point, which is starting off in the past of Frankfurt’s Old City. What image are they exposed to upon the arrival of the high-rise and office buildings?

Apparently “pressed” (“in der Zange”) by modernity, the image shows a before-and-after picture as proof of a lost “idyll.” The photographic evidence is strong, since the pictorial language is vehement: the frame of the modern picture features the tall buildings, whereas the “before” picture features only the Eschenheimer Tower in pre-war times, a building from the middle ages much smaller than the new building modernist high-rise building.

It is questionable what the author actually means by “idyll”—usually an idyllic place is defined as a place or a piece of poetry that “deals with rustic life or pastoral scenes or suggests a mood of peace and contentment”. For the author, this peace and contentment are created by a synergy of modes of transport (horse instead of car), apparent homogeneity of buildings (all buildings are more than 50 years old), and clear order of authority of the buildings (the old tower is the dominant factor in the sight line).
But the article features more insights into the apparent discomfort of the author. The tower is described to be “in der Zange”—the Eschenheimer Tower is heckled by the new buildings. The tightened screws of modernity are moving in and the authors points towards the pressure the tower is confronted with upon the dawning modernity. This discomfort might point towards an identification with the problem of time. The traditional times, and by that the German problem with the past, cannot withstand the pressure of modernity. It conveys thus strongly that a violent extraction or extrusion happens to the traditional building.

Grappling with modernity, also modes of transport have changed: the street features a car, whereas the old picture features a horse-drawn coach. It is therefore different elements that disrupt the “idyll,” which the author stresses in his analysis. The two images qualify for the category of rephotography, being taken from the same vantage point and choosing a very similar frame. The two photographs create a different timeline: they open up to a different one than the first two examples from the 1950s; the reversed nostalgia, as seen in the positive connotations of the present is now presented as the original form of before-and-after photography; the oldest photograph shows the apparent positive state, whereas the present shows the altered, worse state of the cityscape.

The tower itself used to be one of the highest buildings in Frankfurt—it served since the early middle-ages as part of the fortification of the city.114 Thus, the tower is a symbol for Frankfurt’s past, which had been preserved for more than 400 years.115 But much more than a symbol of Frankfurt’s identity represented by one building, it stands as a counter example of all changes that come with a changed cityscape that favours the car over the horse-drawn wagon,

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114 Schwarz, Der Eschenheimer Turm, 8.
115 Schwarz, 8.
which creates hierarchies not only between the different heights of buildings but also who gets to own and use the streets these vehicles move on.

The environment of the postwar era changed drastically, and foremost, there was pressing photographic evidence which could be used side by side. Higher buildings moved in that now questioned the authority of the traditional building. The author describes the loss of the tower’s authority in different layers. He mourns the tower’s former authority, underlines its significance as witness to former times, and remarks the altered environment, dominated by streets for cars.

Naturally, by creating a high building, and through the circumstances of emphasizing cars in inner cities, the environment and speed of cities completely changed, as well as who was able to access spaces and interact in them. The author points out that in the old picture, the houses used to be modest, and by that emphasises his criticism of the modern houses indirectly. “Das alte Bild zeigt mit maßvollen Bürgerhäusern und gemütlichen Pferdedroschken ein Idyll, in das sich der Turm ruhig und sicher einfügt.” (“The old picture shows an idyll with modest townhouses and cozy hackney carriages, into which the tower blends calmly and securely.”) The author stresses not only the architecture itself, but also the altered traffic patterns. Modes of transport, and by that the speed the city moves in (“cozy”), this article appoints speed as a determiner of a feeling of loss of control over the cityscape, symbolized by the high-rise and the urban layout that came with the modernization. At the centre of the author’s argument is the term “idyll.” The assumption that a tower that was used for fortification of a city for centuries ever represented a place that is usually described as a place that indicates “a mood of peace and contentment,” does not hold true when talking about fortification. The symbol of the traditional architectural style that was a relic of the past after the war shows how the meanings have changed. The tower designed for defence is now a defunct shell of its power. The nostalgic
longing for the former idyll does not describe the tower itself, but much more its processes. The contrast of the old and the new seemingly destroys the idyll but underlying there are notions of transport (speed) and homogeneity at work.

This side-by-side of the photograph stands in contradiction to the application of the photographs of the former two samples and the general positive outlook for renewing and restructuring cities with high-rise concepts inside or outside of the centres. It is one of the few samples in the 1950s, in which the public sphere is threatened by the rupture of transport, wealth, and speed of life, for which the high-rise serves as an example.

The 1950s and early 1960s are overwhelmingly marked by positive reporting of the high-rise developments. The amount of articles feature positive connotations, such as “Das Hochhaus als Wohnstätte. Professor May stellt ihm eine günstige Prognose” 116 (“The high-rise as a place to live. Professor May gives it a favourable prognosis”), “Neue Heimat für Evakuierte. In Preungesheim entstand ein Altenwohnhaus mit zehn Geschossen” 117 („New home for evacuees. In Preungesheim, a ten-storey residential building for the elderly was built”). These are still marked by the postwar era necessity for the “lesser evil” of the developments, which completely eradicated a relationship to the past. “Höchstes Frankfurter Wohnhaus eingeweiht. Fünfzehn Stockwerke für alte Leute und berufstätige Frauen” 118 („Highest residential building in Frankfurt inaugurated. Fifteen storeys for old people and working women”) points towards single women, widows, and people whose lives might have been affected by the war. The few critical accounts foreshadow an opinion which manifests in the mid-1960s, as I will demonstrate in the following chapter.

2.6 The End of the Postwar Era—The End of High-Rise Hype

German chancellor Ludwig Erhard proclaimed upon his re-election in 1965 the end of the postwar era: “[Die Bezugspunkte] liegen nicht hinter uns, sondern vor uns. Die Nachkriegszeit ist zu Ende” (“[The reference points] are not behind us, but in front of us. The postwar period is over”).119 The mid-1960s clearly marked a break with the conventions of destruction. The direness of the situation was over and the idea to preserve what was still standing, started to be valued. The student protests and the squatter culture of the student movement underlined the interest in the old housing structure for various reasons. The political change from conservative government led by the CDU over to the SPD led coalition also marked an “anti big business” attitude that went along with the mood of the time.

A new phase of the restructuring of urban centres was also marked by Alexander Mitscherlich’s book *Die Unwirtlichkeit unserer Städte* which sold more than 10 million copies and the high-rise perception entered a new phase: the reverse nostalgia represented in before-and-after photography contrasting war destruction and new high-rise buildings was over.120

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119 Lingelbach, and Waldschmidt. *Kontinuitäten, Zäsuren, Brüche?* 6. There are several instances where a claim to the end of the postwar period is phrased, e.g. 1954 after the Worldcup, 1965 after Erhard’s election, or 1989, after the fall of the iron curtain.
120 Mitscherlich, *Die Unwirtlichkeit unserer Städte.*
2.6.1 Die unendliche Stadt

Figure 2-4 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It features a screenshot of the entire newspaper page, of which 80 percent are covered by a centered single photograph, showing an accumulation of high-rise mass dwellings. Original source:

Figure 2–4: Schulz, Eberhard. “Die unendliche Stadt”. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (Bilder und Zeiten). 14 June 1962, Photograph: Haut.

The 1960s articles on high-rise reporting display the opposite picture to the before and after photography which so forcefully tried to sell the high-rise as the solution of the future for an altered society, which seemingly unshackled itself from the ideas and visual input of National Socialism. The altered city structure not only changed its silhouette, as mentioned by the article discussing the changes of the Eschenheimer Tower, but it also pushed for a redesign of the city favouring the car. Thus, two points of critique are at work in the reporting done during the 1960s in FAZ. This is also the criticism which Eberhard Schulz phrases in his article “Die unendliche Stadt”. The intentions, which were thought to be positive in the 1950s, have not panned out in the way the planners had suspected.

Vom Auto, das wie ein Weberschiffchen zwischen beiden Strukturen hin- und herschießt, haben wir diesmal geschwiegen. Es ist für viele schon lange nicht mehr das Instrument individueller, lösender Freiheit, sondern das Kettenglied in einem Fließband aus Blech, Glas und puffenden Gasen, welches zwischen Stadtkern und Vorstadt dahinzuckt. Alles war einmal schön gedacht, und alles ist heute beim Widerruf der ursprünglichen Absicht und des Auftrags, den wir ihm gaben, angelangt.\textsuperscript{121}

From the car, which shoots back and forth between the two structures like a weaver’s shuttle, we didn’t talk this time. For many people it is no longer the instrument of the individual, releasing freedom, but the chain link in a conveyor belt made of sheet metal, glass and puffing gases, twitching between downtown and suburbia. Everything used to be beautifully thought out, and everything today has arrived at the revocation of the original intention and the order we gave him.

The beginning and especially mid-1960s display a negative report: the foremost negatively connotated articles have titles such as “Die hohen Häuser. In keinem Wald kommt man sich so verlassen vor wie im vierzehnten Stockwerk eines Hochhauses.”122 (“The tall buildings. In no forest does one feel so abandoned as in the fourteenth floor of a high-rise”), and emphasize isolation, loneliness, and sped-up mobility and its consequences.

Le Corbusier’s death in 1965 coincidentally marks the end of positive reporting and the final end of the applied before-and-after photography of war and high-rise.123 After Le Corbusier’s death, the floodgates to criticism of building projects along the lines of the revolutionary architect appear to be opened: “Ein Hochhaus durch die Hintertür? […] Schützgemeinschaft protestiert.” (“A high-rise through the back door? […] Schützgemeinschaft protests.”)124

The 1960s end with criticism, trials, and scaling down of the former megaprojects. Witnesses of these processes are critical headlines: “[…] Vier Stockwerke niedriger / Magistrat droht Bürgergemeinschaft gerichtliche Schritte an,” (“Four floors lower / Municipality threatens to take legal action”)125 “Wachsen die Häuser in den Himmel? Immer mehr Bürotürme in

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Frankfurt / Wandlung des Westends”126 (“Do the houses grow into the sky? More and more office towers in Frankfurt / Transformation of the Westend”), “Hochhäuser und kein Ende? Mainz und Wiesbaden sind auch Rhein-Main-Gebiet / Spekulation stößt an Preisgrenzen”127 (“High-rises and no end? Mainz and Wiesbaden are also Rhine-Main-area / Speculation reaches price limits”). The negative reporting had certainly to do with a higher quantity of building projects having come into the completion stage, coinciding with both economic, social and visual criticism, which was apparently not anticipated in the planning stages, or at least tolerated. Similarly, the visualization with the help of photography of the 1960s does not have an educational appearance like the ones of the 1950s, in which the new high-rises are presented in a neutral or positive manner. The photographs cover more than half the page and are intimidating by its sheer size on paper.

Though not part of the discussion, an outlook into the 1970s exaggerates the language of critics: the language around social problems, loneliness, and isolation is exaggerated and addressed in titles such as “Aufbruch in die Wirklichkeit der Hochhäuser,”128 (“Departure into the reality of high-rise buildings”) and the first racialized stigma is assigned bluntly in the 1973 article: “Türkenhochhaus” bleibt in der Diskussion. In Hildesheim ziehen bald die ersten Gastarbeiterinnen ein“. 129 (“Turks’ high-rise remains under discussion. The first guest workers will soon move in in Hildesheim.”) The high-rise becomes a political weapon and medium, onto

which everyone may project their fears: conservationists about the architectural heritage of their home city, ecologists in regard to the destruction of landscapes by mass dwellings on the periphery of the city, socially against the stigma for the inhabitants which derive from a diverse range of backgrounds, or aesthetes, who fear the height and material of the high-rise. (“Der Rufer in der Betonwüste nutzt das Wahlkampfklima” (“Calling out the concrete desert, using the election climate”), “Hochhaus im Wahlkampf. Bürgerinitiative gegen die Verschandelung Bad Homburgs“ (“High-rise on the campaign trail. Citizens' initiative against the blighting of Bad Homburg”).

The power of the timeline which once had reinforced the message of the 1950s was now replaced by clear criticism of the mass dwelling projects, which were discontinued in the mid-1970s, and in the city centre of Frankfurt continue to this day.

2.7 Conclusion

The display of the past with the means of before-and-after photography of a changed cityscape have shown the power of visual means. The difference between a traumatic “then” and a “new” now is underlined by the press photography of the 1950s, emphasizing modernist changes as the best solution in contrast to the destruction. I suggest that this technique disappears from the FAZ in the findings from the collection of texts after 1965, where the criticism of the high-rise is only underlined by big scale photography, and foremost negative reporting and advocate for further research to support this hypothesis.

131 The two last big projects in the mid 1970s were Cologne Chorweiler and Bremen Osterholz (machmaplazda.com, chronological list of German high-rise mass dwellings by Tobias Nagel)
Before-and-after photography represents a powerful tool to form memory – at the same time, it reminds people of change. Representing the dichotomy of the past and present carries a lot of informational power. Displaying the past without taking an important period of time into consideration that led to the result of the “after” was used to elevate the positive outlook of the mass dwellings, which eventually did not uphold anymore upon the self-proclaimed end of the postwar era, and the urgencies which it had represented.

It is important to note that despite architecture offering a canvas to project ideas on, the early phase of the 1950s was marked by the will to distinguish the urban planners, politicians, architects, and even journalists from a National Socialist past, as I will demonstrate in the next chapter of personnel continuities.
Chapter 3: The High-Rise and Its Chronological Enmeshment

3.1 Introduction

At the opening speech of the Continental, a high-rise building in Hannover, city planner Rudolf Hillebrecht underlines how despicable, pathos laden, and different the architecture had been before the end of World War II in 1945. The architecture of the new high-rise Continental made a deliberate effort to distance itself from the „embarassing pathos“ of National Socialism: “Hier werden Sie nirgends ein falsches Pathos entdecken, das Sie selbst ja auch als peinlich, als unangebracht und als im Widerspruch zu unserer Zeit empfinden würden, die den Zusammenbruch hohl gewordener Formen genugsam erlebt hat.” (“Here you will find nowhere a false pathos, which you yourself would also find embarrassing, inappropriate and contrary to our time, which has experienced the collapse of hollow forms enough.”)\textsuperscript{132} Rudolf Hillebrecht marks a common German phenomenon in his speech. Stunde Null, the zero hour, marked a time in 1945 after everything was supposed to happen differently from the National Socialist decade before, which had brought destruction, misery, and genocide to the country, as also Hillebrecht emphasises. The “zero hour” mantra was applied in all aspects of life, and the infrastructural reset carried the same markers. The appearance of neoclassicism, romanticized, “national” building concepts was challenged by a neutral, international, and foremost new building style. The question whether to re-construct German heritage architecture or whether to construct with an assumed new, international style was at the core of decision making in the turbulent post war years, spanning from 1945 until the self-proclaimed end in the mid-1960s.

Strikingly, neither modernism nor the planning architects for reconstructing German cities were completely new: the planners and plans were in many cases a continuation of the prior years yet communicated as a completely new invention.

3.2 The Continental as Continuation

Built in the “International style,” Hannover’s *Continental* high-rise construction was communicated as a completely fresh start and a new idea, detached from architectural plans made during National Socialism. The Nazi era was marked by its fascination for the classic building forms, which the head designer Albert Speer represented in the form of wide forums, massive pillars, and representative streets. But besides the pompous style of neoclassicism, the application of modernity and functionality had been part of National Socialist plans. Building projects like mass holiday homes (Prora\(^{133}\)), infrastructure projects in occupied countries (e.g. restructuring cities in Norway\(^{134}\)) and high-rise buildings of sixty-eight stories (GAU high-rise in Hamburg\(^{135}\)) had been in the planning stages or were built.\(^{136}\)

Less than ten years prior to his speech upon opening up the high-rise *Continental* in 1953, Rudolf Hillebrecht had published a similarly empathetic yet contrasting speech on this “new agenda.” With a statement of irrefutable optimism, architect and author Rudolf Hillebrecht underlined the positive side of Germany’s destruction in the darkest days of WWII’s aerial warfare. In 1944, Hillebrecht had published this optimistic outlook upon Germany’s destruction

\(^{133}\) Kaule, *Prora: Geschichte und Gegenwart des KdF-Seebads Rügen.*

\(^{134}\) Stratigakos, *Hitler’s Northern Utopia: Building the New Order in Occupied Norway.* Especially the chapter: “The Nazification of Norway’s Towns Shaping Urban Life and Environments during Wartime”, 125-190.

\(^{135}\) Schubert, „Hochhäuser in Hamburg—(noch) kein Thema? Geschichte, Gegenwart und Zukunft eines ambivalenten Verhältnisses.“, 231-254; See also plans for Hamburg: Necker, Sylvia. *Konstanty Gutschow (1902-1978).*

\(^{136}\) A thorough review of the nuances of National Socialist architecture can be found in Barbara Miller Lane (1985)
in the National Socialist paper Nachrichten für unsere Kameraden im Felde (News for our Comrades Away at War.) In the face of the bombings, he writes, “Es ist so: neues Leben blüht, Neugestaltung des Lebens, Neugestaltung Deutschlands, Neugestaltung deutscher Städte. Neugestaltung, wie wir sie meinen!” (“It is like this: new life is flourishing, new life is being created, Germany is being newly formed, German cities are being newly formed. Neugestaltung, as we mean it!”) His speech promoted restructuring Germany along the ideologies of its National Socialist leaders: a complete remake of cities like Berlin, Nuremberg, and Hamburg had been planned out by chief architect and Hillebrecht’s long-time associate Albert Speer.

At the point of Hillebrecht’s speech in 1944, it was yet unimaginable for convinced National Socialists that the destruction and its consecutive reconstruction would not happen under the same ideology. Nevertheless, Germany found itself in an altered position after 1945, contrasting Hillebrecht’s aspirations in the National Socialist newspaper with the Stunde Null—the self-proclaimed hour zero, which marked the complete reset of German society, infrastructure, politic, borders, and work force.

Investigated thoroughly, amongst others by Niels Gutschow and Werner Durth, as well as Jeffry Diefendorf, the continuities of Germany’s post-war history are prominent in the architectural and city planning personnel, which shaped the sociological and environmental set-

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137 “Nachrichten für unsere Kameraden im Felde” (News for our Comrades Away at the Wars), was published by the “Büro der Architekten für die Neugestaltung der Hansestadt Hamburg” (Bureau of the architects for the redevelopment of the Hansecity Hamburg). It was a magazine whose concern was the urban planning of Nazi Germany. J. Diefendorf (1993) calls it the “house magazine” of Konstanty Gutschow, one of Hamburg’s leading architects during National Socialism. Part of planning processes of the Führerstadt, Führer Sofortprogramm, Arbeitsstab für den Wiederaufbau zerstörter Städte (Diefendorf, 337).


140 Diefendorf, Urban Reconstruction in Europe after World War II.
up of the following decade. These patterns not only manifest in the employment, speeches, and architectural iterations, but they can also be seen in the reporting done in light of a “new” architecture. Architecture served in Germany as a symbolic marker of a new beginning.

3.3 Continuities: Who Else is Going to Rebuild?

The end of the National Socialist era and its widespread destruction spurred an interesting dilemma in Germany: on the one hand, a lot of personnel was necessary for the gigantic rebuilding and redesign effort, and on the other hand, there were only very few educated architects and urban planners left that hadn’t been involved with National Socialism. Thus, a new Germany, and a departure from the past, had to be marked by an altered rhetoric about urban plans and architecture, and a rebranding process of prominent personalities and architectural concepts. One of these markers of progress and a new beginning was the high-rise mass dwelling. Its documentation and controversial discussion in media outlets underlines its meaning beyond its sheer architecture. The high-rise’s departure from heritage architecture, entangled with continuities from a National Socialist era, was interwoven with covering up or rephrasing former ideologies in order to maintain a high-powered architect’s continuous career.

Rudolf Hillebrecht’s biography is marked by two successful careers in two (seemingly) different regimes. Hillebrecht was a member of the National Socialist party (Nationalsozialistische deutsche Arbeiterpartei, or NSDAP) part of the office that spearheaded new designs for Hamburg under Konstanty Gutschow. Hillebrecht was an integral part of the Arbeitsstaab für den Wiederaufbau bombenzerstörter Städte (planning committee for rebuilding

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141 Diefendorf, “Reconstructing Civic Authority in Post-War Germany” The Blitz and Its Legacy, 137-150.
142 Meyer Zu Knolle, Die Gebändigte Vertikale, 288.
bombed cities), destined to rebuild Germany under leadership of National Socialist head architect Albert Speer in 1943. In 1948, five years later, and three years after the end of the National Socialist era, Rudolf Hillebrecht had been appointed Hannover’s city planner. The continuation as described here in this chapter has been widely discussed especially for West Germany, and is emblematic for its time. The way the continuation was masked by the rhetoric of a new beginning is distinctive for this time.

Since the state’s civil servants (“Beamte”) would not be completely replaceable in the necessary quantity, especially in the scale of reconstructing a country both infrastructurally, morally, and socially, German history shows many markers of widespread career continuation. Thus, the transformation process from National Socialism towards the Federal Republic of Germany needed strong visual markers to signal the change on a material, visual, and verbal level in order to perfect the impression of a tabula rasa and successful denazification. The opening of the Continental high-rise serves therefore as an example of the strong reformulation that the branding of the high-rise and its implementation had seen.

In 1953, Hillebrecht emphasises the high-rise’s importance for a new beginning in order to depart from the Nazi past. What appeared nine years prior in Für unsere Kameraden im Felde in a National Socialist spirit, iterated with the ideological reasoning that emphasized the urban architecture of the future as “Deutsch” and “Nationalsozialistisch” (“German” and “National Socialist”), appeared less than ten years later in a different light. The ideological words of

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143 Harlander, Zwischen Heimstätte und Wohnmaschine.
144 Steffen, Tradierte Institutionen, Moderne Gebäude.
145 Dorn, Der Architekt und Stadtplaner Rudolf Hillebrecht.
146 Steffen, 23. “sodass die meisten Beamten [...] ihre Karrieren mehr oder weniger nahtlos fortsetzen konnten”
147 Steffen, 42. “Gestalterische, personelle und strukturelle Kontinuitäten existierten also auch hier und waren um Ausmaß zum Teil „erschreckend“.
148 In Meyer zu Knolle, Die gebändigte Vertikale, the author executes an extensive review of Hillebrecht's speech.
German and National Socialist are rebranded. Instead, Hillebrecht emphasizes a connection to the Bauhaus development of the 1920s, and underlines its rebrand in the neutral “Abendländisch” and “Westlich” (“Occidental” and “Western”).\(^{149}\) Hillebrecht changes the narrative from “German architecture” in 1943 to an architecture of the future in 1953,\(^ {150}\) in order to “forget the turmoil of the past 30 years.”\(^ {151}\)

Although Hillebrecht favoured his high-rises outside of the city centre, as most planners after the war did, was he responsible for the complete restructure of the layout of Hannover? Hillebrecht’s role in the planning committee for rebuilding bombed cities favoured “car-friendly” cities that disowned private property holders to make space for wider streets for increased traffic in cities. His approach to the complete restructuring was a city planner’s dream: changing the complete layout in both horizontal but also vertical means.\(^ {152}\)

It is difficult to say in which way Hillebrecht was an avid National Socialist, or whether his published letter in *Für unseren Kameraden im Felde* was just mimicking the language of the time. What is proven is that the plans for redesigning cities like Hamburg, Berlin, or Hannover continued to favour the personal transport of the car—as a fetish of the National Socialist government, car-friendly cities and a completely new outline of the city continued to be favoured.\(^ {153}\) Rudolf Hillebrecht had participated in the architectural design of the national socialist regime while working for Gutschow and Albert Speer until 1945. Thus the continuation of plans made during National Socialism was widespread in West Germany, while presenting it

\(^{149}\) Cf. Steffen, 121.

\(^{150}\) Meyer zu Knolle, *Die gebändigte Vertikale*, 384.


\(^{152}\) Brandt, “Willkommener Abschied—und das Ende der Stadt als Form”, 68-76. Sigrid Brandt calls this “totale Städteerneuerung” (“total renewal of cities” alluding to Goebbels’s sportpalast speech and “total war”)

as a complete break. Although the discourse changed, the personnel remain the same, and the material high-rise was deployed as a marker of a departure from the past.

3.4 Continuities in Reporting

3.4.1 “Kann man in Hochhäusern wohnen?”

Figure 3-1 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It features the entirety of the newspaper page containing five pictures, covering more than 65% of the entire page. The first picture contains an image at night of an office high-rise dwelling in Frankfurt (“Neue Architektur bei Nacht: Das Hochhaus Süd und die Friedensbrücke in Frankfurt am Main.”); the second pictures features the “Wilhelm-Marx Haus in Düsseldorf”, with a Volkswagen beatle car in the foreground; the third picture features again the “Hochhaus Süd in Frankfurt”; the fourth picture features the high-rise mass dwellings of the Grindelberg (“Wohnhochhäuser am Grindelberg in Hamburg”); the fifth picture features unspecified “Wohnhochhäuser in Zürich”. Original source:

Figure 3–1: Köhne, Carl Ernst. “Kann man in Hochhäusern wohnen?” Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (Bilder und Zeiten). 21 March 1953, Photographs: Suter, Göllner, Wolff&Tritschler

The article “Kann man in Hochhäusern wohnen?” (“Can you live in high-rises?”) was written in 1953 by the author Carl Ernst Köhne. It engages with the advantages and disadvantages of the high-rise. In this article, the high-rise is presented as a new idea, illustrating the special status of an entirely new concept of dwelling in Germany.154

Before this publication in 1953, several sources point towards the possibility that Carl Ernst Köhne, who wrote the article for FAZ in 1953, is the same person as Dr. Carl Ernst Köhne, as well as Karl Ernst Köhne of Aachen. In the following I will show the different sources that point to this.

154 See also Gibson, The Early High-Rise in Germany.
The author Dr. Carl Ernst Köhne wrote about heritage and art history before and during the National Socialist Regime. He finished his PhD in Aachen in the 1920s, and was especially involved in art-historical and architectural matters regarding the protection of “German Culture,” conservation under the idea of “Blood and Soil.” As a member of the “Pflegschaft Aachen” (Partition Aachen) at the Rheinisches Landesmuseum Bonn (Rhineland Museum Bonn) from 1939–1942, he aspired renewing the Heimatmuseum (heritage museum).

In a paper published in the magazine of the Heimatverein (heritage society) from 1935, he explains his ideas for the plan of the conversion from old monastery to exhibition space for Teutonic artifacts. The symbolism that he identifies in the exhibition items in the meaning for Germany are similar to what we will see later as a material symbolism of the high-rise. Köhne underlines that the material aspect of the displayed artefacts will strengthen the National Socialist “Blood and Soil” approach to history and cultural materialism.

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Köhne published both in *Völkischer Beobachter*, as well as *Westdeutscher Beobachter*, two of the main National Socialist newspapers.

Rheinisches Landesmuseum Bonn, issue 1, Archivalien im Archiv des Landschaftsverband Rheinland 1820 – ca. 1954, 74. Note that on p. 74 both Dr. C.E. Köhne is registered as “Pfleger“ for “Stadt und Landkreis Aachen” from 1940 – 1942, as well as Dr. Köhne is registered as “Pfleger“ for Aachen from 1939 – 1941. Similar double registries also apply to other people, e.g. Dr. J. Sommer (Aachen) and Dr. Sommer (Stadt Aachen).

[https://afz.lvr.de/media/de/archive_im_rheinland/archiv_des_lvr/findbuch_rheinisches_landesmuseum_bonn_1820_ca_1954.pdf](https://afz.lvr.de/media/de/archive_im_rheinland/archiv_des_lvr/findbuch_rheinisches_landesmuseum_bonn_1820_ca_1954.pdf)

Vertiefungstext zur Ausstellung "Spurensuche", 2.

[http://www.spurensuche-ausstellung.de/texte/vertiefungstext_kreisheimatmuseum.pdf](http://www.spurensuche-ausstellung.de/texte/vertiefungstext_kreisheimatmuseum.pdf) “Am 1. Juli 1935 veröffentlichte der Aachener Kustos Dr. Carl Ernst Köhne in den Heimatblättern des Landkreises Aachen seine Vision eines Kreis-Heimatmuseums in der ehem. Reichsabtei Kornelimünster. In blumiger Sprache macht er für die Leser deutlich, dass Heimatverbundenheit nicht nur ein Gefühl, sondern gleichsam zum politischen Auftrag wird. Inzwischen hatten sich die Nationalsozialisten der Heimatidee angenommen und instrumentalisierten sie. So wurde jetzt das Bild eines Museums aufgezeichnet, dass ganz der Idee von „Blut und Boden“ untergeordnet war.” (“On July 1, 1935, the Aachen custodian Dr. Carl Ernst Köhne published his vision of a district home museum in the former Reich Abbey Kornelimünster in the Heimatblätter of the Aachen district. In flowery language, he makes it clear to the readers that homeland attachment is not just a feeling, but becomes, as it were, a political mandate. In the meantime, the National Socialists had taken up the idea of homeland and instrumentalized it. Thus, the image of a museum was now recorded that was completely subordinated to the idea of ‘blood and soil.’”)

