

**Beyond the *Baustelle*:  
Redefining Berlin's Contemporary Cinematic Brand as that of a  
Global Media City**

Luke Vincent Postlethwaite

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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## Abstract

German unification caused a seismic shock within Berlin and this has been reflected in the studies on the city which have been released over the last two decades. In particular, Berlin has become synonymous with chaotic urban renewal, with academic discourse casting the city as a location in transition. Yet, as society moves on from the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the fall of the Wall, contemporary Berlin bears little resemblance to this image of a work-in-progress city. Therefore, my aim in this thesis is to transcend recent academic debates and explore the 'new' city which has begun to emerge. To achieve this, I investigate the relationship which exists between Berlin and cinema. Indeed, throughout my analysis I offer an original discussion of Berlin's contemporary cinematic image by focussing on the manner in which branding is being used to promote the city's transformed urban space and societal structures. I start by demonstrating how the activities and marketing efforts of the city's film professionals avoid the stereotypes of the past to promote a wholly-positive image of Berlin as a hedonistic and well-equipped global media city. This view then informs my subsequent analysis of contemporary Berlin-set films. Significantly, although these films also show Berlin to be a pleasure-seeking hub for young creatives, they project a more critical vision of the city. Above all, these films highlight the problematic dark-side which many of the city's inhabitants have discovered to be part of Berlin's new found global media city status. As a result, my in-depth discussion of the city's cinematic brand demonstrates that, whilst Berlin may no longer be cast as a location in flux on screen, the city's transformation into a creative hotspot for international pleasure-seekers has created a complex and challenging reality for many of Berlin's inhabitants.

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## Introduction: Beyond the *Baustelle*

At the start of November 2014 Berlin society commemorated the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the fall of the Wall. For three days people from all over the world flocked to the city to take part in an array of events, which included exhibitions, formal receptions and a concert at the *Brandenburger Tor*<sup>1</sup>. The centrepiece to these celebrations was the *Lichtgrenze*<sup>2</sup>, an installation of 8,000 balloons developed by the Berlin-based artist Christopher Bauder, which followed the former route of the Wall for 15km through the middle of the city. Between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> November these balloons were illuminated every evening, before being released into the night sky at the culmination of the weekend's events. The glowing white balloons were designed to act as a reminder of both the former division of Berlin's urban space and the events which ultimately led to unification. As those behind the installation write on the *Lichtgrenze's* official website; "It was people taking to the streets en masse and bravely defying a dictator which enabled the fall of the Wall and a peaceful revolution. Therefore, the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the fall of the Wall should also set as many people as possible in motion (both intellectually and literally)"<sup>3</sup> (*berlin.de*: 2014). To this extent these aims were achieved, as millions took to Berlin's streets to see the installation. In fact, the cultural impact of the event was such that '*Lichtgrenze*' was voted German word of the year in December 2014, whilst a month later Miss Germany paid homage to the installation during the 'national dress' section of the Miss Universe pageant, taking to the stage in a graffiti covered outfit, holding a bunch of white balloons.

Given the resonance that the *Lichtgrenze* had for the city's population, the installation offers a good indication of the legacy of unification and the role this history continues to play in contemporary Berlin. Significantly, although the *Lichtgrenze* followed the actual path of the Wall, the balloons acted as a symbolic and ethereal recreation of the true horror of division. As Stefan Jacobs writes, rather than mirroring the solid, impenetrable band of concrete that dissected the city for over a quarter of a century, these balloons were "fragile and slight"<sup>4</sup> (*Der Tagesspiegel*: 2014). These are sentiments echoed by Lothar Heinke, who states; "When faced with the delicate balloons you need to use your

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<sup>1</sup> Brandenburg Gate

<sup>2</sup> Border of Lights (Translations author's own and provided for guidance only)

<sup>3</sup> Menschen, die massenhaft auf die Straße gingen und einer Diktatur mutig die Stirn boten, haben den Mauerfall und die Friedlich Revolution ermöglicht. Auch zum 25. Jahrestag des Mauerfalls sollen sich möglichst viele Menschen in Bewegung setzen (gedanklich und tatsächlich)

<sup>4</sup> fragil und leicht

imagination to picture the substantial mass of the Wall“<sup>5</sup> (*Der Tagesspiegel*: 2014). As Figure 1 shows, the phantasmagorical qualities of the *Lichtgrenze* were captured in the promotional video, *Visualisierung Lichtgrenze (Visualisation of the Border of Lights)*, which was produced following the event and made available on the website *berlin.de*. The press release surrounding the installation may have stated that the aim was to bring people onto Berlin’s streets, but the overriding impression left by the *Lichtgrenze* was of the installation’s eerie presence in the city, as the images captured on the video are all of empty spaces, uncannily filled by the balloons. Therefore, the installation offered a haunting, emblematic reminder of the city’s past, an approach which was starkly different from the manner in which this anniversary had previously been commemorated.

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<sup>5</sup> Fantasie ist gefragt, will man sich angesichts der zarten Ballons die schwere Mauermaße vorstellen



Figure 1: Haunting images of the Lichtgrenze in berlin.de's Visualisierung Lichtgrenze<sup>6</sup>

For example, the centrepiece for events to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, five years earlier, had been a similar installation along a stretch of the Wall's former route. However, instead of balloons, large blocks of concrete, which resembled those that had been used to build the actual Wall, were lined up in front of the *Brandenburger Tor*. The faithful

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<sup>6</sup> ©Ralph Larmann

recreation of the look and feel of the Wall for this 2009 installation was so great that these replica blocks even possessed the graffiti which famously covered much of the western side of the Wall, although this time these images had been drawn by local community groups. These blocks were then symbolically toppled like dominoes, in an event which offered a more literal recreation of the events of 1989 for a city which was in the final throws of overcoming the seismic shock of unification. Hence, this shift from the physical memorial of these Wall-like dominoes to the symbolism of the *Lichtgrenze* demonstrates a wider move within Berlin society with regard to the role that the history of division and the legacy of unification now plays within the city. Whereas for much of the last 25 years Berlin's inhabitants have been battling to cope with the changes brought about by unification, both in terms of the impact this had on their identity as Berliners and within the altering urban space of the city, this process is no longer a dominant concern for society. The city may still be haunted by its divided past, but Berlin's urban space and the daily life which now fills this reunified topography have moved beyond being defined by such a history.

However, the academic discourse surrounding the post-unification city has been slow to reflect this change. Therefore, the aim of my investigation in this thesis is to begin to address this oversight, by offering a timely and original exploration of the images and lifestyles which have now replaced the view of Berlin as a location in transition within the prevailing reputation of the city. To achieve this, my analysis looks to examine Berlin through the medium of cinema, as the nature of film production and exhibition means that cinema influences both Berlin's economic standing and the image of the city being promoted around the world, a relationship which offers a useful lens through which to consider Berlin's contemporary identity. In particular, I will highlight the prominence of ideas surrounding Berlin as a hedonistic city full of creative people found within cinema and how the different facets of Berlin's film industry are developing such a view. In place of the work-in-progress image which defined Berlin immediately following the fall of the Wall, the cinematic vision of the city has evolved into one more in line with the view of Berlin as a global media city. This is a reputation which Stefan Krätke, in his discussion of Berlin's creative industries, defines as being; "characterised by an overlap between the locational networks of global media firms in the urban economic space" (2011: 152). Thus, it is such a construction of Berlin which informs my investigation. Nevertheless, before moving on to my analysis itself, I will first set out the background to my argument, in order to provide context for what follows. Throughout my thesis I draw on a diverse array of academic work, including city branding theory, ideas surrounding cinematic cities, and arguments linked to

the process of German unification, to highlight scholarly trends found across cinema's engagement with the city. Ultimately, it is this interdisciplinary approach which will allow me to illustrate the complexities at work within contemporary Berlin cinema, and so demonstrate exactly what specific characteristics inform Berlin's global media city status.

### *Towards a Cinematic Brand*

The celebrations to mark the fall of the Wall are not the only time since 1989 that the urban space of Berlin has been used as the site of a public exploration into the state of the city, and the implications this has for the collective identity being projected by Berliners. Following unification, Berlin society was thrown into chaos, as the city's urban space underwent a period of intense rebuilding and renovation, which aimed to bring the two divided parts of Berlin together into one coherent topography. Yet, during the 1990s, rather than attempt to cover up this somewhat frenzied process, the local government embraced the city's rebuilding as an opportunity to reposition Berlin's image on the world stage, beyond the view of Berlin as an abnormal, political hotspot which had existed during division. As Claire Colomb writes; "The emerging landscape of the new Berlin under construction was not only being physically built, it was also *staged* for visitors and Berliners and marketed to the world through city marketing events and campaigns which featured the iconic architecture of large-scale urban redevelopment sites" (2012: 1) (italics in original). Therefore, as Colomb's work on Berlin's post-unification identity highlights, the city's local decision-makers turned to the principle of place marketing to redefine Berlin's reputation. As a result, the motivations and outputs of this place marketing approach are a key component to my investigation in the following chapters.

This place marketing practice is a process which Colomb goes on to define as; "[being based] on the assumption that people's attitudes towards a city [...] are influenced by the visual representations, depictions and descriptions of that place, conveyed through various media, and not solely by their personal experiences of a place" (2012: 18). Consequently, following the fall of the Wall, a variety of different marketing initiatives, involving a diverse range of media, were adopted in an attempt to begin to reinvent Berlin's identity towards something which better reflected the potential of the newly unified city. For example, as Andreas Huyssen writes, the local government used slogans such as *Berlin wird*<sup>7</sup>, which featured on the hoardings covering several major building sites, to position the city's post-unification transformation as a process which would eventually

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<sup>7</sup> Berlin becomes

lead to a better future (2003: 54). Furthermore, the building sites themselves were promoted as part of Berlin's places of interests. This was achieved through the *Schaustelle Berlin*<sup>8</sup> initiative, which involved both opening the city's building sites to the public as visitor attractions and the construction of visitor centre-style temporary structures next to building sites. An example of this was the *Infobox*, which was constructed during the rebuilding of *Potsdamer Platz*. This temporary visitor centre offered members of the public an opportunity to discover more about the plans for Berlin's regeneration. As Janet Ward states; "Out of the enormous *Baustelle*<sup>9</sup> was thus born a great *Schaustelle*, a phrase that the entire city adopted as a self-celebratory outdoor exhibit of itself and its own transformational construction sites" (2011: 306).

This strategy of applying place marketing techniques to shape Berlin's post-unification reputation revolved around developing a brand image for the city which celebrated the possibilities that existed within Berlin's redevelopment. Therefore, it is not just place marketing but the specificities of branding that are at the heart of my own investigation into Berlin's current reputation, as I look to establish the contemporary cinematic brand being disseminated by the city's film industry. This idea of promoting a city through a strong brand is particularly effective due to the fact that, as Andy Pike claims; "What values and meanings people ascribe to specific brands and how they respond to branding [...] are entangled in their own socio-spatial relations and identities and their perceptions" (2011: 7). As a result, Berlin's government has not been alone in turning to the principles of marketing and branding to influence how their city is viewed. Whilst branding as a marketing concept has long been used by businesses as a way of differentiating their products from those of their rivals to gain a competitive advantage, this is no longer the only way that branding is used. As Andrew Harris argues; "This widespread deployment of branding practices has extended to the form and function of cities. From buildings and districts to whole metropolitan regions, attempts have been made to re-image perceptions of urban space" (2011: 188). Throughout the world, local governments and business leaders now actively look to exploit the power of branding through city brands, which aim to positively influence and market individual cities for financial gains. I will investigate the rationale behind such a development and the impact of this growth in city branding in more detail in Chapter 1, but what is important to understand here is that, as Harris goes on to claim, acknowledging how cities' 'feel', how

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<sup>8</sup> Showcase Berlin

<sup>9</sup> Building site



they look, and the values they represent has become a crucial part of branding methods (2011: 190).

However, as branding has become more widely applied to a greater array of activities and areas that make up city life, the use of city brands has also become an increasingly complicated process to define. As Stephanie Hemelryk Donald and John G. Gammack write; “Something as complex as a city may be theorised, represented, imagined and experienced in ways infinitely more complex than those applicable to the products upon which branding theory was developed” (2007: 56). The traditional concept of a brand may be that it is a controlled and constructed image for a particular product, but such a definition is no longer applicable for contemporary city brands. As the advocates of city branding have looked to incorporate more of the everyday elements of the city into their activities, the brand identity developed by such an approach has resisted the singular definition traditionally looked for by brand theorists. As Keith Dinnie argues, the complexities and demands of the modern-day city has led to a fragmented concept of city branding that sees a number of different brands, each linked to a different aspect of the city and each aimed at a different target audience, come together to inform and define what is ultimately understood as the contemporary identity of any given location (2010: 4). Although some of these brands can be managed and controlled by city agencies, others are more organic constructs, which means that the contemporary “brandscape” of cities is full of both complementary and contradictory brands that merge together to inform overall perceptions of the city (Harris: 2011: 188).

This means that it is difficult for academics to investigate an all-encompassing city brand, as such a view now rarely exists. Hence, the focus of academic discussion has shifted to exploring the consumption of these various fragmented city brands, in an attempt to try and understand the range and nature of the current identities being developed by city branding activities. This more targeted approach by academics has resulted in recent studies emerging which explore city branding within such diverse spheres as modern art projects (Harris: 2011), culinary promotion (Richard Tellström: 2010) and themed tours (Stijn Reijnders: 2011). Similarly, my motivations for exploring the film industry in Berlin are also linked to such an approach. The reputation for Berlin present within cinema may be just one version of the city found within the modern-day ‘brandscape’ of Berlin, but by focussing on the activities of Berlin’s film professionals, I will be able to explore the specificities of the city’s image in film and so develop a nuanced and multi-faceted view of the city’s contemporary cinematic brand.

## *Cinema and the City*

In addition to drawing on place-branding theory, my investigation into Berlin's present-day cinematic brand also makes use of the work of theorists exploring the relationship between cities and cinema. This link has become an ever more important part of academic discourse within film studies since scholars such as David B. Clarke (1997) and Mark Shiel (2001) highlighted the need for the city to take greater prominence in discussions on cinema in the late 1990s and early 2000s. As Shiel states; "Thematically, the cinema has, since its inception, been fascinated with the presentation of the distinctive spaces, lifestyles, and human conditions of the city" (2001: 1). Yet, as Clarke argues, the problem was that; "[...] despite the immediately perceptible cinematic qualities that cities frequently seem to possess, and despite the uncredited role played by the city in so many films, relatively little theoretical attention has been directed towards understanding the relationship between urban and cinematic space" (1997: 1). Therefore, over the last two decades academics have begun to explore this relationship, in order illustrate the role which the city plays within cinema.

Central to this approach has been the fact that, as James Donald writes; "One thing cinema [...] has continued to do since the nineteen twenties has been to teach its audiences across the globe ways of seeing and so imagining the modern city, whether or not they live in one. The imagined landscape of the city has become, inescapably, a cinematic landscape" (1999: 68). Therefore, academic investigations into cinema and the city have looked to understand these 'cinematic landscapes' through an examination of both the urban lifestyles found in film narratives and the representation of cities' topographies on screen. This approach has then allowed for a picture to be drawn of the sort of characteristics and images which cinema attributes to certain locations. As Hemelryk Donald and Gammack state; "The cinema [...] affords insights into how a city tells its own stories, and thereby builds its self-perception and the perception of others. New Yorkers are loud, self-obsessed, funny, clever and urbane. Londoners are either suave and class-conscious or edgy and disposed to crime. At least, that is what we learn from films" (2007: 3).

However, whilst much of the work on the relationship between cinema and the city exclusively focuses on the images of urban centres found within films made about a particular location, my investigation into Berlin's cinematic brand takes a broader definition of what is meant by cinema. This approach is influenced by Shiel's argument that; "Industrially, cinema has long played an important role in the cultural economies of cities

all over the world in the production, distribution and exhibition of motion pictures, and in the cultural geographies of certain cities particularly marked by cinema [...] whose built environment and civic identity are both significantly constituted by the film industry and films” (2001: 1-2). There is no denying that textual analysis into the representation of the city on screen forms an important basis to any discussion of the city and cinema, but the nature of the relationship between the film industry, place branding and cities means that such analysis cannot be taken in isolation. The true extent of cinema’s interaction with a city like Berlin, and the impact this has on the wider reputation of the city, can only be understood if Berlin-set films are considered alongside the wider film production activities of the city’s film industry. Consequently, in the analysis which follows I will look at the production of films in Berlin, the reception of these films on release *and* the construction of the city on screen, as this will allow me to establish a more complete picture of the various elements which make up Berlin’s contemporary cinematic brand.

#### *Berlin as a Baustelle*

Berlin has long been an important location for film production, and so it should come as no surprise that the city has become one of the leading focal points, alongside other locations such as London, Paris and New York, in the recent growth in interest surrounding the relationship between cities and cinema within academic discourse. Stephen Barber (2002 and 2011), David Clarke (2006), and Barbara Mennel (2008) are among a number of academics who have explored the relationship between Berlin and cinema. For Barber and Mennel, their focus has been on the history of Berlin cinema, with the city’s turbulent past throughout the twentieth century, from a leading hub of modernism in the 1920s, through Hitler’s reign as Führer, to the city’s period of division, all proving to be fruitful moments for investigation. Although I will touch on each of these historical incarnations of Berlin in my analysis, given my interest in the identity of contemporary Berlin, it is the period since the fall of the Wall in 1989 that is the focus for my own discussion of Berlin cinema. Therefore, it is the academic arguments, led by Clarke, and including work by Ewa Mazierska and Laura Rascaroli (2003) and Katrina Sark (2012), which provide the foundation for my analysis.

The shock caused by unification also impacted the city’s film industry, as the upheaval caused by the subsequent transformation of Berlin gave filmmakers in the city a new creative impetus. Not only were they freed from the confines which had affected filmmaking in both East and West Berlin during division, but the new topography and

society which was being created in the aftermath of unification also offered fresh and exciting possibilities for storytelling. Therefore, films began to emerge during the 1990s which dealt with the city in a very different way from those made during the city's division. Berlin's cinema, reflecting the wider changes seen in how the city was viewed by society, began to alter the image of Berlin perpetuated on screen; from a city living in the shadow of the Wall, to one which reflected the process of rebuilding that was now underway.

This new vision of Berlin broke through into the international conscious of cinema-goers in the late 1990s with the success of the film *Lola rennt* (*Run Lola Run*, Tom Tykwer, 1998). Yet, although *Lola rennt* still remains one of the best-known pieces of post-unification Berlin filmmaking, images of Berlin's changing society and topography have been a feature of a diverse array of films, including *Ostkreuz* (Michael Klier, 1991), *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle* (*Life is All You Get*, Wolfgang Becker, 1997) and *Sommer vorm Balkon* (*Summer in Berlin*, Andreas Dresen, 2005). As a result, the focus of academic work on post-1989 Berlin cinema has been on the impact which these films' exploration of the city's quickly altering urban space and society has had on Berlin's reputation in cinema. As Clarke writes; "The city has been perceived as a work-in-progress, the ballet of cranes above the city's skyline over the last ten years providing a powerful image for the new start promised by the coining of the term 'the Berlin Republic'" (2006: 152). Just as Berlin's local government looked to champion the building sites of the city in their place-marketing, Berlin cinema of the 1990s and early 2000s similarly reflected the fact that Berlin was a city under renewal, as the scars of division were being removed from the city's topography.

These films' work-in-progress viewpoint is supported by Mazierska and Rascaroli who argue that; "What is characteristic of the reality portrayed in these films is the impression of temporariness, of moving, changing and becoming, rather than being. The lack of stability applies both to Berlin's urban design and architecture and to people's lives. Hence, the title of Wolfgang Becker's movie *Life is a Building Site* is symbolic of post-Wall cinematic Berlin." (123). For these academics, post-unification Berlin cinema was defined by images of the city in flux, as the process of rebuilding Berlin created chaos and uncertainty in the lives of the city's inhabitants. Indeed, Sark takes this work-in-progress analogy further in her discussion of post-unification Berlin filmmaking by defining the image of the city found in these films as "*Baustelle* Berlin" (2012: 88). The image of the building site was an inescapable motif of Berlin cinema in the years following the fall of the Wall, and so I adopt Sark's term of *Baustelle* Berlin in my analysis to define this period of filmmaking.

Nonetheless, what follows is not another investigation into *Baustelle* Berlin. Instead, I use this period of Berlin filmmaking as a point of departure for my analysis. As was argued above, whilst the city may have been thrown into turmoil by the fall of the Wall, as Berlin now moves on from the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of these events, the city looks and feels very different from the images which were at the centre of the *Baustelle* films. The outdated nature of ideas surrounding *Baustelle* Berlin for the reality of the present-day city was highlighted at the 2014 *Achtung Berlin* Film Festival, where post-unification films of the 1990s, such as *Ostkreuz* and *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle*, were shown together as part of a retrospective strand usually reserved for historic moments from Berlin's cinematic past. Accordingly, the main purpose of my analysis in this thesis is to address the limited academic investigation into the image of Berlin which has emerged from the rubble of the *Baustelle* period and is redefining the image of the city within cinema. In particular, I argue that the reputation of modern-day Berlin now found in cinema casts the city as a hedonistic, bustling and well-connected mecca for young people from around the world, many of whom are employed within what may loosely be termed 'the media industries'. In fact, my analysis represents the first extended investigation into this new global media city reputation for cinematic Berlin.

Crucially, unlike during previous periods of Berlin's cinematic history, including the city's *Baustelle* phase, the city's regional government has also recognised the potential which cinema offers for city branding. Hence, their attitude and support of the city's film industry has altered to reflect this. This change in approach is epitomised by the decision taken in 2004 to merge the film funding and media industry marketing departments for Berlin and neighbouring Brandenburg together to form the *Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg* (MBB)<sup>10</sup>, an agency which is now responsible for both distributing public money for film production and promoting the region as a media location. Whilst the *Baustelle* reputation may have been disseminated through images of Berlin on screen, as well as wider city initiatives such as *Schaustelle Berlin*, such marketing campaigns operated independently. However, Berlin cinema and city branding are now far more closely aligned, which means that the concept of a cinematic brand has become even more visible within contemporary Berlin.

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<sup>10</sup> Berlin and Brandenburg Media Board

## Baustelle *Berlin and Normalisation*

The changing image of contemporary Berlin, represented by events such as the *Lichtgrenze*, as well as the shift in Berlin's cinematic reputation from that of a *Baustelle* location to a global media city, is part of a wider process to reconcile Germany's past and present undertaken by society as a whole following unification. One of the prevailing issues which faced the country as the two divided parts of Germany came together officially in October 1990 was that the newly unified state was still dogged by the legacy of its problematic past, linked to both the atrocities of the Nazis and the tempestuous years of division. Therefore, as Stuart Taberner claims; "Politicians, intellectuals and media voices from across the spectrum agreed that a reunited Germany should emerge from the shadows of its Nazi past, overcome the legacy of forty years of division and become more self-confident, even assertive" (2005a: xiv). Such an attitude has been at the heart of Berlin's recent place-marketing activities. Colomb demonstrates this when she states that; "In order to support the city's transformation into an involved 'European metropolis', local policy-makers had to break with the negative images associated with the city's tormented past, reinvent and transmit a new image of the city" (2012: 6). The political and cultural elite across Germany believed that the only way for the unified country to prosper and grow was for the nation to develop a reputation as a positive, confident, and most importantly normal, world power. As a result, the process adopted to achieve these aims came to be known as 'normalisation'.

To help to begin to explain the various, and at time conflicting, stages and actors involved in normalisation, it is useful to explore the three different possible options highlighted by Taberner for what constitutes normality. The first of these he defines as 'Latitudinal Normality', which involves Germany adopting the norms and attitudes of other international powers. As Taberner argues, such a process results in Germany being seen; "[...] to be as 'normal' as France, Great Britain and the United States by showing itself to be a progressive state devoted to the rule of law and demonstrating that it has learned from history" (2005a: xiv). In comparison to this internationalised version of normality, the second option is 'Longitudinal Normality', which involves Germany looking to examples from its own history for how it should develop as a nation. As Taberner states, the origins for this option came from; "Conservatives in particular [who] argued that post-unification Germany should do more than simply 'imitate' like-minded nations in the present. Instead, it should look to 'German norms' located in its own past" (2005a: xv). The final option, 'Ahistorical Normality', lies in between these other approaches, as it combines elements of

the country's past with attitudes more in line with globalisation. However, ahistorical normality is also extremely problematic, something which Taberner sees as being epitomised in Berlin's Sony Centre, built at *Potsdamer Platz* following the fall of the Wall. This building; "[...] neither duplicates a more glorious, nineteenth century elegance *in toto* nor attempts to integrate a shameful history into a present-day emphasis on western values. Instead its allusions to the past, in this case to the 1920s, are decontextualized, arbitrary, and entirely decorative" (2005a: xviii) (italics in original). The global media society found in contemporary Berlin cinema is a product of the city's normalisation. Therefore, Taberner's nodes of lateral, longitudinal and ahistorical normality will help me to illustrate exactly what sort of path the normalisation of Berlin has taken.

Nevertheless, it is also important to note that, whilst for many areas of Germany normalisation represented more of a cultural and mental transformation than any actual physical alteration, for Berlin the situation was far more acute. The Wall ran through the heart of the city's urban space, and so its removal left a visible void which needed to be both physically and mentally healed, before the newly unified city could begin to move forward. In terms of the rebuilding of Berlin, in addition to being aligned to Taberner's definitions of normalisation, this process is also reminiscent of the wider practice of gentrification, which Matthias Bernt and Andrej Holm define as resulting in; "Inner cities [being] visibly upgraded by private capital and the face of the urban landscape [changing] dramatically" (2005: 109). Gentrification theory may have initially been applied to American cities, but in recent years this process has spread to many international urban locations. As Rowland Atkinson and Gary Bridge argue; "Gentrification is now global [...] [it can] be found in new regional centres such as Leeds (United Kingdom) and Barcelona (Spain) as well as capital cities previously not associated with the process such as Moscow, Brussels and Berlin" (2005: 1).

The intersection between normalisation and gentrification is evident in the fact that the Wall was a unique and abnormal topographical feature, which marked Berlin's urban space and caused many of the city districts bordering it to fall into a state of disrepair. Therefore, in order to achieve a more normal urban space for Berlin, city officials have looked to downplay many overt traces of the divide during Berlin's renovation, be that in the redevelopment of the former no-mans-land around *Potsdamer Platz*, or the regeneration of inner-city neighbourhoods such as Prenzlauer Berg. Small references may remain, such as in the path of cobblestones that follow the Wall's route, but these gestures are unobtrusive, which means they do not dominate the daily life of the city. Instead, by

mirroring the gentrification process seen in cities all over the world, the urban space of Berlin has been transformed from an atypically divided site of political tension into a location which now displays similar topographical tropes as other international conurbations. Consequently, the process of gentrification is an important part of Berlin's post-unification normalisation, as the way Berlin's historic buildings and districts have been renovated says a lot about the type of normality adopted by the city. Thus, during my analysis I will draw on both gentrification and normalisation theory to help to explain exactly what the representation of the contemporary urban space of Berlin in cinema says about the more 'normal' status which the city has now discovered.

### *The FIFA World Cup as a Turning Point*

The issue for any investigation into Berlin's new normality is that it is impossible to point to one particular moment, either from within the city's rebuilding or cinematic output, which signalled the transition of Berlin's cinematic brand from *Baustelle* to global media city. As Colin McArthur states; "[cities] have no absolute and fixed meaning, only a temporary, positional one" (1997: 20). This means that the reputation of Berlin disseminated by cinema is constantly evolving, and, as a result, the redefinition of the city's cinematic brand has been a gradual process. Yet, in order to differentiate Berlin's contemporary reputation from that which preceded it, I have chosen to use 2006 as a significant turning point. To this extent, Rayd Khouloki's offers a useful analogy when he argues that the city found itself in "a form of adolescence"<sup>11</sup> during the *Baustelle* period (2010: 145). Khouloki's argument is drawn from the ideas of director Thomas Schadt (*Berlin: Sinfonie einer Großstadt (Berlin: Symphony of a Big City)*, 2002), who likened the cranes and building sites of Berlin to teenage acne, and such a personification of Berlin's post-unification development can help to explain the evolution of the city's cinematic brand. As *The Economist* summarises in reference to the region's economy; "After decades of being subsidised by Germany's richer states, Berlin now balances its budget. It is like an adolescent who has grown up and wants to prove he's responsible" (2015). If the *Baustelle* period from 1989 onwards is defined as a time of youthful self-discovery, then it would be reasonable to expect that, as unified Berlin entered its later teenage years in the mid-2000s, the city as a whole would begin to move on from the changes of the pubescent *Baustelle* period.

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<sup>11</sup> einer Art Adoleszenz



However, there are also several more concrete reasons for choosing 2006 specifically, rather than the mid-2000s more generally, as a watershed moment for Berlin's cinematic brand. The most important of these is that 2006 was the year that Germany hosted the FIFA World Cup, with Berlin being used as both the tournament base for the national team and the location for the final. The hosting of a major sporting event had been seen for many years as a key milestone for the country in its attempts to move on from unification. As Stephen Kinzer writes, this can be seen in the fact that Berlin had tried, and failed, in the early 1990s to secure the 2000 Summer Olympics; a result which also demonstrates that the international community did not feel that the fall of the Wall alone was enough to position Berlin as a normal world city (*New York Times*: 1992). Nonetheless, by 2006 attitudes had clearly changed. The looming World Cup acted as a deadline which forced the completion of several major building projects in the city, such as the *Hauptbahnhof*<sup>12</sup>, whilst there was also a noticeable upturn in national pride during the event, with Germans feeling that they had finally achieved a level of acceptance on the world stage. Subsequently, as Luke Harding argues, the successful staging of the World Cup can be seen as a turning point in terms of the process of normalisation for both post-unification Berlin and wider German society (2006: 5-6). The event showed the world a new, more confident and mature version of the country. This is clearly evident in the documentary *Deutschland. Ein Sommermärchen (Germany. A Summer's Fairy Tale*, Sönke Wortmann, 2006), which details the experiences of the German national team during the World Cup and includes several scenes of German fans proudly waving flags and chanting, an outpouring of national pride which had been largely frowned upon since the Second World War. Hosting the event allowed Germany to showcase the new nation which had emerged since the fall of the Wall, with Berlin at the centre of it all as the country's vibrant, unified capital, and filmmaking activities in the city have begun to mirror this change in perception and attitude.

Furthermore, the World Cup also offers a logical break between the *Baustelle* past and Berlin's present-day reputation in terms of the changing strategies for place branding found in the city. Following the World Cup, the city's then mayor, Klaus Wowereit, launched a search for a new city brand. Wowereit had famously coined the phrase "Berlin is poor but sexy"<sup>13</sup> earlier in his term, but, as Colomb states; "While the Mayor acknowledged that the city was in a state of permanent flux and change, he wanted a new

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<sup>12</sup> Main train station

<sup>13</sup> Berlin ist arm aber sexy

umbrella term for the city” (2012: 259). By the mid-2000s the city’s politicians recognised that Berlin had moved beyond its work-in-progress, *Baustelle* reputation, and so the marketing of Berlin no longer championed the city’s rebuilding. In its place the city’s decision-makers launched the ‘be berlin’ campaign, which looked to positively position Berlin as a leading world city.

However, whilst the development of the ‘be berlin’ campaign acts as a good illustration of the changing attitudes found towards city marketing within Berlin following the World Cup, the city’s film industry occupies a uniquely privileged position in the branding landscape of Berlin. This is because, by choosing to form the MBB in 2004, the city’s government created an independent agency. The MBB may report to the region’s politicians, which means that the agency is part of the city’s wider place marketing strategy, but the MBB is also able to choose the images and ideas found within its specific branding of Berlin’s film and media industries. Therefore, cinema sits outside of the ‘be berlin’ brand’s remit. Yet, whilst academics, such as Colomb, have begun to investigate the current branding activities of Berlin’s decision-makers through the ‘be-berlin’ campaign, no one has yet investigated the autonomous branding work of the MBB. Therefore, it is this gap in understanding that I look to fill through my investigation into the branding efforts of Berlin’s film professionals in this thesis.

Significantly, the MBB may have been making funding decisions which have shaped contemporary Berlin cinema since 2004, but the World Cup in 2006 also coincided with the changing reputation for the city developed by the agency, as the impact of the MBB’s decisions was not seen immediately. The nature of the film production cycle is such that it can take years for a film to go from the development stage to being ready to exhibit. This is evident in the fact that 49% of the films which were awarded production support by the MBB in the agency’s first year of operation did not make it to the screen until 2006 or later (MBB: 2004). If the MBB represents a new, more brand-conscious approach to the city’s film industry, then it would be unfair to judge the agency’s impact from 2004 onwards, as it will have taken some time for the full influence of the MBB to seep through into all aspects of Berlin cinema. Therefore, in terms of the city’s cinematic output, I define films made between 1990 and 2006 as being part of the *Baustelle* period and those produced since 2006 as part of what I term contemporary Berlin cinema.

### *Understanding Berlin's Redefined Cinematic Brand*

Using this separation between the *Baustelle* period and contemporary Berlin, I take a two-pronged approach in the following analysis to investigate the characteristics which have come to redefine Berlin's contemporary cinematic brand as that of a global media city. In line with Shiel's argument, discussed earlier, that cinema encompasses both films themselves and the wider activities of the film industry, in Chapter 1 I examine the relationship between Berlin's contemporary production environment and the city's cinematic brand. By making use of theory rooted in the work of academics looking at the growth of the knowledge economy in society, including Richard Florida's argument surrounding the creative class (2002) and Krätke's discussion on the creative capital of cities (2011), I build on my discussion of city branding above to illustrate how creative city brands, such as Berlin's cinematic brand, have become an increasingly integral part of individual cities' economic strategies. Equally, this growth in importance of creative city brands helps to explain the Berlin government's support of the MBB. Therefore, following an examination of the historic development of Berlin's film industry, my exploration of the relationship between Berlin's production environment and the city's contemporary city brand probes the reputation for Berlin which the MBB actively promotes through its various activities. Rather than favouring the old *Baustelle* ideas surrounding Berlin, the MBB champions a version of the city that casts Berlin as a well-equipped hub for media professionals, which is attracting young, creative people from all over the world to come and work in the city. I term the MBB's brand 'media Berlin' and the images found within this brand of Berlin as a hedonistic and 'cool' location, that both works hard and parties hard, forms the cornerstone to the rest of my analysis.

However, the MBB is only one part of Berlin's interconnected film industry. Therefore, to develop a well-rounded picture of the prevailing cinematic brand being disseminated by the city's film practitioners, I conclude Chapter 1 by comparing the work of the MBB with the activities of other actors from within the city's film industry. In particular, I have chosen to focus on the Babelsberg studio complex, the *X Filme* production company and the *Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie Berlin* (dffb)<sup>14</sup> as, when taken together, these three organisations represent the broad spectrum of cinematic activities currently underway in the city. Although these actors operate in different sectors of Berlin cinema, from the training of film professionals, through film development and production, and into film distribution, the overall contribution they make to Berlin's reputation as a film city

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<sup>14</sup> German Film and Television Academy Berlin

largely supports the MBB's branding efforts. As a result, for the film industry as a whole, it is the media Berlin brand which now best represents the public perception of Berlin's production environment.

The second part of my analysis then moves on to look at the image of Berlin found within films made about the city. The wide reach of cinema means that only a small percentage of the total number of people exposed to Berlin by cinema actually live in the city. Therefore, it is through the images of city life found in films set in Berlin, rather than real-life experiences, that many people's understanding of the city is shaped. Consequently, in order for the media Berlin brand to be successfully viewed as an authentic version of the city, the MBB's claims surrounding Berlin need to be supported by the lifestyles and images of the city found on screen. However, it is also important to note that, as the city has become a more confident and dominant location, both domestically and on the world stage, the number of films made about Berlin has steadily increased. Thus, there have simply been too many films produced about Berlin since 2006 to include all of them within a single study. As a result, my textual analysis is not a survey of every film made in Berlin, but a selective overview. This means that, in addition to only focussing on films released since 2006, I also only look at the construction of Berlin found within feature-length fiction films set in the contemporary reality of Berlin. These parameters provide me with a sub-set of Berlin films which are both representative of the diverse spectrum of storytelling found in the city's contemporary filmic output and also similar enough to allow for a detailed investigation into Berlin's cinematic reputation within the confines of this study.

Accordingly, I do not have the space to explore films which have a different production background to these feature-length fiction films but cover similar narrative ground. This includes the growing documentary film movement which is emerging in Berlin cinema, and has produced such diverse films as *Neukölln Unlimited* (Agostino Imondi and Dietmar Ratsch, 2010), *B.i.N.: Berlin in November* (Victor Schefé, 2011) and *Bar25* (Britta Mischer and Nana Yuriko, 2012), as well as short films set in the city, such as *Komm und Spiel* (*Come and Play*, Daria Belova, 2013). Furthermore, I also exclude films from consideration which investigate Berlin from the perspective of a purely historical narrative. This decision may seem surprising given that it is historical films, such as the Oscar winning film *Das Leben der Anderen* (*The Lives of Others*, Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, 2006), which have proven to be the biggest global successes of the post-unification years for the city's film industry. However, the prominence that these films receive in both international

exhibition and academic discourse has a greater resonance for the process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*<sup>15</sup>, found across German culture, than it does for the image of present-day Berlin's topography and society.

Nevertheless, this is not to say that the city's history, in particular previous incarnations of Berlin on film, is not an important element of my analysis. Whilst I do not include an in-depth investigation into the historical films made in present-day Berlin, I do begin my textual analysis in Chapter 2 with a survey of the evolving reputation of Berlin on screen since the inception of cinema. Unification may have fundamentally altered the city, both in terms of the urban space of Berlin and the image of the city found on film, but this does not mean that there is no connection between unified Berlin and the city's past. As my survey will show, there are a number of themes and motifs that have been a continuous presence in Berlin cinema, with images of Berlin as a creative, hedonistic, fast-paced, if politically unstable, city permeating the various different moments of filmmaking which have accompanied Berlin's tumultuous history over the last hundred years. In fact, throughout my textual analysis, I make use of this history to focus and guide my examination of contemporary Berlin cinema.

To this extent, the influence of the city's cinematic past can be seen in the way in which I categorise my analysis of present-day Berlin-set films, as I highlight three different narrative trends which are prevalent within contemporary Berlin cinema, but are also rooted in the city's cinematic past. Hence, in Chapter 3 I take the idea of Berlin traditionally being home to people working within the creative industries as my starting point to investigate those films which deal with successful members of Berlin's modern-day media society, whilst Chapter 4 deals with the contemporary representation of the drifter, a figure who has roamed Berlin on screen throughout the last century. Finally, in Chapter 5 I look at those films which are making use of Berlin's political past to explore the present-day city through espionage-tinged narratives. In each of these chapters the main thrust of my analysis is the extent to which the media Berlin brand developed by the MBB is supported and developed by the images found within these films' narratives. Therefore, I start each chapter with a general survey of the relevant film trend, to build a picture of the manner in which these films confirm or critique the MBB's vision for Berlin, before moving on to a detailed case study of one film in particular. In these case studies, I investigate the production background, reception and representation of Berlin in the chosen films' narratives, in order to demonstrate how my case-study films relate to the MBB's branding

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<sup>15</sup> Coming to terms with the past

efforts through their contribution to the reputation of Berlin as both a site of film production and the representation of the city on screen.

Thus, Chapter 3 examines the MBB's claim that Berlin is now home to a thriving creative scene, full of successful media professionals, by examining a group of films I term the 'industry-insider films'. In many ways, these films are indebted to the New German Comedy Wave of the 1990s, which Eric Rentschler defines as being dominated by; "[...] young upscale urbanites working in a sector of the culture industry. The protagonists – attractive, successful and around thirty – run up against the reality principle and confront the responsibilities of the adult world" (2000: 247). Although these popular films of the 1990s avoided *Baustelle* Berlin in favour of cities less affected by unification, such as Munich and Cologne, this has now noticeably changed. In recent years, films which closely resemble these earlier productions in their style and narrative content, such as *Keinohrhasen* (*Rabbit without Ears*, Til Schweiger, 2007), *Männerherzen* (*Men in the City*, Simon Verhoeven, 2009) and *Rubbeldiekatz* (*Woman in Love*, Detlev Buck, 2011), have emerged within Berlin's cinematic output. However, although the growth of these popular films within Berlin cinema may aid the MBB's view of Berlin as a vibrant, pleasure-seeking media hub, this does not mean that they simply support a limited, shallow view of the city. As my opening analysis in the chapter will show, these industry-insider films are able to use their narrative position within Berlin's media world to critique the superficial role this lifestyle is playing within the city. Such a view is seen particularly clearly in Dennis Gansel's 2010 vampire film *Wir sind die Nacht* (*We are the Night*), the film which I use as my case study in this chapter. I argue that, even though *Wir sind die Nacht* helps to further disseminate the hedonistic, media-centric images of the media Berlin brand, the film also plays with vampire film conventions to add a negative tint to the generally positive brand construction found within Berlin's film production environment.

Whilst the majority of the characters in the industry-insider films are established media professionals, my analysis then goes on in Chapter 4 to examine a group of films whose narratives explore the lives of younger people in Berlin. This demographic features prominently in the MBB's marketing of the city, as the agency uses Berlin's youth culture to promote the view of Berlin as a 'cool' location, attracting experimental young creatives from all over the world. I term these films 'drifter films', as they feature a modern incarnation of a character from within the city's youth culture who, as Birgit Roschy writes; "[has] shaped the image of the city for several decades. Even long before the fall of the Wall, nowhere allowed puberty to be so easily extend as this city with no curfews and

cheap apartments<sup>16</sup> (*Der Zeit*: 2012). This transient drifter figure is found in the depiction of Berlin's youth culture in films, such as *Berlin am Meer* (*Berlin by the Sea*, Wolfgang Eissler, 2008), *Staub auf unseren Herzen* (*Dust on our Hearts*, Hanna Doose, 2012) and *Drei Zimmer/Küche/Bad* (*Move*, Dietrich Brüggemann, 2012). Significantly, many of these films focus on characters looking to break into Berlin's media industries, which means that, rather than being at the cutting edge of these professions, as the MBB asserts, the young people of the drifter films are shown to be on the outside of Berlin's media society, struggling to get by. This more problematic view of life in Berlin for the city's young inhabitants is also prominent in Jan Ole Gerster's 2012 film *Oh Boy*, the film which I have chosen as the case study for this chapter. Themes of disconnection, alienation and transience dominate these drifter films' narratives, as they show that, behind the façade of the media Berlin brand, the reality facing many young people in the city is altogether more difficult and challenging.

I then conclude my textual analysis in Chapter 5 with an investigation into the contemporary espionage films being made in Berlin. Unlike my previous two chapters, which focus mainly on German-language films, made for a domestic audience, these espionage films, such as *Hanna* (Joe Wright, 2011), *Don 2* (Farhan Akhtar, 2011) and *Who am I – Kein System ist sicher* (*Who am I – No System is Safe*, Baran bo Odar, 2014), may be made and set in Berlin, but they are produced for a range of different international audiences. Therefore, these films are part of the growing trend for 'global-local' filmmaking seen across the world, which, as Nolwenn Mingant argues; "[combines] traditional Hollywood elements such as stars, action-adventure, and special effects [...] and foreign elements such as foreign themes, locations, actors and directors" (2011: 142). In terms of Berlin cinema, these films are heavily influenced by the spy thrillers made in the city during the time of division. Therefore, my focus in this chapter is on how these contemporary espionage films are taking themes associated with the city's divided past and adapting them to narratives set in the present-day reality of Berlin. Although their international outlook means that these films perform to many historic stereotypes of Berlin, the first part of this chapter highlights how the construction of the city in these films is evolving into an image more in line with the MBB's vision for Berlin. As my case study of Bill Condon's 2013 film *The Fifth Estate* demonstrates, espionage may remain a feature of these films' engagement with Berlin, but it is no longer Cold War spies who dominate the city. Instead,

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<sup>16</sup> [hat] das Image der Stadt nun seit Jahrzehnten geprägt. Schon lange vor dem Mauerfall ließ sich die Pubertät nirgendwo so ungestört verlängern wie in dieser Stadt ohne Sperrstunde und mit billigen Wohnungen

it is corporate espionage, often rooted in Berlin's digitally-savvy media society, which forms the basis to these films' narratives, a version of the city which combines elements of the city's past with a view of Berlin's media-centric present, and so helps to develop wider ideas surrounding media Berlin within international audiences.

There is little doubt that contemporary Berlin is a very different location from the newly unified city of the 1990s. Consequently, as the process of normalisation comes to an end, the growing confidence of Berlin society to inhabit and exploit the city's renovated urban space is reflected in the cinematic brand promoted by Berlin's film industry. This media Berlin brand shows the city to have moved on from its *Baustelle* reputation, as Berlin has now become a mecca for global media professionals. However, whilst the actors within Berlin's production environment, led by the work of the MBB, may favour a positive construction of a cinematic brand for Berlin, which shows the city to be a global media hub, the films that explore contemporary Berlin on screen do not necessarily support such a limited view. The version of the city found in these films' narratives critiques the images and attitudes propagated by the media Berlin brand, as the films look to reflect the multi-layered and complex reality of the present-day city. Therefore, in the analysis which follows, I will explore the differing layers of understanding surrounding the city which exist in Berlin cinema, in order to illustrate the characteristics which come together to define exactly what is meant by Berlin's new, global media city status.



## **Chapter 1: From *Baustelle* to media Berlin - Berlin's Film Industry and the Development of the City's Contemporary Cinematic Brand**

### **Introduction**

As I argued in my introduction, the relationship between cinema and the city is both industrial and cultural. Therefore, the filmmaking activities and provisions found within present-day Berlin are an important part of the wider brand being constructed for the city by cinema. Indeed, the interconnected approach I take in this thesis, which first explores Berlin's film industry in this chapter, before moving on to examine films made about the city, is particularly pertinent given that creative industries, such as cinema, have become an ever more important element of many cities wider economies in recent years. This is largely due to the fact that such industries have formed part of the growth of the so-called knowledge economy, which has come to dominate the contemporary economic activity of cities, particularly those across North America and Western Europe. Philip Cooke defines the knowledge economy as being; "characterised by exploitation of new knowledge in order to create more new knowledge. This need not be scientific or technological alone, it can be creative knowledge in the artistic, design or musical senses of knowledge" (2002: 5). Such economic activity is noticeably different from traditional heavy industry and, as a result of the increase in prominence of the knowledge economy, many academics, including Richard Florida (2002) and Stefan Krätke (2011), have begun to examine its development. In fact, the academic field which looks at the impact of the knowledge economy on both city planning and place branding has grown considerably since the turn of the millennium.

Therefore, I begin this chapter with an exploration of exactly what is meant by the knowledge economy, and how the growth in work about such a phenomenon can inform my own investigation into Berlin's film industry and its branding activities. Not only will this allow me to highlight the motivations behind the formation of Berlin's contemporary cinematic brand, but it will also enable me to illustrate exactly what I mean by Berlin's film industry. This is because, as the work on the knowledge economy has evolved, the traditional understanding of what is meant by a city's film industry has also begun to alter. Whereas before film industries tended to be based in and around studio complexes, contemporary Berlin's production environment now operates as a diverse industrial cluster, a development which comes to infuse the reputation developed by the city's present-day production environment.

Following on from this section on the ideas behind my argument, I will briefly set out the development of Berlin's film industry over the last century, in order to illustrate how the city's production environment has shaped wider views of Berlin over time. This contextualisation will then form the basis of my analysis of the contemporary film industry, as I look to ascertain the characteristics of the cinematic brand currently being developed for Berlin and how this differs from previous moments in the city's cinematic history, such as that found during the *Baustelle* period. To achieve this, I will first look at the efforts of the MBB, an agency which, as was stated earlier, was given the responsibility by local government in 2004 for both film funding and developing a brand for Berlin's media industries. Thus, my analysis will focus on exactly what images and ideas with regard to the city the MBB is perpetuating through its various activities. This will allow me to demonstrate the characteristics of contemporary Berlin that the MBB has chosen to promote in its efforts to transform the city's brand from that of a city in transition into one which better represents Berlin as an international media hub.

However, the MBB is only one element - albeit an important one in terms of branding - of Berlin's film industry cluster. Consequently, alongside an analysis of the MBB, I will also look at other actors within the city's production environment, namely the Babelsberg studio complex, the production company *X Filme*, and the dffb. If Berlin is to be truly seen as a contemporary global media city, these other elements of the city's film industry cluster must support the brand messages developed by the MBB. Therefore, it is only by looking at the different views of the city disseminated across Berlin's film industry that I will be able to form a well-rounded picture of the cinematic brand being promoted by the city's production environment, a brand which will then be used as a benchmark in later chapters for my textual analysis of the contemporary films being made about Berlin.

### **The Knowledge Economy, Industry Clusters and City Branding**

The growth in importance of creative industries and the knowledge economy is largely due to, as Cooke argues, the fact that cities needed to look for new activities to fill the economic gap created by the demise of traditional industries from the 1970s onwards (2008: 27). This was particularly true of those Western cities whose economy was dominated by heavy industry and manufacturing. For example, cities across Northern England, such as Manchester, alongside others in North America, such as Detroit, as well as those in Europe, such as post-unification Berlin, found their economies decimated as they entered a 'post-industrial' age. Hence, whilst in the past the objectives of local government

and businesses revolved around creating an environment and reputation for a city which was conducive for heavy industry production, such as the 'steel city' statuses developed for locations like Sheffield and Duisburg, this has now changed. Instead, the knowledge economy and its related industries have become the central focus of cities' economic strategies. Some local governments have looked to cultivate a growth in scientific industries through the creation of science parks etc., whilst others have turned to the creative industries, including cinema, to become a key component of their contemporary economies.

Consequently, as Martina Heßler and Clemens Zimmermann claim; "a new connection is being postulated, namely that of the city, culture *and* economy" (2008: 12) (italics in original). Whereas before, a city's cultural industries were a small part of the wider urban economy, as there were other, more profitable, industries which gave a location its economic thrust, the growing importance of the knowledge economy has begun to alter this relationship. As Allen J. Scott writes; "[...] place, culture and economy are symbiotic of one another, and in modern capitalism this symbiosis is reemerging in powerful new forms expressed in the cultural economies of certain key cities" (2000: 4). For many cities around the world, activities such as film production, publishing, or digital media have now become the linchpin to their economies, and so there is now a greater focus on them, from both local decision-makers and academics.

### *Creativity as a Brand*

Such a development led Florida to argue in his seminal book *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002), that this change in the industrial focus of local strategies for economic growth has meant that the sort of people a city needs to attract in order to be economically competitive has also altered. To address this transformation, Florida developed the term 'the creative class' to define this new grouping within society. He states that this term includes; "people in science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music and entertainment, whose economic function is to create new ideas, new technology and/or new creative content" (2002: 8). The focus which the knowledge economy places on the creativity of the individual, as opposed to the mechanical focus of heavy industry, means that it is the members of the creative class themselves, rather than machinery or factories, who have become the most important commodity in developing a successful economy. As Florida also highlights; "Access to talented and creative people is to modern business what access to coal and iron ore was to steelmaking. It determines where

companies will choose to locate and grow, and this in turn changes the ways cities must compete” (2002: 6). Whilst traditional industries were tied to those cities which were close to the raw materials they needed for production, this is no longer the case for the businesses of the knowledge economy. They are able to be far more footloose than their heavy industry predecessors, and so locate wherever the creative class choose to live.

Such a shift has a significant impact on the role of the cinematic brand. The fact that the creative class are free to choose where they live and do business means that the reputation of a city as a creative location has become a crucial tool through which cities compete to attract such people. As Krätke writes; “[...] production locations such as New York, Paris, and Berlin operate in cultural and media spheres as ‘brand names’ that involve the attractive social and cultural qualities of the city in question” (2011: 182). As contemporary city brands look to showcase a particular location’s knowledge economy to potential new members of the city’s creative class, the economic activity and employment prospects found within that city’s creative industries are as important a factor as the lifestyle images found within the cultural artefacts they produce. This is because, as Krätke summarises; “The positioning of a product on the cultural market incorporates two phases: (1) the ‘packaging’ of the product, and (2) the subsequent advertising campaign” (2011: 144). This process can be used to explain the formation and dissemination of creative city brands, such as Berlin’s contemporary cinematic brand. It is the city’s film industry which produces and packages the product of the cinematic brand, before this brand is then advertised through the qualities and lifestyle images associated with films made in and about the city.

Therefore, in order for Berlin to compete in the present-day global economy, the city’s regional government knows that it needs to make Berlin an attractive location for the creative class. Accordingly, the decision to form the MBB, an agency rooted in Berlin’s knowledge economy, can be seen as part of Berlin’s regional government’s strategy to achieve such a position. As Claire Colomb writes; “One of the noticeable aspects of the economic and urban development policies developed by [Berlin’s coalition government since 2001] has been buying into the ‘creative city’ mantra [...] [This] has had significant implication for the content of the place marketing imagery produced and disseminated by Berlin’s place marketing actors” (2012: 229). Those in a position of power within the city have realised that it is only by first packaging together a strong and appealing city brand focussed on the knowledge economy that Berlin will successfully market itself to those

members of the creative class whom politicians and city marketers are looking to attract to the city.

### *The Berlin Film Industry as an Industrial Cluster*

Yet, as Mark Lorenzen and Lars Frederiksen state; “Many cultural industries rest upon a mix of global distribution and local production. Whilst the distribution and marketing of cultural products span globally, the development and production [...] of them is highly clustered in a few major cities” (2008: 155). Therefore, whilst the above argument may explain why recent economic developments make an analysis of Berlin’s production environment a necessary part of my wider investigation, the concept of the industry as a ‘cluster’ also needs to be examined. As will be looked at in detail below, the MBB proudly boasts of Berlin’s role as a global media cluster in its branding material, and so this is an idea which is at the heart of the city’s contemporary cinematic brand. Specifically, my use of the term cluster is heavily indebted to Lisa De Propriis and Laura Hypponen’s argument that; “In the case of creative industries, where the interaction between firms and individuals does not coincide with an exchange of goods only, but goods and services, one can visualise a cluster as a web of networks of relationships” (2008: 274). This network structure means that a cluster can be seen as an interconnected concentration of different companies and individuals, who all interact within both the same industry and, more importantly, the same location.

Such a concept is particularly pertinent for the film industry, as the nature of film production has changed substantially since the height of the studio system in the mid twentieth century. In place of the dominant studios, which acted as a one stop shop for filmmaking talent, the industrial structure of film production now includes a high number of freelance workers and organisations, who only come together for specific projects. As Richard E. Caves states; “What replaced film production within the dismantled studios was a transformed system sometimes called ‘flexible specialisation’, with most inputs required to produce a film coming together only in a one-shot deal. These inputs are selected by an entrepreneurial coordinator (usually the producer) for their suitability to the project’s needs and their availability at the right time” (2002: 95). Lorenzen and Frederiksen support Caves’ argument. They see this flexible specialisation as the main motivation for the film industry to cluster because; “[...] variety through shifting inputs [...] can only be achieved if cultural firms can access the firms and freelancers whenever they are needed for innovation projects [...] *Clustering* of firms with related knowledge bases and specialised

labour [...] [ensures] that new projects find the right result whilst also ensuring that firms and freelancers can find a sufficient number of projects to thrive” (2008: 168) (italics in original). Therefore, such a development has a number of impacts on ideas surrounding Berlin’s contemporary cinematic brand. On the one hand the brand needs to demonstrate that Berlin’s production environment includes an atmosphere where the film freelancers of the creative class will flourish. Yet, on the other hand, the interconnected and co-dependent nature of the city’s film industry cluster also means that it is the activities of the entire film industry cluster found in Berlin, not just the efforts of marketing orientated agencies like the MBB, which shape the city’s cinematic brand.

As Berlin’s *Senatsverwaltung für Wirtschaft, Technologie und Frauen*<sup>17</sup> states in a report on the city’s cultural economy; “The filmic city of Berlin strongly profits from the formation of clusters – especially between producers, technical experts and studios”<sup>18</sup> (2008: 48). However, despite the Senate’s use of the term ‘filmic city of Berlin’, given the freelance and informal nature of the city’s production environment, it is difficult to define the exact geographic parameters of the city’s film industry cluster. This can be seen in the fact that, for example, the MBB is based at Babelsberg, a complex of offices and sound stages that act as the hinterland powering much of Berlin cinema, despite being located in Potsdam, a city which is the capital of Brandenburg. This is an issue Krätke highlights in his analysis of the geography of the film industry in Berlin. Nevertheless, based on his empirical analysis, he argues that; “[...] there is every indication that the entire film industry in the Berlin/Brandenburg region should be seen as one regional cluster formation, which incorporates several local cores within the region. One of these local cores is the location at Potsdam/Babelsberg while the other local cores are to be found in Berlin” (2002: 40). Thus, whilst my later investigation into the representation of Berlin on screen deals only with visions of the topography of the city itself, for the purposes of my analysis of the film industry in Berlin, I include those locations, such as Babelsberg, which may sit outside of the metropolitan boundaries of Berlin but still play a significant role in the city’s film industry cluster.

Given the academic interest which has recently developed surrounding the knowledge economy, it should come as no surprise that Krätke’s work on the film industry cluster in Berlin (see for example Krätke: 2002, 2003, 2011) is part of a wider academic discourse which has begun to explore the importance of the city’s creative industries. For

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<sup>17</sup> Senate Office for Economy, Technology and Women

<sup>18</sup> Der Filmstandort Berlin profitiert stark von Clusterbildung – insbesondere zwischen Produzenten, technischen Dienstleistern und Studios

example, Barbara Heebels and Irina van Aalst (2010) have examined the role of entrepreneurship in Berlin's creative clusters, whilst Alexa Färber (2008) has looked at the role of empty spaces in the development of Berlin's cultural production. These studies may draw on a similar theoretical background as my own investigation, but it is important to stress that what follows is not an examination of the economic, political, or industrial structures which govern Berlin's production environment. My interest does not lie in the physical growth and governance of the film industry in the city. Instead, I use such developments to aid my original examination into how the city's network of different film organisations and relationships comes together to impact the ideas and viewpoints surrounding contemporary Berlin.

### **The Historical Context of Berlin's Production Environment**

Before I move on to look at Berlin's contemporary film industry cluster in detail, it is necessary to first look back at the historic development of the city's production environment. This is because the ebbs and flows of film production in Berlin, which have been seen in the city since cinema's inception, exert an influence on the present-day industry. It is this tumultuous history which has provided the historical foundation, both in terms of physical infrastructure and the view of Berlin as a film city, on which the city's present-day reputation and cinematic brand is built. Therefore, in the following section I will briefly outline the developments seen in Berlin's film industry, in order to provide context for the later analysis of Berlin's contemporary production environment.

#### *Silent Film Production in Berlin*

Although Paris is traditionally seen as the birthplace of cinema, due to the work carried out by the Lumière brothers in the city at the end of the nineteenth century, the Lumières were not the only people who were working on processes which would eventually lead to the invention of moving image projection. At the same time in Berlin, as Stephen Barber points out, another set of brothers, the Skladanowsky brothers, were also developing a projector which would allow for the exhibition of moving images (2002: 21-27). Called the Bioskop, the Skladanowskys used their rudimentary invention to capture short scenes from around Berlin, which they presented to a paying public in the city in November 1895, a full two months before the Lumières' premiere in Paris of their own short films. Unfortunately for the Skladanowskys events conspired against them, as the Bioskop proved to be unreliable and technically inferior to the Lumières' invention. Therefore, their machine failed to take

off, which meant that it was the Lumières' projector which acted as the blueprint for the early development of cinema. Nevertheless, the presence of the Skladanowsky brothers in Berlin shows how the city has one of the oldest film industries in the world and one which has long been at the forefront of developing the capabilities of cinema.

Yet, the German film industry initially failed to build on the Skladanowskys' early work, and so, as cinema developed into a popular form of entertainment in the first few years of the twentieth century, film production in Germany found itself in the shadows of its European neighbours. As Thomas Elsaesser argues, during the 1900s and early 1910s domestic films accounted for only about 10% of the German market, with more inventive films made in other European countries, such as Denmark and France, proving more popular than the stylistically naïve domestic products (1996: 9). This failure of the domestic industry to compete was further exacerbated by the decentralised and unfocused nature of the German film industry (Elsaesser: 2000: 111). Whilst cities like Paris developed into the national hub for their country's film production, allowing for a more creative and focused approach to filmmaking, Berlin did not have the same pull for German filmmakers. They were scattered all around the country, which meant that Germany lost its position as a trailblazer of early cinema. However, whilst this may have been detrimental to the early film industry in Germany, this decentralised structure did mean that the domestic industry took on a fragmented, regional nature, a set-up which, as will be seen later, is now a driving force in the development of Berlin's contemporary reputation.

Ironically, it was the country's defeat in the First World War which allowed the German film industry to begin to emerge as an important player within the international market. Film production in the country had become more coordinated during the War and this only increased following Germany's defeat. Indeed, the embargos and sanctions placed on Germany as a result of the War created a situation which allowed domestic filmmaking to flourish. As Jill Forbes and Sarah Street describe, following the armistice the rest of Europe was flooded by American made films, due to the fact that most European film industries had been decimated by the War. However, the situation in Germany was different. The country was banned from importing film stock because there was a fear that they would use the nitrate contained in film to covertly begin a rearmament programme. This meant that domestic films faced little competition at the box office, which enabled the German film industry to prosper financially. Although the film embargo ended in 1921, Germany remained a largely isolated, insular market, as the hyperinflation which was seen in the country in the 1920s meant that domestic distributors could not afford to start to



bring in foreign films en masse (2000: 6-7). Thus, this domestic dominance gave German film producers a solid foundation on which they could begin to develop a strong German film industry.

The role Berlin played within this growing domestic film industry was greatly aided by the formation of the *Universumfilm Aktiengesellschaft*<sup>19</sup> (Ufa) in 1917, which was based in the city. As Hans-Michael Bock and Michael Töteberg state, whilst Ufa's exact origins are unclear, what is certain is that the company was a joint enterprise between the German government, *Deutsche Bank* and several other German businessmen (2002: 129). Such a background meant that Ufa was run on a far more pragmatic and business-like basis than had previously been seen within the German film industry, a strategy which gave the company a competitive advantage in comparison to its domestic rivals. In fact, Ufa was so successful in the years immediately following the end of the First World War that, as Bock and Töteberg go on to argue; "Ufa dominated the German film industry between 1917 and 1945, acquiring a degree of power never equalled since" (2002: 129). The influence Ufa exerted over the industry enabled the firm to merge with a number of other key German film companies, with one of the most significant mergers coming in 1921 when Ufa bought another Berlin film company, *Decla-Bioskop*. *Decla-Bioskop* had invested heavily in developing its sound stages at Babelsberg, on the outskirts of Berlin, into one of the leading studio complexes in Europe. Hence, following this merger, Ufa was not just the most powerful film company in Germany, but also now had one of the most advanced studio facilities in the entire continent. This situation saw Berlin become, as Thomas J. Saunders claims; "[...] the motion picture as well as the geographical heart of Europe in the 1920s", and this is a reputation which the city's film industry has been looking to maintain ever since (1999: 157).

Yet, Ufa's success was not down to clever business strategy alone. The films the company produced in the late 1910s and 1920s were also massively successful at the box office. This success was in part due to the creative filmmaking of the German Expressionist directors, such as F.W. Murnau and Fritz Lang, who made use of the infrastructure at Babelsberg to produce films which looked unlike anything else being made at the time. These included *Der letzte Man* (*The Last Laugh*, F.W. Murnau, 1924) and *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1927), as the Expressionist directors created visually stunning sets and made use of inventive lighting and camera angles to push the boundaries of cinema. As Sabine Hake writes; "Bringing together a remarkable group of professionals, the Babelsberg studios in

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<sup>19</sup> Universe Film Corporation

the mid-1920s became famous for maintaining the highest technical and artistic standards in Europe” (2008: 33). The complex at Babelsberg became the industrial heartland of the Berlin film industry, which meant that the city as a whole, not just Ufa, came to be known for producing highly original and technologically advanced films.

However, as Klaus Kreimeier states, Ufa, and by association the Berlin film industry, did not just produce Expressionist films. Indeed, the output of Berlin’s Weimar film industry was extremely varied, with a large number of films made in a range of styles, and on a vast array of budgets, emanating from the city (1996: 5). Therefore, alongside the work of the German Expressionists, Berlin was also producing large-scale historical dramas, such as Ernst Lubitsch’s *Madame DuBarry* (1919), working class *Straßenfilme*<sup>20</sup>, such as Joe May’s *Asphalt* (1929), and experimental, realist films, such as Robert Siodmak and Edgar G. Ulmer’s *Menschen am Sonntag* (*People on Sunday*, 1930). This filmmaking diversity, coupled with the critical and box office success which Ufa’s productions enjoyed in the Weimar period, enabled Berlin’s film industry to establish an international standing. In fact, the success of Ufa’s films was so great that the Berlin film industry developed a reputation as a location which rivalled the traditional film production powerhouse of Hollywood. This international competitiveness of the Berlin film industry saw, as Saunders writes elsewhere; “Berlin [...] [attract] a stream of American stars and moguls” (1994: 11). Therefore, whilst Berlin’s early promise as a film city had largely ebbed away in the first few decades of the twentieth century, during the 1920s, the strong performance of Berlin’s film industry saw the city establish itself as an inventive global film production hub, capable of producing a diverse array of films to compete with those made anywhere else in the world.

### *The Nazification of Berlin’s Film Industry*

However, despite the international success of the films produced at Babelsberg during the Weimar period, the growing costs associated with producing epics such as *Metropolis*, meant that Ufa also began to suffer from financial problems. Initially, the studio’s management tried to solve these issues by entering into a distribution agreement with the Hollywood companies of Paramount and MGM. Together they established the *Parufamet* subsidiary, which loaned Ufa four million dollars in exchange for guaranteed screen time and distribution within Germany for films made by the American studios. However, as Bock and Töteberg state, this agreement proved of little benefit to Ufa, as it simply opened up the German market to the Americans (2002: 133). Therefore, the ongoing financial

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<sup>20</sup> Street films

problems for Ufa meant that the company, along with the studio complex at Babelsberg, was taken over in 1927 by the German media mogul Alfred Hugenberg, who looked to streamline the company in order to bring it back into some form of profitability. Hugenberg may have seemed like a natural enough fit for Ufa, given his already large portfolio of media businesses, but he was also a well-known nationalist, which meant that his growing influence at Babelsberg also marked the beginning of a period of increased politicisation at the studio.

As David Welch and Roel vande Winkel state; “Hugenberg had acquired Ufa to ‘preserve it for the national outlook’, which in practice meant producing overt nationalist films” (2007: 7). Such a move led to tensions within Berlin’s filmmaking community, as this growing nationalist attitude was in opposition to the liberal tradition of the Weimar period, not least because many of Ufa’s most famous filmmakers, technicians and actors were Jewish. This situation only increased once the Nazi party seized control of Germany. Ufa was nationalised, whilst at the same time all film professionals had to be registered with the *Reichsfilmkammer*<sup>21</sup>, an organisation which prohibited membership for those with a non-Aryan Background or considered politically unreliable. As Hake states; “The forced integration of the film industry had a devastating effect on individual lives, but it also destroyed a lively cinema culture that had emerged in the 1920s” (2008: 66). As a result, many of those film professionals who had helped to build Weimar Berlin into a thriving centre of filmmaking, such as Fritz Lang, left the country and, along with them, Berlin lost its reputation as an inventive film city.

However, this did not mean that the level of film production in the city went into decline. In actual fact the propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels, took a personal interest in the activities of Ufa. Goebbels recognised the power which cinema’s escapist, entertainment qualities could add to the Nazi scheme, by providing the population with a means to relax and be diverted from the problems of daily life. As Eric Rentschler argues; “Repeatedly, Goebbels stressed that film should exercise a discernible effect, that it must act on hearts and minds. Its calling should be that of a popular art, an art that simultaneously served state purposes and fulfilled personal need” (1996: 54). Hence, Berlin remained the centre of film production within Germany under the Nazis, as Ufa continued to produce a high number of films throughout the period of Hitler’s reign, albeit with a decidedly nationalist slant. Yet, the politically tinged narratives of these Babelsberg-produced films also meant that, as Chris Wahl writes; “[...] foreign sales continued to

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<sup>21</sup> Film Chamber of the Reich

decline over the course of the '30s, and the studio would only become profitable again through the expansion of a corned market as a result of World War Two" (2012: 172). Consequently, as well as losing its reputation as an innovative hub for filmmaking, the rise of the Nazi party also saw Berlin's film industry lose its position as a global film location. Instead, the city became infamous for nationalist, propaganda-laced cinema, which was prevented from travelling beyond Germany's borders due to the trade embargos placed on the country during the Second World War.

#### *East Berlin and the City's Divided Production Environment*

As the Second World War came to an end, the victorious allied powers shut the German film industry down, as they feared that cinema could be used to undermine their authority within the occupied country. Yet, the closure of the industry did not remain in place for long. As Seán Allen states; "[...] whilst the Western Allies viewed film with a considerable degree of suspicion, the Soviet Military Administration in Germany wasted no time in attempting to re-establish film-production in their zone of occupation" (1999: 2). The Soviets had a long history of using film as a propaganda tool domestically and they were eager to begin to deploy a similar strategy within Germany to further aid the communist cause. To this end, the *Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft*<sup>22</sup> (DEFA) was founded in 1946 and soon began production of several films, the first of which to be completed was *Die Mörder sind unter uns* (*Murderers Among Us*, Wolfgang Staudte, 1946), a film which starkly dealt with the reality of post-War Berlin and will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

The re-instigation of film production in the Soviet controlled east of Berlin was massively aided by the fact that, as Daniela Berghahn writes; "[...] the most important film studios in Potsdam-Babelsberg, alongside production and copying facilities, as well as distribution organisations, were situated in the Soviet zone, [which meant] the lion's share of the Nazi film industry [...] fell into the hands of the Soviets" (2005: 15). Hence, as the German film industry had increasingly clustered around Berlin and the Babelsberg studio complex during Ufa's years of domination, it was the Soviet controlled part of the city which once again found itself at the epicentre of the country's cinema. Whilst Babelsberg was initially used for military purposes, film production restarted at the site in 1948 and the studio became part of the *German Democratic Republic*<sup>23</sup> (GDR) in the following year, as the

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<sup>22</sup> German Film Corporation

<sup>23</sup> Deutsche Demokratische Republik

Soviet authorities turned their occupied zone into a communist state, independent of those zones in the west of the country controlled by the other allied powers.

Indeed, as Ralf Schenk argues; “[...] [Babelsberg] remained the exclusive site of feature cinema production in the GDR until 1990: a monopoly” (2012: 122). This privileged position can be explained, as Berghahn states, by the fact that DEFA’s activities did not just include film production. DEFA created a vertically integrated film industry, similar to that which had been found within the Hollywood studio system of the 1930s, with everything from development through to exhibition within East Germany controlled exclusively by the company (2005: 22). Therefore, although the Second World War had been catastrophic for Berlin, leaving the city’s inhabitants, regardless of which zone they lived in, struggling to rebuild the city’s destroyed urban space, this did not mean that Berlin lost its central position within film production, at least not in East Germany.

Yet, within this vertically integrated system, DEFA was ultimately controlled by the communist East German government. Hence, as Stephen Brockmann claims; “Whereas film in western capitalism tends to be seen primarily or even exclusively as a commodity intended to make a profit, film in East Germany was only secondarily expected to make a profit. Its primary goal was the ideological shaping of socialist society” (2010: 216). It was the government, and not the DEFA board, who had the final say on which films were made, and then whether these films were released. However, the problem for East German filmmakers was that the expectations and rules which governed these politicians’ decisions were inconsistent and constantly changing. As Brockmann also argues, this meant; “Filmmakers could never be sure, when they began working on a film, exactly what kind of cultural climate might prevail on its completion” (2010: 215). What may be considered acceptable during the development of a script, could be seen as subversive or problematic once the film was completed, and so the finished film would have to be heavily edited or risk being banned. An extreme example of this was seen in 1965 when 12 completed films, which represented almost an entire year’s work, were banned by the film censors. Thus, whilst the East Berlin film industry enjoyed a privileged position as the sole film production centre in East Germany, the production environment in the city developed a reputation as a politically controlled centre, which had a variable and unpredictable level of filmic output. Indeed, the environment for filmmaking in the country meant that DEFA’s output was low in comparison to other European countries on either side of the Iron Curtain.

The close control and limitations placed on East Berlin filmmakers also meant that creativity suffered, as DEFA films were largely unable to radically push any stylistic

boundaries for fear of falling foul of the censors. According to Schenk, this was because; “[...] formal experiments aroused suspicions among cultural policy makers; in their eyes, a DEFA film [...] had to be easy, unambiguous and comprehensible to everyone, and in no way marked by surrealist or other ‘elitist’ artistic tendencies” (2012: 120). However, this stifling of creativity meant that those films that did make it onto the screens of East Germany were often formulaic, escapist films which failed to attract big audiences. Although there were some noticeable exceptions, such as *Die Geschichte von kleinen Muck* (*The Story of Little Muck*, Wolfgang Staudte, 1953), East German filmmakers largely struggled to make films which both conformed to the governments’ rigid ideas on the type of films which should be made and also appealed to the tastes of East German cinema-goers. DEFA may have inherited the infrastructure used by Ufa within Berlin, but the company failed to return the studio to its former reputation as a vibrant and inventive film production hub.

Not that this mattered. As Brockmann is quoted above as stating, profit was only a secondary concern for DEFA. Therefore, whilst in capitalist economies the lack of commercial success and poor productivity of DEFA would have meant that the company would have struggled to survive, and that the company’s filmmakers would have barely made a living from their work, the state-sponsored nature of the East Berlin film industry meant that this was less of a concern for DEFA. As Hake points out; “[...] film-makers [in East Germany] enjoyed optimal working conditions that included the luxury of time and money, vast studio resources and professional support” (2008: 129). Consequently, despite the lack of financial success, the film industry remained a functioning part of the East Berlin economy, as it continued to employ a vast number of people, even when the actual output and returns from the films that the industry produced did not necessary warrant such a situation. East Berlin’s film industry was a political, not a cultural or economic tool, and so the government wanted to keep up appearances, no matter how the industry was performing in reality.

#### *The Formation of the West Berlin Film Fund*

Although the studio complex at Babelsberg developed into the central hub for filmmaking in East Germany, the situation in West Berlin was markedly different. Film production may have also eventually restarted in the western part of the city but geographically West Berlin was a political island, encircled by the East. As a result, this situation had a detrimental effect on the production environment found in this part of the city. This can be seen in the

fact that, as Margarete von Schwarzkopf states, by the early 1970s film was no longer a major talking point within the city, with the majority of studio space in West Berlin either lying empty or being used for television productions. Therefore, throughout the decade there was a gradual drain on the creative pool in Berlin, with the most talented filmmakers leaving the city for more vibrant film scenes elsewhere (1983: 21). West German filmmakers preferred to work in other cities in the country as the rebuilding of West Berlin, following the devastation of the Second World War, had failed to provide this part of the divided city with the type of production infrastructure which could offset the loss of the old industrial heartland at Babelsberg.

The regional government recognised that the film industry in West Berlin was at risk of dying out, due to the problematic state of the city's production environment. Therefore, in order to attempt to address these issues, West Berlin's politicians established a regional film fund in 1978. Such a move was a novel idea. Whilst government support had been available to the West German film industry at a federal level since 1967, when the national film fund had been established, this was the first time a source of film funding had been introduced at a regional level within West Germany. The acute regional problems facing West Berlin warranted such a measure, as the production environment that existed in the city at the time was hindering most films from being able to reach their full potential. As Detlef Stronk highlights; "'German film' was almost a deterrent for cinema goers. Only a few producers could make a profit from film activities. The risk of producing a film had become so incalculably large. It was therefore logical to offer producers an incentive to produce their films in Berlin, so that a part of this production risk could be taken away"<sup>24</sup> (1983: 7). In spite of the federal government's efforts, the system of funding in West Germany in the 1970s was still failing to provide a stable enough environment for most film producers to procure the necessary finance to make anything but low-budget films, a situation that was adversely affecting the quality and popularity of domestic film. Consequently, the West Berlin Senate hoped that, by setting up a film fund supported by regional government money, they could begin to reverse the gradual demise of West Berlin's filmmaking tradition, by making the western half of the city a financially attractive place to produce films.

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<sup>24</sup> 'Deutscher Film' war für die Kinobesucher fast eine Abschreckung. Nur wenige Produzenten hatten Erlöse aus der Auswertung des Films. Das Risiko, einen Film zu produzieren, war unkalkulierbar groß geworden. Es lag deshalb nahe, dem Produzenten dadurch einen Anreiz zu bieten, in Berlin zu produzieren, daß man ihm einen Teil dieses Produktionsrisikos abnahm

To achieve this regional improvement, a proviso of the fund was that any money given would remain in the region and be spent on film productions that took place in West Berlin. This became known as the 'Berlin-Effect' and meant that, not only would the fund add another level of support, in addition to the federal money, available for the West German film industry as a whole, but it would also begin to reinvigorate film production in West Berlin. Such an increase in film spending in West Berlin would in turn help to safeguard jobs and stimulate the local economy, as the money provided by the Senate for the fund flowed back into local businesses (Stronk: 1983: 15). Therefore, West Berlin came to sit apart from the rest of the West German film industry, not just because of the city's geographic isolation, but also due to this new local focus found within West Berlin's production environment. Just as the early German film industry had been fragmented and decentralised, the establishment of the West Berlin film fund re-instigated a regional outlook within the film industry found within this part of the divided city.

Whilst initially the fund had no explicit manifesto outside of improving the economic conditions for filmmaking within West Berlin, it soon became clear that a by-product of this regional centred support was that, as well as strengthening the city's film industry in terms of production, the fund also influenced the visibility and identity of West Berlin on screen. The presence of the fund meant that more productions were made about the city, and so the streets and landmarks of West Berlin became an increasingly common sight within cinema. Whether this was also a less overt part of the Senate's original motivations is unclear but, as Oliver Castendyke points out, the success of the fund meant that this stronger filmic representation of West Berlin acted as a form of "shop window"<sup>25</sup> for the city itself, as the depiction of West Berlin in the films supported by the fund shaped the way that the city was viewed both at home and abroad (2008: 48). Thus, the film fund also, perhaps inadvertently, began to play a branding role within Berlin's film industry. It may not have been until the formation of the MBB that the city's government clearly acknowledged the link between funding and branding, but the origins of the current branding activities analysed below can be seen in the creation of the West Berlin film fund.

However, despite the Cold War political tensions that existed in the city at the time, the branding potential of the film fund did not mean that the image of the city projected in the films supported by the West Berlin film fund conformed to the kind of stereotypical, idealised Berlin that might be expected from state-sponsored filmmaking. As Stronk goes on to argue; "Naturally it is not the aim of the Berlin film funding system that

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<sup>25</sup> Schaufenster



every film shows *Buletten* (a Berlin style burger) being eaten and the Radio Tower or Memorial Church on screen [...] Because of the Berlin film funding system there is an array of Berlin films which introduce the city and its specific attitude to life without pretention, and so convey a positive Berlin image without the fake tone of advertising<sup>26</sup> (1983: 14). This approach was in stark contrast to the censorship found in East Berlin at the time. Although the film fund was financed by the regional government, it was not forced to favour supporting films that showed West Berlin as a picture-postcard tourist city. This meant, as will be seen in Chapter 2, that the image of the city which was disseminated by the fund's films was one more in line with the daily reality of life in the western half of the divided city and the social problems that existed within it.

#### *A Work-in-Progress Production Environment for the Baustelle City*

The fall of the Wall had massive implications for the city's production environment. Not only did unification bring the two different approaches to filmmaking seen in East and West Berlin together into one unified city, but also the traditional industrial hinterland for Berlin's film industry, the studio complex at Babelsberg, was quickly exposed to the capitalist system of filmmaking. Gone was the stability and security provided by the state in the GDR, as the studio, much like the rest of the assets owned by the East German Government, fell under the *Treuhand* privatisation process. Whereas many of these assets were bought up by German investors, the Oscar winning West German director Volker Schlöndorff was brought in as an advisor on the fate of the DEFA assets. He recognised that the studio needed to be protected for the good of the German film industry, and so looked for a foreign buyer who could help to return Babelsberg to its position as a leading global studio.

Eventually the studio was taken over in 1992 by the French media conglomerate *Vivendi*, who made Schlöndorff studio head. In order to achieve his aims of making Babelsberg a global filmmaking location to rival that of Hollywood, Schlöndorff, as Michael Wedel outlines, developed four points which he hoped would govern the filmmaking activities at the studio. These were that films were to be shot in English, be designed for the American market, have a budget of at least 10 million Deutschmark and look to recover

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<sup>26</sup> Natürlich ist es nicht das Ziel der Berliner Filmförderung, daß in jedem Film Buletten gegessen wurden und auf der Leinwand der Funkturm oder die Gedächtniskirche zu sehen ist [...] durch die Berliner Filmförderung gibt es eine Reihe von Berliner Filmen, die unpräzise die Stadt und ihr besonderes Lebensgefühl ins Bild bringen und dabei ohne falsch Werbetöne ein positives Berlin-Bild vermitteln

at least half of this cost through the sale of international distribution rights (2012: 88). However, the studio complex which *Vivendi* bought had become outdated and ill-equipped for such a capitalist, Americanised style of filmmaking, which meant that Schlöndorff first had to overhaul Babelsberg's infrastructure. As a result, the first few years of *Vivendi's* tenure were problematic. As Wedel notes; "In terms of infrastructure, the new studio owners took the necessary measures [...] over 60 buildings were torn down, other facilities were renovated to be preserved out of historical reasons, and the studio was equipped with modern technology" (2012: 28). Yet, the studio's infrastructure was only one of the issues *Vivendi* faced. They also struggled to overcome scepticism in the studio's staff about their true aims, as well as to overhaul the studio's employment structure so Babelsberg employed fewer permanent staff members, and to combat a downturn in the European economy which meant few large-budget films were being made in Europe.

Therefore, rather than becoming a global studio once more, throughout the immediate post-unification years, Babelsberg became more closely associated with the problematic transformation seen across East Germany. As Randall Halle states; "From the outset, the studios were the site of enormous activity, but the kind that marked the years immediately after the *Wende*<sup>27</sup>" (2008: 69) (*italics in original*). This is not to say that production completely stopped. It was just that the few films which were made at the complex during the 1990s were not the successful blockbusters envisioned by Schlöndorff, which meant that Babelsberg was only able to stay afloat due to the money the studios earned from letting German television productions make use of its facilities (Wedel: 2012: 30). Consequently, the reputation the studio helped to develop for the unified production environment of the city came to be that of a chaotic location, where the filmmaking infrastructure was in a state of flux.

### *The Increasingly Regional Focus of German Film Production*

Still, the site-specific problems found at Babelsberg were not the only issues facing Berlin's film industry following the fall of the Wall. As Halle argues; "Having lived a separate existence for forty years, [Babelsberg] could only enter into the already crowded mediascape of the FRG as a local site of production, albeit a uniquely prestigious one" (2008: 64). The regional competition facing Berlin's post-unification film industry was epitomised by the funding structure found in the country. Following the success of the

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<sup>27</sup> Unification

West Berlin initiative, other *Länder*<sup>28</sup> set up similar regional film funds, with funds in Bavaria and North Rhine-Westphalia, in particular, developing into major players within the regional funding landscape in Germany. Whilst the West Berlin fund had been used as an incentive to offset the problems associated with filming in the isolated western half of the divided city, the attractiveness of the Berlin fund for filmmakers rapidly decreased following unification.

In fact, the problems which the fall of the Wall caused in Berlin's unified production environment, coupled with the increased regional competition in Germany, meant that the Berlin film fund fell behind those found in other *Länder* less affected by unification. Consequently, this combination of a poorly performing production environment and a film funding body which was struggling to compete, ultimately meant that it became difficult to produce films in the city. As the well-known Berlin-based producer Stefan Arndt is quoted as stating about the filmmaking conditions in the city during the *Baustelle* period; "[...] it was hell to film in Berlin"<sup>29</sup> (Visser: *Der Tagesspiegel*: 2013). These problematic conditions found within the city's production environment began to hinder the range of Berlin's cinematic output, with the majority of the films which were made in the decade which followed unification being low-budget films, produced for a select, art-house audience.

The issues facing Berlin's film industry were not helped by the impact that the increase in the number of regional film funds had on the spending habits of German filmmakers. Although, as was the case with the initial West Berlin fund, the regional spend clause remained a central part of these bodies' funding philosophy, filmmakers began to exploit the fragmented regional system to their advantage. As there was little cooperation between the different regional funds, a form of what Matthias Krupp terms "*Förder-Tourismus*"<sup>30</sup> developed in post-unification German film, that saw producers gathering finance from a number of different regional bodies and then travelling around the country, shooting different parts of their film in different regions (2004). This was particularly obvious in the growth in the number of domestic road movies being produced, as filmmakers saw this genre as a logical way to explain the multiple locations which they were forced to use. As Paul Cooke claims, the problem with this type of film was that filmmakers could not always successfully shape their stories to fit a road movie narrative. The resulting films often made detours to areas which caused the film to become convoluted and difficult to follow, and so such films failed to add quality stories to domestic

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<sup>28</sup> Regions

<sup>29</sup> [...] es war eine Hölle, in Berlin zu drehen

<sup>30</sup> Funding tourism

output at the time (2012: 38). Equally, this sort of approach to filmmaking was not necessarily to the regions' advantage. This was because *Förder-Tourismus* failed to produce a real increase in spending in any particular location as, rather than spending their whole budgets in one place, these films moved about the country spending little more than the minimum amount required by each region to satisfy their funding guidelines.

The funds realised that something had to be done to stop this trend and to reassert the original aims of regional funding, which led to two clear developments that began to curb the *Förder-Tourismus* of the road movie and further increased the regional nature of the German film production landscape. Firstly, the larger funds came together and agreed on certain harmonisation and cooperation measures that aimed to stop it being so easy for a producer to procure money from several different funds (*German Film Quarterly*: 2002: 6). However, perhaps more importantly, the regions also began to develop regional hubs as centres of excellence for film production. The hope was that, by improving the reputation of their region's film production capabilities, and, as a result, making their region a desirable place to shoot, a film would be more likely to spend a larger proportion of its budget within the local area.

The measures introduced by the regional funds seemed to stem the growth in road movies, as more productions based themselves in just one region, which meant that, as the 1990s progressed, there was an increasing trend which saw filmmaking activity spread across various different regions in the country. Furthermore, whilst the role which Berlin played within the German film industry following unification was limited, by the turn of the century there were signs that this could be slowly changing. A number of prestigious projects were persuaded to film at Babelsberg, such as *Enemy at the Gates* (Jean-Jacques Annaud, 2001), which at the time was the most expensive film ever made in Europe, with a budget of 68 million dollars. The prominence which this film gave to Babelsberg within the international film industry was further increased with the production of the Oscar-winning film *The Pianist* (Roman Polanski, 2002), followed by the blockbuster *The Bourne Supremacy* (Paul Greengrass, 2004). Berlin's reputation began to gradually evolve from a chaotic location in flux, only able to produce niche productions, into a city with a more vibrant film industry, able to accommodate various different films.

Nevertheless, these few films were not enough to make Babelsberg financially viable, and so, despite attracting these large-budget projects, the studio was unable to shed its reputation as a problematic location, struggling to adapt to the capitalist world of film production. Babelsberg's issues were not helped by the attitude and business

objectives of its parent company *Vivendi*. As Sabine Schicketanz writes; “The French media giant Vivendi [...] ceased film production towards the end. It was a loss making business. Although Vivendi had invested 500 million Euro, the studio was almost exclusively a TV service provider, it was rare that a film was still produced – soap operas instead of feature films”<sup>31</sup> (*Der Tagesspiegel*: 2009). Given the studio’s persistent financial problems, *Vivendi* sold Babelsberg in 2004 to a group of German investors for a token amount of one Euro, a decision which highlights that, although there were some green shoots of recovery within Berlin’s production environment, much work remained to be done to enable the region’s film industry to move beyond the *Baustelle* reputation and regain its position as a leading film production hotspot within Germany.

### **The MBB and the media Berlin Brand**

The lingering problems seen at Babelsberg help to explain the formation of the MBB, as Berlin’s film industry was still in need of some assistance to overcome the issues related to unification and evolve into a leading centre for the creative class within Germany. Hence, the decision by the regional governments of Berlin and Brandenburg to bring their film funding and creative industry marketing divisions together under one roof can be seen as a move aimed at combatting these final few problems, in order to aid the competitiveness of the creative industries within the region. As Matthias Platzeck and Klaus Wowereit, the two regions’ political leaders at the time, outline in the MBB’s *Standortbroschüre*<sup>32</sup>, through the formation of the MBB the Berlin and Brandenburg governments acknowledged that the regions could develop a stronger reputation within the production landscape of Germany if they worked together (2012: 1). Whilst Berlin had the established image that came from being a leading city within cinema since the medium’s inception, the studio complex at Babelsberg lay outside of the unified city’s administrative boundaries, in Brandenburg. Therefore, each region offered the other something that it was itself lacking and so, by coordinating the promotion of the unified and quickly normalising city and Babelsberg within one agency, an appealing and influential brand image could be developed for the region’s film industry.

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<sup>31</sup> Der französische Medienriese Vivendi [...] stellte am Ende das Filmemachen ein. Es war ein Verlustgeschäft. Obwohl Vivendi 500 Millionen Euro investiert hatte, war das Studio fast nur Fernseh-Dienstleister, selten wurde noch ein Film gedreht – Seifenoper statt Spielfilm

<sup>32</sup> Regional brochure

Although the impact which the West Berlin film fund had on the image of the western half of the divided city had been an inadvertent consequence of regional funding, as was seen above, by the time the MBB was founded in 2004 the notion of city branding, fuelled by the prominence of the knowledge economy and the importance of the creative class, had now become an accepted and important part of local government activities. This can be seen, as Colomb states, in the fact that; “Berlin’s Mayor Wowereit quoted Florida’s trio of urban virtues, ‘technology, talent, and tolerance’, in his inaugural speech to the House of Representatives at the beginning of his second term” (2012: 233). Therefore, by giving the MBB a stated role in city branding, the agency was tasked with helping to achieve the local governments’ wider aims with regard to the region’s knowledge economy, by transforming the cinematic reputation of the city’s production environment from that of a problematic *Baustelle* location, into something better equipped to aid the promotion of Berlin as a desirable place to live and work for members of the contemporary creative class.

#### *Adapting to Increased Regional Competition*

By the time the MBB was established, the fragmentation of the film production landscape in Germany, and the attendant creation of media hubs, had also changed the fundamental structure of the country’s film industry. As Elsaesser claims, the regional focus of the post-unification German production environment means that, like the federal nature of the country’s political system, what is understood as the German national cinema industry today is now more a collection of regions, which come together under the umbrella term ‘German Cinema’, than any sort of dedicated national industry in the traditional sense (1999: 13). This regional shift is evident in the fact that, whilst the current iteration of the national film fund, the *Deutsche Filmförderfond* (DFFF), might have a larger budget for feature film funding than each of the individual regional funds, when taken together, as Cooke claims, the regional funds now account for around 70 percent of the total public money available to filmmakers in Germany (2012: 36). The DFFF may provide an important source of funding for the country’s film industry as a whole, and so underpin film production activities in Germany, but the size of the regional funding pots means they are now an equally essential facet of the film support system. Indeed, many films are now produced with support only from the regional level.

This increase in the amount of money available from the regions has been accompanied by a continuing decrease in the *Förder-Tourismus* seen in the 1990s, which

means that the potential regional effect which this type of funding can create is massive. Although the exact amount that a film has to spend in a region varies between bodies, from 100% to 150% of the amount awarded by the regional film fund, in reality the regional effect which attracting a film to a region brings is much higher. For example, the regional effect seen in Berlin in 2013 was 458% (MBB: 2014a). Most filmmakers now choose to shoot the majority of their film in whichever region they receive funding from, which means that it is not just the regional money, but a large chunk of the film's overall budget that is spent within the local economy. Therefore, the regional government's support of the MBB may be part of an international growth in the importance of creative city branding, but there are also more nationally specific reasons which shape the aims of the agency's branding activities. The MBB is not just charged with positioning Berlin's film industry as a globally important centre for filmmaking, but the agency must also make the region more desirable than its domestic rivals, in order to increase the economic gains brought into the regional economy by film production.

The most obvious way to create a strong regional effect would be to focus the award of film subsidies on a small number of big-budget blockbusters, as it is this type of filmmaking which brings the highest level of per film spending. Arndt demonstrates this through his claim that his recent blockbuster, *Cloud Atlas* (Tom Tykwer, Andy and Lana Wachowski, 2012), which was filmed at Babelsberg, created a 1000% regional effect for the Berlin region (Mortsiefer: *Der Tagesspiegel*: 2012). However, the governance guidelines set out for the funds prevent such an approach, with all of the regional funds having a cap on the maximum amount that one film can be awarded. For the MBB this limit is one million Euro (MBB: 2012a). This provision can be explained through the fact that, within the fragmented structure of film production in Germany, the regions do not want their film industries to be dominated by a few large-budget productions, as this would fail to bring a sustainable array of employment opportunities to the region. Instead, as the MBB's guidelines state; "The aims of funding [...] are to enable a varied and diverse film, TV and media network"<sup>33</sup> (2010: 3). Given the freelance nature of modern-day film work, a vibrant industry producing many films is more likely to be able to support a large number of creative freelancers, and so, in the long term, become a sustainable and productive industry, which is an attractive place for members of the creative class to settle.

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<sup>33</sup> Die Ziele der Förderung sind [...] eine vielfältiges und qualitativ profiliertes Film-, Fernseh- und Medienschaffen in Berlin-Brandenburg zu ermöglichen

Accordingly, the financial subsidies on offer across Germany are broadly equal in value, which means, in recent years, the identity and reputation of a region's film production environment has become as important a factor as the money the region offers. As a result, the film funds have become involved in an ever more intense battle to be seen as the number one film production location in Germany. As Kirsten Niehuus, co-head of the MBB, states; "It is therefore important that Berlin and Brandenburg understand that film is more than just an indulgence for filmmakers and it brings a lot to the city in terms of image promotion"<sup>34</sup> (*Berliner Filmfestivals Magazine*: 2011). A region's production environment is judged on both its infrastructure and its output. As a result, the MBB needs to make use of both its funding and branding activities to cast Berlin as an attractive place to live and work for film professionals, an image which can only be achieved if the city is seen to be an inventive, well equipped production centre, which is cultivating a varied array of films.

#### *From Baustelle to Number One Region in Germany*

If we first look at the relationship between the MBB's funding strategy and the city's production output, it is important to note that the reputation for the type of films a location produces broadly manifests itself in two different ways; the cachet of being able to claim to be home to large-scale popular films and the prestige of seeing films supported by your region claim awards and praise from the critics. The problem for the newly established MBB was that, as was argued above, during the 1990s and early 2000s, Berlin's production environment had the reputation of being a niche filmmaking location. Although the region had some success in producing films praised by the critics, such as *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle* (*Life is All You Get*, Wolfgang Becker, 1997), Berlin struggled to consistently produce large-scale films. Therefore, in order to be able to compete with the likes of Bavaria, which has an established cinematic brand that is well known for a varied array of filmmaking, the MBB needed to help the city's film industry move on from its *Baustelle* reputation and develop a more well-rounded status for its film production output.

Whilst the distinction between economic and cultural prestige is not overtly made in the official guidelines set out by the MBB, unofficially the agency's funding activities are purposely split between supporting commercially successful films to boost economic activity and the image of the region as a popular centre for production, and more artistic projects that serve to add cultural resonance to wider ideas surrounding the region as a

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<sup>34</sup> Insofern ist es wichtig, dass Berlin und Brandenburg verstehen, dass Film mehr ist, als nur das Beglücken vom Filmkünstlern und er der Stadt viel an Imagewerbung bringt



production hub. Niehuus gives a clear insight into this approach in an interview with *Die Welt*, when she explains the process which the MBB undertakes when deciding on whether or not to fund a project, stating;

We look at the script intensively and consider whether the film has either artistic or commercial promise. Most of the time there is still this separation, although we value one as much as the other. On the basis of the documents that we have, we then generate a prognosis as to whether the film will be artistically and/or commercially successful. We then fund the projects with the most positive prognosis<sup>35</sup> (2012)

By using such an approach for funding decisions, the MBB is (indirectly) acknowledging that, for Berlin to compete in the fragmented national production landscape, the city needs to be seen to be a location that is able to produce all types of cinema. Such a perspective is only possible due to the MBB's dual role as film fund and city branding agency. Unlike in its previous incarnation as the West Berlin film fund, the MBB is more aware of the impact its funding decisions have on the wider reputation of the city.

Of course, by the time the MBB was established, Babelsberg was beginning to slowly change the type of films being produced in Berlin. However, since the MBB's inception, there has been a noticeable increase in film production in the region. As a report into Berlin's creative industries by the *House of Research*, commissioned by the MBB to mark the agency's 10<sup>th</sup> birthday, states; "Revenues within the Berlin-Brandenburg film industry have increased by 64 percent since 2004"<sup>36</sup> (2014: 6). Whilst this growth includes low-budget films, crucially the MBB's funding strategy has also enabled a stark increase in the number of big-budget films made in Berlin. This includes German-language films, such as *Keinohrhasen (Rabbit without Ears*, Til Schweiger: 2007) and *Fack ju Göthe (Suck Me Shakespeare*, Bora Dagtekin, 2013), as well as co-productions, such as *Inglourious Basterds* (Quentin Tarantino, 2009) and *Cloud Atlas*. As Niehuus argues; "The content profile of the film region has changed: Whereas a few years ago Berlin-Brandenburg was considered to be a region from which films emerged that were artistically highly valued, but commercially

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<sup>35</sup> Wir gucken uns das Drehbuch intensive an und überlegen, ob der Film entweder künstlerisch oder kommerziell besonders erfolgsversprechend ist. Meistens ist das immer noch eine Trennung, obwohl wir das eine genauso wertschätzen wie das andere. Anhand der Unterlagen, die wir haben, erstellen wir eine Prognose, ob der Film künstlerisch und/oder kommerziell erfolgreich werden wird. Die Projekte mit den positivsten Prognosen fördern wir dann

<sup>36</sup> So steigen die Umsätze am Standort Berlin-Brandenburg in der Filmbranche seit 2004 um 64 Prozent

less successful, in the last year [2008] Medienboard was involved as a funder in 9 of the 20 most successful films of the year<sup>37</sup> (*Blickpunkt*: 2009). This evolution of Berlin's reputation as a film production location was clearly seen at the 2013 German Film Awards, as the two films which led the nominations were both made in Berlin and supported by the MBB. Yet, the two films could not have been more different in terms of production background, as the 100 million Dollar *Cloud Atlas* went up against *Oh Boy* (Jan Ole Gerster, 2012), a film made on a budget of 300,000 Euro. Whilst this contrast will be explored in more detail in the case study of *Oh Boy* in Chapter 4, such a situation clearly signals that under the stewardship of the MBB, Berlin's film industry cluster has developed into a location with a varied production output. Therefore, the city is now well-equipped to compete in the battle to be the preeminent film location in Germany.

The transformation of the region's cinematic output and capabilities has been so successful that the MBB uses the claim that Berlin has become the number one film location in the country as the central slogan to much of the agency's efforts to shape the reputation of contemporary Berlin's film industry. However, it should be noted that, whilst the MBB, along with the *FFF-Bayern*<sup>38</sup> and *Film und Medienstiftung NRW*<sup>39</sup>, are clearly the current top three regional funds in the country, the victor in the fight to claim the title of number one differs, depending on which figures one uses to quantify such a claim. For example, in 2014 the *Film und Medienstiftung NRW* awarded the most money to film productions (29.5 Million Euro in comparison to the MBB's 26 Million Euro and the *FFF-Bayern's* 20.4 Million Euro), whilst the latest available regional effect figures show that the MBB currently boasts a regional effect of 458%, in comparison to the *FFF-Bayern's* 280% and the *Film und Medienstiftung NRW's* 200% (*Film und Medienstiftung NRW*: 2015, *FFF-Bayern*: 2015, MBB: 2014a, MBB: 2015a). Yet, regardless of these differing figures, the very fact that Berlin is in a position to claim to be the leading film location in the country is a major departure from ideas surrounding the city's production environment during the *Baustelle* period.

The way that the MBB is using this change in reputation to boost the image of the city's film industry can be seen in the promotional video, *Medienboard-Trailer*, produced by the MBB to market the capabilities and success of recent Berlin cinema (MBB: 2015b). The

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<sup>37</sup> Das inhaltliche Profil der Filmregion hat sich gewandelt: Galt Berlin-Brandenburg noch vor einigen Jahren als Ursprungsregion künstlerisch hochwertiger, aber kommerziell oft weniger erfolgreicher Filme, war das Medienboard im vergangenen Jahr [2008] an neun der zwanzig erfolgreichsten Filme des Jahres als Förderer beteiligt

<sup>38</sup> Bavarian Film and Television Fund

<sup>39</sup> North Rhine Westphalia Film and Media Foundation

video opens with an inter-title which proclaims Berlin to be the number one film location in Germany and then goes on to show clips from films made in Berlin, on various budgets, as well as interviews with both filmmakers and film stars on why they chose Berlin as the location in which to produce their films. Importantly, these interviews are with both German and international film professionals, as this shows that Berlin's film industry has not just become a leading domestic film hub, but also a global hotspot for filmmaking. In addition to this, several of the stars interviewed also make it clear that the current situation in Berlin is largely due to the work of the MBB. This video is just one example of the plethora of marketing material produced by the MBB, but it illustrates well that, by combining the role of film funder and city marketer, the MBB has become the central cog in the development of a more positive, varied and successful cinematic brand emanating from Berlin's production environment.

#### *Branding Berlin as a Media City*

Nevertheless, the perceived industrial capabilities and economic advantages of Berlin's film industry, developed through pragmatic film funding, are only part of the wider brand developed by the MBB. The agency also needs to sell the city as a lifestyle location where people working across various creative industries would want to spend time for entertainment, as well as economic reasons. This is because, as the agency's governance guidelines state; "The Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg GmbH has been tasked by the regions of Berlin and Brandenburg to support the development of a common media region"<sup>40</sup> (2010: 3). Whilst cinema may be a dominant player in Berlin's creative industries, the MBB is not solely focussed on the city's film industry. Therefore, alongside the agency's film funding activities, it is also necessary to look at how this view of Berlin as a vibrant film production hub feeds into the MBB's wider marketing of Berlin's creative industries.

As Florida argues; "What [the creative class] look for in communities are abundant high-quality amenities and experiences, an openness to diversity of all kinds, and above all else the opportunity to validate their identities as creative people" (2002: 218). Thus, it is precisely such an image that the MBB is looking to cultivate through its promotion of Berlin. In particular, the agency draws on marketing principles which, as Graham Drake writes; "[...] exploit local traditions, reputations or narratives as a form of product branding" (2003: 520). The specific locational nature of place brands, such as the MBB's

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<sup>40</sup> Die Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg GmbH ist von den Ländern Berlin und Brandenburg beauftragt worden, die Entwicklung der gemeinsamen Medienregion zu fördern

brand for Berlin, means that the city images found within such reputations use real examples and case studies, in order to be seen as authentic. What is interesting about the examples chosen by the MBB to construct Berlin's creative credentials is that, although the knowledge economy encompasses a vast array of different industries, the MBB focuses on those which may loosely be termed the media and entertainment industries. This is highlighted by Platzeck and Wowereit in the *Standortbroschüre*, when they claim:

From all over the world creatives come to the capital city region to realise their ideas. They start businesses, open subsidiaries or invest in start-ups. Their presence characterises the region as an international creative metropolis, with an inventive as well as culturally stimulating climate, and so helps to ensure considerable economic dynamism in the German capital region. Games Developers, Filmmakers, TV producers, programmers, designers, publishers, music executives and other creatives all over the world sense: You are at the cutting edge in Berlin-Brandenburg<sup>41</sup> (2012: 1)

The agency's marketing material constructs a contemporary reputation for Berlin as a lively, innovative and artistic centre, which is attracting a vast array of international creatives to come to live and work in the city, across a broad spectrum of industries. Therefore, potential new members of the city's creative class will see that they will have plenty of opportunities "to validate their identities" if they chose to relocate to Berlin.

Of course, this bias is partly due to the uniquely focussed, media-centric remit of the MBB, which, as was discussed in my introduction, gives the agency a privileged position within Berlin's wider place branding. All of Berlin's other city branding, for both other elements of the knowledge economy, such as science and art, as well as the city more generally, is handled by the public-private cooperation *Berlin Partner GmbH*, who use the generic 'be Berlin' campaign as a catch-all brand for the city. Thus, the manner in which the city's government has decided to structure the marketing of Berlin means that the media industries occupy a position at the forefront of Berlin's wider city branding activities, as the MBB is able to develop a more targeted and visible brand for this part of the city's economy.

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<sup>41</sup> Aus aller Welt kommen Kreative in die Hauptstadtregion, um hier ihre Ideen zu realisieren. Sie gründen Unternehmen, eröffnen Dependanceen oder investieren in Start-ups. Sie prägen damit die Region als internationale Kreativmetropole mit ihrem ebenso schöpferischen wie kulturell anregenden Klima und sorgen mit für eine beträchtliche wirtschaftliche Dynamik in der deutschen Hauptstadtregion. Games-Entwickler, Filmschaffende, TV-Produzenten, Programmierer, Designer, Verleger, Musikschaffende und andere Kreative in aller Welt spüren: In Berlin-Brandenburg ist man am Puls der Zeit

This situation can be explained through the fact that, although Berlin has begun to emerge from its problematic period of post-unification rebuilding in recent years, the majority of the city's industrial activity remains below that which would be expected from a leading global capital. However, the media and entertainment industries do not conform to this trend. As Krätke states; "Among [German] media cities, Berlin is characterised by a considerable growth in importance during the last 10 years as opposed to its overall weak economic development" (2004: 516). This claim is supported by the *House of Research's* report, which states; "Since 2004 revenue in these media sectors has increased by 80%, at the same time the number of businesses has increased by 74% to 12,554 active firms in the metropolitan region"<sup>42</sup> (2014: 5). To see Berlin's knowledge economy as being dominated by anything other than the media industries would be inaccurate. Therefore, the traditions and narratives which give Berlin's contemporary city brand its characteristics are rooted in this world, and so the prominence of these industries within the efforts of the MBB to move Berlin beyond its *Baustelle* reputation means that I define the brand developed by the agency for the city as 'media Berlin'.

#### *Berlin as a Young and Vibrant Location*

The vibrancy and success which the MBB's vision of media Berlin transmits further enriches the reputation of the city's film industry cluster, as cinema benefits from its central role in the city's new found status as a diverse and popular media city. Therefore, the cinematic brand of Berlin is strongly imbued with the wider images of media Berlin. To this extent, the nature of the media Berlin brand image is that of a young, vibrant and innovative creative cluster. This can be seen in the manner in which new digital media and entertainment industries feature prominently in the MBB's marketing material. As Elmar Giglinger, the other co-head of the MBB, writes in the same publication as Platzeck and Wowereit; "Those wanting to start out in the digital sector come to Berlin-Brandenburg"<sup>43</sup> (2012: 5). Such claims have been aided by the development of a digital media cluster in Prenzlauer Berg, which has gained an international reputation due to the success of companies such as the music website *SoundCloud*, whose headquarters are in this part of the city. In fact, between 2005 and 2012 more than half of venture capital investment into internet-based start-ups worldwide flowed into Berlin's digital industries (*House of*

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<sup>42</sup> Seit 2004 sind die Umsätze in diesen [Medien] Branchen um 80 Prozent gewachsen, die Zahl der Unternehmen stieg ebenfalls um 74 Prozent auf nun 12.554 aktive Betriebe in der Metropolregion an

<sup>43</sup> Wer in Digitalbereich gründen will, der kommt nach Berlin-Brandenburg

Research: 2014: 11). As Caroline Bayley discusses in an article for *BBC News*, this success has led to the area being given the moniker 'Silicon Allee', a name which plays with the 'Silicon Valley' term attributed to the prominent American technology cluster found in northern California to highlight the strong digital credentials now found in Berlin (2012).

As the origins of the *Silicon Allee* name also suggests, Berlin's digital companies are extremely international, both in terms of the people they employ and the reach of their business activities. Crucially, this international business structure is an important signifier of a global media city, which Krätke defines as a location which boasts a number of media companies who operate within a global network (2011: 152). Therefore, this is a view which comes to define the specific nature of the media hotspot reputation found within the MBB's brand. As the MBB's marketing team write on the agency's website; "As a national, as well as international meeting place of creatives, [Berlin] is in a league with cities such as New York, Shanghai, London or Barcelona"<sup>44</sup> (MBB: 2014b). Hence, the MBB is able to use the companies of *Silicon Allee*, alongside the presence of other global media offices, such as the German headquarters for the international music organisations *MTV* and *Universal Music* at Warschauer Straße, to demonstrate how Berlin has developed since unification into a leading international hub for the media industries.

Yet, the MBB's construction of the city's international media industries shows Berlin to be a very specific type of global media city. As Giglinger goes on to state; "The right climate prevails in the capital city region for the industries of the future, which often involve working in young, international teams and for whom 'coolness' and lifestyle are as important a criteria as comparatively cheap office space"<sup>45</sup> (2012: 5). Such sentiments are also found on the agency's website, as the MBB's marketing team write that; "Berlin and the surrounding area has become the most exciting location for young entrepreneurs"<sup>46</sup> (MBB: 2014b). Thus, the MBB casts Berlin as a fashionable, hip location, with an entrepreneurial atmosphere. As Greg Richards states, such a reputation is a growing feature of city branding worldwide, due to the fact that; "[...] cities with a creative 'buzz' or atmosphere are more attractive to live in, work in and to visit" (2012). This argument is supported by Gina Neff, Elizabeth Wissinger and Sharon Zukin, who have looked at precisely this use of 'buzz' within the current growth of place marketing and the knowledge

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<sup>44</sup> Als nationaler wie internationaler Treffpunkt der Kreativen spielt [Berlin] in einer Liga mit Städten wie New York, Shanghai, London oder Barcelona

<sup>45</sup> In der Hauptstadtregion herrscht das richtige Klima für die Zukunftsbranchen die oft in junge, internationalen Teams arbeiten, und für die neben vergleichsweise günstigem Büroraum auch Hipness und Lifestyle ausschlaggebende Kriterien sind

<sup>46</sup> Berlin und sein Umland sind zum spannendsten Ort für junge Entrepreneure geworden

economy and argue that; “Increasingly, the cultural attributes of ‘cool’ are used in the service of increasing profits in post-industrial capitalism” (2005: 311). It is not enough to simply be a competent media hub. A city also needs to possess a fashionable edge, which can then be made use of in the branding of the location as a creative city. Consequently, the semantics of the MBB’s branding combines the international status of *Silicon Allee*, with the cutting edge, digital focus of many of these companies, to give the media Berlin brand both the economic credentials and fashionable ‘buzz’ required to attract members of the creative class.

However, whilst the presence of the companies of *Silicon Allee* delivers the necessary innovative economic elements for creating such a ‘buzz’, the MBB also promotes the city’s nightlife as providing a ‘cool’ and desirable lifestyle outside of the office for the city’s young creatives. Such a strategy is hardly surprising given that, as Florida states; “Nightlife is an important part of the mix” for the creative class (2002: 225). This is largely because, as Neff et al go on to clarify, the nature of the work carried out by those in the media industries means that there is; “A fluid boundary between work-time and playtime [which] is shaped by compulsory ‘schmoozing’, ‘face-time’ or socialising within the industry after the workday” (2005: 321). The freelance nature of contemporary employment in most media industries means that such workers are always on the lookout for their next short term project. Subsequently, a vibrant nightlife is an important element of any city wanting to develop into a successful media centre, as it is often through the contacts made whilst socialising that media freelancers find their next employment opportunity.

In terms of Berlin’s nightlife, a vibrant and hedonistic club scene developed in the city following unification, as the empty buildings found in East Berlin enabled a number of experimental clubs to open up. This led the city to cultivate a reputation as a leading dance music location during the 1990s and early 2000s, a perception which was epitomised by the annual Love Parade that took place in Berlin. Consequently, the MBB appropriates the hip cachet which was built up by Berlin’s *Baustelle* dance music scene to demonstrate that the city boasts fashionable entertainment locations. This can be seen in material like *Medienboard-Trailer*, which sees actors such as Brad Pitt extoll the virtues of Berlin’s entertainment locations (MBB: 2015b). As Ingo Bader and Albert Scharenberg write; “The city’s electronic music scene, the independent labels and the city’s club culture are accountable for Berlin’s reputation as a global music city. This creative environment is used as a brand, and it is also seen as an important economic activity” (2013: 255).

Contemporary Berlin’s nightlife may not boast the same sort of freedom as was found

immediately following the fall of the Wall, with the clubs and bars of East Berlin becoming more formal and organised, but Berlin's reputation as a hedonistic location has only increased in recent years. As Tobias Rapp outlines, the proliferation of cheap flights to Berlin since the turn of the century has transformed the city into a tourist destination, which has allowed more and more people from all over Europe to enjoy the city's nightlife, a fact that is evident in the growth of overnight hotel stays in Berlin seen in the last decade (2009). Therefore, Berlin is now known around the world as a leading global, hedonistic mecca, full of 'cool' bars and clubs. This is a reputation which the MBB uses to its advantage. By harnessing the standing of the city's music scene to market Berlin as a 'cool' city, the MBB is able to further enhance the attractiveness contemporary Berlin commands as a global media cluster for the members of the creative class, and by association the potential economic gains this reputation can bring to the city's economy.

### **The Reality of the media Berlin Brand within Berlin's Film Industry Cluster**

Since the formation of the MBB a decade ago, the agency has used an interconnected approach between film funding and city marketing to shape Berlin's cinematic brand into something which is noticeably different from the city's *Baustelle* reputation, casting Berlin as a vibrant, young, well-equipped global media city. However, the clustered nature of Berlin's film industry means that the MBB is only one of a number of actors that come together to influence ideas surrounding Berlin's contemporary cinematic brand. Consequently, in order for the media Berlin brand to be successfully disseminated to a broad spectrum of people, the vision the MBB creates for Berlin also needs to be supported by the city's wider film industry cluster. Although academics such as Halle (2006) and Marco Abel (2013) have examined certain actors from within the city's production environment, these studies have failed to consider the interconnected nature of the city's film industry. Therefore, by examining Berlin's production environment as a cluster, I will be able to highlight the commonalities and co-dependencies which exist within the city's film industry and so influence the reputation of Berlin as a film city.

#### *Babelsberg's Transformation into a Global Hub*

Perhaps the most prominent actor within Berlin's film industry in terms of media coverage, and the one which most obviously represented the problematic issues that afflicted the city's production environment during the *Baustelle* period, is the studio complex at Babelsberg. Yet, although under the ownership of *Vivendi* the studio struggled to compete



in the international market, since being taken over in 2004 this situation has been radically altered. As Matthew Ogborn comments, Babelsberg's new owners; "[...] have painstakingly rebuilt Studio Babelsberg's reputation to such an extent that the Potsdam enterprise can match the likes of the UK's Pinewood and Shepperton for big-budget international productions eyeing a European base" (*MovieScope*: 2011). Babelsberg may have initially struggled to compete with even its domestic rivals following unification, but, as Schicketanz writes; "Today Babelsberg is the German film location"<sup>47</sup> (2009). The studio has gone from being seen as a problematic relic of the past, to being heralded as a leading international studio complex, which both dominates the domestic production landscape and is able to compete with other large studios around the world. As Jens Mühling argues; "Europe's biggest film studio has, after a long period of crisis, developed into an international brand"<sup>48</sup> (*Der Tagesspiegel*: 2014). This transformation in the reputation of Babelsberg clearly supports the claims of the MBB with regard to the global reach and competitiveness of Berlin's contemporary film cluster, which means that the studio has come to positively affirm the claims surrounding the city's creative infrastructure found within the media Berlin brand.

The studio's international standing is solidified, as Wedel asserts, by the films which are now made at Babelsberg, as they involve some of the biggest and most respected filmmakers and actors from around the world (2012: 18). In recent years, Babelsberg has been home to productions for directors such as Quentin Tarantino (*Inglourious Basterds*), the Wachowski siblings (*Speed Racer*, 2008) and Wes Anderson (*The Grand Budapest Hotel*, 2014), as well as films starring actors such as Kate Winslet (*The Reader*, Stephen Daldry, 2008), Tom Cruise (*Valkyrie*, Bryan Singer, 2008) and George Clooney (*The Monuments Men*, George Clooney, 2014). There may be many reasons why such international productions come to Germany, from the incentives of the DFFF to the country's problematic past, but these productions could have chosen to film at one of the other big German studios. However, by choosing Babelsberg specifically, they give credence to the MBB's wider claim that the excellence of the city's media industries is attracting creative people from all over the world to come and work in Berlin. Thus, these stars' global personas can be used in the promotion of the MBB's vision for the city, such as in *Medienboard-Trailer* discussed above. These actors become spokesmen for the media Berlin brand, a strategy which helps to affirm Berlin's global media city credentials.

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<sup>47</sup> Babelsberg ist heute der Filmstandort Deutschlands

<sup>48</sup> Die größte Filmfabrik Europas ist nach langen Krisenjahren zu einer internationalen Marke geworden

Nevertheless, these stars would not be filming in Berlin if it were not for the competencies which exist at Babelsberg. The necessary transformation of the studio following unification has left Babelsberg with a highly versatile and skilled workforce, as well as a state of the art production infrastructure, which can be deployed onto any project. While the training environment which helps to produce these talented film professionals will be looked at in more detail below in reference to the dffb, it is clear that the capabilities and provisions now present at Babelsberg act as strong incentives to attract film productions to the city. As Babelsberg's marketing department claims; "Whether you are looking for a historical sound-proof stage or state-of-the-art VFX/SFX studios: 300,000 square feet are available for film productions [...] In addition, Studio Babelsberg features Germany's largest indoor water tank for water and underwater filming and permanent sets like a Boeing 737 aircraft gimble or the backlot 'Berliner Street' [...] convertible into any European city" (*Studio Babelsberg*: 2013: 6). The rebuilding begun under *Vivendi* has now transformed the studio into a location with top quality infrastructure.

This view is epitomised in the work of Babelsberg's construction department. As Mühling writes on his own experiences of the studio; "It is unbelievable how quickly worlds appear and then equally quickly disappear here. In just the last year the Third Reich has been built and dismantled twice, a French fairy tale landscape from the 18<sup>th</sup> century appeared and then vanished, a contemporary American office complex, the interior for a 1920s hotel"<sup>49</sup> (2014). The construction department states that it can produce any sets required, regardless of scale or location, which allows Babelsberg to accommodate any type of film (*Studio Babelsberg*: 2014a). Therefore, whilst a large part of set construction at the studio involves the recreation of historical locations, such as occupied Nazi cities of the Second World War (*Inglourious Basterds*, *The Monuments Men*), the skillset of the construction department is such that they can also produce sets which can be used for filming contemporary narratives, regardless of whether the film is actually set in Berlin or not. An example of this was seen in Tom Tykwer's 2009 film *The International*, as the studio's construction department completely recreated the interior of New York's *Guggenheim Museum* at Babelsberg and, according to Tykwer, the results of this project were so accurate that you were unable to tell that you were not in New York once on the

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<sup>49</sup> Unfassbar, wie schnell hier Welten entstehen und wie schnell sie wieder verschwinden. Allein das vergangene Jahr: Zwei Mal wurde in Babelsberg das 'Dritte Reich' aufgebaut und abmontiert, es entstanden und vergingen eine französische Märchenlandschaft der 18. Jahrhunderts, eine amerikanische Bürometropole der Gegenwart, die Innenausstattung für ein 20er-Jahre Hotel

set (*Studio Babelsberg*: 2010). Such skill is a rare commodity in international filmmaking, which means that the view created by the presence of Babelsberg's construction department within Berlin's film industry cluster, supports the MBB's claim that Berlin is a location full of professionals at the cutting edge of their creative field.

Yet, although the majority of the coverage of Babelsberg's success focuses on international productions, this does not mean that these are the only type of films which have been made at the studio in recent years. In fact, as Babelsberg's marketing department writes elsewhere; "Living true to our motto 'Act Global, Spend Local', Studio Babelsberg invests reference-subsidy, awarded for its involvement on international films, in smaller German and European productions" (*Studio Babelsberg*: 2014b). Therefore, the complex is not exclusively used by large-budget, English-language films. In the last few years, Babelsberg has also welcomed German-language films such as *Wir sind die Nacht* (*We are the Night*, Dennis Gansel, 2010) to make use of studio's facilities for special effects sequences. In addition to this, the sets built for the large-budget, historical film *Anonymus* (Roland Emmerich, 2011), which is set in Shakespearean England, were then made use of by the small-budget film *Oh Boy*, which is set in contemporary Berlin, but needed a film-set backdrop for one scene, a setting the filmmakers would not have been able to afford to recreate from scratch within their tight resources. Hence, the production activity found at the studio does not just promote Berlin as an international location for large-scale films. The facilities at Babelsberg are used by a whole array of different films that represent the entire spectrum of film production. As a result, as well as aiding the promotion of Berlin as a highly skilled international filmmaking hub, Babelsberg also supports the claim made by the MBB that Berlin's film industry has become a varied production centre.

#### *Babelsberg as an Important Sub-Cluster of Berlin's Film Industry*

The highly developed provisions now present at Babelsberg are reflected in the central claim made by the studio's marketing department that; "We offer international filmmakers a full range of production services" (*Studio Babelsberg*: 2014c). The reason that Babelsberg is able to offer services which cater to all aspects of a film's lifecycle is that the studio complex has developed into its own vibrant film industry sub-cluster within the Berlin region, with, as the MBB claims, 130 companies linked to film production now being based at the complex (MBB: 2012b: 9). To be sure, it is only because of the facilities present at Babelsberg that Berlin can claim to be an international filmmaking hub, as the studio complex is the sole location within Berlin's film industry cluster which offers the capacity

and infrastructure needed to produce large-budget films. Yet, even though Babelsberg's sub-cluster may make an important contribution to wider ideas surrounding Berlin's film industry, this does not mean that the studio operates in isolation from the rest of the city's production environment. Indeed, the presence of the MBB, and the funding incentives which the agency provides for productions based in the region, also form an important part of Babelsberg's appeal. As Schicketanz argues; "The Babelsberg secret is a combination of clever, risk-aware corporate management, the highest quality standards and a tailor-made funding policy"<sup>50</sup> (2009). The MBB may use the studio as an important asset which drives many aspects of the media Berlin brand, but this relationship is a co-dependent one. Without the MBB deploying a funding strategy which has looked to actively improve the number of large-scale films being made in the region, Babelsberg would have been unable to prosper in the manner it has done, which in turn would have hindered the development of the city's wider film industry. Consequently, although officially they may work independently from one another, this co-dependency serves to highlight the interconnected nature of Berlin's film industry cluster and the impact that the entire network has on the city's cinematic brand.

Furthermore, this co-dependency between Babelsberg and the city's wider film industry is not just confined to the work of the MBB, something which the studio's marketing department make clear in their brochure *'Filming in Germany: Production Services and Soft Money Incentives'* when they write; "[Berlin] has a deep, local skilled crew base. You can hire each position locally, which means enormous savings in travel, hotels and per diems" (*Studio Babelsberg*: 2013: 5). As was argued above, the employment structure of the film industry relies heavily on freelancers, and so easy access to a pool of skilled workers is essential for any location wanting to be a film industry hub. This is particularly true of a contemporary studio complex, such as Babelsberg, which only employs a minimum number of staff permanently. Most productions hire in local freelancers for work at the studio on one off deals, an approach which allows Babelsberg to be more flexible within the ebbs and flows of on-site film production that characterise modern-day filmmaking. Therefore, the MBB's claims that Berlin is able to easily provide skilled freelancers is also a situation which Babelsberg promotes, as it is these freelancers who form the majority of the crew and technical staff for the studio's films.

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<sup>50</sup> [...] das Babelsberger Geheimnis ist eine Verbindung aus kluger, risikobewusster Unternehmensführung, höchsten Qualitätsansprüchen und einer maßgeschneiderten Förderpolitik

The importance of Berlin for the studio can also be seen in the fact that the lifestyle which the city offers filmmakers whilst they are working at Babelsberg is an important feature of the complex's appeal. As Christoph Fisser, one of the Managing Directors of Babelsberg, is quoted in an interview for *Die Berliner Morgenpost* as saying; "[...] Berlin is a trump card"<sup>51</sup> (Matthias Wulff and Peter Zander: 2014). The studio's marketing department develop this point further when they write; "Whether its museums or galleries, dining or entertainment, film, music or fashion, Germany's capital is a place where new trends are set. The legendary nightlife, the attractive and unusual shopping opportunities, but also the unique history shaped by changes and upheavals, are attracting more and more people from all over the world" (*Studio Babelsberg*: 2013: 11). Thus, the combination of Berlin's lifestyle elements and industrial diversity found within the MBB's promotion of the city are also an important feature which the studio actively looks to disseminate. Babelsberg, like the MBB, plays up the inventive, hedonistic and creative conditions found in the city in its marketing material to further promote the notion of Berlin as a fashionable city with a 'buzz', in order to appeal to members of the creative class. As a result, Babelsberg not only supports the development of notions surrounding Berlin's production environment being an internationally important and varied film hub, but also spreads the idea of Berlin as a young, 'cool' city with a vibrant nightlife catering to diverse media professionals, qualities of the city which are also central features of the media Berlin brand.

#### *X Filme and Berlin's Production Companies*

In addition to the studio complex at Babelsberg, another important aspect of the film industry cluster in the city are the numerous production companies, which have either moved to Berlin or have been founded in the city since the fall of the Wall. As Marc Röhlig writes; "There are around 250 production companies in Germany which specialise in feature films. 116 of these, almost half, are based [...] in Berlin or Potsdam"<sup>52</sup> (*Der Tagesspiegel*: 2013). The time of division, and the problematic period of rebuilding which followed unification, may have created an atmosphere within Berlin which failed to fully maintain the city's vibrant film culture, but contemporary Berlin has now developed into a location which once again is acting as film hotspot, where film production companies want to cluster. Hence, the MBB's claim that present-day Berlin has emerged from its insular

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<sup>51</sup> [...] Berlin ist eine Trumpkarte

<sup>52</sup> In Deutschland gibt es rund 250 Produktionsfirmen, die sich auf Spielfilmlänge spezialisiert haben. 116 davon, fast die Hälfte, sitzt [...] in Berlin oder Potsdam

*Baustelle* period and become the leading film industry location in Germany is given greater credence.

One of the most well-known of these Berlin-based production companies is *X Filme*, which was established in Berlin in 1994. Amongst the company's founding members were the film directors Tom Tykwer, Wolfgang Becker and Daniel Levy, as well as producer Stefan Arndt. They came together with the aim of forming a collective organisation which gave filmmakers more control over their work, an aspiration which had links to the formation of the Hollywood studio *United Artists* by, amongst others, D.W. Griffith and Charlie Chaplin in 1919. As David Clarke argues; "The aims of [*X Filme*] are threefold: firstly, to improve the working relationship between producers, writers and filmmakers by integrating them into a cooperative structure that is both critical and supportive; secondly, to take risks and produce demanding individual, yet entertaining German films that will reach sizable audiences; and thirdly, to improve the control of artists over the finished film product" (2006: 4).