Harris, *Cultural Materialism*, IX.
Dann wächst der Bestand nicht nur zahlenmäßig, sondern es ziehen sich unsichtbare Fäden herüber und hinüber ins malerische Indetal, wo der Landkreis Aachen nun in einem nach allen neuzeitlichen und nicht zuletzt nach nationalsozialistischen, der Kunde und Pflege des Gedankens von Blut und Boden dienenden Grundsätzen aufgebauten großen Heimatmuseum einen neuen Schwerpunkt hat.

(Then the inventory would not only grow in numbers, but invisible threads would pull across and across into the picturesque Indetal Valley, where the district of Aachen would now have a new focus in a large museum of local history, built according to all modern principles and not least those of the National Socialists, which served the customer and care of the idea of Blood and Soil.)^159

The fact that the art historian Dr. Carl Ernst Köhne is writing about a heritage museum is not striking. The choice of publication outlets is much more interesting: besides his engagement at the heritage museum in Bonn under clearly articulated National Socialist ideas (“Blood and Soil”), he publishes reviews on the *Große Deutsche Kunstaustellung*^160 (The Grand German Art Exhibition) for *Westdeutscher Beobachter* (West German Observer), an NSDAP newspaper for West Germany.^161

Another sample of Carl Ernst Köhne’s pre-war contributions to the press on cultural materiality and National Socialist involvement features the insignia of the thousand-year Reich in *Völkischer Beobachter* (*Völkisch Observer*), a NSDAP newspaper, wherein he underlines the meaning of cultural artefacts for Germany.


^161 This image Köhne reviews is documented to have been purchased by Adolf Hitler for 500 RM. http://www.gdk-research.de/de/obj19405335.html
Staat zu seiner Gefolgschaft, den erlesenen Vertretern aus allen Teilen der Nation sprechen wird: Als Sinnbilder der 1000jährigen im Volksstaate Adolf Hitlers zu neuer Wirklichkeit und Größe und Bedeutung auferstandenden Gedanken vom Heiligen Deutschen Reich!

(Accompanied by the curator of the Aachen City Museums (...), the replicas of the Reichskleinodien have now arrived in Nuremberg (...). Surrounded by purple cloth hangings, they will shine and glitter at the side of the leader in the old, venerable ballroom of the town hall, when he will speak to his followers, the exquisite representatives from all parts of the nation, at the great reception of the Party and the State: As symbols of the 1000 year lasting artefacts in Adolf Hitler's Volksstaat to the new reality and greatness and significance of the resurrected thought of the Holy German Reich)

Köhne emphasises not only the medieval insignia but especially focuses on the buildings in which they are formally housed and where they are displayed during the exhibition. Köhne underlines these as “Sinnbilder vergangener Größe” (symbols of past greatness), or places in which former royalty was exercised. The insignia and the houses that carry history refer to the “rebirth” of the 1000-year-old Holy German Empire, the 1000-year Reich of Adolf Hitler.

For how the author Karl Ernst Köhne made connection between architecture/cultural materialism and National Socialist politics, one last example serves to illustrate his attitude to National Socialism. It is important to note that the spelling of the first name differs, yet, his biographical and topical information appears to match that of Carl Ernst Köhne.

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During the process of appointing the new head of *Kampfbund der Deutschen Architekten* (Combat League of German Architects),\(^{166}\) the author Karl Ernst Köhne of Bonn is mentioned. Karl Ernst Köhne expresses doubt against the appointment of proposed director Weigert.\(^{167}\) In Karl Ernst Köhne’s opinion, he was not invested in National Socialism enough for the position.


(The Kampfbund der Deutschen Architekten warned against Weigert's appointment, and the Bonn National Socialist Karl Köhne accused him of being a “purely intellectualist, nihilistically critical ‘liberalist and philosopher.’” Köhne claimed that Weigert had spoken for “national feelings and racial thinking only cynical bonmots” and warned of the “barbarity of the Third Reich.”)\(^{168}\)

By this, Karl Ernst Köhne underlined his standpoint and conviction for the National Socialist idea—to the point that he criticized an architect as not being National Socialist enough.

Assuming Carl Ernst Köhne’s involvement with the heritage museum of the partition Aachen of the Landesmuseum Bonn, it appears that he and Karl Ernst Köhne “of Bonn” are the same person, but further research is required for conclusive evidence.

Nevertheless, the articles of Carl Ernst Köhne before and during WWII can identify him as an author who emphasized his view of the totality of National Socialism, especially in regard to architecture and art, and its national meaning and expression for the regime.

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\(^{167}\) Note the different spelling: It is suggested that Karl (Ernst) Köhne and Carl Ernst Köhne are the same person confirmed by the Art Historical Institute of Cologne, since the founder of the stipend “Doktorhut” is named Dr. Karl Ernst Köhne and shares the same biographical data with Carl Ernst Köhne (confirmed in an email to the author by the Kunsthistorisches Institut Bonn, on August 29 2019).

With this information at hand, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)* article from 1953 “Kann man in Hochhäusern wohnen?” reads differently. The subtleness of Köhne’s answer to the question of tradition vs. modernity underlines his political 180-degree turn, in which the high-rise becomes the marker of a positive futurism and stands contrary to the nostalgic, traditional, and pathos-laden cultural materialism he applied in his art and architecture reviews of the National Socialist era. Köhne opens the article by stating high-rises originated in the United States, and that the high-rise might not foremost be a necessity, but much more a fashion.

Bei einer Bebauung von nur einem Fünftel des Bodens war hier sichtlich nicht eine städtebauliche Zwangslage oder krasse Grundstücksspekulation die Triebfeder, sondern eine Idee und eine Meinung, mit der wir uns aus ganz anderen Motiven auch in Deutschland auseinanderzusetzen haben.

(With only one fifth of the land being built on, the driving force here was obviously not an urbanistic predicament or blatant land speculation, but an idea and an opinion, with which we have to deal for completely different motives in Germany.)

Subtly, he engages with the thought of tradition vs. modernity. He inquires when and in which way the buildings connect to a German national sense of cultural artefacts. The “traditional shores of Alster” are now dominated by steel, light materials, and glass. He continues, “Heute setzt sich, wie der vielumstrittene IDUNA-Bau beweist, auch am traditionsreichen Alsterufer der aus Stahlbeton, Leichtstoffen und Glas formschön-zweckmäßige Baukunstwerke schaffende Geist unserer Tage durch.” (“Today, as the controversial IDUNA building proves, the spirit of our days, which creates elegant and functional architectural works of art made of reinforced concrete, lightweight materials and glass, prevails even on the banks of the Alster, which are steeped in tradition.”) He continues to mention the “heritage of occidental cultures,” and by that, the replacement of what he termed during National Socialist times
This exchange of a nation with region illustrates the rebranding process his ideas underwent in order to fit into the time’s discourse and convictions. At the same time, the word is strongly associated with the conversatism of the 1960s CDU.

Hier wird das Erbe der abendländischen Kultur wirksam, deren Hochleistungen stets ausgezeichnet waren durch ein Gleichgewicht zwischen Zweck und Form, Sachlichkeit und Schönheit, einzelner Aufgabe und allgemeiner Verpflichtung. Dieselbe Sicherheit im Unwägbaren, die einst die Akropolis gestaltete und in Altdeutschland die malerische Willkür kirchturmüberhohter Straßenräume entstehen ließ, ist auch im Gewände neuzeitlicher Formen und Baustoffe, lebendig.

(This is where the heritage of occidental culture comes into its own, whose achievements have always been distinguished by a balance between purpose and form, objectivity and beauty, individual task and general commitment. The same security in the imponderable that once shaped the Acropolis and created the picturesque arbitrariness of street spaces overhauled by church towers in Old Germany is also alive in the garments of modern forms and building materials.)

The constant temporality and recurrence to the old masters of a lineage of German and central European mastery is striking.

The strong National Socialist markers seen in earlier examples are replaced by similar recurrence of the “old.” “Gängeviertel Alt-Hamburgs” (“Gängeviertel of Old Hamburg”) and “Altdeutschland” (“Old Germany”) refer to a temporal instance as well, in which splitting the old from the new becomes much more apparent. Although mentioning the “old-fashioned” style, Köhne makes clear that it is time for new markers in the city’s silhouette: “Bauwerke von dem optischen Gewicht, wie es einst ein Brückentorturm an solcher Stelle einer Stadtsilhouette gab.” (“Buildings of the optical weight as there once was a bridge gate tower at such a place of a city silhouette.”) He also points out that if the high-rise wouldn’t be high enough, it would be a

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169 Note the parallels to Rudolf Hillebrecht’s rephrasing.
“Belanglosigkeit” (“pettiness”). In his view, a high-rise serves the purpose of accentuating the modern city. The high-rise serves in its symbolic way as a marker of reorientation in a restructured city—and indirectly, marks the beginning of a new, seemingly de-nazified era.

Köhne stresses that architecture has to the shape human existence, and that it needs to be restored after having been destroyed. He writes, “Es gilt, vom Arbeitsalltag und seinen Gewohnheiten her die verlorengegangene Einheit der Daseinsgestaltung—wir nennen das ja wohl auch Kultur—wiederherzustellen.” (“It is necessary to restore the lost unity of the shaping of existence—we call it culture—from the everyday working life and its habits.”) His orientation towards World War II in conversation with the current state of architecture underlines the high-rise movement as a direct reaction to the social restructuring processes of the self-proclaimed Stunde Null.

The author stresses that the “occupying power” had asked for the buildings, pointing out that the initial motivation for this came from the British Allied Forces. “Die Besatzungsmacht hatte eine geschlossene citynahe Anlage mit 3000 Wohnungen verlangt. Das war zu den geforderten Bedingungen auf dem verfügbaren teilzerstörten ehemaligen Villengelände flächenmäßig nicht zu schaffen.” (“The occupying power had demanded a closed complex close to the city centre with 3000 apartments. This could not be achieved under the required conditions on the available partially destroyed former villa site.”) The construction of the high-rise quarter happened in a historically special area of the city: the Grindelviertel neighborhood had been Hamburg’s traditional Jewish quarter, and the high-rise mass dwelling was built on the ruins of that quarter.

In the course of his foray into the different interpretations of the high-rise, he mentions the stigma of high-rises being a “Menschenregal” (“human shelf”). Köhne denies this prejudice
by emphasizing the beauty of the clear lines of its shape. The sheer idea of sleeping more than twenty meters above ground seems to elicit fear in the reader, which the author tries to undo by mentioning the house’s beauty: “durchdacht über die Linien hinaus, wo die Schönheit beginnt” (“thought through beyond the lines, where beauty begins”).

All of the above examples show the urge to present the high-rise as a necessary new innovation that replaces old patterns—and “magically” makes National Socialist biographies, Jewish heritage, and housing problems disappear.

3.4.2 The Redundant Photography of “Kann man in Hochhäusern wohnen?”

The page layout of the article “Kann man in Hochhäusern wohnen?” features a striking amount of photography. Looking closer at the featured photographs, it displays five different high-rises: the Wilhelm-Marx Hochhaus in Düsseldorf, one of the first high-rise office buildings in Germany, built in the late 1920s; the Hochhaus Süd in Frankfurt is one of Frankfurt’s first office buildings and high-rises, built from 1949 to 1951, and is even featured twice. Additionally, a mass dwelling from Zurich, Switzerland. Lastly, the Grindelhochhaus from Hamburg is at the point of the publication of the article the only German example of housing people (vs. offices) in high-rises and illustrates therefore the lack of examples and experience which could actually inform the German status quo of housing people in mass dwellings. Housing people in high-rises is thus a futuristic idea not established yet in Germany, the photographic examples to illustrate the concept of German mass dwellings are therefore replaced with photos of pre-war examples, foreign constructions or office houses.

One of the photographs is noted to be taken by Wolff&Tritschler, a company that established itself as one of the most successful photo agencies during the first half of the
The two photographers were involved in the propaganda apparatus of Nazi Germany, photographing important events, like the Olympics or NSDAP party meetings. One of their accredited photos depict one of Germany’s first high-rises, the Wilhelm-Marx-Haus in Düsseldorf. This high-rise was completed in 1924 and designed by Wilhelm Kreis, another example for a continuous biography of an architect, since his involvement in the ideological planning stages of both the National Socialist and the post-war regime are fundamental.

The mismatch is what stands out in this article: the high-rise is presented as a futuristic solution that is being broadly applied, yet some of the photos depict the same object, or office buildings instead of dwellings, or examples from Switzerland. The sheer idea of the high-rise as a marker for change during the period of the Zero Hour came thus before the actual materialization. The high-rise was marked as a path into the future by those who had reinvented their own identities by rephrasing ideas of ideological architecture.

### 3.4.3 Recurring to the Past: Tracing “Old Frankfurts” Links

*Figure 3-2 removed due to copyright restrictions. The image contained a half a page shot of the newspaper page. It featured the text “Frankfurts neues Hochhaus wird jetzt bezogen werden“ and features a 8 storey high-rise building. Original source:*
The collection of articles of the *FAZ*’s reporting on high-rises during the 1950s display a tension between a certain sentimentality for the past while trying to focus on the outlook towards an untainted future. This phenomenon is influenced by proposing the high-rise as a solution in order to communicate the *tabula rasa*—a clean slate after 1945.

The rift between nostalgia for former architectural structures and an emphasis on the benefit of the high-rise for a future society is clearly represented in the article “Neun Stockwerke am Kaiserplatz” (“Nine Stories at Kaiserplatz”) from 1951. The author emphasises the ties to the Old Frankfurt, writing, “Ein besonderes Kuriosum ist, daß Karl Dröll selbst seine Jugend in dem an das alte Indanthren-Haus angrenzenden Haus in der Friedensstraße verbracht hat. Auch durch solche Bindungen erhält das neue Junior-Haus seine Beziehung zu dem alten Frankfurt.” (“A special curiosity is that Karl Dröll himself spent his youth in the house adjacent to the old Indanthren House in Friedensstraße. It is also through such ties that the new Junior House maintains its relationship with the old Frankfurt.”)

Significant are the links it draws towards the past of “Alt Frankfurt,” and treats the high-rise like an heir which supposedly honours its past while progressing into a new future.174

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174 See also: Arnold, *Allied Air War and Urban Memory*, 314. “This kind of reflective – rather than restorative – nostalgia was particularly pronounced in Kassel, where a group of middle-class intellectuals, some of whom had had strong affiliations with Nazism prior to 1945, drew on turn-of-the-century notions of Alt-Kassel in order to imagine the pre-war city as a place of beauty, harmony and innocence. In Magdeburg, by comparison, the notion of Alt-Magdeburg, which had been of marginal importance in pre-war discourse, did not gain wider currency until the 1960s when the demolition of several inner-city churches provoked opposition from sections of the old Protestant middle classes.”
The article starts out by mentioning that the Junior Haus as a new exponent of the new representative office buildings, something that has become a "household name" by its sheer appearance. The author writes, “Das Junior-Haus am Kaiserplatz, jüngster Vertreter unter den neuen repräsentativen Bürohäusern in Frankfurt, ist schon vor seiner Vollendung in Frankfurt zu einem Begriff geworden.” (“The Junior House on Kaiserplatz, the youngest representative of the new representative office buildings in Frankfurt, has become a household name even before its completion in Frankfurt.”) The enthusiasm of the article is a stylistic device which I identify in the majority of the high-rise articles until the 1960s. The high-rise is something grand and new appearing in the city line, a welcome contrast to the rubble that Frankfurt still found itself in in the early 50s, and a marker for the future that exculpates from the National Socialist past. The reporting about its placement and its balance in regard to the rest of the city underlines the specificity of the high-rise building, which differs from a normal building. The high-rise is thus clearly represented as a new object that has “the best intentions to fit in.”

In the progression of the article, it is especially the new high-rise’s ties to the future while still honouring “Old Frankfurt’s cityscape” that gives it its legitimacy. The evoked notion of “maintains the relationship to the Old Frankfurt” evokes tradition and familiarity as to not “scare” the spectator. But this carte blanche turns out to be a false account of the past. The National Socialist case is neglected, and instead of discussing ties to the case of dispossessing a Jewish family during National Socialism to seize the land that Idanthen house is built on, the futuristic aspect of the building is emphasized by glorifying an unspecified past.

After having established the adornment for the past and making sure there is a lineage between the past and the assumed future, the article continues to praise the futuristic inventions
of the new Junior House, like the elevator and the neon lights. It therefore emphasises the future with its new inventions and looks.

3.4.4 Photographic Truth?

The nostalgic heritage is praised in the article, and by that tries to pay tribute to the former building. The article mentions that the two developers have “still” (immer noch) a photograph of the former building mounted in their office. The article therefore employs the imagery of the photograph as a marker for respecting the past. It is the photographic imagery that underlines the temporal rupture of the report, and thus, manifests its validity.

The article mentions the former owners of the building to be “Isr. Schmidt” who handed over the business to “Scheuermann and Dröll.” Before 1938, “Israel Schmidt und Söhne” (“Israel Schmidt and Sons”) was one of Germany’s biggest real estate dealers. The company was owned by Jewish Germans until the company owners sold it to “Scheuermann and Dröll.” For 15,000 RM[Reichsmark], “Scheuermann and Dröll” bought the business in 1938 because the Jewish family was forced to emigrate by rising discrimination, limitations, and violence against German Jews. Due to its low price, the family was involved in a decade-long court battle after emigrating to the United States.

The article conveys the notion of nostalgia and ownership, righteousness and tradition in light of building the high-rise in the middle of Frankfurt. But none of those links are accurate,

175 Schwanenflug, „Kunden waren das Kaiserhaus.“
176 Notice also the secretive notion of the article written in 2010 of one of the interviewees who reacts afterwards in Schwanenflug “Kunden waren das Kaiserhaus”. “Na, jetzt haben Sie Ihr Interview ja doch bekommen”, sagt er nach dem etwa einstündigen Telefonat. Doch dann kommt plötzlich ein Brief in die Redaktion. Haas droht mit gerichtlichen Schritten, sollte ein Artikel über Dröll & Scheuermann in der IZ erscheinen“ (“Well, now you got your interview after all“ he says after the one-hour phone call. But then suddenly a letter arrives at the editorial office. Haas threatens legal action if an article about Dröll & Scheuermann appears in the IZ.”)
since the discontinuity of the business and the building are as questionable as the acquisition of the real estate. The author writes, “Noch heute hängt in dem Büro der beiden Inhaber des Unternehmens die Fotografie des alten Indanthren-Hauses, das ehemals an dieser Stelle stand und das durch einen der März-Angriffe des Jahres 1944 völlig ausgebrannt ist.” (“Still, the photograph of the old Indanthren house, which once stood here and which was completely burnt out by one of the March attacks of 1944, hangs in the office of the two owners of the company.”)

The described temporal gaps in the article stress the significance of the high-rise as a component to the divide between an altered timeline of a before and after, in which “before” creates a blind spot of the happenings between 1938 and 1945, and an “after” in which the outlook towards the future replaces the immediate gaps of the problematic before. The warped display of the past underlines its problematic nature: not that the continuities are questionable, but the fact that the past is changed upon reporting about the future.

3.5 Further Continuations

The list of continuation of urban planners and architects after WWII is long. Nevertheless, there are few instances in which the architect’s National Socialist past was publicly criticized.

To give a brief impression at the end of this chapter, I want to quote a few articles which display continuities. The reporting done on high-rises and urban restructuring in the magazine Der Spiegel features many star architects who, similarly to Rudolf Hillebrecht, were praised for their vigor and work after the war. Thus, Der Spiegel calls the proponent of the car-friendly city

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177 For an overview, see e.g. Durth, “Verschwiegene Geschichte. Probleme der Kontinuität in der Stadtplanung 1940-1960”, 28-50.
Rudolf Hillebrecht in a cover article from 1959 the mastermind behind the “miracle of Hannover.”

Although it is debatable how much ideological energy steered the architect’s plans, the completely new design of buildings and streets followed the same principles that the Nazi ideologists had outlined and forced in Germany and the occupied countries.

*Der Spiegel* writes in 1959:

> In ungewohnt kühnem und schnellem Entschluß billigte der bei städtebaulichen Neuerungen sonst recht betuliche Hamburger Senat unlängst einen Plan, der die Physiognomie der Hansestadt grundlegend verändern wird. Rund sechs Kilometer vom Hamburger Stadtkern entfernt soll nach modernsten städtebaulichen Erkenntnissen ein neues Kontorhausviertel von gewaltigen Ausmaßen entstehen: eine zweite City."

(In an unusually bold and quick decision, the Hamburg Senate, which is otherwise quite fussy about urban development, recently approved a plan that will fundamentally change the physiognomy of the Hanseatic city. Around six kilometers from Hamburg's city center, a new district of office buildings of enormous dimensions is to be built according to the latest urban planning findings: a second city).

These megaprojects were favoured by Oberbaudirektor Hebebrand. Werner Hebebrand had been, just like Rudolf Hillebrecht, in Albert Speer’s committee for rebuilding the German cities from 1943 to 1945. Prior to that, from 1939 to 1943, one of his bigger projects included a leading role in planning the “Stadt der Hermann-Göring-Werke,” a new city to house the workers of one of Nazi Germany’s biggest industrial cities. It is difficult to not put his plans after the war in line with the formerly ideological plans.

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The continuities of personnel that have irreversibly and vastly intentionally restructured and destroyed what was left of historically grown cities according to a National Socialist ideology can also be identified in the persona of the architect Hans Bernhard Reichow. Earlier, in 1957, Der Spiegel writes

Als der Hamburger Architekt vor einiger Zeit mit der Generalplanung der neu zu errichtenden Heidestadt beauftragt worden war, hatte er den Senne-Landrat Franz Specht davon überzeugt, daß die Entwicklung eines neuen Straßensystems ("Unser bisheriges stammt ja noch aus der Zeit der Sänften und Pferdegespanne") das "vordringliche uns gestellte Pensum des Städtebaus" sei.\(^{181}\)

(When the Hamburg architect was commissioned some time ago with the general planning of the new Heidestadt to be built, he had convinced the Senne District Administrator Franz Specht that the development of a new road system ("Our present one dates back to the time of sedan chairs and horse-drawn carriages") was the "urgent task of urban development.")

In the same article, upon reporting on the planning stages of Bielefeld’s Sennestadt, Hans Bernhard Reichow had learned the bread and butter in Albert Speer’s committee just like the above-named architects, but Reichow had fortified his position as an avid NSDAP member even more evidently than Rudolf Hillebrecht or Werner Hebebrand. While working for Konstany Gutschow, and planning car-friendly cities during the war, he worked on the “Generalplan Ost,” restructuring occupied Poland, Ukraine, and Russia in order to make them suitable for the outlined ‘Germanization’. He continued propagating the complete restructure for car-friendly cities, favouring mass dwellings outside of the city. Reichow published in 1960 the controversial book “Die autogerechte Stadt.”\(^{182}\) Similar to Carl Ernst Köhne, he continued to write and

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\(^{181}\) “Ohne Kreuzungen”, Der Spiegel, 2 October 1957, 60-61.  
\(^{182}\) Reichow, Die autogerechte Stadt: ein Weg aus dem Verkehrs-Chaos.
participate in clubs, lending the impression that his links to his former political ideology might have lasted.\footnote{As a former planner for the resettlement, the Gesellschaft für pommersche Geschichte, Altertumskunde und Kunst (The society for the history, heritage and art of Pommerania) might be mentioned.}

As historian Klaus Kürvers points out, the thought of \textit{tabula rasa} is rooted in both the pre-war modern architecture movement, as well as the Third Reich ideology of cleansed and empty land as a necessary condition for a new, clean, and well-structured city.\footnote{Kürvers, “Das Chaos Berlin neu gestalten.”} The continuation of this thought after the war is illustrated both by its material and personnel continuation. This mechanism made way for a general effort in most German cities to completely alter the outline of the city, and hence alter its social and industrial setup.\footnote{Kürvers, 212. “Über die Neugestaltung der zerstörten Innenstädte hinaus setzte sich seit den sechziger Jahren dieses Planungsdanken auch im Umgang mit der im Krieg unzerstört gebliebenen Altbausubstanz fort. Mit dem flächendeckenden Abriss in den großen Sanierungsgebieten setzte eine zweite Zerstörung der Städte ein.” (“From the 1960s onward, this planning approach continued beyond the redevelopment of the destroyed inner cities in the treatment of the old buildings that had remained undestroyed during the war. With the comprehensive demolition in the large redevelopment areas, a second destruction of the cities began.”)}

\section*{3.6 Conclusion}

In this chapter, I have shown a selection of examples that illustrate the connection between reporting done on the high-rise construction in accordance with the continuities of architects’ and journalists’ careers. By resorting to the biographical information of writers and architects, as well as photographic evidence, I showed that also the reporting done on the high-rise is linked with a National Socialist past, while being displayed as a discontinued past or temporal rupture.
Chapter 4: “Wild” Child vs. Wohnmaschine: the high-rise’s outdoor spaces

“The aspiration to obtain the same temperature everywhere implies a complete separation between the inside and outside, using architecture as the ultimate artefact to isolate humans from nature.”

4.1 Introduction

The deceptively simple claim by Francesco Spanedda points towards the strictest separation between the outside and inside to be implemented in architecture. As he describes in *Architecture and the Anthropocene*, the tendency toward separation is fundamental in the writings of the founding fathers of modernism, foremost Le Corbusier’s idea of the Modular and all its aspects of compartmentalized, organized life for the ideal human (male, 180 cm, single, working). Although Le Corbusier’s vision was aiming to provide a “better urbanism,” offering more elemental access, such as light, water and air to city dwellers, its complete separation and compartmentalization triggered problems. In the following, I will address the unforeseen consequences, such as the aftermath of verticality and anonymity caused by the complete separation of indoor and outdoor spaces, as well as instances of ascribed liminality. As the main focus, I will look closer at the high-rise mass dwelling’s outdoor spaces, and the motivation of its construction. Regarding the object of study, I hypothesize that children’s books feature outdoor spaces in an emphasized way, and I am therefore choosing this genre for my analysis.

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186 Spanedda, Architecture and Anthropocene, 17.
187 See also Ann Sussman’s controversial essay “The Mental Disorders that Gave Us Modern Architecture”. As well as the brilliant critical discussion of Anderson, “The Perils of Diagnosing Modernists”.
Departing from the much debated “ideal dweller” represented by the working husband, who conceptualists such as Le Corbusier had in mind, other social groups, such as children, were on the fringe of the developments. Thus, the new structure of high-rise mass dwellings had more severe consequences for those who did not follow the pattern of the average man, leaving the house in the morning and returning at night: women, older people, and children were exposed to the consequences of modern dwellings in a very different way than the “ideal (hu)man.” This remark leaves the question in which way the particular architecture of mass dwellings influenced the relationship between inside and the outside for one of these groups. Although the high-rise mass dwelling was not sweepingly implemented in West Germany, the new type of architecture constituted an important landmark in nearly every West German city and town. Moreover, it can be argued that especially the first publication places high-rise architecture at the centre of a not-too-distant and normalized future for “millions of children.”

In the following, I make the claim that especially in children’s literature, this stronger divide between the inside and the outside is evident, and clashed with the original design of modern high-rise dwelling, until a specific location was created for those forces that modular construction had not included in its initial planning. My understanding is based on how the two books use the high-rise’s specific indoor and outdoor spaces in relation to the following elements: technology (the elevator, the doorbell), sound, verticality, anonymity, and its concluding effect of outsourcing and segregation.

4.2 Children’s Literature and Moral Convictions

In contrast to the aforementioned press opinions appearing in Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and Der Spiegel, the two children’s books I compare belong to a different genre. I will therefore
briefly review in which way this specific genre lends itself as a medium to address the divide between the inside and the outside.

Children’s books authors appear with distinct political and moral convictions, as Mattenklott indicates. Children's books were understood as a tool to educate and communicate morals and behavioural patterns, as illustrated in many novels both in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Overall, the strong emphasis of morals and rules in a social context are pronounced by authors in children’s fiction. Children’s fiction crystallizes currents and tendencies by simplification, and therefore offers both risk and chance in order for them to reveal the moral and societal attitudes of the author, which are informed by the common streams and counter-streams of its time.

4.3 Nature in Children’s Books

Nature appears as one of the central topics in children’s literature. Flora and fauna serve as images for an abstracted understanding of the ego. Giorgia Grilli points towards the friction of urbanization and nature in children’s books. Mentioning the coinciding of accelerated urbanism and a high-time of children’s books publications in the second half of the nineteenth century and onward, Grilli emphasises that the general message has been: to be urban means to be less human. Grilli highlights that children’s literature makes a point of the child’s

188 See also Mattenklott, Zauberkreide, 16.
189 See on this topic foremost English publications in the 1980s, e.g. Robert D. Sutherland. “Hidden Persuaders: Political Ideologies in Literature for Children.”; as well as Shannon, Patrick. “Hidden within the Pages: A Study of Social Perspective in Young Children's Favorite Books.”
190 Savelsberg, "Struwwelpeter at One Hundred and Fifty", 181-200.
194 Grilli, 67. “The child, symbolically speaking, cannot be in the city, he cannot be. It is out of place. Because the child is human in an ontologically open way to the other, while the city exists to deny otherness with respect to
connection with nature. In children’s literature, the adult finds a nostalgic link to a human existence which cannot cope with urbanism, but regresses into the idea of romanticizing a special bond with an ideal of “the natural”.

Similarly, Carolyn Sigler asks how the wave of green literature for children fits into the history of children’s relationship with outdoor spaces. She uses the theoretical backdrop of modern ecocriticism to consider how contemporary children's literature concerning the environment has responded to contemporary political developments for adults. Sigler points out that nature as an actant in literature may be understood as an antagonist to modernity, a critique of contemporary life. This argument is supported by ecocriticism writers such as Lawrence Buell and Glen Love. Sigler states by referring to Buell:

Traditional anthropocentric definitions and uses of pastoral often sentimentalize nature as an idealized Arcadia that at its best enables a kind of reconciliation of conflicting ideas and that at its worst turns the environment into a metaphor for “the humanistic assumptions of the writer and his audience,” merely existing to provide “a temporary and ephemeral release from the urban world.”

Lawrence Buell describes pastoral writings as “an ideological theatre for acting out desires that have very little to do with any bonding to nature as such.”

The role of outdoor spaces can therefore be considered an instrumental aspect in literary fiction, and especially in children’s fiction. It marks the opposition to progressive developments and acts as an antagonist to modernity. Therefore, I am interested in the compartmentalized outdoor spaces that provided an area for children outside of the high-rise, and in which way they

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actually represent nature, or in which way they are just an outdoor space that marks the segregation from the indoor space’s productive forces.

4.4 Overview: The High-Rise in Postwar European Children’s Books

As Grilli outlines, the tension between urban and countryside had existed since urbanization and the birth of the age of the child came into place. The new architectural form of the high-rise is therefore also featured as main plot point in a handful of successful publications in Europe, coping with an altered living but also behavioral form.

One of the most prominent German books discussing high-rise mass dwellings is the novel by Michael Ende, *Momo* (1973). In this novel, the main protagonist, a child, lives in the ruins of an old amphitheater. Her antagonists, the grey men, try to monetize time, and live in a city with high-rise dwellings. The housing developments are often characterized as soulless, grey, anonymous, contrasting her amphitheater ruin equipped with second-hand furniture. Other examples of using the high-rise dwelling in West German children’s media of the 1970s and 1980s are popular audio cassettes series.\(^{198}\)

Another example for children’s literature addressing the high-rise, Eva Rechlin’s *Spuk im Hochhaus* in 1980 identifies the high-rise as an uncanny place which collides with the protagonist’s behavioral patterns. In the novel, the main protagonist is not a child, but an elderly professor who moves into a high-rise dwelling in order to enjoy the calmness and solitude, when a ghost starts appearing and causing trouble, irritating his aspired silence, but also revealing his solitude as undesired loneliness.

\(^{198}\) Benjamin Blümchen (*Benjamin zieht aus*), Bibi Blocksberg (*…zieht aus*), TKKG (*Es geschah in einer Regennacht*).
Further literature addressing the high-rise as a central plot point can be identified in German translations written by Scandinavian authors. Books by Swedish author Inger Skote include *Abenteuer im Hochhaus* (1967), (originally *Mikaels äventyr i höghuset*, 1965) and the book by Norwegian author Anne-Cath Vestly *Aurora i Blokk Z* (1966) (*Aurora aus Hochhaus 7*, Reinbek, 1979).

As an outlook to Chapter Six, books in the twenty-first century in the German market target more diverse audiences. Aytül Akal writes *Das Hochhaus im Wald* in 2006 with a bilingual children’s book in both Turkish and German. Isabell Acker also addresses topics of diversity in the high-rise *Die Lange Reise im Fahrstuhl* (2019), in which a family encounters neighbours with identity displaying diversity of religion, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

The two children’s books that I will focus on are parallel in their plotline: the high-rise as central plot point triggers adventures, in both *Die Drei vom Hochhaus* (1966) and *Wir Kinder vom Hochhaus* (1980).

### 4.5 The Playground’s History: A “Children’s Ghetto” or Nature Space?

The two books analysed not only present a longing for nature but put emphasis on the need to outsource the children to a place outside of the high-rise’s confinements, in both cases, a playground. This is analogue with the different historical perspectives which Darijana Hahn-

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199 “Wenn Familie Sahin im 20. Stock ihres Hochhauses in den Aufzug steigt, beginnt die lange Reise im Fahrstuhl. Auf dem Weg ins Erdgeschoss treffen sie ihre Nachbarinnen und Nachbarn aus aller Welt. Da sind die alleinerziehende junge Mutter mit ihrer fünfjährigen Tochter Yade aus der Türkei, Frau Rose aus Rumänien, der Rentner Herr Wagner mit seinem Rollator, Student Lei aus China, die Tanzlehrerin Frau Ntsama aus Kamerun, Frau Ivanova mit ihrer Lebensgefährtin” (“When the Sahin family gets into the elevator on the 20th floor of their high-rise building, the long journey in the elevator begins. On the way to the first floor they meet their neighbors from all over the world. There is the single young mother with her five-year-old daughter Yade from Turkey, Mrs. Rose from Romania, the pensioner Mr. Wagner with his rollator, Student Lei from China, the dance teacher Mrs. Ntsama from Cameroon, Mrs. Ivanova with her partner”)
Lotzing outlines in her dissertation “Spuren im Sand.”\textsuperscript{200} In the high-rise mass dwelling, the increased divide between inside and outside is pushed to a high standard due to its distance to reach the outdoor space because of the high-rise’s inherent verticality. The “travel” from the higher level to the ground floor divides the inside and outside both via time and space. Other dividers that are based in the compartmentalization that modernism aspires to cause different reactions due to quantity and quality of the dividers between the compartments: sound travels in the high-density housing, and causes a disembodied reception of the neighbouring party in regards to sound, smell and sight. A possible separation caused by uniformity and division triggers feelings of anonymity and funnels into the conclusion of more segregation.\textsuperscript{201} In this particular instance, I will focus my analysis on the problems that occur inside of the high-rise towards the solutions the protagonists and their parents seek outside of the high-rise. In both of the novels, the construction of an outdoor play area is suggested to bring peace to a tense situation in the high-rise.

Darijana Hahn-Lotzing sketches the playground’s history.\textsuperscript{202} Hahn indicates the central function of materiality and environment as graspable concepts to children. This sociological subgroup is inherently occupied with their material environments. Hahn reviews pedagogues’ and urban planners’ ideas towards the playground from its formation in the early nineteenth century to today’s staple function in Germany’s urban planning.

Playgrounds, sandboxes, and other assigned spaces for outdoor play are a relatively new development of the industrial age.\textsuperscript{203} Beginnings of the playground concept in Germany were

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Hahn-Lotzing, \textit{Spuren im Sand- oder: der Kinderspielplatz als Indikator der Gesellschaft.} \\
\item See on the topic of climate in regard to modernity: Horn, Eva. “Air Conditioning”, 455-462. \\
\item Hahn-Lotzing. \\
\item Hahn-Lotzing, 34.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
initiated in the late nineteenth century by Friedrich Fröbel as a space for play in the kindergarten conceptualisation (“angemessenen Spiel- und Bewegungsplatz oder/ und einen zweckmäßig eingerichteten Turnplatz”) (“adequate playground and exercise area or/ and a suitably equipped gymnastics area”), and saw its more widespread implementation during the reconstruction of German cities after the war.

As a phenomenon of densification of urban centres, its implementation started in the late nineteenth century. Hahn marks the contrasting attitude of the German review contrasts those of the American playground associations: in Germany, the literature highlights the playground as a replacement of a “lost space” or nostalgic reference to the past, in which an assumed natural environment was still accessible. It is important to note that this was not the sole motivator for its construction: training and regulating the workers, as well as separating unproductive from productive forces was a big driver for its implementation in Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century. The German reception often neglects the underlying implications of training the modern human being. The thought that playgrounds represent a replacement of fleeting access to nature in urbanized areas is a thought that is even more emphasized after WWII, as

204 Hahn-Lotzing, 34.
206 Hahn-Lotzing, 40. “Vor dem Hintergrund der wachsenden Städte ist allen Anträgen und Kommentaren zu Spielplätzen gemein, dass die Jugend einen schöneren und besseren Ort bräuchte als die staubige Straße, die als Spielfläche nur noch übriggeblieben wäre.” (“Against the backdrop of growing cities, common to all motions and comments about playgrounds is that youth would need a nicer and better place than the dusty street, which would only be left as a play area”)
207 Hahn-Lotzing, 41. “Dieser Aspekt der Disziplinierung geht in der deutschen Spielplatzliteratur gänzlich unter, die den Spielplatz lediglich als Ersatz für verloren gegangenen Raum interpretiert und dabei die jüngere Vergangenheit glorifiziert” (“This aspect of discipline is entirely lost in German playground literature, which interprets the playground merely as a substitute for lost space, glorifying the recent past”)
Hahn works out in her historical analysis.\textsuperscript{209} The critical discussion of both the need and the question of how to design playgrounds triggers a wide academic response.\textsuperscript{210} Both high-rise mass dwellings, car-friendly cities, and pedagogical developments offset the discussion of playgrounds in the 1960s.

\begin{quote}
Diese Einstellung, mit dem Spielplatz die Lebensbedingungen zu verbessern, Kindern vermeintlich gesündere und schöner Orte anzubieten als Straße, Platz und Hof, schlug in den späten 1960er Jahren um in die bekannte Einstellung, Kindern mit Spielplätzen nur zweitrangigen Ersatz für die von Verkehr und Städtewachstum geraubten natürlichen Spielorte zu bieten.\textsuperscript{211}
\end{quote}

(In the late 1960s, this attitude of using playgrounds to improve living conditions and to offer children supposedly healthier and more beautiful places to play than streets, squares and courtyards, changed into the familiar attitude of offering children with playgrounds only as a secondary replacement for the natural playgrounds deprived by traffic and urban growth.)

Alternative pedagogues of the 1960s and 1970s, such as Eberhard Fiebig, were opposed to the segregation of the child to a refined space such as the playground. The pedagogy published in \textit{Kind Kaputt (Child Broken)} represents one of the more radical interpretations of the playground: “Das bloße Vorhandensein von Spielplätzen teilt die Umwelt in zwei Bereiche, den allgemeinen Bereich relativer gesellschaftlicher Freiheit und das Kinderghetto, in dem alle persönlichen Freiheiten durch Verbote gewaltsam unterdrückt werden.”\textsuperscript{1} (The mere presence of playgrounds divides the environment into two areas, the general area of relative social freedom and the kindergarten, where all personal freedoms are violently suppressed by prohibitions.)

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{209} Hahn-Lotzing, 43.  
\textsuperscript{210} Hahn-Lotzing, 48. “Die Autoren und Initiatoren verbindet die Ansicht dass es in der BRD eine Spielplatzmisere (…) gebe, die eine allgemeine Kinderfeindlichkeit der Gesellschaft ausdrücke.“ („The authors and initiators are united by the view that there is a playground misery in the FRG (…), which expresses a general hostility of the society towards children.“)
\textsuperscript{211} Hahn-Lotzing, 77.
\end{flushright}
Especially in densified areas like those of the mass dwellings and high-rises, sport fields and playgrounds had to be developed, in order to provide a designated space for outdoor play amongst car-friendly cities. As a second argument, the playgrounds were deemed essential in order to maintain productivity and physical health of office and factory workers, but also segregating unproductive from productive forces.212

Author Gerhard Aick, a playground theorist during the sixties, marks playgrounds both as nature escape in the metropole, but foremost as segregational tool in order to expel the unproductive forces of society: “Wir haben uns nämlich von der Vorstellung freizumachen, dass der Spielplatz, wie viele laienhaft meinen, nur ein Ersatz für die den Kindern durch die Großstadt gestohlene Natur sei, ein Auslauf für die vom Häusermeer Bedrängten.”213 (“We have to free ourselves from the idea that the playground, as many laymen think, is only a substitute for the nature stolen from the children by the big city, an outlet for those oppressed by the sea of houses”). Other pedagogues such as Jan Hendrik van den Berg called the playground even as part of a “ghettoization” process, pointing towards its segregational capacity.214

The high-rise mass dwellings gave rise to a compartmentalized, segregated outdoor experience in the midst of densified architectural conceptions: The Adventure Playground. This development, one step up from the classic trio of sandbox/slide/swing and climbing construction,

212 Hahn-Lotzing, 92.
213 Aick, 30, in Hahn, 69.
214 Hahn-Lotzing, 54.

“So urteilt die 1979 durchgeführte Studie Kind und Spiel im öffentlichen Raum: Aber auch der schönste Spielplatz bleibt ein Ghetto. Unsere Gesellschaft besitzt eine betrübliche Meisterschaft im Ausgrenzen. So wie wir unsere Alten in Altersheime schließen, verbannen wir die Kinder aus unserer Welt auf die Spielplätze. Gruppen, die nicht leisten, nicht produktiv sind, darf man nicht ständig vor Augen haben, weil sonst die eigene Leistungsideologie brüchig werden könnte.“ („This is the verdict of the 1979 study Child and Play in Public Spaces: But even the most beautiful playground remains a ghetto. Our society has a deplorable mastery of exclusion. Just as we close our elderly into nursing homes, we banish children from our world to the playgrounds. Groups that do not perform, that are not productive, must not be constantly in front of one's eyes, because otherwise one's own performance ideology could become fragile.“)
focusses on natural building materials, and was catered towards those critiques who had the longing for a nature and free play environments.²¹⁵

Accordingly, the two books that I analyse regarding indoor and outdoor features in children’s literature, clearly emphasize the concept of playgrounds as a tool of children’s spatial segregation, much more than the need for a natural experience. The clash with modern architecture and city planning goes beyond access to “nature” deemed necessary for the development of children and creates the now canonical space of children’s playgrounds.

4.6 Die Drei aus dem Hochhaus (1966)

Schneider-Buch published Die Drei aus dem Hochhaus by Corona Hepp in its series Kinder und ihre Umwelt (Children and Their Environment) in 1966.²¹⁶ The backside of the cover introduces the reader to the central aspect of the book: it appears the book wants to familiarize children with distinct concepts for an architecture that was anticipated to become a new norm for many families in West Germany. The covertext foregrounds that the high-rise and its twelve levels are like “an unknown part of the earth for the researcher” (“Das Hochhaus und seinen zwölf Stockwerken, in das Max, Stefan und Tilli mit ihren Eltern einziehen, ist für sie so etwas wie ein unbekannter Erdteil für den Forscher”). The book introduces the high-rise as a normality that has arrived and established itself for “millions of children.”

Indeed, historically, the late 1960s did represent the high point of the construction of mass dwellings. Yet, the nonchalant normalcy the text conveys does not match the reality at the time. Again, high-rises are presented as a natural state when they were not yet in place. It stresses

²¹⁵ It is notable that the first “adventure playground” was built in 1967 at Märkisches Viertel in West-Berlin. Driessen, Christoph. “Die Geschichte des Spielplatzes“
²¹⁶ Hepp, Die Drei aus dem Hochhaus.
the anticipated normalcy of the yet new architectural concept: “Städte und Hochhäuser—das ist
die Welt von Millionen Kindern. Auch eine Welt der Abenteuer!” (“Cities and high-rises—that
is the world of millions of children. Also, a world full of adventures!”).

Corona Hepp’s book features a West German family that moves from a single unit in the
countryside to a high-rise at the periphery of the big city. Moving into this new architectural
form triggers a myriad of challenges and adventures for the three siblings and their parents.

4.6.1 Verticality

The reader is introduced to the children’s first perception of the high-rise with the analogy of a
church tower with balconies and umbrellas. After having moved the furniture with an elevator
(“mit Lift natürlich”) to the 11th floor, the family enjoys the view over the landscape below. This
elevated, exaggerated height conveys a feeling of superiority, control, and power over the natural
surrounding landscape. The family looks out from the balcony on the 11th floor and identifies
the snowy mountains at the end of the horizon (“Vom Balkon aus kann man sogar die
Schneeberge sehen” (“From the balcony, one can even see the snowy mountains”)). They are
“conquering” the landscape via their gaze which is inaccessible to any person on the ground or
on a lower level. The elevated position of the children accentuates the fascination with the height
of the tall buildings: an elevated outlook over the landscape surrounding them is a metaphorical
triumph over the discrimination in the authoritative network of the child. But the positive set-up
of verticality is only established as a counterpoint for further problems the protagonists will
encounter.

und Sonnenschirme auch nicht.” (“That people where living in it, was evident. A churchtower doesn’t have
balconies and neither umbrellas”).
In another plot point, the high-rise’s distinct form of the balcony interacts with the natural behaviour of the child. It is the concept of a vertical house itself that is at the core of the plot point’s problem. The author uses a very simple and almost naive problem to illustrate an “unnatural” friction between the high-rise and the nature of the child. Throwing a ball as high as the two brothers can, the boys’ tennis ball ends up in the applesauce that one of the stay-at-home mother’s just put outside on the balcony to cool off. In this trivial example, the author foregrounds another environmental clash of child vs. vertical architecture: the spatial problematics of a vertically structured play like “throwing a ball as high as one can” spotlight new forms of behaviour the brothers must adapt in order to cater to the high-rise architecture. But the sky as a free space for play does not exist in the high-rise, instead, it is colonized and can only be used with care from there on.\textsuperscript{218}

The children face another vertical and gravitational environmental problem: the youngest sister Tilli drops a planter from the balcony on the 11th floor and thus poses a threat to the people walking underneath the high-rise with the falling object.\textsuperscript{219} Later on, with too little space for physical activity like climbing (the trees and bushes had been declared off limits), the boys climb the rain pipe from the balcony. This vertical problem results in one of them underestimating the height of the building—another situation in which the author indirectly points out the problem of verticality. Departing from the balcony, the rain pipe poses an existential threat to the child. In contrast to a tree which is slowly climbed and re-assessed, the boys start out climbing the rain pipe along the balcony on the 11th floor—a height and verticality ungraspable for a “wild child.”

\textsuperscript{218} Hepp, 20.  
\textsuperscript{219} Hepp, 25.
4.6.2 Elevator

The 1909 manual for the *Fahrstuhlführer*, the elevator operator is testament to the general uncanniness and technological complexity of the elevator in its beginning in Germany: “Used in the right way, this book will allow him to pass the examination for elevator operator without difficulty. This book is not intended for someone completely lacking in technical know-how; such a person can hardly expect to become a useful operator.”\textsuperscript{220} The history of the lift suddenly introduced complex technology into the bourgeois idea of home, which apparently required a skilled in-house technician to man the unfamiliar apparatus.\textsuperscript{221}

Almost sixty years after the *Fahrstuhlführer*’s publication, the author of *Die Drei aus dem Hochhaus*, Corona Hepp, situates the elevator as one of the main plot points of the children’s book. The protagonists, three siblings (two older brothers and one younger sister), function as the main protagonists in play with the peculiarity of the high-rise. Similar to the naive attitude of the “new urban man” interacting with the lift in 1909, Hepp utilizes the character of the child to point out the unfamiliarity with the elevator concept, and the high-rises’ spaces and problems, in which human nature contests against the modern concept of living.

The high-rise’s endemic confrontations inside are reason for the children to conclusively seek space outside, shunted to outdoor spaces by the adults in order to enforce clear dividers between inside and outside.

In the first catastrophic episode, the youngest sister Tilli, confuses the elevator with her own room. In a traumatic event of confusion, the girl loses trust in the reliability of the building and its functions. The author accentuates the homely aspect Tilli sets up through her action of

\textsuperscript{220} Bernard, *Lifted*, 149.
\textsuperscript{221} See also Sandberg, Mark B. *Ibsen's Houses*. Cambridge University Press, 2015., particularly the Chapter “Home and House.”
equipping her new room meticulously with her doll’s tea dishes. The confused child loses trust in the homely aspect of her new room when the lift starts moving and everything that constitutes the reliability of the idea of *home*—such as stability, safety, and control—disappears. Tilli’s character functions as the natural, feral human, incapable of understanding the complexity of the elevator. The author Corona Hepp chooses to indirectly point out the problem of the high-rise’s specific spatial allocations, and the technology that is inevitable for the high-rise’s functionality.

“Tillis blaue Kammertür bewegte sich—klick!—und schnappte zu. Und dann passierte etwas ganz Gräßliches: der Fußboden rutschte nach unten—nicht nur der Fußboden, nein das ganze Kämmerchen sank mit Tilli tief und immer tiefer hinunter!” (“Tilli’s blue chamber door moved—click!—and snapped shut. And then something really horrible happened: the floor slid down—not only the floor, no, the whole chamber sank with Tilli deep and deeper and deeper!”)\(^2\)

As trivial as this event might seem, the author introduces the subtle agenda of the book with this first plot point: the children collide with the complexity of the high-rise. This can be understood as a lesson of how to navigate and behave in the high-rise as a child. To take this assumption further, the clash between the children’s behaviour within the spatial setup of the high-rise can be understood as a critique of human vs. modernity, along the lines of Carolyn Sigler’s interpretation of nature in children’s books.

Much more than just a sheer critique of urbanization and mass dwellings, the author Corona Hepp indicates that the contemplative nature of the child is interrupted by technology. The author highlights the unhomely aspect of the elevator by contrasting the sudden surprise of the movement of the elevator with equipping her assumed room (the elevator) for her doll.\(^3\)

\(^2\) Hepp, 12.
\(^3\) Hepp, 12. “Ich . . . ich habe doch meine Puppenecke eingerichtet, und auf einmal fiel das Zimmer runter . . .” (“I... I was setting up my doll's corner, and suddenly the room fell down. . .”)
The doll-house metaphor is a mise-en-abyme and trope of real life hopes of a conservative gender setting of the woman as the homemaker.

The author foregrounds its initial problem by having further plot points connected to the technology of the elevator, where the children’s behaviour appears to clash with the architectural setup of the high-rise mass dwelling.

In another misadventure, the lift stops working completely, and represents not only the loss of control over a complex technology within one’s home but presents itself as a prison that the children are trapped within. The siblings and their friends get stuck in the elevator after pressing too many buttons all at once.\textsuperscript{224} The high-rise’s technology is a shock to the children’s system and trust network, a system too complex to understand, but whose physical consequences are dire.

\textsuperscript{224} Hepp, 29.
\textsuperscript{225} Hepp, 29.
This time, it is not only the little sister Tilli who is confronted with the uncanny concept of the elevator as part of an insatiable element in the house, but also the male counterparts, her older brothers. All of the children experience existential dread within the elevator, which appears as a technological counterpart to the idea of home.

As one of the first intimidating (and absurd) solutions, the author introduces the visiting uncle, who suggests putting the children on a leash, in order to have them behave properly in the high-rise. (“Alle fünf Kinder werden an der Leine geführt, damit sie nicht noch einmal auf dumme Gedanken kommen.”)\textsuperscript{226} Hereby, the author increases the threat that the clash between children and mass dwelling causes: the children are punished for not being able to navigate the architecture. The author re-enforces the perception of the child as a feral being who is incompatible or has to be trained in order to comply with the high-rise’s distinct spaces.

Corona Hepp introduces another character to stress the technological challenge of the high-rise’s space. An archaic figure, fallen out of the perceived time represents the speed of modernization. Corona Hepp introduces the character of the \textit{Nachtwächter}, the nightwatchman.

\begin{quote}
Da erblickten sie durch die Glastür einen Schlapphut, dann einen grauen Pelerinenmantel, dann Stiefel [...] Ein riesengroßer alter Mann stand vor der Tür. In der Hand hielt er einen langen Stab, und an seinem Mantelknopf baumelte eine Taschenlampe. [...] “Ich bin der Nachtwächter,” sagte der Mann mit seiner rauen Stimme. “Schon seit hundert Jahren!”\textsuperscript{227}
\end{quote}

(Then through the glass door they saw a floppy hat, then a grey tippet coat, then boots [...] A huge old man stood at the door. In his hand he held a long stick, and a flashlight dangled from his coat button. “I am the nightwatchman” said the man with his rough voice. “I’ve been watching for a hundred years!”)

\textsuperscript{226} Hepp, 131.
\textsuperscript{227} Hepp, 69.
By creating the character of the *Nachtwächter*, Hepp emphasizes the clash with modernity. The author creates the *Nachtwächter* as the story’s hero: although almost a fictive character by stating the longevity of his age, he is the authoritative figure that comes to the children’s rescue in various situations, for example in a rescue mission upon the siblings being stuck while climbing the facade of the high-rise.

As an archaic figure in the presentation of the futuristic high-rise, the *Nachtwächter* points towards the clash of times and living models, and functions as a nostalgic personification, conveying physical strength, accountability, as well as old, and simpler technologies. He introduces the children to older cultural techniques “Früher, als es noch keine elektrische Beleuchtung hab, mußte jeder Nachtwächter so eine Laterne tragen, wenn er durch die Straßen ging.”228 (“In the past, when there was no electric lighting, every nightwatchman had to carry such a lantern when walking through the streets.”) The *Nachtwächter* directly refers to the past, in which modern technologies were not available – and by that offers an alternative and time window into a cultural and social setup inaccessible to the children. The children are confronted with both the past through older generations and the only reality they know, which is the status quo of modernity, emphasized in the book in the form of the modern high-rise mass dwelling. The *Nachtwächter* character shows the children his nostalgic collection of past, simple technologies. He displays the contrast of past and future and opens the dialogue of how things can function differently: telling the time with an automated watch instead of the horn, shining light from electric light instead of a lantern, overcoming vertical obstacles with a rope ladder.

228 Hepp, 66.
Alle meine Sachen hebe ich hier auf, auch meine Nachtwächter-Sammlung. Seit vielen Jahren sammle ich, was früher ein Nachtwächter brauchen konnte. [...] Seltsame, unbekannte Dinge lagen darin: ein golden schimmerndes Horn, eine Glocke, eine altmodisch verschönkelte Feuerspritze, eine Laterne und eine Strickleiter. ²²⁹

(All my things I keep here, also my nightwatchman collection. For many years I have been collecting, was back then nightwatchmen needed. Bizarre, unknown things were in it: a golden sparkling cornett, a bell, an archaically ornamented firehose, a lantern and a rope ladder.)

The Nachtwächter functions therefore as a personified gatekeeper of a time before the status quo, which finds now its automated equivalent in the high-rise. Corona Hepp therefore chooses to present the high-rise as a counterpoint to an already functional pre-modern time. By addressing an alternative, she emphasizes the recourse to a nostalgia that I cover in the chapter on postwar German press.

4.6.3 Sound

On the first day of trying to enjoy the outdoor space of the high-rise, with the distinct mass-dwelling space of the balcony, the family experiences the sound sensitivity of the building. The clash of the acoustic specifications of the high-rise clash with the child’s behaviour. It is elicited in a scene in which the downstairs neighbours complain about the noise, since they are located right underneath the family. This special location, which is endemic to the mass dwellings, is the distinct space of the balcony. It cues a new behavioural form of the children, as well as the parents. The author makes use of this story plot as both an educational and odd entertainment factor, writing:

²²⁹ Hepp, 80.

(“Red? No, I prefer yellow. Or maybe flowered?” shouted the brothers and sisters loudly. Then, beneath them, on the balcony on the 10th floor, someone cleared their throat. “Hm... hm... hm... hm!” it sounded harshly. Mother put her finger to her lips. “Shhh! Not so loud!” The conversation continued in a whispering voice.)

The concept of the balcony marks the absurdity of the situation—the family continues to whisper to each other in order to not irritate the downstairs neighbour.

The compartmentalized nature of the balcony does not hold up to an experience in the open field—the spatial specificity of the balcony does not allow for dispersion and dissipation in the truest meaning. The children’s behaviour clashes with the high-rise’s architectural features. Human sounds are silenced in order to support the acoustic neutrality of the house.

4.6.4 Anonymity and Uncanniness

The high-rise Corona Hepp describes is a wild mishmash of authoritarian struggle, surveillance and comforting homemaking, but underlying the story is a troubling architectural experience that all characters try to tackle. The children’s characters function not only as a disturbance to this artificial, compartmentalized, and highly stylized social setting, but they also point out the main flaws of the high-rise being constructed against children’s (and maybe humans) behavioral patterns.

230 Hepp, 15.
In order to address the anonymity of the masses caused by the distinct architecture and its concluding uncanniness, the children stumble upon an apparently empty apartment. After discovering this empty apartment without a name on either the bell or the door, and hearing “strange” sounds, the children suspect a ghost or a criminal activity in the seemingly uninhabited apartment.