However, the formation of *X Filme* was not the first time that a group of German filmmakers had attempted such an operation. Hake points this out when she likens *X Filme* to the *Filmverlag der Autoren*, which was set up by the directors of the New German Cinema movement in the 1970s (2008: 195). By creating a connection with the respected New German Cinema within academic discourse, *X Filme* gains some critical gravitas in terms of the company's creative potential and cultural importance, which creates a privileged position for *X Filme* within writing on the present-day film landscape in Germany. Furthermore, as Wolfgang Becker is quoted as saying; "There is no alternative to Berlin for our project in terms of location"<sup>53</sup> (*Der Tagesspiegel*: 2004). The company's production activities and the city are inextricably entwined, and so, like Babelsberg, the reputation *X Filme* commands within both academic discourse and the city's film industry also comes to influence Berlin's wider cinematic reputation.

Yet, despite the links drawn in academic writing between the company and the art-house New German Cinema movement, which mainly produced films that reached a small audience both at home and abroad, *X Filme* does not take a similar approach to filmmaking. As Clarke goes on to state; "X Filme seeks to bridge the gap between popular cinema and intelligent and original filmmaking" (2006: 5). This approach was already evident in *X Filme's* early productions, as the company developed a reputation for low-budget, inventive, but also popular, films, which, like the company itself, were based in

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<sup>53</sup> Als Standort ist Berlin für unser Projekt ohne Alternative

Berlin. This included Wolfgang Becker's *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle*, as well as Tom Tykwer's *Lola rennt* (*Run Lola Run*, 1998), with Tykwer's film in particular becoming a surprise global hit. This early success was followed by bigger budget films, most notably the *Ostalgie* comedy *Goodbye, Lenin!* (Wolfgang Becker, 2003), which cost over three and a half times more than *Lola rennt* to produce. Yet, significantly this increase in budget was also coupled with an increase in box office revenue, with *Goodbye, Lenin!* going on to earn just under 80 million dollars worldwide, in comparison to the 14.5 million Dollar takings of *Lola rennt* (*The Numbers.com*: 2014a and 2014b). The success of *X Filme*'s early films has enabled the company to grow into one of Germany's leading film producers, which is now respected not just domestically, but also around the world. As Arndt states; "We have developed a position for ourselves through *X Filme* in which we are now being taken seriously worldwide"<sup>54</sup> (*Blickpunkt*: 2012). Consequently, *X Filme* boasts a reputation that complements the MBB's own efforts to develop the standing of Berlin's film industry into a location which is able to produce a range of internationally successful films.

This evolution of *X Filme*'s global standing has continued into the present day, aided by the production of further internationally well-received films, such as the Palme d'Or winning *Das weiße Band* (*The White Ribbon*, Michael Haneke, 2009). As a result, the increase in resources and status which the company's early success brought shows little sign of stopping, a fact that means *X Filme*'s output has also continued to evolve. The desire to combine popular and challenging filmmaking remains but, alongside its more traditional German-language films, in recent years the company has also been a co-producer on English-language films such as *Cloud Atlas*, as well as European productions, such as *Amour* (Michael Haneke 2012). Indeed, the growing international outlook of *X Filme* can be seen in the fact that one of the company's founders, Tom Tykwer, directed both *Cloud Atlas* and the Berlin-set spy thriller *The International*. Tykwer made his name as a director with *Lola rennt*, and his progression since his success with this film into a director with a global reputation shows that it is not just the city's infrastructure, but also Berlin's wider filmmaking talent, which has emerged from the city's problematic *Baustelle* production environment to become leading figures within cinema worldwide.

However, the company's increased international focus does not mean that *X Filme* has completely abandoned either low-budget filmmaking or Berlin as a location for its films' narratives. In addition to those mentioned above, *X Filme* has been involved in recent

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<sup>54</sup> Wir haben uns mit X Filme eine Position erarbeitet, in der wir international Wahrgenommen werden

years with the production and distribution of Berlin-based films, such as *Märzmelodie* (*March Melody*, Martin Walz, 2008), *Alter und Schönheit* (*Age and Beauty*, Michael Klier, 2009) and *Oh Boy*. Therefore, the company's output still includes smaller-scale films with a Berlin bias, which helps to maintain the strong association *X Filme* has to the city's cinema industry. What is interesting about this contrast is that, whilst many global producers choose to split out their filmmaking activities, to help to differentiate between different types of productions, such as the Hollywood studio *Twentieth Century Fox's* use of the *Fox Searchlight* subsidiary for lower budget productions, this is not an approach taken by *X Filme*. Instead, *X Filme* has continued to treat all its films as equal. Those behind *X Filme* explain this approach by stating that they have looked to create "[...] a label for good films. A label which doesn't represent one individual film but which creates a reliable and recognisable name [...] for all its films – international co-productions, major German feature films or high-quality TV productions" (*X Filme*: 2014). One way this has been achieved is through the creation of the *X-Edition* brand, under which all of *X Filme's* productions are released in Germany, and which features prominently on all domestic DVD packaging. By being branded as *X-Edition* productions, films such as *Cloud Atlas* and *Oh Boy*, despite, as was stated earlier, their vastly different production backgrounds, become connected through their *X Filme* credentials in the popular imagination.

As *X Filme* is so strongly associated with Berlin, by actively looking to bring all of the company's activities together under one label, *X Filme* strengthens present-day ideas surrounding the city being an internationally capable producer of innovative and varied films. As Arndt argues; "We were so brave and crazy in the beginning to only travel abroad with German films such as *Lola rennt*, *Goodbye Lenin!* or *Das weiße Band*. I see the future as increasingly international. We should not allow ourselves to be limited, but must internationalise further, in order to take part on the international stage"<sup>55</sup> (*Blickpunkt*: 2013). Consequently, *X Filme* supports the idea of contemporary Berlin as a global media city. As a well-respected international producer, run by renowned film professionals, who produce a varied selection of films for the global market, the company's presence in Berlin demonstrates the city's hotspot status within an international filmmaking network.

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<sup>55</sup> Am Anfang waren wir so mutig und verrückt, nur mit deutschen Filmen wie *Lola rennt*, *Goodbye, Lenin!* oder *Das weiße Band* international zu reisen. Die Zukunft sehe ich immer internationaler. Wir dürfen uns nicht beschränken, sondern müssen uns weiter internationalisieren, auf internationalem Parkett mitspielen



### *The dffb and the Training of Berlin's Film Professionals*

Nonetheless, all of the activities within Berlin's present-day film industry discussed so far need a training and education system to sustain and produce the highly skilled professionals found across the city's production environment. As a result, alongside the more traditional creative businesses, such as production companies and studios, educational institutions are also an essential part of Berlin's knowledge economy. As the MBB's marketing team write; "Alongside the innovation-orientated creative environment, it is, in particular, the excellent economic conditions, good value for money, pool of highly professional service providers and employees, and not least the excellent education possibilities, which ensure that more and more investors, founders, creatives, and decision-makers settle here"<sup>56</sup> (MBB: 2014b). A strong educational climate is particularly important for any city wanting to be seen as a film hotspot. This is because, as film production has shifted from a studio system, such as that seen at Babelsberg in the 1920s, to the current model of freelance project working, the way film professionals develop their skills has also altered. As Caves argues; "In the studios, directing and other non-acting crafts were learned through on-the-job training on the set. This apprentice method of training was no longer efficient for cinema films after assembly-line production on the studio lot had ceased. This slack was taken up by film schools at several universities and specialised institutions" (2002: 99). In terms of contemporary Berlin, this 'slack' is particularly taken up by two film schools, the dffb based in central Berlin and the *Filmuniversität Babelsberg Konrad Wolf*<sup>57</sup> based next to the Babelsberg studio complex.

The practical-focus of Berlin's film schools means that their reputation is best seen through the films produced by those associated with these schools, particularly the graduates of the schools' directing programmes. However, although the *Filmuniversität Babelsberg Konrad Wolf* is now seen as a leading institution in Germany, the school's role has been limited since unification by the necessary process of adapting to the transition from communism to the capitalist structure of the unified country. Therefore, the school has only recently begun to produce a steady stream of graduates of note. Consequently, it

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<sup>56</sup> Neben dem innovationsorientierten Kreativumfeld sorgen vor allem hervorragende wirtschaftliche Rahmenbedingungen, ein gutes Preis Leistungs-Verhältnis, ein Pool an hoch professionelle Dienstleister und Mitarbeitern und nicht zuletzt exzellente Ausbildungsmöglichkeiten dafür, dass sich immer mehr Investoren, Gründer, Kreative und Entscheider hier niederlassen

<sup>57</sup> Konrad Wolf Film University Babelsberg

is the dffb which has made the most important contribution to current understandings of Berlin's film education system.

In terms of the dffb's standing, the school's reputation has been particularly shaped in recent years by the work of a group of filmmakers who have come to be known as the Berlin School. Although, as is often the case with notions of 'film movements', the exact parameters of who belongs to the Berlin School is difficult to define, what is certain is that the name was developed due to the academic background of the movement's three original members; Thomas Arslan, Christian Petzold and Angela Schanelec. All three of these directors are graduates of the dffb, and so the movement's name was initially coined by critics in reference to these directors' links to Berlin's education system. In particular, they all explored an approach to filmmaking which was influenced by their studies under the avant-garde filmmakers Harun Farocki and Hartmut Bitomsky at the dffb. The members of the movement may investigate a plethora of different issues in their work, from the migrant dominated narratives of Arslan's films (e.g. *Geschwister – Kardeşler (Brothers and Sisters)*, 1997) to Petzold's supernatural-tinged stories (e.g. *Yella*, 2007), but their films all conform a similar filmic style and it is this style which has the greatest impact on the wider reputation of the dffb.

As Cooke argues, what connects these films is that all of the Berlin School directors take part in an "exploration of cinematic realism in both the form and content of the work produced" (2012: 72). This is a realism, which, as Hake states; "[is defined by a] preference for long takes, few dialogues, lay actors, and episodic narratives" (2008: 206). As a result of their stylistic choices, the Berlin School directors are seen to be challenging and exploring the very limits of the medium of cinema. Abel points this out when he writes that; "[The Berlin School constitutes] the first significant (collective) attempt at advancing the aesthetics of cinema within German narrative filmmaking since the New German Cinema" (2013:10). Thus, the Berlin School has become a symbol for the experimental fringes of German filmmaking, and so, by association, the reputation of the dffb comes to be that of an innovative and pioneering institution.

#### *The Wider Reach of the Berlin School*

The reach of this reputation has been particularly helped by the fact that, as Abel goes on to argue; "[The Berlin School has] become part of the daily vocabulary of German film critics – so much so that discussions of the merits of individual films are often subordinated to considerations of them as examples of this school" (2013: 11). Despite the Berlin School

films' lack of commercial success, German film critics have disproportionately championed these films within the domestic press, something which has only increased as more and more directors have begun to produce films similar in style to those of the Berlin School's founders. Such a preference has also spread to the work of German film academics, with Lutz Koepnick claiming that; "During the last five years, German film studies [...] has been preoccupied with the work of the Berlin School, i.e. Germany's newest generation of noncommercial, critical, and formalistically rigorous filmmakers" (2013: 651). This can be seen in the publication of several works dedicated to the movement, such as Abel's monograph *The Counter-Cinema of the Berlin School* (2013), as well as Roger F. Cook, Lutz Koepnick, Kristin Kopp and Brad Prager's *Berlin School Glossary* (2013).

The Berlin School name has come to function as a brand within modern-day German filmmaking, which means that the movement influences far more than just the standing of the dffb. In fact, the strength of the Berlin School name within critical discourse surrounding Berlin cinema is so great that the movement has come to dominate many ideas surrounding the style and capabilities of contemporary Berlin filmmakers. Interestingly, such a development has taken place despite the fact that, as Abel argues; "[...] many so-called Berlin School directors neither hail from, nor learned their filmmaking skills in, Berlin (even though most of them have moved there by now). Nor, I hasten to add, are many Berlin School films about, or even set in, Berlin" (2013: 10-11). As Clarke explains, as the movement has grown, not all of the subsequent additions to the Berlin School grouping trained at the dffb. Instead, filmmakers have been subsumed into the movement due to their preferences for a similar filmic style, rather than their academic background (2011: 136). The Berlin School now includes directors who trained elsewhere in Germany, such as Christoph Hochhäusler (*Milchwand (In this Very Moment)*, 2003), who trained in Munich, and Ulrich Köhler (*Bungalow*, 2002), who studied in Hamburg, as well as those who attended films schools in other German-speaking countries, such as Valeska Grisebach (*Sehnsucht (Longing)*, 2006), who trained in Vienna. Consequently, these filmmakers explore spaces from all over Europe, and are not just focussed on the topography of Berlin.

This creates a contradictory dichotomy with the contribution the Berlin School makes to the wider cinematic brand of the city. On the one hand, as the films of the Berlin School often fail to engage with the urban space of Berlin, these productions do not advance the reputation of the city on screen. However, in comparison to this, the movement's links to the city, forged through the association with the dffb, means that the Berlin School remains an important feature of ideas surrounding the industrial capabilities

of Berlin. Therefore, rather than weakening the contribution the Berlin School makes to ideas surrounding the city's film industry, such a diversification of contemporary understandings of the movement actually helps to further the idea of Berlin as a creative hub found across the promotion of the city's production cluster. As was argued earlier, Florida claims that the creative class will be attracted to a city if it has a reputation for being a location which welcomes inventive and artistic people, and this is a view of Berlin which the various filmmakers who are now considered to be part of the Berlin School help to construct. The innovative, pedagogical atmosphere found at the dffb may be central to understanding the Berlin School's approach to filmmaking, but the various filmmakers who have become part of the movement also affirm global opinions of Berlin as a location where creative people from all over the world are supported and helped to flourish.

This international flavour of the Berlin School is further aided by the fact that, as Cook, Koepnick and Prager claim, the realism at the core of the Berlin School films is also part of a wider international re-emergence of such a filmmaking style in cinema, from countries as diverse as Denmark, Romania and Thailand (2013: 13). The Berlin School is not just a national film movement but also one which is linked to a wider global trend. This global appeal can be seen in the fact that, in recent years, the movement has been the subject of retrospective screenings at many international festivals and venues, most notably the *Museum of Modern Art* in New York, which showed 17 Berlin School films together in one season in 2013. Crucially, the information the museum produced to advertised the series used both post-unification Berlin and the dffb as the context for the movement. For example, the online introduction to the screenings states that; "In the mid-1990s, a new group of Berlin-based auteur filmmakers emerged, building from what we can see now, 20 years on, was the intellectual rubble of the collapsed Wall. The three founding members of what came to be known as the Berlin School – Thomas Arslan, Angela Schanelec and Christian Petzold – all studied at the dffb". (*Museum of Modern Art*: 2013). Thus, the wider reputation developed by the Berlin School supports efforts to redefine the capabilities of Berlin's post-unification film industry, by demonstrating that, from the problems created by the fall of the Wall, the city has emerged as an international film hub, able to nurture experimental film professionals.

## **Conclusion**

The growth of the knowledge economy, and the development this has brought about in city branding activities, has had a fundamental impact on Berlin's cinematic reputation.

Although the origins of the MBB may lie in the West Berlin film fund, the remit which the agency has been given by the regional governments of Berlin and Brandenburg is far wider and more overtly geared towards the development of a city brand than was found in the earlier film fund. Therefore, the MBB makes use of both film funding and city marketing techniques to shape the contemporary cinematic brand of Berlin. In terms of film funding, the agency has taken a pragmatic approach, which has looked to increase the volume and variety of Berlin's cinematic output. As a result, the reputation of the city's production environment has changed from the *Baustelle* image of Berlin as a niche production location, to a contemporary view which sees the city as a vibrant film hotspot that now acts as the number one film region in Germany. Such a notion of Berlin cinema has then been used as the foundation on which the MBB has built its wider brand for the city's creative industries. In particular, the MBB's branding activities have focussed on the media and entertainment industries found in the city, bringing them together under the brand of media Berlin, a brand which is firmly aimed at attracting the contemporary creative class to the city. Therefore, to appeal to this section of society, the MBB has endorsed a version of Berlin which casts the city as a young, cutting-edge media hotspot, with a vibrant nightlife for these people to enjoy.

However, the MBB's media Berlin brand is only able to be successful disseminated because of the backing the agency's brand image receives from the wider activities found in Berlin's film industry cluster. The studio complex at Babelsberg has developed a reputation over the last decade as a leading international film production location, with an infrastructure able to compete with anywhere in the world. This has led to an increase in the number of large-budget productions made within Berlin, a change which affirms the MBB's claim that Berlin is a vibrant, global film production hub. Such a reputation is also reinforced by *X Filme*, as the firm has become a renowned film production company worldwide, with a diverse, international catalogue of films. Furthermore, the contemporary production activities in the city are underpinned by the education provisions found in Berlin. Therefore, the reputation of the dffb and, in particular, the Berlin School group of filmmakers, helps to promote Berlin as a location which is nurturing a deep pool of skilled and knowledgeable creative professionals. Consequently, the chaotic reputation which haunted the city's production environment immediately following the fall of the Wall is now an outdated view. Instead, through the efforts of the MBB, and with the support of the city's wider film industry cluster, Berlin's contemporary cinematic brand is defined by

the image of media Berlin, where the city is cast as a global media city, with a young creative population at the forefront of the global knowledge economy.

## Chapter 2: Berlin on Screen - From Birthplace of Cinema to *Baustelle* City

### Birthplace of Cinema

As was stated earlier, the work of the Lumière brothers in France at the end of the nineteenth century may mean that Paris is the city often cited as the birthplace of cinema, but such a view does not necessarily tell the full story. Indeed, film pioneers all over the world were working on various different machines that they hoped would lead to the projection of moving images. This included several people within Berlin, most notably Max and Emil Skladanowsky. The Skladanowsky brothers had been experimenting with film since the 1870s and, by November 1895, their efforts had produced a number of short films which they felt were suitable for public exhibition. Amongst these films was a clip of Emil dancing, shot on the rooftop of the brothers' Prenzlauer Berg apartment building near to Eberswalder Straße underground station. As Stephen Barber writes, Max Skladanowsky later dated this sequence to having been produced in the summer of 1892, which means that this short scene represents one of the earliest examples of any city, not just Berlin, being captured on film (2002: 21). Emil may be the focus of the camera's gaze, but the city fills the rest of the frame, with the rooftops and chimneys of working class eastern Berlin clearly visible behind him. Looking back at this clip now, what is most interesting is that the early glimpses of Berlin found in this short film are not of the city's great Prussian monuments or historical buildings but of Berlin's unglamorous, inner city neighbourhoods. As Regina Aggio argues; "After all, the development of film in Berlin can be determined with topographical accuracy. It was invented between Pankow, Prenzlauer Berg and Mitte"<sup>58</sup> (2007: 9). The origins of Berlin cinema may be relatively humble but, as cinema has grown over the last century, from a small cottage industry into a major creative medium, the focus of cinematic representations of Berlin has changed and evolved over time.

Therefore, the purpose of the analysis which follows is to chart the development of Berlin's filmic reputation, with a particular focus on how the city has been portrayed by those films produced between the fall of the Wall in 1989 and the FIFA World Cup in 2006. Crucially, although there may be a growing corpus of work on the historic representation of Berlin in cinema, from Susan Ingram's edited collection for the *World Film Locations* series (2012) to chapters by academics such as David Clarke (2006) and Barbara Mennel (2008), I take a slightly different approach to these studies in this chapter. Whereas most

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<sup>58</sup> Immerhin lässt sich die Entstehung des Films in Berlin topographisch genauer bestimmen. Er ist zwischen Pankow, Prenzlauer Berg und Mitte erfunden worden

investigations into Berlin's cinematic history have dealt with either a certain theme or timeframe from the city's tumultuous past in isolation, I look to investigate the leitmotifs that prevail throughout the city's cinema. Consequently, whilst I use a chronological structure, which draws on the academic discourse surrounding Berlin cinema, I also compare and contrast different periods of Berlin filmmaking. The various shocks and problems experienced by Berlin throughout the twentieth century may have created interesting and unique filmic identities for the city, be it as the Nazis' capital or a destroyed city, but underneath these images exists a number of constants. This includes, for example, the idea of Berlin as a politicised city or the image of Berlin as a hotspot for creatives. Ultimately, it is this continuity that underpins the city's evolving filmic reputation, and so provides the context for the contemporary representations of Berlin dealt with in my later chapters.

### **Weimar Berlin on Screen**

The invention of cinema coincided with a rapid expansion of Berlin. When the Skladanowsky brothers began their experiments in the 1870s, the population of Berlin had been around 1 million, a relatively small number for a global capital city. Yet, by 1920 this number had quadrupled and the city was now home to 4 million inhabitants. This population boom meant that Berlin operated as a leading hub within Germany and this position was reflected in the city's film industry. However, it was not just within cinema that Berlin was developing a reputation as a hotspot of creativity. As Anton Kaes argues; "By the 1920s, Berlin had become the imaginary centre of urban culture, drawing artists, intellectuals, tourists, migrants and immigrants into its orbit like a magnet [...] The city became the primordial site of modernity to which painters, poets, and filmmakers returned obsessively" (1999: 29). The presence of world famous creatives, such as the architect Walter Gropius and artist George Grosz, as well as the city's infamous cabarets, which were renowned for their hedonism and sexual freedom, saw Berlin develop a reputation as a city whose society was at the cutting edge of fashion and culture.

This status was reflected in the city's cinematic output as Berlin became home to a diverse array of filmmakers, working in numerous different styles. As was discussed in Chapter 1, the most well-known group of filmmakers in the city at the time was the Expressionists, who were developing an international reputation for pushing the boundaries of the medium. However, whilst these filmmakers may have used the studio complex at Babelsberg to construct their expressionist worlds, and so helped to further



develop Berlin's reputation as a successful and creative film industry location, the majority of their films' narratives avoided depicting the reality of Weimar Berlin. There were notable exceptions, such as *Der letzte Mann* (*The Last Laugh*, F.W. Murnau 1924), which uses an expressionist style to tell the story of an elderly doorman at a luxury Berlin hotel, but such an expressionist Berlin film remained an anomaly.

Instead, as Dorothy Rowe states; "One of the major aesthetic features of Berlin's modernity was the new experience of space, time and motion by which it was now characterised" (2003: 12). Hence, the urban space of the city created by Berlin's new modernism offered fresh possibilities for the city's filmmakers. The transformation of Berlin in the early part of the twentieth century had created a city unlike anything that had been experienced before. Societal changes and technological advances altered people's work life, their domestic arrangements, and how they spent their free time. In order to begin to understand and assess these developments, Berlin filmmakers began to explore life within the city through so-called *Straßenfilme*, such as *Die Straße* (*The Street*, Karl Grune, 1923), *Asphalt* (Joe May, 1929) and *Menschen am Sonntag* (*People on Sunday*, Robert Siodmak and Edgar G. Ulmer, 1930). Whilst these films spanned a range of genres and film styles, they were tied together through their use of narratives set on the streets of the city, a setting which these *Straßenfilme* used to investigate the reality of Weimar Berlin. As Barbara Mennel summarises, these films focused on the; "pleasures and dangers of modern life; crime, anonymity, a loosening of morality, unemployment, and class struggle on the one hand and movement, speed, entertainment, and liberated erotics on the other" (2008: 23). Thus, the image of Berlin projected by the *Straßenfilme* created a version of the city that showed a gritty underside to Berlin's development into a hedonistic, modernist location.

In order to explore such a view of Berlin, Weimar filmmakers drew on similar ideas to leading cultural theorists of the time, such as Walter Benjamin and Georg Simmel. As Pierre Sorlin states, these writers had been at the forefront of attempts to understand the sociological impact of the modern city on the lives of Berlin's inhabitants, Simmel through essays such as *The Metropolis and Mental Life* (1903) and Benjamin in his flâneur infused writing, and their arguments provided a useful framework for filmic explorations of Berlin (2005: 26). Both felt that the changes seen in Berlin as the city grew into a world metropolis had happened too quickly, which meant that the city's inhabitants had not been given time to process the developments that were happening around them. David Frisby defines this attitude as being motivated by the fact that; "[...] the speed of destruction and

reconstruction [in Weimar Berlin] robbed the observers of the ruins the time for reflection. The face or faces of the city could be transformed so rapidly, that the presentness of the past was seldom allowed to enter into consciousness at all" (2001: 119). In an attempt to process these changes, Benjamin took to the streets, traversing the city to try and understand the new reality which was being created. In comparison, for Simmel, it was the effect which the city's transformation had on the mental life of Berlin society which was most telling.

As Graeme Gilloch states; "[...] for Benjamin, the city is the site of the rise of Erlebnis and the concomitant demise of Erfahrung. The experience of the modern urban complex is that of the fragmentation of experience itself [...] [Whereas] Simmel explores the impact of the city upon the 'inner life' of the individual" (1996: 144). Simmel argued that the modern metropolis now offered so much in terms of activities and distractions that the individual became over-stimulated and disorientated by their surroundings, which saw, as Frisby writes elsewhere; "The intellect [creating] a necessary distance, abstraction and inner barrier from the jostling crowdedness and the motley disorder [...] Socially this distance takes the form of indifference, dissociation and the blasé attitude" (1990: 65). As the growth of Berlin was linked to increased industrialisation, Simmel believed this blasé attitude to be symptomatic of the rising commodification associated with the money economy of the city. However, the problem with this new phenomenon of 'the crowd' was that it also led to an increase in anonymity and loneliness, as traditional familial networks were broken down, a change in society which had a negative effect on the mental life of Berliners and saw an increase in problems such as paranoia.

Whilst many of the *Straßenfilme* explored the idea of the modern flâneur and the blasé attitude of the crowd, the film which best represents such a view of Weimar Berlin is *Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt* (*Berlin: Symphony of the Big City*, Walter Ruttmann, 1927). Ruttmann's film tells the story of a day in the life of Berlin and is one of a series of international city symphony films that were produced in the 1920s and included *Rein que les heures* (*Nothing but Time*, Alberto Cavalcanti, 1926), which explored Paris, and *Man with a Movie Camera* (Dziga Vertov, 1929), which depicted Moscow. In *Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt* Ruttmann makes use of a documentary style and plays with filmic techniques to create a film text which mirrors many of the ideas found within Simmel's work surrounding Berlin as a superficial city dominated by a faceless crowd. As Barber argues; "Once immersed within Berlin the film [...] oscillates between scanning its surfaces, as the ephemeral traces of a day and night pass over its buildings and avenues and examining the

nature of perception in the city, with the camera following the inhabitants' gaze at its incessant spectacle" (2002: 32). Ruttmann does not allow the camera to linger for too long on any scene or individual in particular and this means that the film reflects what Ruttmann sees as the shallow indifference of Berlin's inhabitants.

Consequently, as Peter Jelavich argues, the city itself becomes the star of the film, with the version of Berlin depicted being one very much in the throes of a modernist renovation (2009: 209). The Berlin that Ruttmann portrays is not one full of traditional architecture, with such buildings rarely shown in the film at all. As Mennel states; "The modern metropolis is marked mainly by the camera's repeated return to places in the city that are not identified by their national significance in the capital of Germany, but rather by their role for transportation or leisure. Instead of architecture, we find traffic" (2008: 38). The city image which Ruttmann creates on screen is one where the tempo and rhythm of Berlin life are the characteristics that define the city, as the film repeatedly makes use of images of Berlin's busy streets, the city's public transport network, and its factories. Just like in the writing of Simmel and Benjamin, the city found in *Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt* is one which is a bustling, busy world metropolis that has fully embraced the industrialisation and hedonism of the modern age.

However, the fast-moving and shallow gaze which Ruttmann uses to explore the city also allows the film to investigate the darker side of city life. Ruttmann combines the tempo of the city with montage editing to create a filmic text which builds layers of understanding and develops the film's critical exploration of Weimar Berlin. This is seen in the sequence that depicts an unknown young woman throwing herself to her death from one of Berlin's bridges. As Figure 2 illustrates, the scene opens with images of women begging on the street before a young woman is seen in close up. Yet, as she prepares to jump the camera cuts to a roller-coaster, then a spinning spiral, whilst once the woman has disappeared under the water of the Spree, the camera does not loiter at the scene. Instead, rather tellingly the film cuts to a clip of models on a catwalk and then to one of a caged lion. Through both its own ambivalent treatment of the event and the use of editing, the film links this woman and her subsequent demise to the wider problems of commodification and the breakdown in communication brought about by the rapidity of life in Berlin at the time. The woman would seem to be the very epitome of the problems of alienation found in the work of Simmel, as she has become overwhelmed by the situation she found herself in in Berlin.





Figure 2: Montage editing and the mental life of Berliners in *Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt*

Ruttmann's film is typical of the construction of Berlin found in Weimar cinema and this image of a quickly altering city of hedonism, with a problematic and dangerous underbelly, continued into the sound films made about Berlin in the early 1930s, such as *M* (Fritz Lang, 1931) and *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (Piel Jutzi, 1931). For example, the exploration of the issues facing Franz Biberkopf (Emil Jannings) once he is released from prison and returns to the city in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* continues the view of the struggling Berliner seen in reference to the young women discussed above. As Jelavich argues, much like in *Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt*, the opening of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* uses editing and multiple images to stress the alienating and confused situation Biberkopf finds himself in due to the city's rapid development (2009: 225). Thus, in an attempt to combat these feelings, Biberkopf functions in the film as a working class flâneur, as he roams the city in search of a purpose and a place to belong; be it on Berlin's streets, in the city's bars, or at the city's cabarets. As a result, Biberkopf becomes an early example of the character of the drifter, a figure who, as will be see below, has come to haunt Berlin cinema. Therefore, Berlin's early cinematic reputation was that of a city which was both at the very forefront of advancements in the modern world and was a decadent mecca of the hedonistic post-First World War period. However, at the same time, behind this debauched façade lurked a more damning reality, which illustrated the social problems caused by the city's growth. Berlin's inhabitants had been left dazed and confused by the rapid tempo of the city's development and this situation was giving rise to a transient lifestyle in the city.

## The Politicisation of Berlin's Image in Cinema

Yet, alongside these images of the Weimar city, there was also a growing political element within Berlin filmmaking. This can be seen in the fact that the well-known nationalist and media mogul Alfred Hugenberg bought an interest in Ufa in 1927, in order to allow him to more effectively make use of cinema as a medium through which to spread his political beliefs. Although initially this growing politicisation of Berlin cinema did not directly influence the image of the city on screen, by the early 1930s this was noticeably changing, especially as the Nazi party gained more and more power within Germany. The left-wing film *Kuhle Wampe* (Slatan Dudow, 1932), which explored the problems of Berlin's working class and the importance of class solidarity, was heavily censored by the authorities and was only allowed to be released in a shortened form. Then in 1933 Fritz Lang's second Dr Mabuse film, *Das Testament des Dr Mabuse* (*The Testament of Dr Mabuse*), was banned completely for fear it would incite a lack of trust in figures of authority. As Sabine Hake notes, this growing culture of censorship; "[...] represented the endpoint of a politicisation of film culture that culminated in the Nazi takeover of the industry. These famous censorship cases as well as the more hidden pressures on writers, directors, and producers [...] attested to the shifting balance of power in culture and society as a whole" (2008: 54). Therefore, during the early 1930s, the changing political atmosphere in Germany impacted the cinematic image of Berlin.

The biggest influence which the Nazification of cultural policy had on the reputation of Berlin in cinema came from the fact that the party had a dislike of anything linked to modernism. As Hake goes on to write; "Art and culture in the Third Reich were characterised by traditionalism, classicism, anti-intellectualism, and the denunciation of modernism as alien and degenerate" (2008: 64). Such a view extended to the work of cultural theorists such as Simmel and Benjamin. Consequently, the critical engagement between cinema and ideas surround the flâneur and the blasé attitude of the crowd disappeared from films set in Berlin, as the image of the city as a vibrant centre of modernism was repressed by the Nazi authorities.

Although scenes set in the city's cabarets and shots of Berlin's busy streets remained a feature of the Nazi's engagement with the city, the construction of these images became sanitised, as any possibility for subversion was removed from the films of this period. Berlin may have been constructed as a progressive mecca of the golden twenties, albeit with a gritty dark side, but under the Nazis such a view of the city soon stagnated. Instead, the films supported by the Nazis saw Berlin used either as a site for

propaganda narratives, such as in *Hitlerjunge Quex* (*Our Flags Lead Us Forward*, Hans Steinhoff, 1932) and the *Olympia* films (*Olympia 1. Teil - Fest der Völker* (*Olympia Part 1 – Festival of Nations*), *Olympia 2. Teil – Fest der Schönheit* (*Olympia Part 2 – Festival of Beauty*), both Leni Riefenstahl, 1938), or as a backdrop to escapist entertainment films, such as Carl Frölich's *Die vier Gesellen* (*The Four Companions*, 1938) and *Der Gasmann* (*The Gas Man*, 1941), as well as Helmut Käutner's *Unter den Brückern* (*Under the Bridges*, 1944). In particular, cinema was used as a tool to distract the population from their daily problems and guide them towards a lifestyle more in line with Nazi ideology.

Nowhere was this more obvious than in the changing role women played in these films. The liberal arts scene in Berlin in the 1920s may have been a liberating force for many women but, as Stephen Brockmann argues, Nazi cinema promoted a very different view of female emancipation (2010: 139). Berlin's creative society is shown to be a threat to the city's female population, with the safety of the home offering a more accepting environment. Therefore, in *Unter den Brückern* Anna (Hannelore Schroth) reacts with disgust following her experiences as an artist's model, but finds solace in her relationship with Hendrik (Carl Raddatz). Similarly, in *Die vier Gesellen* Marianne (Ingrid Bergman) and her college friends see establishing their own design agency as a way of furthering themselves. However, the friends find that it is only through marriage, not a career, that they are able to find true happiness. Therefore, although some of the tropes of Weimer Berlin remained a feature of these films, the propagandistic aims of those in control of Berlin's film industry meant that overall Berlin became a sterile space on screen, shaped by the Nazi's beliefs.

The limitations of this approach became more acute as the Second World War went on, with the Nazi's control of the film industry meaning that the image of Berlin during this period failed to engage with the realities of the city as a wartime capital. For example, although the Second World War was well underway at the time of production, the street scenes in *Der Gasmann* are noticeably devoid of people in uniform. This disjunction between the reality of wartime Berlin and the city disseminated on screen can also be seen in *Unter den Brückern*. As Figure 3 shows, Anna's apartment looks out over the city. However, the image of Berlin's skyline offered by the film does not contain any reference to the bomb-damage which afflicted much of inner-city Berlin at the time. As Hake writes; "[...] the censors considered certain representations – for instance, of bombed cityscapes – too demoralising for wartime audiences" (2008: 68). The authorities were keen to avoid a realistic depiction of the destruction now found within the nation's capital for

the benefit of the war-weary nation's morale. This meant that the image of Berlin projected on screen during Hitler's reign bore an ever decreasing correlation to the reality found in the actual city.



Figure 3: The lack of bomb damage in *Unter den Brücken*<sup>59</sup>

## Berlin in the Aftermath of the Second World War

### *A City in Ruins*

Yet, once Hitler's downfall was confirmed in 1945, the destruction left behind in Berlin by the Second World War could no longer be avoided by the city's cinema. The city lay in ruins and as a result a number of films began to appear which explored the devastated city. Such a brutally honest construction of the annihilation of Berlin's urban space radically altered the city's image in cinema, with the images of destruction at the heart of these films meaning that they have come to be collectively known as the *Trümmerfilme*<sup>60</sup>. These included domestic films, such as *Die Mörder sind unter uns* (*Murderers Among Us*, Wolfgang Staudte, 1946) and *Razzia* (*Raid*, Werner Klingler, 1947), as well as foreign produced films, such as *A Foreign Affair* (Billy Wilder, 1948), *Germania, anno zero* (*Germany, Year Zero*, Roberto Rossellini, 1948), *Berlin Express* (Jacques Tourneur, 1948) and *The Big Lift* (George Seaton, 1950). As Markus Münch writes; "Rubble films – one could hardly film anything else in Berlin in 1946"<sup>61</sup> (2007: 38). The escapism of the Nazis' entertainment films was gone, as the *Trümmerfilme* produced a more realist treatment of the city on screen, which better reflected Berlin's inhabitants' attempts to come to terms with defeat and the remnants of the city that remained.

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<sup>59</sup> Mit freundlicher Unterstützung der Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung, Wiesbaden, Germany

<sup>60</sup> Rubble films

<sup>61</sup> Trümmerfilme – etwas anders konnte man in 1946 in Berlin kaum drehen



As Brockmann argues, the *Trümmerfilme* allowed many; “[...] their first glimpse of a radically transformed national capital, one strongly different from the bustling, prosperous metropolis of the mid-1920s” (2010: 198). Many of these films used documentary style footage of the ruins of the city within their opening scenes to instantly establish the viewpoint of Berlin as a city in ruins. Therefore, as Figure 4 shows, *The Big Lift* begins with newsreel footage of the city being screened at a cinema on an American base in Hawaii, which shows the bombed out buildings of Berlin, whilst similar images are seen in *A Foreign Affair*, as the film shows aerial glimpses of the ruins of Berlin through an aeroplane window as it comes in to land in the city. Furthermore, as Ralph Stern argues; “[post-war] Berlin’s most frequently depicted sites were those with the greatest historical and political resonance. The damaged Brandenburg Gate, the burned-out Reichstag, and the ravaged Reichskanzlei<sup>62</sup> were popular sites and were incorporated into many early post-war films” (2007: 78). As a result, these *Trümmerfilme* began to reconfigure concepts of Berlin, as the city became somewhat problematically stigmatised as a devastated, abnormal location. In place of the vibrancy of Berlin’s pre-Nazi decadence, it was images of *Trümmerfrauen*<sup>63</sup> sorting through the rubble of the city, of black market gangsters, and the ruins of the *Reichstag*, which dominated the cinematic view of Berlin in the late 1940s.

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<sup>62</sup> Reich Chancellery

<sup>63</sup> Rubble women (the name given to the women who cleared the rubble from German city’s after the War)

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Figure 4: The ruins of Berlin in the opening to *The Big Lift* (Top) and *A Foreign Affair* (Bottom)

However, although the city's urban space may have changed, this does not mean that these films completely abandoned the legacy of previous Berlin cinema. In fact, many of the *Trümmerfilme* make reference to Weimar Berlin culture. This can be seen in *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, which tells the story of Dr. Hans Mertens (Wilhelm Borchert), who has returned to Berlin after serving in the German army, but is struggling to come to terms with what has happened during the War. Meanwhile, his murderous Nazi commander, Ferdinand Brückner (Arno Pausen) is now a successful businessman in the city, having escaped reprimand for his actions on the eastern front. The film opens by showing the figure of Hans walking through the rubble of the city, a motif which continues throughout, as Hans is regularly seen traversing the city's fields of rubble. His wanderings are an attempt to come to terms with the ruined state of Berlin and the transient position he now inhabits within the city. Such a view is further developed by Hans's living arrangement, as he is shown to be squatting in a bomb-damaged apartment. Therefore, much like the Weimar figure of Franz Biberkopf, Hans is drifting through post-War Berlin, desperate to find a place to belong.

Furthermore, after introducing the viewer to the figure of Hans amongst the rubble, the opening shot of *Die Mörder sind unter uns* then pans up to the entrance of a cabaret, as the film highlights that, although Berlin lies in ruins, the city's famous cabaret scene continues. Such images of Berlin cabarets are a feature of the majority of *Trümmerfilme*, with the criminals of *Razzia* being based out of the Ali-Baba club and the singer Erika von Schlütow (Marlene Dietrich) playing a major role in *A Foreign Affair*. Yet, rather than offering a positive continuation of Berlin's reputation as a thriving metropolis found in the Weimar films, the use of such imagery acts as a stark point of contrast with the ruins, which further emphasises the complete destruction of Berlin. The city's cabarets were the cornerstone of Weimar Berlin's hedonistic lifestyle, but they are now shown to be precariously tucked away amongst bombed out buildings and piles of rubble. Consequently, just as the title of Rossellini's film *Germania, anno zero* suggests, the *Trümmerfilme's* references to Weimar Berlin illustrate that the old Berlin is gone and the city which has been left behind now faces a new zero hour from which it must rise again.

#### *Berlin as a Political Hotspot*

In particular, Berlin's new role was one of a city at the very heart of post-Second World War politics, as the allied powers which had liberated Berlin now governed the city in an uneasy alliance. However, the manner in which this political element to life in Berlin was depicted varied between the different *Trümmerfilme*. In those films made by domestic filmmakers, for a primarily domestic audience, the occupying soldiers were largely absent, as the struggles of German characters came to the fore in these films' narratives. This is evident in the crime thriller *Razzia*, as it is the local police, led by Chief Inspector Naumann (Paul Blidt), and not the occupying armies, who are tasked with investigating the black market operations in the city. The film avoids any in-depth depiction of the military, with the busy black market at the burned-out *Reichstag*, the streets of the city, and the gangster run Ali-Baba club all being conspicuously empty of foreign soldiers.

The same cannot be said of the numerous Hollywood *Trümmerfilme*. Unlike the domestic films, these English-language films explored Berlin's ruins from the perspective of the occupying soldiers who were stationed in the city. This alternative perspective can be explained through the different production backgrounds to these films, a fact that is starkly evident in the case of *A Foreign Affair*. The film's director, Billy Wilder, may be originally from Berlin, but the treatment of the city in the film is markedly different from the domestic *Trümmerfilme*. This is because, as Gerd Gemünden argues, there was in fact

various different actors and concerns involved within the production of the film (2008: 110). The Hollywood studios wanted a film that would appeal to audiences in America, Germany, and further afield, whilst the military wanted the film's narrative to positively promote the benefits of an Americanised version of capitalism. Therefore, *A Foreign Affair* had to contain a universally appealing, American-biased narrative, which meant that the domestic *Trümmerfilme's* preference for tales dealing with the suffering of Berlin's inhabitants would not have been palatable for international audiences, who only a few years earlier had been fighting against the city's population.

Consequently, *A Foreign Affair* explores the lives of American GIs in Berlin, in particular Captain John Pringle (John Lund), who finds himself at the centre of a love triangle involving the German cabaret singer Erika and American Congresswoman Phoebe Frost (Jean Arthur). By switching focus onto the allied soldiers, the film is able to still explore the post-war city, but does so through the eyes of main protagonists who have not been tainted by the stigma of Nazism for cinema-goers around the world. Indeed, even the potential problems associated with the character of Erika are partially offset by the choice of the German-born, but famously anti-Nazi, Marlene Dietrich to play her. Such a perspective is also found in *The Big Lift*, as once again the American army is the focus for the film's narrative, which tells the story of the Berlin Blockade from the point of view of two American airmen, Danny MacCullough (Montgomery Clift) and Hank Kowalski (Paul Douglas). Therefore, these Hollywood films may construct a similar image of Berlin as a city in ruins and engage with stereotypes such as the city's cabarets but their choice of protagonists and international perspective meant that they disseminated a version of Berlin where the city was firmly codified as a politicised location.

This politicisation also influenced the manner in which the other occupying forces, in particular the communist Russians, were characterised in these films. Thus, the Soviet soldiers in *A Foreign Affair* are shown to be drunks, whilst in *Berlin Express* they do little to help in the search for Dr Bernhardt (Paul Lukas). However, perhaps surprisingly, these negative undertones remain only minor elements of the Hollywood films' narratives. In fact, despite Berlin being split politically into four zones, each governed by a different allied power, the films do not just stick to Berlin's American-governed areas. As David Bathrick writes about *A Foreign Affair*; "In Wilder's 1947 Berlin there are no borders, there is no divided city" (2010: 39). This is a view also seen in *The Big Lift* as Danny is shown to enter the Soviet Sector, but only once he has shed his American uniform and joined the numerous Berlin natives freely moving amongst the different zones. Therefore, whilst there

was no escaping the political atmosphere in Berlin at the time, the division of the city played a secondary role to the images of Berlin's devastated urban space in these English-language films.

Instead, it was the native population who were cast as the real threat to these American soldiers in Berlin, as the Hollywood *Trümmerfilme* showed how the indoctrination and problematic morals of the Nazi period still plagued Berliners. Accordingly, the few German men found in these films, such as Stieber (Otto Hasse) in *The Big Lift*, were cast as either Nazis in hiding or opportunistic spies working in collusion with one of the other occupying powers for their own selfish gain. Equally, the city's women did not fare much better in these films. Although the struggles of characters such as Erika in *A Foreign Affair* offers a slightly more sympathetic view, as she is shown to be living in a bomb-damaged apartment similar to that of Hans in *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, this is tainted by these women's calculating nature. As Mila Ganeva highlights, the desperation of the situation found in Berlin meant that these women are shown to be a dangerous presence within these films' narratives, as they look to exploit their relationships with the American GIs in order to find a solution to their problems (2012: 49). Hence, in *A Foreign Affair*, Erika is shown to be the former girlfriend of a high ranking Nazi, who is manipulating her relationship with John in order to avoid being sent to a de-nazification camp, whilst in *The Big Lift* Danny's German girlfriend Frederica (Cornell Borchers) only wants to marry him to gain access to America so that she can be reunited with her German lover, who has emigrated to St Louis. The domestic *Trümmerfilme* may have sensitively explored the struggles of the native population in coming to terms with the legacy of Nazism, but the characterisation of Berliners in these Hollywood films failed to rehabilitate the majority of the negative German stereotypes that had been developed during the War.

### **Divided Berlin**

#### *Berlin as a City of Spies*

The post-war concept of Berlin as a city in ruins did not last long. As Ganeva goes on to state; "During the 1950s, Berlin's rubble would all but vanish not only from the streets [...] but also from the screens of West German and international cinemas" (2012: 49). The films of the 1940s and early 1950s captured Berlin at a unique moment of devastation, but as the city's inhabitants came to terms with the end of the War and looked to rebuild their lives, a renovated urban space began to emerge in Berlin films. Yet, despite the disappearance of the city's ruins, perceptions of Berlin as an abnormal location prevailed.

The political developments which followed the power-sharing deal that the allies had agreed towards Berlin at the end of the War meant that the city now occupied a crucial strategic position as the last frontier of western European, American-sponsored, capitalism, in the face of communist Eastern Europe. Therefore, Berlin became increasingly known as a focal point of the Cold War, with the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 solidifying such perceptions. Through this, the city gained a physical symbol to accompany its reputation as a location where the communist East and capitalist West precariously existed alongside each other, grudgingly locked in political stalemate.

Whilst the impact which division had on domestic films set in Berlin will be explored below, the building of the Wall gave a crucial new impetus to English-language filmmaking in Berlin. As the 1950s progressed, fewer Hollywood films had used Berlin as the location for their narratives, but the East German government's decision to erect the Wall made Berlin an interesting and fruitful location for such films once more, be they made by the Hollywood studios or an English-American co-production. The Wall radically changed the depiction of Berlin on screen, as the political tensions of the Cold War were now more overtly depicted. This manifested itself in these Cold War films' version of Berlin as a city full of spies, with the political situation in the city used as the setting for several thrillers which pitted capitalists directly against communist. Therefore, the idea of the city as a hotbed of global espionage came to define perceptions of Berlin found within English-language cinema during the time of division, as characters who were aligned to intelligence agencies in America (*The Quiller Memorandum*, Michael Anderson, 1966), the UK (*The Spy who Came in from the Cold*, Martin Ritt, 1965), Russia (*A Dandy in Aspic*, Anthony Mann, 1968), East Germany (*Torn Curtain*, Alfred Hitchcock, 1966) and Israel (*Funeral in Berlin*, Guy Hamilton, 1966), to name just a few, dominated these films' narratives. Furthermore, although the filmmaking spike seen in the 1960s was not maintained, there remained a flow of English-language films made in Berlin until the fall of the Wall in 1989. Within these films, the concept of Berlin as a city of spies remained strong, as the presence of Cold War-influenced tales within the cinematic output of West Berlin in the 1980s, in films such as *Octopussy* (John Glen, 1983) and *Judgement in Berlin* (Leo Penn, 1988), attests.

This more stringently divided treatment of Berlin was seen in the manner in which the urban space of the city was constructed in these films. Whilst the post-war films had treated the urban space of the city equally, depicting the Russian and American sectors in much the same way, a stark contrast was now drawn between the two different cities which existed on either side of the divide. As a result, Ganeva's claim that the ruins which

had defined post-war Berlin had disappeared from cinematic constructions of the city needs to be qualified. Whilst this was certainly true for the view of West Berlin found in these English-language films, the same cannot be said for these films' engagement with the eastern half of the city. In reality the 1960s saw much of the centre of East Berlin undergo a major rebuilding programme to turn this part of the city into a modern location, a building project which saw the construction of the *Fernsehturm*<sup>64</sup>. Yet, such redevelopment was not found in English-language films' engagement with East Berlin. Instead, the urban space of this part of the city was shown to still be dominated by derelict buildings left ruined by the War. As Figure 5 demonstrates, this is evident in *Torn Curtain*, which tells the story of an American scientist, Professor Michael Armstrong (Paul Newman), who defects to East Germany with his fiancée Sarah (Julie Andrews), in order to steal secrets about the East's missile programme. Upon their arrival in East Berlin the couple are taken to meet a Government minister, but the view from this high-ranking official's office is not of modern East Germany. Instead, it is of ruins, an image which is reminiscent of the view out of the window of the businessman Brückner's office found in the *Trümmerfilm Die Mörder sind unter uns*. The minister is shown to govern a communist wasteland, as the film, much like many of the Cold War English-language films made in Berlin, casts the urban space of East Berlin as underdeveloped and rundown.

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<sup>64</sup> TV Tower

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*Figure 5: The differing office views in Die Mörder sind unter uns (Top), Torn Curtain (Middle) and The Quiller Memorandum (Bottom)*

Furthermore, by aligning the East German official with the murderous Nazi character of Brückner from this earlier film, *Torn Curtain* also taints the East German regime with the negative connotations left behind by the legacy of Hitler. Much like in the Hollywood *Trümmerfilme*, the native German population of the city are unable to escape their previous incarnation as Nazis. Such a depiction of East Germany is also seen in the opening to *Funeral in Berlin*, as the titles appear in a gothic font which closely resembles



one used by the Nazis, over images of the ruins of East Berlin. As the titles progress, the camera focuses in a group working near to the Wall, amongst which are a number of East German guards. Significantly, whilst the western spies of these Cold War films are covert operatives who wear plain clothes, the East German officers in *Funeral in Berlin* are in uniform, a costume choice which closely aligns these characters with the view of the Nazi soldier in uniform found in Second World War films. Such a viewpoint is common across these Cold War films, as East Berlin is not only shown to have struggled to overcome the physical legacy of the Second World War, but also those Germans who live behind the Wall are cast as a continuation of the city's Nazi past.

This negative coding of East Berlin is further enhanced by the way in which the urban space of West Berlin is constructed. In comparison to the view of East Berlin as a location in ruins, the western part of the divided city is shown to have developed into a modern, bustling city. This is epitomised through the focus these Cold War films develop on the area around the Kurfürstendamm and, in particular, the *Europa-Center*, a complex of offices, restaurants and shops which was completed in 1965 and is shown to be a beacon of modern capitalism, built in the contemporary style and topped by a revolving Mercedes badge. Not only is the building a favourite hangout for West Berlin's 'coolest' inhabitants, such as the photographer Caroline (Mia Farrow) in *A Dandy in Aspic*, but in *The Quiller Memorandum* the upper floors of the building act as the base for MI5. Hence, as Figure 5 also demonstrates, whilst the East German Government is left to survey the ruins of East Berlin in *Torn Curtain*, the British spies of *The Quiller Memorandum* look out over the modern, renovated centre of West Berlin. The division of Berlin during the Cold War was shown in these English-language films to not just be ideological. The differing topographies on the two sides of the Wall were also constructed as radically different urban spaces.

#### *Domestic Visions of West Berlin*

Although the building of the Wall caused a spike in English-language filmmaking about the divided city in the 1960s, such activity was an anomaly rather than the norm within the West Berlin film industry. As Detlef Stronk and Margarete von Schwarzkopf were both quoted as stating in Chapter 1, film production in the western of half of Berlin massively suffered, as the city's isolated status from the rest of West Germany limited the industry's ability to attract and retain filmmaking talent. This struggle was not helped in the early years of the domestic industry's redevelopment by the preferences for so-called *Heimat* films within West Germany. Whilst the war-torn topography of Berlin may have provided

an ideal backdrop for the *Trümmerfilme*, this style of filmmaking soon became unfashionable. As Robert Shandley writes; “Rubble films were problem films about problems that the German public either no longer wished to solve or claimed to have already solved” (2001: 8). Therefore, German filmmakers turned to *Heimat* films as a way of providing the native population with the escapist films they desired. As Brockmann writes; “Such films painted a pretty picture of the German countryside, reassuring the Central Europeans that the core of their cultural identity was intact even after a brutal war” (2010: 286). Unlike the *Trümmerfilme*, *Heimat* films avoided the scarred cities in favour of more rural settings, which meant that Berlin played no major role in these films. Equally, the engagement of the West German film industry with Berlin did not improve in the 1960s and 1970s as the *Heimat* films began to be challenged by the films of the New German Cinema. This group of young filmmakers, such as Alexander Kluge, Werner Herzog and Rainer Werner Fassbinder, felt that *Heimat* films had failed to properly address the problematic Nazi past, and so looked to produce more challenging films, which both pushed the limits of the medium of cinema and explored the dark recent history of Germany. However, once again such filmmakers largely avoided Berlin and, instead, chose to make their films within the West German film hubs of Munich and Hamburg.

It was only after the Berlin senate founded the West Berlin Film Fund as a way of combatting the falling film production activity in West Berlin that the number of films made in and about Berlin began to increase. As a result, in the 1980s a number of domestic films were made which began to explore Berlin’s divided status, such as *Der Mann auf der Mauer* (*The Man on the Wall*, Reinhard Hauff, 1982), *Westler* (*East of the Wall*, Wieland Speck, 1985) and *Der Himmel über Berlin* (*Wings of Desire*, Wim Wenders, 1987). These films offered a more wistful take on Berlin’s division than in the Cold War spy thrillers, as they explored the impact which the Wall had on the daily lives of the city’s inhabitants. Yet, at the same time they supported the politicalised image of the city found in the English-language films, which favoured West Berlin as a positive, capitalist location in comparison to the communist East. This can be seen in *Der Himmel über Berlin* which tells the story of an angel called Damiel (Bruno Ganz) who watches over the inhabitants of the city. The film is shot in black and white and shows Damiel moving freely about both East and West Berlin. However, despite this freedom Damiel wants to become part of everyday life in the city. Therefore, at the end of the film he chooses to become human, settling in West Berlin. It is at this point that the film changes from black and white into colour, a shift from a

melancholic to more positive tone which indicates that, despite losing his privileged position, Daniel is correct in choosing to settle in the western half of the divided city.

### *An Alternative View of the Divided City*

The overriding image of Berlin found in West German cinema during division may have been that of a location dominated by the Wall, but the founding of the West Berlin Film Fund also saw a group of films emerge which depicted a different version of West Berlin, such as *Christiane F* (Uli Edel, 1981) and *Taxi zum Klo* (*Taxi to the John*, Frank Ripploh, 1980). During the 1970s and 1980s, West Berlin came to be known worldwide as a location which was home to a 'cool' youth culture, a view which was supported by the decision of musicians such as David Bowie to settle in the city. Therefore, *Christiane F* explores this alternative lifestyle through a character who embraces this scene, but gets caught up in a world of prostitution and drug use, a view of the city which added a tainted element to the 'cool' image of West Berlin in cinema. Such a version of life in West Berlin is also at the centre of *Taxi zum Klo*, which tells the story of Frank (Frank Ripploh), who works as a teacher by day but lives a hedonistic life within West Berlin's fashionable gay party scene at night. Much like in *Christiane F*, these 'cool' elements of life in the city are offset with graphic scenes of drug use and sex, which further helps to propagate a version of the city as a pleasure-seeking location with a problematic dark side. Such a reputation for Berlin had been largely missing from cinema screens up until this point during division. Therefore, within these West Berlin films of the 1980s there was a re-emergence of an image of Berlin which, much like in the city's Weimar heyday, illustrated that there was a thriving pleasure-seeking scene within West Berlin, which was enjoying a more anarchistic and debauched way of life than was found in the Cold War visions of the divided city.

Crucially, the problematic lifestyles of Christiane and Frank also correlate to the transient way of life seen in earlier moments of Berlin cinema. In fact, these West Berlin films drew for the first time a direct link between the hedonism of Berlin's youth culture and the figure of the drifter, who was roaming the city in search of meaning. This development can be explained by the fact that, as Birgit Roschy was quoted in my introduction as stating, the conditions found in West Berlin during the time of division created an incubatory situation, where young people could delay facing the realities of the adult world (*Der Zeit*: 2012). This can be seen in *Taxi zum Klo*, as Frank fails to accept the responsibilities of his teaching job and continues to live a life of hedonism. However, this decision leads to a drug-fuelled breakdown, a downturn which is inescapably tied to the

city. The urban space of West Berlin plays a major role in Frank's way of life, as he is regularly seen travelling across the city for casual sex in public toilets and parks. Indeed, his doctors warn him that there will be fatal consequences if he continues to pursue such endeavours. Thus, the figure of the drifter was now at the centre of the city's problematic, pleasure-seeking youth culture.

Nevertheless, despite this growing diversity of storytelling with West Berlin cinema, there still remained a glaring omission within the city's production output, namely films which explored the life of migrant characters in Berlin. Such an oversight was especially noticeable given that West Germany had become home to a number of *Gastarbeiter*<sup>65</sup> since the end of the Second World War, with West Berlin in particular boasting a large Turkish community, which meant that such inhabitants now made up a crucial part of society. These communities may have been missing from West Berlin films but elsewhere stories of migrants within West Germany became an increasing feature of the country's cinema. As Jochen Neubarer argues; "In the mid-1970s the number of filmic works which dealt with the situation of immigrants in Germany increased"<sup>66</sup> (2011: 171). Such films included *Angst essen die Seele auf* (*Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, 1974), *Shirins Hochzeit* (*Shirin's Wedding*, Helma Sanders-Brahms, 1976) and *40m<sup>2</sup> Deutschland* (Tevfik Başer, 1986). Therefore, despite the lack of Berlin in these films' narratives, it is important to understand the historical development of this trend within West German cinema, as these films provide an important point of reference for subsequent depictions of migrant life in Berlin.

As Angelica Fenner states, these films largely fitted into the wider genre of the problem film which had been a feature of German cinema since the Weimar period (2003: 23). Still, the issue with this was that these films' depiction of migrant life often placed their characters' experience in opposition to the dominant German culture. As Rob Burns writes; "[...] the perspective [these films] brought to bear on the alien culture was one in which the focus was unremittingly on alterity as a seemingly insoluble problem, on conflict of either an intercultural or intracultural variety (2006; 133). This view was particularly acute in the representation of the role which migrant women, especially those from within the Turkish community, played in West German society. Deniz Göktürk illustrates this when she writes that these films followed; "a model in telling stories of Turkish women repressed by

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<sup>65</sup> Guest workers (workers from abroad brought to West Germany to fill the labour shortage after the Second World War)

<sup>66</sup> Mitte der 70er Jahre erhöht sich die Zahl der filmischen Werke, die sich mit der Situation der Einwanderer in Deutschland befassen

patriarchal fathers, brothers and husbands, of their exclusion from public spaces, or of imprisonment in closed spaces” (2002: 250). This is seen, for example, in *40m<sup>2</sup> Deutschland* which tells the story of Turna (Özay Fecht), who travels to Germany with her husband Dusun (Yaman Okay), only to be confined to their small apartment all day. She is prevented from interacting with the new culture she is surrounded by as it is her husband who holds the key to their apartment and he makes sure the door remains locked at all times. Through Turna’s captive status the film highlights both her isolation from West German society and the oppressive patriarchal hierarchy that is shown to exist within migrant communities. Even in the film’s closing shot, following her husband’s death, Turna is shown to hesitate by the open door, leaving the viewer unsure as to whether she will be able to break free from her suppression. The problem with the view found in films such as *40m<sup>2</sup> Deutschland* was that such treatment of migrant characters created a one dimensional depiction of the migrant as a repressed victim that fed into the prejudices found within wider German society.

#### *DEFA’s Vision of East Berlin*

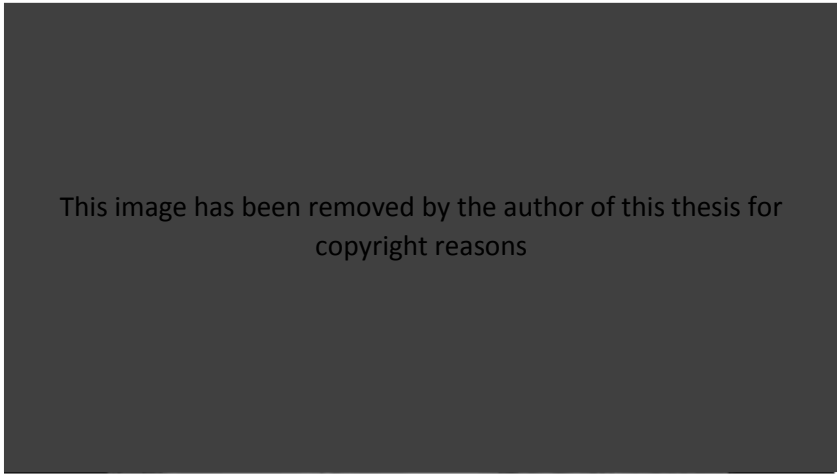
As was discussed in Chapter 1, whilst the film industry in the western half of divided Berlin struggled to compete in the fragmented landscape of West Germany, East Berlin was the centre of the East German film industry, due to the presence Babelsberg on the outskirts of the city. Such a privileged position also fed through into the representation of the city in film, as East Berlin was the focus for many films produced by DEFA, the state run film production company, throughout the years of division. However, as was also argued earlier, the political control which the state held over DEFA’s production output meant that the quality and style of films produced was inconsistent, depending on whether East German filmmakers were enjoying a period of liberal or tight state control. As Brockmann writes; “The production of critical *Gegenwartsfilme*<sup>67</sup> was to be one of DEFA cinema’s main challenges from the 1950s through the 1980s, and while it resulted in some of DEFA’s greatest artistic triumphs, it also often led to film bannings or public interventions on the part of socialist bureaucrats” (2010: 223). The East German government recognised that they needed to allow the film industry to produce films which explored the reality of East Berlin at the time, but they were also conscious that such contemporary portrayals could have the power to be subversive and undermine the communist regime. Hence, it is important to note that all of the most famous and well regarded films made about East

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<sup>67</sup> Films dealing with contemporary issues

Berlin during division, such as *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser* (*Berlin – Schönhauser Corner*, Gerhard Klein, 1957), *Der geteilte Himmel* (*Divided Heaven*, Konrad Wolf, 1964), *Die Legende von Paul und Paula* (*The Legend of Paul and Paula*, Heiner Carow, 1973) and *Solo Sunny* (Konrad Wolf and Wolfgang Kohlhaase, 1980), were made during periods where the state was exercising a more liberal approach to censorship, which allowed these films to explore East Berlin more critically and informatively.

An early example of this delicate situation can be seen in *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser*, which tells the story of a rebellious group of East German youths, who are struggling to come to terms with life in the divided city. The film is set in Prenzlauer Berg and, as Figure 6 illustrates, unlike the depiction of East Berlin in the Cold War English-language films, the opening shots of the streets around this part of the city show a location which has overcome the destruction seen in the *Trümmerfilme* and become a bustling part of East Berlin. However, this positive portrayal of the city's urban space is contrasted with the problems that the film's young characters experience with figures of authority, as they struggle against the expectations placed upon them by society. As a result of such pressure, several of the film's characters flee to West Berlin, in the case of the film's main protagonist Dieter (Ekkehard Schall) to avoid criminal charges, whilst his friend Karl-Heinz (Harry Engel) believes that he will be better off within a capitalist society. Such a bold exploration of the hopes and frustrations of East Berlin's youth is in stark contrast to what might be expected from a state controlled film industry, as Klein made the most of the liberal attitude of the censors at that moment to deliver a film which did not shy away from the real problems of East Germany, as the country looked to establish itself as an independent nation.