(As soon as they stepped off the elevator, the brothers looked at each other with meaningful looks. Again, they heard the strange giggling, this time much louder than the other day. In addition, there was bickering and scolding behind the door in a shrill voice. Max and Stefan sneaked across the small corridor to the apartment door and tried to peek through the keyhole. They couldn't see anything because the key was in the lock inside. But now they heard clearly how someone shouted: “Ribbed beast is not my name . . . hahahah . . . and neither is Hammelwade . . . hihihi . . . ! What, laceleg? You might like that . . . ”)

The uncanny sounds detached from physical appearance cannot be located or identified. As another critical architectural feature, the spatial proximity and the travelling sound make for a distinct story in which the high-rise architecture is triggering an uncanny, disembodied perception of an anonymized entity. Othering and the fear of the unknown are part of the setup that the architectural form favours—acoustic sounds are perceived, spatial closeness can be

231 See also Vidler, *Warped Space*.
concluded, but the visual aspect of seeing the other person while hearing them remains closed off. This discontinuity and intangibility, a diachronic combination of senses and action causes disturbance. The children perceive the unapproachable but acoustically tangible presence as a threat.\footnote{Vidler, \textit{The Architectural Uncanny}, 23. “The better oriented in his environment a person is, the less readily will he get the impression of something uncanny in regard to the objects and events in it”}

The author uses a sentence from the fairy tale \textit{Rumpelstilzchen}. The intersection of \textit{Rumpelstilzchen} within \textit{Die Drei vom Hochhaus} opens up a boxed conversation about outsider anonymity and Othering. As Peter Widmer point out in his analysis on names and the consequential Othering which happens in the Brother Grimm’s fairytale Rumpelstilzchen, the uncanny aspect of not knowing but wanting to control an unknown entity is central to the effect of the tale.\footnote{Widmer, \textit{Der Eigenname und seine Buchstaben}.} Parallelly, the Rumpelstilzchen trope overarches the topic of uncanny anonymity that the high-rises enable. The “Spukwohnung” (scary apartment) is the scariest place for the protagonists in the uncanny anonymity of the high-rise.\footnote{Hepp, \textit{Die Drei vom Hochhaus}, 38.}

Another plot point combines the uncanniness of technology and the othered inhabitant of the high-rise. Communication between the youngest sister Tilli and an assumed ghost happens via the high-rise’s telecommunication door system—Tilli’s older brothers Max and Stefan trick her into believing that she can talk to the ghost via the intercom. This specific technological feature of the high-rise marks another uncanny instance of the high-rise’s technology. The intercom makes it possible to “talk” to people without seeing their face.\footnote{Hepp, 35.} This phenomenon of disembodiment lies at the heart of the intercom’s and also the “Spukwohnung’s” uncanniness.

\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{Vidler, \textit{The Architectural Uncanny}, 23. “The better oriented in his environment a person is, the less readily will he get the impression of something uncanny in regard to the objects and events in it”}
\item \footnote{Widmer, \textit{Der Eigenname und seine Buchstaben}.}
\item \footnote{Hepp, \textit{Die Drei vom Hochhaus}, 38.}
\item \footnote{Hepp, 35.}
\end{itemize}
4.6.5 Segregation

The indoor and semi-indoor spaces (such as the balcony) of the high-rise are identified as problematic for the children in Hepp’s Die Drei aus dem Hochhaus. It is both lack of knowledge and direct clash with the nature of the child, as presented in the plot by Corona Hepp. The concluding message of the novel pushes for a resolution of the various conflicts by exiling the children to an assigned outdoor space. Before this resolution, the outdoor spaces are assigned specific functions as well, which mimic the understanding of the indoor space.

The general understanding of nature conveys notions of freedom: no entrance fee and no boundaries should obstruct the access to what is generally conceived as the idea of the “natural” outdoor space. Contrary, rules in artificially created outdoor spaces always apply, and have been constructed since its definition as a contrast to urbanization, e.g. parks. The high-rise space as a mass dwelling establishes new boundaries for children and adults: the green spaces are ornamental.

The disorientation of the compartmentalization of the high-rises causes further bewilderment, as the youngest sister Tilli asks naively, where the garden can be found, only to find out that no one is allowed to access the outdoor space.


(“Where is the garden?” Tilli asked. “Come on, Tilli, there's a big lawn behind the house.” The lawn was really beautiful. But unfortunately there was a wooden sign stuck in the grass. “No Trespassing” was written on it.)

237 Hepp, 16.
The children are looking for a space to belong to in order to escape the high-rise’s rules and confrontations, but even the outdoor spaces are restricted, they are not allowed to touch the grass. “Da es leider verboten war, in die Wiese hineinzulaufen, suchten die Geschwister ihren Zeltplatz ebenfalls am Rasenrand.”238 (‘Since it was unfortunately forbidden to run into the meadow, the brothers and sisters looked for their campground also at the edge of the lawn.’) The children expect the outdoor spaces to be a place without rules and behavioural regimentation from the outside.

However, the high-rise’s outdoor spaces are also regulated by rules and signs. In several instances the boundaries between inside and outside appear to blur. Assuming a “free” nature, the children take flowers from the balconies and park landscapes, which causes trouble with the other inhabitants of the high-rise.


“War es an Ihrem Balkon?” wandte sich die Mutter an die Hausmeisterin. […] “[Ja] Ich habe es von meinem Fenster aus genau beobachtet.”

(“By the way, your daughter is also a right cheeky one,” she said, turning to her mother. […] “I just hear that you are a flower thief,” said the mother sternly. “But I didn’t steal the flowers, I just picked them,” Tilli cried in bewilderment. “You were away, and I wanted to have a birthday bouquet for Bärbel. “Was it on your balcony?” the mother turned to the janitor. […] “[Yes]I watched it carefully from my window.”)

238 Hepp, 40.
239 Hepp, 62.
The balcony’s distinct form of privately-owned indoor space and outdoor space is questioned by Tilli’s behaviour, and points out the high level of assigned, complex functions catered towards a specific adult human being in the Wohnmaschine.

In order to find a space for the two brothers to play, Max and Stefan establish a camp with tents in front of the house in an undesignated space with some neighbour boys. Their camp is criticized for interfering with the look of the grass.\textsuperscript{240} “Die Kinder dürfen ihre Zelte nicht wieder aufbauen, wenn das Wetter besser wird. Es haben sich einige Hausbewohner beklagt, weil der Rasen dort, wo die Zelte standen, ganz zertreten ist.”\textsuperscript{241} (“The children are not allowed to put up their tents again when the weather gets better. Some of the residents of the house complained because the lawn where the tents were standing was completely crushed.”)

As a result of constant confrontation, regimentation, and disciplining in conflict with the high-rise’s distinct rules, even in the outdoor spaces, the children’s wish to abandon the high-rise architecture is rebuffed. Hepp writes: “Es war, als habe der Regen alle Fröhlichkeit aus dem Hochhaus fortgespült. Nicht nur Tilli weinte. Auch Stefan saß ein Schluchzer in der Kehle. Er seufzte tief: “Früher, in unserem alten Haus, war es viel, viel schöner als hier!” (“It was as if the rain had washed away all the happiness from the high-rise. Not only Tilli cried. Stefan also had a sob in his throat. He sighed deeply: "In former times, in our old house, it was much, much nicer than here!”) As a solution, the author creates two alternative scenarios.

The youngest sister Tilli receives a dollhouse, in order to internalize and deal with feelings surrounding domesticity, housing, and homeliness. The two brothers each receive a tent and an assigned space where they are allowed to camp out with other boys from the

\textsuperscript{240} Hepp, 53.
\textsuperscript{241} Hepp, 62.
neighbourhood on the periphery of the curated grass field. This new functional space, assigned to children is created as a first step in the direction of the playground, as we will see in the following analysis of *Wir Kinder vom Hochhaus*. It is an acknowledgement that the high-rise mass dwelling’s absolute architecture neglected certain members of society and their needs.


(“Just think, the janitor brought a letter earlier. The letter says that all the people in the high-rise building agree that you should set up your tents again. You may play on the meadow between the jasmine bushes and the chestnut tree. The prohibition sign will be removed.” […] “We have taken a vote. It was agreed that the large green area should remain ornamental lawn, but the small one should belong to the children.”)

Concludingly, the book’s proposed plan of action to bring peace to the high-rise is segregation of the children’s behaviour by exiling them to an assigned space that the parents can observe from their windows, while maintaining the main part of the grass as ornamental outdoor space.

The book *Die Drei vom Hochhaus*, written in 1966, shows the institutionalized playground space in its beginning stages. Up to the 1960s, children had played in the rubble of destroyed cities, in the cleared wastelands, or in other unassigned nature spaces - very few official playgrounds had been implemented nationwide before. The new structure of the high-rise with its organized green spaces forced the need for an assigned play-space for children outside of the organized space of the high-rise.
Compartmentalization of the spatial problems evoked by the high-rise is a common form of segregating “the other.”242 The space is not compatible with the “unproductive” force of the child in the capitalist setting of the mother as the homemaker and the father as the absent worker. The highly planned environment has proven to be insufficient for an inclusive approach of the children’s free time design, as also Darijana Hahn-Lotzing points out, writing, “Eines der anderen Motive—neben [...] “Kinderspiel,” “Institutionalisierte Erziehung” und der Disziplinierung durch Sozial-Hygiene ist die Kompensation nicht nur des verlorenengegangenen Raumes, sondern vielmehr die Kompensation der gewonnen (Frei-) Zeit.”243 (One of the other motives—besides [...] “child's play,” “institutionalized education” and the disciplining through social hygiene - is the compensation not only of the lost space, but rather the compensation of the gained (free) time.)

The diachronic comparison of the two Schneider-Buch novels outline the spatial development of assigned play spaces for children. 14 years after Die Drei vom Hochhaus, Schneider-Buch publishes a book in which the playground movement (with its crowning invention of the Abenteuerspielplatz) becomes the conflict’s solution of child vs. high-rise, a more refined and institutionalized segregation of the child from the high-rise.

4.7 Wir Kinder vom Hochhaus (1980)

Uwe Natus published the book in 1980, a time in which the high-rise had just surpassed its high point of implementation, and its negative reputation had started to evolve.244 Very few additional

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243 Hahn-Lotzing, 48.
244 As shown in Chapter Two.
high-rise dwelling plans were implemented after 1980, and their scale decreased in most cases to less than 2000 inhabitants. The 1980s can therefore be identified as a time in which the high-rise had arrived in the middle of society. Neither as an aspiration and hopeful prospect, as I identify the 1950s and early 1960s, but as a concrete (literally) reality with its positive, but foremost negative representation.

In this much shorter book, with 26 pages (in contrast to Hepp’s 90 pages), the same main problems of the high-rises setup are addressed: insufficient/vertical spatial order, technology/elevator and its complexity, sound as permeating the rules of home/privacy, anonymity as source for uncanniness and the inhabitants assumed Otherness, and the concluding compartmentalization and exiling of children to an assigned outdoor space, in Natus’s writing in the form of an Abenteuerspielplatz (adventure playground).

The book by Schneider-Buch is addressed to the first-time reader, just like Hepp’s work with the same publisher, but the book is much shorter and simpler in its plotlines, using large typeface for readability and accessibility to new readers.

The main character, Sabine, reports she and her parents just moved from a small town to the high-rise at the outskirts of a bigger city. She lets the reader know that they moved into a high-rise and thus opens the main plot point of the story. The small town of Appelhülsen in North Rhine-Westphalia is named as the place Sabine’s family moves from, and where “such tall buildings” did not exist, which sets up the contrast between countryside and urban life, as well as the alien form of architecture. Thus, the author opens up the classic divide between countryside and urban dwelling, and the parallel classic notion of child as contradictory to the adult space of the city. This divide between the countryside as pure, archaic, and childlike, and the urban as
adult, neutral, and technological can also be observed in other novels from the turn of the century, such as Johanna Spyri’s *Heidi* or Hans Christian Andersen’s *Little Mermaid.*

4.7.1 **Verticality**

Basing the analysis of *Wir Kinder vom Hochhaus* on the same grid as *Die Drei vom Hochhaus,* the lack of using the high-rise’s feature of verticality is a major difference. Addressing verticality appears only in one sentence, which discusses the buildings height as a difference between country and city. Thus, the “issue” and therefore exoticism of vertical living is absent in the plotlines in Uwe Natus’s book from 1980.

4.7.2 **Elevator**

As a plot point of the catastrophe, the children of the high-rise decide to steal sand from a nearby construction site and have a sandbox inside the elevator. In a lack of useable space (they don’t have a playground nearby), they utilize the only space assigned a foreign, apparently flexible outside function. The elevator is therefore repurposed as a playground.

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245 Nassen, "Naturkind, Landkind, Stadtkind." 84-91, Rutter, "The City and the Child.", 610.
stole three buckets of sand. Unfortunately, there is no playground nearby. If we want to
play, we have to walk to Ferdinandstrasse. We dumped the sand into our lift and built a
sandcastle. It turned out to be a great castle. With the castle we went up and down. I stole
the sign “No Trespassing” from the lawn in front of our house and stuck it in the castle.

The building supervisor is infuriated, since designated spaces are assigned specific
functions: the elevator is not a designated space for play, nor a place for natural elements like
sand. To the children, this single use function of this technological space clashes with their
understanding of play and nature, and indicates the forgotten element of design of the
Wohnmaschine—a place to play.

_Wir Kinder vom Hochhaus_ constitutes the elevator as the turning point and concluding
expulsion of the children to outdoor spaces. The adults recognize that there is no assigned space,
neither an unassigned play space for the children, and create as a consequence a playground on
the property of the high-rise.

### 4.7.3 Sound

Similar to the phenomenon of verticality, the exoticism of travelling sound, hearing a high
density of people in one place, shared via thin walls, above neighbours and balconies is not
addressed in Uwe Natus’ novel. This is partially due to the simplicity of the plotline, but also due
to the normalization of certain living conditions undergone in the 1960s and 1970s as part of
densification and restructuring of living arrangements.

### 4.7.4 Anonymity and Uncanniness

The main conflict of Natus’s book is anonymity. Since the children can only access other
children via the bell in the high-rise, the problem of having only the last name of the father on
the bell becomes the first driving task of the plot. In contrast to a single house setting where accessibility of the children is given also without needing literacy to ring the right bell, the book highlights the sophisticated problem of inaccessibility to younger inhabitants of the high-rise. The children solve this identified problem by creating new colourful name tags which have all names of family members (including women and children). This solution suggests not only the anonymity issue of the high-rise, but by suggesting a non-hierarchical, accessible, user-(children) friendly solution for readability (colours), it marks the flattened hierarchy between adults and children, as well as men and women. This emancipatory stance which is recognizable in *Wir Kinder vom Hochhaus* traverses gender conventions which were assumed and reinforced in *Die Drei vom Hochhaus*.

Additionally, to the inaccessibility via the last name system, the first-person narrator Sabine states that the high-rise houses twenty-four families.\(^2\) This opens up another parallel trope similar to Hepp’s topic of anonymity and foremost Otherness. Sabine points out that the people in the house have “strange names.” The author thereby indicates not only an uncanniness through anonymity, but might be pointing towards diversity in the high-rise’s community, where unfamiliarity funnels into a feeling of the Other as an unknown entity, only signalled by a name.\(^3\) The main protagonist Sabine remarks that the names sound “funny:” “Rudi Ratzeputz. Ernst Ringelschwein.” These obviously stylized names are not only phonetically “Other,” but also a recurring trope in children’s literature. The high-rise dwellers are marked as people with different names than what the norm expects (whatever that norm would be).


\(^{3}\) One could go further and assume that Natus pays tribute to Rumpelstilzchen/Hepp by giving the family the last name “Poppinga”, which resembles the original title of “Rumpele stilt, oder der Poppart.” (in: Rölleke: *Die älteste Märchensammlung der Brüder Grimm*, 238)
The first person narrator Sabine informs the reader that the top apartment is empty, and that she sometimes likes to take the elevator all the way up to the top to spy through the keyhole, but she cannot discover more than “an old chair and a red paint pot.” Also, Hepp’s book included the spying through the keyhole in order to find out about a mysterious apartment. The phenomenon of the uncanny empty space, caused by the spatial and acoustic divide of the high-rise can be regarded as endemic to the architectural setup.\textsuperscript{248}

### 4.7.5 Segregation

The children (and the adults) feel the resistance that the architecture poses upon them. Without an outdoor space for roaming and the problem of inaccessible nature in the high-rise’s surroundings, the need for the concept of a designated play area and socializing opportunity, like that of the playground, becomes necessary.

Though the book resolves all problems in the end by the fathers taking the initiative to build an \textit{Abenteuerspielplatz} and a sandbox, the book emphases that exiling children’s energies has positive effects and calms the situation for all inhabitants—children and adults. Though hierarchies both between genders and ages seem more flattened than in Hepp’s work, the basic plot points remain, which the high-rise imposes onto the children as an antagonist.

\textit{Wir Kinder vom Hochhaus} from 1980 displays a couple of changed gender dynamics. Whereas the assumption that women and girls are housewives and servants is very clear in Hepp’s book, Uwe Natus chooses a young girl as the main protagonist who reports from the first-person

\textsuperscript{248} Lipman, \textit{The Domestic Uncanny}. 
standpoint and implements changes in order to better the situation for the children of the high-rise.

4.8 Conclusion

In the analysed books, the exiling of children and complete compartmentalization are the solution to the clashing nature of the implementation of modernism and children’s nature. Though not a mass phenomenon in the architectural landscape of West Germany, its presence as a landmark in almost every bigger city shows how also here, modernity carries compartmentalization as one of its markers of functionality. As the analysis of the two novels has shown, the outdoor space with an assigned functionality in proximity to the high-rise became an important space in the time of the most popular years of the high-rise mass dwelling.

The authors address several main incongruences between the children’s behavior and the high-rise structure: the anonymity of the high-rise, the sound structures of the high-rise, challenged access to nature (problems of the balcony, issues with accessibility to an unassigned “free” space), and the concluding solution of the segregation of the children into specific spaces, ghettoization as solution to avoid conflicts of child vs. architecture.

The high-rise development is at first glance a simple, and sparsely implemented architectural invention in West Germany. Looking closer at the children’s books display of this architectural form, it becomes clear that it was part of the reformation of both societal and environmental changes as a consequence of the disappearance of wastelands and free roaming possibilities for the child, as well as general secessionist tendencies in a labor/leisure-informed ideological architecture. Though intended to provide healthier living in contrast to the turn-of-the-century Mietskasernen (tenement blocks), with the agenda to provide better access to more
air, light, and space in a modern block building, the implemented high-rises privatized and compartmentalized outdoor space in the form of the balcony and the playground, interested in the exile of unproductive members of society, parallel to its very existence on the periphery of the urban centres where they were built.

Hahn-Lotzing quotes in her outlook the sociologists Horelli und Kukkonen, who are pushing for a return to the unassigned spaces. Clearly, this return under the conditions of safety would only be possible in an environment in which safety is restored. In the case of the modern mass dwelling, the threatening factors would be extreme verticality, extreme compartmentalization, anonymity, social segregation as well as car-friendly infrastructure.

The approach of de-compartmentalizing urban environments appears diametrical to the approach taken in the urban reconstruction processes of Germany in the 1950s to 1970s—and heavily question the general outline of the high-rise mass dwelling.

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249 Quoting Horelli, Liisa/Kukkonen, Keikki (1985), Wie sollte die Umwelt der Kinder rund Jugendlichen verändert werden?
Chapter 5: A Subtle Boss Fight: The High-Rise as Environment in Early Handheld Gaming

5.1 Introduction

The beginnings of the handheld gaming industry in the late 1970s were pioneer work—both advancing battery and display technology enabled the game developers to make games more interactive by including graphics. Foremost, the option to play the game at any place and therefore at any time marked the uniqueness of the handheld gaming console.\(^{250}\) The design of handheld game console *Game & Watch* by Nintendo was innovative, and it featured not only the possibility to play an electronic game, but also to read the time. Foremost, as I argue, it used relatable game environments by representing the player’s real environments, which had undergone massive restructuring after the war. The *Game & Watch* (henceforth G&W), one of the first available handheld gaming consoles in Germany, therefore utilized the underlying challenges and fears the changed cityscape of the twentieth century brought upon its inhabitants.

Games process events and change and reflect the critical fears and hopes of players. They train and mimic life lessons like success, failure, chance, and strategy.

Johan Huizinga underlined the cathartic importance of games by coining the term of the Magic Circle in *Homo Ludens*.\(^{251}\) The Dutch sociologist described gaming culture’s character and importance of play and how the real world and game world interact and influence each other. Huizinga underlined the connection of play which precedes and builds culture. He pointed out that the process of gaming is an alteration process that furthers culture. Huizinga considered the

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\(^{250}\) Ryan, *Narrative Across Media: The Languages of Storytelling.*

\(^{251}\) Huizinga, *Homo Ludens.*
Magic Circle a process of catharsis upon a posed problem. After the game, the player is able to gain knowledge and insights in order to inform his actions outside of the game. Within the Magic Circle, the player is confronted with fear, questions, challenges, or in its positive version, with dreams, hopes, and aspirations. Within the Magic Circle, the player is able to grow: the game becomes a place in which an elevated idea of the individual can experiment and eventually overcome those challenges via immersion and narration in catharsis. The individual returns to the real world with gained experience and an acquisition of plurality of meanings, enriched by the positive or negative confrontation within the Magic Circle.

Applying this early ludology theory to video games has been both embraced and criticized within Game Studies, but the simplified concept is helpful in understanding my main point in this chapter: newly invented, intuitively designed, and early marketed handheld electronic games contributed to the reception of a novel, intimidating architecture and the infrastructural consequences it brought with it.

I am arguing along with Jesper Juul’s essay “The Magic Circle and the Puzzle Piece,” in which he underlines the main function of Huizinga’s term: to emphasize its isolated function as a cultural signifier, in which the boundaries between inside and outside are a participatory one. In the game, the player’s environment agrees in a mutually dependent relationship: the “real environment” cannot be created without the player’s imagination and projection. I am applying this basic understanding of ludology to the early iteration of digital handheld gaming consoles, and am interested in which way the altered city is addressed in these games. I argue that early

handheld digital gaming offered a playground for grappling with the altered reality of a “defeated state” that both Japan (the game console’s origin country) and Germany (one of its biggest European markets) have in common. ²⁵⁵

The Japanese card and toy factory Nintendo reinvented itself and adjusted to market demands of the space age and the craving for the new: it took the pole position in the development of the handheld gaming market in the late 1970s with its console titled Game & Watch. It aimed at making gaming not only handheld, but also designed as a solitary experience for the juvenile gamer and adult businessman, applying immersive comic-like environments. ²⁵⁶

The Japanese company sought to strike a chord that was marketable to the masses: mobility (and therefore the handheld device) was the technological advancement of the time. Devices for measuring time became the core of innovation with the success of the digital watch makers Casio, Texas Instruments, and Sharp. ²⁵⁷

The G&W targeted the longing for mobility and on-the-go leisure time in an environment of labour and post-Fordism.

Hand in hand with the new gaps of time which had to be filled and commodified were restructuring processes in the capitalist setup of its time. The developments after Fordism stretched into an on-the-go production and management, which funneled into the sociological structures of the working force. Post-Fordism pushed consumers not only into a stronger divide between leisure and labour, but also consumerism itself. ²⁵⁸

In the following, I am in accordance with scholars like Chris Rajek and Ben Carrington who have shown how intertwined the

²⁵⁶ Herman, Handheld Gaming. 143 - 148. In: Wolf, *The Video Game Explosion : A History from PONG to Playstation and Beyond*.
assumed separation between labour and leisure is. Eventually, leisure can be identified as an act of perpetuating the patterns of labour. Nintendo’s portable console exemplifies how the quantification of time during the act of playing supports Carrington’s argument of leisure as labour.

Although not the main topic of this chapter, it is important to acknowledge the ties with economic systems without which a development in and division of leisure and labour would have simply not been possible. In special regard to the developments in West Germany after the war, Eckhard Frank summarizes the connections between labour and cityscape in his monograph Soziologie der Stadt. Based on the sociological analysis of early twentieth-century authors such as Max Weber, Georg Simmel, and Henri Lefebvre, and late twentieth-century urban sociologists like Edward Soja and Armin Nasseni, Frank expands on how compartmentalized time (and specifically leisure time vs. labour) came into being as a direct consequence of post-Fordist modularization and chronological synchronisation of on-demand production. As a consequence, newly freed up time produced through labour compartmentalization was used for leisure activities, again closing in on capitalist consumption and reproducing a time and rule based apparatus similar to those of post-Fordist factories and offices.

260 Eckardt, Soziologie der Stadt.
262 Eckhardt, 59.
Conclusively, the handheld and portable device market expansion was a consequence of restructured environments and social setups due to economic industrial forces, a reproduction of steady labour in segments.\footnote{Weber, 13.}

Besides being the first, biggest, and most successful game series issued between 1980 and 1983,\footnote{Gorges, Florent, and Isao Yamazaki. The History of Nintendo: 1889-1980, from Playing Cards to Game & Watch. Pix’N Love, 2010.} Nintendo’s G&W featured a unique setup which I identify in direct relation to a restructured urban environment. The G&W is a handheld device that is used to pass time during the off-hours at home and the commute to work. The console’s advertisement featured the device’s mobility as selling point in Japanese TV ads: the G&W functioned as a gadget which could be brought in a shirt pocket to a park or to a soccer game,\footnote{VideoGameAds, „Nintendo Game & Watch Commercial 3 - Retro Video Game Commercial / Ad”} or while waiting in non-places\footnote{Augé, Marc. Orte und Nicht-Orte.} and in transit.\footnote{Jer V, “Game & Watch Commercial (japanese)"} In addition to its handheld novelty, the feature of including the measurement of time in the gadget’s design is a distinct function of the G&W, which I see enmeshed with the altered cityscapes.\footnote{More on this in the segment “Handheld Time”, applying time-urban space theories such as the fundamental Simmel, Georg. Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben. e-artnow, 2014.}

Thirdly and lastly, the game scenarios, which the G&W utilizes as a graphic backdrop, display the cityscape as a form of a subtle boss fight. A boss fight is defined in game design as the toughest and hardest enemy that the player has to defeat at the end of the level. I claim that in the Game&Watch, there is no personified boss who requires defeating in order to win the level, but much more that the game environment creates the core problem and challenge of the one level game. The game-maker’s choice of game environments illustrates the coming to terms of
the late 1970s with a restructured urban hierarchy and the concluding alteration of social setups, and chooses a subtle problematic backdrop, which I identify as the high-rise.

I claim that the console’s combination of mobility, time measurement, and game environment indicate a society grappling with the restructured urban spatial relations.\textsuperscript{269}

With the ludologist theory, the gaming device, and the historical context presented, I will now delve deeper into the connection between virtual and real-world spaces through media analysis, chrono-obsession, and spatial theory, as well as narratology. Here I introduce twenty-four games that were published in the Federal Republic of Germany and analyse 1) the reporting done upon the new phenomenon in early German computer magazines, 2) the aspects of time and handheld nature of the G&W, and 3) the decisions which shaped the new digital suite and gameplay.

5.2 Nintendo’s Game & Watch

As I indicate in the introduction, the G&W presents an interesting cultural object for analysis, as it incorporates the disciplinary nature of time (in the form of a clock) and the liberating nature of leisure (in the form of a game).

5.2.1 The Game & Watch: A Novelty

The handheld device G&W, issued by Nintendo in 1980, revolutionized the game, toy, and gadget market targeted both towards children and adults.\textsuperscript{270} These small devices, its screen sized a little bit bigger than a matchbox, were not only accessible because of their pocket size but were

\textsuperscript{269} Payer, Peter. "The City and the Clock. Public time perception in Vienna, from 1850 to 1914."
therefore also made for mobile, handheld usage. In a century of mobilization, it lent itself as a perfect market compound to the following innovations: Sony’s Walkman, issued in 1979; portable calculators, mass produced after 1975; Casio’s portable keyboard, the VL-1, marketed since 1979; and the rise of the digital watch, first issued in 1975 by Texas Instruments.

The idea of a handheld portable device can therefore be classified as an idea of the late 1970s, which falls into the time when many Western countries saw an acceleration of its urban development. I seek to understand if spatial and temporary ruptures in living and time management influenced the seemingly systematized mobility of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

The focus on an environmental representation in early digital games is differently interpreted and designed. When Atari issued Pong in 1974, the idea was to imitate a game mechanic, not a game environment or narrative. The German magazine Der Spiegel commented on the new digital representation of environment and digital avatars: “Die Nintendo-Ingenieure nutzten die elektronischen Möglichkeiten voll aus. Statt schlicht geometrischer Konfigurationen, wie bisher bei elektronischem Tennis oder Bowling üblich, zauberten sie quicklebendig wirkende Bildfolgen auf die Sichtscheibe.” (“Nintendo engineers took full advantage of the electronic possibilities. Instead of simple geometric configurations, as was previously the case with electronic tennis or bowling, they conjured up lively image sequences on the screen.”) It is important to note that the console started the movement of digital game environments with this fundamental innovation: the handheld G&W was special because it chose a graphic backdrop and character in order to narrate the gamer’s experience. In total, Nintendo

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271 Guins, Raiford, and Henry Lowood, eds. Debugging game history: a critical lexicon.
published fifty-nine games.\(^{273}\) A selection of these were published outside of Japan, mainly in the USA and Central Europe. In Germany twenty-four of the most successful and marketable games were published between 1981 and 1984, many of which I briefly analyse below.\(^{274}\) Globally, these devices sold more than twenty million copies, fifty-one million to date, making it a significant cultural object.\(^{275}\)

5.2.2 The G&W in Germany

West Germany—not only with its rebuilt industry but also with its altered cityscape—was one of the main European markets for the G&W. According to the magazine *TeleMatch*, the G&W fascinated consumers:

> Vor genau zwei Jahren machten sie auch in der Bundesrepublik Furore: die winzigen LCD Spiele. Kleiner als ein Taschenrechner, ausgestattet mit einem Bildschirm in der knappen Größe einer Streichholzschachtel. Heiß war und ist auch die Handlung, die von kleinen schwarzen Männchen absolviert wird. Der japanische Hersteller Nintendo schockte die etablierte Konkurrenz mit diesen ungewöhnlichen Spielen, und bis heute ist Nintendo mit seinen bei uns “tricotronics” genannten Spielen unumstrittener Marktführer geblieben.\(^{276}\)

(Exactly two years ago they also caused a sensation in the Federal Republic of Germany: the tiny LCD games. Smaller than a pocket calculator, equipped with a screen the size of a matchbox. The plot was and is also hot, with little black men. The Japanese manufacturer Nintendo shocked the established competition with these unusual games,

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\(^{273}\) Gorges 2012.  
\(^{274}\) Weiss, *GameandWatch.ch*. The numbers rely on Weiss excellent compilation, as well as on the sources found in *TeleMatch*, on German ebay ads, as well as Nintendo.com. Besides Gorges (2012) publication, published research on the G&W is in the beginning stages. As I point out in the quantitative analysis, further research is welcomed in order to contribute to the ongoing findings.  
\(^{275}\) IWata in the Nintendo interview series “IWata asks” suggests “The Game & Watch series sold 12.87 million domestically and 30.53 million overseas for a total of 43.4 million”  
and to this day Nintendo has remained the undisputed market leader with its games we call "tricotronics".)

The article in *TeleMatch* communicates that the G&W, although a mass product, stood out with its quirkiness: the author appears to struggle to find the right words to describe the console. He struggles to name the digital avatars and instead uses “the little black figures”.

Striking is the choice of describing the timing: the article from 1983 makes mention of the time frame the games have been around in order to justify the reporting done upon it—“exactly two years” underlines the magazine’s justification to report upon a “tiny” console, with a “hot plot.”

Identifying the combination of urban structures paired with absurd rescue missions in its simplistic style, the G&W created its success.

For each market, *localization* was done. This process is applied to this day in games; *localization* means not only a direct translation of published material in the originating country, but also an adjustment to the specific country’s cultural references. In Germany, the selection of the games is notable:277 many of the infrastructure games made it into the published selection.278

The games received a new title and a new introductory text. So, the games *Fire* (7/1980) and *Fire II* (12/1981) became “Hilfe, es brennt” (“Help, there is a fire”) and “Rettung im Sprungtuch” (“Rescue in the jump sheet”) respectively; the game *Helmet* (2/1981) became “Vorsicht, Werkzeug;” (“Attention, tool”) the game *Manhole* was translated to “Achtung, Graben;” (“Attention, trench”) *Fire Attack* (3/1982) was titled “Blockhaus in Flammen;” (“blockhouse in flames”) many games with only character names in the title were, not altered, and names were adapted in the titles (*Mickey und Donald, Donkey Kong*).

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277 More on this in the quantitative environment analysis later on in this chapter
278 Full list in the appendix
The console’s name illustrates the former distinction between similar, yet not globalized markets. With a different name than the Japanese/English title Game & Watch, the German distributor Bienengräber accessed the market in West Germany, renaming it to *Tricotronic* in 1980: a neologism including the word *tric*, alluding to trickery, but also to both the wondrousness and the finesse of the game, and marking the special appearance of the G&W. Paired with the special suffix deriving from *electronic*, the German name for the G&W utilized the boom word of the 80s: -*tronic* was signalling a digitalization with all its positive attributes: reliability, practicality, and efficiency. The choice of the words emphasizes the digital appeal of the G&W, selling its novelty as a highlight. This contributed to the G&W becoming one of the most popular toys in Germany’s early 1980s.²⁷⁹

The development of games went parallel with urban expansion and densification in the form of high-rises and mass dwellings. Just like in Germany, the high-rise and satellite-city development had peaked in Japan in the 1960s and early 1970s.²⁸⁰ If the 1950s and 1960s were the decades in which the high-rise development was politically strongly enforced,²⁸¹ the 1970s and 1980s were the time in which the reactions towards the buildings had become a mass-phenomenon and thus part of a new reality that remained unquestioned for a new generation. The notion of the high-rise had become a reality that can be recognized in an increase not only in a

²⁷⁹ Heidtmann, *Kindermedien*, 124. “produzieren besonders japanische Unternehmen Minicomputerspiele mit Flüssigkristallbild; diese winzigen, meist batteriebetriebenen LCD-Spiele gehen schnell so weit im Preis herunter, daß sie zu Beginn der 80er Jahre zu den beliebtesten und verbreitetsten Kinderspielgeräten gehören.”, “Japanese companies in particular produce mini-computer games with liquid crystal images; these tiny, mostly battery-operated LCD games quickly go down in price to the point that by the early 1980s they are among the most popular and widespread children's game devices”.


quantitative display in German press outlets, but also in cultural artefacts like the videogame, functioning as a medium to digest challenges and the novelty of altered ways of life.

Similar developments were happening in many Western and Japanese urban centres. Strikingly, Germany and Japan have a distinct political setup, with both countries having been American occupied postwar zones, and both countries having been part of the Tripartite Pact grappling with its defeat after years of fascism and nationalism.

I therefore suggest that coping with the loss of national architecture after its destruction in the war included the process of working through the loss of this national heritage through a particular design in game environments of the late 1970s and early 1980s. It is without a doubt that certain cultural and social forms of interaction were erased by densified urban areas.

One indicator for a completely changed spatial and therefore social interaction in Japan is the Kamishibai street theatre in Japan. Between the 1930s and 1960s, the Kamishibai used to be one of the biggest entertainment forms for the lower and middle class in Japan. The Kamishibai is a form of theatre, in which one narrator uses a set of hand drawn slates to illustrate a story. This form of entertainment, which happened in the backstreets and pedestrian oriented alleys, completely disappeared in the 1960s due to two factors, as Sharalyn Orbaugh (2012) illustrates in “Kamishibai and the Art of the Interval”. The places for the Kamishibai disappeared during the restructuring of the city in the 1950s, when Japan went from a pedestrian-oriented cityscape

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282 As shown in Chapter Two on photographic representation in the FAZ
283 Dierkes (2010) points out three determinants which the conventional explanations of historiographies apply: “National character and Culture”, “Collective responses to trauma”, and the “needs of defeated states” (Dierkes 2010, 8). The state of “complete military, political and moral defeat in 1945” (Dierkes 2010, 12) is the factor both Germany and Japan have in common. Please also refer to Chapter Two in regard to the indications of the disunity between nostalgia and new beginning in West Germany.
to a car-oriented one. Another factor was the TV becoming more accessible to both children and adults.\textsuperscript{284}

Shunsuke Tsurumi states in \textit{A Cultural History of Postwar Japan} about the consequences of densification by mass dwellings in Japanese cities:

But now, shut up in mammoth buildings (danchis) and living in small partitions, the Japanese have little time to associate with one another, and children little time and space to play. Even young people with time and money are said to tend towards what Nakano Osamu calls “Capsule Man,” who feels most secure and relaxed when he is shut up in his small room with his stereo, television and comic books.\textsuperscript{285}

Japan established itself as a leading innovator of technological products, among them also electronic toys. These game environments developed in Japan, suggest a portrayal of an environment Japan faced in the postwar period of rebuilding an architectural infrastructure and, importantly, in re-working a national conscience and its fears and thoughts in relation to a new environment and social structure.\textsuperscript{286}

Similar to Germany, the defeat was not only political, but also psychological, bringing a lot of insecurities and the loss of an incorporated heritage with it. Japanese cities had suffered a high level of destruction, followed by an occupation of American forces that emphasized the defeat and instated a memory of a decade perceived with the aforementioned shame.\textsuperscript{287}

The aim of this chapter is to reveal the parallels of a national historiographic response displayed in the games’ narrative. A quantitative analysis of the G&W game environments

\textsuperscript{284} Please also refer to Chapter Four on altered outdoor spaces regarding children’s playgrounds.
\textsuperscript{286} See on the details of gaming and Japanese culture Whaley, \textit{Beyond 8-bit: Trauma and Social Relevance in Japanese Video Games}.
\textsuperscript{287} Dierkes, “Portrayals”, 169.
shows that a majority of them use the urban high-rise or its construction as the initial problematic setting. The games’ challenge is in many cases a struggle for life and death upon an imagined urban conflict.288

5.2.3 Game Reception and Gaming Culture in Magazines

The alteration of the urban environment gave birth to a new commuter generation of employees moving back and forth in public transport systems for a longer time than ever before in order to move to work from their insular dwelling. These also questioned the general belonging to a place, concluding in a shifted space-making of the mobile culture of the 1970s and 1980s. Successful sales in Germany caused the founding of gaming magazines, like the TeleMatch, or media reception in magazines like Der Spiegel.289

The gaming magazine TeleMatch published articles on gaming regarding hardware and software from 1982–1985. As a magazine for a scene in its fledgling stages, video games and consoles illustrated the demand for digesting, sharing, and building a new economy and hobby. Foremost, a new identity and community for those interested in the new trends that were marked by aspects of futurity, Americanisms, escapism, and a playfulness of the target audience of male adults.

Hartmut Huff, editor of Germany’s first computer and gaming magazine TeleMatch, picked up on the gaming movement when it moved from the arcades into the home in 1976 (Atari), and his magazine folded a year after the videogame crisis in late 1983.290

288 See in depth analysis of environments in 5.2.4.
289 The LCD games also in German TV series from the 1980s, see for example the crime series “Die Story”. Gawaleus, “Die Story Game&Watch Mickey Mouse MC-25”.
As a translator for various magazines that arguably were both cutting edge and outsider culture in the sprawling magazine world, Hartmut Huff translated for editions of *MAD Magazine* (e.g. Don Martin hat Premiere #1, 1973)\(^{291}\) and *Playboy* special editions (*Playboy’s Taschenbücher: Sex im Film! 1979*). Arguably, a similar audience was addressed with his short-lived computer magazine. He issued 12 copies over the course of two years (December 1982 to April 1985).\(^{292}\) Identified by one of the reader’s comments as a typical “men’s magazine,” its audience was young to middle-aged men who wanted to combine their hobby of programming and gadget talk with a hip attitude.\(^{293}\)

A magazine about the budding computer game market also highlights an aspiration for a “feeling of futurity” regarding gaming developments. The early digital gaming culture appeared as a terra incognita needing to be mapped. “Neuartige Elektronikspiele wecken neue Kauflust: Die Japaner bieten makabre Tricks auf handlichen Täfelchen, die Amerikaner rüsten mit Computertechnik zu pompösen Ritterkämpfen.” („New electronic games awaken a new desire to buy: the Japanese offer macabre tricks on handy little panels, the Americans arm themselves with computer technology for pompous knightly battles“)\(^{294}\)

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\(^{291}\) https://madtrash.com/contributor/000100/

\(^{292}\) Most issues of the TeleMatch are digitized on https://archive.org/details/telematch

\(^{293}\) “Ein reines Männermagazin. In Ihrem ansonsten recht gelungenen Heft störte mich beim ersten Durchblättern nur Ihre sogenanntes TeleMate, da ich keinen unmittelbaren Zusammenhang zwischen einer Zeitschrift für Unterhaltungselektronik und einem halbnackten Mädchen sehe. Nach dem Durchlesen Ihrer TeleMate Aktion fiel es mir jedoch wie Schuppen von den Augen: Es handelt sich also bei Ihrer Zeitschrift um ein reines Männermagazin.” („It's an all-male magazine. In your otherwise quite accomplished magazine only your so-called TeleMate bothered me when I first leafed through it, because I don't see any direct connection between a consumer electronics magazine and a half-naked girl. After reading your TeleMate campaign, however, it became obvious: Your magazine is a men's magazine only.”) (Letter to the editors: Gaby M. Werth, *TeleMatch* 2/1983 p. 6)

The quoted article makes a point of stressing the oddness of the game environments that the developers chose. The point towards the sense of destruction which causes the urgency in the gameplay, keeping the player engaged and hungry for more. At the same time, the novelty of the media format is also underlined by the applied vocabulary that the journalist uses: “Anzeigetäfelchen” underlines the novelty of the device. It illustrates the lack of the right word for the new device, and by that a budding scene that was uninfluenced by former modes of design but relied heavily on problems confronted in real life situations.

One of Germany’s biggest magazines, Der Spiegel, published 1981 an article with the poignant title “Teufel in der Tasche” (“Devil in the Pocket”). The article represents a mixture of fascination with the success of the LCD games made by Nintendo, but also Bandai and several other Japanese producers.

Fast scheint’s ein Fall für Völkerpsychologie zu sein. Die Japaner, ohnehin verschrien als roboterhafte Techniker, bringen noch mehr Hektik, Streß und Aggression ins Kinderzimmer und in die Freizeit der Erwachsenen.

(It almost seems to be a case for international psychology. The Japanese, already notorious as robotic technicians, bring even more hectic, stress and aggression into children's rooms and adults' leisure time)

The article focusses on a moral evaluation of the new consoles: it mentions the addictive and innovative, yet violent design of LCD games. The article makes mention of the G&W’s “absurd cruelty.” The unnamed author of the half page article ascribes this to a Japanese trait,

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295 Can be translated to something like “Little display panel”
naming the makers of the LCD games “robot-like technicians.” This blatant racism assigns negative stereotypes to the Japanese inventors. To add onto his assumption, he criticizes the “stress” “they” bring into the “children’s rooms and adult’s free time.”

Summing up the key issue the author mentions in this article, it becomes clear that the author’s problem lies in its broad target group: the games did not draw a line between a children’s or adult toy. The issue of the “absurd cruelty” arises from children consuming a game which might have been better, or originally was, marketed towards adults—the application of digital games to a broad market, its lack of regulations, and its broad topics with the choice of urban environments underline a specific naivete, but also relatability in the early years of digital gaming.

Much more important to note is the “realistic” setting of the games. Looking at preserved originals, the simplicity of these games is striking when compared to graphics and complexity of games of the 2020s.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the digital environments of the G&W were the first of its kind, in which a mass product utilized a realistic setting in which an avatar could change the outcome of the interactive game – at least for a while and its eventual defeat.

Thus, it is the overlap of realistic settings and consequential death of the character which underlined the authors’ criticisms of the genre videogame. The author describes one of the “realistic” scenes which make use of overt violence, stating:

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297 This blatantly stereotypical and racialized statement does hardly surprise in the perspective of its time, but I would like to annotate this with additional literature, e.g. Sohn, “Introduction: Alien/Asian: Imagining the Racialized Future.”
298 A lot of Japanese Television advertisements were catered towards young adults, see for example Satoshi Matrix, “Game & Watch Multi-Screen Commercial [1982]”, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjDtFrLBtjk.
299 At last, simple stick figures who dissolve into angels because they fall off a high elevation during a fire appear more relatable than an abstracted monster eating little balls, like in the 70s arcade hit “PacMan”

(The earth shakes and survivors climb out of broken buildings. A helicopter circles over the inferno. Whoever misses the helicopter's rescue rope sinks into flames and collapsing ruins. "For ages six and up," promises one of the initiators of such disasters . . . Fun for the whole family." The macabre scenes, ultra-short cartoons, so to speak, also play out 10.5 to 18.5 square centimetres of small display panels.)

Besides describing the violent scene of collapsing ruins and helicopters, the author juxtaposes his description immediately with the concern for the age and subtly points out by stressing the boxing text: “Fun for the whole family.” He underlines in a second step the combination of comic-like graphics (“ultra-short comic films”) with cruelty (“macabre games”). LCD games like the G&W demonstrably blurred the line between children’s toy and adult leisure and were a novelty for which the authors lacked words.

The game environments in these “ultra-short comic films” had a striking effect. These comic-like backdrops created the urgency around the gameplay. The LCD games provided the first relatable and interactive game environments, mimicking reality. The urban restructuring of the 1960s and 1970 triggered the choice of these first interactive game environments and made them marketable to a wide audience. I am hypothesizing that the environments were inspired by reflecting on restructured cityscapes with high-rises and mass dwellings.
The games were so new and unexpected that no regulation was in place during its first publication in 1980. The general approach to marketing and this entirely new idea of leisure activity for adults brought the G&W to toy stores, and henceforth brought unwanted violence to children.

Die Japaner hingegen werfen ihre diabolischen Taschen-Spielchen nun international aus, nachdem sie damit zu Hause geradezu hysterische Kauflust ausgelöst hatten. Seit die Firma Nintendo im April vorigen Jahres die erste “tricOtronic” genannte Serie herausbrachte, eroberte sie 20 Prozent des gesamten japanischen Spielzeugmarktes und bei den Elektronikspielen gar einen Umsatzanteil von rund 95 Prozent.

(The Japanese, on the other hand, are now throwing their diabolical pocket games out internationally, after having triggered an almost hysterical desire to buy in their home country. Since Nintendo released the first series called "tricOtronic" in April last year, it has conquered 20 percent of the entire Japanese toy market and even a 95 percent share of sales of electronic games.)

It is important to note that the development of these early games functioned in a complete makeshift operation: Nintendo’s hardware engineers were developing graphics, developers were building models of the proposed game scenarios, the software engineers were even selling the games for the winter Christmas holiday in Japan. This approach underlines the untargeted, almost naïve game-making process for the G&W, in which no one was yet following established rules or marketing ideas and specialization within the workforce, but instead, in which the only

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300 The USK, the „Unterhaltungssoftware Selbstkontrolle” was the equivalent to the FSK, assessing appropriate age limits for games. It was founded in 1994, after the first ego shooters appeared on the market. Brunken, and Wild. Geschichte der deutschen Kinder- und Jugendliteratur, 493.
301 Obviously, various layers influence the uncanniness of the densified city. Already in the 1920s, film adaptions of Godzilla and King Kong did address the hyper object of the city. I argue that the game environments of the G&W are a continuation of that very discomfort.
303 http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/clubn/game-and-watch-ball-reward/0/1
guidance in order to map the terra incognita was based on intuition and direct inspiration of environmental triggers.\textsuperscript{304}

Therefore, the naivete of the game environments can be identified as a non-targeted display of what early game environment designers deemed relatable. I argue, the restructured cityscape appears therefore at a high rate, because the new city was the most pressing problem for the pioneers in game environment design. The game environments differ from any viewing habits introduced by arcades during the 70s, e.g. settings in space or sports games. The choices of the game environments are highly influenced by everyday scenes.\textsuperscript{305}

\subsection*{5.3 Game Environments}

Compiling a list of the twenty-four games issued in Germany, these games of the G&W series display a broad variety of settings at first glance.\textsuperscript{306} The player manoeuvres jungles, waterways, streets, walls, high-rises. Upon grouping them into the most prevalent categories, the cityscape with its specific infrastructure can be identified as the environment with the highest representation, followed by conflicts of exaggerated nature.\textsuperscript{307}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[304] On the topic of unguided creation, see e.g. Duch, Wlodzislaw. "Intuition, insight, imagination and creativity." 40-52.
\item[305] See also nintendo.com: “Everyone from hardware developers to the planners and designers came up with ideas. Most of the games are based on everyday themes, so anyone could come up with them.” Izushi in Iwata, nintendo.com http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/clubn/game-and-watch-ball-reward/0/1
\item[306] See Appendix.
\item[307] Please also refer to the appendix. Arguably, “Turtle Bridge” can also be grouped into “Animals” or “Infrastructures”.
\end{footnotes}
Taking a closer look at the “infrastructures” category, I am attempting a closer analysis of the predominant environments with special attention to architecture. I will try to show how this particular game environment creates the main problem and therefore game driver.
The high-rise can be identified as the problematic set up that is unnavigable for the player due to added stressors, like fire (Fire I and Fire II), tumbling barrels (Donkey Kong), falling tools (Helmet), or pumping water into a hose in order to extinguish a fire in a high-rise (Mickey & Donald). I am interested in identifying the narrative set up around this trope and therefore choose to analyse one of the most successful games, Fire (Rettung im Sprungtuch) for an in-depth analysis.

The plot of the five G&W games Fire, Fire II, Donkey Kong, Helmet and Mickey & Donald present the high-rise as the core problem, or rather an environment as the game’s problematic setup: a high-rise is at the centre of the catastrophic event, thus, the player feels motivated to solve the problem by applying a set of rules (game mechanics) to help with the solution. In Fire, the initial problem is a high-rise on fire. Stick figures jump from the burning building and the player needs to catch them with a jump carpet. In Helmet the initial problem is represented as a high-rise in construction, with tools falling down from the heights. The player is motivated to help the avatar in order to avoid tools that are falling off of the high-rise. In Mickey & Donald, the initial problem is a high-rise on fire, and the two avatars Mickey and Donald need to pump water up a hose in order to extinguish a burning high-rise. In Donkey Kong, the high-rise’s height provides a fatal slide for barrels rolling down its structure, which the avatar needs to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High-rise</th>
<th>Aerial Warfare</th>
<th>Staples</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fire /Hilfe es bre Parachute</td>
<td>Mario's Cement Factory/Mario Fire Attack/Blockhaus in Flammen</td>
<td>Fire II /Rettung im Sprungtuch</td>
<td>Fire II /Rettung im Sprungtuch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helmet /Vorsicht</td>
<td>1 Oil Panic/Oil Panik</td>
<td>2 Manhole/Achtung Graben</td>
<td>3 Manhole/Achtung Graben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donkey Kong</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mickey &amp; Donald</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5–2: The proportion of high-rise settings in the G&W gameplay (pie chart and table)
avoid. The game Donkey Kong was issued in 1982, one of the later games that Nintendo published. The text on the box of the game describes the scenario: the gorilla has taken a girl hostage and is throwing oil barrels in order to avoid being caught. Indeed, the main problem in this setup is the high-rise in which it takes place: “Besonders, wenn eine tückische Wolkenkratzer-Baustelle der Schauplatz ist – und der haarige Bursche noch mit Ölfässern um sich wirft.” (“Especially when a treacherous skyscraper construction site is the scene—and the hairy fellow still throws oil barrels around.”)\textsuperscript{308} The G&W introductions in its German localization made the multipurpose function clear by stating “Spiel, Uhr und Wecker in einem!”\textsuperscript{309} (“Game, Watch and Alarm - All in One!”)

5.4 Case Study: The G&W Game “Fire”

“Ein Haus brennt” begins the text on the Fire game box, continuing „Menschen springen aus dem 3. und 4. Stockwerk. Die Gesprungenen prallen vom Sprungtuch immer wieder ab, müssen aber sicher zum Krankenwagen gebracht werden. Spiel, Uhr und Wecker in einem! Verschieden Spiele erhältlich!” (“A house is burning. People jumping from the third and fourth floor. The jumped people bounce off the jumping sheet again and again, but must be brought safely to the ambulance. Game, watch and alarm clock in one! Different games available!”)\textsuperscript{310} The written introduction supports (morbidly) the key features suggested by the graphic game environment: the third and fourth floor of the mass dwelling are on fire. The jumping people have to be bounced off into the emergency car in order to survive. If not bounced, but dropped to the floor, an angel appears, signalling the jumper’s death. Three angels as a marker of the avatar’s repeated

\textsuperscript{308} Game introduction on the package of “Donkey Kong” (1982).
\textsuperscript{309} Text after each introduction on the German TricOtronic game boxes.
\textsuperscript{310} Rettung im Sprungtuch, TricOtronic, 1982.
death, and the game is over. In an attempt to identify the main tropes that motivate the gameplay, I am setting out on a philosophical exploration about the fall, the fire, and the inevitability of failure in the G&W game *Fire*.

Let us return to Huizinga’s Magic Circle, but in the updated version of the twenty-first century, as suggested by Jesper Juul. As a solution to criticism of the terms’ application, he underlines that the Magic Circle represents the player’s constant negotiation between “inside” and “outside.” The Magic Circle thus becomes more powerful, the closer it approaches and at the same time distances themselves from the “outside”. The G&W games are a great example for this magical circulation: a very familiar urban setting (the high-rise) is posed upon very elemental problems (Fall, Fire, Failure).

### 5.4.1 The Fall

The uniqueness of the G&W was its use of visual environments. In order to increase the drive of the gameplay, urgencies and forces had to be introduced to engage the player. The G&W’s unique approach was to apply it to graphic urban environments, and consequently, high-rise structures as the most intimidating one of new forms.

Portraying the high-rise as the initial starting point of danger with terror evoked by the verticality of the building stands out. The height and density of high-rises are intimidating, their appearance seems uncontrolled and prone to dangerous combinations—not too far away the imminent threat of falling out of a high-rise, or a high-rise setting on fire. The act of bouncing a falling person is the only way to help them survive, to deter gravity from doing what it is known
to do: be really harmful when paired with height.\textsuperscript{311} It is the verticality of the high-rise, the unsustainable element of elevation and its consequential gravity that poses the most pressing threat to the gamer and concludingly the game’s necessary mechanic of gravity.

Besides the obvious factor of gravity-driven games resulting from the x and y axes of the coordinate system that early gaming was limited to, the choice of high-rises as constituents of this gravity (in contrast to planes, mountains, trees, churches, statues, etc.) is striking. The high-rise therefore seems to be central to the developer’s environmental concern of gravity. It underlines the high-rises’ idiosyncratic position in the 1970s environment, and the concerns surrounding it. The fear of height normally avoidable became a daily confrontation within densified apartment areas. The consequence of gravity and the sense of one’s own weight are fundamental to the player’s motivation to keep on playing, until its eventual fate of failure.

\textbf{5.4.2 The Fire}

Using the idea of Huizinga’s Magic Circle as broadened by Jesper Juul, \textit{Fire} distinguishes itself as the main problem of urbanity. London, Hamburg, Vancouver: Almost every metropole had a rapture which marked the birth of a new beginning. In Juul’s logic of the Magic Circle, \textit{Fire}, set in the absurd incident of people jumping out of the high-rise, marks a familiarity, yet abstraction which engages and cleanses the player.

\textsuperscript{311} Bitmop, “The Use of Gravity in Video Games”. As this online article about gaming mentions, gravity is one of the four fundamental forces: “electromagnetism, strong nuclear, weak nuclear, and gravity”. Naturally, the function to program gravity into early gaming was the most obvious forces to increase the urgency of a gameplay in a “real life” setting.

Ironically, high-rises would not exist without fire. The three main compartments a high-rise consists of are concrete, steel and glass, all made by the transforming power of fire. Yet, it is the element recurring as the biggest threat to what it had been created from in the G&W game Fire. Without fire, no fall; without fall from the high-rise, no gameplay.

Fire, as the “late comer of the elements” is a special element: it not only is dependent on other elements, since fire needs enough air to burn, but it also appears on the last day of Genesis, later than the other elements earth, water, and air. In Greek mythology, fire is known as the beginning of humankind—Prometheus sparks modern technologies with his gift. At the same time, fire could not be more opposed to the urban style of living: water, earth, and air are in check in a hyper engineered urban centre, far away from any “wild” natural elements not irritating a high-rise with strong winds, soil avalanches, or floods. But the fire is the one element which both creates and distorts—it can happen any time in a misconnected electric circuit without being controlled properly. The G&W game Fire enriches its Magic Circle with exactly this mechanism – a long history of pros and cons, fatal consequences and necessity, while involving a cathartic engagement with this fear paired with a new architectural phenomenon.

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312 Bachelard published extensively not only on architecture and space, but also on fire. (Bachelard, Poetics of Space. Bachelard, The psychoanalysis of fire; Bachelard, Fragments of a Poetics of Fire)
313 Harris, "Pyromena", 27.
314 Harris, "Pyromena", 29.
315 Mentz, “Phlogiston”, 60.
316 Harris, “Pyromena”, 30. “Fire remains immanent in the bricks of Babel”.
5.4.3 The Failure

The sheer number of avatars falling from the high-rise is bottomless. Not only do they never stop falling until the game is lost, there is also an altered sense of what the consequences of uncaught avatars actually mean besides three angels in the top right corner of the game. If during a gameplay neither one, nor two, but three avatars experience the unfortunate event of not being bounced by the player, the game is lost. There is no winning. There is no rescue. The end of the game is always marked by the player losing.³¹⁷

Failure is the end of all G&W games. Due to its simple setup, there is no winning sequence, as known from later developments for digital games.

As video game scholar Jesper Juul points out, failure is an awkward notion in the videogame setup. Integral yet in reality unpleasant and undesired, it drives forward the gameplay.³¹⁸ What Jesper Juul calls the “paradox of failure in games” is set parallel to why people love tragic movies, and violent cinema which makes us feel “sadness, fear, or even disgust.” Yet, grappling with things that are unpleasant, or frightening, or yet to be understood touches on a primal notion of learning, as Jesper Juul points out. The cathartic and engaging mechanism of the Magic Circle causes the engagement with the trope of failure. Thus, the game represents an exercise in defeat. The high-rise as a new phenomenon—bringing car-oriented cities, the exclusion of the family, and outsourcing of the workforce with it—is something to deal with. It represents discomfort and fear and is therefore the perfect game setting.

The philosophical exploration of the tropes and mechanics in conversation with the high-rise topics and infrastructural alterations of inner-city environments is lacking one last point: the

³¹⁷ Juul, The Art of Failure.
³¹⁸ Juul, “Video games make us all losers!”
handheld nature of the G&W in the age of mobilization and individualisation, which I will explore in the third part of this chapter.

5.5 The Handheld and Handholding

Young adults and businessmen, thus people commuting to school or work, were the first target group of Nintendo’s first successful portable game console. The evolution of digitized gaming, and especially handheld devices, surfed on a wave with other household items of the late 1970s: the record player had become a Walkman, the adding-machine transformed into a portable calculator, and arcades became handheld LCD screens, barely big enough to be played. In a situation where neither established arcade tropes (like sports) nor fantastic world building (like outer space or fairy tales) find their main application in the game environments, replaced by cityscapes, the question arises: In what way were these decisions in the dawning of the gaming industry shaped by altered places/space relations, a transit nation, and the nomadism of the postwar era?