This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons

Figure 6: *The busy streets of Prenzlauer Berg in Berlin - Ecke Schönhauser*

The pull of capitalism is also the main feature of *Der geteilte Himmel*, which, like *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser*, explores the conflict many people felt before the erection of the Wall in deciding on whether to stay in the East or risk moving west. The film focuses on the struggle of Rita (Renate Blume), a young East German whose boyfriend Manfred (Eberhard Esche) stays in West Berlin following a business trip. Rita visits Manfred in the West, as she tries to decide whether to join him permanently. Whilst the film does not condemn Manfred’s decision to defect, the film’s director, Konrad Wolf, does still offer a negative portrayal of West Berlin. As Daniela Berghahn states; “In depicting Rita’s visit to West Berlin, Konrad Wolf and his cameraman Werner Bergmann sparingly use the clichés that had become customary in DEFA’s depiction of the West. Still, West Berlin is rendered as a somewhat inhospitable place with neon lights [and] sterile architecture” (2005: 191). The idea of West Berlin as a cold place is also seen in *Berlin - Ecke Schönhauser*, as Dieter struggles to adjust to life in West Germany. Therefore, the construction of Berlin’s urban space in these DEFA films mimics the propagandistic version of the city’s topography found in West Berlin filmmaking. It is just that, whilst in West Berlin film, East Berlin is shown to be a backwards and repressive location, in the DEFA films the opposite is true. The capitalist society of West Berlin is shown to be unsympathetic and dangerous, with the communism of East Berlin offering an imperfect, but far more understanding, way of life. This contrast can be seen in the fact that both Dieter in *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser* and Rita in *Der geteilte Himmel* decide to settle in the East, despite the problems they have experienced there.

Unsurprisingly, the liberal attitude of the censors towards the ambiguous, if ultimately positive, portrayals of East Berlin found in these films did not last. As a result, as was mentioned in Chapter 1, the censors banned an entire year’s production in 1965 because they felt that these *Gegenwartsfilme* had begun to take the critical elements found in films such as *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser* too far. As Berghahn writes, this new censorship regime meant that filmmakers began to avoid making films similar to the *Gegenwartsfilme* of the 1950s and early 1960s and instead looked to produce *Alltagsfilme*<sup>68</sup> which explored more personal narratives (2005: 196). These films, such as *Die Legende von Paul und Paula* and *Solo Sunny*, avoided overt discussions of the divided city and instead focused on the personal desires and problems of their protagonists. Therefore, in *Die Legende von Paul und Paula* single mother Paula (Angelica Domröse) longs to find true love, something which she believes she has discovered in Paul (Winfried Glatzeder), even though Paul is already

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<sup>68</sup> Films dealing with everyday issues

married. Equally, the narrative of *Solo Sunny* illustrates the struggles of Berlin singer Sunny (Renate Krößner) as she attempts to become a solo artist.

Yet, this personal turn does not mean that these films did not further develop the cinematic reputation of East Berlin found in DEFA's output. In fact, by avoiding overt political images of the divided city, these films were able to circumvent the censors and explore areas of life in East Berlin which still furthered the understanding of the city in film. Hence, as Aggio argues, *Solo Sunny* uses the problems experienced by Sunny to explore the conflict which existed in East German society between individual desires and state expectations (2007: 136). This manifests itself in the film through the construction of Prenzlauer Berg, where Sunny Lives. Whilst in *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser* this area of the city was shown to be a busy working class neighbourhood, where the rebellious young people at the centre of the film were in the minority, by the 1980s this has now changed. In *Solo Sunny* Prenzlauer Berg is shown to have developed into an artistic and intellectual haven, which is quickly becoming the heart of the growing opposition movement within East Germany. Although Sunny's bohemian life as a singer may not be as extreme as the pleasure seekers of West Berlin films made at a similar time, such as *Christiane F* and *Taxi zum Klo*, *Solo Sunny* still shows that the rebellious spirit which has been a feature of Berlin cinema since the Weimar period had not completely disappeared from East Berlin. Her transient life as a singer can be seen to mirror the figure of the young drifter featured in West Berlin films. Consequently, despite the fact that East and West Berlin existed separately from each other in two different countries, behind the propaganda, the images and reputation developed for the city on screen in both the East and West throughout the period of division contained certain similarities. Whilst there was no denying that Berlin was a city living in the shadow of the Wall, Berlin society still clung on to the hedonistic alternative lifestyle which had been a feature of the city's cinematic reputation since the Weimar period.

### ***Baustelle* Berlin: Towards a Unified City Image on Screen**

If the repercussions from the end of the Second World War repositioned the image of Berlin on screen throughout the decades of division which followed, then the fall of the Wall in 1989 had a similar impact on the manner in which cinema engaged with the city. Berlin was no longer split between East and West, which meant that the view of the city as a location living in the shadow of the Wall was no longer relevant to the reality of unified Berlin. Still, the unification of the city was not a smooth or simple process. Berlin's



government, as well as the city's wider inhabitants, were faced with the daunting task of bringing the communist East and capitalist West together into one functioning topography and society through a major programme of rebuilding and renovation. Although this normalisation of the unified city was a process which was being mirrored all over Germany, the unique situation which had been created by Berlin's divided status meant that, as Katharina Gerstenberger states, the city became "a laboratory for changing German identity", with cultural representations of Berlin following unification casting the city as a microcosm for national concerns (2008: 1). Cinematic portrayals of post-unification Berlin were no different, as the films made about the city in the 1990s and early 2000s were heavily influenced by the legacy of unification and the possibilities which the process of rebuilding was creating within Berlin's urban space, society and culture.

However, it is important to note that such filmic narratives were in opposition to the prevailing trend towards escapist, often comedic films, which was found in German cinema as a whole in the decade following unification. As Jennifer Kapczynski writes, across Germany, films such as *Abgeschminkt (Making Up!, Katja von Garnier, 1993)* and *Der Bewegte Man (Maybe, Maybe Not, Sönke Wortmann, 1994)* were being produced which avoided the political and social realities of the time, in order to appeal to the masses (2007: 246). To achieve such a narrative these films favoured cities such as Munich and Cologne, as they offered a topography and societal structure which, unlike in Berlin, had been left relatively unscathed by unification. Indeed, despite the prominence of these films in national production, it was not until the turn of the Millennium that such a style of filmmaking began to emerge within Berlin's cinematic output, through films such as *Was tun, wenn's Brennt? (What to Do in Case of Fire, Gregor Schnitzler, 2001)* and *Nackt (Naked, Doris Dörrie, 2002)*. In addition, despite the steady stream of English-language Cold War spy thrillers which had been made in West Berlin throughout the period of division, the challenging, German-specific nature of Berlin in the 1990s saw such filmmaking avoid engaging with the urban space of the city in their narratives. As a result, it took until the mid-2000s for Berlin to once again begin to appear in English-language films, through productions such as *The Bourne Supremacy (Paul Greengrass, 2004)* and *Flightplan (Robert Schwentke, 2005)*. As was argued in Chapter 1, the fact that Berlin's film industry lacked a populist element to its post-Wall cinematic output meant that the city was associated with low-budget films, targeted at an art-house audience. Therefore, the films which came to lay the foundations to Berlin's new, post-unification reputation on screen were productions such as *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle (Life is All You Get, Wolfgang Becker, 1997)*, *Lola rennt*

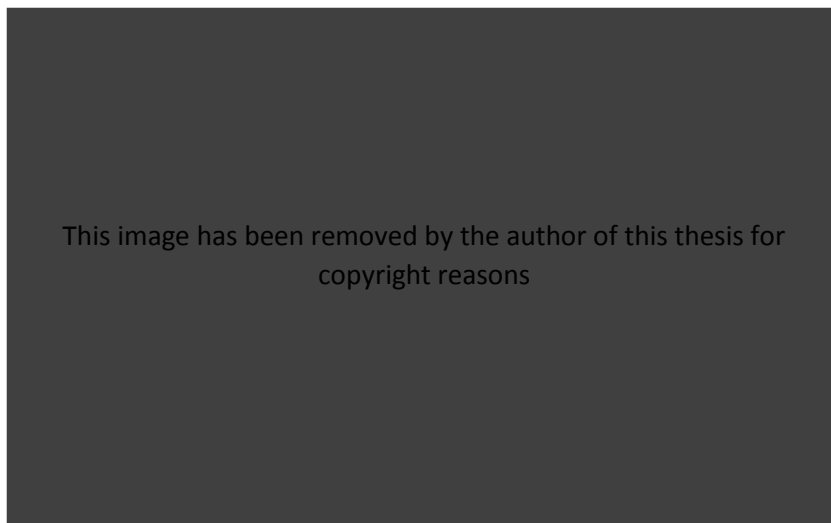
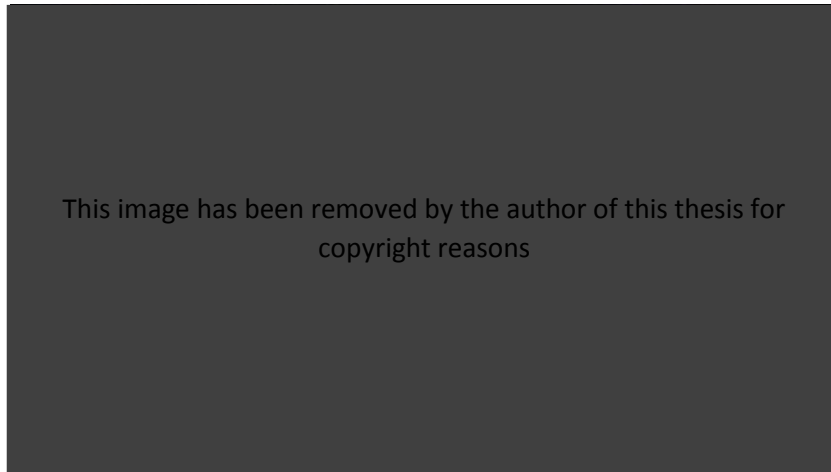
(*Run Lola Run*, Tom Tykwer, 1998), *Lola+Billidiki* (*Lola and Billy the Kid*, Kutlug Ataman, 1999), *Berlin is in Germany* (Hannes Stöhr, 2001) and *Julietta* (Christoph Stark, 2001).

### *Berlin's Urban Space as a Baustelle*

As was discussed in my introduction, all these films were united through a perspective of, as Rayd Khouloki states; "Berlin as a city in a state of upheaval"<sup>69</sup> (2010: 141). The overriding image of the city in films from this period was that of Berlin as a chaotic city which was undergoing a rapid and disorientating transformation, as society looked to come to terms with the fall of the Wall. The most obvious way this change was disseminated on screen is through the image of the building site. As Figure 7 shows, the image of the city in transition can be seen, for example, in *Lola rennt*, as Lola (Franke Potente) runs past streets littered with building sites, whilst in *Ich Chef, du Turnschuh* (*Me Boss, You Sneakers!*, Hussi Kutlucan, 1998), the only place where the main character Duddi (Hussi Kutlucan) can find work is on a building site, due to his status as an illegal immigrant. The prominence of the building site motif in these *Baustelle* Berlin films illustrates that, no matter who you were, the city's programme of rebuilding and renovation was an inescapable reality in post-unification Berlin.

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<sup>69</sup> Berlin als Stadt im Umbruch



*Figure 7: Berlin's post-unification building sites in Lola rennt (Top) and Ich Chef, Du Turnschuh (Bottom)*

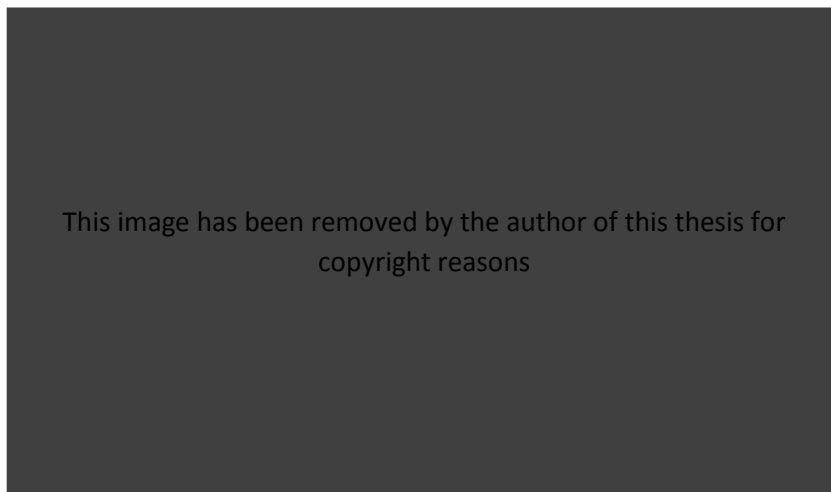
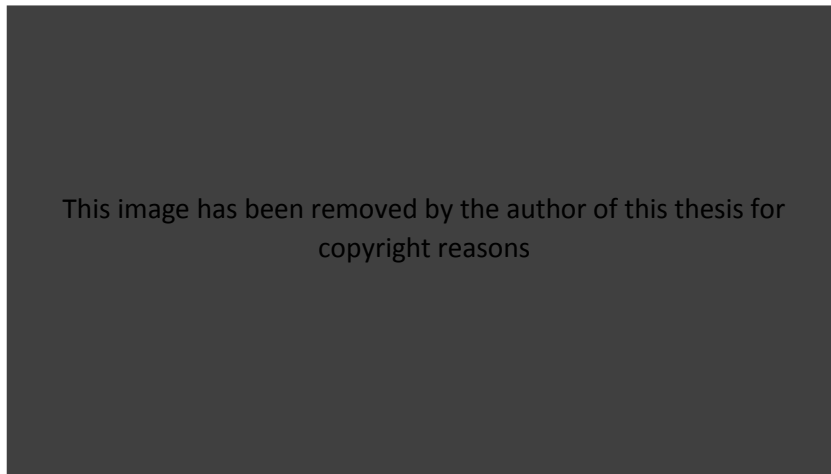
While the city's building sites may be the most striking element of *Baustelle Berlin* in these films, they are not the only feature which helps to create a view of Berlin as a city in flux, with the manner in which the urban space of the city is constructed also aiding ideas surrounding Berlin being in the midst of a period of redevelopment. As Margit Sinka states, this can be seen during Lola's runs through the city in *Lola rennt*, as Lola is seen running along streets all over the city but there is little logic to their sequence. Editing is used to create a route that is both confused and unrealistic, and so to follow this path in reality would be impossible (2000). Tykwer purposely creates a muddled topography for the city in the film, which brings together the eastern and western halves of Berlin, but does so in a disjointed way, which emulates the confusion many people faced as they attempted to traverse Berlin during its massive programme of rebuilding. The use of editing to mimic this state of confusion is also found in films such as *Angel Express* (Rolf Peter Kahl, 1998) and *Chill Out* (Andreas Struck, 2000). However, rather than using editing to create an unrealistic topography, these films make use of jump cuts to disrupt the flow of their narratives. Such

a fractured editing style highlights that, although Berlin may have been attempting to normalise its topography during the 1990s, this process of rebuilding meant that the city was full of disruption and diversions which were infiltrating the daily life of the city's inhabitants.

The idea of Berlin as a fragmented city is similarly present in the English-language film *Flightplan*, which shows that, even 15 years after the fall of the Wall, Berlin was still struggling to fully overcome the problems of unification. The majority of the film plays out on board a plane whilst it is flying from Berlin to America. However, the opening scenes of the film are set in Berlin and follow the main protagonist Kyle (Jodie Foster) as she journeys through the city back to her apartment. Yet, the viewer is unsure as to whether these scenes represent a real journey, a memory, or a dream, as Kyle is joined by her husband (John Benjamin Hickey), a character who it soon becomes clear has recently died. The strange uncertainty which this causes is further developed by the way this sequence is edited together, with the film drawing on the version of Berlin found in films such as *Lola rennt* and *Angel Express*. Periods of silence are suddenly interrupted by the sound and image of a rushing underground train, whilst a scene set in the city morgue, as Kyle prepares to fly her husband back to America, is also included. This creates an unnerving and disjointed portrait of Berlin as an abnormal location, with *Flightplan*, much like the German-language *Baustelle* films, demonstrating that the period of transformation, which Berlin entered following the fall of the Wall, has created a fragmented urban space.

Tykwer states that he wanted to create a version of Berlin in *Lola rennt* which illustrated that the city's population was struggling to relearn how to inhabit the new, transformed spaces in Berlin which were created by unification and such sentiments dominate the construction of Berlin in the *Baustelle* films (*Der Spiegel Online*: 2008). In order to achieve such a view, these films' vision of Berlin's urban space is noticeably different from previous images of the city. Ever since the Weimar *Straßenfilme*, the city's streets had been shown to be bustling locations, busy with traffic and people. Yet, in both *Lola rennt* and *Flightplan* the streets which Lola and Kyle traverse are almost completely devoid of activity. In its place, as Figure 8 demonstrates, Berlin's streets are constructed as void like spaces, a view of the city which is also found in the film *Dealer* (Thomas Arslan, 1999). In this film a Turkish drug dealer called Can (Tamer Yiğit) waits in empty parks or disused plots of land for his customers, as their business is less likely to be interrupted in such locations. The importance of these spaces to the film's construction of Berlin can be seen in the fact that *Dealer* closes with a montage of shots of these empty spaces,

something which leaves the viewer with the perception of the city as a desolate space, lacking in the normal activity of a big city.



*Figure 8: The empty voids of Baustelle Berlin in Lola rennt (Top), Flightplan (Middle) and Dealer (Bottom)*

The symbolism of both the building site and the voids of the city has parallels with the *Trümmerfilme*, which also captured Berlin during a time of difficult rebuilding. Yet, whilst famous Berlin landmarks, such as the *Reichstag* featured strongly in the

*Trümmerfilme's* construction of post-Second World War Berlin, a similar approach is missing from the *Baustelle* films. As Ewa Mazierska and Laura Rascaroli state; "The centre of the city [...] rarely features in these films" (2003: 124). Instead, as Katrina Sark points out, the *Baustelle* films root their narratives in East Berlin, in particular the districts of Mitte and Prenzlauer Berg, as this is the area of the city where the rebuilding and renovation projects were also focussed (2010: 58). Thus, the main characters in films such as *Julietta*, *Chill Out* and *Berlin is in Germany* all live and work in eastern Berlin, a view of the city that begins to reconfigure understandings of the structure and concentration of Berlin life on screen. This is particularly true for western cinema-goers, as the view of Berlin they had previously been exposed to focussed on either the area surrounding the Wall, or the centre of West Berlin around the Kurfürstendamm.

In fact, the *Baustelle* films were so successful in reorienting the gaze of Berlin cinema eastward, that by the time English-language filmmaking began to re-engage with Berlin in the mid-2000s, these films noticeably avoided the historic centre of the city. Instead, the films showed that, as part of the city's development, Berlin's post-unification society had adopted a new centre, which was found in and around Alexanderplatz. The east of the city is integral, for example, to *The Bourne Supremacy's* version of Berlin. The film may tread similar ground to that of the Cold War films by having a narrative which revolves around a CIA operation in Berlin, but it is from a building overlooking Alexanderplatz, not the Kurfürstendamm, as was the case for the spies of *The Quiller Memorandum*, that Pamela Landy (Joan Allen) sets up her temporary office, as she looks to track down Jason Bourne (Matt Damon). Significantly, the film's version of eastern Berlin avoids the negative view of this part of the city as an undeveloped location which was found in the Cold War films, as *The Bourne Supremacy* constructs the urban space of both halves of Berlin in much the same way. Although they may have been slower to re-engage with post-unification Berlin, the English-language films which began to emerge towards the end of the *Baustelle* period affirmed the fact that the redevelopment of Berlin had altered the focus of daily life in the city, as the east of Berlin had become an integral and legitimate part of the city, rather than an occupied location behind enemy lines.

#### *The Spaßgesellschaft and Baustelle Berlin*

The prevailing image of Berlin's urban space within all the *Baustelle* films may have been of a chaotic location in flux, but these films also showed how this situation was being experienced differently by the diverse groups which make up Berlin society. The city's

younger generation found Berlin's disjointed topography to be a perfect environment for a hedonistic journey of self-discovery, whilst many former East Berliners struggled to adapt to the capitalist society of unified Berlin, and much of Berlin's migrant population found themselves marginalised in the new urban space of the city. Interestingly, this multi-perspective view was a notable departure from the version of city life found in the films made during the other moment of great transition for Berlin following the end of the Second World War. Whereas in the *Trümmerfilme* the struggle to survive in the ruins of Berlin was the dominant, universal issue, the multiple viewpoints offered by the *Baustelle* films creates a more nuanced assessment of life in the transforming city, which demonstrates that the impact of Berlin's rebuilding was uneven and changeable, depending on your age, background, and ethnicity.

If we look at the films which explored Berlin's post-unification youth culture first, it soon becomes clear that films such as *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle*, *Chill Out* and *Julietta* are heavily influenced by the rise in a hedonistic youth culture seen all over Germany in the years immediately following the fall of the Wall. This youth culture became known as the *Spaßgesellschaft*<sup>70</sup>, a way of life which, as Eric Rentschler points out, was the focus for much of German cinema in the 1990s (2000: 262). Most notably, Berlin was the home of the Love Parade, as well as a plethora of clubs in the east of the city which played the techno music associated with this annual street party throughout the year. Therefore, the city was used in these *Baustelle* films as a pleasure-seeking location packed full of experimental and fashionable clubs. This meant that Berlin became, as David Clarke argues; "[...] the habitat of a new, resourceful, go-getting generation, and [...] one of the hot spots of a pan-European youth culture epitomised by the annual 'Love-Parade' open-air raves" (2006: 152). Hence, in *Julietta*, the main protagonist (Lavinia Wilson) comes to the city to enjoy the Love Parade with her boyfriend, whilst in *Chill Out* Max (Barnaby Metschurat) is a part-time security guard, who is also trying to make it as a DJ on Berlin's club scene. It was this party lifestyle of excess that acted as the foundation on which concepts of the *Spaßgesellschaft* within post-unification Berlin were developed, as the *Baustelle* films' fascination with narratives exploring this youthful generation came to dominate the cinematic portrayal of young people in Berlin at the time.

Although the Love Parade may have been the most well-known element of Berlin's club culture, the *Baustelle* films' engagement with the hedonistic lifestyle of the *Spaßgesellschaft* was not just confined to images of Berlin's parties and their patrons. The

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<sup>70</sup> Hedonistic society

techno beats of Berlin's clubs subtly infiltrated the soundtrack of the city's films, even when the *Baustelle* films' narratives ventured outside of the clubs themselves; seeping into the everyday reality of the city in scenes such as those that see Lola run across Berlin in *Lola rennt*. The deployment of such a technique meant that Berlin's urban space as a whole was infused with the essence of this club culture on screen. Similarly, although the techno clubs dominated, these films' depiction of Berlin's *Spaßgesellschaft* did not just include the city's music industry, but explored the diverse spectrum of creative endeavours which were present in the city at the time. Such a view is found in *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle*, as it is not just the city's club culture, but Berlin's wider experimental art and theatre scene, which forms the backdrop to Jan (Jürgen Vogel) and Vera's (Christiane Paul) relationship, a version of city life which highlights that Berlin's *Spaßgesellschaft* offered more than just its techno parties. Therefore, the varied different niche art movements and entertainment locations which constituted Berlin's post-unification youth culture permeated all elements of the city's cinema, becoming a lifestyle that defined understandings of daily life in *Baustelle* Berlin.

Of course, in many ways, the pleasure-seeking *Spaßgesellschaft* in these films represented the latest incarnation of Berlin's hedonistic tradition, something which has been a constant feature in the city's cinematic reputation, be it through the representation of the cabarets of Weimar Berlin, or the exploration of West Berlin's alternative youth culture on screen. However, in these previous periods, the city's hedonism was largely shown to be a distracting evening entertainment for the office workers and labourers of the city. Consequently, a tension existed between the hedonism of Berlin by night and the reality of the city by day, such as in the turbulent relationship between the party girl Else (Betty Amann) and the policeman Albert (Gustav Fröhlich) in the silent film *Asphalt*. Equally, this continued during the time of division, as such hedonism became more entwined with the figure of the drifter. It was the pleasure-seeking desires of Frank in *Taxi zum Klo* and Sunny in *Solo Sunny* which drove these characters into a transient existence in the city. Therefore, this hedonism and the figure of the drifter were a natural fit, as they both occupied a position on the outside of mainstream society.

Yet, in the *Baustelle* films, this opposition between a more transient, hedonistic lifestyle and the everyday mainstream life of the city is shown no longer to be a factor for the young people of the *Spaßgesellschaft*, as the city's clubs and experimental arts community have now become a far more integral part of their own identity and careers. In fact, the films show how the carefree nature of the *Spaßgesellschaft* fitted perfectly into



the quickly changing, chaotic topography that was found in Berlin, as the city centre underwent its massive programme of regeneration following the fall of the Wall. As Hake states, this synergy was best seen in the title of *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle*, which translates literally as 'Life is a building site', sentiments that reflect not just cinema's version of the city, but also the reality of the situation the *Spaßgesellschaft* found themselves in at the time (2008: 220). The hedonism of the *Spaßgesellschaft* complemented the wider *Baustelle* image of the city, which meant that the two became linked to one another, as Berlin was shown to be an innovative hotspot whose daily life was dominated by artistic, creative people.

Even though characters, such as Jan in *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle*, are facing issues of homelessness and unemployment, due to the uncertainty found in Berlin as the city adjusts to unification, unlike characters such as Franz Biberkopf in earlier films, these issues do not alienate him from the city. Instead, his journey of self-discovery is complemented by the images of building sites that littered the film's visual narrative, as both Jan and the city are shown to be simultaneously undergoing a process of reinvention. Crucially, Jan was not alone, as young characters living a transitory life in Berlin are a feature of the majority of the *Spaßgesellschaft* films, with many narratives including characters who are squatting in the city, such as the DJ Max (Barnaby Metschurat) in *Julietta* and the homosexual fraudster Johann (Sebastian Blomberg) in *Chill Out*. As Mazierska and Rascaroli were quoted in my introduction as arguing, the treatment of Berlin society in these films showed the city to be a place defined by images of temporariness and moving rather than being (2003: 123). Berlin's process of rebuilding may have been creating a chaotic and problematic environment for all of the city's inhabitants, but the construction of the *Spaßgesellschaft's* relationship to the city's changing urban space in the *Baustelle* films showed these young people to be the section of society most in tune with the city's transformation.

Indeed, in several of the *Baustelle* films entry into the *Spaßgesellschaft* is offered as a solution to the identity problems facing certain characters, something which is evident in *Chill Out* and the transformation of the character of Anna (Tatjana Blacher). As Broderick Fox writes; "The setting of the film, which proves integral to the characters' search, is [post-Wall] Berlin, a city seeking its own distinct, post-unification identity" (2001: 38). Hence, Anna starts the film as an anonymous figure within society whose obscurity within *Baustelle* Berlin is such that, whilst working in the city's archives, Max fails to see her during his nightly rounds and inadvertently locks her in. Yet, once she meets Johann and begins to

embrace his *Spaßgesellschaft* lifestyle, Anna becomes a more active and obvious part of city life, so much so that, as the film progresses, she not only begins a relationship with Max but becomes the dominant partner in their relationship.

This positive position of youth culture within the city's urban space was further supported by the fact that the hedonism of the *Spaßgesellschaft* infiltrated narratives across Berlin cinema and was not just confined to those films which dealt with native German members of the city's club scene. Therefore, as films which explored Berlin's migrant population finally began to emerge within the city's cinematic output following unification, the world of the *Spaßgesellschaft* was offered as a means through which members of Berlin's migrant community could begin to challenge the traditional stereotype of them as repressed victims. As Sabine Hake and Barbara Mennel write; "Gone were the exploited guestworkers and their suffering wives and daughters. [...] The films offer self-confident responses to lived experiences often in conflict with the parent generation and open to other minoritarian positionalities, be they other immigrant or refugee groups or gays and transgender people" (2012: 6/7). This new portrayal of migrant characters was particularly obvious through protagonists in the *Baustelle* films who represented an alternative lifestyle, not previously seen in migrant filmmaking, such as the homosexual characters of *Lola+Bilidikid*, or independent female character of Deniz (Serpil Turhan) in *Der schöne Tag* (*A Fine Day*, Thomas Arslan, 2001).

In *Lola+Bilidikid* Lola (Gandi Mukli) and her other transsexual friends are shown to challenge traditional gender stereotypes by performing as a Turkish drag act called the *Gastarbeiterinnen*<sup>71</sup>, an occupation which places them firmly within the city's creative *Spaßgesellschaft*. Furthermore, Lola's brother Murat (Baki Davrak) discovers the freedom to come to terms with his own sexuality through his association with this group. This subversion of the traditional stereotypes of migrant sexuality, as well as the roles attributed to the different sexes, is also seen in *Der schöne Tag*, which follows Deniz, a young Turkish woman, through the course of one day. Deniz is an actress in Berlin, a career choice which is a radical break from the traditional view of the repressed housewife found in previous migrant films. The independence this career gives her continues into her relationship with the wider urban space of the city. Deniz is shown to comfortably move about *Baustelle* Berlin as a whole, travelling out to one of the city's lakes with her boyfriend, before going for an audition in Prenzlauer Berg. In fact, Deniz is so at ease in the city that she regularly turns down offers from men to accompany her to her door for

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<sup>71</sup> Female guest workers

protection. Her position within the city's *Spaßgesellschaft* is shown to have allowed her to break free of the negatively codified view of Turkish women seen in films such as *40m<sup>2</sup> Deutschland* and discover a new self-confidence in the city.

However, the dominance of the *Spaßgesellschaft* within Berlin society was not only shown to be a positive presence in the city. In several films the young people who fail to conform to the *Spaßgesellschaft's* expectations are shown to be alienated and marginalised within unified Berlin. Such a situation can be seen in *alaska.de* (Esther Gronenborn, 2000), which deals with a group of teenagers living in Hohenschönhausen, a deprived suburb in the east of Berlin. These teenagers may move about their high-rise estate with relative ease, but the manner in which the film constructs this estate as a semi-rural space serves to illustrate that these young people have been cut off from the wider city. Whereas films such as *Julietta* perpetuate an ideal of the *Spaßgesellschaft*, which sees young people wearing fashionable clothes and taking recreational drugs, such as ecstasy and cocaine, this is not a lifestyle which is present in *alaska.de*. Instead, the film's teenagers favour baggy sports clothes and smoke cannabis, physical differences which highlight that these young people's marginalisation is in part due to the fact that they do not fit with the expectations of the *Spaßgesellschaft*. In comparison to teenagers like Murat in *Lola+Bilidikid*, who are prepared to conform to the *Spaßgesellschaft*, the young people in *alaska.de* are forced out of the city centre into a space that is barely recognisable as being part of Berlin. It is this claustrophobic isolation from the city around them that leads to many of the problems dealt with in the film. Yet, although such a version of Berlin offers a more nuanced view of youth culture in the city, the reasons behind the alienation of the young people in *alaska.de* still also serves to strengthened the definition of *Baustelle* Berlin as a city dominated by young, hedonistic people of the *Spaßgesellschaft*.

#### *The Older Generation's Experience of Baustelle Berlin*

In addition to the alternative view of the city's youth culture found in *alaska.de*, problematic elements of Berlin's post-unification transformation are also seen in the manner in which certain *Baustelle* films draw a comparison between the public and private spaces of the city, and, in particular, the differing generations who inhabit them. Therefore, whilst the public space of Berlin is shown in *Lola+Bilidikid* to be a liberating location for the film's young Turkish characters, Murat and Lola's mother (Nisa Yildirim) is exclusively shown within the domestic space. Her oldest son actively hides information from her, something which the film suggests was also done by his father before he died, as the film

characterises her as the archetypical repressed Turkish housewife. Her children may enjoy the hedonism of the *Spaßgesellschaft*, but she is kept inside for her own safety, away from the threats which these elements of Berlin society supposedly pose to the Turkish traditions she represents. Therefore, in addition to illustrating that the *Spaßgesellschaft* has enabled certain members of the city's youth population to discover a form of acceptance within the public space of the city, *Lola+Bildikid* also shows that the hedonistic, but chaotic, reality of post-unification Berlin is an alienating and marginalising force for the city's older generations, as it acts in opposition to their more traditional beliefs.

This alienation of Berlin's older inhabitants is not just confined to members of the city's migrant communities. It is also seen in films such as *Berlin is in Germany*, *Sommer vorm Balkon* (*Summer in Berlin*, Andreas Dresen, 2005) and *Netto* (Robert Thalheim, 2005). These films explore the growing nostalgia of middle-aged members of Berlin society, who are struggling to reconcile their remembered versions of the city with the reality they are now faced with following Berlin's rebuilding. Thus, in many ways these films offer stories that complement the nostalgia-tinged, historical narratives of the successful *Ostalgie* films, such as *Goodbye, Lenin!* (Wolfgang Becker, 2003), which were made at a similar time. Yet, in comparison to the *Ostalgie* films, the contemporary setting of these *Baustelle* films allows them to explore the post-unification issues facing those that grew up during division far more explicitly. For example, *Berlin is in Germany* tells the story of Martin (Jörg Schüttauf), an East Berliner who is released from prison into a Berlin he hardly recognises. The city had still been divided when Martin went to jail, but has rapidly altered in the years that he has been away. In particular, Martin discovers that many of his old friends are struggling to adapt to the changing city.

Significantly, the film uses the confused state of its protagonists to offer a different, more traditional take on the drifter than the *Spaßgesellschaft*-centred films. This is a situation which is also found in the characterisation of the main protagonists in *Sommer vorm Balkon* and *Netto*, as the struggles facing these older characters closely resembles those which defined Franz Biberkopf's transient lifestyle in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*. Like Biberkopf, Martin struggles to reintegrate himself into society, as he cannot bring together his remembered version of Berlin with the city's renovated reality. This is demonstrated by the fact that Martin must literally relearn the topography of Berlin, street by street, as he prepares to take his taxi driver exams, but keeps getting the old and new street names confused. A similar situation is found in *Sommer vorm Balkon*, as Katrin (Inke Friedrich) paints images of the buildings around her apartment in Prenzlauer Berg but struggles to sell

them, as the art dealer feels the pictures represent the area as it was before its post-Wall regeneration. The *Spaßgesellschaft* may enjoy a symbiotic relationship with the altering urban space of Berlin in the *Baustelle* films but this privileged position does not extend to the city's older generations. Instead, they are struggling to bring their remembered versions of the city together with the reality now found within Berlin's transformed urban space.

Yet, despite these problems, the *Baustelle* films also highlight that all is not lost for these older characters. Although Murat's mother in *Lola+Billidikid* helps to continue a view of Turkish women that was found in the migrant films of the 1970s and 1980s, unlike these earlier films, the closing scene of *Lola+Billidikid* offers hope that there is possibility of change. She finally discovers that her sons have been keeping information from her and storms out of her apartment, fleeing into the street below. As she does so she removes her headscarf, a move which highlights, as Gönül Dönmez-Colin writes; "Unlike Turna [in *40m<sup>2</sup> Deutschland*] [...] the mother [in *Lola+Billidikid*] is capable of 'unveiling' herself from the traditions that had imprisoned her under the pretext of false security" (2008: 165). Crucially, she is only able to do this once she finally leaves the confines of the domestic space, as this ending depicts a view of the city which further supports the concept of *Baustelle* Berlin's public space as a location which provides a greater level of freedom and acceptance. A similar ending is also found in *Sommer vorm Balkon*, which closes with a shot of Katrin's apartment building covered in scaffolding. Through this the film suggests that, unlike in her paintings from earlier in the film, Katrin is finally ready to adapt to the changing nature of Berlin. However, despite their more positive view of the future, neither of these endings show these changes to be seeping into Berlin's private sphere. As a result, both these solutions still privilege the public space of the city, leaving the private spaces previously inhabited by these characters disconnected from Berlin's newly transformed urban space.

#### *Baustelle Berlin's Migrant Ghettos*

The prevailing view of *Baustelle* Berlin in cinema may have been dominated by images of the urban renewal that had taken hold in the city's eastern districts, but there was one type of filmmaking within the city's cinematic output which offered a starkly different version of Berlin, namely the growing number of migrant films made about the city. Although the east of Berlin and the *Spaßgesellschaft* feature in films such as *Der schöne Tag* and *Lola+Billidikid*, these films were notable exceptions, rather than the norm within the

*Baustelle* migrant films. Instead, the majority of these films completely ignored the eastern districts of Prenzlauer Berg and Mitte and focused their narratives exclusively on the western district of Kreuzberg, where a large proportion of Berlin's Turkish population live. Similarly, these films avoided characters rooted in the alternative lifestyle of the *Spaßgesellschaft*. In place of transsexuals and independent women, it is the lives of heterosexual young migrant men which features heavily in these films' narratives.

Yet, despite this different viewpoint, these male characters still share some similarities with their *Spaßgesellschaft* counterparts, as they too are shown to have discovered a new found self-confidence in films such as *Geschwister – Kardeşler (Brothers and Sisters, Thomas Arslan, 1997)*, *Dealer* and *Freunde (Friends, Martin Eigler, 2000)*. These films illustrate the dominant position enjoyed by the Turkish community in large parts of Kreuzberg, a development which was seen in the way these films captured the district's public space. This is evident in *Geschwister - Kardeşler*, a film about three siblings growing up in Kreuzberg, as the camera follows the oldest of the three, Erol (Tamer Yiğit) whilst he makes his way around the streets surrounding Kottbusser Tor underground station. The majority of the shops and cafes he passes have Turkish, not German, names and this is complemented by the use of traditional Turkish folk music on the soundtrack to this scene. If the viewer was not aware that the film was set in Berlin, they could be forgiven for thinking that Erol was traversing a district of Istanbul, as the film shows how the diaspora community has confidently taken control of their surroundings in this part of Kreuzberg and begun to shape it into something that better reflects their own cultural heritage.

Furthermore, whilst scenes depicting the often difficult migration of characters from their homeland to Germany had been common in West German migrant films, as part of their desire to break with the prevailing view of migrants as problematic 'others' found in these victim films, the majority of the *Baustelle* migrant films actively avoid leaving Berlin, even when their characters do so. Therefore, in *Geschwister – Kardeşler* the camera leaves Erol at the airport to fly back to Turkey to begin his military service and instead follows the family back to their Kreuzberg apartment, whilst in *Ich Chef, du Turnshuh* the viewer is also left behind in Berlin when Dudie is finally deported back to Armenia. By avoiding venturing outside of the city, these films perpetuate a view of their, often second generation, characters as a confident part of German society, rather than a migrant incomer to the city.

These characters may be obviously more self-confident within the security of migrant areas such as Kreuzberg, but the young males of these films, much like the young

people of *alaska.de*, are also shown to be struggling to integrate themselves into the wider *Spaßgesellschaft*-dominated city. Thus, these films maintained the view of post-unification Berlin having a fragmented and disconnected topography. As Mennel argues, this situation is not helped by the fact that the urban space of Kreuzberg in these films is shown to be rundown, a view which is in stark contrast to the images of renovation which dominate the *Spaßgesellschaft* films, and helps to cast these migrant areas of Berlin as a form of American-style ghetto (2002: 138). This perception is further aided by these young men's choice of career, as these films' protagonists all seem to conform to the stereotype of the foreigner as a form of criminal. This is a view which Burns highlights when he writes; "[...] in their determination to extricate themselves from the discourse of victimisation, these filmmakers may run the risk of merely exchanging one set of clichés for another. For movies in which Turks appear variously as pimps, prostitutes, drug-pushers, thieves, petty hoodlums and gangsters might serve to reinforce populist stereotypes of the foreigner as anti-social malingerer or inveterate criminal" (2006: 142). Hence, in *Geschwister – Kardeşler* Erol is shown to be a petty-thief, whilst both Can in *Dealer* and Tayfun (Erdall Yildaz) in *Freunde* are successful drug dealers.

Crucially, these films stress that these young men's criminal lifestyles are a result of their marginalisation, rather than an active choice. Both *Dealer* and *Geschwister – Kardeşler* highlight that Can and Erol want to better themselves, but are faced with few possibilities other than a life of crime. Therefore, these migrant young males can be seen as another version of the fragmented construct of the drifter found in the *Baustelle* films, as these migrant films, much like those that deal with older members of Berlin society, demonstrate that such a way of life is not just confined to the hedonistic squatters of the city's *Spaßgesellschaft*. Instead, whilst the pleasure-seeking view of the city's youth culture may dominate, the transient situation found in the city has caused a number of different inhabitants to search for a place to belong, in various different ways, in order to process their current status in the city.

In terms of these migrant characters, their dislocation from the city around them is such that, even as gangsters, they are only able to operate on the local level, as they roam Kreuzberg looking to make money through robberies and drug deals but fail to venture any further into the wider city. This dislocation is also seen in the friendship groups these young migrants are shown to keep, with the gangs of Arslan's films being made up exclusively of Turkish youths, whilst in *Ich Chef, Du Turnschuh* Dudie and his friends form a collective of immigrants who operate on the building site in open opposition to their Berliner work

colleagues. The films illustrate how the ghettoisation of these characters hinders their ability to widen their networks, which in turn perpetuates these young men's marginalisation. In addition, when intercultural relationships are shown, they carry a negative and often dangerous connotation. Consequently, in *Freunde* it is Nils's (Benno Fürmann) friendship with Tayfun which causes him to destroy incriminating evidence against his friend, a decision which initiates a deadly chain of events, whereas in *Jargo* (Maria Solrun, 2004) the friendship between the migrant boys of Jargo (Constantin von Jascheroff) and Kamil (Oktay Özdemir) is ruined by the native Berliner Mona (Nora von Waldstätten) and the way she plays one boy off against the other. The disjointed urban space of Berlin may be a location full of potential for members of the city's *Spaßgesellschaft*, but these *Baustelle* migrant films demonstrate that the fragmented reality created by the city's redevelopment is adversely impacting the young men of the city's migrant communities, as their marginalisation prevents them from taking advantage of the opportunities created by Berlin's rebuilding to better themselves.

## Conclusion

The reputation for Berlin disseminated by films set within the city is one which has evolved overtime to reflect the tumultuous history of Berlin during the twentieth century. However, despite this lack of stability, certain constants have remained. Due to the city's volatile history, a prevailing view of Berlin on screen has been that of a political hotspot, where different partisan factions plot against one another. Alongside this there have also been a number of features which have shaped the version of daily life in the city found in cinema. For most of the last century, life in Berlin has been shown to be being lived at a fast tempo, with images of busy streets and people on the move infiltrating images of the city. Such vibrancy has then been complemented by narratives which explore the city's nightlife. From the cabarets of the 1920s through to the clubs of the *Spaßgesellschaft*, a view of the city as a hedonistic location full of creative people has been a continual feature of the images of city life found on screen. However, many Berlin films are also haunted by the figure of the drifter, a character who is usually an outsider, traversing the city in the hope of finding somewhere to belong. Over time, this figure has become linked to the city's hedonism, as Berlin's alternative scene has been used as a form of escapism for such characters.

Nevertheless, the chaotic process of rebuilding which took place following the fall of the Wall challenged and developed the view of Berlin previously held by cinema. With



the Wall removed, it was the image of the building site which replaced those of division as the defining feature of Berlin on screen. Furthermore, the confusion created by the new urban space which was emerging in the city saw a growth in empty spaces on screen, as society struggled to learn how to re-inhabit the post-unification city. This meant that Berlin society as a whole, not just those on the outside, were thrown into a state of transition, with this chaos creating a situation in the city which allowed the creative young people of the *Spaßgesellschaft* to dominate the reputation of Berlin society on film.

Of course, as was argued in Chapter 1, in recent years Berlin's film industry, led by the work of the MBB, has looked to reposition the city's reputation in cinema from that of a *Baustelle* location, to one more in line with ideas surrounding Berlin as a global media city. Still, at the same time, as Graham Drake was quoted in the previous chapter as stating, city branding efforts, such as those of the MBB, must be underpinned by images linked to the reality found in the city, in order to be seen as authentic and successful. Therefore, in the chapters which follow, I take some of the different characteristics of Berlin cinema discussed above, namely the city as a creative hotspot, the figure of the drifter, and the view of Berlin as a city of spies as the focal point for my analysis. I then use these tropes as entry points through which to investigate the contemporary view of Berlin found on screen. In particular, I focus on the extent to which recent films made about the city are moving beyond the chaotic images of the *Baustelle* and towards a version of the city which supports to the MBB's brand of media Berlin.

### Chapter 3: *Wir sind die Nacht* - The Superficial, Unfulfilling Life of the Industry-Insider in media Berlin

#### Introduction

Berlin has long been depicted as a creative location on screen and the purpose of the analysis in this chapter is to apply this view to present-day Berlin cinema, examining the dominant version of the city's creative community found within contemporary Berlin-set films. Significantly, whilst such people were cast during the *Baustelle* period as an experimental part of the *Spaßgesellschaft* in films such as *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle* (*Life is All You Get*, Wolfgang Becker, 1997) and *Julietta* (Christoph Stark, 2001), the archetypal construction of the city's present-day creatives is noticeably different. In fact, the protagonists at the centre of films such as *Keinohrhasen* (*Rabbit without Ears*, Til Schweiger, 2007), *Männerherzen* (*Men in the City*, Simon Verhoeven, 2009) and *Groupies bleiben nicht zum Frühstück* (*Groupies Do Not Stay For Breakfast*, Marc Rothemund, 2010) would seem to have more in common with those characters found within the New German Comedy Wave films of the 1990s. As Eric Rentschler was quoted in my introduction as stating, these earlier films dealt with successful young professionals in their late twenties and early thirties, who faced some form of identity crisis, and the films discussed in this chapter adopt a similar narrative style (2000: 247). Consequently, given the position of power which many of the central protagonists in films such as *Keinohrhasen* enjoy within Berlin's creative industries, I have termed these contemporary films 'industry-insider films'.

However, these industry-insider films also represent the growth, discussed in Chapter 1 in relation to the MBB's funding strategy, of a more popular strand of German-language filmmaking within Berlin's cinematic output in recent years. Hence, the focus of my analysis below is on the extent to which the emergence of this strand of filmmaking within the city is also engaging with ideas surrounding Berlin as a global media city. On the one hand these industry-insider films explore the same hedonistic, creative milieu found in the media Berlin brand. Yet, at the same time, the films use their narratives rooted within Berlin's media society to explore the tensions and problems which are missing from the MBB's version of Berlin. As a result, they illustrate the limited nature of the wholly positive media Berlin brand, and so these films both support and critique the MBB's vision for the city.

In order to begin to understand this duality, I will first set out an overview of the depiction of Berlin found in the industry-insider films, as I look to establish the

commonalities that bind these films' versions of Berlin together. I will then move on to a case study of Dennis Gansel's 2010 vampire film *Wir sind die Nacht* (*We are the Night*), a film which typifies the multi-layered view of media Berlin found within the industry-insider films. *Wir sind die Nacht*'s production background epitomises the growth in bigger-budget German-language films within Berlin's cinematic output in recent years, whilst the film's narrative depicts Berlin's infamous hedonistic nightlife. Thus, the film explores many areas of city life that are also found within the media Berlin brand. However, at the same time *Wir sind die Nacht* is a vampire genre piece, dealing with blood-thirsty killers. Therefore, the film plays with vampiric otherness to offer a darker view of contemporary Berlin, which seems to critique the growing problem of commoditisation that has accompanied the new found maturity discovered within the city's creative industries. *Wir sind die Nacht*, much like other industry-insider films, may help to disseminate the view of Berlin as a global media city, but the film also demonstrates that there is more to such a status than is found within the MBB's promotion of the city, by highlighting the shallow and inauthentic nature of Berlin's media world.

### **The Contemporary Berlin-set Industry-Insider Films**

#### *Elements of the media Berlin Brand*

The correlation between the media Berlin brand and the construction of Berlin society found in the industry-insider films can be seen in the fact that these film's version of city life helps to support the MBB's promotion of Berlin as a global media city, in order to attract members of the creative class to come and work in the area and so boost the city's economy. This is because, as Richard Florida was quoted in Chapter 1 as stating, such people want to live in a location which offers them the opportunity to "validate their identities" and the diverse construction of Berlin's creative industries found in the industry-insider films illustrates that they will be able to do precisely this (2002: 218). Hence, the idea of Berlin now being a leading hotspot for members of the creative class is introduced through, for example, the lives of record producers and singers in *Männerherzen* and *Groupies bleiben nicht zum Frühstück*, journalists in *Keinohrhasen* and *Zettl* (Helmut Dietl, 2012), advertising executives in *Im weißen Rössl – Wehe, du singst!* (*The White Horse Inn – Don't You Dare Sing!*) (Christian Theede, 2013), publishers and authors in *Phantomschmerz* (*Phantom Pain*, Matthias Emke, 2009) and *Mord ist Mein Geschäft, Liebling* (*Killing is my Business, Honey*, Sebastian Niemann, 2009), and television professionals in *Männersache* (*Man's Business*, Gernot Roll and Mario Barth, 2009) and *Drei* (*Three*, Tom Tykwer, 2010).

Importantly, in addition to being part of the knowledge economy, the majority of these occupations are rooted within the media industries, which means that the version of working Berlin found within the industry-insider films shows Berlin society to be populated by a diverse array of specifically media professionals. As a result, the industry-insider films highlight that Berlin, much as the MBB claims, is not just a city with a strong knowledge economy, but is a thriving media city.

Whilst the idea of Berlin as a creative city may not be a new concept in cinema, the contemporary view of the city's media industries is a very different one than has previously been found in Berlin. As was seen in Chapter 2, Berlin's creative scene has long been associated with the more alternative strand of youth culture found in the city, such as in *Solo Sunny* (Konrad Wolf and Wolfgang Kohlhaase, 1980) or *Christiane F* (Uli Edel, 1981). Such representation was epitomised during the *Baustelle* period by the young people of the *Spaßgesellschaft*, who were presented as experimental and avant-garde in their approach, as they used the chaotic situation found within Berlin in the years following the fall of the Wall to explore the full extent of their creative possibility. Therefore, in films such as *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle*, the *Spaßgesellschaft* may have enjoyed a privileged position within the *Baustelle* city, but their lifestyle was in opposition to what would normally be understood as mainstream behaviour within society, as these young people squatted in vacant buildings and made little money from their creative endeavours. This lack of a more organised and acceptable mainstream element within the city's media scene aided the development of a work-in-progress reputation for Berlin in the 1990s, a status which contemporary efforts by agencies such as the MBB to redefine the view of Berlin held around the world are looking to overcome. Consequently, a crucial difference between the *Baustelle* and the media Berlin images is that, although the media Berlin brand may still exploit Berlin's reputation as a creative city, the version of Berlin's creative scene found in the MBB's marketing material promotes the city as a location that now has an established and organised infrastructure for the knowledge economy to operate in.


This different view of Berlin's media society is present in the industry-insider films through the lifestyles of their protagonists, with these films promoting a more corporate, career orientated way of life for the city's creative professionals. If *Baustelle* Berlin was populated on screen by struggling DJs and actors, the version of Berlin society projected by the industry-insider films focuses on the executives and media personalities who now make a living within Berlin's thriving and structured media industries. Therefore, in these industry-insider films, the city is home to both successful creative freelancers, such as DJ

Ickarus (Paul Kalkbrenner) in *Berlin Calling* (Hannes Stöhr, 2008), as well as those who work in the management of large corporations operating within the creative industries, such as the advertising executive Niklas (Florian David Fitz) in *Männerherzen*. By engaging with such an image of Berlin in their narratives, these films demonstrate that the footloose creatives who the MBB is looking to attract will find their entry into contemporary Berlin far smoother and potentially rewarding. This is because the city is home to a varied, structured and stable knowledge economy, operating within a rejuvenated urban space and containing all the necessary infrastructure and provisions, such as high quality office space and good transport connections, expected of a leading international business location.

Moreover, the dominance of the media-centric creative class within the MBB's marketing material is not the only element of the media Berlin brand which is also found in these industry-insider films. Through its branding efforts the MBB looks to promote Berlin as the leading creative region in Germany, in order to place Berlin as the number one film hotspot within the fragmented domestic film production landscape. Interestingly, a similarly regional point of view has permeated through to the narratives of the industry-insider films. *Baustelle* Berlin, as was argued previously, may have been seen as a microcosm for the nation, as both German society as a whole and the inhabitants of Berlin more specifically came to terms with the fall of the Wall, but the city's position as the capital of Germany is no longer the defining factor in these films. This alternative view shows Berlin to be a distinct region, which is noticeably different from those found elsewhere in the country. This is seen in the road movie *Offroad* (Elmar Fischer, 2012) and the way in which the film constructs the relationship between a series of locations across Germany. The film follows Meike (Nora Tschirner), an average provincial German, who decides to flee her steady life when she discovers that her fiancé has been cheating on her. She initially heads to her local city, Düsseldorf, to raise money for a trip to Africa, but this proves unsuccessful as no one will take her seriously, and so Meike decides to go to Berlin. As her end goal is the Sahara, her detour to Berlin makes little geographic sense. Yet, it is in Berlin that she finds both a solution to her problems and a new love interest in the 'exotic' musician Salim from Neukölln (Elyas M'Barek). Meike discovers that she does not necessarily have to leave Germany, just her immediate region, to find the exciting new experiences that she craves. Therefore, through the comparison the film offers between Berlin and Düsseldorf, *Offroad* constructs a version of Berlin which positions the city as a

location separate from the rest of Germany, by showing that Berlin has more in common with the 'exotic' than it does with the strictly German elements of the film.

This view of Berlin as an interconnected global region is further developed by the fact that several of the industry-insider films contain international narratives. For example, the storyline to *Mord ist mein Geschäft, Liebling* revolves around the attempts of a Berlin publisher (Nora Tschirner) to acquire the rights to Italian author Enrico Puzzo's (Franco Nero) next book and involves several trips to Italy, a country that also features in *Das Leben ist zu lang* (*Life is too Long*, Dani Levy, 2010), as the main protagonist, Berlin-based filmmaker Alfi Seliger (Markus Hering), attends an Italian film festival to receive a lifetime achievement award. However, it is not just Berlin's connection to its European near-neighbours which helps to foreground the city's position within an interconnected network of global locations. As Figure 9 shows, the extent of Berlin's global standing is evident at the beginning of *Zettl*. The film opens with a media mogul's helicopter landing in front of a skyline of high-rise buildings, a panorama that is more reminiscent of New York than Berlin. In fact, the viewer could be led to believe that this scene is taking place in America due to Frank Sinatra's *New York New York* accompanying these images on the film's soundtrack. It is only because the *Fernsehturm* is visible in the far corner of the shot that the viewer is aware that the helicopter has actually landed by the Spree and not the Hudson. This purposeful geographic confusion employed by the film serves to link the two locations in the collective imagination of its viewers, as *Zettl* shows that Berlin has now joined New York as a leading global location. In terms of the wider reputation of Berlin, these international links further highlight Berlin's desirability to global business and members of the creative class from all over the world, with the city being shown to be a truly global media city.



This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons

*Figure 9: Geographic confusion in the opening of Zettl*

Furthermore, the Berlin skyline is not just a feature of the opening titles of *Zettl*, with skyline shots of Berlin figuring prominently throughout the visual narratives of all the industry-insider films. Yet, whilst such shots were dominated by cranes during the *Baustelle* period, with the films of the 1990s and early 2000s adopting such images to further compound the reputation of Berlin as a work-in-progress, these symbols of rebuilding are noticeably missing from the industry-insider films' view of Berlin. In place of cranes, it is images of Berlin's new, sleek high-rise buildings, alongside more recognisable landmarks, in particular the *Fernsehturm*, which become the markers for the newly transformed topography of the city. Importantly, the specific choice of the *Fernsehturm* as the historic building which anchors the view of Berlin's skyline found within these films, illustrates how the city's eastern districts are no longer defined by either their former position within communist East Germany, or by the tumultuous period of post-unification rebuilding. Instead, this area of the city is now an integral part of Berlin's normalised urban space. Indeed, the area in and around Alexanderplatz has become a thriving symbol of post-unification Berlin's transformed topography, due to the regeneration of the area into a busy shopping, entertainment and business locale. This is evident, for example, in the building of the *Alexa* shopping centre, one of the premier shopping locations in contemporary Berlin, on the former site of the *Polizeipräsidium Alexanderplatz*<sup>72</sup>. Consequently, the regenerated urban space of Alexanderplatz, peppered with sleek high-rises and watched over by the towering *Fernsehturm*, has now become the dominant area of the city within understandings of how Berlin's topography, and in particular the city's vibrant knowledge economy, is organised.

The positive redefinition of Berlin's eastern districts into the defining locations for the city's media professionals can be seen in *Groupies bleiben nicht zum Frühstück*, as the film features a globally successful pop band called Berlin Mitte. Of course, Mitte is one of the central districts of eastern Berlin which acted as home to many of members of the *Spaßgesellschaft*, and also includes the *Fernsehturm* within its borders. Additionally, in recent years the district has become the base for an increasing number of successful media companies. Therefore, the band's choice of name, much like the decision of Berlin's wider media society to locate themselves within this part of the city, is clearly designed to exploit the international, 'cool' cachet now associated with East Berlin. As Figure 10 illustrates, this growing dominance of eastern Berlin is seen towards the end of *Groupies bleiben nicht zum*

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<sup>72</sup> Police headquarters Alexanderplatz (former central headquarters of Berlin police which was also used by the Gestapo during the Second World War)

*Frühstück*, as the band feature several Berlin landmarks in the backdrop to their stage design for their sold-out show at the city's *O2 World*. Although they may be called Berlin Mitte, the band stands in front of images of buildings from across Berlin. However, the *Fernsehturm* features centrally, flanked by shots of buildings from across East and West Berlin, with the manner in which these images spread out at intervals, getting larger as they do so, creating a visual ripple effect, which emphasises the core position of the *Fernsehturm*. Therefore, the band's stage design demonstrates that the city's urban space as a whole, not just Berlin's eastern topography, is now defined by the ideas surrounding the city's media society emanating out of eastern Berlin districts such as Mitte.



Figure 10: The centrality of East Berlin landmarks to the city's urban space in *Groupies bleiben nicht zum Frühstück*<sup>73</sup>

However, as well as positively re-positioning East Berlin within the city's cinematic reputation, the prominence of Berlin's skyline across the industry-insider films also serves to highlight that it is not just the business environment now found in the city which helps to further the idea of Berlin as a location where the creative class can thrive. In all these films, such skyline shots are captured at all times of the day, showing Berlin at dawn, in daylight, at dusk and at night. This means that the city image which is presented through these shots illustrates how Berlin is a city which never sleeps, a view of Berlin which is further aided by the fact that the media professionals of these films spend as much time enjoying Berlin's hedonistic nightlife as they do at their offices. As Florida claims, a vibrant nightlife is an important feature for any city wanting to be a hub for the creative class and, as a result, the bars and clubs of the city feature heavily in the MBB's marketing material (2002: 225). Equally, the industry-insider films show Berlin's media society to be one which works hard and parties hard, an important feature of any global media city, as such a lifestyle provides

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<sup>73</sup> ©SamFilm



the freelance members of the creative class the opportunity to network. We see people planning deals and making contacts over drinks in films such as *Kokowääh (Coq au vin)*, Til Schweiger, 2011) and *Rubbeldiekatz (Woman in Love)*, Detlev Buck, 2011), with the version of Berlin found in these industry-insider films showing a city which possesses the perfect environment for members of the creative class to come to live and work.

#### *The Ahistorical Style of media Berlin*

Nevertheless, whilst the MBB's promotion of Berlin is done for purely economic reasons, and so remains wholly positive, the industry-insider films do not have similar aims. Therefore, they are able to offer a more nuanced view of the present-day city. These films may engage with many elements of the media Berlin brand, but they do so in a way which offers a more complex and multi-layered view of the city than is found within the MBB's marketing material. The lifestyle of the characters who are shown to be living in 24 hour Berlin takes place in a world which is defined by modern, upscale offices, fashionable hangouts and upmarket restaurants, with the way that these locations are styled both defining the look and feel of media Berlin and beginning to offer a more critical version of Berlin's media lifestyle. Many of these spaces, in particular the offices of the films' protagonists, are designed in the stereotypical glass and steel style of 'global business', creating locations which would not be out of place in London, New York or Tokyo. Although on the one hand such a style offers further confirmation of Berlin's new status as a modern, global city, the generic nature of this glass and steel look is also shown to be somewhat problematic. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the playboy lifestyle of Ludo Decker (Til Schweiger), the main protagonist in *Keinohrhasen*. In the film Ludo is shown to be a bachelor about town, whose office at a national tabloid newspaper is decorated in a minimal white style and who frequents expensive bars and restaurants that suit the internationalised tastes of their rich clientele. Yet, the issue with this is that Ludo's Berlin is a globalised space that lacks any real defining characteristics to distinguish the city from numerous other big cities around the world, an approach which is mirrored in Ludo's own superficial and hedonistic life as a gossip journalist. The offices of Berlin may offer the necessary infrastructure for creative people from around the world to base themselves in, but the faceless global style which dominates in these locations takes away from the regional specificity of Berlin.

This disjuncture between the style of Berlin's spaces and the city's distinct identity is also seen in the manner in which the fashionable bars and clubs of the city are depicted

in the industry-insider films. Whilst the upmarket feel may remain, many of these locations have embraced a style that could be termed 'vintage chic', with the bars and restaurants adopting a style that pairs purposefully tattered decoration and mismatching retro furniture with items that would not look out of place in the city's more globalised locations. This can be seen in all of the films' treatment of Berlin but, as Figure 11 demonstrates, the contrast is clearest in *Männerherzen*, as the film draws a stark comparison between the global style of the offices of the record label and advertising agency where its protagonists work and the 'vintage chic' of the bars and restaurants that they then go on to socialise in. This sort of 'vintage chic' style is synonymous with 'cool', alternative media hangouts across the world, from Shoreditch and Dalston in East London to Williamsburg in Brooklyn, with this eclectic trend becoming a clear visual signifier in film worldwide to the presence of a fashionable media scene. Therefore, the use of such a style in these industry-insider films could be seen in part to reaffirm the MBB's image of Berlin as a 'cool', global media city which is attractive to members of the creative class who favour areas with a 'buzz'.



Figure 11: Berlin's offices (Top) and bars (Bottom) in *Männerherzen*

However, the presence of this style in Berlin also has clear links to the city's past and, in particular, the chaotic and haphazard nature of the squatting community that became a famous part of city life in West Berlin, before spreading east following the fall of the Wall. As a result, this style's use in Berlin perhaps should be more accurately termed 'squatting chic' rather than the more international 'vintage chic'. The bars and clubs of eastern Berlin, which dominate the films' depiction of this style, were firmly rooted in the squatting movement of the 1990s, which means that their links to this sort of aesthetic outdates its use as the international look of choice for the media elite. Yet, rather than providing a historical link between Berlin's present and past, the use of such a style in the 'cool' hangouts of media Berlin more closely resembles the ahistorical style discussed in my introduction, which Stuart Taberner found to be present in the rebuilding of Potsdamer Platz (2005a: xviii). This is because the squatting status of characters, such as Jan (Jürgen Vogel) in *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle*, as well as the decoration of the clubs found in films such as *Chill Out* (Andreas Struck, 2000) during the *Baustelle* period were not a stylistic choice but were a forced necessity linked to Berlin's wider status as a chaotic city in flux.

Still, similar motivations are no longer behind the adoption of this 'squatting chic' by the present-day locations found in the industry-insider films. As Ingo Bader and Albert Scharenberg write; "Non-commercial, dingy, self-made basement clubs have become rare [in Berlin]. Increasingly, they are being replaced by 'chic' and thoroughly styled bars, as well as by a simulated and 'ready-made' subculture" (2013: 251). Therefore, the rise of 'squatting chic' is linked to the gentrification of Berlin seen in recent years. As the hedonism of Berlin's *Spaßgesellschaft* has gained a 'cool' status around the world, initially due to the international reputation of events such as the Love Parade, and since continued through the hype surrounding 'squatting chic' clubs such as Tresor, Berghain and Bar 25, the decision of the bars and clubs of contemporary Berlin to continue to adopt such a style is done for purely commercial reasons.