Diese Elektronikspiele neuester Bauart aus Japan sind elf Millimeter flach und auf die Brusttasche von Oberhemden zugeschnitten. Jedermann soll die handlichen Geräte ständig bei sich tragen und an der Bushaltestelle, im Wartezimmer des Arztes oder unter der Schulbank damit fummeln können.

(These electronic games of the latest design from Japan are eleven millimetres flat and tailored to the breast pocket of shirts. Anyone should be able to carry the handy devices with them and use them at the bus stop, in the doctor's waiting room or under the school desk)\textsuperscript{319}

\textsuperscript{319} „Teufel in der Tasche“, Der Spiegel, 1981 November 2, \url{https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-14344082.html}
Here, the article emphasises the portability (in the pocket of a shirt) of the G&W. The handheld gaming device becomes a part of the wardrobe and a tool for dealing with everyday waiting times, such as commuting and sitting in “a doctor’s office.”

Although handheld, portable, and personalized devices reign over all actions of the twenty-first century, it is important to note that portability was a novelty even into the 1970s. Gadget mobility changed everything, yet, academic production on the topic of mobility is relatively scarce. One prominent and concise publication, focusing on both the global but also the German market, is Heike Weber’s *Versprechen mobiler Freiheit*. She provides an overview of changing spatial relations, but also temporal contexts in the course of the development of portables.

In doing so, Weber focuses on three main factors for the portable revolution: the changed housing situation in West Germany increased personal transit (1950: 1,754 person-kilometres per inhabitant, as opposed to 11,385 person-kilometres per inhabitant in 2000).\(^{320}\) Weber emphasises that this figure increased not only because of the higher number of kilometres spent commuting to work, but rather that leisure time and holidays changed the number of kilometres travelled. The structure of rural/urban living changed. The 1950s and 1960s also saw an increase of city population.\(^{321, 322}\)

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\(^{320}\) Weber, *Das Versprechen mobiler Freiheit*, 16

\(^{321}\) Weber, 16

\(^{322}\) Hood, *Shinkansen*, 112.

“In Japan, similar mechanisms can be observed: The development of commuter transportation caused a spike in the development of the high-rise (and underground construction): Japanese cities were suddenly transformed into new vertical landscapes. A postwar Japan had chosen to focus on technological mass production and the correlation of labour culture and progress set standards transported far across the quickly growing population, and almost doubled from 1945’s 79 million to 127 million inhabitant country in 1984.”
A second aspect of gadget mobility is what Weber refers to as “appreciation of miniaturization,” in which above all small devices were influenced by the Space Age, science fiction, and spy films like James Bond. Wearability of the device, for example the ability to carry a device in a shirt pocket or trouser pocket or a part of the body, such as the wristwatch, received a great response from the 1970s onwards.

Heike Weber furthermore emphasizes that the concept of the device with several functions was also transferred to digital portables, similar to the principle of the Swiss Army Knife. A digital game with a watch was thus “twice” as good as a simple digital game.

Especially digital 2-in-1 options often meant no additional weight. The author stresses the dichotomy of portable devices in which players both “plug in” in order to engage digital environments, yet at the same time “unplug” from physical situations in an escapism of reality. As an important point, the author points out the relationship between space and time, which reached its peak during the evolution of battery technology and portable revolution.

All of these outlined functions apply to the G&W. The success of the console is based on altered commuter structures caused by changed living and working conditions, by a redesigned urban infrastructure, by increased portability due to technological advances and lastly, by the multi-tool fascination of the gadget.

Thus, the main selling point of the G&W was its handheld nature. Revolutionizing the concept of leisure time without the attachment of space/place, as the success of the arcades in the 1960s and 1970s had shown, and the home console brought it into the private sphere, the individual, handheld game console posed itself as a new definition of the relation between

individual and place. The high-rise functions both as symbol and root of these developments of a mobilized society establishing a nomadic relationship and thus opening up the gap between space and place.\textsuperscript{325}

The aspect of nomadism/vagabondism discussed by Adorno (1944)\textsuperscript{326} and Heidegger (1951)\textsuperscript{327} regarding dwelling and its impossibility for future generations (“Dwelling, in the proper sense, is now impossible,” writes Adorno in \textit{Minima Moralia}), can be read as an aftereffect of that very notion. Evidently, the home as place (in contrast to space) had not only become unobtainable, but also triggered the reactionary nomadism handheld devices not only symbolized but also perpetuated. The twentieth century made it necessary to re-access the place of leisure time and the division between public and private space. In the following, I would like to observe some selected notions of the handheld movement, which trickle into and cause each other: I am basing it on both consumer philosophy, spatial refigurations, and, consequently, on altered time schemes triggered by restructured urbanscapes.

5.5.1 **Handheld Consumption and the Culture Industry**

It is clear that a postwar society is not only considered nomadic, but also deeply driven by capitalist ideals.\textsuperscript{328} In an “on-the-go” economy, not only material belongings are disposable and exposed to a short-time usage, but they also boost themselves with the consequence of an endless circuit. Whatever can be consumed in a vagabond state of mind is not tied to the place anymore, it is much more tied to the idea of the act of consumption—in relation to the G&W, the

\textsuperscript{325} Moores, \textit{Media, Place and Mobility}, 28.
\textsuperscript{326} Adorno, "Minima Moralia", 18.
\textsuperscript{327} Heidegger, Martin. "Building, dwelling, thinking.", 66-76.
\textsuperscript{328} See Vidler, \textit{The Architectural Uncanny}, 214.
consumption of the game is at the centre of this state of mind. The German computer magazine *TeleMatch* underlines the output rate of the G&W:

Schier unüberschaubar scheint das Angebot der sogenannten Hand-Held-Games zu werden, jener kleinen und kleinsten Elektronikspiele, die unzählige Fans begeistern, Gegner des elektronischen Spielvergnügens aber zur Verzweiflung bringen. Dass auch hier die Spreu vom Weizen getrennt werden muss, steht außer Frage. *TeleMatch* bringt einen Überblick sämtlicher aktuellen Spiele und sagt Ihnen, was warum empfehlenswert und wirklich neu ist.³²⁹

(The range of so-called hand-held games, those small and smallest electronic games that thrill countless fans but drive opponents of electronic gaming to despair, seems to be almost unmanageable. There is no question that here too the wheat must be separated from the chaff. *TeleMatch* gives you an overview of all current games and tells you what is new and why we recommend them.)

Similar to the outline in the close analysis of the game *Fire* is the consumption of temporarily bound cultural artefacts part of the lifeway of modern capitalism, as authors such as Adorno outlined, pointing towards the entertainment history and steady consumption:

The more strongly the culture industry entrenches itself, the more it can do as it chooses with the needs of consumers—producing, controlling, disciplining them; even withdrawing amusement altogether: here, no limits are set to cultural progress.”³³⁰

Regarding the handheld console G&W, the question of the agreement regarding the act of consumption loops back to the displayed environments: if the urban infrastructures are so fundamental for the fascination of the gameplay, what does it express about the very notion during the act of playing?

³²⁹ Andersen, “Die neuesten Elektronikspiele”, 72.
5.5.2 Handheld Space

In the case of the relation between the G&W and its narrative choice of infrastructures and urban landscape, the narrative set-up is linked to everyday problems implemented in a game environment that the player is coming to terms with.

The spatial relations of having a handheld device in an established environment have been explored in several scholarly contexts. Most prominently, the *Walkman Effect* by Hosokawa (1984). In his treaty about the Walkman Effect from 1984, about four years after the development of the G&W and the Walkman itself, he underlines not only the aspect of mobility as important in altering a perceived (urban) environment upon using a handheld device, but also the notion of understanding the duality of actions; walking *and* listening, or analogously, gaming *and* knowing the time, as marketed for the Game *and* Watch:

> The Walkman may make the walk act more poetic owing to its “stuttering” function of the Deleuzian “and.” One walks and listens (and inversely). One experiences walk’n'listen, or even walk'n'eat'n'drink'n'play'n'listen (boy with roller skates eating McDonald, drinking Coke, and listening to Michael Jackson through Walkman...).331

Hosokawa’s essay about the Walkman Effect underlined the revolutionary notion of handheld devices, that spiralled on from there. The contemporaneousness of several actions increases the fascination and vigour of an action or narrative.

The special case the G&W underlines though is that not only the watch and the game are important factors in its ground-breaking appearance: the narratives chosen for the console negate

an altered urban environment that also altered spatial and sociological patterns. The handheld device belongs to the body and influences the interior but also the exterior reception. In the case of the G&W, this idea is identifiable as an addition to perceived environments.\textsuperscript{332} This is much more than an alternate reality, the handheld function with the factors of immersion create a penetrating intimacy, as described also by Hosakawa’s Walkman effect: “The Walkman works not as a prolongation of the body (as with other instruments of \textit{musica mobilis}) but as a built-in part or, because of its intimacy, as an intrusion-like prosthesis.”\textsuperscript{333}

The G&W device becomes therefore a symbol of a secret non-participatory extension of reality. It functions as a secret bearer in the sense of Hosakawa’s idea. “What surprised people when they saw the Walkman for the first time in their cities,” writes Hosakawa, “was the evident fact whether the Walkman user was listening to something, but not what he was listening to. Something was there, but it did not appear: it was secret.”

The act of playing the G&W on the go remained mysterious: a silent congruence between the games’ environment and the player would install a sense of ownership and power in the player. One can argue that this loops back to Adorno’s definition of mass culture: it symbolizes the agreement with an unsettling reality of altered urban spaces.

The high-rise in its playful manner is part of many G&W games. It functions as a benchmark for the newly normalized nomadism of its time. This lack of benchmarking in handheld devices represents the dissolution of the binarism of inside and outside. The German philosopher Otto Bollnow sums up in 1963:

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\textsuperscript{332} Moore, \textit{Media, Place and Mobility}, 69. Moore argues that the division between space and place is evaporated by handheld/mobile devices. \\
\textsuperscript{333} Hosakawa, \textit{The Walkman Effect}, 176.
\end{flushright}
Aus ihr [der Scheidung zwischen Drinnen und Draußen] bestimmt sich die Grunddynamik aller menschlichen Wege im Raum: als das Fortgehen in die Welt und das Heimkehren nach Hause, wobei beide Richtungen als gleich notwendig und gleich gewichtig begriffen werden müssen.334

(From it [the separation between inside and outside] the basic dynamic of all human ways in space is determined: as going out into the world and returning home, whereby both directions must be understood as equally necessary and equally important)

It is exactly this homecoming, in Greek mythology described as the root of nostalgia with the translation of *nostos*, which the handheld device disintegrates—there is no need any more for a homecoming when everything is available on the go.

### 5.5.3 Handheld Time

The G&W strikes at first with its second denominator: the watch. In what way is time important when playing? This absurdity and double function generated the appeal and outstanding nature of the G&W.

At first, the constant display of time strikes as a disqualifier: games are designed as distraction, the moment to lose control over structured work schedules. Per definition, games disperse the compartmentalization of everyday life, structured by the artificial concept of measured time.335 But why would a handheld device have the central function of a digital watch built-in as a selling point?

Besides the already discussed factors of the novelty effect, the question is in which way the measurement of time is an essential factor not only for urban existence (Simmel, 1903), but also in an aspect for an urban vagabond (Vidler, 1992). Time measurement is also necessary as a

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334 Bollnow, *Der Mensch und der Raum*, 4.
335 Simmel, *Die Grobfäßtäde und das Geistesleben*. 
new metronome for everyday life not consistent with meteorological time tellers, like the position of the sun and moon, and seasons, a life in bubbles and underground, a life dependent on the beat of the city.\textsuperscript{336} The clock is the main indicator of existence and of the individual’s tie to the common mass.\textsuperscript{337} It is an instalment unifying the masses. With its digital revolution in 1975, the minute and the second became precisely measurable at all times, with one glance.

The article in \textit{Der Spiegel} underlines the G&W’s multifunctionality and time measurement feature as a selling point: “Uhren- und Weckerfunktion übernehmen die “tricOtronic” – Bausteine nebenbei.”\textsuperscript{338} (The "tricOtronic" components also perform clock and alarm clock functions on the fly)

Space and time as unity receives a specific marker after the turn of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{339} The city needs time management in order to function. The G&W capitalizes exactly on that: the feeling of control in a spatially detached age.\textsuperscript{340} The handheld console was dialing into a feeling that is ascribed by urban scholars as a phenomenon happening in densified spaces.\textsuperscript{341} The G&W symbolized exactly what the analogue clock had triggered in the first wave of chronometrization.\textsuperscript{342}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{Payer sync} Payer, Peter. \textit{Die synchronisierte Stadt}, 143.
\bibitem{Tati example} One of the cinematic examples is Jacque Tati’s Playtime (1978), see also Hilliker, “In the Modernist Mirror: Jacques Tati and the Parisian Landscape.”, 318–329.
\bibitem{Spiegel article} NA. „Teufel in der Tasche“, \textit{Der Spiegel}, 2 November 1981, 276. \url{https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-14344082.html}
\bibitem{Mückenberger} Mückenberger, and Läpple. \textit{Zeiten und Räume der Stadt: Theorie und Praxis}.
\bibitem{Payer chron} See Payer, “The City and the Clock”, 4.
\end{thebibliography}
5.5.4 Ubiquitous Time Measurement as Discipline

The Guinness Book registered “world’s largest largest watch” mounted on the façade of one of Frankfurt’s tallest office buildings, the Commerzbank, in the downtown district in 1983. A publicity move initiated by an American advertisement company named McBell, the Swiss watch producer Swatch had hired them to compete with the dominant market of Japanese made digital watches. The idea of the Swatch had been to produce plastic vacuum-sealed watches—therefore, once broken, the consumer had to buy a new watch. The frequency in which consumption and digestion circulated quicker serves also the strategy of Nintendo’s plastic electronic strategy, an accessorizing of the nomadic. Furthermore, it also underlines the possibilities for fetishizing time as a commodity, or, as to be explained, time as the only constant when categories such as place are not a constant anymore.

Time measurement evaporated into the vernacular. Not only was the G&W showing the notion of the watch but on the contrary, it was exemplifying the notion of timekeeping as an accessory, a fetish, an illusion of control, a replacement of belonging in space as well as belonging in time.

The advertisement company McBell was not only targeting the aforementioned SuperUltraMega movement of the 80s and all the grandeur and mass production that came with it, but it also linked marketable novelties with each other when they decided to mount a 100-meter-long Swatch onto the surface of the Commerzbank skyscraper. The German magazine Der Spiegel quotes Swatch Founder Irniger in 1985: “Die Swatch war vor allem eine originelle Marketing-Idee. ‘Wir verkaufen die Swatch als modisches Accessoire’, so Irniger, ‘das nebenbei

343 Katzir, "Time Standards for the Twentieth Century: Telecommunication, Physics, and the Quartz Clock.", 119-150.
344 More on the history of simultaneity Sauter, "Clock Watchers and Stargazers".
Striking and applicable to the explorations of time and space regarding the G&W is the company founder’s comment regarding the “nebenbei” (“on the fly.”) This is a word which already appeared in an earlier quote in the Spiegel article “Teufel in der Tasche” – telling time becomes a normalized process, which happens “on the fly.” Displaying the time is an extra feature of the watch—it is not intended to be its main function. Time tellers in the 1980s have officially become an accessory, a fashion, and therefore a symbol for a different notion. I am suggesting, along the lines of Georg Simmel, that time is a measure of taking control over space in an accessory notion.

The quotation also shows a prolific aestheticization of the object measuring time outside of its apparent function. Let us treat it as a symbolic reminiscence to what it coincides with: the high-rise with a mounted watch. While it would be too brusque to claim this is no coincidence, there can be no doubt, the lost relation to spaces like the high-rise is being occupied by a simulacrum of mobile time measurement.

If indicating the time becomes a “nebenbei,” (“on the fly”), then the question of the status of the clock poses itself in a spatial relationship. Since time is not spatial itself, it can never be “besides (with),” it can only be in the background, steadily present but up to the discretion of the individual it wants to engage with it.

This brings us back to the G&W, of which half its name consists of the ostensible notion of being able to keep track of the time spent playing the game. The excursion into the

representation of time in the early 1980s has shown how the notion of timekeeping is not actually about time keeping, but it is a marker both for the ongoing nomadism and the desire of accessorizing this aspect “on the fly.”

5.6 Conclusion

As shown, the facets of the simple handheld game console G&W carry a lot of striking markers which deal with urban structures. As I have indicated, its German reception both in magazines and advertisements was met with skepticism, yet also illustrated its success.

I have also illustrated how Japan and Germany share not only the common fate of restructured cityscapes while dealing with their defeat and shame after WWII, but also how sociological patterns of play and coming to terms arose from altered cityscapes, like that of the Kamichibai, and commuter culture. From this, game environment analysis brings out the striking quantity of high-rise environments in the G&W’s game settings.

By application of game theories by Jesper Juul, I have shown how electronic games offered interactivity and a new, simple, yet effective graphic immersion. Basing my hypothesis on Huizinga’s Magic Circle, I demonstrate that the game environments created for the G&W were a way to deal with urban trauma after reconstruction.

Concludingly, the aspect of handheld nature of the late 1970s and early 1980s stresses the nomadism increased by car-culture, commuting, insular living, and relocation, by relying on time keeping “on the fly.”
Chapter 6: Space is Not Neutral: Identity and Place-Making in the High-Rise of Karosh Taha’s Beschreibung einer Krabbenwanderung

6.1 Introduction

European nations introduced high-rise mass dwellings as a widespread housing solution for millions of refugees after World War II. With the metropolitan experience of more than five years of bunkers and aerial warfare destruction, with its concluding five years of turmoil, rubble, and chaos, the 1940s in post war Germany were marked with dire need of a positive spatial turn to house the millions of people who had lost their roof and roots. The high-rise mass dwellings brought relief, and in many cases, a luxurious improvement to the situation beforehand.

Fast forward to the twenty-first century, high-rise mass dwellings have gained an altered image. Its connotation has shifted from celebrated and welcomed housing solution to marginalized and segregated space, marked by stereotypes, prejudices, and preconceptions. In 1980, William H. Whyte was one of the first researchers to give the connection of personal wellbeing and connection to a space a name, by differentiating space and place with the term place-making. Along the lines of the mechanism that Whyte described, other scholars, urban

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Zalewski, “Rudolf Hillebrecht und der autogerechte Wiederaufbau Hannovers nach 1945“, 38. As described in earlier chapters, the contrast to the direness of the 1940s couldn’t have been more emphasized as city planners mentioned in 1948.

“Trotz Einsatz erheblicher Geldmittel zur Rattenbekämpfung hat die Rattenplage durch die Schutthalden so zugenommen, dass immer wieder in den Büros wichtige Papiere zernagt werden. So sind zum Beispiel unliebsame Verzögerungen in der Erfassung der Bevölkerung … dadurch eingetreten, dass zahlreiche Fragebogen, die zur Auswertung bereitlagen, von Ratten zerfressen wurden.” (“Despite the use of considerable funds for rat control, the rat plague through the rubble heaps has increased to such an extent that time and again important papers were gnawed up in the offices. For example, unpleasant delays in the registration of the population … have occurred because numerous questionnaires that were ready for evaluation were eaten by rats.”)

Whyte, "The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces.".
designers and sociologists have employed this term to explain spatial phenomena, such as Canadian sociologist Jay Pitter, who has stressed the meaning of “class and race in the planning system” and its concluding segregation and marginalization.348

In order to proof the categories of space and place-making for migrated and racialized communities, I will use the novel *Beschreibung einer Krabbenwanderung (BeK)*, which centers the plot around a high-rise mass dwelling in the twenty-first century. I will proof in which way post-migrant theories of liminality and liminality are informed by an architecture that does not follow the principles of place-making.

### 6.2 Recent Negative Representations of High-Rise Mass Dwellings

What had been part of the subtle vernacular for years was strongly emphasized in news reports on high-rise mass dwellings during the Coronavirus pandemic of 2020.

High-rise mass dwellings had not caught much bundled attention in German media until the press reports, yet soon the inherent problems of the high-rise mass dwelling space were both thematized as well as stigmatized. On June 10, 2020, various outlets report about a high-rise mass dwelling in Göttingen, which goes by the name *Iduna*. All articles from media outlets appear to wonder about the question of blame. The public broadcasting outlet *Deutsche Welle* writes, “A cluster infection in a housing complex has left a central German city facing strict lockdown. Everybody is asking who is to blame.” The connection between the word “high-rise complex” and the word “blame” appears to point towards the inhabitants' fault. In former reports about the high-rise, such as by magazines *Der Stern* and *Der Spiegel* and lastly, the populist yet

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widely distributed tabloid *Bild*, the high-rise mass dwellings are negatively connotated, and with it its diverse setup of inhabitants.

“From Poster Child to Social Hotspot” titles the *Goettinger Tageblatt* in a report on *Iduna* high-rise complex. Upon trying to describe the visual impression of the decay of the posterchild to the social hotspots, most of the articles default to describe the amalgamation of objects and quantities. The article in *Goettinger Tageblatt* describes quantities, like those of windows, balconies, and collections of items. Similarly, a longform article in *Der Stern* describes the high-rise’s visual impression of height, windows, and quantities of people.\(^{349}\) Also the newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* describes the *Iduna-Zentrum* in Göttingen in regards to its overwhelming quantitative impression: „Die Geschichte des *Iduna-Zentrums* in Göttingen scheint schnell geschrieben. 17 Stockwerke, mehr als 400 Wohnungen, gut 600 gemeldete Bewohner, in Wahrheit vermutlich eher 700. Unter ihnen Arbeitslose, Studenten, Flüchtlinge, Migranten, Drogen- und Silizitätige, Rentner.” Hand in hand with quantifying the massive visual impression of the high-rise, goes the dehumanization. The material existence appears centered, whereas social connections, initiatives, the general society in the high-rise dwellings disappear.

Tabloids use more descriptive negative tags and general clusters to describe the stereotypes of the high-rise mass dwelling: “sozialer Brennpunkt,” (“Social Hotspot”)

“Großfamilien,”(“big families”), \(^{350}\)“mehrerer arabisch-albanischer Clans” (“of several arabian-

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\(^{349}\) A longform article from 2019 sounds similar to other quantifying descriptions. The national magazine *Der Stern* tried to filter the issues of the architectural phenomenon of the post-war and reconstruction era, before the mass press coverage during the COVID-19 pandemic: “[This article is] about shattered dreams and the will to survive. About the failure of architecture and the defeat of people. It is a faded concrete block with two staircases, four elevators, 18 floors, 407 apartments.” It asks why high-rise mass dwellings gained a bad reputation and what effects it had on its inhabitants.\(^{350}\) Dreisbach, “Corona in Göttingen. Ein ehrenwertes Haus.”
albanian Clans”\textsuperscript{351} are supposedly breaching the law of social distancing, and entire mass dwellings in Berlin with “mainly Romanian inhabitants”\textsuperscript{352} who “share a small bedroom apartment with four children.”\textsuperscript{353} These national descriptors point towards a generalized quantity which dehumanizes. The generalized, stereotyped descriptions of inhabitants lead the tabloid \textit{Bild} to the conclusive assigned descriptor of the high-rise mass dwelling as a simplified “Corona Block.”

This pre-emptive short press review of the summer of 2020 illustrates both the stigmatization as well as the inherent spatial setup of the high-rise, seemingly relying on quantification of numbers and its material overburdening effect. Thus, it also points to the spatial setup of mass dwellings, which are appear problematic in its architectural design, propagating surveillance and permeation of sounds, smell, privacy which causes a liminal effect: dwelling in the in-between. In the following, I want to explore the spatial descriptors that Karosh Taha utilizes in her novel in order to explore the spatial qualities of the high-rise and in which way the author applies post-migrant theories of liminality revolving around the architectural setup which the protagonists inhabit.

6.3 Karosh Taha’s \textit{Beschreibung einer Krabbenwanderung}

The protagonists of Taha’s \textit{Beschreibung einer Krabbenwanderung} or \textit{BeK} (\textit{Portrait of a Wandering Crab}), are housed in a similar setup such as the aforementioned Iduna house in

\textsuperscript{351} Sievering, “Viele Bewohner infiziert, Mieter ziehen aus Angst aus. Aufruhr im Corona-Block in Göttingen.”
\textsuperscript{352} Biermann, “Eine Corona-Ampel in Berlin springt auf Rot. Gereizte Stimmung im Corona-Block in Berlin-Neukölln.”
Göttingen. Karosh Taha uses the distinct architecture of the high-rise mass dwelling as a focal point around which all protagonists determine or facilitate their identity. She describes a Kurdish migrant community in the high-rise dwelling and their interaction with the spaces of the high-rise. An occasional personification of the high-rise, which moves, breathes, and acts underlines its universal dominance over its inhabitants. A material analysis of the high-rise underlines the features of distinct spaces in the mass dwelling architecture.

These high-rise dwellings’ descriptions feature elevators, balconies and entrance halls which are unique in its quantity and use for this type of architecture. These spaces feature a quality of liminality. Boundaries defining privacy appear permeated via sounds, smell, visual and physical proximity of individuals. Furthermore, abstract concepts such as moral and cultural as well as physical ones, such as attributions of inside as well as outside appear permeated and liminal. The balcony is a commitment to the outside while still staying inside the assigned space of a private one. The elevator carries the ascription of an inside space, but it defies all the general markers of inside: as a space with a single, or no function and interaction with strangers and neighbours, its proper definition would belong to an outdoor space, like the street.\textsuperscript{354} In the novel, Taha makes particular use of liminal spaces like the balcony and the elevator as a setup for her character’s liminality inside of the high-rise complex in her novel.

Both in the press reports on high-rises and Covid-19, as well as in Taha’s novel, the high-rise’s stereotype is marked by a marginalized space at the end of the line of a strenuous journey, caught up between trauma, poverty, and addiction. This is important to note when discussing Karosh Taha’s liminal spaces in \textit{Portrait of a Wandering Crab}—the high-rise is not an exclusive

\textsuperscript{354} As described by Augé, Marc. \textit{Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity}. 

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space for migrant issues, but marginalization happens on many levels of individuals in the *in-between*, as Taha also points out in an interview with the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung upon the question whether the high-rise creates parallel societies for migrants: “Wenn man konsequent sein möchte, müsste er auf alle Schichten angewandt werden.” (“If one wants to be consistent, it should be applied to all the different social classes”). At the same time, it is important to acknowledge migrant’s representation in percentage of inhabitants, that this is, as Taha stresses, no active process, but a result of racism in housing politics. “Das ist kein aktiver Prozess—diese sogenannten Migrantenviertel sind mitunter ein Ergebnis von Rassismus auf dem Wohnungsmarkt.”355 (“This is not an active process—these so-called migrant neighbourhoods are sometimes a result of racism in the housing market.”) With almost one quarter of immigrants in Germany living in high-rise buildings, the reasons for this “last resort” are often caused by racism in the already tight housing market.356

Liminality is tightly interwoven with and breaks the boundaries of closed bubbles and an assumed sedentarism, which is one of the ascriptions towards the inhabitants of the high-rise mass dwellings. The main protagonist and narrator Sanaa, a student, lives with her family in a so-called *Hochhaussiedlung*—a high-rise mass dwelling.

In the novel, all of the family’s members grapple with their longing for home as migrated individuals, who live in the high-rise mass dwelling, while passing through liminal spaces. Sanaa’s mother spends her nights on the balcony in order to have access to the sky and the moon, to which she prays while commemorating her life in Iraq. Sanaa’s aunt never leaves the limits of

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their apartment and balcony and accesses the world via their TV-Satellite dish. Also, Sanaa’s father is described to blur the lines between here and there by focussing on the TV in order to stay in touch with his homeland, and develops a scratching habit which Sanaa accounts to the “shedding of the shell of a crab.” This transitional act of a person who is perforating the boundary of inside and outside of his skin and its environment is a testament for the metaphorical perforation of two stages.\textsuperscript{357}

### 6.4 Gebaute Umwelt als Lebenswelt:\textsuperscript{358} The High-Rise Mass Dwelling as Post-Migrant Lifeworld

The city had always been a place of migration, and an assumed sedentarism of the twenty-first century disagrees with the historical setup of societies in flux since time immemorial.\textsuperscript{359}

As Yildiz points out, the city is a place of migration: “most visible is the transformation of (Western) Europe's cityscapes by migrants. […] This two-way process has penetrated many areas of social and cultural life, bringing about new hybrid forms.”\textsuperscript{360} Although urbanism is not possible without migration, the particular space of the mass dwellings represents the post-war solution to extreme migration and replacement, and by that an even bigger materialization of mobile identities. The reputation of mass dwellings after WWII cycled through different stages.

As Sebastian Kurtenbach categorizes, the initial setup of mass dwellings was intended for the modern nuclear family.\textsuperscript{361} Political and geospatial circumstances altered the image of the

\textsuperscript{357} Benthien, \textit{Skin: On the cultural border between self and the world.}  
\textsuperscript{358} Ammon, \textit{Architektur im Gebrauch: Gebaute Umwelt als Lebenswelt}, 10.  
\textsuperscript{359} Ribhegge, “City and Nation in Germany from the Middle Ages to the Present”, 21-36.  
\textsuperscript{360} Hill, and Yildiz. \textit{Postmigrantische Visionen}, 97. “Stadtgeschichten sind immer auch Migrationsgeschichten […] Fremdheit sogar die historische Grundlage für das Stadtleben”, see also Geisen, Riegel, and Yildiz. “Migration, Stadt und Urbanität.”  
\textsuperscript{361} Ammon, \textit{Architektur im Gebrauch: Gebaute Umwelt als Lebenswelt.}
high-rise: the large housing estate became a place of social housing (1970s), and funneled into a place conceived as a social area for migration (1990s) (“complete social segregation”). The large housing estate became a place for the marginalized, with markers of social and ethnic segregation.\footnote{\cite{Kurtenbach}, 160 - 162.\footnote{\cite{Oswald}, 21.\footnote{\cite{Friedrich}, 33.\footnote{\cite{Zieleniec}, “Lefebvre’s Politics of Space.”}}}

Caused by political, financial, and social preference, the mass dwellings developed into segregated communities with a heterogenous ethnic setup, as the Federal Department for Migration and Refugees of Germany reports in 2008: “Zu 24,1 % wohnen [Bewohner mit Migrationshintergrund] in Wohnhäusern mit neun und mehr Wohnungen sowie in Hochhäusern.”\footnote{\cite{Friedrich}, 33.\footnote{\cite{Zieleniec}, “Lefebvre’s Politics of Space.”}} Almost one quarter of migrants live in high-rise dwellings, which marks the mass dwelling and high-rise as a migrant space. In which way the emphasis on architecture informs the qualities of feeling “at home” is explored in the next section about place-making.

### 6.5 Space-Making vs. Place-Making

Before discussing and applying concepts to the novel, it is necessary to touch on some urban theory categories. Although an in-depth analysis of space vs. place-making is not possible, the general definitions of space vs. place will be briefly explained in this section. Despite its brevity, this intervention will serve to highlight my following iterations on stewardship and placemaking in relation to the novel “Beschreibung einer Krabbenwanderung.”

*Space* is often associated with a neutral category of a physical or even digital locality, before it receives identity markers which convert it into *place*. The assumption that a space ever has neutral associations has been questioned in the recent academic discourse.\footnote{\cite{Zieleniec}, “Lefebvre’s Politics of Space.”}
space, place is an environment in which positive setups support positive connections to the subject.

Urban theorists Arijit Sen and Lisa Silverman stress the physical and social dimension in their monograph “on corporeal and embodied experiences and affective responses to the physical environment, opening up a world of meanings and symbols […] that may not be immediately visible”.  

The appeal of the environment can be increased via different mechanisms, as for example sketched out via twelve central questions outlined by the urban designers Christie Coffin and Jenny Young. These questions point to the core of the definition of a place: their twelve questions inquire about the history, ownership, size, logic order, balance between community and privacy, usefulness, healthiness and sustainability of a place. They also change the angle of positive place-making by zooming in on the specificities of the inhabitants. Coffin and Young stress the importance on the place’s likeability, the audience, and social equity. Similarly, Jay Pitter emphasizes the social equity, but also racialized notions of spaces and places, amongst others counsel estates and high-rise mass dwellings. The effects of place-making orchestrate the reactions to a space in which the protagonists of Taha’s high-rise mass dwelling are situated. The assumed neutral space of the high-rise mass dwelling is the personalized antagonist against who Sanaa fights in order to make the space a meaningful place for her and her family. I will show in the following how the idiosyncrasies of the mass dwelling are never “neutral”.

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366 Sen, and Silverman, Making Place, 178.
367 Coffin, and Young. Making Places for People.
368 Pitter, and Lorinc, Subdivided: City-building in an Age of Hyper-Diversity.
6.6 Liminal and Hybrid Identity and Their Spaces

Widely discussed in (post-)migrant studies, Homi Bhabha coined the term of the post-migrant identity’s location as the “in-between.”\(^{369}\) Bhabha suggests a non-binary understanding of a migrant identity. He sees the “third space” as a possible allocation of a “hybrid identity.”\(^{370}\) Homi K. Bhabha argues that “hybridity itself is the ‘third space’ from which other positions, many-layered and multifaceted combinations (can) stem."\(^{371}\) The unambiguous location in one place is left behind and discontinuities come to the forefront. This “innovative break” radically questions habitual dichotomies such as Western/non-Western, natives/foreigners, which until now have functioned as signposts of social perceptions.\(^{372}\)

There are various twists to define the spatial flexibility Bhabha introduced as “third space” or the “in-between” in the line of thought of hybridity in a new spatial order. This concept presumes a dichotomous system, in which sedentary identities break out of an inherited order.

Post-migrant scholar Erol Yildiz questions the concept of a natural sedentarism vs. an assumed “modern” phenomenon of mobility as outlined by Bhabha. Yildiz calls the in-between of first- or second-generation migrants in the twenty-first century a “sedentary mobility,”\(^{373}\) and brings the assumption of the “natural” sedentary and the “artificial,” “modern” mobility into question.\(^{374}\) These concepts allow for more fluidity than Bhabha’s initial hybrid theory, that was still rooted in a dichotomous understanding.

\(^{369}\) Bhabha, Homi, K. “Culture’s In-Between.”, 53-60.
\(^{370}\) Bhabha, Homi K. “The Third Space.”, 211. Also mentioned in Yildiz and Hill “In-between as Resistance”, 275.
\(^{371}\) In Yildiz and Hill, 275.
\(^{372}\) Yildiz and Hill, 276.
\(^{373}\) Yildiz and Hill, 279. Also mentioned in Yildiz, Was heißt hier Parallelgesellschaft?
\(^{374}\) See also Moslund. “Postmigrant Revisions of Hybridity, Belonging, and Race in Gautam Malkani’s Londonstani.”, 105-136.
In contrast to Yildiz’ positive outlook on a fluid identity, author Mark Terkessidis problematizes this positively connotated hybrid/transtopia with a negative perspective by coining the term of the *present absence*. Though acknowledging the same point which Yildiz makes by steering away from a dichotomous concept, Terkessidis claims that the mobility in a worldview reinforcing the belief of sedentarism leads to an irresolvable cul-de-sac of *present absence*.

According to Terkessidis, this critical understanding is perpetuated and nurtured by digital media. It alters possibilities of transgression of space and time, and therefore hybridity and mobility. Although the digital space with media like the telephone, the TV, and in the twenty-first century, mobile phones and the internet dominate daily life, the conclusion is not to undermine the importance of the physical space. On the contrary, it is significant as a counterpoint for the individual, floating (not only in post-migrant sense) through time and space, but between the physical and the metaphysical.\(^375, 376\)

Returning to Yildiz’ positive equivalent of Terkessidis’ definition, he coins the term *transtopia* for the fluidity and mobility marked by these identity concepts. Yildiz writes:

“[Transtopias] are partially realized utopias in a world shaped by mobility. They are spaces in which boundaries are traversed, where ambiguous and contradictory elements, both local and global, are linked with each other and condense to form urban structures and modes of communication.”\(^377\)

Especially in the twenty-first century, the meaning of the actual physical space becomes more important, in an age in which the digital sphere has replaced a lot of physical environments.

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\(^{375}\) Terkessidis, *Nach der Flucht*.

\(^{376}\) This compilation of terms is found in Hill, and Yildiz. *Postmigrantische Visionen*, 98.

\(^{377}\) Yildiz, and Hill. “In-between as Resistance”, 279.
Similar to Terkessidis, Yildiz emphasises that despite the digital importance, the physical spaces are influential. Foregrounding architecture and urban design in relation to migrant communities.

Angesichts der großen Mobilität infolge der Globalisierung und extremen Beschleunigung von Kommunikation aufgrund digitaler Vernetzung im virtuellen Raum, gewinnt der greifbare ‘reale’ Raum wieder zunehmend an Bedeutung – zum einen als ein Refugium des Individuums für seine Selbsterortung und zum anderen als städtischer Raum zur Identifizierung mit Gesellschaft und Stadt, selbst wenn mit Hilfe der Internetmedien soziale Räume unabhängig vom physischen Raum entstehen.378

(In view of the great mobility resulting from globalization and the extreme acceleration of communication due to digital networking in virtual space, the tangible real space is again increasingly gaining importance—on the one hand as a refuge for the individual to locate himself and on the other hand as urban space for identification with society and the city, even if social spaces emerge independently of physical space with the help of the Internet.)

Thus, identities find themselves in a constant process of variables, which is tied to spatial and temporal questions in both the digital and physical environment.

As a third example, the author Perez Murcia foregrounds the specifics of time and space. He understands the possibility to communicate and receive digital acoustic/visual information from the migrants’ home countries as a reason for an altered spatial and temporal perception. Murcia defines the way the understanding of the term “home” is reshaped upon relocation and resettlement with both spatial and temporal consequences.379 He divides the individual’s spatial liminal transgressions into three categories: the first two categories are the here and the there as a consequence of two spatial attachments. Caused by this spatial disparity, Murcia claims that the individual finds itself in the resulting third category of the nowhere.380 The nowhere category manifests in the physical realm. These spaces cause but also illustrate the liminality of post-

379 Murcia, “The sweet memories of home have gone”, 1515-1531.
380 “The discussion shows that a transitional existence is not only experienced as a tension between ‘here’ and ‘there’, as the research conducted by Hammond (2004), Korac (2009), and Den Boer (2015) suggests, but also between ‘there’ and ‘nowhere’.” Murcia, 1528.
migrant identities. Murcia elaborates the different categories, giving examples of people displaced within their own country, using the example of the “aftermath of conflict in Columbia between 1980 and 2010."

Those who experience the loss of a sense of home and following years or even decades of displacement struggle to remake it, tend to see themselves trapped in a liminal space. Their accounts reveal a strong connection between the feeling of being ‘spiritually homeless’ and experiences of liminality.381

Though every country has its own specifications in terms of the reason for displacement, Murcia underlines that the refugees’ history from Uganda to Colombia and to migrant workers from Poland share similar setups: in any instance, the individual has to re-invent their identity, and find new interpretation for an altered relationship to language, customs, or even natural phenomena like climate.

The assumption that concludes Murcia’s paper is that the altered spatial relationship of immigrants and refugees goes hand in hand with a strong temporal reaction. Time is now divided into back then and now (and in the future, which often means a return to back then), analogue to Murcia’s spatial triptych of there, here, and nowhere. Since the future outlooks are unknown, and often combine a fantasy of returning to a homeland that does not exist anymore, the individuum finds itself in the liminal space between there and here, and back then, now, and afterwards. The liminal space between the two extremes Murcia identifies as nowhere/never.382

I will employ the above assumptions about the liminality of space and time of post-migrant spaces and identities as a theoretical backdrop in order to position them parallel to the

382 His negative interpretation can be seen as analogue with Terkessidis term of the present absence.
fictional setup of Karosh Taha’s novel. In special regard to the particular space of the high-rise and mass dwellings as post-migrant spaces of Germany’s twenty-first century, I analyse the narratological function of the high-rise and how it is applied to illustrate the outlined issues of liminality. I thereby determine that the high-rise features liminal spaces in between departure and arrival in both its temporal and spatial implication. Concludingly, I define the application of the architectural set-up as a central plot point in the narrative, while paying special attention to distinct spaces of these mass dwellings that define the narratological set-up.

6.7 Post-migrant Identities in *Beschreibung einer Krabbenwanderung* and the Liminal Spaces of the High-Rise

Dividers that orchestrate the *inside* and *outside*, the *here* and *there*, such as bridges, doors, bubbles, atmospheres, grates, and filters have been addressed by Georg Simmel, Bernhard Siegert, Peter Sloterdijk, and Gernot Boehme. But the high-rise architecture of mass dwellings offers spaces of liminality that escape these markers of *either/or, here/there*, or *inside/outside*. Similarly, Taha’s protagonists in *BeK* are confronted with transchronologisms and translocalities: they are neither *inside* nor *outside*, neither in the *past* nor in the *future* nor in the *present*.

Permeating sensory impressions, like sound and smells, but also viewpoints both as surveillance and as the surveilled open the space beyond an inside and an outside. These cannot

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383 Simmel, *Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben.*  
385 Sloterdijk, *Bubbles: Microspherology.*  
be marked with binary markers, but can be identified as liminal features of the high-rise spaces that Taha uses in her novel. Balconies and elevators are graspable items of this transitionality.

*BeK* highlights these spatial aspects of a post-migrant *translocality* and uses the personified specific architectural setup to underline the liminal identities of inhabitants in the novel. The architectural phenomenon of the high-rise mass dwelling is central for the novel’s setup: it shapes the way people interact with each other in *BeK*. The high-rise appears in several instances as a personified element in the story, and thus underlines its integral position for the narratological function of the high-rise. “Das Hochhaus ist ein organisches Wesen: Wenn auf der ersten Etage ein Bewohner sich das Bein bricht, hat es Folgen für die Menschen im ganzen Haus.“ 387 (“The high-rise is an organic being: If a resident breaks his leg on the first floor, it has consequences for the people in the whole building.”) Similar to a character, the high-rise dwelling is described as a creature that mediates inhabitants’ consequential behaviour and that has its own will.388

The personification of the high-rise district underlines one fact of liminal identities, reflected by terms like “present absence” (Terkessidis 2017): the liminal element is stressed at all times, and not even a material object like the high-rise displays markers of a constant, on the contrary, it enhances the liminal situation of the characters.


(I imagine the house shaking vigorously once every ten years to throw off the hoarded burden of its inhabitants and take a step forward. But for two decades, the high-rise has

387 Taha, BeK, 69.
388 Similar mechanisms have been mentioned in Chapter One.
389 Taha, 33.
overslept to clear itself out. Perhaps it is dead too. Only our apartment gapes like a hole in the house.)

The agency of the high-rise underlines its narratological function as a main character, not only a space serving as a backdrop. The protagonist’s habits are defined by the particular high-rise spaces; balconies, lifts, and the entrances of the dwelling.

6.8 Place and Space in BeK

Sanaa represents the example of a fluid identity model. She tests out various transgressions: studying at a university as the first one in her family and actively leaving and criticizing the apartment complex. Sanaa embraces the fact that she can have several partners, she surrounds herself with various fluid and hybrid identity models, like her boyfriend. He is a German whose parents appear to have grown up in Germany but might have emigrated from Turkey. Sanaa perceives his family as “very German.”

Markers for this “Germanness” are spatial allocations. On the outside, Sanaa notices that the family lives in their own townhouse with a pointed roof, and that they have a curated “German” front yard. On the inside, Sanaa notices that the family uses Muslim insignia as decoration instead of for religious purposes. Sanaa points out the praying carpet (“bought on vacation in Dubai”) on the wall as an ornament instead of on the floor for its actual use of praying, as she knows it from her own family. It contrasts the heavily used religious object

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390 Taha, 149. “Um kurz vor drei fahren wir mit meinem Auto zu seinen Eltern. Sie haben ihr eigenes Haus mit Garage und Vorgarten, mit Blumenbeet und Rasensprenger, mit zwei Fahrrädern vor der Tür und werbungsweiseweißen Gardinen an den Fenstern. Das einzige Indiz für ihr Türkischsein ist der Nachname.“ (“At just before three, we drive to his parents' house in my car. They have their own house with a garage and front garden, with a flower bed and lawn sprinkler, with two bicycles in front of the door and advertising-white curtains on the window. The only indication that they are Turkish is their last name.”)

391 Taha, 151.
where “the borders are worn out” in her own household.\textsuperscript{392} She notices that her boyfriend’s mother greets her unlike a *Hochhausfrau* (high-rise woman) who measures and monitors, which she mentions as a key feature of the high-rise.

### 6.8.1 Prospect: The High-Rise

The high-rise is personified, as well as a source of all good and evil that happens to the protagonists. The protagonist's behavioural patterns are tied to the architectural setup and its spatial restrictions. Distinctive spaces this architecture creates are re-appearing and of importance for the narrative; the balcony and the lift hold specific descriptors and idiosyncrasies that are distinct markers for both mass dwellings and behavioural patterns of the migrant protagonists in *BeK*.

### 6.8.2 The Outside: *BeK*’s Natural Phenomenons in the Liminal Space of Metaphysical and Real

The high-rise accumulates big quantities of people in a small spatial setting, and therefore triggers and relies on relegating the *inside* and *outside* more forcefully, or default to a liminal experience. As mentioned before, the reinforcing patterns of *inside/outside* happens in *BeK* in regard to chronological aspects like the aforementioned *then/now*, but also with spatial markers like *here/there*, as well as *inside/outside*. Bernhard Siegert refers to psychoanalytical writings of the early twentieth century stressing the consequences of the distinction of *inside* and *outside*, which are “at the very base of the constitution of reality.”\textsuperscript{393} In a liminal space that Taha’s high-

\textsuperscript{392} Taha, 151.
\textsuperscript{393} Siegert, “Doors: On the materiality of the symbolic”, 20.
rise and its inhabitants signify, also lines of reality and the metaphysical appear blurry. Foremost, metaphysical elements are represented in the form of the outside world or “nature.”

The high-rise estate finds itself in a thick fog one day. The weather event of persistent fog is documented by TV teams who come to the estate, trying to explain the phenomenon with meteorological explanations, while Sanaa’s family explains the fog with mystical reasoning. The fog disables all functions of surveillance that normally happen in the liminal spaces of the balcony, the lift, and the stairway. Thus, it functions as a boundary that cuts off surveillance.

Bernhard Siegert elaborates on the consequences of the aforementioned inside/outside division. “The imaginary, which is usually assigned to the ‘inside’ of the subject, becomes projected onto the outside, showing up in or blending with the real.” Similar to Taha’s high-rise markers of the in-between appear in the natural phenomena on the fringe of the metaphysical and the real. “Weiße Wolken wandern in unser Viertel hinab. Wenn der Regen Asijas Tränen sind, der Wind Asijas Geheule, dann muss dieser Nebel ihr Puderzucker sein, werden die Hochhausfrauen denken.” (“White clouds descend into our neighbourhood. If the rain is Asija's tears, the wind Asija's howling, then this fog must be their icing sugar, the high-rise women will think.”). The natural phenomenon offers her the possibility to hide in the fog.

Sanaa sees a chance to live the life she desires, without being surveilled. She dreams of wandering through the thick fog with her boyfriend, visibly and physically stressing their bond by holding his hand. Since she knows that the visuality of the high-rise and its surveillance character create the conclusion: “dass man in meiner Welt nur dann frei ist, wenn die anderen

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394 Siegert, 20.
395 Taha, 186.
einen nicht sehen.”396 (“In my world you're only free when the others can't see you.”) With the fog, these surveillance functions are now disabled.


(The fog is God's will, some say. There is a curse on the neighbourhood. Schaitan wants to mislead people, others say. For the first time in years the high-rise has exhaled, I think. The reporters turn away frowning and then prefer to question meteorologists.)

People in the high-rise interpret the fog as a sign from God/Satan or as a curse. The personification of the high-rise as the producer of the fog as a breathing entity underlines that the architectural structure holds immense symbolic and frictional potential for the people living in it. The natural phenomenon of fog suppresses the visual aspects of the high-rise: it is not inflicted by the verticality of the building, in contrast, it attacks the high-rise’s powers in terms of overview and visuality at the high-rise’s main point: the height of the building and its consequence of overview. The fog creates a liminal space in which Sanaa can perform a transitional identity that does not function along dichotomous models of interior/exterior, Kurd/Turk, woman/man, or Bhabha’s “in-between,” but outside of visual markers that appear to be superficial and visual.

6.8.3 Balcony: the Liminal Space between Inside and Outside

The balcony is a liminal space that neither conforms to the outside nor the inside. It often plays an important role in both communicative and individual sense, in the form of representation and

396 Taha, 191.
397 Taha, 195.
important speeches. Balconies are liminal spaces where secrets are exchanged and individuals gain overview, it is a space neither inside the house nor outside. In a historical sense, balconies have had a central role in society since the Roman Times, but became the space of the common man in the end of the nineteenth century with Hausmann’s vast restructuring of Paris, and consequentially inspired modernist architects. The balcony as an integral part of high-rises became even more widespread after WWII. In the attempt to give access to air and light as a counter architecture to densified city centres, the balcony became a staple item in modern architecture.\textsuperscript{398}

The balcony can be viewed as a liminal medium in which information is stored, processed, and transferred.\textsuperscript{399} It is marked as a space with loose boundaries, sometimes carries markers of the interior (storage of objects, dwelling), sometimes markers of the exterior as process (access to nature, overview of the district), sometimes markers of transfer (communication to other balconies, to people below, above, sideways). Analogue to Murcia’s concept of the here, there, and nowhere the balcony can be understood as a liminal element of transtopia. Neither inside nor outside, it concludes into a space that allows access to different temporal and spatial memories and conditions.

The balcony functions in regard to transfer of acoustic or visual communication, in which the position on a balcony enables the dweller to oversee their environment or is seen from a different geographical location. Thus, not only the accessibility of the balcony causes new patterns of interaction, but also the spatial set-up of an in-between of infrastructure/dwelling and nature/air carries distinct markers of liminality.\textsuperscript{400} The balcony gives an impression of access to

\textsuperscript{398} Al-Kodmany, Kheir. “Residential visual privacy”, 283-311.  
\textsuperscript{400} See also Chapter Four.
light and air without leaving the dwelling. This access to the sun, the moon, the sky, the air, a place to enjoy solitude, and as a watchtower is what marks the balcony experienced “nature.” This obvious friction between built environment and the natural is what defines the liminality of the balcony. The balcony, situated on a vertical scale, becomes convenient access to “nature,” without the necessity to leave the confinement.

Besides the environmental access, the balcony has several other functions: it is a place for storing objects from the past for the future. In the following, I analyse sequences of the novel BeK to illustrate this distinct feature of balconies in mass dwellings as a narrative device in the context of migratory spaces.

In a dreamlike sequence, the protagonist Sanaa imagines a dead bird as the reason for a bloody stain on her bedsheets.


(Poor bird, I think. I would carry the small, warm body to the balcony box, bedded in my hands, to bury it between the geraniums, where a fresh head can grow after a year. But we have no geraniums.)

She dreams that she buries this dead bird in the sole nature that is accessible to her. Instead of in a field, under a tree or at the seaside, the only nature accessible to her is a flowerpot on the balcony. In no other instance in BeK do protagonists access nature, the sky, the moon except via the balcony. Neither is it a public outdoor space such as a park or a zoo, in which unforeseen interactions can occur, but it is a liminal space between a highly private indoor space that represents seclusion.

401 Taha, BeK, 9.
On the other hand, this space represents the space where people watch each other from afar. It is an interrupted communicative process (watching/being watched) that funnels into the conclusion of the constant surveillance that Sanaa criticizes. This surveillance and constant transmitting in the high-rise space causes a distance that Jay Pitter problematizes in the dichotomic place/space concept. It highlights the fragility of this liminal existence in which such place making features as stewardship, taking care of the place one inhibits, cannot be acted out.

In BeK, the inhabitants don’t display a stewardship model, in which they curate an ornamental aesthetic both socially and material. On the contrary, Sanaa stresses the fact that the balcony fulfils all other functions but the stewardship model. She underlines the fact that she actually has never planted geraniums on her balcony, and also points towards the other inhabitant’s lack of stewardship on balconies, but also in the entrance way, the staircase and elevator. The balcony is a deserted place that dwindles in between personalized space and utilitarian space.

Sanaa’s depressed mother Asija uses the balcony as an outdoor space within the confinement of the apartment. She uses the space in order to get “fresh air” and in order to access the moon for praying.402 The balcony in BeK is not only a daytime space, but much more a nighttime space. The accessibility to the sky and the moon underlines the spatial appeal of the balcony: reminiscing about a blended idea of religion, magic, and the homeland happens in connection with the sky—the natural element that is accessible and a global, universal landmark. The moon not only plays a role in pseudo-ancient rituals for Sanaa’s family, but also as a ledger for access to a former temporal and spatial memory.

402 Taha, BeK, 8.
In meinem Kopf hallt ihre Stimme aus dem Irak wider, aus der Vergangenheit [...] als sie mich fest umarmte und mir die Warzen mit ihrer Spucke wegreiben konnte, mit Mondlicht und ein paar Sprüchen.  

(In my head echoes her voice from Iraq, from the past [...] when she hugged me firmly and could rub my warts with her spit, with moonlight and a few sayings)

The sky is the environment that is most normalized for the immigrant identity: the sky looks similar above Germany and Iraq. The protagonist’s mother Asija finds herself in the in-between of arriving in Germany, yet not departing psychologically from Iraq. “Aber sie kann nicht zurück, weil es den Irak von damals nicht mehr gibt, vielleicht weiß sie das und ist deswegen verstört und betet den Mond an, um den Irak zu heilen.”404 (“But she cannot go back because there is no Iraq from that time, maybe she knows that and is therefore disturbed and worships the moon to heal Iraq.”) The ceremonial idea of healing people or, in this case, a whole country and idea of homeland, reverberates through Asija, the mother who spends her nights on the balcony in a trance.

This space allows her to have access to the sky while being physically in one space. “Abends betet sie auf dem Balkon einen Viertelmond an. Im Schein strahlt sie so schön wie eine verlorene Jungfrau. Letzte Nacht beobachtete ich sie: die fahlen Hände auf das Geländer gelegt – das Gesicht zum Vollmond gerichtet.”405 (“In the evening she worships a quarter moon on the balcony. In the light she shines as beautiful as a lost virgin. Last night I watched her: her pale hands laid on the railing, her face facing the full moon.”) The balcony is the only space to access

403 Taha, BeK, 62.
404 Taha, 79.
405 Taha, 8.
the natural environment while remaining in the apparent safe space of the confines of the apartment.

The balcony becomes the main access to the natural world, much more than the street outside of the house, or a possible park nearby. Here, the moon, the sun, the clouds, the weather are perceived, giving the illusion of being outside, when the protagonists mainly remain inside. Contrary to Sanaa, her parents represent a pre-hybrid identity in which dichotomies are central to their identity’s setup. One can claim that the portrayed identities around Sanaa’s family live in the high-rise dwelling under the illusion of being in Germany, when all habits and thoughts remain in Iraq, their “inside.” This marks the balcony as a liminal space that allows both access to a here and a there in BeK. The protagonists find themselves in an identity crisis of what Murcia calls the nowhere—neither here nor there, neither past nor now.

The author Karosh Taha foregrounds the obsession with mysticism in the protagonist's identities. Mysticism is also of liminal nature, and gives the impression of being in control/making sense of a situation, as part of a set-up of a transitional space, as indicated by Bernhard Siegert. The protagonists hope to access the power of the moon via the balcony. Another indicator of the search for signs, help, guidance, that the protagonists don’t seem to find in the physical world. The moon’s power and its worship are central to wellbeing. Not only the moon functions as a magical element that knows more than the material world, but also natural phenomena, like the fog that moves into the high-rise estate and disrupts the main level of communication. Similar to the liminality of the balcony, so can mysticism be identified as a liminal interpretation of the material and metaphysical.

6.8.4 “All Along the Watchtower”: Overview and Power

Michel de Certeau is one of many influential writers who wrote about the cartographic power in terms of overview. In an analogy, also the inhabitants of the high-rise find themselves in a situation in which their taking control over an uncontrollable situation in a liminal space emancipates them from an elevated point of view because of the high-rise’s verticality. Certeau writes:

“His elevation transforms him into a voyeur. It puts him at a distance. It transforms the bewitching world by which one was “possessed” into a text that lies before one’s eyes. It allows one to read it, to be a solar Eye, looking down like a God. The exaltation of a scopic and gnostic drive; the fiction of knowledge is related to this lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more.”

Sanaa describes the high-rise as a place of surveillance. In many instances, she feels like the person who is being monitored. The balcony has not only the function to oversee other people’s movements, but it also exposes the person on the balcony to the gaze of others. In an instance of spectacle, the balcony of Sanaa’s family becomes a stage open for embarrassment, gossip and judgement. Similarly, Sanaa points out how almost every action which happens in the high-rise’s transitional space of inside/outside are under the inhabitants’ judgement.

But also Sanaa observes, learns, judges in these transitional spaces, as are others in a constant examination of the transitional position the individuals in the high-rise are sensing:

408 Taha, BeK, 112. „Ein paar Leute blickten nach oben, zeigten auf unsere Etage, und ich verschwand in mein Schlafzimmer.“ (“A few people looked up, pointed to our floor, and I disappeared into my bedroom.”).
An Jamila muss ich denken, die auf dem Balkon klatschnasse Jeanshosen an Wäscheständern aufhängt und sich über das Geländer lehnt, um das Treiben der Männer auf dem Marktplatz zu beobachten. An Karima denke ich, die beim Fensterputzen schaut, was die Jungen auf dem Weg von der Schule nach Hause anstellen. An Baqqe muss ich denken, die beim Rauchen auf dem Balkon sieht, wie das dürre Mädchen aus dem siebten Stock an der Bushaltestelle raucht, um dann zu Tante Khalida zu laufen.409

(I have to think of Jamila hanging soaking wet jeans from her clothesline on the balcony and leaning over the railing to watch the men go about their business in the marketplace. I think of Karima who, while cleaning the windows, looks at what the boys are doing on the way home from school. I think of Baqqë, who smokes on the balcony and sees the skinny girl on the seventh floor smoking at the bus stop, then running to Aunt Khalida.)

In many instances, monitoring and being monitored form the setup of behaviour for the protagonists in BeK.