This can be seen in the transformation of Prenzlauer Berg on screen. This area was the home to squatters in *Baustelle* films such as *Julietta*, but is now home to the young professionals of the industry-insider films such as *Männerherzen*. As Matthias Bernt and Andrej Holm write in relation to the changes seen in this district; "The blend of cafes, international cuisine, boutiques and delicatessens typical of other gentrified [cities] at the global scale can now be found [all over the area]. 'Prenzlauer Berg' has effectively become a brand name which can be found in [...] an apparent aesthetic in the interior design of houses, shops and restaurants" (2005: 119). Despite Prenzlauer Berg moving beyond being

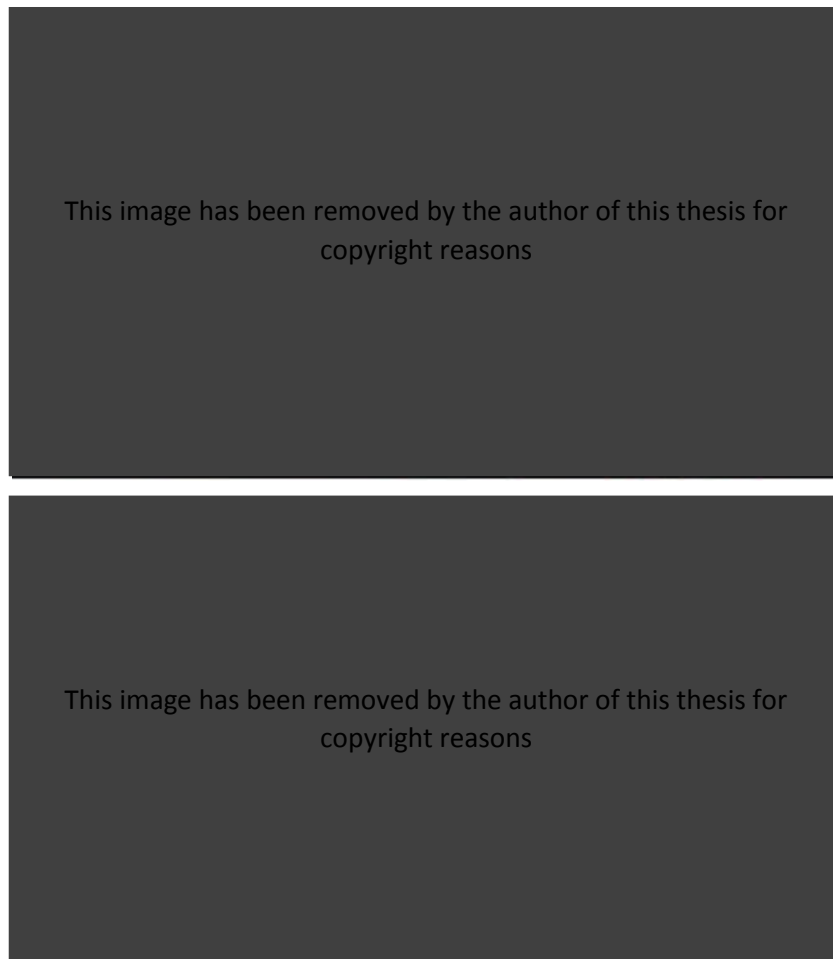
home to the squatters of the *Spaßgesellschaft*, the area's entertainment locations want to continue to exploit the 'cool' cachet associated with Berlin's squatters for their own financial gains in the present. Hence, this 'squatter chic' becomes a superficial part of the contemporary city, which lacks any true connection to the struggles found in Berlin's past and is instead part of a gentrified, commoditised global 'look' within the modern-day city.

This transformation in the use of the squatter style can be seen in *Zettl* as Max (Michael Herbig) attends a party in a derelict building. However, although the party may take place in a space that is in many ways reminiscent of the derelict factory used by Vera (Christiane Paul) for her alternative theatre show in *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle*, this party is full of political and media heavyweights, rather than young creatives. Thus, the entertainment spaces of Berlin in the two films may be aesthetically similar, but their use and the people who populate them are markedly different. Whilst these derelict locations symbolised the possibilities of *Baustelle* Berlin for the city's young people in the 1990s, it is now established insiders who frequent such locations, as they look to exploit the fashionable edge associated with such a style. Yet, the presence of such people in these contemporary spaces is often a negative one, as *Zettl* demonstrates. The party in question is shown to be a coming together of the egomaniacal and unhinged professionals found in the film's satire of Berlin's media society. In fact, throughout the industry-insider films' engagement with Berlin's nightlife, it is the patrons of these locations who provide these films with their villains. Consequently, this appropriation of Berlin's squatter past within the city's contemporary nightlife is shown in the majority of the industry-insider films to be a superficial threat to the city, as this approach is turning Berlin's clubs and bars into internationalised, commoditised spaces. The global creative class may be attracted by these locations' 'buzz' but such an aesthetic comes at a cost, as it lacks any real attachment to Berlin's cultural history.

#### *The Unfulfilling Nature of Berlin's Media Society*

The problems created by the perceived inauthentic nature of Berlin's media society are further compounded by the identity crises which many of the films' characters suffer. In fact, the narrative thrust of the majority of the films revolves around their protagonists' dissatisfaction with their life in media Berlin. Therefore, characters such as Niklas in *Männerherzen* and Ludo in *Keinohrhasen* may be successful in their respective fields, but this success is shown to be hollow and unfulfilling, a situation which has a significant impact on ideas surrounding media Berlin. The city may now be a location where media

professionals from around the world can find employment, but the sort of lifestyle which exists within Berlin's society is shown by the industry-insider films to lack any real depth. This negative casting of Berlin's media world is seen in the *Heimat*-Musical *Im weißen Rössl – Wehe, du singst!*. The film follows Otilie (Diane Amft), a Berlin advertising executive who goes on holiday to the Alps with her father (Armin Rohde) after being dumped by her boyfriend (Ben Ruedinger), with the film using this escape to also stress the unfulfilling and drab life Otilie leads in Berlin. Otilie's boyfriend is characterised as egotistical and superficial, whilst the city is shown to be a grey, rainy location whose inhabitants are miserable. However, as Figure 12 demonstrates, in comparison to this negative version of Berlin, the scenes set at the White Horse Inn, where Otilie and her father stay in the Alps, are bursting with colour, with the people in these scenes being so happy they cannot help but sing.



*Figure 12: The comparison between grey Berlin (Top) and the colourful Alps (Bottom) in Im weißen Rössl – Wehe, du singst!*

The Alpine inn is cast as a more traditional setting in comparison to Berlin, something which is represented by the references the film makes to the *Heimat* films of the 1950s in the way that these scenes in the Alps are styled and captured. Yet, whilst such

traditional elements were a negative presence in the construction of provincial Germany found in *Offroad*, with Berlin in comparison offering a positive solution to Meike's problems, *Im weißen Rössl – Wehe, du singst!* uses its bright, *Heimat*-infused Alpine scenes to demonstrate how the expectations and attitudes present in contemporary Berlin's media society are an inauthentic feature of Otilie's life in the city. Significantly, when compared to one another, these films demonstrate the multi-layered view of the city found within Berlin's cinematic output, with the city's media world being shown in the industry-insider films to offer different experiences for different people. This multi-dimensional view of Berlin is evident in that fact that even in *Offroad*, the city's media society does not escape criticism, with the film's villains being a group of Berlin-based media professionals.

Furthermore, whilst Berlin's position as a global region is supported by *Offroad*, the ending of *Im weißen Rössl – Wehe, du singst!* illustrates that the city needs to reengage with a more Germanic past, in order to solve the ahistorical problems created by the superficial, globalised turn found within Berlin's media society. Although Otilie does eventually return to Berlin, she only does so on the proviso that her and her new boyfriend (Tobias Licht) bring some of the spirit of the White Horse Inn back with them. Such a solution is reminiscent of Taberner's concept of longitudinal normality discussed previously and is one that is also present in several other industry-insider films. For example, the music producer Jerome (Til Schweiger) in *Männerherzen...und die ganz ganz große Liebe* (*Men in the City 2*, Simon Verhoeven, 2011) only finds happiness and true love once he abandons his playboy lifestyle in Berlin and returns to his provincial German hometown.

Issues linked to the growing global outlook found within Berlin also provide the narrative drive for *Berlin Calling*. The film's main protagonist, DJ Ickarus, struggles with the international demands created by his life as a successful DJ. Ickarus may be a native Berliner, but his global identity is emphasised in the film through his choice of wardrobe, as he exclusively wears different international football teams' shirts. Yet, despite his success as a DJ, Ickarus finds the lifestyle he now leads to be unfulfilling. He seems to spend more time in airports than enjoying the freedom and hedonism which was a feature of Berlin's nightlife during the *Baustelle* period. Ickarus's frustrations with the hollow nature of such an existence lead him to go on a drug-fuelled binge, which in turn causes him to have a mental breakdown. Therefore, through the problems experienced by Ickarus, the film demonstrates that Berlin's growing international status is not a wholly positive development, with the pressures such a lifestyle places on the city's media professionals leading to a life dominated by work assignments and tedious travel.

Yet, whilst *Im weißen Rössl – Wehe, du singst!* travels outside of the city to find a solution to Otilie's problems, which the film then re-introduces into the city at the end, *Berlin Calling* promotes a more local idea of *Heimat*. Ickarus begins to record a new CD whilst in hospital following his breakdown and in this music he includes samples of the sounds of the city, such as the electronic beeps and rhythm of Berlin's underground trains. Thus, *Berlin Calling* promotes a return to a specific local environment and set of traditions which exist in the city, but sit separate from Berlin's media world. Such a positive privileging of the local, non-media elements of Berlin is found in several other industry-insider films. The pop star Chriz (Kostja Ullmann), for example, finds happiness with a Berlin teenager, Lila (Anna Fischer), who does not even know who his band are, despite their global hits, in *Groupies bleiben nicht zum Frühstück*, whilst Ludo discovers a more fulfilling way of life when he meets the Nursery Teacher Anna (Nora Tschirner) in *Keinohrhasen*. However, regardless of the differing sources of their narrative solutions, what is clear is that the majority of the industry-insider films use their narrative position within Berlin's media world to promote a version of Berlin which illustrates the problematic and inauthentic nature of the city's creative industries. The blame for this development is shown to lie within the increasingly global outlook present amongst the city's media professionals, whilst a solution is offered through a return to the distinctly German tradition of *Heimat*, be that found in the Alps or hidden away within present-day Berlin.

### ***Wir sind die Nacht*: A Case Study of Berlin-set Industry-Insider Films**

Dennis Gansel's *Wir sind die Nacht* is a film which in many ways epitomises both the industry-insider films' exploration of contemporary Berlin and the MBB's promotion of the city's film industry through the media Berlin brand. Although, like the majority of the industry-insider films, a love-story is at the film's heart, *Wir sind die Nacht* is a contemporary horror film which makes use of the conventions of the vampire genre to investigate Berlin. In order to do this, the film employs special effects and studio-shot sequences to fully bring its vampire characters to life. This means that the production background of *Wir sind die Nacht* offers a good illustration of the capabilities found within Berlin's present-day film industry. The film tells the story of a young Berliner, Lena (Karoline Herfurth), who is turned into a vampire by Louise (Nina Hoss), a blood-thirsty club owner, during a night out. Lena's entry into the vampire world occupied by Louise and her two companions, Charlotte (Jennifer Ulrich) and Nora (Anna Fischer), also acts as her initiation into the hedonistic world of media Berlin, as she starts to immerse herself in a lifestyle

similar to that which is enjoyed by protagonists across the industry-insider films. However, the problem is that Lena has already begun to fall for a Berlin policeman called Tom (Max Riemelt), and so she struggles to reconcile her new found vampiric way of life with her feelings for him. This crisis allows the film to explore the highs and lows of Berlin's media society, as *Wir sind die Nacht* makes use of the symbolic potential found within the blood-thirsty otherness of the vampires to offer a critique on the lifestyle enjoyed by the city's young professionals.

#### *A Multi-faceted Production for a Diverse Film Hotspot*

If we start by looking at the production background to the film, it soon becomes clear that the fact that *Wir sind die Nacht* was made at all says a lot about the transformation seen within Berlin's film industry since unification. Gansel actually had the idea for the film in 1996, whilst still at film school in Munich, following a night out in Berlin with friends. He produced a script for a film called *The Dawn*, which later evolved into the story of *Wir sind die Nacht*. However, at the time no one was prepared to take a risk on the film, which meant that he was unable to get funding for the project for almost 15 years. As he is quoted as saying in an interview with Stefan Stosch; "Many people wanted to make genre films back then – but it was only ever the next Katja Riemann comedy which made it into cinemas [...] No producer wanted to believe in the cinematic capabilities of blood suckers"<sup>74</sup> (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung*: 2010). Gansel may blame his choice of genre for his inability to secure funding, but the setting of his film in *Baustelle* Berlin would also seem to have played a role. As Christian Becker, the film's producer, alludes to in the 'Making of' documentary that accompanied *Wir sind die Nacht*'s UK DVD release, there is a chance that, if Gansel had been prepared to make his film elsewhere, he may not have had to wait 15 years to do so, as other cities, both in Germany and further afield during the 1990s, could have offered a more stable foundation for such a style of film than Berlin did (Momentum Pictures: 2012). As was argued in Chapter 2, whilst the New German Comedy Wave films prospered elsewhere in Germany, popular filmmaking was noticeably absent from Berlin's production output in the decade following the fall of the Wall. Accordingly, the reticence of film professionals to back to Gansel's large-scale, Berlin-set vampire film would seem to illustrate the wider attitude that was found within the post-unification

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<sup>74</sup> Viele hätten damals Genrefilme drehen wollen – doch in die Kinos sei dann immer nur die nächste Komödie mit Katja Riemann gekommen [...] Kein Produzent habe an die Kinotauglichkeit von Blutsaugern glauben wollen



country's film industry towards Berlin as a site of film production, with the city viewed as a place which was only capable of being home to art-house productions.

Yet, if *Baustelle* Berlin was seen as a problematic film location unable to host the more escapist domestic films of the 1990s, the fact that Gansel has now been able to produce his film in the city shows how Berlin's reputation as a film production centre has changed, with the city evolving into a location that is able to produce a varied set of films. Not only did Gansel find a backer for his project, but he was able to accrue an estimated budget of around 6.5 million Euro for *Wir sind die Nacht* (IMDB: 2013). This is a large figure for any German production and one which demonstrates the changing nature of Berlin's cinematic output by being far greater than any of the *Baustelle* German-language films possessed. This budget was aided by the commitment of the MBB to the film. The agency awarded *Wir sind die Nacht* one million Euro, the maximum amount of funding it offers to any single project. Of course, Gansel's ambition in the making of *Wir sind die Nacht* was to produce a slick piece of genre cinema and he needed a large-budget to achieve this, but for the MBB to award such an amount to a domestic film is unusual. For example, in comparison the science-fiction film *Die kommenden Tage* (*The Coming Days*, Lars Kraume: 2010) received only 600,000 Euro, despite the film's similar need for special effects, and even the sequel to the extremely successful *Keinohrhasen*, *Zweiohrküken* (*Rabbit without Ears 2*, Til Schweiger, 2009) was only awarded 900,000 Euro (MBB: 2008, 2009a, 2009b). Therefore, given MBB co-head Kirsten Niehuus's explanation in Chapter 1 on the process behind funding decisions, with the MBB looking to support films which will either make an economic or artistic impact, the MBB clearly felt that *Wir sind die Nacht* was a commercially orientated film which was well placed to both fully make use of Berlin's production capabilities and offer a narrative which further developed the reputation of contemporary Berlin being disseminated on screen.

The city features heavily in the film, with Gansel making use of location shooting where possible to capture the reality of contemporary Berlin's urban space. Yet, whilst the city's role in the film will be explored in more detail below, it is important to note that *Wir sind die Nacht* was not fully shot on location. The special effects needed to recreate the world of the vampires meant that several sequences were filmed at Babelsberg. As was stated in Chapter 1, the provisions which have been developed at the studio in recent years support the MBB's assertions about Berlin's capabilities as a film production hub. These claims are echoed in Babelsberg's own marketing material, as the studio proudly boasts of its ability to accommodate any kind of film, regardless of budget, setting, or effects needed

(*Studio Babelsberg*: 2013: 6). In terms of the studio's infrastructure, such aptitude is evident in the opening sequence of the film, which sees the vampires leap from an airplane as it flies over Berlin, with this scene being captured using the permanent aircraft gimble at Babelsberg. Furthermore, the intricacies of the vampires' supernatural powers, such as their ability to climb walls, as well as their blood-thirsty rampages through Berlin, could only be brought to life because of the visual and special effects expertise found amongst the labour pool associated with Babelsberg. Thus, the varied production of *Wir sind die Nacht* develops a view of Berlin's film industry which supports the idea that the city's knowledge economy is full of high-skilled, flexible professionals, a key feature of the wider media Berlin brand and an essential asset for any city looking to position itself as a leading location for members of the creative class.

This combination of location-shooting and studio-based sequences also highlights a new synergy in the relationship between Babelsberg and the rest of Berlin's film industry. Previously, the few large-scale productions made at Babelsberg during the *Baustelle* period, such as *Enemy at the Gates* (Jean-Jacques Annaud, 2001), avoided the chaotic urban space of the city, which in turn meant that Berlin's streets featured exclusively in low-budget domestic films, such as *Lola rennt* (*Run Lola Run*, Tom Tykwer, 1998). However, by making use of both location-shooting and studio-based filming, the production of *Wir sind die Nacht* demonstrates that in contemporary Berlin you do not have to be making a Hollywood blockbuster to enjoy the sound stages of Babelsberg. Yet equally, the urban space of Berlin is no longer the reserve of small-scale productions. As a result, the film promotes a more harmonious and diverse view of the activities of the city's contemporary production environment, and so strengthens the representation of Berlin as a whole on screen.

In addition to the relationship between the production of the film and the wider Berlin film industry, the commitment of the MBB to the project will have been further encouraged by the fact that the film is produced by *Constantin*, a leading German production company with an international reputation for producing high quality and successful popular films. This is because, despite the company's prominence in the domestic industry, *Constantin* had taken little interest in Berlin-set films during the 1990s, choosing to back the more commercial films made elsewhere, such as *Das Superweib* (*The Superwoman*, Sönke Wortmann, 1996). Nevertheless, since the turn of the Century the company's attitude towards Berlin has begun to change. In fact, *Constantin* has been responsible for several of the industry-insider films to emerge from Berlin in recent years,

such as *Warum Männer nicht zuhören und Frauen schlecht einparken* (*Why Men Don't Listen and Women Are Bad at Parking*, Leander Haußmann, 2007) and *Männersache*. As a report in *Blickpunkt* states with regard to the MBB's, and in particular Kirsten Niehuus', attitude towards this increased engagement of *Constantin* within Berlin; "Kirsten Niehuus [...] noted that the region 'has developed into a true brand name as a film location'. She justifies this by pointing out that Constantin has embraced Berlin talent, with whom they are making larger budget films than would have previously been possible within the region"<sup>75</sup> (2007). The influence of *Constantin* in the production of *Wir sind die Nacht* can be seen in that fact that the film received a wide cinema release domestically, where 300 prints were in circulation in the first week (Stosch: 2010). Furthermore, the film has gone on to be shown at international festivals and be released on DVD in several other countries, including the USA and UK. Such a global release strategy is in no doubt partly due to the film having an internationally minded production company attached, who knew how best to make use of the film's vampire genre credentials. Therefore, as *Wir sind die Nacht* demonstrates, by having contemporary Berlin increasingly used as a location in *Constantin's* films, the wider reputation of Berlin's film industry benefits both from the prestige that being associated with such a company brings and the wider exposure *Constantin* produced films traditionally enjoy.

#### *Wir sind die Nacht as an Innovative Piece of Berlin Cinema*

As well as *Wir sind die Nacht's* production background, the newspaper coverage surrounding the film also helped to further nuance the reputation of Berlin. In particular, the reports on the film which emerged in the German press in the run up to the film's release highlight *Wir sind die Nacht's* strong relationship to the city and by doing so reflect the wider marketing of *Wir sind die Nacht* as an archetypal contemporary Berlin film. This is seen in Christoph Spangenberg's article on the film for *Der Tagesspiegel*, which combines an interview with Gansel on the production of the film with a wider review of the finished piece. As Gansel is quoted as saying in the interview; "Without Berlin the film would not have been possible"<sup>76</sup>, an attitude he further explains by stating that the city "[...] offers

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<sup>75</sup> Kirsten Niehuus [...] stellte fest, dass die Region 'als Flimstandort zu einer echten Marke geworden ist.' Diese, so ihre Begründung, sieht man an der Umarmung der Constantin von Berliner Talenten, mit denen Sie höher budgetierte Filme herstellen, als aus der Region heraus möglich wäre

<sup>76</sup> Ohne Berlin wäre der Film nicht möglich gewesen

incredible locations”<sup>77</sup> and it was for this reason he was determined to make a strongly Berlin-based film. This approach results in a relationship between the film and the city which sees, as Spangenberg then goes on to say; “Gansel takes his audiences on a short trip through the city”<sup>78</sup> (2010). Indeed, Gansel’s refusal to make the film in another city was covered by many of the articles which emerged about the film, also featuring, for example, in pieces by Peter Zander (*Die Welt*: 2010) and Jessica Braun (*Der Zeit*: 2010). Therefore, the film and the city become entwined in the critical coverage of *Wir sind die Nacht*, a link which also demonstrates that it is not just through the film’s visual narrative, but also through the wider production and promotion of the film, that the image of Berlin in cinema is developed.

Furthermore, numerous journalists drew parallels between the film’s vampire aesthetic and the wider international renaissance which this genre has enjoyed following the success of the *Twilight* film series; *Twilight* (Catherine Hardwicke, 2008), *New Moon* (Chris Weitz, 2009), *Eclipse* (David Slade, 2010), *Breaking Dawn Part 1* (Bill Condon, 2011) and *Breaking Dawn Part 2* (Bill Condon, 2012) (Spangenberg: 2010, Zander: 2010). Still, these reviewers also pointed out that, rather than being a formulaic German-language homage to the *Twilight* trend, *Wir sind die Nacht* added its own Berlin-based spin to concepts of the modern-day vampire movie. As Zander writes; “But now, in the middle of the boom from Stephenie Meyer’s *Twilight* books and films, and all of the following TV series (*True Blood*, *Moonlight*, *Vampire Diaries*), a German director has once again made a vampire film. And more than that: He saves the genre from bleeding out, he gives it back what all of the young teen productions painfully were lacking”<sup>79</sup> (2010). Such a reaction was in stark contrast to the traditional view of post-unification populist filmmaking amongst the country’s journalists, who had, as Jenni Zylka writes, previously defined this style of filmmaking as a poor imitation of Hollywood (*Der Tagesspiegel*: 2010). Hence, certain critics championed *Wir sind die Nacht* as an example of how contemporary genre filmmaking could be executed successfully by German filmmakers. As Ole Reißmann argues; “‘Wir sind die Nacht’ subverts the genre rules with notable confidence and can even demonstrate several action scenes worthy of Hollywood [...] What does that mean for

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<sup>77</sup> [...] bietet unfassbare Locations

<sup>78</sup> Gansel nimmt seine Zuschauer mit auf einen Kurztrip durch die Stadt

<sup>79</sup> Jetzt aber, mitten im Boom von Stephenie Meyers ‘*Twilight*/Bis(s)-‘ Büchern und Filmen und alle den nachfolgenden TV-Serien (‘*True Blood*’, ‘*Moonlight*’, ‘*Vampire Diaries*’) hat erstmals wieder ein deutscher Regisseur einen Vampirfilm gedreht. Und mehr als das: Er rettet das Genre vor seiner Ausblutung, er gibt ihm das zurück, was alle die jüngeren Teenie-Produktionen schmerzlich vermissen ließen

genre films from Germany – it can be done well”<sup>80</sup> (*Der Spiegel*: 2010). Consequently, the promotion of *Wir sind die Nacht* serves to place Berlin’s production environment within a wider, internationally popular genre, which reaffirms the city’s new found status as a global film hotspot. Yet, in addition, by being perceived by journalists as a film which avoids the clichés associated with the recent *Twilight*-led trend, *Wir sind die Nacht* comes to be seen as a piece of inventive cinema.

As the film is also viewed as a quintessential Berlin film, such a viewpoint in turn influences ideas surrounding Berlin’s film industry as a whole, with the city not only cast as part of the global system of filmmaking, but also a place where this system is being challenged and reworked in unique ways. As was seen in Chapter 1, the MBB actively promotes Berlin as a cutting edge centre of film production, which is now the number one film location in Germany. This is because such a reputation makes the city an attractive place for both film executives looking for a place to shoot a movie and members of the creative class who favour locations with an innovative ‘buzz’, believing these locations are best placed to provide them with the freedom they need to reach their full creative potential. Therefore, the reaction of the German critics towards Gansel’s take on the vampire genre in *Wir sind die Nacht* helps to support and disseminate a view in line with the marketing efforts of the city’s film industry. Yet, although *Wir sind die Nacht*’s inventive use of the tropes of the vampire genre may indorse the industrial reputation of Berlin’s production environment, these characters remain dangerous, blood-thirsty killers, and so I now turn to a more detailed examination of the impact which the presence of such protagonists within Berlin has on the wider construction of the city found in *Wir sind die Nacht*.

### *Vampires in Cinema*

The presence of vampires within the film’s version of Berlin’s industry-insider milieu is central to understanding *Wir sind die Nacht*’s wider critique of contemporary Berlin. Therefore, before moving on to look at the engagement with Berlin in the film itself, it is important to first understand the role vampires have come to play in cinema more generally. Film has a long held obsession with vampires, with productions repeatedly drawing on vampire folklore to scare their audiences. Yet, alongside their potential to induce terror, the deeper metaphorical meaning contained within the figure of the vampire

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<sup>80</sup> Bemerkenswert souverän setzt ‘Wir sind die Nacht’ die Genreregeln um und kann sogar einige Hollywood-taugliche Actionszene vorweisen [...] Was bedeutet Genrefilme aus Deutschland – das kann gutgehen

has also been explored by vampire genre films to add narrative depth to their stories. This is largely due to, as Erik Butler contests, the fact that; “[...] the vampire fulfils Freud’s definition of the uncanny: the vampire combines the known and the unknown, the home and the world outside, and the familiar and the strange” (2003: 2). The vampire’s uncanny characteristics come from the fact that, unlike other, more animalistic, monsters that are also found within the horror genre, vampires look and act like humans, yet their blood thirsty desires set them apart from what is understood as normal human behaviour. Consequently, cinematic vampires have often been used for their humanlike ‘otherness’ where they may resemble the other characters in the film in looks, but their abnormal behaviour places them outside of normal society. The metaphorical potential of the vampire’s abnormal otherness has meant that such characters have been employed by films as a way of introducing wider societal issues into their narrative. As Joan Gordon and Veronica Hollinger argue; “The figure of the vampire, as metaphor, can tell us about sexuality, of course, and about power; it can also inscribe more specific contemporary concerns” (1997: 3). Therefore, an exploration into the manner in which this vampiric otherness is deployed is an essential part of any reading of a vampire film.

A closer inspection of the canon of vampire genre films shows that such an allegorical use of the vampire has long been a feature of German cinema, as one of the first films to ever include a vampire character was the German expressionist film *Nosferatu* (F.W. Murnau, 1922), a production which was also filmed in Berlin. As Ken Gelder discusses, the film explores ideas of vampiric otherness by playing heavily on its vampire character, Count Orlok’s (Max Schrek), Jewish appearance. Such a technique serves to place Count Orlok’s otherness firmly within concepts of race, and so the film covertly engages with the growing anti-Semitic feelings which were present in Germany at the time through the figure of the vampire (1994: 96-97). Count Orlok’s primary purpose may be to act as the film’s villain, but the way that his vampiric otherness is then developed to add depth to *Nosferatu*’s wider critique on Weimar society laid a platform which subsequent vampire films built upon.

Following the success of films such as *Nosferatu* and the early sound film *Dracula* (Tod Browning, 1931), the vampire became a staple of the horror genre and, whilst the deeper meaning of the vampire’s otherness was different in each film, as society’s own fears and problems evolved and altered over time, the metaphoric potential of the vampire remained central to these characters use within cinema. Yet, as the vampire was usually the villain of the film, and, therefore, something that the main characters had to overcome

and defeat, this meant that the wider societal issues which the vampire represented also came to be vilified. This was in part due to the fact that vampire genre narratives within cinema mainly made use of two key literary texts for the basis of their tales, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) and Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872), as both these stories had narratives that told of mortal humans overcoming the threat of vampires.

However, although cinema focussed on a small number of literary texts for inspiration, the depiction of the vampire more broadly within literature had begun to evolve. As Milly Williamson writes; "There is a long history of vampire fiction in which the vampire is sympathetically constructed; a reluctant symbol of evil whose innocence is hidden by the very fact its body is seen to be the essence of evil" (2005: 2). This more sympathetic construction of the vampire became ever more popular in literature following the success of Anne Rice's novel *Interview with the Vampire* (1976). This novel made the vampire the narrator of the piece, with the book telling the life story of a vampire called Louis and, in particular, the relationship he has with another male vampire called Lestat. This shift in narrative focus onto the vampire as protagonist allowed the vampire's otherness to be explored in a more well-rounded and considered way. Readers got to know more about the vampires' back-story, their motivations and their struggle to come to terms with their desire for blood; an approach to the vampire's characterisation which cinema's initial insistence on using the vampire as the villain did not allow.

Considering the vampire genre films' fondness for literary adaptations, it should not be a surprise that the success of *Interview with the Vampire* also heralded a change in strategy towards vampires within cinema, with an adaptation of Rice's novel being one of the first films to signal a modification in the way cinema depicted its vampires. In Neil Jordan's 1994 adaptation, a similar narrative setup to the novel is used, with Louis (Brad Pitt) acting as the film's narrator, as he tells of his transformation and subsequent turbulent relationship with Lestat (Tom Cruise). As Harry M. Benshoff argues, such a narrative approach allows the film to explore issues of homosexuality, but, by having such a relationship at the centre of the narrative, the film was able to offer a more detailed and sympathetic discussion of the changing perceptions towards such a lifestyle than would have been possible had Louis and Lestat been cast simply as the film's villains (1997: 271). Homosexuality itself was not a new concept for vampire films, with, for example, many of the *Carmilla* adaptations, such as *The Vampire Lovers* (Roy Ward Baker, 1970), offering a villainously negative portrayal of same-sex relationships. However, *Interview with the*

*Vampire* signalled a change in the depiction of the vampire's otherness, where such sexual differences were no longer seen as a binary negative presence.

The trend begun by films such as *Interview with the Vampire* has continued into the present day, as the otherness of the cinematic vampire is now more sympathetically foregrounded within many films' narratives. This is illustrated by the recent *Twilight* series of films, with these films using the centrality of their vampire characters to offer a discussion on teenage sexuality. Yet, as was touched upon above, although films like *Wir sind die Nacht* are in no doubt part of the *Twilight*-led renaissance enjoyed by the vampire genre, in many ways European cinema has chosen a different approach to its vampire films. Whilst the vampires in *Twilight*, as well as in American television shows, such as *True Blood*, hide away in the forests and small towns of North America, in European films such as Timur Bekmambetov's *Night Watch* (2004), Tomas Alfredson's *Let the Right One In* (2008) and Neil Jordan's UK-set return to the genre *Byzantium* (2012), the vampires roam the continent's conurbations. Although these films' still use their vampires' otherness to discuss similar topics to the *Twilight* films, such as sexuality and the nuclear family, their differing approach to the setting of their contemporary vampire tales causes these European vampires to also become part of a wider discussion surrounding the changing urban landscape across Europe. The present-day European vampire film is one that revels in the threat posed by urban vampires, and so it is a trend which offers a potentially fruitful root of investigation for anyone interested in the role of cities within cultural representations of present day Europe, a field within which this study is of course firmly located.

As nearly all the main protagonists are vampires in *Wir sind die Nacht*, the film is strongly aligned to this more contemporary use of such characters within cinema, with the presence of the vampires within Berlin being used in a way that allows the allegorical potential of these characters' vampiric otherness to bring greater depth to the film's exploration of the city. Nevertheless, alongside this, as the film's vampire clan are all young (at least in appearance), sexually liberated females, the way the film engages with its vampire characters offers a number of potential routes of investigation, with a reading focussing on, for example, gender and sexuality being one of the most obvious. However, to begin to engage with such debates would detract from my wider discussion on the role of the city in the film. As a result, for the purposes of this chapter it is the way that the film uses these characters' vampiric otherness to both critique and develop the MBB's vision of media Berlin that is at the heart of the analysis that follows.



### *Berlin as a Creative, Hedonistic City*

Much like the other industry-insider films, *Wir sind die Nacht* constructs a version of Berlin which fits with many of the ideas found within the media Berlin brand. The image of daily life that the film engages with is strongly linked to the MBB's promotion of a young, fashionable, creative Berlin. The vampires are shown to be leading figures within the city's creative class, with Nora being a DJ and Charlotte an actress. Equally, the urban space within which the vampires operate is aligned to the view of Berlin as a hedonistic city with a 'buzz'. Skyline shots of the city litter *Wir sind die Nacht*, depicting the city both during the day and at night. As was argued above, the use of such shots within the industry-insider films has come to define the Berlin which these films explore as a 24 hour city, which both works hard and parties hard, and *Wir sind die Nacht* very much prescribes to such an image of Berlin.

Moreover, the film does not use the city as a microcosm for any wider concepts of contemporary Germany, as was the tendency in the *Baustelle* films. Instead, *Wir sind die Nacht* continues the trend seen in other contemporary industry-insider films of constructing the normalised city as a separate and distinct regional entity. Whilst the vampires at the start of the film are shown to be returning from a trip to Paris, the other regions in Germany in comparison are ignored by the narrative. In fact, the city's separation from the rest of the country is such that, when the police raid the vampires' hotel towards the end of the film, threatening them with capture, rather than fleeing into the surrounding countryside, or to some remote part of Germany, the vampires plan to move to Moscow. Just like in the depiction of the city in both *Offroad* and *Im weißen Rössl – Wehe, du singst!*, *Wir sind die Nacht's* Berlin is shown to be a city which has broken out of its national confines and taken its place within an international network of locations, with the city's inhabitants feeling like they have more in common with societies in other global cities than with the rest of Germany. Consequently, the construction of Berlin in the film strengthens the MBB's claim that Berlin is now a distinct global region.

Given eastern Berlin's recent past, and the close ties which this part of the city had to the Soviet Union, the fact that the vampires now feel they have to travel to Eastern Europe to find safety also highlights the changes which have been seen in Berlin since the fall of the Wall. The city's post-unification transformation has enabled East Berlin to leave behind the reputation, seen for example in the espionage films of the 1960s, of being an underdeveloped communist outpost and firmly shift towards the ideals of Western Europe. Although the gaze of the film wanders across the city, the camera constantly returns to

Alexanderplatz, with the *Fernsehturm* dominating the skyline shots found in *Wir sind die Nacht*. Therefore, like many industry-insider films, *Wir sind die Nacht* champions the redevelopment of eastern Berlin into a functioning part of Berlin's renovated, capitalist urban space, with the area in and around Alexanderplatz now acting as the epicentre for much of the activity found within the city's media dominated society.

This transformed nature of the city's urban space is also evident in the vampires' decision to take refuge in the abandoned *Teufelsberg* radio station in West Berlin before they leave the city for Moscow. The vampires are no longer able to blend into Berlin, as their otherness cannot be hidden in the modern-day city's urban space. Therefore, their need for a secure, empty building to hide out in takes them all the way out of Berlin and into the Grunewald at the city's western edge. However, as Charlotte states at one point, the vampires have never been very good at cleaning up after themselves. It is just that, in previous periods of Berlin's history, the city's disjointed nature meant that Berlin's centre was full of empty buildings which were ideal for the vampires' needs. During the *Baustelle* period this was particularly true of East Berlin but, as the city's urban space emerges from its post-unification period of rebuilding, such vacant buildings have either been knocked down or are now occupied, which means that the vampires are forced out of the normalised urban space of the centre and into the city's periphery. The derelict *Teufelsberg* is in many ways the last bastion of both Berlin's Cold War past and the city's *Baustelle* redevelopment, which means that it is the only place that is now safe for the abnormal activities of the vampires within the city.

As was seen above, the city played a central role in the planning and development of *Wir sind die Nacht*, with the film's production team purposefully setting out to engage with real Berlin locations, in order to present an image of the city that is strongly aligned to the reality of contemporary Berlin. In particular, as Becker goes on to discuss in the film's 'Making of' documentary, the impression which the production team were trying to recreate was one of a city that has been transformed into an international metropolis. However, whilst locations such as Alexanderplatz are an important part of this approach, Becker also states that the team wanted to steer clear of the parts of Berlin which had already been found in the industry-insider films and engage with other areas of the city that had not yet been incorporated into Berlin's contemporary cinematic topography (Momentum Pictures: 2012). Therefore, whilst the production team's overall vision for Berlin may fit with the MBB's claims surrounding Berlin's newly transformed status as an international creative hub, by looking for an alternative Berlin image to the one that had

previously existed in the collective imagination, the film offers a fresh perspective to further aid and expand cinema-goers understanding of the type of the city which Berlin has developed into and what buildings etc. exist within its modern-day, unified topography.

This can be seen through the way the film engages with locations such as *Cumberland Haus*, which is used as the hotel that the vampires live in and is found on the western edge of the city centre, close to the *Messe Berlin*<sup>81</sup>. At the time of filming *Cumberland Haus* was in the final stages of undergoing a renovation that was transforming this location from an abandoned building into a luxury shopping and hotel complex, and so the decision to incorporate this particular building into the film is an interesting one. The renovation of *Cumberland Haus* mirrors Berlin's own post-unification regeneration and development, which means that the building's use in the film acts as a symbol for the move towards a more luxurious and globalised lifestyle within Berlin society as a whole. Yet, the choice of a location in western Berlin is also a noticeable departure from the manner in which such upmarket locations are incorporated into the majority of the other industry-insider films. Productions such as *Keinohrhasen* steadfastly focus on the more established upmarket locations found in the heart of Berlin around the *Brandenburger Tor* and *Potsdamer Platz*. Therefore, by avoiding these locations, *Wir sind die Nacht* adds greater depth to understandings of Berlin's newly renovated topography. The film demonstrates how this more exclusive lifestyle is not just confined to specific central locations in Berlin and is spreading across the city, into a vast array of different sites and districts.

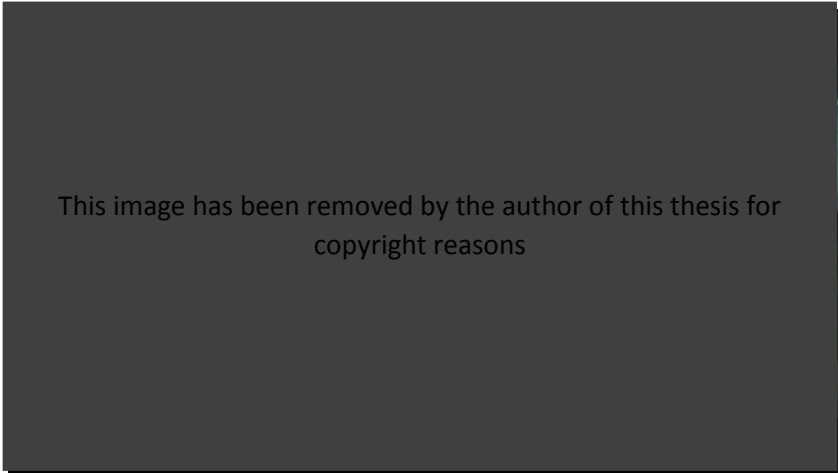
#### *The Vampiric Nature of Berlin's Club Scene*

The urban space of Berlin is not the only element of *Wir sind die Nacht's* narrative which symbolises the city's recent redevelopment. Lena's own transformation from mortal young woman into undead vampire in the first part of the film reflects that of post-unification Berlin, as the city leaves its troubled *Baustelle* adolescence behind and enters a more glamorous and stable period of maturity. This connection is demonstrated concretely in the film when we learn from Lena's police record that she was born only a few months before the fall of the Wall. Yet, initially it would seem that Lena is far more aligned to *Baustelle* Berlin, as she resembles the image of the gritty, troubled city which the proponents of contemporary Berlin's normalisation want to move on from. Not only is Lena a petty thief with a criminal past, but she also shuns any form of feminine glamour, in favour of a short tom-boy haircut and grubby ill-fitting clothes. To make matters worse, she lives in an


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<sup>81</sup> Berlin Exhibition Centre

unfashionable concrete high rise in a part of the city's suburbs that is far removed from the industry-insider films' usual hangouts in the renovated city centre. However, as Figure 13 demonstrates, after Louise bites her, Lena undergoes a drastic visual, as well as metaphysical, transformation, in order to become part of the vampires' luxurious lifestyle. Her tom-boy image, tattoos and piercing are literally cleansed away and replaced by long flowing hair, a glowing clean complexion and fashionable designer clothes. In the film all it takes to complete Lena's transformation from abnormal outcast to part of the globalised elite is a hot bath and a new outfit, but through this makeover Lena's entry into the vampires' world comes to symbolise Berlin and the choices that exist for society now the city has discovered a newly normalised status.



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*Figure 13: Lena's transformation from tom-boy to glamorous vampire*

Lena's entry into the vampire clan leaves her at a junction. To fully embrace the hedonistic, global lifestyle of the vampires would mean leaving behind her family and the ordinary way of life she knows in Berlin, as well as turning her back on the potential true love she has found with Tom. Yet, to reject the vampires would mean that she would also lose her position within the seductive world they occupy, forcing her to return to her more

mundane existence in the city, a life which seemingly had few prospects. Therefore, the narrative arc followed by Lena in *Wir sind die Nacht* builds on her symbolic link to the post-unification city to reflect the challenges facing Berlin society more generally. The desire of leading city agencies, such as the MBB, may be for Berlin to become an accepted part of a wider international network of locations, but through such a development the city risks losing its own regional personality, as Berlin becomes another faceless and hollow global location. Yet equally, if the city's inhabitants were to shun Berlin's growing globalised outlook completely, the city's potential as an international hub would be limited. This would then make Berlin less attractive for the footloose businesses of the knowledge economy, as well as the global creative class who rely on such organisations for employment, a consequence which in turn would have massive economic implications for everyone in the city.

In order to explore and analyse this conundrum further, *Wir sind die Nacht* makes use of the potential offered by the fact that the film's version of Berlin is centred on the city's famous nightlife, a part of city life that also acts as a cornerstone to the MBB's marketing campaigns. Much like in many of the other industry-insider films, the film makes use of a 'squatter chic' style in those scenes set in the city's bars and clubs. This is evident early in the film, as we are introduced to Berlin's nightlife when Lena accidentally comes across the vampires' club whilst aimlessly roaming the streets of the city at night. Initially, she seems to have discovered an illegal rave, much like the ones that *Baustelle* Berlin became famous for. She sees people climbing through a gap in a fence to enter and, when she follows, she finds herself in the derelict and abandoned *Spreepark* theme park. As Gansel's idea for *Wir sind die Nacht* was inspired by his experiences of Berlin's nightlife in the 1990s, it should perhaps be no surprise that there is a strong nostalgia for Berlin's *Spaßgesellschaft* in the film's initial engagement with present-day Berlin's club scene. Yet, as Lena ventures further into the club itself, it soon becomes clear that what she has discovered is something more permanent and well organised than an illegal rave happening in an abandoned theme park. The main part of the club is revealed to be intact and there is a fully functioning, fashionably styled bar, which is serving champagne and branded drinks, a feature that is most obvious in the product placement of *Red Bull* ice buckets within this scene. Consequently, rather than stumbling across an illegal rave, the club that Lena finds herself in would appear to be one of the many 'squatter chic' entertainment locales of the contemporary city's mainstream nightlife.

However, the way that *Wir sind die Nacht* aligns such a style with its vampire characters means that the film is able to deploy the allegorical potential associated with vampiric otherness to further deepen the critique which is found within the use of an ahistorical 'squatter chic' aesthetic in the other industry-insider films. In the film it is Louise who decides who gains entry to the vampires' club, whilst it is also through her bite that Lena acquires access to the luxurious world which the vampires operate in, an uncanny setup which is further strengthened by the fact that none of the human employees or patrons of Berlin's nightlife are even acknowledged by the film. Therefore, as it is the blood-thirsty vampires who control entry into this hedonistic world, the film's depiction of the city's party scene takes on a somewhat menacing personality.

Interestingly, the idea that media Berlin contains an uncanny otherness is one which has also been used more generally by those who have criticised the gentrified development of Berlin. For example, in December 2014 the street artist Lutz Henke painted over his famous graffiti mural in Kreuzberg, which depicted a businessman chained together by his watch strap. However, in an article for *The Guardian* explaining his decision, Henke states that his motivation for this act of self-vandalism was due to the fact that present-day Berlin is no longer the haven for creative expression it once was. Instead, he argues; "Because it needs its artistic brand to remain attractive, [Berlin society] tends to artificially reanimate the creativity it has displaced, thus producing an 'undead city'. This zombification is threatening to turn Berlin into a museal city of veneers, the 'art-scene' preserved as an amusement park for those who can afford the rising rent" (2014). The city's decision makers, such as the MBB, may cling to the creative cachet developed in the squats of the *Baustelle* city to give contemporary Berlin a fashionable 'buzz', but under the surface the city has become a gentrified 'squatter chic' location, occupied by media elites, rather than experimental artists. *Wir sind die Nacht* may deal with vampires, not zombies, but the film offers a filmic exploration of this 'zombification' of the city's urban space and its hedonistic society. Therefore, whilst the majority of the industry-insider films make reference to a 'squatter chic' style, the murderous threat posed by the pleasure-seeking vampiric 'others' in *Wir sind die Nacht* offers a metaphorical embodiment of the problems of commodification and superficiality depicted throughout these films' engagement with the gentrified world of media Berlin.

In addition, although their way of life centres of the city's nightspots, the vampires are not just confined to Berlin's club scene, but are shown to be enjoying the full array of amenities now offered by Berlin's newly transformed urban space. They live a hedonistic

and frivolous life, visiting the city's most exclusive shops, eating in the best restaurants and staying in the most expensive hotels, all of which is done whilst wearing a glamorous wardrobe of designer clothing. As a result, the vampires come to be the very definition of the aspirational, global, luxury lifestyle that many in contemporary, pleasure-seeking Berlin are striving for. As Nora states at one point; "We can gorge on food, get drunk, take coke and screw around as much as we want and never again become fat, pregnant or addicted"<sup>82</sup>. However, alongside this, the vampires are shown to be killing for blood in the same light-hearted manner with which they shop for clothes and party. As Figure 14 illustrates, this can be seen through the contrast which the film offers between images of Berlin partygoers downing shots and taking cocaine and the vampires' consumption of blood, which at varying points in the film is also drunk from shot glasses and snorted from tables. The film's version of media Berlin and its vampire characters are inseparable in the narrative, which means that *Wir sind die Nacht* shows the immortality of vampirism to be the height of Berlin's consumerist lifestyle, as you can indulge in anything you want to and never feel any negative effects.

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<sup>82</sup> Wir fressen, saufen, koksen und vögeln so viel wie wir wollen und werden nie wieder fett, schwanger oder süchtig

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Figure 14: *The mortal consumption of alcohol (Top) and the vampiric consumption of blood (Bottom)*

Consequently, the vampiric undertones associated with these characters' hedonism illustrates the growing commodification of Berlin's nightlife and the dangers which the presence of such a superficial attitude now poses to contemporary Berlin. The city's hedonistic nightlife may have been a feature of Berlin cinema since the Weimar period, but the role this nightlife has played in society has changed over time. For most of Berlin's cinematic history, entry into this part of society was shown to be a dangerous and destructive threat for average Berliners. This was evident, in the seduction of Albert (Gustav Fröhlich) by Else (Betty Amann) in *Asphalt* (Joe May, 1929) or in teenage Christiane's (Natja Brunckhorst) descent into drug addiction and prostitution in *Christiane F.* Yet, during the *Baustelle* period this point of view was reversed, as entry into the world of the *Spaßgesellschaft* was shown in films such as *Chill Out* to be a positive development, as it was this section of society who were best placed to navigate Berlin's fractured urban space. The MBB may still look to positively privilege such hedonism in its marketing of the city, but the vampiric otherness of the modern-day pleasure seeking world of media Berlin



in *Wir sind die Nacht* means that the city's nightlife is once again cast as an abnormal and unsafe feature within cinema. The film highlights that Berlin's contemporary party lifestyle has become an ahistorical, unfulfilling, commoditised element within the city's globalised society, which means that, much like the film's vampires, who prey on the city's security guards and bellboys, the hedonism of media Berlin is a dangerous threat to the more everyday reality found outside of this section of society within the city.

#### *Berlin's Selective Relationship to the Past*

Equally, it is not just through the use of a 'squatter chic' aesthetic for the city's nightlife that the film directly engages with Berlin's history and the ahistorical appropriation of this past in the present. All of the vampires may be native Berliners but their historical origins differ, as they were each converted into a vampire at different times. Louise is the oldest in the group, originating from Berlin's Prussian Court, whilst Charlotte is a Weimar actress and Nora a Love Parade raver. Therefore, the manner in which *Wir sind die Nacht* engages with the varied history of the group offers a useful insight into the relationship which exists between contemporary Berlin and the city's hedonistic past. The importance of this discussion to the film's wider construction of media Berlin can be seen in the fact that the film opens with a photographic montage that acts as an introduction to the vampire clan's historical development. These photographs start in the present day and flow backwards, until the photographs are replaced with paintings from the Prussian court. In each of the images the vampire clan are shown, with the manner in which this sequence is constructed drawing on the much discussed concept of Berlin as a palimpsest of history (see Huyssen: 2003). By starting in the present and fading backwards, the opening titles are literally peeling away the layers of history that have built up in the city over time, which means that these photographs act as not just an introduction to the vampires, but to the history of the city itself.

What is particularly interesting about the choice of images in the opening titles is the way that they construct a selective history for the city which completely avoids any overt depiction of either the Nazis or the time of division, with apolitical images of the vampires at a 1950s dance and a newspaper headline declaring the end of the Second World War being shown instead. As was seen in Chapter 2, ever since the demise of Hitler, the image of Berlin as either the capital of the Nazis or as a divided Cold War city has dominated the representation of the city in cinema. Indeed, as Taberner was quoted in my introduction as arguing, it was finally coming to terms with the legacy of this tumultuous

history that was at the centre of the normalisation process seen in both Berlin's urban space and the city's wider society during the *Baustelle* period (2005a: xiv). Consequently, by omitting these more controversial moments from the film's photographic palimpsest of the city, *Wir sind die Nacht* demonstrates that, although contemporary Berlin may be underpinned by its history, society is now ready to move on from Berlin's identity as either a Nazi capital or divided city, and into a period where Berlin's contemporary identity is able to redefine understandings of the city, away from the problematic legacy of these periods.

The opening titles may lay the foundations for such a redefinition, but the film continues to make reference to the city's past throughout its narrative. Specifically, these references construct a history for the city that is strongly rooted in the 1920s, a period which saw Berlin heralded as a modern, international, creative capital of amusement and innovation. Thus, Charlotte's origins as a Weimar actress are complemented by other, more subtle references to the city's cinema from this period, for example, through the fact that Lena and Tom's relationship mimics that between the policeman Albert and petty thief Else in *Asphalt*. As Taberner argues, this retrospective look towards the Weimar period has been prevalent more generally across recent Berlin-set cinema, particularly in those films with a historical narrative. For example, films such as *Rosenstraße* (Margarethe von Trotta, 2003) have referenced the Weimar period to positively reposition Jewish identity on screen (2005b: 358). Accordingly, it would seem that *Wir sind die Nacht* is mirroring a wider trend within cinema which purposefully engages with a pre-Nazi history. Yet, significantly, the specific historical references found in the film privilege Berlin's reputation as both a leading cinematic hub and a centre of international hedonism, a historical viewpoint of Berlin which also helps to ground the MBB's claims surrounding the contemporary qualities of media Berlin.

This cinematic approach reflects the strategy seen across Berlin's recent development, as the city's decision makers have increasingly looked to reconnect to the period before the rise of Hitler and the subsequent problems of division. This is because, as Will Self argues; "[...] it would make sense for the Berliners to [look to the city's hedonistic past], because sex and drugs take us right back to the comparatively harmless decadence of the Weimar Republic, rather than letting us dwell on the more unsavoury decades between 1933 and 1989" (*The Guardian*: 2014). In fact, as Dereck Scally writes, in terms of Berlin, this viewpoint is so prevalent that; "The city famed for its edgy atmosphere and historical scars is now being retro-fitted with single-minded obsession [...] Whilst the rest of eastern Germany works hard to create a new future for itself, Germany's frustrating and compelling

capital has a new determination that its future should look like its lost past" (*Irish Times*: 2014). Nowhere is this attitude more obvious than in the decision to demolish the *Palast der Republik*<sup>83</sup>, a building which acted as the parliament building in East Germany, and replace this relic of division with a rebuilt version of the Prussian Palace, which had existed on the site before the War. This building project may mean that Berlin is losing a well-known part of the city's Cold War past but, as the city's former mayor Klaus Wowereit, is quoted as stating; "We are building something that got lost in the troubled history of this city" (Evans: *BBC News*: 2013). Consequently, *Wir sind die Nacht*'s engagement with Berlin's past constructs a history for the city which in part looks to make similar revisions to understandings of the historical foundations of present-day Berlin.

However, although the film champions Weimar flappers, Prussian courtesans, and Love Parade ravers over Nazis, as these characters are vampires, they are still dangerous murderers. Therefore, whilst Berlin society may now be looking to move on from the city's problematic Nazi history and into a more stable future, the film shows that there are problems with the way that this is being done. As Silke Arnold-de Simine states; "In order to ensure the potential participation of future generations, valuable memories that are supposed to endure have to be preserved by ritual and repetition or transferred into a material form" (2005: 11). The problem is that the ritual act through which the memories of Berlin's past are being memorialised in *Wir sind die Nacht* is vampirism, an act which, as Chris Homewood argues, demonises a subject and so excludes it from the mainstream (2006: 125). The film may draw its historical basis from periods that are all infamous moments of hedonistic enjoyment but, by vampirising this history, *Wir sind die Nacht* highlights the dangers that exist in the manner through which society is engaging with them.

This is most pertinent in the case of the Prussian and Weimar histories represented by Louise and Charlotte. Despite the fact that these periods lack the socially unacceptable and gruesome legacy of the Nazi period, the city was still never able to fully establish a stable existence during these moments. In fact, Prussian Berlin ultimately led to the First World War, whereas Weimar Berlin saw the rise of the Nazis. Therefore, these moments from Berlin's past still contributed to the city's history of abnormality. Yet, as the rebuilding of the Prussian Palace demonstrates, the more problematic parts of these histories are being largely forgotten in the present-day city, as society is selective in which elements of the past are remembered. Consequently, such selective commemoration

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<sup>83</sup> The Palace of the Republic

becomes a form of a rose-tinted nostalgia, a tactic which establishes a superficial, ahistorical base within contemporary Berlin society.

The problems associated with this selective use of history in the present is seen in the growing dissatisfaction which Charlotte feels throughout the film towards her vampiric way of life. She struggles with the superficiality of eternal life, as she increasingly misses elements from her old existence in 1920s Berlin. Charlotte may have been able to continue the pleasure-seeking life of excess she enjoyed in Weimar Berlin for decades longer than would have been mortally possible, but this hedonism is the only part of her former life in the city which she has been able to keep. When she was turned into a vampire, she was forced to leave behind her husband and daughter and it is this lack of a more mundane, everyday family life which is shown to be the biggest factor in Charlotte's dissatisfaction. Her transformation into a vampire has robbed her of the ups and downs of mortal existence, as the film illustrates that the hedonism of the vampires is not enough on its own for Charlotte to continue to lead a fulfilling existence. By over-privileging moments of great hedonism from Berlin's past, this history loses its wider context, and so fails to add any great critical meaning to the reality of the contemporary city. Instead, as *Wir sind die Nacht's* use of uncanny vampires rooted in the city's past demonstrates, the allusions to this history in the present becomes a hollow and commoditised part of the world of media Berlin, which poses an ahistorical threat for the city.

#### *A Battle for Dominance within Berlin*

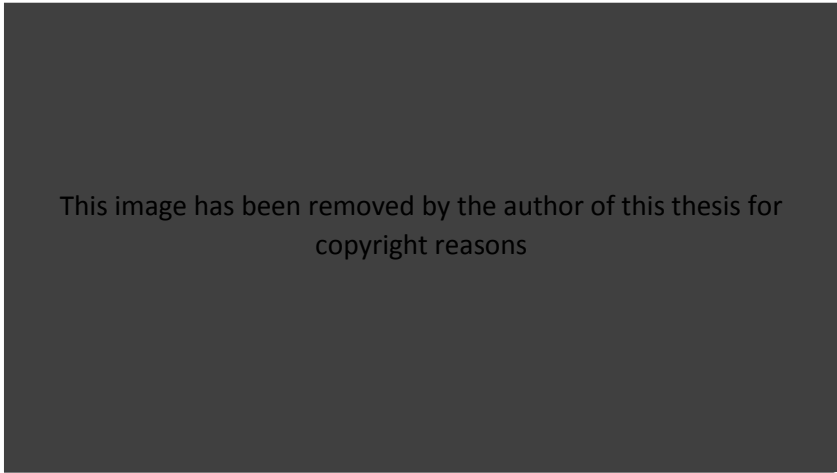
*Wir sind die Nacht's* Berlin may be dominated by ahistorical vampires but through the young Berlin policeman Tom the film offers a counterpoint to the vampires' superficial lifestyle. As was discussed above, many industry-insider films employ an alternative, non-media-centric character as a love interest in their narratives, such as Anna in *Keinohrhasen* and Lila in *Groupies bleiben nicht zum Frühstück*, with such characters offering a point of comparison to the shallowness encountered by the main protagonists in their interactions with Berlin's media world. However, the fact that Tom offers a mortal alternative to the eternal vampires for Lena means that his characterisation takes on added meaning. He encounters Lena shortly before her meeting with Louise and subsequent transformation into a vampire, when she is accidentally caught up in a police operation to arrest a Russian criminal, and he is instantly attracted to her, continuing to pursue her throughout the film.

Yet, during his pursuit, Tom is characterised as the complete antithesis of the vampire clan. His career is in no way linked to the city's knowledge economy, which means

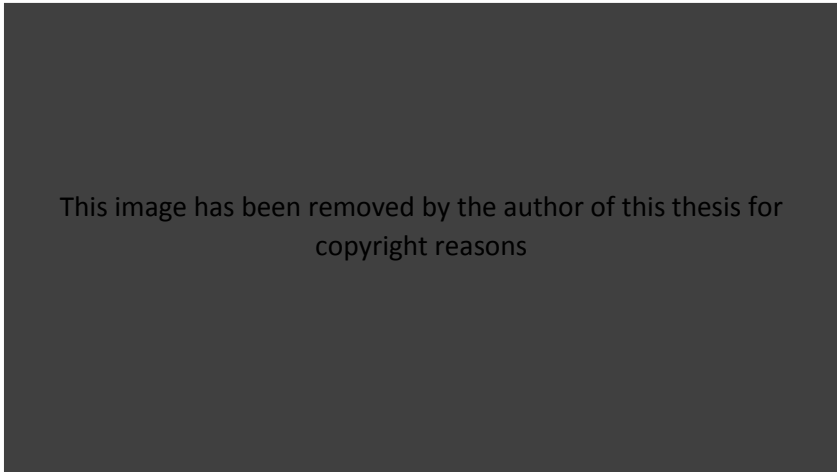
that, unlike the vampires, Tom does not take part in the film's version of the pleasure-seeking and shallow world of media Berlin. In fact, he is teased by his colleagues for lacking a life outside of work. Similarly, although Tom has found success as a policeman within the modern-day city, he lives in an apartment which has not been renovated. Therefore, his living arrangements are in stark contrast to the vampires' luxury hotel rooms, something which can be seen in the fact that his flat still contains the large old heaters that were a feature of many Berlin apartments following the fall of the Wall, but have since been ripped out in favour of more modern central heating. If the vampires act as an allegory for the inauthentic, globalised nature of media Berlin, Tom, therefore, represents the opposite extreme. He becomes a symbol for the 'other' Berlin, which may dominate the overall make-up of Berlin society, but is noticeably missing from the view of the city as a media hub found in the MBB's marketing campaigns. By resisting the pressure to conform to the hedonistic, media-centric world of the vampires, Tom maintains a more authentic link to both the city's past and its regional uniqueness, which means that, as can be seen in his choice of a career as a policeman, he is also a far more safe presence within the city. Therefore, like many of the industry-insider films, *Wir sind die Nacht* uses Lena's relationship with Tom to offer a *Heimat*-infused alternative to Berlin seductive media world.

These differing standpoints are epitomised in the comparison the film develops between Tom's pursuit of Lena and Louise's own desire to seduce her, a disparity which is evident in the bedroom scenes that both characters have with her. As Figure 15 shows, Louise is standing behind Lena in her scene, a position that both highlights the lack of any physical closeness in their relationship and illustrates that Louise is much taller than Lena, creating a power dynamic within the scene that causes Louise to take on a predatory position of control. In contrast to this, the scene between Tom and Lena sees the two framed side by side on the bed. Tom has his arms around Lena, as the two almost become one in the shot. Therefore, in comparison to the predatory Louise, Tom is depicted in a far more sympathetic way, and so by association his relationship to Lena is also shown to be more genuine and meaningful. Such a dynamic is highlighted in the first scene where all three characters are together. Tom persuades Lena to have coffee with him, yet Louise's jealousy of Tom's closeness to Lena causes her to follow the pair. Thus, as Lena is enjoying her coffee with Tom, she notices the shadow of Louise crouched high on the wall above them. Such a use of shadows to illustrate the dark threat posed by vampires was first seen

in *Nosferatu*, and so *Wir sind die Nacht* draws on the historical characterisation of the vampire in cinema to highlight the powerful danger which Louise poses.



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*Figure 15: The differing constructions of Lena's relationships with Louise (Top) and Tom (Bottom)*

Louise's predatory nature comes to a head towards the film's finale, as she looks to destroy the relationship between Lena and Tom, a turn of events which sees Tom cast not just as an alternative to, but as a victim of the vampires and the media world they have come to reflect. As was argued earlier, the way in which vampires terrorise society has long been used by cinema to explore societal issues, with the figure of the vampire traditionally representing a negative element in society, whilst their victims symbolise a more positive solution. Therefore, as Tom represents a non-media-centric alternative to the vampires, his victimisation at the hands of Louise comes to signify the manner in which elements of Berlin society not linked to the city's knowledge economy have been forgotten during the process of redefining Berlin's reputation worldwide. The underlying context found in the film's contrast of the hedonistic, but blood-thirsty, club owner with the love-sick policeman suggests that, although the MBB's media Berlin brand may positively promote Berlin as a

media hotspot full of young, creative people, such a view creates a limited snapshot of Berlin society, which results in a misleading reputation for the city.

The problem with such a strategy is that the city's policymakers' obsession with casting Berlin as a media hub has led to a fragmentation in contemporary Berlin. The city's 'cool' media world has been overly accentuated, and, as a result, has come to sit separately from the rest of Berlin society. As Oliver Stallwood writes, the privileged position enjoyed by Berlin's media professionals has led to tensions in the city between those young, fashionable, international members of the creative class, which the MBB has looked to attract, and the rest of the city's inhabitants. This clash can be seen in the protests that have marked the wider gentrification of Berlin districts such as Prenzlauer Berg and Kreuzberg, a process largely fuelled by professionals linked to the city's creative industries (*The Guardian*: 2012). Therefore, through the comparison of Louise and Tom, *Wir sind die Nacht* looks to redress this balance, by casting the forgotten elements of society as a more meaningful alternative to the superficial and inauthentic nature of media Berlin, a view which in turn begins to redefine the contemporary image of Berlin away from the one-dimensional, media-focussed reputation found within the MBB's brand.