The contention is as heightened in light of the dread of surveillance that Sanaa feels trapped in both the social and spatial setup of the high-rise.

“Und ich weiß keinen Ausweg mehr, weil in jedem Moment eine Jamila, eine Karima, eine Fatima auftauchen und uns ertappen könnte, und bis zum Abend wüsste das ganze Viertel Bescheid und schaute vom Marktplatz aus auf unseren Balkon.” 410

(And I don't know a way out anymore, because at any moment a Jamila, a Karima, a Fatima could appear and catch us, and by evening the whole neighbourhood would know and look out from the market square onto our balcony.)

The space of the balcony is the space in between the inside and outside that marks their existence and challenges the inhabitants feeling of self by the means of oppression—to watch from the balcony is to affirm and redesign the non-existent boundaries between the dweller’s existence in the space between inside/outside, here/there, and back then/now.

409 Taha, 23.
410 Taha, 24.
Früher konnte ich an der Haltestelle nicht rauchen, weil ich genau wusste, dass irgend eine Hochhausfrau aus dem Fenster guckte, um Tante bei Fehlverhalten sofort Bericht zu erstatten.\textsuperscript{411}

(I used to not be able to smoke at the bus stop because I knew exactly that some high-rise woman looked out of the window to report misconduct to her aunt immediately.)

Sanaa is aware that every action she takes outside of the restraints of the high-rise is monitored by the “three hundred eighty-six eyes” of the high-rise.\textsuperscript{412}

The balcony is described as a female space—both aunt Kahlia and her mother Asija inhabit the balcony. They smoke, prey to the moon, store chairs, deposit hot pans, watch and are watched by other women. This act of watching over other inhabitants becomes the main instrument of power, when the distribution of independence, freedom of speech, and movement, and the general social ranking of gender is limited. Only the female inhabitants in BeK seem to be vulnerable to this feeling of complete surveillance, and are the ones who monitor each other, to use it as an instrument of power to degrade one another. While the men eat sunflower kernels on the bike racks and smoke marijuana without dreading to be caught, Sanaa is afraid to smoke at the bus stop, and be reported. Upon mentioning the mechanisms to her boyfriend Kemal, he can only laugh about the description, and cannot identify with the pressure which Sanaa constantly feels in the high-rise.

Wenn ich das Viertel beschreiben müsste, dann bräuchte ich keine Adjektive, sondern zwei Handvoll Verben: wachen, bewachen, überwachen, beobachten, observieren, spionieren, bespitzeln, kontrollieren, aufnehmen, inspizieren, dirigieren, reglementieren, belehren, einschätzen, kommandieren, notieren, registrieren, erfassen, taxieren, abstempeln, bemessen, bewerten, ermahnen, bedrohen, ängstigen, bestrafen.\textsuperscript{413}

\textsuperscript{411} Taha, 34.
\textsuperscript{412} Taha, 32.
\textsuperscript{413} Taha, 64.
(If I had to describe the neighbourhood, I wouldn't need adjectives, but two handfuls of verbs: watch, guard, monitor, observe, observe, spy, spy on, control, record, inspect, direct, regiment, instruct, assess, command, record, estimate, stamp, measure, evaluate, admonish, threaten, frighten, punish.)

The visual impact both of the high-rise architecture, as well as the actions performed perforate the boundaries of inside and outside. A constant negotiation of right and wrong replaces a steadfast value system that has been eroded for the main characters in BeK.

6.8.5 The Balcony as Storage Space

The balcony is a multipurpose space: it serves as an elevated space for negotiation. On the contrary, a classic indoor aspect of dwelling is performed on the balcony as well—a storage space. Jeans, winter tires, chairs: objects that don’t have a place inside of the small apartment, or as a preparation for a possible future. Although these objects are never or rarely needed, they carry an importance that makes them indispensable. Their meaning and importance are defined by the inhabitant’s feeling of being prepared and being tied to a place via the material belonging. Since basements or larger houses usually allocate space hidden away from everyday life or outside spectators, the high-rise’s architectural setup forces a liminal space like the balcony to become storage space, on display for everyone. The objects become safety deposits for what-if cases, a symbolic assurance of a timeline leading into the future.


414 Taha, 32.
(On the balconies, washed-out clothes hang motionless on the clothes horse, because even the wind does not visit the neighbourhood. On a few balconies there are flower pots without real flowers, only with dandelions that bloom there by mistake. Besides the flower pots, some residents have stacked their winter tyres on top of each other, for example the Hussein family on the sixth floor.)

The balcony functions as storage for both indoor as well as outdoor objects. Tires, extra chairs, garbage, and bicycles. This inversion of taking objects assigned to outside confinements of the dwelling, and storing them in the balcony, becomes a marker for the liminal qualities of the space. The outdoor objects don’t quite cooperate with the space: the items usually stored in outdoor spaces or garages leave marks inside — dirtiness from the outside world is being dragged into the high-rise dwellings. This underlines the contrast between the problematic inside/outside. The line between exterior spaces with distinct exterior activities blur in light of the indoor aspects of the balcony.

Ich schaue ein Stück höher, wo Tante Khalida wohnt, schaue auf die Rumpelkammer, die mal ein Balkon war. Da lagern weiße Plastikstühle für den Fall, dass sich dreißig Gäste auf einmal ankündigen, diverse Besenstiele stehen in einer Ecke mit einem traurigen Wischmopp in ihrer Mitte. Zwei Riesenantennen versperren die Sicht auf die Fenster. Das Hochhaus ist vollgestopft, da ist nicht einmal Platz für einen Liter Sonnenschein.415

(I look a bit higher up where Aunt Khalida lives, look at the junk room that used to be a balcony. There are white plastic chairs in case thirty guests announce themselves at once, various broomsticks stand in a corner with a sad mop in their middle. Two giant antennas block the view of the windows. The high-rise is full to bursting, there is not even room for a litre of sunshine.)

By engaging the balcony throughout the novel, Taha signals how time and space are defined by different markers of relevance. The balcony assembles things for the what-if cases,

415 Taha, 33.
the constant calculation of variables, marking it as a transitory space of time, as well as failed place-making. The inhabitants store belongings from the past for the future, and therefore the stored objects are not here and now, but are stored for a possible future, while being remnants of a long gone past. The author hints at the unlikeliness of the expected dimensions. This preparedness for a “what-if” is detached from reality, symbolizing a hope of a future that never arrives.

6.8.6 Lift

The lift is a distinct space of modern buildings. Invented by Elisha Otis in the mid-nineteenth century, it marked a new access to housing in the sky that had been inaccessible until then—since both construction of higher housing, but also the sheer impracticability of climbing more than four flights of stairs prevented vertical development.

The lift represents a place in which the protagonists feels vulnerable. The enclosed space marks the closeness of all inhabitants to each other that can normally be ignored on an incorporated level. The lift facilitates closeness with other inhabitants, which is dreaded yet momentary, its use is inevitable and its path unavoidable. The direct communication that happens in these elevators is different from the lived anonymity of the inhabitants. It increases what Andreas Bernhard calls the “problematic relationship between private and public space, intimacy and anonymity already evident in the stairwell.”

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416 Bernard, Lifted, 77 and 83. “it reflects the vertical order that remained in effect in mass tenements into the twentieth century, with its center on the second floor, the so-called bel étage, and a continuous decrease in value the closer one approached the outer limits of basement and garret”

417 Bernard, 192.
The main protagonist Sanaa describes the confrontation of different people in the lift as a claustrophobic event, in which an outdoor space of travelling is ascribed with indoor qualities that force intimate interaction.

Im Aufzug hoffe ich, auf niemanden zu treffen, aber er hält auf der fünften Etage an und Baqqe und Herr Zakholy steigen ein, ein altes Ehepaar aus Zakho. Baqqe heißt eigentlich Frau Zakholy, aber weil sie wie ein Frosch aussieht, nenne ich sie »Baqqe«. Sie ist Tante Khalidas engste Vertraute und sicherste Quelle. »Hallo, Hübsche, wie geht es dir?« Ich antworte ihr, ohne sie anzuschauen, weil ihr neugieriger Mund mich verschlucken könnte. Und die Frauen reden, wenn sie im Supermarkt von ihr nicht gegrüßt werden. Asija bemerkt sie höchstens im Aufzug, wenn es unvermeidbar ist.418

(In the elevator I hope not to meet anyone, but he stops on the fifth floor and Baqqe and Mr. Zakholy, an old couple from Zakho, get in. Baqqe is actually Mrs. Zakholy, but because she looks like a frog, I call her "Baqqe". She is Aunt Khalida's closest confidante and safest source. "Hello, handsome, how are you?" I answer her without looking at her because her curious mouth could swallow me. And the women talk when they're not greeted by her in the supermarket. Asija only notices them in the elevator when it is unavoidable.)

The lift forces the inhabitants to interact with each other, which is generally coined as an unpleasant experience, since it questions the conventions of privacy of an indoor space. The cross-over of outdoor and indoor experience increase the discomfort of Sanaa.

Friendly pleasantries can be exchanged inside of the lift. The male character, Herr Zakholy, does not impose judgement onto her, and an encounter with him represents a pleasant situation.


418 Taha, 19.
habe nichts gegen seine Anwesenheit. Am liebsten würde ich mit ihm hundert Etagen hochfahren, damit ich ihm alles erzählen kann.\textsuperscript{419}

(In the elevator, I meet Baqqe's husband, Mr. Zakholy. Since I've known him, he's been smiling at me in the elevator. We see each other more often in the elevator, he is my elevator buddy - I have nothing against his presence. I'd love to take him up a hundred floors so I can tell him everything.)

In the light of Herr Zakholy being not only silent and smiling, therefore ridding the interaction of judgement and hierarchical management, Sanaa wants to travel “a hundred floors” upwards with him. Sanaa underlines with this statement that it is possible to free the inhabitants of the rules which the architecture imposes on them.

6.9 Conclusion

Karosh Taha’s novel \textit{Beschreibung einer Krabbenwanderung} illustrates the parallels of liminal and transitional spaces and identities. Different post-migrant models can be identified in the protagonist’s setup, meandering between hybrid identity as described by Homi Bhabha and transitional concepts of Perez Murcia and Erol Yildiz. At the core of Karosh Taha’s novel is the discrepancy between space- and place-making: indoor and outdoor spaces have features which distribute and encourage surveillance and hierarchical oversight, instead of encouraging and nurturing feelings of “home”.

Similar to the findings of sociologist Perez Murcia, the protagonist’s parents display a forlornness that is marked by both temporal and spatial markers, which Murcia coins with the term \textit{nowhere}. The steady thinking back to a country both in a temporal but also spatial and cultural capacity prevents these figures from developing a notion of sedentarism in both a

\textsuperscript{419} Taha, 66.
temporal and spatial sense—they are kept up in the in-between, but not in Bhabha’s sense: their liminal position is not a positive third space as described by Bhabha and his idea of hybridity. The liminal position is never-ending, a loop in a twilight zone out of which there is no temporal nor spatial escape. Similarly, the elevator is a distinct high-rise space in which the protagonists perform immediateness on the basis of a forced interaction, on the contrary to the balcony, which is all about mediated, indirect, non-physical communication.

The co-isolation\textsuperscript{420} of the inhabitants is challenged in the elevator. The elevator forces interaction of isolated entities and confronts the protagonists with their social environment on a superficial level. The elevator represents a space that mediates between the isolation of the apartment and the outside. It transitions the protagonist and is a necessary vehicle which is unavoidable. It neither belongs to the inside nor the outside, it is a space in which the strict utilitarian notion of space is performed.

The high-rise in \textit{Beschreibung einer Krabbenwanderung} is a protagonist that breathes, stores, shakes, and foremost controls the inhabitants, which they reproduce by monitoring each other. The high-rise as a homogenic post-migrant space keeps the inhabitants in a liminal loop, which appears impossible to break out of in the confinements of the high-rise dwelling. The high-rise district, which is the main setting of the novel, plays the main role in the novel. Without this distinct architectural setup, most of the narrative threads cannot exist.

The density of people who have a view over each other creates power dimensions not possible without the high-rise and its particular spaces, like the balcony or the lift. The balcony represents liminalities in a spatial definition of inside and outside and creates therefore a space

\textsuperscript{420} Sloterdijk, “Anthropo-Technology.”, 40-44.
that reinforces a liminal cultural identity but also bares problematic loop-shaped processes of time, space, and identity. It gives access to an illusion of nature, which remains fictional. It enables the storage of objects that are not used in the present, and it enables access to a mystical and seemingly natural gaze onto the sky, a space that can be considered universal, not tied to markers of time and space.
Chapter 7: Conclusion

“Wo wir uns finden” - “where we find ourselves”

High-rise mass dwellings are an international phenomenon in the century of architectural modernism. The outlines of the above-named conditions exist in nearly every country on the globe. So why is it particularly relevant to the context of German media representation?

My thesis has shown how massive high-rise dwellings share material communalities across the globe, but are specific to their context and intentionality of their medial representation and interpretation. I want to briefly turn to what lies beyond the general problems of materiality posed by high-rises and look at a distinctly German notion which has been addressed in the past chapters.

In 1963, a small review of a coffee-table book titled “Deutschland im Farbbild” (“Germany in Technicolour”) appeared under the headline “Kein schöner Land” in the FAZ, alluding to one of Germany’s most famous folk songs, written in 1833. The book displays photographs of different landscapes and architecture of postwar Germany. The author underlines the sentiment of discomfort in light of the friction between romanticized patriotism and placemaking in Germany. The author relegates a certain apologist notion upon photographing German landscapes. According to him, modernist architecture such as the high-rise mass dwelling of Bremen Neue Vahr, serve as an apology in order to balance out an undesired landscape “accumulation”.

“Fast wie eine Entschuldigung für solche Anhäufungen vertrauter Motive wirken ein paar artistische Aufnahmen, ein paar moderne Objekte: die nächtliche Hohenzollernbrücke in

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421 From the lyrics of “Abendlied”/“Kein schöner Land”: “Wo wir uns finden wohl unter Linden zur Abendzeit“.
Köln, breite Ackerfurchen im Chiemgau, das Thyssen-Hochhaus in Düsseldorf, das hannoversche Messegelände, die „Neue Vahr" in Bremen.”

(“A few artistic shots, a few modern objects appear almost like an apology for such accumulations of familiar motifs: the Hohenzollern Bridge in Cologne at night, wide arable furrows in the Chiemgau, the Thyssen high-rise in Düsseldorf, the Hanover trade fair grounds, the “Neue Vahr” in Bremen.”)

This article represents the predicament which has been depicted in the past chapters, in which modernism in Germany functioned as an escape from and an apology for National Socialist romanticism—even if it was just a cover-up amongst continuities as outlined in Chapter Three.

The author of the coffee table book review continues to describe this simple book of landscape photography as an achievement which balances the tainted topic of “Heimatgefühl” (“sense of a homeland”) and the daunting past.

“Hier ist ein gefühlsbetontes, „romantisches” — im positiven Sinne — Buch entstanden für Betrachter, die das darin abgebildete Land lieben, die Heimatgefühl noch rein und unverbildet zu genießen verstehen.

(“Here is an emotional, "romantic" — in the positive sense — book for viewers who love the country depicted in it, who still know how to enjoy the feeling of home in a pure and unspoiled way.”)

It appears he needs to stress the fact that a romantic notion can be interpreted as positive. Also, he suggests that those who can still enjoy a “Heimatgefühl” (“sense of a homeland”) are particularly gifted with the rare skill to be able to feel a sense of connection to home. Not the architecture, but how it is understood, presented and reflected in regards to homemaking and placemaking has been at the core of this thesis. In the media analysis of the representation, I have offered deeper perspectives about the nation concept, Vergangenheitsbewältigung and mobility and placemaking.
This thesis has shown how a general concept of architecture can be rephrased depending on the intentionality of politics—and displayed in different media. All of the authors I have discussed in the past chapters tried to make sense of the place they find themselves in. Questions which pertain migration have been evoked in every chapter, and might be most pronounced in a country like Germany, which had to rebuild an (often artificial) national identity in order to put it into convergence with a past identity: the photographer who takes photographs in order to visually signal a new start from the political past and traumatic destruction of homes; the journalist, as well as the architect, who change only a handful of adjectives in a speech or an article in order to be able to save face in light of their past, and still be able to talk about their work without evoking too many parallels; the author of children’s books, who recognizes a shift of how (and where) children ought to behave in this apparent new world full of contrarian generational ideas; the urban youth in countries that share a similar fascist past, such as Germany and Japan, who find themselves in a mobilized and segregated society, where not only transportation, but also time and trauma are facilitated by urban structures; and the inhabitants of an author who addresses the topic of migration, such as Karosh Taha, whose protagonists try to come to terms with their past in a country that is grappling with its identity, surrounded by people who are trying to do the same (“Als wäre es in Deutschland so einfach Deutsch zu sein”, “As if it was that easy to be German in Germany”, as mentioned in Can and Akcit). All these chapters have shown how Germany’s post-war history reverberates through all aspects of life and media - especially in relation to core values such as place/Heimat/home, and its corresponding material iterations of dwelling. Urbanity, and densified buildings are here to stay. Migration is here to stay. Hybrid, liminal and transient forms of living are here to stay and will challenge the definitions of home and place and what people
understand as a nation, or respectively, what it has ever meant and will mean to feel connection to a place and culture.

My chapters have shown how architecture contributes to softening or strengthening patterns of segregation and surveillance, thereby demonstrating how crucial an interdisciplinary analysis is. Understanding urban design and architecture as both a narrative strategy as well as a medium is fundamental in order to grasp placemaking strategies.

As outlined in the last chapter, high-rise mass dwellings illustrate a difficult connection to the concept of “home”. A home that makes it possible to escape or to come home to—a coming home to oneself, to an identity that is connected to the history, the landscape and the community, in whatever iteration this is facilitated. Architecture is a vehicle of the transcendental process of nostos, but placemaking and homecoming is facilitated in a complex mesh of interdisciplinary approaches.

7.1 Overview

One of the goals of this study was to critically analyse the mechanisms behind the shifts of the high-rise’s reputation in the mesh of history and identity as complex as in postwar Germany. While the high-rise’s negative connotation hadn’t been assumed from the beginning, the visual and textual analysis displayed an emphasis on a photographic communication of a “new start.”

In addition, the analysis of the collection of articles displayed continuities in both authorship as well as portrayed individuals, contributing to the ongoing catalogue of underestimated continuities of personnel after WWII between National Socialist political operators and postwar West Germany. With that, the specificity of pedagogical and intentional
literature widened the scope on how life was perceived or assumed for inhabitants in fiction and interactive fiction.

The analysis of children’s literature has brought to light how bewildering and alien new technologies, as well as spatial allocations, were to certain inhabitants of the new form of dwelling. At the same time, the generational divide, illustrated by the watchman, has shown how different one generation was from the other.

In the analysis of an interactive medium, the G&W, I showed that a high percentage of Nintendo’s early mobile games used the high-rise as a game environment that drove the gameplay. By applying ludology theories, I singled out motivational game drivers and the high-rise’s enmeshment with cultural, historical, and social configurations.

Lastly, I addressed the contemporary stigmatization of the high-rise. By pointing at the interface of social and material configurations in the high-rise, I reinterpreted the aspects of space- vs. place-making with focus on the transitionality. In a broader picture, the findings inform space- vs. placemaking practices.

7.2 Relevance

In accordance with the title of this dissertation, Engaging the High-rise in German Media Culture - Aspects of Vertical living 1945-2020, I argued that understanding space goes beyond its material configuration. Overall, the thesis added to existing conversations about understanding the high-rise’s historical inscriptions. Rather than administering a textual analysis of one literary work, this study demonstrated the interdisciplinary multitudes and reverberations of newly introduced architectural concepts.
It is my opinion that the high-rise’s implementation as a solution to a problem of spiritual and material homelessness triggered other challenges. That said, the media analysis also offers insights not only into the topic of high-rises, but also into digital gaming, journalism, and social and cultural components.

A central limitation of this or any study on architecture arises from the complexity of the topic. With any study on a multifaceted topic, the limitation of having to select only a few approaches and having to draw larger conclusions poses a problem. Since the thesis covers a timeline of more than sixty years, the specificity of each community, configurations, medium, and time cannot be addressed. That said, the aspects and evocations I have raised have covered an adequate overview to further conversations on the relevance of architecture in media—interactive, public, and literary fiction included. Modernist mass architecture has remained the same in the past seventy years. In places like Vancouver, BC, where I wrote this dissertation, the effect and its discussion of densification and mass dwellings has never been as prominent as in the past decade. Big scale housing appears to be the answer to problems of migration, homelessness and an intended “new start” that is disconnected from the past culture.

7.3 Chapter’s findings

The analysis of photography as applied to the articles of the newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung leads to insights that before-and-after photography was applied to underline its dramatic and positive change from rubble cities to modern cities. High-rises are not just seen as a solution to the crisis but also as a way of repudiating the past. The end of the postwar era in 1965 marks the end of the foremost positive reporting done on high-rises in FAZ during the 1950s.
The findings of Chapter Three expand on claims of continuities and deepen the understanding of reviewer and reviewed. The continuities of personnel expand beyond the architectural configuration, but they reach into the reporting done on the high-rise phenomena. The means of linguistic pomp remain similar, but its ideological backdrop appears erased.

The fourth chapter uses the genre of children’s literature and tries to elaborate on the connection between the high-rise’s outdoor and indoor space. The genre of children’s literature offered a different angle than the newspaper analysis of the first two chapters: it displays the pedagogical problematization the authors intended to address in a very overt way. At the same time, it served as a pedagogical medium to communicate with the generations growing up in high-rises in the form of a “how to” (or “how to not…”) guide for living in a high-rise. Concludingly, the findings of the fourth chapter show the aspect of social segregation. With the intended assignment of each space to its function, the interactive and interdisciplinary involvement of the children protagonists points to problems of exclusion of whichever forces are deemed unsuitable for the targeted design of the high-rise mass dwelling. Although no author intends to criticize this segregation, the analysis of the portrayed indoor and outdoor spaces have proven to point exactly at that.

The fifth chapter discusses architecture not as a literary text or a representation in the press, but as a symbol that drives the gameplay due to its overbearing impression. Due to the games’ endemic qualities of interaction and confrontation, the gameplay uses deep-rooted fears that it turns into game accelerators. My findings underline a strong involvement with built environments in the early handheld game console. By analysing the game environments and its driving force behind the gameplay, I show that Nintendo’s Game & Watch used high-rise dwellings as a space of conflict and gamified the existing fears around the new housing concept.
In a second step, I identified German journalism, such as gaming magazines and installations as agents that litigate time management and mobility in the context of the games.

The last chapter returned to a literary analysis and close reading of literary fiction. My findings affirmed for a second time the problematized context of the high-rise as more than a dichotomic inside/outside facilitator as seen in Chapter Four. I show how the author Karosh Taha uses the space of the high-rise dwelling in order to address post-migrant topics of liminality, mobility, but also surveillance.

Overall, the findings have demonstrated the malleability of the high-rise presentation. Thereby, it indicates that the high-rise as a mass phenomenon also functions as a medium that stores, transmits, and processes information and serves as the object of the same functions in order to not only shape the built environment, but also the constructed environment of memory and social context.

7.4 Outlook

While the chapters of this thesis have been looking back in time, they have touched on topics which will be of even bigger importance in the future.

Firstly, urbanization and densification in heterogenous environments have been, and ever will be of relevance. The discussion which this thesis has proposed on architecture’s socio-cultural feedback loop is important to note when talking about the big topics of the twenty-first century of increasing urbanization and concepts of sedentary fluidity.

Secondly, the power of how media displays and shapes public opinions which exceed material configurations has been shown in the analysis of press and press photography. Architecture and living arrangements can help facilitate increasing questions of urbanization and
non-sedentarism in light of segregation. Both at the level of literary analysis, as well as its broader embedment into socio-cultural dynamics there is a marked attention to liminal spaces which are architecturally created in order to facilitate unwanted effects of segregation. This could be shown in the form of expanding research onto further novels which are making use of architectural space as a signifier of existing imbalances, or in the form of broadening the scope into other genres, such as film. The connection between media use and mobility has been shown in several chapters, and the findings of this thesis enhance the conversation about the enmeshment of the handheld and the environment in the twenty-first century.

As described in Chapter Four and Chapter Six, the correlations of mobility, displacement and segregation ask for an expansion in an age in which our very existence, including social contacts, professional life and leisure have become handheld.

This is relevant especially in altering concepts of nation states and its corresponding identity making. In a bigger picture, the relations of mindfulness of place – where and who are we if we are digital? – have been peripherally dealt with in Chapter Five, but its expansion is something I consider absolutely central for any discussions around migration and placemaking.

In the specific case of West Germany, the high-rise was a solution to a big scale problem of destruction, material and spiritual homelessness, and migration. There is an ongoing, and maybe even more present problem of radicalization in echo chambers and digital platforms in an ever increasing heterogenization of society. I have applied tools in order to analyze the interconnectivity of identity, culture and place, but I believe that this methodological framework can be applied for other socio-cultural and media analyses, such as general communication revolving around health, migration, social injustices, racism and the environment.
Today, the densification of urban centers, which goes hand in hand with similar urban tropes such as globalization, the questioning of the concept of nation state in a digitalized world, and of course migration brings similar questions to light. The media display of living arrangements, but also more fundamental questions such as what verticality means in connection with control, surveillance and being surveilled, offer literary and media inquiries pertaining to topics of placemaking.

In the case of Germany, Europe, or many other countries, the question of friction of identity concepts which are based on a country’s past create questions and media answers to which I have spoken in this thesis. It is therefore crucial to understand in which way placemaking in a globalized world is confronted with questions of migration and the questions about the nation state.

My conclusions have contributed to the media discussion of powerful, and omnipresent mediums such as visuality and ludology. These now digital cultural techniques are at the very centre of digital existence in the twenty-first century. The way I have analyzed gaming environments and the enmeshment with time of the photograph provide tools for insights into the effects of visual markers and their function as more than a mirrored image of reality. These tools are applicable to a myriad of influential cultural artefacts. Especially in an increasingly gamified reality, in which the trip to the supermarket offers gamified rewards, or exercising contributes to a higher score, a close analysis of everyday gamification and its implications are connected to the findings in Chapter Four.

This thesis offers insights into and interdisciplinary approaches to the media articulations of a specific architectural form. At the same time, it highlights the importance of place- vs. spacemaking, and, ultimately, the defining markers of what is loosely defined as home. The
simple act of dwelling cannot be multiplied and reinstalled countless times without simultaneously touching on every other aspect of life: it calls for the recognition of forms of non-sedentary living and how these might suggest, in turn, new modes of liminality of space, time, tradition, roots, culture, nation states, and memory.
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Videos


Gawaleus, Die Story Game&Watch Mickey Mouse MC-25, 1:05, 2009 January 10.

Appendices

Appendix A

List and short description of G&W games

**Ball (Jolly Jongleur)** – the player prevents balls from dropping to the floor

**Chef (Verrückte Küche)** – the player has to catch the fish tossed up by his pan

**Donkey Kong (Donkey Kong)** – At a high-rise construction site, Donkey Kong has to avoid barrels rolling down the different levels

**Donkey Kong II (Donkey Kong II)** – the player has to avoid the birds in order to get to the gorilla locked up in a cage

**Donkey Kong Junior (Donkey Kong Junior)** – DK is kept in a cage and Mario has to free him in a Jungle environment

**Fire I, II (Rettung im Sprungtuch/Hilfe, es brennt)** – the player controls two firemen carrying a stretcher in order to bounce people falling form a burning high-rise into an ambulance

**Fire Attack (Blockhaus in Flammen)** – the player has to hit the attackers to avoid them burning his blockhouse

**Greenhouse (Green House)** – the player has to spray insecticide on to the pests

**Helmet (Vorsicht Werkzeug)** – the player has to avoid falling tools dropping down from a high-rise construction

**Judge (Das Hammer-Duell)** – the player hits the opponent with a hammer or avoids the opponent’s hits
Lion *(Der Löwe ist los!)* – the player controls two wards in order to stop the lion from exiting the cage

Manhole *(Achtung Graben!)* – the player saves pedestrians from falling into the manhole

Mario’s Cement Factory *(Marios Zement Fabrik)* – the player has to manoeuvre a cement factory by opening handles to unload cement into the trucks while taking elevators and avoid falling down

Mickey&Donald *(Mickey&Donald)* – the player has to extinguish a fire in a high-rise building

Mickey Mouse *(Mickey Mouse im Hühnerstall)* – the player tries to catch the eggs falling out of the hen’s pens

Octopus *(Schnapp den Schatz)* – the player has to avoid the octopus’ tentacles and get to the treasure

Oil Panic *(Öl-Panik)* – the player has to catch the oil drops at a gas station while a car is being filled

Parachute *(Sprung in die Hölle)* – the player has to use a barge to get troops from the river onto shore

Popeye *(Popeyes Bootsausflug)* – the player tries to avoid the items thrown at him by his wife Olivia

Snoopy Tennis *(Snoopy spielt Tennis)* – the player has to hit the tennis balls

Mario Bros. *(Mario Brothers)* – the player has to manoeuvre over and under walls, while avoiding hawk-like creatures

Turtle Bridge *(Die lebende Brücke)* – the player has to jump over lined up turtles to get to the other side

Vermin *(Maulwurfsjagd)* – the player hits moles as they surface from their tunnels.