However, Tom's link to the vampires is not just through Lena, but also through a police investigation into one of the clan's recent murders, which means that the struggle between him and Louise for Lena's affections only intensifies as the police close in on the vampires. As was mentioned above, this police operation culminates in a shootout at the vampire's hotel, which claims the life of Nora. Furthermore, following their discovery, Charlotte's growing despair with her eternal life leads her to kill herself, leaving Louise and Lena as the sole remaining vampires. For Lena, Charlotte's suicide also signals a turning point. She recognises that the shallow nature of the hedonistic, global lifestyle of the vampires comes at a price and she is no longer prepared to make this sacrifice. Therefore, she decides to turn her back on the vampiric way of life and the world of media Berlin in which the vampires operate. As a result, much like Niklas in *Männerherzen* and Ickarus in *Berlin Calling*, Lena discovers that success within Berlin's media society is not enough for a fulfilled and happy life, despite what the MBB's marketing campaigns may say.

The problem for Lena is that Louise refuses to allow her to escape, which means that she is forced into a battle to the death to save herself and Tom. Through this confrontation, *Wir sind die Nacht* suggests that, in order for Berlin to develop a contemporary reality which is both stable and fulfilling, the city's society equally needs to take stock of the growing influence of global media elites within Berlin and reengage with

the city's alternative, albeit less glamorous, elements. Such a view is strengthened by the fact that Lena defeats Louise, as in doing so Lena illustrates that Berlin society can similarly break free from the city's current superficial situation. Therefore, much like in the other industry-insider films, where, for example, Ludo finds happiness with Anna in *Keinohrhasen*, the union between Lena and Tom in *Wir sind die Nacht* can be seen as a union between the city's media world and other sections of Berlin society. Nevertheless, whilst the other vampires may now be dead, Lena is unable to change back into a human and Tom is left severely injured, which means that the couple's ultimate fate remains unclear. Consequently, by leaving the ending ambiguous, *Wir sind die Nacht* shows that this union between the two parts of Berlin society is far from a certain outcome for the city.

### **Conclusion**

The industry-insider films are a dominant feature of the production landscape of contemporary Berlin. Yet, although these films' narratives support certain elements of the MBB's marketing material, by showing Berlin to be a society controlled by young, fashionable members of the creative class, they also demonstrate the one-dimensional nature of such a view. Berlin's media world is shown to be a superficial presence in the city, with many of the professionals featured in these films finding their lives to be unfulfilling. Such a situation is epitomised by the vampire narrative of *Wir sind die Nacht*. The film uses the allegorical potential of the vampires' otherness to explore the problematic undercurrent which exists in the world of media Berlin. Throughout the course of the film, Lena goes from a gritty and unkempt petty criminal to a member of the city's glamorous, media-centric world, before realising that, in order to be happy, she cannot fully turn her back on the more everyday life she was leaving behind. Although the hedonistic life of the vampires may at first seem an appealing part of Berlin's tradition of global hedonism, the film uses these characters' otherness to highlight the ahistorical abnormality that is at the centre of Berlin's party scene, illustrating the wider risks involved for the city if society was to fully commit to such a hollow existence. However, this does not mean that the film advocates a wholehearted adoption of the alternative lifestyle represented by Tom. Instead, the ending of *Wir sind die Nacht*, much like many of the other industry-insider films, presents a compromise between the two elements of Berlin society. The film promotes a view of Berlin which sees society embrace parts of the city's media world, but does so without marginalising other identities which exist in Berlin. Therefore, ultimately the version of Berlin constructed by these industry-insider films is one which adds a more



nuanced and multi-layered viewpoint to ideas surrounding Berlin as a global media city, by showing the benefits and the problems created by such a development.

## Chapter 4: *Oh Boy* - The Alienating Reality of Berlin in Contemporary Drifter Films

### Introduction

The media-centric view of Berlin found in the industry-insider films may be one version of the city present within Berlin's cinematic output but the films dealt with in this chapter offer an alternative point of view. These films move away from exploring the lives of professionals enjoying successful careers in the city's knowledge economy. Instead, they investigate the reality facing many young people in the city, as these characters look to make the transition from child-like student to working adult. In order to achieve this, the narratives of these films draw on the figure of the drifter, a character which has haunted Berlin's cinema for decades. As was seen in Chapter 2, the drifter lifestyle has long been associated with a transient existence in the city, with characters roaming Berlin looking for a place to belong in films as diverse as *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (Piel Jutzi, 1931), *Taxi zum Klo* (*Taxi to the John*, Frank Ripplow, 1980) and *Berlin is in Germany* (Hannes Stöhr, 2001). Therefore, the films analysed in this chapter are firmly indebted to these historical incarnations of the drifter.

Yet, within the context of present-day Berlin, the continued presence of this drifter figure in cinema would seem to go against the image of the city as a normalised location agencies such as the MBB are looking to promote. These films' version of Berlin may show a city which has moved beyond the *Baustelle* period to become a busy capital, but they also demonstrate that there are still elements of Berlin society who are living a more transient existence. The disjuncture this situation creates is shown to be problematic, especially for young people, who are feeling increasingly alienated from the city around them. This is evident in the way in which several of the drifter films engage with Berlin's media world. As was the case with the careers of characters in the industry-insider films, we find DJs in *Berlin am Meer* (*Berlin by the Sea*, Wolfgang Eissler, 2008), actors and performers in *Staub auf unseren Herzen* (*Dust on our Hearts*, Hanna Doose, 2012), and photographers and graphic designers in *3 Zimmer/Küche/Bad* (*Move*, Dietrich Brüggemann, 2012). However, these young protagonists' search for a place to belong is often tied up with their struggle to gain entry into Berlin's media world and the career progression and financial gains it offers. As a result, instead of the executives and managers of the industry-insider films, we find interns, entry level workers, and unemployed artists. Superficially, these young people may seem to be the epitome of the young creatives which the MBB is looking to attract to the city through the media Berlin brand. Yet, in reality these protagonists find themselves

marginalised by the city's media elites. Furthermore, this view is then complemented by other films, such as *Am Himmel der Tag* (*Breaking Horizons*, Pola Beck, 2012), *Shahada* (Burhan Qurbani, 2010) and *Die Fremde* (*When We Leave*, Feo Aladag 2010), which show that this growing feeling of youthful disenfranchisement is not just confined to those young people directly engaged with Berlin's media society. Through this multi-dimensional depiction of life for young people in the city, the drifter films add a different layer of understanding to the image of Berlin found within cinema, developing a view which is starkly different from the MBB's economically motivated claims that the city is a youthful hub for the creative class.

Therefore, in the analysis which follows I look to ascertain the impact which such a construction of the city has on ideas surrounding Berlin as a global media city. I will begin by looking at the drifter films in general, as I explore the way these films construct Berlin and the links this has to images found within the media Berlin brand. I will then build on this analysis in the second half of the chapter, by taking Jan Ole Gerster's 2012 film *Oh Boy* as a case study. *Oh Boy* is one of the most critically successful of the drifter films and explores the slacker lifestyle of Niko Fischer (Tom Schilling), a twenty-something Berliner who is struggling to find a purpose in the city. Thus, my analysis will show how the film's critical success, as well as its production background, helps to support the industrial reputation of Berlin's film industry as a global film hub. Yet, at the same time, though the problems facing Niko, the film produces a nuanced investigation into life for those who exist on the periphery of Berlin's media society. Consequently, much like the drifter films as a whole, *Oh Boy* offers a critique on the dislocated reality facing many young people in the contemporary city, a viewpoint which adds a problematic dimension to the image of young, creative Berlin.

### **The Drifter Films' Construction of Contemporary Berlin**

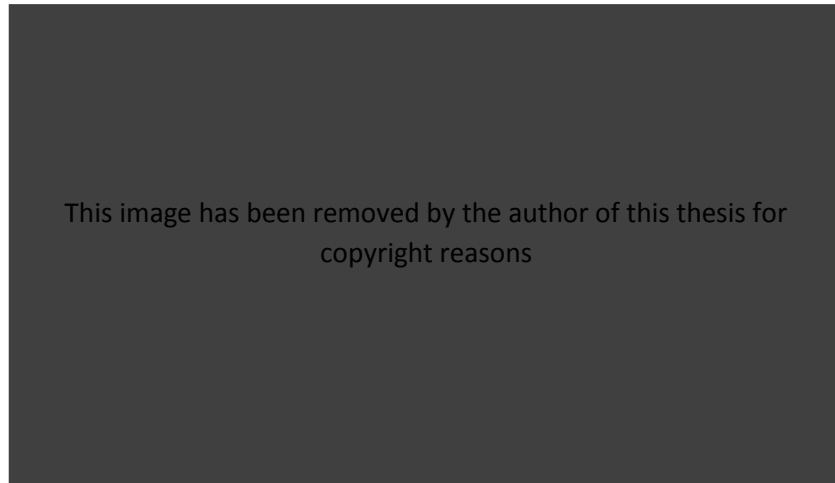
#### *Berlin as a Bustling, Vibrant City*

Throughout the historical use of the drifter in Berlin cinema, the position this character has occupied within the urban space of the city has been key to understanding the wider implications associated with such a lifestyle. Therefore, in order to fully explore the contemporary drifter films' discussion of the problems facing young people in Berlin, it is first important to analyse how the city's topography is constructed in these films. One of the main features of the MBB's claims surrounding Berlin is that the city's urban space has emerged from the difficult period of rebuilding following unification to become a

functioning, normalised topography, befitting of a global capital city, and the depiction of Berlin's urban space in the drifter films supports this viewpoint. The cranes and building sites, which dominated images of the city's topography in the *Baustelle* films, have now largely disappeared from the view of Berlin found in the drifter films. These images of rebuilding have been replaced with other motifs, which more seamlessly fit with the image of Berlin as a city which is reclaiming its position as a bustling capital. The city is defined as a location where life is lived at a fast tempo. This can be seen in the use of sound in *Am Himmel der Tag*, which tells the story of party girl and architecture student Lara (Aylin Tezel), who becomes pregnant following a one night stand with a Berlin barman (Kai Michael Müller). The film makes a feature of the diegetic sound of the city, with the noise of Berlin's streets not just deployed as background sound but exaggerated in several scenes in a way that comes to define the manner in which the film constructs its vision of Berlin. The characters struggle to find a quiet space to escape to, with their lives dominated by the constant hum and buzz of city life around them. This is evident in the frequent use of shots of the apartment building where the main protagonists live. Although we only see the upper floors of the high-rise building, the sound of the traffic from the street below dominates, as the audio backdrop to these scenes illustrates the pulsating tempo of the contemporary city, by demonstrating that the sound of this activity is so prevalent in Berlin it is seeping into the characters' domestic spaces. Hence, through its hyperbolic use of diegetic street sound, *Am Himmel der Tag* creates an impression of the city which shows that Berlin has moved beyond its work-in-progress status and become a busy, lively metropolis.

This fast tempo is also seen, as Figure 16 demonstrates, in films such as *Staub auf unseren Herzen* and *Straight* (Nicolas Flessa, 2007), with these films showing Berlin's public spaces to be filled with the activity of daily life through shots of traffic filled streets and busy markets. This hustle and bustle is in contrast to the *Baustelle* films, where the uncertainty and unfamiliarity of Berlin's altering urban space meant that the city seemed like a desolate place, devoid of the activity of normal metropolitan life. This was seen in Lola's runs across Berlin in *Lola rennt* (*Run Lola Run*, Tom Tykwer, 1998), as she ran in real time through often empty streets (Sinka: 2000). As Tom Tykwer was quoted earlier as stating, such void-like city spaces were symbolic of the process which Berlin's inhabitants were forced to undertake in the 1990s and early 2000s, as they looked to relearn how to inhabit the city's transformed topography (*Der Spiegel*: 2008). Therefore, the way that the drifter films construct a fast-paced image of the city illustrates that this process has now

been completed. The vibrant street scenes found within these films highlight how the city's inhabitants have fully reclaimed Berlin's urban spaces, filling them with the hectic comings and goings of daily life.



*Figure 16: Busy city images in Staub auf unseren Herzen (Top) and Straight (Bottom)*

In addition, whilst the majority of the characters in the industry-insider films are white, middle class Germans, the view of Berlin society offered by these drifter films is more diverse. These films also explore the lives of characters from within the city's migrant communities, with the narratives of these films supporting the positive repositioning of Berlin's urban space found within the media Berlin brand. Although migrant characters in *Baustelle* films such as *Lola+Bilidikid (Lola and Billy the Kid, Kutlug Ataman, 1999)* and *Der schöne Tag (A Fine Day, Thomas Arslan, 2001)* freely roamed the city, as was seen in Chapter 2, such a view was overshadowed by the prevailing stereotype of Berlin's young migrant community living a ghettoised existence as gangsters and petty thieves. However, whilst this negative stereotype is still a feature in the drifter films, it no longer dominates. More and more young migrant characters are able to escape their ghetto-like existence and interact with the wider urban space of Berlin. Accordingly, one of the three sub-plots found

in *Shahada* focuses on Ismail (Carlo Ljubek), a Turkish-German policeman living with a white German woman (Anne Ratte-Polle), and the dissatisfaction he now feels, despite achieving a fully integrated position within Berlin society. This situation is also found in *Cibrâil* (*The Visitor*, Tor Iben, 2011), as the title character (Sinan Hancili) is also a discontented Turkish-German policeman who is living with a white German woman (Martina Hesse). Hence, a crucial difference between these characters and the migrant drifters who were present in *Baustelle* films, such as Erol (Tamer Yiğit) in *Geschwister - Kardeşler* (*Brothers and Sisters*, Thomas Arslan, 1997), is that the transient lifestyles and problems found in these contemporary films are not because of the ghettoisation of their main protagonists, but arise through the clash which these characters' growing assimilation creates between them and their migrant heritage. Consequently, this more integrated view gives credence to the MBB's claims that Berlin's urban space has moved beyond the dislocated *Baustelle* past and developed into a functioning, 'normal' topography befitting of an international city.

In particular, the contemporary drifter films highlight the liberal freedom now enjoyed by their integrated second and third generation migrant characters in the city, a situation which manifests itself through narratives which explore the growing sexual liberation of Berlin's migrant youth. It is in the bars and clubs found across Berlin that these characters are shown to be able to escape their conservative migrant heritage and fully embrace their true identity. For example, Umay (Sibel Kekilli) begins to find acceptance in the city once she allows Stipe (Florian Lukas) to take her for a drink in *Die Fremde*, whilst in another of *Shahada*'s three sub plots Maryam (Maryam Zaree) decides to undertake an illegal abortion in the toilets of one of the city's clubs, rather than at home where she may be discovered by her father (Verdat Erincin), who is a local Imam. Similarly, whilst the homosexual characters of *Lola+Bilidikid* were a rare glimpse of an alternative version of migrant male sexuality in the *Baustelle* films, the freedom enjoyed by characters in these contemporary drifter films means that gay migrants are now almost as common as the figure of the Turkish gangster on screen. Thus, in the third narrative strand of *Shahada* Samir (Jeremias Acheampong) is shown to fight his desire to kiss Daniel (Sergej Moya) whilst they are getting ready to go out clubbing at his house, only to later embrace him outside the club.

Crucially for concepts of media Berlin, the fact that this freedom is often associated with the fashionable bars and clubs of the contemporary city also helps to support a positive viewpoint of Berlin's nightlife, and by association ideas of the city as a hedonistic

mecca disseminated as part of the MBB's brand. Nevertheless, despite this positive portrayal, these migrant-focussed drifter films rarely overtly show such spaces to be codified as being dominated by established media professionals, a view which is true of the majority of drifter films. The young protagonists of these films keep their private and professional lives more segregated than is the case in the industry-insider films, as these young people socialise with fellow struggling outsiders. As a result, the version of the city's nightlife found in these films does not conform to the image of Berlin as a place where people's work and social life are interchangeable. Whilst the creative freelancers of the industry-insider films use the city's bars and clubs to exploit networking opportunities, these nightspots are shown in the drifter films to be locations where Berlin's young people go to escape the problems of their transient life in the city. Accordingly, although the drifter films' version of the city may conform to the MBB's view of Berlin's urban space as a normalised, bustling location, these films are able to develop some narrative distance from ideas surrounding Berlin as a city dominated by media industries. It is this perspective which allows the drifter films to cultivate their critique on Berlin, as their narratives' position outside of the city's media world opens up a different channel through which to discuss contemporary Berlin.

#### *The Changing Role for Young People in Berlin*

This alternative angle is further aided by the fact that, whilst certain aspects of the city's public space may be a positive feature for young migrants, this view is an anomaly within the drifter films in general. Instead, for the majority of these films, their cautionary analysis of the situation facing Berlin's youth can be seen through the films' problematic construction of the relationship between the city's normalised urban space, its mainstream society and its young inhabitants. In order to do this, these films take ideas found within the media Berlin brand, such as Berlin's bustling topography, as a starting point, which they then use to subvert the symbiotic relationship that existed in the *Baustelle* films between the city's youth and its urban space. As was seen in Chapter 2, the creative experimentation of the *Spaßgesellschaft* was shown in films such as *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle* (*Life is All You Get*, Wolfgang Becker, 1997) and *Chill Out* (Andreas Struck, 2000) to be the lifestyle best placed to navigate the chaotic situation found within Berlin's urban space following the fall of the Wall. This relationship meant that the young people who made up the *Spaßgesellschaft* became the section of society who were driving Berlin's post-unification development.

Such a privileged position remains a feature of the media Berlin brand. The MBB champions Berlin's knowledge economy as a young, 'cool' and creative presence in the city, with an entrepreneurial atmosphere that supports start-ups and freelancers. However, this view is noticeably missing from the construction of Berlin found in the drifter films. This can be seen in *3 Zimmer/Küche/Bad*, a film which follows a group of Berlin friends, all linked in some way to the city's creative industries, over the course of a year. In particular, the film revolves around the numerous house moves which these friends are forced to make, as they search for a purpose in the contemporary city. At the start of the film the young protagonists are shown to be living in student-like *Wohngemeinschaften*<sup>84</sup> but soon realise that, if they are to find success in Berlin, they will have to move. As Ewa Mazierska and Laura Rascaroli were quoted in my introduction as arguing, transient existences defined by house moves were also a feature of the *Baustelle* films, with such images of change complementing the wider process of regeneration underway in Berlin at the time (2003: 123). However, in comparison, *3 Zimmer/Küche/Bad's* construction of the relationship between its young characters and the city illustrates how this reciprocal relationship has come to an end.

The film's characters attempt to leave behind their student lives by getting apprenticeships, finding stable partners and moving into apartments better suited to young professionals. Yet, despite these changes, they remain on the outside, unable to find a way to break into the city's exclusive media world. As Thomas (Robert Gwisdek) states at one point in the film, Berlin's contemporary youth are left in flux, destined to be the "Internship Generation"<sup>85</sup>. Berlin may have developed into a bustling city, no longer scarred by building sites, but the view of the lives of the city's young people found in the drifter films shows how Berlin's youth has become stuck in a period of transition; unable to remain children forever but prevented from developing into the young professional adults they want to become.

The reasons behind these problems are shown to lie in the altered societal structure which now exists in Berlin. As the urban space around them has matured, the cultural classes who dominated the *Spaßgesellschaft* have equally moved on from their period of youthful exuberance and become part of mainstream life within the newly global city. Therefore, the former members of the *Spaßgesellschaft* now belong to a more mature, conventional element of Berlin society. Such figures act as the bosses and role models for

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<sup>84</sup> Flat shares

<sup>85</sup> Praktikum Generation



the young protagonists of the drifter films, as they now occupy positions of power and influence within Berlin's economy. Consequently, the MBB may promote Berlin as a welcoming hub for young creatives, but the drifter films show how the role which young people play in the city is changing, due to the fact that society is becoming increasingly hierarchical, a situation which is having an adverse effect on the lives of Berlin's young inhabitants.

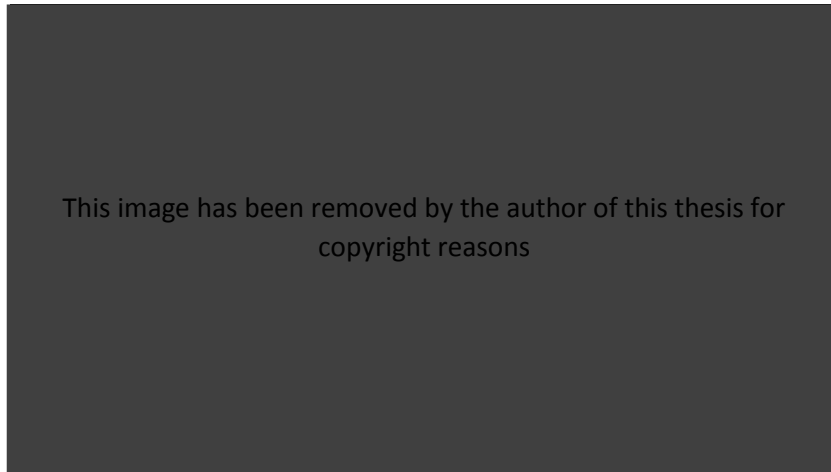
This is because this older element was a part of society which was largely missing from Berlin's creative scene during the city's rebuilding. Therefore, the *Spaßgesellschaft* did not have to meet the same sort of expectations, and so they enjoyed a level of creative freedom now absent from Berlin. Hence, the young protagonists of *3 Zimmer/Küche/Bad's* search for a place to belong is motivated by their need to conform to the more mature expectations that now exist within the city's mainstream, former-*Spaßgesellschaft* elites. Such problems are common issue facing Berlin's youth. As the spokesman for the community group *Hipster Antifa Neukölln*, which looks to address the problems facing young people in Berlin, is quoted as saying; "[These problems stem from] people who settled here in the 1980s and 90s, back when everything was still ruined and cheap and shabby; a lot of them formed the avant-garde. You could make a living back then quite easily. Those people are now much older and many of them have families and businesses" (Huw Nesbitt: *Vice*: 2013). As a result, the opportunities that young people today believe will be available to them in the city, due in part to the promotion of Berlin as a youthful, creative hotspot by agencies such as the MBB, are found to be difficult to come by within Berlin's matured society.

The frustration which this situation is causing within the city's youth manifests itself through a growing sense of alienation in the drifter films. Therefore, in order to explore this growing dislocation of the city's young people, several of the drifter films adopt a view of Berlin which is reminiscent of the city images found within Weimar cinema. Specifically, their version of Berlin has many parallels to the construction of the city's urban space found in films such as *Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt* (*Berlin: Symphony of the Big City*, Walter Ruttmann, 1927), which means, as was seen in the discussion of Ruttmann's film in Chapter 2, the ideas of cultural theorists such as Georg Simmel can also be a useful tool through which to analyse the drifter films' version of Berlin.

Simmel argued that the rapid development of Berlin at the start 1900s led to a growth in issues of alienation within the city's inhabitants, as they looked to adapt to the quick tempo of city life. For him this rise in such problems was because, as Barbara Mennel

states, society developed a blasé, crowd mentality as a reaction against the sensory bombardment they were faced with in the fast-paced city. The issue with this was that such an attitude caused an increase in anonymity for the city's inhabitants, as the traditional village mentality, where everyone was looking out for each other, was gradually broken down (2008: 25). It is this blasé attitude of the crowd which features in the drifter films, as the re-emergence of such an attitude in Berlin cinema highlights the growing disenfranchisement of Berlin's young inhabitants. This is evident in *Am Himmel der Tag*. Lara is initially unsure as to whether she should continue her pregnancy, aware that a baby would radically alter her current way of life. However, once she decides to keep the baby she soon finds herself alienated by society. The problem facing Lara is that for her student friends her decision to keep the baby goes against their hedonistic, still child-like way of life. Yet, the more mature adult elements of Berlin, represented by her suburban parents, struggle to understand why she would choose to be a young unmarried mother, as this will limit her opportunities and goes against their expectations for the sort of path young people should follow.

Lara is seen moving amongst the city's crowds but no one seems to care about her. In response to this, she retreats from the city's public space, creating a nest like environment for her and her baby in her Berlin apartment. However, when Lara miscarries, the extent of her marginalisation becomes clear. She has no one in the city to whom she can turn to for support. In fact, she feels so alone that she is unwilling to have the now dead foetus removed, as this would rob her of the one thing she still feels connected to, and so attempts to continue as if nothing has happened. As Figure 17 shows, at the height of the physical and mental breakdown that the alienation she endures during this crisis leads to, Lara travels the Berlin underground wearing a faceless white mask, with her name scrawled across it in red ink. Whereas in the traditional village, a plight such as Lara's would be supported through the established networks of kinship, the crowds of the city are shown to be ambivalent to her situation. Therefore, the shock value of Lara, masked but still pregnant in appearance, taking on a physical manifestation of the alienation and anonymity she feels in the city shows that contemporary Berlin society has adopted a blasé attitude which is adversely affecting the city's inhabitants. Lara's act of wearing the mask becomes a desperate plea for one of Berlin's commuters to take an interest in her situation and offer her the comfort she needs. Yet, despite her grotesque appearance and even going as far as to provide her fellow inhabitants with her name, no one takes any notice of her.



*Figure 17: Lara's anonymity in Am Himmel der Tag*

This scene is the most obvious way in which the narrative explores the crowd mentality of present-day Berlin, but it is not the only point in the film where such a critique is present, with Lara's visit to a silent disco one of several other moments in the film where her anonymous position within the city's crowds is highlighted. Furthermore, the effect of alienation and the crowd on the mental life of Berlin's inhabitants is seen in other drifter films. For example, in one pivotal scene in *Staub auf unsers Herzen* the main protagonist, Kathi (Stephanie Stremmler), loses her young son, Lenni (Luis August Kurecki), at a busy flea market. Despite Kathi's obvious distress and cries for help, no one offers to assist her. As a result, she is forced to battle through the ambivalent mass of the crowd who fill the rows between stalls as she searches for him, a situation which leads her to have a nervous breakdown. The experiences of these two young mothers is in stark contrast to the experience of Julietta (Lavina Wilson) in the *Baustelle* film of the same name (Christoph Stark, 2001), who also becomes pregnant, this time following the Love Parade, but finds the city a welcoming place full of potential for a young mother. Berlin's post-unification urban space might have been chaotic, but the young people who dominated the city during the *Baustelle* period were shown to be an accepting presence within the city.

However, in comparison to this, the contemporary drifter films highlight that the fast-paced maturity now found within Berlin's urban space has come at a cost, with this new reality turning the city into a harsh and uncaring place, where everyone is looking out for themselves. Consequently, despite the MBB championing the city as an exciting and welcoming place, Berlin's young inhabitants are increasingly facing a battle to maintain their individuality and relevance within the city. Interestingly, such a critique has been a common response to the fervent adoption by cities worldwide of strategies, discussed in Chapter 1, which are aligned to Richard Florida's argument surrounding the creative class.

Local decision-makers, such as those found in Berlin, may have embraced Florida's ideas surrounding the promotion of locations as liberal, creative hubs, but this has not been without problems. Indeed, for many people who have relocated to these areas the reality they have discovered has been radically different from the welcoming, vibrant atmosphere they were promised. As Frank Bures, a freelance writer, who moved to Madison, Wisconsin, a city which had been championed by Florida himself as a creative hotspot, writes; "I'm not sure what exactly I expected, but within a year or two it was clear that something wasn't right. If Madison was such a creative class hotbed overflowing with independent, post-industrial workers like myself, we should have fit in. Yet our presence didn't seem to matter to anyone, creatively or otherwise" (*Thirty Two Magazine*: 2012). Therefore, the alienating situation facing Berlin's youth in the drifter films reflects the darker reality many young people across the world have experienced within cities claiming to be hubs for the creative class, and so adds a troubling dimension to the MBB's construction of Berlin as a global media city.

#### *Berlin as a Global Region*

In addition to the transformed nature of Berlin's urban space, a further feature of the media Berlin brand is the regional perspective which the MBB adopts as it looks to promote the city as a distinct location in the fragmented media landscape which exists in Germany. Such a view of the city is evident in the drifter films, with these films contrasting the experiences and attitudes of their young characters with those found elsewhere in Germany. This can be seen in *Berlin am Meer*. When Mitsch's (Claudius Franz) sister Mavie (Anna Brüggemann) arrives from Munich, he fears she will not understand the party lifestyle he and his friends enjoy in Berlin, despite being a student like the film's other characters. The film treats her Bavarian origins as a kind of foreignness which would normally only be reserved for non-Germans. This creates a xenophobic clash of cultures within the narrative, which illustrates that distinct regional identities exist in Germany. Thus, through this use of an inter-regional domestic culture clash, the film highlights how a chasm in understanding and lifestyle has emerged between the city's inhabitants and those from elsewhere in the country.

Furthermore, the MBB stresses that this regional perspective has allowed Berlin to develop into a global location within an international network and such a view of the city is also present in *Berlin am Meer's* construction of Berlin's regional identity. As Figure 18 highlights, Berlin's distinct, global position is illustrated quite literally in the film's closing

credits, which show an altered map of Europe, where the metropolitan area of Berlin has become surrounded by water, due to the fact that the rest of the Germany has been flooded by the North Sea. Thus, this image creates a view of Berlin as an island within Europe, rather than the capital of Germany. In an assessment of the city which echoes the earlier discussion of films such as *Offroad* (Elmar Fischer, 2012), Berlin society is shown to have developed into something that operates by its own rules domestically, as the drifter films' engagement with characters and locations from elsewhere in Germany gives credence to the MBB's view of Berlin as an independent, global region.



Figure 18: Berlin as a European island in Berlin am Meer

Likewise, the media Berlin brand also casts the city as a location which is home to people from all over the world and this is a view which is supported by those drifter films which explore the lives of characters who originate from outside of Germany's borders. Indeed, several of the migrant-focussed drifter films, such as *Die Fremde, Glück (Bliss)* (Doris Dörrie, 2012) and *Kaddisch für einen Freund (Kaddish for a Friend)* (Leo Khasin, 2012), include the movement of their characters to and from Berlin within their narratives. This is a change to the approach, described previously, taken by the *Baustelle* films to this element of migrant identity. Films such as *Geschwister – Kardeşler* and *Ich Chef, du Turnschuh (Me Boss, You Sneakers!)* (Hussi Kutlucan, 1998) refused to follow their protagonists once they left the city, a decision which meant that the global potential of these films' migrant themes were left unexplored. Yet, in comparison, the contemporary drifter films show Berlin to have become an easily accessible destination for many migrants. This is illustrated by the ease in which characters such as Irina (Alba Rohrwacher) in *Glück* and Ali (Neil Belakhdar) in *Kaddisch für einen Freund* are both able to flee political trouble at home and travel to Berlin with few problems.

However, once they arrive in Berlin, these characters do not necessarily find the city easy to integrate into; Irina is forced to live in a cheap hotel and work as a prostitute, whilst Ali finds himself at the centre of racial tensions in the city. Hence, the drifter films offer a multi-layered view of Berlin's international standing, by also demonstrating the problems associated with Berlin's position within an international network. Therefore, these films add a more challenging dimension to the image of Berlin as interconnected global region found within the media Berlin brand. This is evident in *Die Fremde*, which tells the story of Umay, a second generation Turkish-German woman who has moved from Berlin to Istanbul following her marriage to the Turk Kemal (Ufuk Bayraktar). Umay's life in Istanbul is an unhappy one, as she lives in a loveless and violent marriage with Kemal, and so she flees her husband and seeks sanctuary with her family back in Berlin. Yet, whilst in previous migrant films the distance between Berlin and Turkey meant that, as was the case for Erol in *Geschwister – Kardeşler*, movement from one to the other would facilitate an escape from whatever problems the character was facing, this is no longer the case for Umay. Rather than providing relief, the life she finds with her family in Berlin is shown to mirror her existence in Istanbul.

This is illustrated by the visual and narrative links which the film develops between Umay's life in Turkey and the one she returns to in Berlin. As Figure 19 demonstrates, Umay and her son Cem (Nizam Schiller) are shown in two different dining room scenes in the film, one with Kemal's family in Istanbul and the other in Berlin with Umay's own family, with the film visually connecting the two locations through the way Umay and Cem are positioned in these two scenes. As David Grammling argues, Umay and Cem are seated in the same position around the two different tables, which means that; "These two shots set up an absolute equivalence between Turkish family life in suburban Turkey and Turkish German family life in urban Berlin; these two modern patriarchal Muslim families are aestheticised identically, regardless of their current country of residence" (2012: 36-37). Moreover, the dining room is not the only time that the two families are linked, with, for example, the violence that Umay suffers at the hands of her brother Mehmet (Tamer Yiğit) in the family kitchen in Berlin mirroring the violence she endures from Kemal whilst in Istanbul. Therefore, Berlin's growing status as an international hub has a detrimental effect on Umay's attempts to flee her repressive life in Turkey, as she finds her flight from Istanbul to Berlin does not offer her the release from the abusive Kemal which she had desired. In fact, ultimately she is forced to break all ties with her family, which in turn means that she adopts a transient position in the city, searching for a place to belong.



Figure 19: Visual links between *life in Istanbul* (Top) and *life in Berlin* (Bottom) in *Die Fremde*<sup>86</sup>

Indeed the MBB may claim that Berlin's standing as a global hub offers the perfect environment for young people to develop, both personally and professionally, but the conclusions of several drifter films suggest that the city is not always the location best placed to offer the success young people hope to find in Berlin. The aspiring composer Tom (Robert Stadlober) leaves Berlin at the end of *Berlin am Meer* for music school elsewhere in Germany, whilst in *3 Zimmer/Küche/Bad* Philipp (Jacob Matschenz) grows frustrated with his lack of progress as a photographer in the city and so moves to Düsseldorf. In addition, it is not just other locations in Germany which are shown to be potentially more accepting and fruitful for these young people. This can be seen in *Little Paris* (Miriam Dehne, 2008), a film which focuses on the dancer Luna (Sylta Fee Wegmann), who hopes to flee her provincial problems and find success in Berlin, but discovers the city's creative scene to be pretentious and tightly controlled. As a result, at the end of the film Luna is shown to be living in America, as it is New York, not Berlin, which has enabled her to pursue a career as

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<sup>86</sup> © 2010 Majestic Filmverleih – Filmstill „Die Fremde“, Regie: Feo Aladag

a professional dancer. These films' young drifters may be attracted to Berlin precisely because of the international, liberal and creative reputation which the MBB is promoting through the media Berlin brand, but the reality which they discover in the city is starkly different. Instead, the drifter films show Berlin to have matured into an alienating location that no longer guarantees young people the recognition and success they desire.

### ***Oh Boy*: A Case Study of the Drifter Film**

Jan Ole Gerster's exploration of Berlin in his debut film *Oh Boy's* exemplifies the alienating view of the city perpetuated by the drifter films. The film tells the story of a day in the life of a young Berliner called Niko, who has dropped out of university without telling his wealthy father (Ulrich Noethen). Niko traverses the city aimlessly, existing on the monthly allowance his father provides, whilst he tries to figure out the direction he wants his life to go in. However, as the film progresses, his transient existence becomes increasingly under threat as he breaks up with his girlfriend, discovers his father now knows he is no longer a student and has stopped his allowance, and meets up with an old classmate who he bullied at school. Niko's problems are not helped by those he encounters in the city. Although he has no desire to become part of Berlin's creative industries, throughout the film he comes into contact with numerous people from this part of the city's society, with these characters shown to be pretentious and uncaring. Therefore, the narrative of *Oh Boy*, much like many of the other drifter films, adds a deeper layer of understanding to the reputation of Berlin as a youth culture hotspot found within the media Berlin brand. The film produces a melancholic version of Berlin, which highlights the situation currently facing the city's youth population and the issues that are being caused by their position on the periphery of Berlin's media world.

### *Oh Boy's Relationship to Berlin's Film Cluster*

*Oh Boy* was made on a small budget, even for a low-budget German film, of 300,000 Euro, an amount which included 50,000 Euro from the MBB. In the context of the MBB's funding strategy, where funding decisions are made on an assessment of whether a film is either going to be a box office success or artistically important, such a funding amount and budget demonstrates that *Oh Boy* was supported by the MBB as the agency felt that the film was a culturally relevant, rather than commercially viable, piece of filmmaking. Therefore, *Oh Boy* represents a different, but complementary, style of filmmaking to the larger budget films discussed in both Chapters 3 and 5. The presence of films like *Oh Boy* within Berlin's



cinematic output highlights the varied nature of the filmic activities found within present-day Berlin. The growth in large-scale domestic and international productions may have helped Berlin's film cluster move beyond the reputation of the city being a niche film location which dominated during the *Baustelle* period, but *Oh Boy* illustrates that this does not mean that Berlin's film professionals have completely abandoned lower budget films.

Furthermore, the funding *Oh Boy* received from the MBB was not the only link the film's production had to the wider film industry cluster found in Berlin. Whilst *Oh Boy* was Jan Ole Gerster's first film, his professional background is one which is firmly rooted in the city's production environment. Therefore, *Oh Boy* acts as a good example of the interconnected and mutually dependent activities and relationships which come together to influence the city's filmic reputation. Gerster developed *Oh Boy* as his graduation project from the dffb, a film school whose status has grown in recent years following the critical success of the Berlin School group of filmmakers. Whilst *Oh Boy* may not fit into the aesthetics of the Berlin School, Gerster's link to the dffb was covered in a number of articles surrounding the release of the film (see Heinrich: 2012). For the reputation of the dffb, such coverage expands the school's repute, as it shows that, alongside its links to the Berlin School, the dffb is educating an array of filmmakers, who work in a diverse range of styles and genres. As the institute is also seen as an important provider of training for the professionals who make up Berlin's film industry, the added dynamic brought to the school's reputation from the release of *Oh Boy* also feeds into the city's production environment's reputation. The film highlights that the dffb's graduates are good examples of the varied and creative skillset found within Berlin's knowledge economy, a claim that is also a central component of the MBB's promotion of Berlin as a film hub.

Additionally, before going to study at the dffb, Gerster worked at *X Filme*, most notably as an assistant to director Wolfgang Becker on *Goodbye, Lenin!* (2003). This link continued into the making of *Oh Boy*. Even though the film was not produced by *X Filme*, it was *X Filme*'s distribution arm, *X Verleih*, which distributed *Oh Boy* in Germany. Thus, the film benefitted from *X Filme*'s strong brand reputation, gaining instant credibility by being able to display the *X Filme* logo on its promotional material. However, the presence of *Oh Boy* on *X Verleih*'s roster of films also helps to develop the perception of *X Filme* being a company which, despite producing an increasing number of big-budget films, still also supports small-scale filmmaking. Therefore, *Oh Boy* was not just a stand-alone, independent film from a debut director, but an interconnected product of Berlin's production environment.

These links became particularly pertinent following the release of the film, with *Oh Boy* managing to achieve something that very few German films ever achieve. The film was both critically acclaimed and became a relative financial hit considering its small budget, attracting over 320,000 domestic cinema-goers (*Filmförderungsanstalt*: 2013). In addition, the film has gone on to be screened at numerous international festivals and has been distributed in the USA, a market which few post-unification German films have managed to enter. In fact, from its initial 300,000 Euro budget, *Oh Boy* has gone on to take over 2.5 million dollars worldwide (*boxofficemojo.com*: 2015). The film's box office success meant that the producers of *Oh Boy* were able to pay back the MBB's funding during a gala event at the *Berlinale* in February 2013. Being able to return the MBB's funding is rare, a situation which is evident in the fact that, from all the MBB supported films released that year, *Oh Boy* was one of only three to pay their funding back, with the others being the commercial comedies *Ausgerechnet Sibirien* (*Lost in Siberia*, Ralf Huettnner, 2012) and *Schlussmacher* (*The Break-up Man*, Matthias Schweighöfer and Torsten Künstler, 2013) (MBB: 2013). Therefore, as a low-budget success, the MBB is able to use the film alongside bigger-budget films the agency has also supported in its promotional material and at events like the one at the *Berlinale*. The benefit of such a contrast is that it provides concrete evidence of the agency's claim that Berlin is now able to produce highly successful large and small-budget films, a diversity which is an essential part of the MBB's statement that Berlin is now the number one film location in Germany.

The film's position as a prominent example of Berlin's vibrant, low-budget filmmaking community was further enhanced by the fact that *Oh Boy* received eight nominations for the 2013 Lolas, the German equivalent of the Oscars. This made *Oh Boy* the second most nominated film behind the Hollywood science-fiction film *Cloud Atlas* (Tom Tykwer, Andy Wachowski and Lana Wachowski, 2012), which was eligible for the awards due to the fact that the film received a large part of its funding from German bodies, including the MBB. The ensuing coverage in the build up to the awards show cast the ceremony as a David versus Goliath battle between the 100 million Dollar budget of *Cloud Atlas* and the 300,000 Euro budget of *Oh Boy* (see Pietz: *Der Tagesspiegel*: 2013). It was a battle that *Oh Boy* was victorious in, as the film received six awards on the night to *Cloud Atlas's* five, including the Golden Lola for Best Film. Given such a build-up, this victory for *Oh Boy* had further implications for the impact which the film made on the industrial reputation of Berlin's production environment. By achieving a victory over not just another domestic film, but an international co-production with a budget around 300 times larger

than its own, the film illustrates how low-budget filmmaking in Berlin is able to compete with the best in the world. This is particularly important in terms of Berlin's attractiveness for members of the creative class, as the success of a low-budget film, by a first time director, illustrates that the city boasts a nurturing creative environment which enables people, regardless of their experience, to successfully reach their full creative potential.

Moreover, as both *Cloud Atlas* and *Oh Boy* were funded by the MBB and made use of the city for their production, their dual success also acted as a positive confirmation of the MBB's promotion of the city as the preeminent film region in Germany. As Hanns-Georg Rodek writes; "As well as the 6:5 of 'Oh Boy' vs 'Cloud Atlas', there was also a 13:1:4 this evening. 13 Lolas went to the Berlin-Brandenburg region, only one to the other German film centre of Munich and 4 to the other regions"<sup>87</sup> (*Die Welt*: 2013). Although, as was argued in Chapter 1, the claim to which location is the leading film region in Germany is difficult to verify, given the plethora of different facts and figures that can be used, there is no doubt that awards are one of the most convincing and important indicators used by both film professionals and the wider public to judge cinematic success. Hence, the dominance of *Oh Boy* and *Cloud Atlas* at the 2013 Lolas supports the MBB's claim that Berlin is a region with the facilities and filmmaking talent to rival anywhere in the world, as the city has developed from a small-scale filmmaking location during the *Baustelle* period into a global player in the world of cinema.

#### *An Alternative Take on Berlin Youth Culture*

Significantly, the connection between the city and the film is not just cultivated through *Oh Boy*'s production background. Berlin also features prominently in the film's visual narrative and so the city played a major role in the promotion of the film. For example, 'Berlin' became the go to adjective within the critical coverage of the film's release, with Peter Zander describing *Oh Boy* as a "Berlin-Film" (*Die Welt*: 2012), whilst Andreas Wilink uses the phrase "Berlin ballad"<sup>88</sup> (*Die Welt am Sonntag*: 2012). This link was made even more explicit for international audiences when the film's title was adapted by local distributors into their particular native language. As Gerster is quoted as stating in an interview with Kristin McCracken; "The film has now been released in more than 30 countries, and wherever we go, people say the film has to say 'Berlin' on the poster" (*The Huffington Post*:

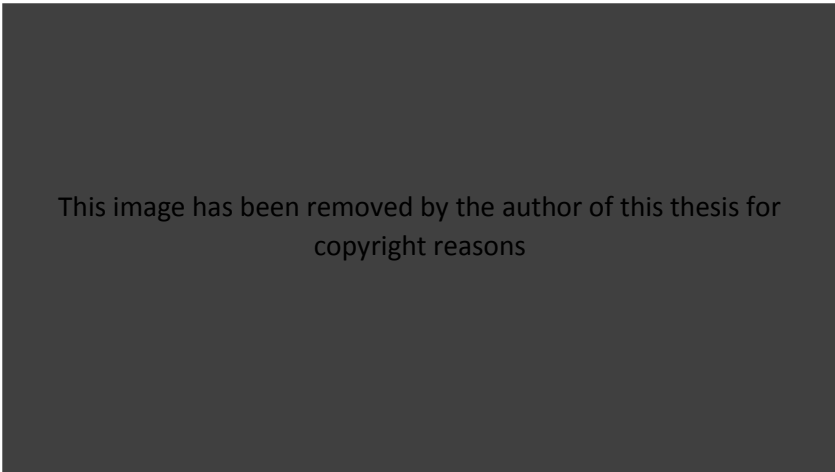
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<sup>87</sup> Außer dem 6:5 von 'Oh Boy' gegen 'Cloud Atlas' gab es an diesem Abend noch ein 13:1:4. Dreizehn Lolas gingen an die Region Berlin-Brandenburg, nur eine an das andere deutsche Filmzentrum München und vier in andere Regionen

<sup>88</sup> Berliner Ballade

2014). Indeed, when *Oh Boy* was released in America, despite the original German title being in English, the film was actually released under the new name of *A Coffee in Berlin*. Therefore, in order to understand the impact which Niko's drifter lifestyle has on the wider reputation of Berlin, it is important to understand the role Berlin plays in the film.

*Oh Boy* regularly cuts away from its protagonists and shows images of the city around them, which have no direct link to the storyline, but instead come to place Berlin firmly at the centre of the film. As Figure 20 illustrates, much like in several of the other drifter films discussed earlier, these images consist not just of shots of Berlin's buildings, but focus on the city's streets, its traffic and its public transport. Thus, the film constructs Berlin's urban space as a location which very much supports the bustling, post-*Baustelle* view of the city promoted by the media Berlin brand. This view of the city as a busy location is aided by the nature of the transport network found within the eastern districts of Prenzlauer Berg and Mitte, where large portions of the film are set. The city's suburban rail lines are clearly visible within these districts, whilst the Berlin underground also rises to the surface and runs on exposed tracks above the city's streets. Furthermore, Berlin's trams are also incorporated into the road system below. Therefore, *Oh Boy's* version of Berlin's urban space makes full use of the unique situation this creates, showing how the public transport system is interwoven into the landscape of the city, as trams and trains make their way along streets already busy with cars and pedestrians.



This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons

*Figure 20: Berlin as a bustling city*

Nevertheless, whilst the construction of Berlin's urban space in the film may mirror the MBB's claims surrounding the city, what becomes clear through a survey of the articles written about the film is that journalists were also keen to stress that *Oh Boy* avoids playing to stereotypes. In particular, despite taking place within Berlin's youth population, the critical reception of the film highlights that this does not mean that *Oh Boy* immerses itself

in the 'cool' world of Berlin's clubs and bars. As Gerster is quoted as saying in an interview with Kaspar Heinrich; "The put on hipster attitude is foreign to me, this image of Berlin being full of people who dance on roof terraces to electro beats"<sup>89</sup> (*Der Tagesspiegel*: 2012). It is precisely this 'hipster' view of Berlin as a city dominated by fashionable dance clubs which features prominently in the industry-insider films, such as *Wir sind die Nacht* (*We are the Night*, Dennis Gansel, 2010). Equally, these images are also deployed as a central component of the media Berlin brand, as these night-time locations are used as signifiers for Berlin's thriving creative economy. Yet, as Gerster states elsewhere, whilst there is no doubt that parts of Berlin may have become world-renowned locations for a fashionable style of international hedonism, this is not a version of the city which he wanted to explore in the film (*Die Zeit*: 2012). As a result, by placing the narrative outside of this hedonistic world, Gerster is able to distance himself from the stereotype of Berlin being dominated by pleasure-seeking media professionals.

The fact that Gerster's alternative attitude features prominently in *Oh Boy's* critical reception begins to develop a different view to the MBB's concept of Berlin as a creative hub for international, hedonistic young people. The film offers a more everyday version of Berlin away from the hype of the contemporary city being a 'hipster' hub, something which is aided by the fact that Niko is played by a native Berliner in Tom Schilling, who was born and bred in the now fashionable eastern districts of the city. Schilling's position as an authentic representation of the everyday city was prominent in the film's promotion. Several articles focussed on the fact he shuns a celebrity party lifestyle, choosing instead to take his son to football practice or to hang out in the local park (Zander: 2012). To this extent, Schilling himself emphasises the resonance Gerster's version of Berlin has to him as a true Berliner in several interviews, being quoted in one as stating; "When I watch the film I say to myself: Aha I live in this city as well"<sup>90</sup> (Heinrich: 2012). As was seen in the previous chapter, the presence of Tom, played by another native Berliner in Max Riemelt, in *Wir sind die Nacht* had a similar effect. However, whilst Tom is only a secondary character in comparison to the vampire clan of this particular film, Niko is the main protagonist in *Oh Boy*, a position which sees Niko's experiences in Berlin given greater prominence. As Zander writes; "[Schilling] therefore becomes the face of a generation, the face of Berlin"<sup>91</sup> (2012). Consequently, it is through Niko's different perspective that the film offers an

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<sup>89</sup> Die aufgesetzte Hipster-Attitude ist mir fremd, dieses Bild von Berlin mit Leuten, die auf Hausdächern im Sonnenuntergang zu Elektrobeats tanzen

<sup>90</sup> Wenn ich den Film anschau, dann sage ich mir: Aha in dieser Stadt wohne ich also

<sup>91</sup> [Schilling] wird damit zum Gesicht einer Generation, zum Gesicht des Berlins

alternative angle on Berlin. His experiences of the city challenge the version of Berlin promoted by the MBB and show that the reality facing many young people in the present-day city is far more complex than the media Berlin brand would lead people believe.

#### *Niko's Melancholic Existence within Berlin*

This desire to break with the cinematic representation of Berlin as a 'cool' hedonistic location can be seen in the decision to film *Oh Boy* entirely in black and white, a choice Gerster justifies by saying; "[Black and white gives] a different kind of truth" (McCracken: 2014). As Ralf Krämer writes, such black and white images of Berlin's streets are reminiscent of the tradition of *Straßenfilme* that was particularly strong in Berlin cinema in the 1920s and 1930s, through films such as *Asphalt* (Joe May, 1929) and *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (*Die Welt*: 2012). Of course, these films also acted as the origin for the drifter in cinema, and so the decision to film *Oh Boy* in black and white gives the film's drifter narrative greater historical resonance. This link to the past is further developed by the fact that, as Jan Schulz-Ojala argues, *Oh Boy's* cinematic nostalgia for Berlin's black and white films is not just confined to the Weimar period (*Der Tagesspiegel*: 2012). Niko's Prenzlauer Berg apartment overlooks the busy intersection on Schönhauser Allee which contains Eberswalder Straße underground station at its centre, an area of the city which has long been a popular location for German filmmakers. The Skladanowsky brothers captured the first ever images of Berlin from the roof of their apartment overlooking the station, whilst this part of the city also featured heavily in the DEFA film *Berlin - Ecke Schönhauser* (*Berlin - Schönhauser Corner*, Gerhard Klein, 1957), which depicted young East Berliners looking for a place to belong in the divided city. As Gerster points out in the audio commentary that accompanied *Oh Boy's* DVD release, the filmmakers were fully aware of the cinematic history associated with this area, which meant that they made sure that their images of Berlin's streets were similar in style and form to those found in films such as *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser* (*X Verleih*: 2013). By depicting contemporary Berlin in the same black and white hue found in the city's cinematic history, the film seems to be longing for a bygone age, a view of Berlin that gives a melancholic tone to *Oh Boy's* drifter tale, with the problems Niko faces leading to feelings of nostalgia-tinged disenfranchisement from the present-day city.

The film may construct the urban space of Berlin as a busy location, but by robbing the film's version of the city of its colour, *Oh Boy's* view of Berlin lacks the vibrancy that should accompany such a portrayal of the city's streets. Berlin becomes a forlorn and dark

city, with life lived in a gloomy reality where everything is in shades of grey. In order to process this situation Niko takes to the city's streets. In fact, as Zander argues, the episodic nature of *Oh Boy's* narrative, which is made up of several vignettes from Niko's travels, causes Niko to become a flâneur-like figure, who is attempting to understand the city around him (2012). As was stated in Chapter 2, the flâneur tradition is something which developed in Berlin in the early twentieth century, as writers such as Walter Benjamin moved about the city observing everyday life and the changes which were being caused by Berlin's rapid development at the time. Therefore, as Rob Shields argues; "[...] while the flâneur is presented as a native of his locality he is actually an individual caught in the act of attempting to regain and keep his native mastery of his environment" (1994: 72). Shields may be writing about the Weimar flâneur, but Niko's actions within *Oh Boy* are carried out for exactly the same reasons.

Significantly, although such flâneur journeys have been tied up with the figure of the drifter on screen for decades, the nostalgia found within Niko's wandering has a strong correlation to similar trips which were made in the *Baustelle* films by former East German characters, such as Martin (Jörg Schüttauf) in *Berlin is in Germany*. However, whilst these older characters used such journeys to attempt to understand their alienation from eastern Berlin and the transformation of this part of the unified city from a communist capital to *Spaßgesellschaft* playground, *Oh Boy* shows how the structure of society in the city has now changed. By illustrating that such feelings of melancholia have been transferred from the city's older generation to younger inhabitants such as Niko, the film demonstrates how the position of contemporary young people within the city is markedly different from their *Spaßgesellschaft* predecessors. Despite what the MBB may claim, *Oh Boy* shows that Niko's generation is no longer at the cutting edge of society, a change in position which allows the film to further distance itself from the hedonistic stereotypes of media Berlin.

This view is enhanced by the atypical music used in the film. Many contemporary Berlin films choose to mirror the city's reputation as a dance music hotspot in their choice of soundtrack, but *Oh Boy* avoids such a style of music and, by association, the image of Berlin as a youth culture mecca dominated by pleasure-seeking party-goers. In place of the usual trance and electro beats, the film makes use of a jazz soundtrack more in line with the city's Weimar past, a selection which further connects Niko's life in Berlin with the historical origins of the drifter. This choice of music also aids the film's wider melancholic tone, as the irregular jazz rhythms create a disjointed atmosphere. As Wilink states; "The jazz on the film's soundtrack conveys the attitude to life which characterises the raw

images of Berlin deployed by Gerster: halting rhythms, grey voids, mellow angles, edgy and brittle”<sup>92</sup> (2012). It is within the shadows created by the film’s monochrome colour pallet and fractured soundscape that Niko exists, as the dark actuality of his marginalised and transitory position in Berlin is echoed by the city around him.

### *An Elitist View of Berlin’s Media Society*

Nevertheless, whilst Niko’s life in the city may offer an alternative view of Berlin, the film does not fully subvert the stereotype of Berlin as a ‘cool’ international city found within the media Berlin brand. For example, although Gerster may claim he was breaking with stereotypes by choosing to shun the ‘hipster’ view of Berlin, his stylistic choices in *Oh Boy* still create a film which is the very epitome of current fashions in global cinema. This is evident in the manner in which reviewers reacted to the film. As Georg Diez writes; “[Oh Boy] treats Berlin as the French treat Paris or the Americans New York”<sup>93</sup> (*Der Spiegel*: 2012). Whilst Rainer Gansera claims; “‘Oh Boy’ is atmospherically reminiscent of the romantic melancholy of Jim Jarmusch’s ‘Coffee and Cigarettes’. One can read every episode as a homage to Wood Allen’s city neurotic era”<sup>94</sup> (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*: 2012). Similarly, the American critic Peter Debruge argues; “[...] the film feels like a late, lost chapter from the French New Wave or a kindred spirit to so many DIY indies, served up with a wry smile and a German accent” (*Variety*: 2014). Crucially, many of the films referenced in these reviews are favourites of cinephiles across the world. Therefore, by aligning *Oh Boy* to other international film movements, be that classic films, such as those of Jean-Luc Godard (*À bout de souffle* (*Breathless*), 1960) or Woody Allen (*Manhattan*, 1979), or more recent American indies, such as *Frances Ha* (Noah Baumbach, 2012), the reviews of *Oh Boy* conferred an intellectual, ‘cool’ cachet on the film. As a result, *Oh Boy*’s stylised black and white images create a film text which still propagates the view of Berlin as a fashionable creative location found within the MBB’s marketing material.

Furthermore, whilst the film may avoid the explicit exploration of Berlin’s media world found in the industry-insider films, this does not mean that *Oh Boy* is completely

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<sup>92</sup> Der Jazz auf dem Soundtrack des Films vermittelt das Lebensgefühl, das Gersters Berlin in rauen Bildern prägt: Rhythmus des Stillstands, graue Leere, mürbe Ecken, kantig und spröde

<sup>93</sup> [Oh Boy] behandelt Berlin so, wie die Franzosen ihr Paris behandeln oder die Amerikaner ihr New York

<sup>94</sup> Atmosphärisch erinnert ‘Oh Boy’ an die romantisierte Melancholie von Jim Jarmuschs ‘Coffee and Cigarettes’. Als Hommage an den Woody Allen der Stadtneurotiker-Ära kann man jene Episoden lesen



devoid of characters from within this part of the city's society. In fact, as Niko meanders through Berlin's 'cool' neighbourhoods he encounters several people from the city's creative economy, with these encounters providing the film with its narrative thrust. Consequently, rather than fully challenging the view of Berlin as a media hotspot found within the media Berlin brand, *Oh Boy* uses the problems facing Niko to highlight the tensions which this world is creating within contemporary Berlin. This is evident as Niko meets an old classmate, Julika (Friederike Kempter), whilst having lunch. Julika invites Niko and his friend Matze (Marc Hosemann) to an interpretive dance recital that she is part of that evening and the manner in which *Oh Boy* constructs Niko's experience at the recital comes to critique the role Berlin's creative community is playing within the city. Although Gerster stresses in the film's commentary that the dance was choreographed by a respected contemporary dancer, he also says that the piece was designed to be effective and impressive for those who are already fans of such work, but strange and comical for outsiders, who may not have an extensive knowledge or experience of this sort of performance (*X Verleih*: 2013). This opposition is seen in the film through the reaction of Niko and Matze in comparison to the others in the audience. They fail to understand the piece, giggling throughout, as the film illustrates the chasm in understanding and lifestyles that exists between the 'cool', creative world that the contemporary city has become famous for and the alternative way of life represented by Niko.

This dislocation becomes even more acute through the characterisation of Julika's friends and fellow artists. They are openly hostile to Niko and Matze's presence at the performance, which comes to a head at the after-party, as Matze and the fictional director (Steffen Jürgens) of the recital have a heated argument. The director rages about Matze's failure to understand his attempts to challenge the mainstream, but, at the same time, he himself fails to see the potentially comedic elements that undeniably exists within his work. Therefore, the director is shown to be pretentious and elitist. This is an attitude which is in sharp contrast to the portrayal of such characters in the *Baustelle* films, with Niko's visit to Julika's recital having strong parallels to a similar visit made by Jan (Jürgen Vögel) to an alternative theatre performance by Vera (Christiane Paul) in *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle*. Unlike Niko, Jan was welcomed into this community, with the city's *Baustelle* creative scene shown to be a positive force within the city. Accordingly, *Oh Boy's* engagement with Berlin's alternative arts scene serves to illustrate the change in attitude that has taken place in the city's creative industries in recent years and the marginalisation this has led to within Berlin's youth population, who now find that this section of society has become an

impervious and pretentious part of the global world of media Berlin. Therefore, despite the alternative view offered by Niko's lifestyle, his experiences come to act as a counterpoint to a wider discussion Berlin's media world.

### *Berlin's Coffee Culture as a Symbol for the City's Gentrification*

Significantly, the catalyst for the film's discussion of these problems comes from an early scene where Niko tries unsuccessfully to buy a cup of black coffee from one of Prenzlauer Berg's 'cool' coffee shops as he does not have enough money to purchase the expensive drink. As Matthias Bernt and Andrej Holm were quoted in Chapter 3 as arguing, the 'squatter chic' coffee shops in this part of Berlin have become synonymous with the city's gentrified lifestyle in recent years (2005: 119). Equally, Prenzlauer Berg acts as the centre of Berlin's contemporary creative economy, something which can be seen in the fact that many of the media executives present in the industry-insider films live within the district. Therefore, alongside more overt references to the city's media world, such as the scene at Julika's recital, *Oh Boy* uses the city's contemporary coffee culture as an allegory for the lifestyles and attitudes which Niko encounters within the Berlin's fashionable eastern districts. As Heinrich writes; "Filter coffee is more than a hot drink, it is a metaphor for the Berlin which Gerster knows"<sup>95</sup> (2012). Of course, as was seen in Chapter 2, during the period of division films such as *Solo Sunny* (Konrad Wolf and Wolfgang Kohlhaase, 1980) helped to develop a view of Prenzlauer Berg as a creative haven. This view was then further strengthened during the *Baustelle* period in films such as *Julietta*. However, by focussing on Prenzlauer Berg's gentrified coffee culture, *Oh Boy* subtly and comically critiques the way in which the area has developed since unification into the epicentre of media Berlin.

This is evident in the confusion which Niko suffers as the coffee shop waitress (Katharina Hauck) reels off the seemingly endless possibilities that accompany his request for a 'normal' coffee. The film creates a standoff between Niko and the waitress which offers a negative perspective on the gentrification of the district. This is epitomised by the fact that the waitress has a strong Swabian accent. Prenzlauer Berg is now home to a large population from this part of Germany. However, as Peter Schneider writes; "A significant number of Berliners consider newcomers from the southern German state of Swabia the epitome of the wealthy, order-obsessed gentrifiers they resent" (2014: 271). This critique was a feature of many reviews of *Oh Boy*, with Marc Reichwein summing up well the

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<sup>95</sup> Der Filterkaffee ist mehr als ein Heißgetränk, er ist eine Metapher für das Berlin, das Gerster kennt

reaction of journalists to this scene, writing; “The malicious glee which many journalist took from the disavowal of the ‘Prenzlauer-Schwabia-Mafia’, who instead of coffee sell ‘nothing but perfumed eco-bean-juice’, is significant. It points to a cultural fight which is still not fully percolated [...] the German media, barista courses and competitions cast coffee making as a pseudo-artistic career”<sup>96</sup> (*Die Welt*: 2012). The absurd situation which Niko finds himself in is one that rings true for many familiar with the society which now dominates the renovated neighbourhoods of East Berlin. Prenzlauer Berg may be one of the most desirable areas to live for the city’s media executives, but the area is no longer the creative hub it once was. Instead, *Oh Boy* casts the district’s incomer residents as a pretentious, pseudo-bohemian presence in Berlin, who epitomise the rise of an inauthentic ‘squatter chic’ lifestyle within the city’s fashionable locations.

Niko may be a local Berliner, but he is unable to understand this part of city life. Therefore, Niko’s inability to procure a coffee, and so by association enter Berlin’s gentrified media-centric world, becomes entangled with his wider search for a place to belong. Hence, wherever he goes throughout the day he encounters empty flasks and broken coffee machines. The view of Berlin which this develops is one which further propagates a concept of the alienating reality of life for young people in the city found across the drifter films. Niko’s inability to secure a coffee acts as a symbol for his wider marginalisation from society. Crucially, by highlighting that the root of this disjuncture lies in the ‘squatter chic’ elitism of the Prenzlauer Berg coffee shop, *Oh Boy* demonstrates that the marginalisation of young people such as Niko stems from the fact that the experimental, creative lifestyle which once defined both this district and Berlin’s youth culture more generally has disappeared from the gentrified city. As a result, the film highlights that the MBB’s promotion of media Berlin misrepresents the true nature of life in the contemporary city. Berlin may be home to a strong artistic community, but the MBB’s single-minded and wholly positive marketing of this section of city life above all else ignores the pretentious attitudes which now define Berlin’s creative economy, as well as the alternative lifestyles which are struggling to exist alongside the city’s media elites.

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<sup>96</sup> Die Häme, mit der sich mancher Journalist an der Desavouierung der ‘Prenzlauer Schwaben-Mafia’ ergötzt, die statt Kaffee ‘nur noch parfümierte Ethno-Bohnen-Soße’ verkauft, ist bezeichnend. Sie deutet auf einen noch nicht fertig gebrühten Kulturkampf [...] Deutsche Medien, Barista Kurse und Wettbewerbe inszenieren einen Pseudo-Künstlerberuf der Kaffeebereitung

### *Contemporary Berlin's Ahistorical Relationship with the City's Past*

In addition, *Oh Boy* also uses Berlin's 'cool', media-centric society to explore the role history is playing in the contemporary city. The history of the city seeps into Niko's travels across Berlin and his efforts to understand the contemporary city. This is illustrated towards the end of the film when Niko encounters an old man called Friedrich (Michael Gwisdek) in a local bar. Friedrich tells Niko that he used to live close to this fashionable bar many years ago and goes on to recount his experiences of *Kristallnacht*<sup>97</sup> in this area of the city. Through his past, Friedrich comes to represent the controversial Nazi history that society has been looking to move on from throughout the post-unification period of normalisation. Yet, this process has left Friedrich feeling disconnected from the city around him. He says to Niko that he is unable to understand the bar's other patrons, even though they are speaking German. However, it is not the language that they are speaking which makes them incomprehensible to an old Berliner like Friedrich but their way of life, which is so far removed from the reality of the city that he has known.

As the bar is located in the heart of Prenzlauer Berg, this disjuncture can be seen as one between the world of media Berlin and the city's past. Therefore, much like through *Wir sind die Nacht*'s vampirisation of Berlin history, Friedrich's alienation illustrates how, in its desire to move on from the problems of the past, Berlin society has sanitised its relationship to history to such an extent that the city's inhabitants have lost any true connection to the past. As Gerster is quoted as stating; "[...] you never see any film coming from Germany that shows this ghost of history in a film that's set in the present, and how these ghost are still part of everyday life. They're not *dominating* everyday life, but they're around, especially in a city like Berlin" (McCracken: 2014) (*italics in original*). Therefore, the inclusion of Friedrich is an attempt by the film to re-instigate such a discussion. Indeed, *Oh Boy* suggests that the old society Friedrich represents is not just being marginalised by Berlin's transformation into a normalised, global media city, but that it is at risk of disappearing from the city altogether, as this scene ends with Friedrich collapsing and dying.

Furthermore, Niko's encounter with Friedrich is not the only place in the film where such a critique is present. On one of his journeys around the city, Niko is taken by Matze to visit Phillip (Arnd Klawitter), an actor shooting a film in Berlin. Whilst the inclusion of such a scene could serve to highlight the vibrancy which the MBB boasts is now a feature of cinematic activities in the city, this scene is used instead to offer a critical portrait of the

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<sup>97</sup> Night of the broken glass

prevailing approach to filmmaking present within Berlin and the attitude of the city's film industry towards Berlin's past. As Hannah Pilarczyk writes; "What is being filmed there is indicative of what has gone so terribly wrong in German cinema"<sup>98</sup> (*Der Spiegel*: 2012). Phillip is the lead in what seems to be, from the size of his trailer, a large-budget German-language Second World War film, where he plays a Nazi who is in love with a Jew, a storyline that Niko makes fun of for its clichéd nature. Moreover, when Niko asks Phillip whether the film is based on a true story, rather than offering further details on the real people who have acted as the inspiration for the film's main characters, he simply replies "Yes, the Second World War"<sup>99</sup>. Phillip believes that historical setting alone is enough to produce a meaningful Nazi film, which means he has little interest in the true history his film is engaging with. Although there has been much debate surrounding the cultural impact of such Second World War films, through Philip's attitude, *Oh Boy* adopts a critical standpoint against such filmmaking, by casting these large-budget historical films as further confirmation of the lack of historical understanding in contemporary Berlin. Their narratives may be rooted in the past, but *Oh Boy's* engagement with such films indicates that those involved with this type of filmmaking are not interested in critically exploring this history in great detail and instead are simply appropriating this history for box office success. Therefore, the film positions such filmmaking as a further indication of the superficial attitude found within media Berlin.

Interestingly, whilst *Oh Boy's* discussion of history was a feature of many articles written upon the film's release, the coverage given to such ideas is markedly different when the domestic and international reviews are compared. For domestic reviewers, the film's melancholic depiction of Berlin, as well as *Oh Boy's* discussion of the pretentious media elites in the city, take centre stage, with Niko's experiences at the film set and with Friedrich mentioned only in passing. However, for American critics, it is the references to Berlin's Nazi past that become the pivotal feature of their reviews. As Rachel Saltz writes; "[...] this is Berlin, where dark history lurks" (*New York Times*: 2014), whilst Debruge echoes these sentiments by writing; "[...] Gerster presents an epically forbidding Berlin in black-and-white, full of life but shadowed by terrible recent history" (2014). The different reactions of German and American critics to the film highlights how Berlin's post-unification reputation is not necessarily a uniform one. In fact, the failure of domestic reviewers to engage with the film's critical portrayal of society's relationship to the city's

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<sup>98</sup> Was dort gedreht wird, bringt auf den Punkt, was im deutschen Kino so fürchterlich schief läuft

<sup>99</sup> Ja, der zweite Weltkrieg

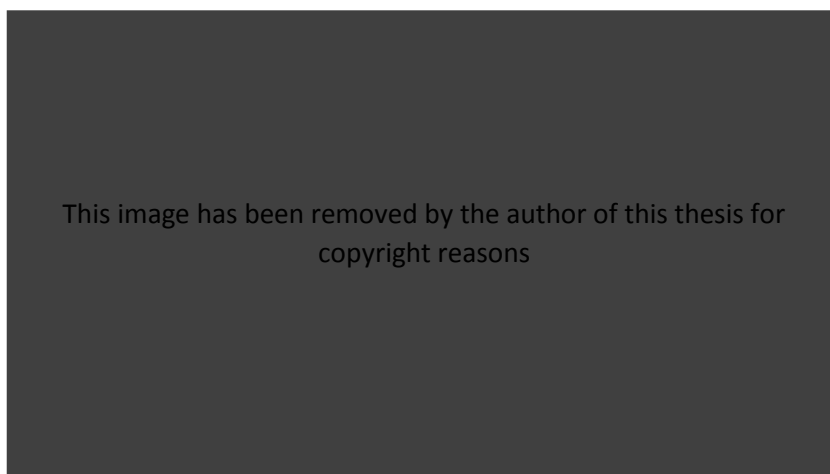
past can be seen as further confirmation of the ahistorical attitude which is now prevalent in media Berlin. Both the MBB and contemporary Berlin society more widely are far more inclined to favour the city's positive role as a hedonistic, creative hub over any lingering problems associated with Berlin's more controversial past, as such an approach allows the city's inhabitants to more easily focus on the future. However, in comparison to this, the stains of the past still linger for global audiences. This international attitude will be explored in more detail in Chapter 5, but what these reviews demonstrate is that Berlin's international reputation is noticeably different from the position which the city currently enjoys in the domestic imagination.

#### *The Disjuncture between Berlin's Public and Private Spaces*

Nevertheless, within *Oh Boy* these references to Berlin's past still act as counterpoints to the film's main discussion of Niko's failure to integrate himself into contemporary Berlin's media-dominated society. In particular, Niko's disconnection from the city can be seen in the manner in which *Oh Boy* draws a sharp contrast between the city's public and private spaces. Whereas the public space of the city conforms to the MBB's claim that Berlin has become a lively, post-*Baustelle* location, especially when compared to the empty nature of Berlin streets in earlier films, such as *Lola rennt*, Niko's domestic space does not continue to support such a positive view. He has moved into a new apartment a few weeks before, but has so far failed to unpack, with his apartment dominated by piles of boxes waiting to be emptied. Therefore, these scenes act as further confirmation that, as was discussed earlier in relation to *3 Zimmer/Küche/Bad*, the relationship between Berlin's urban space and the city's youth has changed. Whereas the *Spaßgesellschaft's* lack of domestic stability in the *Baustelle* films mirrored the chaotic upheaval found in the city's public space at the time, such correlation has now disappeared. As a result, *Oh Boy*, much like the majority of the other drifter films, challenges the MBB's promotion of Berlin as a youth culture hub, by demonstrating that many of the city's young inhabitants are experiencing a problematic and dislocated existence in Berlin.

Although the city around him may have found a new confidence in its matured status, Niko's living conditions show that he himself is struggling to find the same sort of stability. This is highlighted by the fact that the sounds of the city's streets, as was the case in *Am Himmel der Tag*, seep into the scenes set in Niko's apartment, with the noise from the busy streets below acting in stark opposition to the transitory state of Niko's living arrangements. Furthermore, in several shots Niko is shown looking out of his apartment

window, which overlooks the busy Schönhauser Allee, something which is illustrated in Figure 21. As Andrew Webber writes, such a use of windows within cinema creates “screens within the film screen”, which produces a sense of estrangement between protagonists and the world beyond (2006: 12). Therefore, the way that these shots of Niko’s apartment are framed in *Oh Boy* highlights the barrier which the window places between Niko and the bustling street below, a separation that is accentuated by the fact that Niko is captured in sharp focus, whilst the city beyond is blurred. The window acts as a visual symbol of the marginalisation that Niko feels towards the city around him. The transformation of the city’s urban space during the *Baustelle* period has created a series of public spaces that may fit with Berlin’s new maturity, but have left the city’s young people struggling to understand their role within contemporary Berlin.



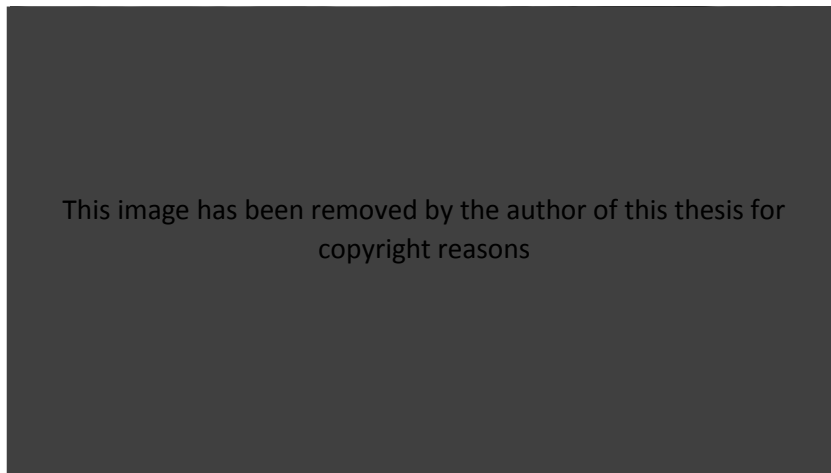
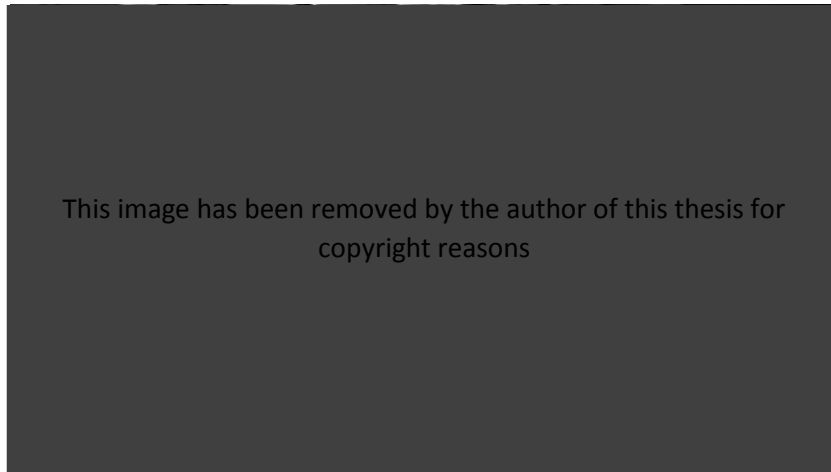
*Figure 21: The separation between Niko and Berlin’s public space*

This breakdown in the relationship between Berlin’s young people and the city’s urban space becomes even more explicit when Niko ventures out into the city. His nostalgic dislocation is shown to mean that he struggles to navigate Berlin’s urban space successfully. Early in the film we see him miss a tram on his way to a meeting with a psychologist (Andreas Schröders) to decide if he should have his driving license revoked for drunk driving. Things then do not get any better for Niko as he fails the psychologist’s tests, due to the fact that the psychologist believes Niko’s current drifter lifestyle means that he is at a high risk of a mental breakdown, which would make him unfit to navigate the city on his own by car. Therefore, it is not just his driving license that Niko has revoked, but his position as a normal, functioning inhabitant of the city. As a result, the film shows how those in a position of power within Berlin, represented by the psychologist, are actively preventing the vagrant way of life Niko embodies from being a part of the contemporary city. Niko’s loss of his driving licence is an allegorical act, which mirrors the manner in

which his transient lifestyle is no longer a feasible option for the current youth generation in the city, as they are placed under an increased amount of pressure to conform to societal norms.

Due to the loss of his driving license, Niko must traverse the city by public transport. This should force him to become part of the throng of inhabitants that the film demonstrates to be populating Berlin's streets, which in turn should begin to heal the disjuncture that exists between Niko and Berlin society. However, the way that these journeys are constructed in the film only exaggerates the dislocation and alienation that Niko feels towards Berlin's urban space and those who inhabit it. Despite the fact that Berlin's public transport system is often busy and overcrowded, as Figure 22 highlights, Niko appears to be alone on his journeys across the city, as he is shown either sat in empty carriages or in close up shots that cut off the other passengers around him. Equally, as with those that take place in Niko's apartment, these scenes illustrate that a barrier exists between Niko and the wider city in the form of a screen-like window. Niko is seen looking out on the city from behind the glass of these windows, with little more than his own reflection being visible to both him and the viewer. He is unable to connect directly with the wider city, and so, despite being out within the public spaces of Berlin, these scenes are captured in a way which separates Niko from Berlin's urban space, showing him to be an outsider whose presence in the city becomes that of a voyeuristic outcast.





*Figure 22: Niko's journeys across Berlin*

To illustrate the problems created by such a situation, as was the case with the depiction of Lara's journeys in *Am Himmel der Tag, Oh Boy* engages with images which draw on the idea of the crowd mentality of the city's inhabitants. As Niko traverses Berlin, he is seen to struggle against the blasé crowd of the city, a choice of imagery which highlights that Berlin's wider society cares little about Niko's problems. In addition, the superficial manner in which the film cuts away from Niko at several points and includes a montage of images of anonymous members of Berlin society, without offering an explanation or further investigation of these images, mimics the ambivalence which exists in the city and the faceless existence which the growing blasé nature of society is facilitating. These shots may serve to cast Berlin as a key protagonist within the film, but the unwillingness of the camera to linger on these images means that these sequences come to show the city to be a cold and impersonal location, where the individuality of those who make up the city's masses is not important.

### *The End of the Drifter in Berlin*

The changes seen within Berlin's urban space in recent years are shown to be out of step with the reputation Berlin still enjoys as a youth culture hub, due in part to the continued promotion of such a view through the marketing efforts of agencies such as the MBB. Therefore, *Oh Boy* illustrates that the disjuncture which this misconstruction is causing within the city's young inhabitants has left Niko confused and alienated from his surroundings. Such feelings are evident as he tries to justify his existence to his father, who asks Niko what he has been doing for the last two years. In reply, Niko states; "I've reflected [...] on me, on you, on everything"<sup>100</sup>. Yet, whilst those in positions of authority in the city, such as Niko's father or the psychologist, may see this transient behaviour as being in opposition to the desires of Berlin's normalised society, this is not the position taken by the film. As Stephanie Merry writes; "It would be easy to see the movie and its random vignettes as a satire of the arrested development of millennials, but there's none at work here" (*The Washington Post*: 2014). Instead, the film's melancholic tone is sympathetic towards Niko's plight, as elements such as *Oh Boy's* black and white images and jazz soundtrack become a wistful lament for Berlin's lost drifter tradition.

However, despite this empathy, the film is unable to provide a solution which allows Niko's drifter lifestyle to become an accepted part of the dominant world of media Berlin. This change is highlighted towards the end of the film as Niko waits at the hospital to find out if Friedrich has survived or not. These scenes from the hospital are punctuated by a montage of images of Berlin's urban space captured at daybreak. As Tilman Krause writes, these human-less images caught between the end of the city's parties and the start of a new day are not a new concept for Berlin. Instead; "This is familiar for art lovers. They are reminiscent of the whole tradition of Berlin hangover pictures. This goes back to the time around 1900"<sup>101</sup> (*Die Welt*: 2013). These 'hangover pictures' accompanied Berlin's rise as a hedonistic location, a reputation that continued from the cabarets of the Weimar period, via West Berlin's hippy and punk movements during the time of division, through to the *Spaßgesellschaft* of *Baustelle* Berlin. As a result, the cinematic tradition of the drifter can be seen as a filmic version of such images, with the depiction of the problems created by the pleasure-seeking tendencies of Berlin society, present in films such as *Taxi zum Klo* and *Julietta*, offering a similar exploration of the city. Significantly, the majority of *Oh Boy's*

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<sup>100</sup> Ich habe nachgedacht [...] über mich, über dich, über alles

<sup>101</sup> Das kommt dem Kunstfreund bekannt vor. Es erinnert ihn an eine ganze Tradition Berliner Hangover-Bilder. Die geht zurück bis in die Zeit um 1900

'hangover pictures' are of locations linked to either the time of division, such as the remaining sections of the Wall and *Mauerpark*, which was previously a strip of no-man's land between East and West Berlin, or with the *Baustelle* period, such as the city's lingering building sites and the massive graffiti strewn buildings that have become famous images of the post-unification city. As up until this point the film's depiction of Berlin's urban space has shown the city to be full of activity, the emptiness of these historically relevant locations comes as something of a shock for the viewer and goes against the understanding of the contemporary topography of Berlin developed by both the film and the wider media Berlin brand.

Yet, by positioning these images at the exact moment that Friedrich is dying in hospital, the film illustrates how the drifter way of life, which has defined Berlin for years, is similarly disappearing from the city's contemporary reality. As Birgit Roschy writes; "[*Oh Boy*] is a melancholic farewell to this type of film"<sup>102</sup> (*Die Zeit*: 2012). Such a lifestyle is counterintuitive to the normalisation which society has been working towards since unification, with a more mature way of life now the central feature of the MBB's promotion of Berlin's media society. As Gerster states; "An image of what the ideal life should look like is permanently being peddled in the media, nowadays this encompasses a range of things: from having a 'career and earning money' to 'living on a farm and owning designer furniture'"<sup>103</sup> (*Die Zeit*: 2013). Therefore, as Schulz-Ojala writes; "[*Oh Boy*] is a hymn to the cold, lost, lonely Berlin and how it continues to quietly exist today next to the oh-so-hip city of the same name"<sup>104</sup> (*Der Tagesspiegel*: 2012). Through the film's exploration of Niko's situation, *Oh Boy's* highlights how Berlin's normalised reality has come at a price, as Berlin's unique culture of youthful experimentation is deemed to be an unsuitable, dysfunctional part of the contemporary city.

Yet, the film does end on a note of hope. Friedrich's death acts as the culmination to Niko's journey and the film's closing scene shows Niko in a coffee shop the next morning, having spent the night at the hospital waiting in vain for Friedrich to recover. Significantly, Niko is finally able to procure a cup of coffee, an event which suggests that, through his encounter with Friedrich, Niko seems to have found the purpose he was looking for, which means that he is now able to begin to reintegrate himself into society. In

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<sup>102</sup> [*Oh Boy* ist] ein melancholischer Abgesang auf jene Film-Spezies

<sup>103</sup> Durch die Medien wird permanent ein Bild kolportiert, wie ein optimales Leben auszusehen habe, das reicht heute noch viel weiter: von 'Karriere und Geldverdienen' bis hin zu 'auf den Bauernhof leben und Möbel entwerfen'

<sup>104</sup> [*Oh Boy* ist] eine Hymne auf das kalte, verlorene, einsame Berlin, wie es heute in aller Ruhe weiterexistiert, neben der ach so hippen Stadt gleichen Namens

terms of the wider discussion of history found in *Oh Boy*, Niko's change of circumstance would seem to offer a way forward for Berlin society as a whole. The death of Friedrich shows that the film is not advocating a whole-hearted return to the *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* of the past, but instead is suggesting that the city's inhabitants, as Niko does with Friedrich, need to discover a more genuine and critical link to this history, which they can carry with them in the present. However, this ending is also bittersweet. Niko realises that it is he who will have to adapt to Berlin's gentrified society, as he has been unable to discover any remnants of the experimental youth culture he has been melancholically searching for throughout the film. Similarly, whether he will be able to successfully make this transformation and begin to overcome his marginalisation is also unclear. Niko is once again framed in front of a window, and we see a train pass by on the other side of the glass. Therefore, through its closing shot, *Oh Boy* emphasises that, despite seemingly achieving a breakthrough, at least for now, Niko remains adrift in the city, disconnected from the busy, vibrant public space of Berlin.

## **Conclusion**

The view of Berlin found in the MBB's marketing material may be of a city which is a pleasure-seeking hotspot for international young creatives, but the drifter films shun such an approach, offering a more problematic take on the lives of Berlin's young people. These films draw on the tradition of the transient drifter to demonstrate that, although Berlin has become a bustling global hub, with a thriving media society, many young people are struggling to find a place to belong in the city. There is no denying that Berlin is a city dominated by older media professionals, but their pretentious attitude is counterproductive to the MBB's claims that the city is a welcoming youth culture mecca. Instead, the drifter films highlight that the youthful freedom and self-discovery which has been synonymous with Berlin for decades is no longer an accepted part of the city. This is because the expectations which have developed within Berlin's matured society following the period of post-unification rebuilding are forcing the city's young people to abandon their more transient way of life and conform. This version of city life is epitomised by *Oh Boy*, as the film shows that, in place of the city's drifter tradition, a more career orientated, stable way of life dominates Berlin today. Such a narrative thread may have parallels to the industry-insider films and their characters' dissatisfaction with their lifestyle in Berlin's media world, but, as films such as *Wir sind die Nacht* explore the problems of Berlin's creative industries from the inside, their narratives are only able to nuance the ideas found

within the media Berlin brand. Yet, by contrasting the life of a complete outsider in Niko with the city's media society, *Oh Boy* is able to transcend the view of the city as a media-dominated location, illustrating that Berlin has become an alienating and uncaring city for those young people who exist on the margins of this world. Consequently, the film adds a different, more disparaging layer to understandings of Berlin found within cinema and in doing so *Oh Boy* highlights the lost way of life that has been left behind following Berlin's post-unification transformation into a global media city.

## Chapter 5: *The Fifth Estate* - The Changing Nature of Berlin' Spies in Contemporary Espionage Films:

### Introduction

As well as the city's standing as a hedonistic and creative location full of young people, another constant thread within cinematic representations of Berlin has been the idea of the city as a location full of spies. Therefore, whilst the legacy of Berlin's pleasure-seeking, creative community has been explored in the previous two chapters, I now turn to the manner in which the view of the city as a hotbed of international espionage remains a feature of contemporary Berlin filmmaking. In particular, this view of the city was developed through the numerous English-language Cold War thrillers which were produced in Berlin during the time of division. Consequently, it should come as no surprise that many of the contemporary espionage films dealt with in this chapter, such as *The International* (Tom Tykwer, 2009), *Hanna* (Joe Wright, 2011) and *Unknown* (Jaume Collet-Serra, 2011), are English-language films which are indebted to the cinematic history of Hollywood forays into Berlin cinema. However, the Berlin espionage film is not an exclusively English-language filmmaking trend. Although Hollywood films may have dominated such a view, Berlin's cinematic reputation as an espionage hub has always been rooted in a diverse array of productions. For example, following the end of the Second World War, the idea of Berlin as a centre of surveillance was developed by domestic *Trümmerfilme*, such as *Razzia* (*Raid*, Werner Klingler, 1947), alongside Hollywood productions, such as *A Foreign Affair* (Billy Wilder, 1948). This diversity remains a feature today, as the view of Berlin as a centre for global spies is also present in German-language films made in the city, such as *Who am I – Kein System ist sicher* (*Who am I – No System is Safe*, Baran bo Odar, 2014), as well as the Bollywood film *Don 2* (Farhan Akhtar, 2011) and the South Korean film *The Berlin File* (Seung-wan Ryoo, 2013).

The different languages and production backgrounds of these films means that, unlike the films discussed in my previous chapters, for whom a theatrical run outside of German-speaking countries is a bonus rather than an aim, the majority of the contemporary espionage films are made for the global market. Therefore, before analysing the films themselves, I will first set out the wider international filmmaking context within which the contemporary espionage films exist. Of particular interest is the growth of transnational filmmaking within global cinema in the last few decades, something which Randall Halle defines as being signified by a shift from; "film as national product in

geopolitical exchange [...] to film as a cultural commodity in a global free market” (2008: 7). The changing nature of international filmmaking has led Nolwenn Mingant to coin the term the ‘global-local film’, a concept which I also adopt. As Mingant argues, the globalisation of film production now means that international filmic practices, such as the Hollywood star system and special effects, are combined with more local features, such as native stories and actors, meaning that the provenance of the contemporary espionage film is increasingly more complicated to define (2011: 142). The films discussed in this chapter may be considered part of Berlin’s film industry precisely because of their use of local stories, locations and actors, but, through my subsequent analysis, I explore this global/local dichotomy to highlight the tension which this transnational approach to filmmaking creates in these films’ narratives, as they look to both perform to international stereotypes and more meaningfully engage with regional identities.

These pressures are evident in the contemporary espionage films through the fact that, on first glance, the presence of these tales of international conflict and surveillance seems to go against the view of Berlin as a normalised city found within the media Berlin brand. This is because the reputation of Berlin as a city of spies maintains a stereotypical link to the problematic situation found in the city before the fall of the Wall. However, by comparing and contrasting different contemporary espionage films in the first half of the chapter, I will demonstrate how, rather than playing to these stereotypes, these films are using this historical view of Berlin as a gateway into a more contemporary construction of the city, which is moving towards an image ultimately in line with the MBB’s idea of Berlin as a global media city. Much like in the films discussed in previous chapters, these films show Berlin’s urban space to be overcoming the problems of the past, a change which is also impacting the activities of the intelligence community in the city. Gone are the Government sponsored spies of *The Quiller Memorandum* (Michael Anderson, 1966) and *Funeral in Berlin* (Guy Hamilton, 1966) and in their place are technology-savvy individuals, tracked by international crime organisations. This new kind of espionage is epitomised by *The Fifth Estate* (Bill Condon, 2013), the film which I examine as my case study in the second part of the chapter. The film explores the recent *WikiLeaks* scandal and the rise of Julian Assange, who uses technology and the media to facilitate his modern-day variety of spying. Therefore, the construction of Berlin found in the narrative of *The Fifth Estate* illustrates how these contemporary espionage films are taking a well-known element of the city’s cinematic past and adapting it to the global media present favoured by the media Berlin brand.

## The Rise of the Global-Local Film

The relationship which the contemporary espionage films have to the city's film industry is noticeably different from the production background of previous Berlin-set spy films. The Cold War thrillers of the 1960s, such as *The Quiller Memorandum*, *Funeral in Berlin* and *Torn Curtain* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1966), were made by Hollywood studios, with little input from the domestic film industry in the city. This meant that these films firmly remained products of the North American filmmaking system, and so promoted a 'touristic' view of the city, seen through the eyes of outsiders. Such an attitude was most obvious in the manner in which the main protagonists in these films were all American or British spies, with the local population confined to minor, often negatively codified, supporting roles. This is evident in *The Quiller Memorandum*, as the film focuses on the exploits of *M15* and *CIA* operatives in the city, with the few Berliners in the narrative acting as the film's villains. However, in the last few decades there has been a number of changes in the international film industry, particularly with regard to the make-up and tastes of these films' target audience, which means that such an approach is no longer a viable option.

On the one hand, as Toby Miller et al argue, the world market has become increasingly important to the Hollywood Studios, due to the fact that cinema audiences within North America have continued to shrink, a decline which began in the 1950s. This has meant that Hollywood has needed to replace falling revenues at home with box office returns from elsewhere (2005: 10). Yet, at the same time, as Angus Finney writes; "Local audiences and communities are rising up, demanding culturally specific stories that explore their own communities" (2010: 5). Whilst previously Hollywood's focus was on making films for a domestic audience, which meant that their films reflected American, rather than global, tastes and attitudes, this has now changed. As Finney continues; "[...] the studios are conceding that American world series sports movies or homogenised, formulaic romantic comedies set in Long-Island are failing to rock audiences from Angora to Zagreb" (2010: 5). Consequently, in order to connect with audiences around the world, Hollywood has been forced to alter its approach to filmmaking, by paying more attention to elements outside of America, be that in the stories it tells or the way in which it produces its films.

As stated above, this development has given rise to an increase in what Mingant categorises as 'global-local films', which combine elements more traditionally found in Hollywood blockbusters, with aspects more aligned with the local region. These films still contain many familiar tropes of big-budget Hollywood films, such as action sequences and well-known stars. Yet, the global-local film also looks to transcend the outsider, tourist



perspective previously adopted by such filmic forays to locations outside of America, by including more meaningful explorations of local stories and protagonists, in order to increase the film's chances of being a success at the global box office. As Halle states; "The [Hollywood] producers understand that their films must appeal to markets well beyond the North American continent. The U.S. market might still be the most significant single market, but the increased importance of international distribution and secondary markets expand the direction of filmmaking beyond it" (2008: 43). For example, the attraction of Germany as both a film production location and market can be seen in figures published by the *Motion Picture Association of America* on the make-up of the global box office. In 2013, the German box office was worth 1.3 billion dollars, ranking eighth overall. Similarly, a story with strong European credentials is also likely to appeal to other major markets on the continent, such as the UK (1.7 billion dollars, third overall) and France (1.6 billion dollars, fourth overall) (2013: 5).

Interestingly, whilst Hollywood, due to its dominance at the global box office, may be the obvious example of the growth in the global-local film, other major international film industries around the world, such as those found in India and East Asia, have begun to adopt a similar approach, in an attempt to improve the global success of their own films. Therefore, as Miller et al go on to argue, the traditional boundaries of national film production are being challenged (2005: 209). Such a development is particularly pertinent for ideas surrounding Berlin's cinematic reputation. As was seen earlier, the MBB promotes Berlin as a distinct film production region and the transnational turn seen in the city's film industry also gives a boost to such regional identity. As Halle writes, transnational storytelling allows; "[The local to be] re-signified within the field of new possibilities [...]. Indeed, transnational structures and relations in the home of the nation-state might be 'credited' with bringing life back into European regionalisms, local affiliations and tribal relations" (2008: 20). Whereas previously the tourist perspective of Hollywood forays into Berlin meant that the city's regional reputation was closely tied to the national identity of Germany, the rise of transnational filmmaking is liberating the region's sub-national individuality. Hence, the global-local perspective of the contemporary espionage films analysed below blur the boundary between Berlin cinema and the international film industry, and so give greater prominence to a more regionally specific point of view in relation to Berlin on screen.

In terms of Berlin's production environment, the impact of global-local filmmaking can be seen in the number of co-productions, financed through a combination of local and

international sources of funding, that are now found within the city's cinematic output. This is because, as Paul Cooke argues, such international co-productions; "[...] utilise the Berlin-Brandenburg context to endow their projects with a degree of German authenticity" (2012: 201). By receiving funding from bodies such as the MBB or the DFFF, these films are, at least in part, categorised as German films, a fact which is evident in the presence of Berlin-made co-productions such as *Anonymous* (Roland Emmerich, 2011) and *Cloud Atlas* (Andy Wachowski, Lana Wachowski and Tom Tykwer, 2012) on the list of nominees for the German film awards in recent years. In fact, although post-unification Berlin initially struggled to attract anything other than small-scale, German-language films to the city, with the handful of co-produced epics made at Babelsberg during the *Baustelle* period (e.g. *Enemy at the Gates*, Jean-Jacques Annaud, 2001) being anomalies, rather than the norm, in recent years Berlin has become home to an increasingly diverse array of international co-productions. This has included large-scale blockbusters, which make use of Babelsberg's set building skills to recreate other eras and worlds, such as *Inglourious Basterds* (Quentin Tarantino, 2009) and *Cloud Atlas*. However, the local spend clauses, which, as was discussed in Chapter 1, are an integral part of film funding in Germany, have also seen other co-productions engage with more locally specific stories in order to qualify for support. As a result, a growing number of international co-productions combine studio-based shoots with scenes set in the contemporary urban space of Berlin, with co-produced espionage films, such as *Unknown* and *Don 2*, being examples of this approach.

Still, although many of the contemporary espionage films gain local credibility through the fact that they are classified as German co-productions, the source of finance received by a film is not the only factor which defines a global-local film. Narrative content, use of locations, and film personnel are as important a factor as the production background to the film. Therefore, the central role Berlin plays in the narratives of films such as *The Fifth Estate* and *The Berlin File* casts these productions as part of Berlin cinema, despite neither film being a German co-production. The majority of the contemporary espionage films may lack the German-language signifiers of those films discussed in my previous two chapters, but their global-local outlook means that they are still an important part of the contemporary production landscape found in Berlin. In terms of the city's film industry, the big budgets usually associated with these films means that they create a large regional effect, providing employment and revenue to both the city's freelance film professionals and the many businesses connected to the city's production environment. At the same time, these films' worldwide reach also impacts the view of Berlin held by international

cinema-goers. The Berlin elements of these global-local films act as a form of advertising, which influences the global reputation of Berlin and attracts international visitors to the city, be they fans of English-language films, or the Indian or Korean viewers of *Don 2* and *The Berlin File*.

However, the growth of the global-local film is not without its problems, especially given that the 'local' focus of the contemporary espionage films does not mean that they treat Berlin in the same way as the German-language productions found in the city. This difference can be explained through the audiences which these films are looking to attract. The majority of the contemporary espionage films have been developed with a global release strategy in mind, which means that the approach taken towards Berlin's actors, characteristics and locations during the development of these films is different to those films whose main focus is domestic cinema-goers. This is because, as Roy Stafford states, different audiences around the world have different expectations and tastes when it comes to films (2007: 34). Hence, as Mingant goes on to argue, what is familiar for local audiences is exotic for foreign ones. Therefore, although there has been an "evolution toward a more authentic use of foreign elements" in the global-local films, these films still revert to a more stereotypical view of their locations, in order to meet the universal expectations of international audiences (2011: 149-153). In terms of Berlin, this difference is evident in the fact that, for domestic cinema-goers, their opinions on the city are shaped on a daily basis, as they are confronted with a mass of images and news stories from the nation's capital within the domestic media. Yet, for international audiences, their exposure to the city is more limited, as Berlin competes with other global locations on the world stage for coverage. This means that the expectations of this audience as to the themes and images which should be present within a Berlin film rely more on long held stereotypes, forged over time. Consequently, the tension between stereotypes and the reality of the everyday city found within global-local films is an essential element to my analysis of the contemporary espionage films in this chapter. It is the balance which these films strike between the performance of historical stereotypes and a meaningful engagement with modern-day Berlin that shapes the reputation of the city being disseminated by these films and, by association, influences the extent to which they include images similar to those found within the media Berlin brand.

## The Contemporary Espionage Films' Movement towards media Berlin

### *Remnants of the Baustelle*

In the context of the contemporary espionage films, the dichotomy between playing to stereotypes and a more authentic exploration of Berlin can be seen in the fact that these films make use of the Cold War tradition of Berlin as a city of spies for the basis of their narrative, but then also begin to engage with images more in line with ideas surrounding Berlin as a creative, hedonistic city. Indeed, whilst the Cold War may provide the historical point of reference for these espionage films within Berlin cinema, the stereotypes found within the contemporary films are not ones rooted in the divided city. Instead, it is the *Baustelle* period which is strongly referenced within the narratives of these films.

Therefore, these productions demonstrate that, whilst the global coverage of the fall of the Wall may have moved Berlin's reputation beyond that of a city divided, the international audiences of these contemporary espionage films still view Berlin as a work-in-progress location, attempting to overcome the trauma left behind by unification.

This strong correlation between the *Baustelle* period and these contemporary espionage films is evident in *Unknown*, which tells the story of a scientist called Martin Harris (Liam Neeson), who is visiting the city for an international conference. Early in the film Martin is involved in a near fatal car accident and wakes up to find that someone has stolen his identity. No matter how much he protests, everyone, including his wife (January Jones), seems to believe this impostor is the real Martin Harris and that Martin's claims are a result of amnesia brought on by the accident. Yet, as Martin eventually discovers, the real truth to this confusion lies in the shady world of espionage and terrorism. As the Spanish director of *Unknown*, Jaume Collet-Serra, is quoted as stating; "[...] Berlin is perfectly suited to the story because it's a city that's still looking for its own identity. The city itself resonates with the themes and characters and the story" (Roxborough: 2011). Martin's issues mirror the problems facing Jason Bourne (Matt Damon) in the *Baustelle* film *The Bourne Supremacy* (Paul Greengrass, 2004), as this film also played on the struggle for identity and problems of amnesia within post-unification Berlin. However, although it may certainly be true that during the period of rebuilding Berlin society was struggling to come to terms with the city's new identity as a unified location, in recent years such problems have become less of a factor. This is reflected in both the normalised view of the city's urban space found within the media Berlin brand and many contemporary Berlin films, whose narratives now deal with identity issues which are no longer directly linked to the

problems of unification. Yet, Collet-Serra's view fails to take into account these developments, and so illustrates how the stereotypes of the *Baustelle* period still linger for those who are less familiar with the daily life of present-day Berlin, such as the international audiences that the contemporary espionage films are looking to engage with.

Equally, it is not just through Martin's memory loss that the film draws on elements of *Baustelle* Berlin within its narrative. The early scenes in the film show Martin leaving his briefcase behind by accident on his arrival at Tegel airport, before realising his mistake when he arrives at his hotel. He immediately takes a taxi back to the airport to retrieve the briefcase and it is during this return journey that Martin is involved in his accident, as the taxi swerves off the *Oberbaumbrücke* and plunges into the Spree. However, this bridge is in the east of the city, whilst the airport is located in the west and Martin's hotel, the famous Hotel Adlon, is situated next to the *Brandenburger Tor* in Berlin's centre. Therefore, there is no logical reason for the taxi to be anywhere near the bridge, as the film constructs an unreal version of Berlin's topography through Martin's journey across the city. As was argued in Chapter 2, such a construction was also found in the seminal *Baustelle* film *Lola rennt* (*Run Lola Run*, Tom Tykwer, 1998), with Lola's runs across the city following an impossible route, which mirrored the chaotic and disjointed state of Berlin's urban space at the time. *Unknown* may have been made after the *Baustelle* period, but the construction of Berlin at the start of the film strongly references Tykwer's film, particularly as *Unknown* chooses to locate the culmination of Martin's confused journey on the *Oberbaumbrücke*, which was also a central feature of Lola's runs across Berlin.

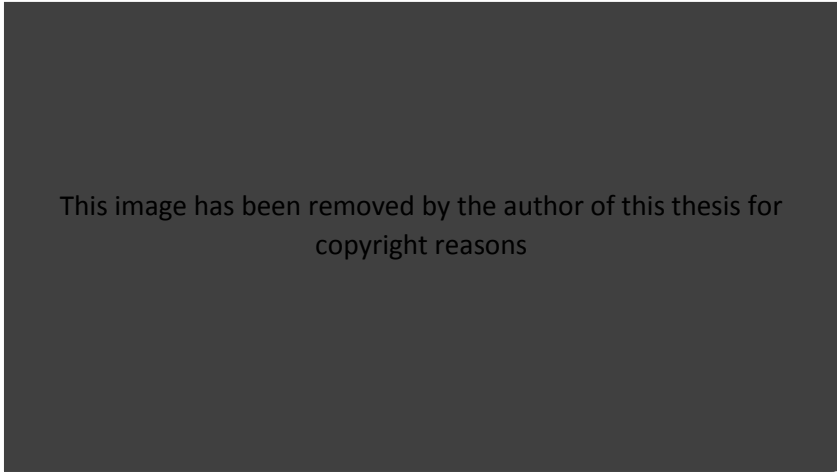
The contemporary espionage films' tendency to construct a topography for Berlin which alludes to the disjointed *Baustelle* image of the city is also found in *Ninja Assassin* (James McTeigue, 2009), a film which deals with the battle of rogue ninja Raizo (Rain) to defeat his former ninja clan, before they can assassinate both him and a *Europol* agent called Mika (Naomi Harris). One of the film's central battle scenes takes place in a disused industrial bunker, which supposedly once belonged to the East German government. Yet, when Raizo appears outside this bunker, he is quickly shown next to the *Siegessäule*<sup>105</sup> in the heart of the *Tiergarten*, a park that was part of West Berlin and is nowhere near any such industrial land. Furthermore, the presence of this derelict bunker in the heart of Berlin goes against the trend which has seen the ruins of Berlin disappear from both the MBB's promotion of the city and the version of Berlin found in the industry-insider and drifter films. Instead, *Ninja Assassin* actively engages with the image of Berlin as a location full of

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<sup>105</sup> Victory Column

ruined, derelict buildings found in *Baustelle* films, such as *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle* (*Life is All You Get*, Wolfgang Becker, 1997) and *Lola + Bilidikid* (*Lola and Billy the Kid*, Kutlug Ataman, 1999).

This gritty view of Berlin is also seen in *Hanna*. Whilst the topography of the city may not be as disjointed as is the case with the construction of Berlin in both *Unknown* and *Ninja Assassin*, the sort of city districts which the main protagonists are shown to visit largely conform to the image of Berlin as a location in need of renovation found in the *Baustelle* films. The film tells the story of a young girl, Hanna (Saoirse Ronan), who is trained by her father, Erik (Eric Bana), in the Arctic wilderness to become a highly competent assassin, and is then sent out on a mission to Europe, a mission which culminates in Berlin. It is revealed that the reason for Berlin being chosen as Hanna's end-goal is that her dead mother was an East Berliner. Yet, as Figure 23 demonstrates, once Hanna arrives in the city, rather than finding herself surrounded by the 'cool' bars and clubs synonymous with the version of eastern Berlin found within the media Berlin brand, she is seen travelling down dark streets full of graffiti to anonymous, rundown concrete high rises, an image that is far more reminiscent of the version of this part of Berlin found in *Baustelle* films, such as *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle*. Berlin may no longer be a divided city, but the version of the city's urban space found in these films strongly plays to the stereotype of Berlin as a work-in-progress, gritty, and chaotic city, an image of Berlin which, as has been seen previously, is one which the MBB has been actively looking to move on from through the media Berlin brand.



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*Figure 23: The gritty view of Berlin's urban space in Hanna*

#### *Introducing Berlin's Transformed Urban Space to International Audiences*

Nevertheless, although both *Ninja Assassin* and *Hanna* may reference the *Baustelle* image of the city in their construction of the urban space of Berlin, when their versions of the city

are compared to each other, it becomes apparent that the traction such a stereotype has over international views of Berlin is changing. Whereas the disused bunker in *Ninja Assassin* is found in the centre of the city, when a similar location is needed in *Hanna*, a film which was made two years later, as the narrative builds to a final shoot-out between Hanna and the CIA agent, Marissa Wiegler (Cate Blanchett), such empty and disused buildings are shown to no longer be a feature of central Berlin. Instead, the pair are forced out to the abandoned *Spreepark* in the city's eastern suburbs. Thus, whilst the ruins and derelict buildings of *Baustelle* Berlin may remain within these films, these locations are not as prevalent as before, meaning that scenes which make use of such a setting increasingly play out on the periphery of the city. In fact, the Korean spies of *The Berlin File*, which was made a further two years after *Hanna*, are forced into the countryside outside of Berlin for their final shoot-out, as the city is no longer able to provide them with an appropriate safe house.

Of course, as was discussed in Chapter 3, this lack of suitable empty buildings was also a problem for the vampires in *Wir sind die Nacht* (*We are the Night*, Dennis Gansel, 2010). Like Hanna and Marissa, the vampires tried to first make use of the *Spreepark*, before being forced further out of the city to the *Teufelsberg* in the *Grunewald*, with their increased marginalisation being used in *Wir sind die Nacht* to highlight the changing nature of contemporary Berlin's topography, from problematic *Baustelle* city to normalised global location. Consequently, the trajectory seen in *Wir sind die Nacht* is also present in the use of Berlin's derelict spaces in the contemporary espionage films. As a result, despite these films' references to the city's *Baustelle* past, there is a notable progression in the contemporary espionage films' treatment of Berlin's urban space towards an image which more closely resembles the normalised topography found within the MBB's promotion of the city through the media Berlin brand.

The difficult balance the makers of the contemporary espionage films must strike between the reality of present-day Berlin and the stereotypes which exist within their international target audience is something which Tom Tykwer addresses in an interview with Alex Billington surrounding the release of his espionage film *The International*, a film which features Berlin prominently in the opening part of its narrative. Tykwer argues; "[...] I feel like in Berlin, it's a really undiscovered territory for architectural discoveries", a statement which he clarifies by going on to state that, due to the numerous new buildings and other redevelopments which have taken place in Berlin since the fall of the Wall, the city's contemporary topography is largely unknown to cinema audiences (*First Showing:*

2009). The city's transformed urban spaces may offer a blank canvas for filmmakers, but the unfamiliar context this provides also forces them to include themes and images more connected to the city's cinematic past, in order to ground their films within international ideas surrounding Berlin, before then being able to move on to explore the newly renovated city. Accordingly, Tykwer chooses to open *The International* in front of Berlin's *Hauptbahnhof*, a building whose completion signalled the beginning of the end for Berlin's period of rebuilding. Yet, the unfamiliarity of this new building is offset by the fact that the film's main protagonist, *Interpol* agent Louis Salinger (Clive Owen), is there to gather information from an informant, a style of meeting which was also common in the Cold War spy films set in the city.

The use of the *Hauptbahnhof* in *The International* illustrates that, away from the out-dated view of Berlin as a gritty location, the reality of post-unification Berlin's urban space is one dominated by a trend towards an architectural style which heavily uses glass and steel. Significantly, this is not the only time that such an architectural style is featured prominently in the contemporary espionage films. As Figure 24 illustrates, the new headquarters of the *Bundesnachrichtendienst*<sup>106</sup> is a central component to the activities of the hacker group CLAY in *Who am I – Kein System ist sicher*, whilst *Don 2* features the striking new government buildings which have been built around the *Reichstag*. As was discussed in reference to the industry-insider films, such architecture is used across contemporary Berlin cinema to signify the presence of the large, global corporations, which city agencies, such as the MBB, are looking to attract to Berlin as part of their strategy to grow the city's international standing and economy. As a result, although the occupants of the buildings found in the espionage films may be more closely linked to the city's government than its media society, they are still involved in high-profile, transnational work. Thus, by including such buildings within their narratives, these contemporary espionage films begin to promote a view of Berlin which supports the MBB's claims that the city is emerging as an international business location which boasts the necessary infrastructure to support large transnational corporations.

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<sup>106</sup> National Intelligence Service



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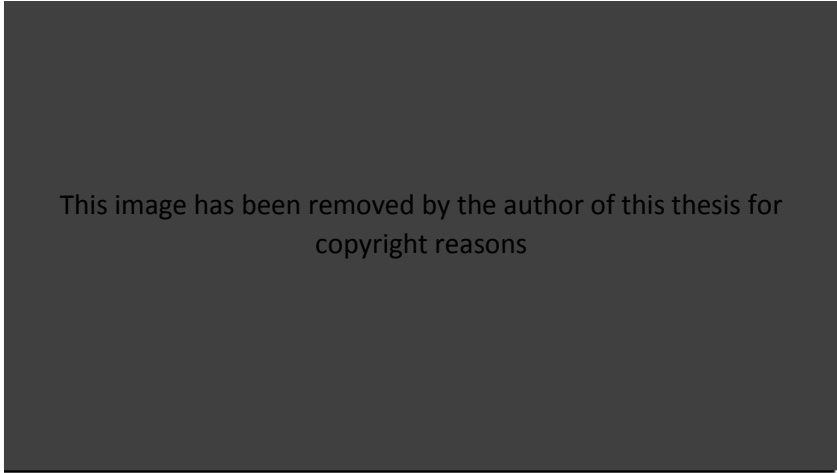


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*Figure 24: The use of glass and steel in The International (Top), Who am I – Kein System ist sicher (Middle) and Don 2 (Bottom)*

The evolution of the view held with regard to Berlin's topography within international audiences, from run-down location to international business hotspot, can be seen in the manner in which *Unknown's* construction of Berlin alters as the film progress, with the film educating its viewers on the reality now found within the 'unknown' city of Berlin. The film opens with images of the Soviet War Memorial in the *Tiergarten*, a location also featured in films such as *The Big Lift* (George Seaton, 1950), and one which is firmly

associated with Berlin's problematic past. The film then moves on, as was stated above, in its early scenes to a view of Berlin which draws on the *Baustelle* legacy of *Lola rennt* to construct an unrealistic topography for the city. However, by the end of the film, *Unknown* promotes a version of Berlin's urban space which more closely resembles the normalised topography at the centre of the media Berlin brand. As Figure 25 shows, this can be seen in the way that the film closes with a credits sequence which makes use of an aerial shot over Berlin that rises in the west and gradually makes its way east, moving across the city centre towards the *Fernsehturm*. This image of the city is noticeably devoid of either the problematic voids of no-mans-land which were found along the Wall during the time of division, or the cranes and building sites of the *Baustelle* period. In their place, the image of Berlin which the film leaves its viewers with is one of a coherent, big city, a view which demonstrate that the objective of the film's narrative to introduce Berlin's newly normalised topography to international audiences has been concluded successfully.



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Figure 25: The closing shot of Berlin's normalised urban space in *Unknown*

#### *The Changing Nature of Berlin's Spies*

This use of Berlin's cinematic past as an entry point into a discussion on the present-day city is also seen in the manner in which the spies at the heart of these espionage films are depicted. As was argued earlier, the presence of such spy narratives within contemporary Berlin initially seems to echo the city's problematic history, where Berlin's divided status allowed government-sponsored Cold War espionage to flourish. Indeed, spies with a strong link to this past are found in the contemporary espionage films, through the former *Stasi* operatives Ernst Jürgen (Bruno Ganz) in *Unknown* and Wilhelm Wexler (Armin Mueller-Stahl) in *The International*, and the CIA spies Marissa and Erik in *Hanna*. However, rather than investigating such government sponsored operatives' integral role within the city, as was the case in the Cold War spy films, the thrust of these contemporary films' narratives

revolves around these spies' demise. As Ernst says in *Unknown*, there is; "Not much left to interest an old spy", sentiments which demonstrate the outdated place such a Cold War definition of international espionage plays in Berlin. Thus, Ernst dies towards the end of the film, a fate which also befalls Marissa, Erik and Wilhelm, narrative twists which firmly illustrates that this type of spy no longer has a role within contemporary Berlin.

This death of Berlin's old intelligence community reflects the wider developments that have been seen in global politics following the end of the Cold War. The fall of communism in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s marked the end of the war of attrition which had been waged between the global powers of communist East and capitalist West for almost half a century. As a result, the work of international secret services has also altered. Spying on other world powers may remain a feature of contemporary intelligence work, but the activities of individuals who pose a threat to international security, such as global terrorists and crime bosses, are now also of far greater interest; a development which requires a different kind of spy from the Cold War stereotype. Therefore, in the contemporary espionage films, in place of the shady covert operatives working for secret government services, we now find Berlin to be home to civil servants, employed by global crime agencies, such as *Interpol*, as is the case of Louis in *The International* and Roma (Priyanka Chopra) in *Don 2*, or *Europol*, through Mika in *Ninja Assassin* and Hanne (Trine Dyrholm) in *Who am I – Kein System ist sicher*. Significantly, the growth of these office-based spies means that, whilst the Cold-War spies largely worked clandestinely on the city's streets, with the closest they came to an office being the temporary *M15* operation in an unfinished building on the Kurfürstendamm seen in *The Quiller Memorandum*, the city's contemporary operatives now work out of globally connected, high tech office spaces, which are equipped with all the necessary surveillance and computer provisions. Consequently, the change in working practices seen in the contemporary espionage films also disseminates a view of the city which helps to promote the internationally competitive business infrastructure which the MBB claims to have developed within Berlin.

The narratives of these films may not instantly evoke the city's media industries in the same manner as the industry-insider films' exploration of Berlin does, but under the surface there are many parallels between the activities at the heart of the contemporary espionage films and the image of the city found within the media Berlin brand. This is particularly strong in those films, such as *Don 2* and *Who am I – Kein System ist sicher*, which focus as much on their criminal characters as on those who are tracking them down.

*Don 2* tells the story of an Asian drug baron called Don (Shah Rukh Khan), who comes to Berlin to organise a robbery at one of the city's banks, whilst *Who am I – Kein System ist sicher* focuses on a group of Berlin hackers, who go by the name of CLAY, and their struggle to make an international name for themselves. The illegal activities of these films revolve around high tech, computer based crime, and so both contain computer geniuses able to break into the systems of Berlin's biggest companies. In *Who am I – Kein System ist sicher*, the key to the group success lies in the abilities of the young Berliner Benjamin (Tom Schilling), whilst in *Don 2*, Don's bank heist is only possible once he has recruited the Berlin-based IT specialist Sameer (Kunal Kapoor). The image of Berlin's knowledge economy found within the media Berlin brand is that of a city which is full of skilled members of the creative class, and the presence of Benjamin and Sameer in these contemporary espionage films supports such a view, by showing the expertise which can be found within the city's pool of freelancers.

Furthermore, as was seen in Chapter 1, in an attempt to make the city attractive to the footloose members of the creative class, the MBB claims that the atmosphere found within present-day Berlin is fostering an entrepreneurial spirit, which means that the city is not just home to a high number of freelancers, but is also a place where these freelancers come together to form successful collaborations, either on one off projects or as part of a start-up company. This situation is epitomised by the growth of the *Silicon Allee* moniker to refer to the numerous digital start-ups, such as the music website *SoundCloud*, which have emerged in Berlin in recent years (see Bayley: 2012). Therefore, whilst their protagonists may operate in legal grey areas, the narratives of both *Don 2* and *Who am I – Kein System ist sicher* see a group of Berlin-based specialists come together to achieve a common goal. In the case of *Don 2* it is various different crime specialist recruited by Don, but in *Who am I – Kein System ist sicher* the hacker group CLAY more closely resembles the digital start-ups which have become an important part of the media Berlin brand. CLAY is made up of four computer specialists, and all four bring different technical expertise, which, when combined, allows the group to achieve global success as a subversive hacker organisation, attracting the attention of Hanne and her *Europol* colleagues in the process. Therefore, the type of espionage at the heart of *Who am I – Kein System ist sicher* gives credence to the MBB's claims surrounding the city's digital hub credentials, by using ideas associated with Berlin's spying past and developing this reputation to show how the city's espionage community is now at the forefront of contemporary intelligence, engaging in cutting-edge surveillance driven by the city's position as a hotspot for digital start-ups.

### *Berlin as an International City*

The make-up and activities of these criminal gangs also helps to strengthen a view of Berlin as a global location, a key facet of the claims found within the media Berlin brand. Hence, in their pursuit of international acclaim, CLAY interact with fellow hackers from Russia and America via online 'dark nets', whilst the criminal gang which Don assembles is made up of people who originate from across Europe and Asia. Similarly, these films bring together an international array of spies to track down these gangs, be it the Dane Hanne in *Who am I – Kein System ist sicher*, the British agent *Mika* in *Ninja Assassin*, or the Indian operatives of *Don 2*. Therefore, these films demonstrate that, even though the end of the Cold War has altered the role Berlin plays globally, the city still remains an important international location, which is attracting people from all over the world to come and work in the city.

This is also seen in the way in which these films engage with the image of Berlin as a mecca for hedonistic young people. The raves and clubs of the Love Parade and the *Spaßgesellschaft* may have been absent from *Baustelle* espionage films, such as *The Bourne Supremacy*, but Berlin's famous nightlife is a growing feature of recent espionage films. For example, in *Unknown* Martin and Gina (Diane Kruger) find refuge in one of the city's clubs whilst trying to avoid an assassin sent to kill them, whilst the members of CLAY in *Who am I – Kein System ist sicher* visit similar clubs to celebrate their hacking successes. In addition, whereas, as was seen in Chapter 4, *Oh Boy* (Jan Ole Gerster, 2012) chose a jazz soundtrack to aid its exploration of a view of Berlin away from the city's fashionable nightlife, the dance music associated with Berlin's club scene is a major feature of the soundtrack to *Hanna*, despite the film's reticence to explore the 'cool' bars of eastern Berlin in its construction of the city's urban space. Crucially, this soundtrack was written by the British dance group *The Chemical Brothers*, a choice of artist by the filmmakers which supports the MBB's claims that the city's creative industries are part of an international network of freelancers.

Furthermore, the international perspective found in these films also positions Berlin as a global region, rather than the capital of Germany. As was discussed above, the global-local approach to filmmaking is making regional identities more visible within transnational filmmaking and the manner in which Berlin's global position is constructed in these films demonstrates the impact such a development is having on the representation of the city on screen. Whilst in the Cold War spy films the gaze of the camera rarely left Berlin, and when it did so this was normally for a nearby European capital, such as London, as these films' spies reported back to their home governments, the contemporary

espionage films make a feature of the role Berlin occupies within an interconnected web of international locations. Therefore, the narrative of *The International* moves on from Berlin to other global cities, such as Milan, New York and Istanbul, whilst Hanna's journey to East Berlin takes her from the Arctic wilderness to the deserts of North Africa, before she gradually makes her way across southern Europe. In fact, the regional identity of Berlin is so strong that, as Hanna makes her way to the city, she never describes her journey as leading her simply to Germany, but always to Berlin specifically.

Similarly, the city's position as an international region is also seen in the espionage films which do not leave Berlin, something which is evident in *Unknown*, as Martin watches an English-language news channel whilst in hospital. The channel is called '*Berlin News International*', a name which is unusually regional for an English-language news channel. Yet, although '*German News International*' may seem like a more logical option, through such a choice of name, the film affirms the fact that its narrative is an exploration of present-day Berlin, not a wider discussion of unified Germany. Therefore, the growth of such transnational filmmaking within Berlin's cinematic output is aiding the promotion of a distinctly Berlin perspective to cinema-goers around the world, a regional outlook which is also at the heart of the MBB's marketing of the city. Moreover, this distinct regional identity was also a feature of the films discussed in the previous two chapters, and so the MBB's regional viewpoint is one that is strongly supported within Berlin filmmaking as a whole, with the city promoted across Berlin's present-day cinematic output on the basis of its regional individuality and potential, as opposed to its role within a national system.

### ***The Fifth Estate: A Case Study of Contemporary Espionage Films***

*The Fifth Estate* is an American-Belgian co-production which makes use of Berlin for a considerable part of its narrative. The film explores the well-known story of *WikiLeaks* from the perspective of the organisation's former spokesman, Daniel Berg (Daniel Brühl). He meets Julian Assange (Benedict Cumberbatch) at a hacking conference in Berlin and the two quickly develop a friendship which enables the launch of *WikiLeaks* onto the world stage. *The Fifth Estate* focuses, in particular, on events surrounding the coordinated publication of classified documents obtained by *WikiLeaks* in several international newspapers and the breakdown the release of this information causes in the working relationship between Daniel and Julian. Therefore, the background to the film's production, its critical reception and the themes dealt with in *The Fifth Estate's* narrative epitomises the relationship which the contemporary espionage films have to Berlin, as well as the impact

which these films are making on the city's cinematic reputation. On the one hand, the film's international production background firmly fits with the global-local filmmaking style discussed above, a characteristic which also helps to develop the wider global reputation of Berlin's film industry. Yet, at the same time, the narrative of *The Fifth Estate*, much like other contemporary espionage films, combines themes from the city's cinematic past with an exploration into the reality of present-day Berlin, developing a view of the city which is rooted within the world of media Berlin.

#### *The Fifth Estate as a Global-Local Film*

It is important to note that the production background to *The Fifth Estate* differs from the other films chosen as case studies in my previous chapters in one very obvious way; namely that the film, unlike both *Wir sind die Nacht* and *Oh Boy*, received no funding from the MBB. However, *The Fifth Estate's* Berlin credentials come from the fact that the film both deals with a story which is firmly rooted in present-day Berlin's media society and includes German filmmaking talent, most notably the actor Daniel Brühl, in key roles. Brühl is an actor whose star persona is firmly associated with post-unification Berlin cinema. He became a well-known film star, both at home and abroad, through his roles in two Berlin-set international hits from the early 2000s, *Goodbye, Lenin!* (Wolfgang Becker, 2003) and *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei* (*The Edukators*, Hans Weingartner, 2004). Therefore, the choice of Brühl to play a leading part in *The Fifth Estate* instantly links the film to these historically important Berlin productions. This is something which was highlighted in the critical reception of the film, with Tara Brady writing in her review; "[...] the film does bear some resemblance to the politically minded entertainments – *Goodbye Lenin!*, *The Edukators* – that first put the actor on the map" (*Irish Times*: 2013). Additionally, Brühl's credentials as a Berlin star are not just built around his previous roles. He also lives in the city, and this was featured heavily in the press coverage surrounding *The Fifth Estate's* release. Brühl conducted several interviews to promote the film and many of these, such as one with Christy Grosz, commented on Brühl's life in the city, in particular the fact that he owns a restaurant in Kreuzberg (*Deadline Hollywood*: 2013). Therefore, by stressing the authentic presence of a true Berlin resident within the film, the press coverage of *The Fifth Estate* forged a strong link between the city and the film in the minds of international viewers.

Yet, Brühl's star persona is not just as a Berlin actor, and so his presence in Berlin also helps to develop ideas surrounding the city's position as an international film hub. Although he made his name in German-language films, such as *Goodbye Lenin!*, Brühl

epitomises the contemporary transnational film star. He was born in Barcelona, to German and Spanish parents, and has increasingly begun to combine roles in German-language films (such as *Die kommenden Tage* (*The Coming Days*), Lars Kraume, 2010), with ones in Spanish-language films (such as *Salvador*, Manuel Hueriga, 2006), and English-language films (such as *Rush*, Ron Howard, 2013). His ability to act in several languages means that his career is not rigidly defined by his nationality and this transnational star persona was something which journalists, such as Brady, also covered in their reporting of the film's release (2013). Therefore, the decision of an internationally successful film star, such as Brühl, to call Berlin his home demonstrates that the city's thriving, global film industry enables him to have both a successful career and good lifestyle, a fact that gives credence to the view of Berlin as an attractive place for international members of the creative class to base themselves.

Of course, the use of native actors within espionage films is not a new feature, as German actors were also present in the Cold War films. However, as was mentioned above, in such films these actors played secondary characters, who often conformed to negative national stereotypes. Yet, this is not the case for Brühl's character in *The Fifth Estate*. He is at the centre of the narrative, providing the film with its moral heart. As a result, his position in the film epitomises the greater involvement of local talent present within contemporary global-local films. Significantly, even though the pivotal role given to Brühl's character may be as a consequence of the pressures placed on the contemporary espionage films to more meaningfully engage with local elements, such a development has also had positive implications for the reputation of Berlin's film industry. As Michael Cieply writes; "For actors like Mr Brühl, the new globalism has brought opportunities that were almost unimaginable in the middle of the last decade [...] 'Its changed a lot in five years' said Mr Brühl [...] 'All of a sudden, we have possibilities, even as German actors'" (*New York Times*: 2013a). *The Fifth Estate* demonstrates how the growth of the global-local film is allowing Berlin talent to compete on the international stage, a factor which also feeds into the MBB's claims surrounding the capabilities of the city's film industry. The MBB boasts in its marketing material that Berlin is home to highly skilled freelancers, which means that the city is able to accommodate any production, regardless of its requirements. Therefore, Brühl's prominence in *The Fifth Estate* gives weight to these claims, as he acts as a symbol for the internationally competitive and successful capabilities found amongst the city's film professionals.



Alongside the implications the film's global-local background has for local elements of Berlin's film industry, the international outlook found in the production of *The Fifth Estate* also positively shapes Berlin's cinematic reputation, particularly aiding the MBB's promotion of Berlin as a hotspot which is attracting members of the creative class from all over the world to come and work in the city. Alongside the Berlin-based Brühl, the film features Benedict Cumberbatch, a British actor who is considered one of the rising stars of Hollywood, and is directed by the well-known and respected Hollywood director Bill Condon, whose two previous films before making *The Fifth Estate* had been the hugely successful *The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 1* (2011) and *Part 2* (2012). Indeed, the view of Berlin as a global hotspot developed by the production of the film is particularly pertinent given the lack of financial support *The Fifth Estate* received from the MBB. As Cooke states, one of the criticisms commentators have aimed at the generous film funding structure found within Germany is that the system attracts productions looking to take financial advantage of the incentives offered, without really engaging with the wider region and its film industry (2012: 38). As was discussed in Chapter 1, this condemnation was particularly acute with regard to the *Förder-Tourismus* of the 1990s. Yet, as Jens Mühling outlines, despite a concerted effort by funders to reform the system, for example removing the tax loopholes which existed within German funding provisions and enabled Hollywood studios to receive money for productions which were neither made in or about Germany, such accusations remain (*Der Tagesspiegel*: 2014). However, the fact that an international filmmaker, such as Condon, chose to make use of Berlin, without the financial incentives offered by either the MBB or the DFFF, demonstrates that money is not the only factor which is attracting a growing number of international productions to the city. As Chris Jancelewicz quotes Brühl as stating; "It's also nice to see that more and more film companies [...] are coming over to Europe, to Germany, to Berlin, to shoot their movies. Not only because of tax reasons, but also because of the facilities and the professional crews we have" (*moviefone*: 2013). Thus, the growing cinematic activities in the city are not just due to the MBB's financial clout, but also because Berlin's film industry has truly developed into a global production hotspot, a fact that gives greater authenticity to the view of Berlin's production environment found within the media Berlin brand.

Nonetheless, the release of *The Fifth Estate* also demonstrates the risk involved with the growing presence of global-local films within Berlin's cinematic output. Despite creating much anticipation before its premiere at the 2013 Toronto Film Festival, *The Fifth Estate* drew a muted response from the critics. This reception was then reflected in the

film's performance at the box office worldwide, with the American takings for the film being, as Jon Swaine reports; "[...] the worst opening weekend for any major film released in 2013" (*The Telegraph*: 2013). This poor performance at the box office led Dorothy Pomerantz to label the film the biggest 'Turkey' of the year. She writes; "[*The Fifth Estate*] has earned just \$6 million at the global box office on a budget of \$28 million. That means the film has earned back only 21% of its budget at the box office" (*Forbes*: 2013). Pomerantz claims that the 21% return for the film was the lowest of the year, meaning that *The Fifth Estate* was the biggest failure of 2013. The international reach of the contemporary espionage films may be helping to promote Berlin across the world, but a consequence of this global coverage is that any problems associated with these films' are also projected internationally.

This can be seen in the fact that Pomerantz's article drew a number of counter arguments from international journalists. Amongst these was Mark Kermode, who argues in his video blog that Pomerantz's calculations fail to take into account both marketing spend and the quality of the film, which means that; "If [*The Fifth Estate*] is the worst film of the year, then it has been a really good year" (*BBC*: 2013). Kermode felt that *The Fifth Estate* was not a bad film, it was just that the film had failed to connect with audiences, and so the label of the worst film of the year was unfair. Whilst these differing arguments may have helped to lessen the blow delivered by Pomerantz's stinging assessment of *The Fifth Estate*'s performance, such a debate will still have impacted Berlin's standing as a successful film hub. The marketing efforts of the MBB may, understandably given the agency's wider economic aims, focus on the film industry's achievements, but *The Fifth Estate* demonstrates that, despite the undeniable success enjoyed by films produced in the region in recent years, the city is not immune from also producing a flop.

#### *WikiLeaks' Links to the World of Espionage*

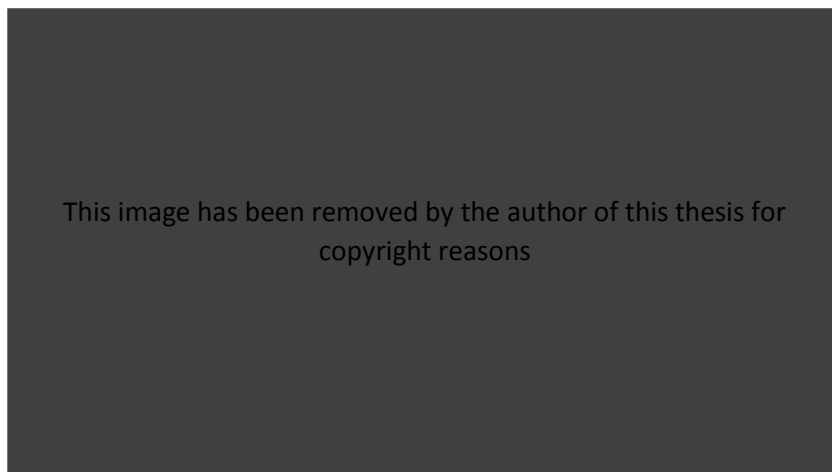
Regardless of the film's performance at the international box office, the production background and construction of Berlin in *The Fifth Estate* offers useful routes of investigation in terms of the tension which exists within the contemporary espionage films between performing to the stereotypes of the past and exploring Berlin's present-day reality. At its heart the film is a political thriller, based around state secrets and classified information, themes which were central components of the Cold War spy films made in the city. In fact, the production of *The Fifth Estate* itself at times resembled a plot for such a film, as Ben Child outlines when he reports that during production the real *WikiLeaks*

looked to steal and publish details surrounding the film (*The Guardian*: 2013). The reasons given for such actions were that the website, or more specifically Julian Assange, felt that the source material used for the film, namely two books by people formerly with close ties to *WikiLeaks* (*Inside WikiLeaks: My Time with Julian Assange and the World's Most Dangerous Website* by Daniel Donscheit Berg and *WikiLeaks: Inside Julian Assange's War on Secrecy* by David Leigh and Luke Harding) would produce a film which was overly biased against Assange and the website. These concerns can be seen in the fact that Assange called the film a "massive propaganda attack" during an address to the Oxford University Union, which took place at the same time as filming for *The Fifth Estate* was being conducted in Berlin, and he continued such attacks right up until the film's release (Child and Hill: *The Guardian*: 2013). Given the Cold War-tinged espionage stereotypes that still linger in the view of Berlin held within international audiences, such coverage of the film's production within an internationally renowned newspaper like *The Guardian* will have continued to support this view, tainting audiences expectations before the film's release towards the content of *The Fifth Estate*, with the film cast as a piece of propaganda, firmly rooted in the shady world of espionage.

In many ways the characterisation of Assange in the film supports his fears. He is shown to be a dark and unreliable figure. For example, when they first meet, Julian tells Daniel that *WikiLeaks* is supported by hundreds of volunteers, who help to sort through the submissions to the website. Daniel even engages in conversations, via email and web chat, with a number of these volunteers, as he too begins to work on verifying material for *WikiLeaks*. However, Daniel soon discovers that the army of volunteers is all a lie, concocted by Julian to overinflate the reach and popularity of *WikiLeaks*. In truth, the volunteers who Daniel has been interacting with are all alias used by Julian, as the website is exposed as a one man team. The fact that Julian operates through various fake identities is a feature which has strong correlations to the Cold War spies of previous Berlin films, such as the double agent Eberlin's (Laurence Harvey) use of multiple aliases in *A Dandy in Aspic* (Anthony Mann, 1968).

This link to the city's Cold War intelligence community is also seen in the imagined office space which the film creates for Julian's aliases to operate within. *WikiLeaks'* activities are all based online, which means that Daniel and Julian have no need for a permanent, physical location to do business from. However, this creates a problem for the filmmakers, as there is little visual merit in showing two people working and interacting with colleagues and co-workers on computers. Therefore, the film turns the web chats that

take place between Daniel and Julian into conversations in a fictional office space, which symbolises the online business being done by the website. Yet, as Figure 26 shows, this office does not resemble the bright work spaces featured either within the MBB's promotional material or the industry-insider films. Instead, the film's virtual office is a dark room with no natural light, a space which better resembles the Cold War bunkers which were a common feature of Berlin's espionage infrastructure during the time of division, such as in the hideout from which the underground Nazi group operated in *The Quiller Memorandum*.



*Figure 26: WikiLeaks' bunker-like office*

These connections to the city's pre-unification spies are further strengthened by several overt references characters make in the film to Berlin's espionage history. Julian gives two presentations, at different points in *The Fifth Estate*, at the *Chaos Hacker Conference* in the city, one before *WikiLeaks'* success and the other after. At the first of these talks an audience member comments that what Julian is proposing through *WikiLeaks* is a "sharing of secrets" which is strongly reminiscent of the work of the *Stasi* in East Germany during the time of division. However, this negative characterisation is then countered during the second presentation, when another member of the audience, a middle aged, former resident of the East, asserts that, if Julian had been operating during the Cold War, the Wall would have fallen far sooner. Therefore, although there is certainly some truth in Assange's claims that the film would portray him in a bad light, *The Fifth Estate* is careful to not stereotype the character of Julian as a one-dimensional, evil megalomaniac. The film shows both the good and the bad of *WikiLeaks'* work, as the narrative attempts to abstain from passing judgement on Julian's character. As Condon himself states; "[...] this film won't claim any long view authority on its subject, or attempt any final judgement" (Child and Hill: 2013). Yet, regardless of this desire to remain neutral

in the debate on the morals of *WikiLeaks*, the film still casts Julian as a modern-day spy, something which maintains the view of Berlin as a city of espionage.

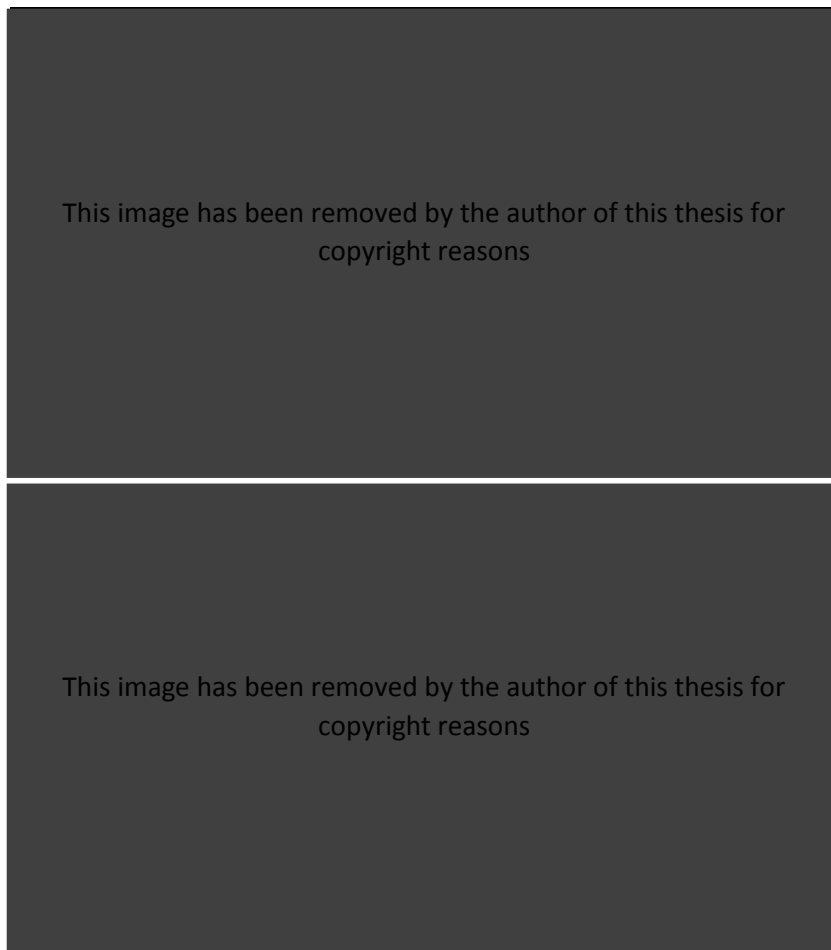
#### *A Contemporary Form of Espionage*

All the same, the spying and propaganda campaigns at the centre of *WikiLeaks*' work are not conducted between governments, as had been the case during the Cold War, but between media organisations. As Paul Asay writes; "[...] with traditional journalism dwindling under economic pressures, Julian sees WikiLeaks as fulfilling the function that the free press is flagging on" (*Plugged In*: 2013). The central role played by global media organisations in the film's narrative is evident in *The Fifth Estate*'s early scenes. The film begins with a series of conversations taking place amongst the different news outlets who are helping *WikiLeaks* to publish a massive leak of American intelligence files, namely *The Guardian* based in London, the *New York Times* based in New York and *Der Spiegel* based in Berlin. The media-centric espionage being carried out by *WikiLeaks* is exemplified by the involvement of this international coalition of journalists, with the people involved in this conversation being noticeably different from those found in the other contemporary espionage films. For example, *The International* also begins with a telephone conversation surrounding an operation in Berlin, but in place of journalists from around the world, this conversation is between the more traditional spy characters of *Interpol* agent Louis and New York Assistant District Attorney Eleanor (Naomi Watts). The opening of *The Fifth Estate* instantly makes clear that the film is firmly based within the sort of media milieu which forms the foundation to the media Berlin brand. As a result, the film's engagement with a spy narrative can be seen to be a continuation of the redefinition of ideas surrounding Berlin within the contemporary espionage films, as the city is shown to now be the birth place of a very modern kind of media-centric espionage.

As Brühl is quoted as saying; "I've never been involved with a project that deals with so many current and relevant issues" (*GQ*: Leppard: 2013). *WikiLeaks* is not just any media organisation but is at the forefront of the digital revolution. The website fully exploits the potential created for investigative journalism through technological advances and the spread of the internet. Such a view is cultivated by the opening titles to the film, which show the history of journalism, from cave drawings through to the growth in online media. As Cieply writes; "Mr Condon takes titles seriously – so much so that he put the opening sequence of '*The Fifth Estate*' in motion even before he started shooting the film" (*New York Times*: 2013b). Condon's emphasis on the title sequence shows that he believed

it would set the tone for the rest of the film, by showing how *WikiLeaks* is rooted in traditional media, but at the same time is pushing the boundaries of what can be understood as journalism. Berlin is not mentioned in these opening titles, with the images, perhaps unsurprisingly given the director's Hollywood background, being biased towards American media outlets; an attitude which is illustrated by the use of the now infamous 'last' print cover of the New York based magazine *Newsweek* in this sequence (see Holpuch: 2013). Still, the movement towards digital technology and journalism found within the film's opening titles resonates with ideas which are present within the MBB's promotion of media Berlin, and so also comes to infuse the film's subsequent exploration of the city.

The early part of *The Fifth Estate's* narrative demonstrates how the initial growth of *WikiLeaks* is undeniably coupled with Berlin, a view which illustrates that the city has become a leading player within the digital industries. The connection between *WikiLeaks* and Berlin is seen in the way in which the film visually links the work of the organisation with the urban space of the city. This is highlighted in the sequence where Daniel and Julian are dealing with the aftermath of their first big exposure, involving tax avoidance and corruption at the Swiss bank *Julius Bär*. The bank tries to have *WikiLeaks* shut down and, in his efforts to prevent this, Julian becomes involved in a telephone argument with an unnamed adversary. Julian claims that the bank's actions show how *Julius Bär* does not understand the nature of information transfer in the twenty first century, and, by association, he is also suggesting that the work of *WikiLeaks* is a cutting edge and important consequence of the growth of digital technology. Crucially, during this speech the viewer does not see Julian talking on the telephone but, as Figure 27 illustrates, his words are heard over a series of images of Berlin's urban space, a view which emphasises the connection which exists between the website and the city. By constructing this scene in such a way, the film highlights that *WikiLeaks* has been able to develop its spying activities not because of Berlin's Cold War past as a centre of espionage, but due to the possibilities now present within the city's urban space, especially within its growing digital economy. Therefore, much like the MBB's use of the business of *Silicon Allee* in its marketing, the film demonstrates that Berlin is able to provide a nurturing and encouraging atmosphere which allows innovative digital businesses to thrive.



*Figure 27: The connection between WikiLeaks and Berlin's urban space*

#### *Lingering Baustelle Stereotypes*

However, although the film may be offering a more updated, media-centric take on Berlin's reputation as a hotbed of international espionage through this scene, the images of the city chosen are clips of the *Oberbaumbrücke* and Berlin's graffiti-strewn buildings, views of the city which were also prevalent in the *Baustelle* films. This outdated viewpoint can be seen in the fact that the film chooses to show Lutz Henke's graffiti in this sequence. As was discussed in Chapter 3, the artist himself has now painted over this mural, as he feels that the experimental atmosphere the work represented has disappeared from the city. Therefore, *The Fifth Estate's* depiction of *WikiLeaks'* work may support elements of the media Berlin brand, but the view of the post-unification city as a work-in-progress still lingers, regardless of the reality which is now found in Berlin's present-day, normalised topography. The film's reticence to leave behind Berlin's *Baustelle* reputation is most obvious in the prominence afforded to the art commune and squat *Tacheles* in the narrative. Daniel takes Julian to the squat when they first meet and the building comes to act as both a place to work and to socialise for the members of *WikiLeaks* throughout the

film. Yet, the importance of *Tacheles* within the film's engagement with the urban space of Berlin is also problematic, particularly given that, in the film's source material, the real Daniel makes no mention of ever having been to *Tacheles* with Julian, and so the squat's inclusion in the film is an active choice taken by the production team.

*Tacheles* was an artist commune based within a ruined department store in the heart of Mitte, one of the first areas of East Berlin to develop the sort of alternative arts scene which came to define understandings of youth culture in *Baustelle* Berlin. As Daniel tells Julian, the building was going to be demolished until the squatters moved in, which means that *Tacheles'* rise to prominence in Berlin during the 1990s was archetypal of the wider squatter lifestyle and transient existence celebrated by the youth culture of the *Spaßgesellschaft* and depicted in many of the *Baustelle* films. However, in 2012 the squatters who formed the commune were forcibly removed from the building, as the owner wanted to take advantage of the prime real estate opportunity *Tacheles* offers. Therefore, *The Fifth Estate's* film crew had to get special permission to recreate the old artist commune in the building before renovation began. As a result, the decision by the film's production team to go to the effort of recreating *Tacheles* creates a version of Berlin's urban space which is out of step with the present-day reality found in this part of the city. As Christoph Spangenberg quotes an extra from the shoot as saying; "It was once again the *Ostalgie* from before"<sup>107</sup>, an attitude which illustrates how the *Baustelle* version of Berlin to which *Tacheles* belongs is no longer relevant (*Der Tagessiegel*: 2013).

The film could have chosen any of the numerous fashionable bars found elsewhere in Mitte for Daniel and Julian to socialise in but, by choosing *Tacheles*, *The Fifth Estate* is actively performing to international stereotypes of Berlin as a city of transient squatters, rather than engaging with the image of Berlin's normalised urban space found within the media Berlin brand. This can be seen in the fact that, even by 2007, when the film's early scenes are set, *Tacheles* had become a relic of the *Baustelle* city, with the squat evolving into a tourist destination, kept alive by visitors wishing to discover Berlin's quickly disappearing *Spaßgesellschaft*. As Jonathan Jones writes, in the last few years of the squat's existence, *Tacheles*; "[...] felt more like a 'cool' bar with an eye to tourists than the revolutionary warren it once was" (*The Guardian*: 2012). Consequently, despite the view of Berlin held by global visitors, and mirrored in *The Fifth Estate*, of a city full of experimental art squats, a more structured and formalised society is now found in the city, a

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<sup>107</sup> Es war wieder die Ostalgie von damals



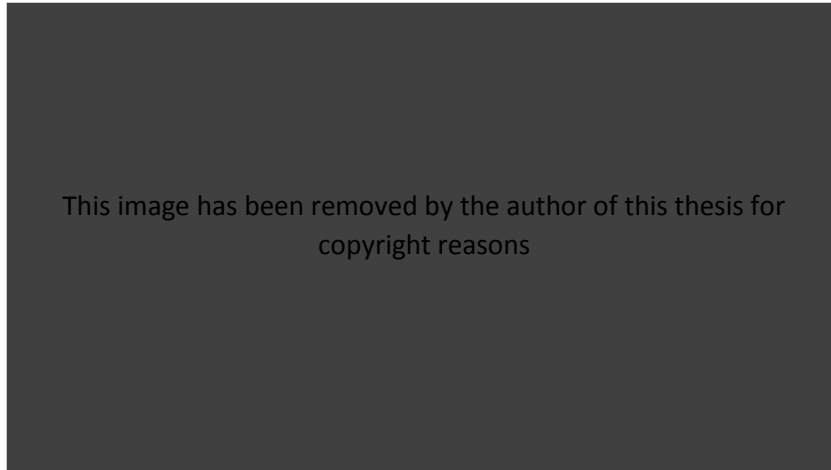
development which was at the centre of my previous analysis of *Oh Boy*, and is further highlighted by the eviction of *Tacheles*' artists.

The difference between domestic and international understandings of Berlin's contemporary urban space can be seen in the fact that Daniel's decision to take Julian to *Tacheles* to cement their working relationship mirrors a similar scene found in the German-language espionage film *Who am I – Kein System ist sicher*, as Max (Elyas M'Barek) invites Benjamin to a party, in order to explore the possibility of bringing him into his hacker group. In both films, the characters discuss technical specifications and the way that they can use digital technology for espionage, as others party around them. However, whilst Daniel and Julian do so in a relic of *Baustelle* Berlin, the location of the party in *Who am I – Kein System ist sicher* is an expensive modern house, decorated in a sleek and minimal contemporary style. These two scenes may both represent a coming together of Berlin freelancers to form a digital start-up, but the party in *Who am I – Kein System ist sicher* better reflects the MBB's vision of Berlin as a normalised location by projecting an image of Berlin as a city whose society has moved beyond its squatter past and now occupies spaces which demonstrate Berlin's new found affluence. In comparison, the use of the squat in *The Fifth Estate* means that international audiences are left with the impression that elements of the city still conform to the *Baustelle* image, a viewpoint which is only strengthened by the fact that *The Fifth Estate* deals with such contemporary events in its narrative.

Nonetheless, although the decision to use *Tacheles* may ground the version of Berlin's urban space found in *The Fifth Estate* within *Baustelle* stereotypes of the city, within these scenes there is also a tension between such an outdated view and an image of the city more in line with the idea of Berlin as a gentrified, media-centric location. Even though *Tacheles* always remained an artistic squat, its evolution into a tourist hotspot meant that this provenance came to more closely resemble the 'squatter chic' style discussed in my previous two chapters, than the experimental transience of the *Baustelle* period. Therefore, *The Fifth Estate*'s recreation of the squat also strongly draws on a 'squatter chic' aesthetic. However, whilst such a style was used by the industry-insider to illustrate the superficial and hollow presence of Berlin's media society within the modern-day city, its use within *The Fifth Estate* is done for different reasons. The 'squatter' history of *Tacheles* connects the version of Berlin found in the film to the city's past, and so orientates these images of Berlin within international expectations surrounding the city. Yet, at the same time, the more 'chic' elements found within the style and infrastructure of

the commune allow the film to develop the image of Berlin beyond these *Baustelle* stereotypes. It is in the quieter parts of the building that Daniel and Julian work on developing *WikiLeaks*. Still, such a set-up is only possible because the squat provides the pair with wireless internet access, a very modern provision which would not have been found in the squats of *Baustelle* Berlin. Thus, the version of *Tacheles* found in *The Fifth Estate* demonstrates that, much like many of Berlin's former experimental clubs and squatter locations, the building may maintain a decorative style which links the commune to the city's recent history, but, underneath this façade, the squat has in fact developed into a functioning part of Berlin's high-tech media society.

The use of *Tacheles* as both a hedonistic party location and temporary office in *The Fifth Estate* epitomises the work hard, party hard lifestyle that defines Berlin society within the media Berlin brand, which means that this view also begins to infuse the wider understanding of the city within the film's international audience. As Gina Neff, Elizabeth Wissinger and Sharon Zukin were quoted in Chapter 1 as discussing, such an environment is essential for the city's media freelancers, who use Berlin's bars and clubs to make contacts and develop projects (2005: 321). Therefore, this image of Berlin is an important facet to the MBB's claims that the city is now a hub for members of the creative class. In *The Fifth Estate*, this mix of business and pleasure is illustrated in one of the early scenes set in *Tacheles*, as Julian tries to persuade Daniel of *WikiLeaks*' capabilities. As Figure 28 illustrates, whilst he speaks, his words are projected onto the walls of the room, with Julian's pitch becoming a form of light-show, accompanied by the techno music from the squat's bar, which acts as the diegetic soundtrack to this sequence. Such a combination of lights and dance music is a common feature of the parties found across Berlin's club scene, which means that, by mimicking such a style, the film produces a visual representation of the hedonistic networking being carried out by the members of Berlin's creative class.



*Figure 28: Julian's speech as a lightshow*

#### *Berlin as an International Media Hub*

Consequently, the prominence of *Tacheles* in *The Fifth Estate* acts as an entry point into a discussion on Berlin's contemporary digital industries. As was discussed in Chapter 1, this part of Berlin's present-day knowledge economy is largely based in the east of the city, with the epicentre of *Silicon Allee* being found on the boundaries between the eastern districts of Mitte and Prenzlauer Berg. Hence, in addition to *Tacheles*, the majority of the other locations present within the film's exploration of Berlin are also in the east of the city, with the *Haus des Lehrers* on Alexanderplatz, which holds the conference where Daniel and Julian first meet, being one such example. However, as Figure 29 shows, rather than continuing the 'squatter chic' aesthetic of *Tacheles*, or the dark bunker-like style of *WikiLeaks*' imaginary office, the film's other locations conform far better to the MBB's claim that the city's media professionals work out of bright, well-equipped offices suitable for global businesses. Hence, the office which Daniel works in at the start of the film is a glass and steel building which could be home to a global enterprise anywhere in the world, whilst the *Haus des Lehrers* is a bright, modern conference centre, with the facilities and infrastructure to accommodate international events such as the *Chaos Hacker Congress*. Such a view of eastern Berlin is starkly different from the underdeveloped image of this part of the city found in the Cold War films and continues the development which, as was discussed in Chapter 2, was started by *The Bourne Supremacy* to reposition understanding surrounding the eastern districts of Berlin within the imagination of international cinema-goers. In particular, given the media-centric narrative found in the film, *The Fifth Estate's* construction of eastern Berlin supports the MBB's claims that this area of the city has emerged from the problematic period of rebuilding following unification to now become the thriving centre of the city's global media society.

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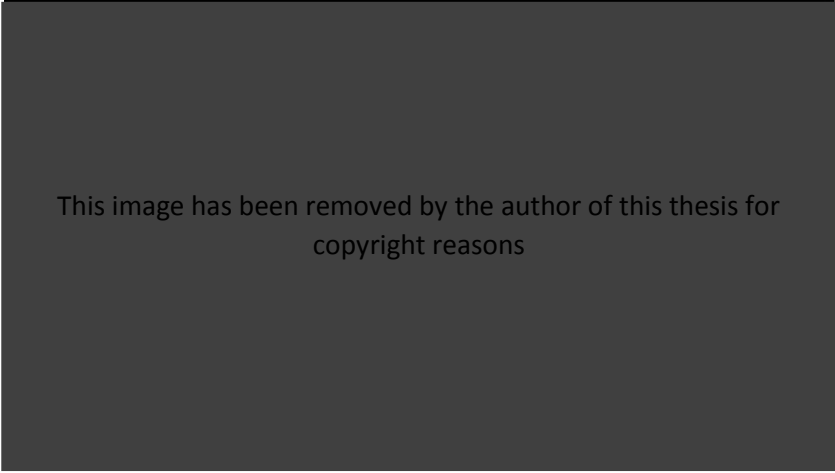
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*Figure 29: Berlin's modern business infrastructure*

The bustle which has been brought to this part of the city through the growing importance of Berlin's eastern districts can be seen in the fact that, as was also evident in the discussion of *Oh Boy*, *The Fifth Estate* makes a feature of the city's busy streets and hectic transport system, with the visual narrative of the film being littered with images of trams, cars and trains. This is a marked departure from the manner in which Berlin's streets were depicted in previous espionage films and so begins to promote a view of Berlin's urban space more in line with the MBB's claims surrounding the city's normalised topography. The *Baustelle* espionage films made a feature of the chaotic, often abnormal state of the city's transport network, with the disjointed journey of Kyle (Jodie Foster) through empty streets in the opening to *Flightplan* (Robert Schwentke, 2005) being an example of this. However, in contrast to such a view, the images of hectic Berlin streets full of transport are deployed in *The Fifth Estate* to give a sense of Berlin as a city with a busy urban society, who are now able to easily travel both around the city and to other international locations.

The nature of *WikiLeaks'* form of international espionage means that Daniel and Julian are required to travel all over the world. Consequently, whilst large sections of the film are set within Berlin, the narrative of *The Fifth Estate*, much like in other contemporary espionage films, such as *Hanna* and *Don 2*, connects those scenes set in Berlin with sequences which play out in other international locations. Significantly, the base *WikiLeaks* has in Berlin is shown to be a useful aid for this international travel. As was discussed in Chapter 1, such a claim is also used by Babelsberg in their marketing material to boost the attractiveness of Berlin for global film projects, which may require staff and resources to be flown into the city for a shoot (2013: 10). Thus, the speed and ease which the members of *WikiLeaks* travel to and from the city in *The Fifth Estate* gives credibility to such claims. This is highlighted when Daniel travels to Liège to meet a potential source. In reality such a trip would take well over six hours by public transport, but in the film Daniel leaves work and makes it to Liège in no time at all. This is not the only point in the film where the length of such international trips are shortened. As a result, the film supports the view found across much of the film industry's media Berlin marketing material, which projects Berlin as a well-connected central hub within Europe, where people can easily and quickly access locations all over the continent.

Furthermore, the locations which the characters travel to are mainly situated outside of Germany, as this interconnected view of Berlin found within the film also firmly casts the city as part of a wider network of international locations. As Figure 30 demonstrates, this regional identity is evident when the film cuts to a map of Europe, following Daniel and Julian's initial efforts to spread *WikiLeaks'* message. Flashes of light flow across the map, literally showing the growth of the website's reach through the continent's internet cabling and hacker networks. The website may have achieved global recognition, but the hub from which these threads of light are emanating is Berlin, as the film uses the map to highlight the hotspot status which the city now occupies within the digital media industries. In addition, whilst the map illustrates the different cities where *WikiLeaks'* message spreads to, such as Paris, Stockholm and Zürich, it does not contain any markers which signal national boundaries. Consequently, just as the MBB argues, Berlin is not defined by its position as the capital of Germany, but is instead shown to be a strong regional entity within Europe's transnational network of digital media locations.



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*Figure 30: Berlin as an interconnected regional hotspot*

However, Berlin's interconnected position at the heart of Europe ultimately means that the city becomes a dangerous location for *WikiLeaks*, and Julian in particular. As the website's activities attract more attention from the international press, Julian and Daniel also become people of interest for several governments around the world affected by *WikiLeaks'* exposés, not least the American administration. In many ways such a development is simply a part of the film's exploration of a spy narrative rooted in Berlin, as the CIA's desire to track down Julian and stop *WikiLeaks'* work creates a stand-off between government agency and independent rebel seen across the contemporary espionage films. However, what is significant is the steps that Julian is forced to take to avoid *WikiLeaks* being shut down. As was discussed above, one of the biggest challenges facing the protagonists of Berlin's contemporary espionage films is that, as the city's urban space normalises and the derelict and empty buildings, which have been prevalent in Berlin since the end of the Second World War, disappear, these characters are increasingly struggling to find a safe location to hide out in. Therefore, Hanna finds shelter in the abandoned *Spreepark*, whilst in *The Berlin File*, the North Korean operatives are forced out of the city and into the surrounding countryside. Similarly, in *The Fifth Estate*, although Berlin may provide the perfect creative environment for Daniel and Julian to establish *WikiLeaks* as a global force, the normalised city is unable to offer Julian protection as the CIA closes in. As a result, he is forced into the extreme step of relocating *WikiLeaks'* operations to a remote part of the Icelandic countryside. Through this move, the film demonstrates that nowhere in Berlin, not even the city's suburbs and surrounding countryside, offers a suitable hiding place for Julian and his subversive activities, as the voids and ruins which have plagued the city for decades have now largely vanished.

## Conclusion

The contemporary espionage films may be linked to Berlin cinematic past, and in particular the location's role as a city of spies during the Cold War, but they are also products of the present-day international film industry. Therefore, their production and treatment of Berlin epitomises the global-local film trend, as they look to meaningfully engage with their local setting, whilst still appealing to an international target market. The tension which this approach creates is evident in the manner in which these films both evoke Berlin's problematic past and use such stereotypes as an entry point into a discussion on elements of the media Berlin brand. Hence, it is this dualism which is allowing these films to begin to evolve the reputation of Berlin away from the *Baustelle* image of the city and towards one more in line with the view of Berlin as a normalised, global media city. This is evident in *The Fifth Estate*, whose espionage narrative offers a fresh take on the idea of Berlin as a hotspot for international spies. The engagement with *Tacheles* in the film may conform to the *Baustelle* stereotype of Berlin as a city full of transient squats, but the film also shows that a very modern kind of espionage is taking place in the city. The creative environment and business provisions now found in contemporary Berlin allow *WikiLeaks* to flourish, as the film propagates a view of Berlin which supports the MBB's claims that the city has developed into a digital start-up hotspot, with the necessary infrastructure to accommodate innovative members of the creative class from all over the world. Stereotypes from the past may still linger in the contemporary espionage films' narratives, but they do not dominate. Instead, the reputation for Berlin found within these films supports many aspects of the media Berlin brand, as a new form of media-centric, digitally-savvy international spy takes centre stage.

## **Conclusion: The Complexities of Berlin's Global Media City Reputation**

Looking at Berlin now, 25 years on from the fall of the Wall, there can be no doubt that life in the contemporary city is markedly different from that which existed immediately following unification. The chaotic period of transformation that took hold of the city's urban space, throwing the lives of the city's inhabitants into flux, during the 1990s and early 2000s, has now largely come to an end. Consequently, the prevailing view within academic discourse of the city as a location in transition is no longer a true reflection of the reality found within Berlin. Instead of exploring the impact of the city's regeneration, it is now more pertinent to consider how Berlin society is interacting with the city's newly mature urban space and what this says about the 'normality' which Berlin as a whole has now discovered. It is precisely these questions which have informed my investigation in this thesis, as I have instigated an original and comprehensive study into Berlin's present-day cinematic reputation.

### *The Nature of Contemporary Berlin Cinema*

In order to achieve this, I have taken a broad definition of cinema, which has included an analysis of the film production landscape in the city, the funding mechanisms available to Berlin-set films, the city images being projected by these films, and their reception on release. Crucially, such an approach enabled my investigation to include a combination of industrial and textual analysis, something which has been largely missing from previous studies of Berlin on screen, and so I was able to produce a comprehensive survey of the spectrum of activities which influence Berlin's cinematic identity. The rationale behind this strategy was seen in Chapter 1, where I examined the rise in importance of city branding for post-industrial cities over the last few decades. As cities such as Berlin have seen the focus of their economic activity switch from heavy industry to more knowledge-based endeavours, the reputation of an area has become as important as the raw materials and infrastructure it can provide. Thus, city authorities have embraced branding practices, in order to more actively shape and promote the reputation of their metropolitan area for economic gains.

As the work of academics such as Stefan Krätke and Richard Florida demonstrates, these city brands have particularly focussed on the creative potential of regions, as numerous international locations have looked to attract footloose members of the creative class. In terms of cinema's role within this process, it is the medium's potential as both a



creative industry and visual art form through which to disseminate city images that makes cinema's relationship with certain locations particularly useful for an investigation into creative city branding. Hence, it is for this reason that the image of Berlin found in contemporary cinema is best viewed as a cinematic brand.

In the second half of Chapter 1 I then drew on branding theory and ideas surrounding the creative class to explore the activities of Berlin's film industry. Of particular concern was the work of the MBB, a local government-supported agency which has the responsibility for both promoting Berlin's media industries and distributing regional film funding. The MBB's two-pronged approach has massively influenced the reputation of Berlin as a film production location. The agency has used the funding and branding tools at its disposal to transform the image of Berlin into one which promotes the region as the leading production hub in Germany. Such a reputation is rooted in Berlin's diverse and thriving production environment, which now produces a wide array of films, from small-scale independent projects to large-budget epics. Yet, at the same time, as the MBB supports all of the city's media industries, not just cinema, the agency promotes Berlin's film industry as a central cog of a wider creative economy. Berlin is shown to have developed into a vibrant global media city, where young creatives from all over the world come to work. Therefore, it is for this reason that I termed the MBB's overall brand for the city 'media Berlin'. To strengthen the desirability of such a reputation, the MBB makes full use of Berlin's renovated business infrastructure and lifestyle amenities across its marketing material; boasting of the city's highly skilled workforce and entrepreneurial atmosphere, alongside Berlin's reputation as a 'cool' youth culture hotspot, with a fashionable, hedonistic nightlife.

However, the industrial structure found within Berlin's film industry means that the city functions as a filmmaking cluster, with the activities of several different organisations influencing the standing of Berlin as a film production hub. As a result, the MBB's branding activities cannot be considered in isolation. It was for this reason that I concluded Chapter 1 by investigating the extent to which the images found within the MBB's marketing material are also present in the wider activities of Berlin's film professionals. Through case studies of the Babelsberg film studio, the production company *X Filme* and the dffb film school, I highlighted how the reputation developed by the MBB is being supported and further advanced by the wider film industry cluster in the city. Hence, Babelsberg has evolved into a leading international film studio, with a highly skilled workforce, whilst *X Filme* has become a well-respected production company, which has a roster of films that

includes both low-budget domestic productions and large-budget international blockbusters. Furthermore, the reputation of the dffb has grown in recent years, due to the work of its graduates and links to the Berlin School film movement, which means that the school is helping to support the view of Berlin as a location that is nurturing inventive and talented filmmakers. Accordingly, the activities found across the city's film cluster disseminate the view of Berlin as an interconnected, innovative, global media city, meaning that the media Berlin brand has come to define the reputation of Berlin's production environment.

Nevertheless, whilst the filmmaking activities found within Berlin provide an important industrial foundation for the city's cinema, it is through the images of the city present within Berlin-set films that most people are exposed to the contemporary city. Thus, for the media Berlin brand to be viewed as an authentic and successful representation of the city as a whole, similar city images must also be found in these films. For this reason, the second half of my analysis moved on to examine the extent to which the media Berlin brand is supported by the version of Berlin being projected by cinema. My textual analysis began in Chapter 2 with an investigation into the historical evolution of the city's reputation on screen. In most academic literature the city's past is dealt with separately. However, by comparing and contrasting different moments from Berlin cinema in this chapter, I was able to provide both context for my later analysis and demonstrate several common threads which have prevailed within the depiction of Berlin since cinema's inception.

For example, the city has long been seen in cinema as a hedonistic location, where creative people come to work. Equally, the transient figure of the drifter has been a common element of Berlin cinema since the Weimar period, as the city's inhabitants have roamed Berlin looking for meaning and a place to belong within the constant change and turmoil created by the city's tumultuous history. At the same time, this disorder has meant that the city has been a fruitful location for political espionage, an image which was particularly prevalent during the time of division. Consequently, these commonalities provided the starting point for my analysis of contemporary Berlin filmmaking, as I used these themes to help me to organise the plethora of different films which have been made about Berlin in recent years.

Chapter 3 looked at the image of Berlin as a creative location found within what I defined as 'industry-insider films'. These films explore the lives of media professionals in the city, and so confirm many aspects of the media Berlin brand. They illustrate how the

city has become a globally connected location, full of modern office complexes and successful creatives. In addition, the protagonists of these films are shown to be living a hedonistic life in Berlin, as they visit the city's most fashionable restaurants and party in the city's coolest clubs. However, the industry-insider films also use their position within Berlin's 'cool' media world to critique the superficial existence which many people have discovered to be lurking within this section of society. To this extent, crises of identity are common amongst these films' central characters. In particular, the industry-insider films use their protagonists' dissatisfaction with their lifestyle in the city to highlight the ahistorical nature of Berlin's transformation into a media hotspot.

By showing how Berlin's history, especially the city's squatter past, is being commoditised for profit within society, the industry-insider films illustrate the gentrification of Berlin's creative industries, a situation which is emblematic of the hollow, insincere attitude which prevails amongst the city's media professionals. Such a view is found within *Wir sind die Nacht* (*We are the Night*, Dennis Gansel, 2010), the film I explored as my case study in this chapter. The film is firmly rooted in Berlin's hedonistic nightlife, but combines this view of Berlin with a vampire tale. Therefore, *Wir sind die Nacht* plays with conventions of vampiric otherness to illustrate the shallow nature of present-day Berlin. The film's vampires are shown to kill for blood in the same light-hearted way that Berlin's partygoers take drugs and down shots, a contrast which adds a tainted danger to the vision of Berlin as a pleasure-seeking hub for media professionals. The industry-insider films may not challenge the image of Berlin as a successful global media city, but they do highlight the problematic undercurrent that exists within such a transformation, as Berlin's media society offers an unfulfilling existence in the city.

These ideas are then further nuanced and developed by the 'drifter films' discussed in Chapter 4, as they offer a complementary but different take on contemporary Berlin when compared to the industry-insider films. These films explore the figure of the drifter, a character who, despite the city's urban space discovering a new maturity, is struggling to understand their place within Berlin. In general, this figure is aligned to the city's youth population, as the drifter films demonstrate that life for young people in the city is not necessarily as simple as the MBB claims. The agency's marketing material appropriates Berlin's long held reputation as a location for alternative youth movements, most recently seen in the city's *Spaßgesellschaft*, to cast modern-day Berlin as a similar hotspot for young creative people. Therefore, the media Berlin brand disseminates an image of the city that promotes Berlin as a location with a welcoming and liberal atmosphere, which is enabling

young people to easily and successfully make the transition from student to young professional. However, the narratives of the drifter films propagate an altogether more alienating reality for the city's youth.

These films may show Berlin to be a bustling global city, but the societal structure that now exists in Berlin no longer privileges youthful self-discovery, as the city is governed by an older generation. Crucially, whilst the *Spaßgesellschaft* is used as a template for the MBB's promotion of youthful Berlin, it was precisely the lack of such figures of authority in the *Baustelle* city which allowed this youth culture to flourish. Yet, in the contemporary city, these older figures now expect Berlin's youth population to conform to their mature expectations, a pressure which causes the young people of the drifter films to become disenfranchised from the city around them. This is a view of Berlin found in *Oh Boy* (Jan Ole Gerster, 2012), my case study film for this chapter. The film tells the story of Niko Fischer (Tom Schilling), a young Berliner who roams the city looking for a purpose. However, although the city is shown to be dominated by media elites, Niko remains on the outside of such a world, as Berlin's media society is cast as a pretentious and uncaring part of the contemporary city. Therefore, the drifter films show the limited view of the media Berlin brand. By highlighting the marginalising nature of the normalised society which has developed in present-day Berlin, the films project a more multi-faceted, challenging view of Berlin than is found within the MBB's claims surrounding the city as a youth culture mecca.

Whereas the films discussed in Chapter 3 and 4 deal primarily with German-language productions made for the domestic market, the contemporary espionage films analysed in Chapter 5 have more international ambitions. The changing nature of global film production means that more and more big-budget films are being produced in locations outside of the USA, and many of the contemporary espionage films discussed in Chapter 5 are part of this transnational development. Therefore, these films can be seen as examples of the wider trend I describe as 'global-local films'. This style of filmmaking is defined by both the use of many of the familiar tropes of Hollywood productions, such as action sequences and special effects, and a desire to more meaningfully engage with local aspects, such as native actors and stories. As a result, these differing demands create a tension between international stereotypes and regional individuality within the narratives of such films.

In terms of Berlin cinema, this dichotomy can be seen in the fact that what ties the Berlin-set global-local films together is their adoption of a spy narrative within the urban space of the contemporary city. Berlin society may have left behind the period of political

turmoil which plagued the city during division, but for international audiences the view of Berlin as a work-in-progress location dominated by shady espionage operatives still prevails. Yet, the contemporary espionage films perform to these international stereotypes in a way that also begins to develop the image of Berlin held by their audiences, moulding these opinions towards a point of view that is better aligned with the media-centric version of Berlin favoured by the MBB. For example, the image of Berlin as a global city, with a functioning, modern topography is an increasing feature of these films, something that can be seen in *The Fifth Estate* (Bill Condon, 2013), the film I chose as my case study in this chapter. The film explores the history of the computer hacker organisation *WikiLeaks*, which means that, as well as being a spy thriller set within Berlin, *The Fifth Estate* offers an exploration into the city's modern-day digitally-savvy media society. Therefore, the espionage at the centre of the film is firmly rooted in Berlin's media world, a view of the city which supports many aspects of the media Berlin brand. Consequently, these films demonstrate that, although aspects from Berlin's troubled past may still linger within the city's reputation, the idea of Berlin as a leading global media city is gaining traction across the city's cinematic output.

If Berlin is no longer defined as a *Baustelle* city, then it is the image of Berlin as a global media city, with a hedonistic nightlife and high-class business provisions, which currently acts as an inescapable motif within the city's cinema. Given the central role of the MBB in shaping the city's reputation, it should come as no surprise that this view of the city is also at the heart of the agency's media Berlin brand. However, this does not mean that the MBB's view of the city is the only version of Berlin found within cinema. Whilst the marketing efforts of Berlin's film professionals enthusiastically embrace the media Berlin brand without question, producing a wholly positive, one-dimensional view of the city, the same cannot be said about the films set in Berlin. This difference in approach is due to the fact that, whereas agencies like the MBB develop and promote city brands for economic reasons, and so look to privilege the more positive elements of the present-day city, the nature of life in a metropolis like Berlin is far more complex and demanding. Therefore, contemporary Berlin-set films may support certain elements of Berlin's global media city status, but they also begin to nuance and critique these ideas. Thus, Berlin's contemporary cinematic image may be driven by the media Berlin brand, but the view of the city found on screen also demonstrates that life in Berlin's media world is not without its problems.

### *The Continuous Evolution of Berlin's Cinematic Brand*

Nevertheless, although the media Berlin brand may define the period of filmmaking since 2006 discussed in detail in this thesis, it is important to note that this is just the latest in a series of reputations afforded to Berlin on screen. Indeed, as Colin McArthur was quoted in my introduction as stating; “cities have no fixed meaning” (1997: 20). Therefore, looking forward, it should be expected that the image of Berlin in cinema will continue to develop as the city further matures. To this extent, it would appear that Berlin’s standing as a ‘cool’ mecca for creative people from around the world has recently begun to wane. Hence, Max Read argues on the popular news blog *Gawker* that “Berlin is over” (2014). Similarly, Katie Engelhart builds on these claims in an article for the *New York Times* by stating that Berlin’s loss of repute is such that the East German city of Leipzig is now considered to be “the New Berlin” (2014). Of course, the fashionable ‘buzz’ surrounding the city’s knowledge economy has been a central feature of contemporary Berlin’s cinematic image. Therefore, if the city is no longer seen as a cutting edge hotspot for international creatives, the nature of Berlin’s global media city reputation will also alter.

In fact, if the small but varied sample of Berlin-set films released in the last few months are any indication, the city’s cinema may be at another turning point in terms of its filmic identity. For example, there are signs that the negatively-tinged view of life within Berlin’s hedonistic media society, discussed in Chapter 3, is gaining greater prominence across the city’s cinematic output. Thus, whilst the industry-insider film *Lichtgestalten* (*Light Shapes*, Christian Moris Müller, 2015) promotes a city image similar to that found in productions such as *Wir sind die Nacht*, this critique of Berlin’s pleasure-seeking creative society is now also found in global-local films, such as *Posthumous* (Lulu Wang, 2014) and *Unfinished Business* (Ken Scott, 2015). These films avoid the espionage stereotypes of the past to deliver narratives set within Berlin’s globally-connected media world. However, at the same time they cast this section of society as a pretentious feature of Berlin. Significantly, this negative construction of Berlin’s knowledge economy has so far been missing from the Berlin-set global-local films. As a result, these recent films are starting to propagate a more problematic version of Berlin’s media credentials to audiences around the world, which further challenges the MBB’s wholly positive promotion of the city.

Moreover, this is not the only development within Berlin cinema. Whereas, as was seen in Chapters 3 and 4, characters with a non-media-centric lifestyle have been deployed as counterpoints to the city’s media world in both the industry-insider and drifter films, an increasing number of recent productions have given a greater prominence to such

protagonists, producing narratives which avoid Berlin's media society. Therefore, the 2015 Golden Lola winning film *Victoria* (Sebastian Schipper, 2015) explores Berlin's criminal underworld, whilst films such as *Jack* (Edward Berger, 2014) and *Schönefeld Boulevard* (Slyke Enders, 2014) demonstrate the problems facing young people in Berlin's working class suburbs, and *Praia do Futuro* (*Futuro Beach*, Karim Ainouz, 2014) investigates the melancholia of the city's gay inhabitants. By ignoring figures from within Berlin's knowledge economy, these films are able to foreground a more detailed exploration of the 'other' elements in society which have largely been overlooked by the majority of Berlin's post-*Baustelle* cinema. Accordingly, this non-media-centric view is beginning to weaken the image of the city as a location dominated by media industries, by showing that there is more to Berlin than 'cool' dance clubs populated by creative professionals.

Whilst none of these developments are yet enough on their own to fully undermine the dominant view of the city found within the media Berlin brand, it would seem that the features which define the image of Berlin found in cinema are beginning to evolve beyond this reputation. What comes next for the city's altering filmic image will depend on a number of factors, including how the city's media society reacts to the loss of its 'cool' cachet, as well as the wider implications which come from the growing prominence Berlin is enjoying on the world stage. Still, the original approach found in my analysis has laid the foundation for understanding such developments. I have demonstrated for the first time the complex relationships and images which come together to influence Berlin's post-*Baustelle* cinematic brand, and so provided a framework for understanding the connection between cinema and the normalised city. Consequently, no matter which path the city's identity in cinema takes over the coming years, what is certain is that the turbulence of the past no longer defines Berlin. Instead, it is Berlin's reputation as a global media city that will act as the basis from which the city's cinematic brand will continue to develop.

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## Filmography

- 3 Zimmer/Küche/Bad (Move)*, 2012, Dietrich Brüggemann, Germany, *teamWorx*
- 40m<sup>2</sup> Deutschland*, 1986, Tevfik Başer, West Germany, *Studio Hamburg*
- À bout de souffle (Breathless)*, 1960, Jean-Luc Goddard, France, *Les Films Impéria*
- Abgeschminkt (Making Up!)*, 1993, Katja von Garnier, Germany, *Arnold & Richter Cine Technik*
- A Dandy in Aspic*, 1968, Anthony Mann, UK, *Columbia British Productions*
- A Foreign Affair*, 1948, Billy Wilder, USA, *Paramount Pictures*
- Alaska.de*, 2000, Esther Gronenborn, Germany, *Bioskop Film*
- Alter und Schönheit (Age and Beauty)*, 2009, Michael Klier, Germany, *X Filme Creative Pool*
- Am Himmel der Tag (Breaking Horizons)*, 2012, Pola Beck, Germany, *Alinfilmproduktion*
- Amour*, 2012, Michael Haneke, France/Germany/Austria, *X Filme Creative Pool*
- Angel Express*, 1998, Rolf Peter Kahl, Germany, *Erdbeermund Filmproduktion*
- Angst essen die Seele auf (Ali: Fear Eats the Soul)*, 1974, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, West Germany, *Filmverlag der Autoren*
- Anonymous*, 2011, Roland Emmerich, USA/UK/Germany, *Columbia Pictures*
- Asphalt*, 1929, Joe May, Germany, *Ufa*
- Ausgerechnet Sibirien (Lost in Siberia)*, 2012, Ralf Huettener, Germany, *Jooyaa Filmproduktion Berlin*
- Bar25*, 2012, Britta Mischer and Nana Yuriko, Germany, *25Films*
- Berlin Alexanderplatz*, 1931, Piel Jutzi, Germany, *Allianz Tonfilm*
- Berlin am Meer (Berlin by the Sea)*, 2008, Wolfgang Eissler, Germany, *Alinfilmproduktion*
- Berlin Calling*, 2008, Hannes Stöhr, Germany, *Stöhrfilm*
- Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt (Berlin: Symphony of the Big City)*, 1927, Walter Ruttmann, Germany, *Deutsche Vereins Film*
- Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser (Berlin – Schönhauser Corner)*, 1957, Gerhard Klein, East Germany, *DEFA*
- Berlin Express*, 1948, Jacques Tourneur, USA, *RKO Radio Pictures*
- Berlin is in Germany*, 2001, Hannes Stöhr, Germany, *Stöhrfilm*
- Berlin: Sinfonie einer Großstadt (Berlin: Symphony of a Big City)*, 2002, Thomas Schadt, Germany, *Odyssee Film*
- B.i.N.: Berlin in November*, 2011, Victor Schefé, Germany, *RadioVictorFilm*
- Bungalow*, 2002, Ulrich Köhler, Germany, *Peter Stockhaus Filmproduktion*

*Byzantium*, 2012, Neil Jordan, UK/USA/Ireland, *Demarest Films*

*Cibrâil (The Visitor)*, 2011, Tor Iben, Germany, *Feel Bad Movies*

*Chill Out*, 2000, Andreas Struck, Germany, *Jost Hering Filmproduktion*

*Christiane F.*, 1981, Uli Edel, West Germany, *Solaris Film*

*Cloud Atlas*, 2012, Tom Tykwer, Andy and Lana Wachowski. Germany/USA/Hong Kong/Singapore, *X Filme Creative Pool*

*Das Leben der Anderen (The Lives of Others)*, 2006, Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, Germany, *Wiedermann Berg Filmproduktion*

*Das Leben ist eine Baustelle (Life is All You Get)*, 1997, Wolfgang Becker, Germany, *X Filme Creative Pool*

*Das Leben ist zu lang (Life is too Long)*, 2010, Dani Levy, Germany, *X Filme Creative Pool*

*Das Superweib (The Superwoman)*, 1996 Sönke Wortmann, Germany, *Constantin Film*

*Das Testament des Dr Mabuse (The Testament of Dr Mabuse)*, 1933, Fritz Lang, Germany, *Nero Film*

*Das weiße Band (The White Ribbon)*, 2009, Michael Haneke, Germany/Austria/France/Italy, *X Filme Creative Pool*

*Dealer*, 1999, Thomas Arslan, Germany, *Trans Film*

*Der bewegte Man (Maybe, Maybe Not)*, 1994, Sönke Wortmann, Germany, *Constantin Film*

*Der Gasmann (The Gas Man)*, 1941, Carl Frölich, Germany, *Tonfilmstudio Carl Frölich*

*Der geteilte Himmel (Divided Heaven)*, 1964, Konrad Wolf, East Germany, *DEFA*

*Der Himmel über Berlin (Wings of Desire)*, 1987, Wim Wenders, West Germany/France, *Road Movies Filmproduktion*

*Der letzte Mann (The Last Laugh)*, 1924, F.W. Murnau, Germany, *Ufa*

*Der Mann auf der Mauer (The Man on the Wall)*, 1982, Reinhard Hauff, West Germany, *Bioskop Film*

*Der schöne Tag (A Fine Day)*, 2001, Thomas Arslan, Germany, *Pickpocket Productions*

*Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei (The Edukators)*, 2004, Hans Weingartner, Germany/Austria, *Y3 Film*

*Die Fremde (When We Leave)*, 2010, Feo Aladag, Germany, *Independent Artists Filmproduktion*

*Die Geschichte von kleinen Muck (The Story of Little Muck)*, 1953, Wolfgang Staudte, East Germany, *DEFA*

*Die kommenden Tage (The Coming Days)*, 2010, Lars Kraume, Germany, *Badlands Film*

*Die Legende von Paul und Paula (The Legend of Paul and Paula)*, 1973, Heiner Carow, East Germany, *DEFA*



*Die Mörder sind unter uns (Murderers Among Us)*, 1946, Wolfgang Staudte, Germany, DEFA

*Die Straße (The Street)*, 1923, Karl Grune, Germany, Stern Film

*Die vier Gesellen (The Four Companions)*, 1938, Carl Frölich, Germany, Tonfilmstudio Carl Frölich

*Deutschland. Ein Sommermärchen (Germany. A Summer's Fairy Tale)*, 2006, Sönke Wortmann, Germany, Little Shark Entertainment

*Don 2*, 2011, Farhan Akhtar, India/Germany, Excel Entertainment

*Dracula*, 1931, Tod Browning, USA, Universal Pictures

*Drei (Three)*, 2010, Tom Tykwer, Germany, X Filme Creative Pool

*Enemy at the Gates*, 2001, Jean-Jacques Annaud, USA/France/Germany/UK/Ireland, Paramount Pictures

*Fack ju Göthe (Suck Me Shakespeer)*, 2013, Bora Dagtekin, Germany, Constantin Film

*Flightplan* 2005, Robert Schwentke, USA, Touchstone Pictures

*Frances Ha*, 2012, Noah Baumbach, USA, RT Features

*Freunde (Friends)*, 2000, Martin Eigler, Germany, Money Penny Filmproduktion

*Funeral in Berlin*, 1966, Guy Hamilton, UK/USA, Paramount Pictures

*Germania, anno zero (Germany, Year Zero)*, 1948, Roberto Rossellini, Italy/France/Germany, Tavere Film

*Geschwister – Kardeşler (Brothers and Sisters)*, 1997, Thomas Arslan, Germany, Trans Film

*Glück (Bliss)*, 2012, Doris Dörrie, Germany, Constantin Film

*Goodbye, Lenin!*, 2003, Wolfgang Becker, Germany, X Filme Creative Pool

*Groupies bleiben nicht zum Frühstück (Groupies Do Not Stay For Breakfast)*, 2010, Marc Rothemund, Germany, SamFilm Produktion

*Hanna*, 2011, Joe Wright, USA/UK/Germany, Focus Features

*Hitlerjunge Quex (Our Flags Lead Us Forward)*, 1932, Hans Steinhoff, Germany, Ufa

*Ich Chef, du Turnschuh (Me Boss, You Sneakers!)*, 1998, Hussi Kutlucan, Germany, Malita Film

*Im weißen Rössl – Wehe, du singst! (The White Horse Inn – Don't You Dare Sing!)*, 2013, Christian Theede, Germany, Senator Film

*Interview with the Vampire*, 1994, Neil Jordan, USA, Geffen Pictures

*Jack*, 2014, Edward Berger, Germany, Port au Prince Film & Kultur Produktion

*Jargo*, 2004, Maria Solrun, Germany/Iceland, X Filme Creative Pool

*Judgement in Berlin*, 1988, Leo Penn, West Germany/USA, Sheen/Greenblatt Productions

*Julietta*, 2001, Christoph Stark, Germany, *teamWorx*

*Kaddisch für einen Freund (Kaddish for a Friend)*, 2012, Leo Khasin, Germany, *Sima Film*

*Keinohrhasen (Rabbit without Ears)*, 2007, Til Schweiger, Germany, *Barefoot Films*

*Kokowääh (Coq au vin)*, 2011, Til Schweiger, Germany, *Barefoot Films*

*Komm und Spiel (Come and Play)*, 2013, Daria Belova, Germany, *Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie Berlin*

*Kuhle Wampe*, 1932, Slatan Dudow, Germany, *Prometheus Film*

*Let the Right One In*, 2008, Tomas Alfredson, Sweden, *Filmpool Nord*

*Lichtgestalten (Light Shapes)*, 2015, Christian Moris Müller, Germany, *Christian Moris Müller Filmproduktion*

*Little Paris*, 2008, Miriam Dehne, Germany, *Cineplus Media Service*

*Lola+Bilidikid (Lola and Billy the Kid)*, 1999, Kutlug Ataman, Germany, *Boje Buck Produktion*

*Lola rennt (Run Lola Run)*, 1998, Tom Tykwer, Germany, *X Filme Creative Pool*

*M*, 1931, Fritz Lang, Germany, *Nero Film*

*Madame DuBarry*, 1919, Ernst Lubitsch, Germany, *Projektions-AG Union*

*Manhattan*, 1979, Woody Allen, USA, *Jack Rollins & Charles H. Joffe Productions*

*Männerherzen (Men in the City)*, 2009, Simon Verhoeven, Germany, *Wiedemann & Berg Produktion*

*Männerherzen...und die ganz ganz große Liebe (Men in the City 2)*, 2011, Simon Verhoeven, *Wiedemann & Berg Produktion*

*Männersache (Man's Business)*, 2009, Gernot Roll and Mario Barth, Germany, *Constantin Film*

*Man with a Movie Camera*, 1929, Dziga Vertov, Soviet Union, *VUFKU*

*Märzmelodie (March Melody)*, 2008, Martin Walz, Germany, *X Filme Creative Pool*

*Menschen am Sonntag (People on Sunday)*, 1930, Robert Siodmak and Edgar G. Ulmer, Germany, *Filmstudio Berlin*

*Metropolis*, 1927, Fritz Lang, Germany, *Ufa*

*Milchwand (In This Very Moment)*, 2003, Christoph Hochhäusler, Germany/Poland, *Cine Image*

*Mord ist mein Geschäft, Liebling (Killing is my Business, Honey)*, 2009, Sebastian Niemann, Germany, *Rat Pack Filmproduktion*

*Nackt (Naked)*, 2002, Doris Dörrie, Germany, *Constantin Film*

*Netto*, 2005, Robert Thalheim, Germany, *2004 Filmproduktion*

*Neukölln Unlimited*, 2010, Agostino Imondi and Dietmar Ratsch, Germany, *INDI Film*

*Night Watch*, 2004, Timur Berkmbetov, Russia, *Bazelevs Production*

*Ninja Assassin*, 2009, James McTeigue, USA/Germany, *Legendary Pictures*

*Nosferatu*, 1922, F.W. Murnau, Germany, *Prana Film*

*Octopussy*, 1983, John Glen, UK/USA, *United Artists*

*Offroad*, 2012, Elmar Fischer, Germany, *Claussen Wöbke Putz Filmproduktion*

*Oh Boy*, 2012, Jan Ole Gerster, Germany, *Schiwago Film*

*Olympia 1. Teil – Fest der Völker (Olympia Part 1 – Festival of the Nations)*, 1938, Leni Riefenstahl, Germany, *Olympia Film*

*Olympia 2. Teil – Fest der Schönheit (Olympia Part 2 – Festival of Beauty)*, 1938, Leni Riefenstahl, Germany, *Olympia Film*

*Ostkreuz*, 1991, Michael Klier, Germany, *Michael Klier Film*

*Phantomschmerz (Phantom Pain)*, 2009, Matthias Emke, Germany, *Barefoot Films*

*Posthumous*, 2014, Lulu Wang, USA, *Flying Box Productions*

*Praia do Futuro (Futuro Beach)*, 2014, Karim Ainouz, Germany/Brazil, *Hank Levine Film*

*Razzia (Raid)*, 1947, Werner Klingler, Germany, *DEFA*

*Rein que les heures (Nothing but Time)*, 1926, Alberto Cavalcanti, France, *Néofilm*

*Rosenstraße*, 2003, Margarethe von Trotta, Germany/Netherlands, *Studio Hamburg*

*Rubbeldiekatz (Woman in Love)*, 2011, Detlev Buck, Germany, *Boje Buck Productions*

*Rush*, 2013, Ron Howard, UK/Germany/USA, *Cross Creek Pictures*

*Salvador*, 2006, Manuel Hueriga, Spain/UK, *Future Films*

*Sehnsucht (Longing)*, 2006, Valeska Grisebach, Germany, *Home Run Pictures*

*Schlussmacher (The Break-up Man)*, 2013, Matthias Schweighöfer and Torsten Künstler, Germany, *Amalia Film*

*Schönefeld Boulevard*, 2014, Slyke Enders, *credo:film*

*Shahada*, 2010, Burhan Qurbani, Germany, *Bittersüß Pictures*

*Shirins Hochzeit (Shirin's Wedding)*, 1976, Helma Sanders-Brahms, West Germany, *Westdeutscher Rundfunk*

*Solo Sunny*, 1980, Konrad Wolf and Wolfgang Kohlhaase, East Germany, *DEFA*

*Sommer vorm Balkon (Summer in Berlin)*, 2005, Andreas Dresen, Germany, *X Filme Creative Pool*

*Speed Racer*, 2008, Andy and Larry Wachowski. USA/Germany/Australia, *Village Roadshow Pictures*

*Staub auf unseren Herzen (Dust on our Hearts)*, 2012, Hanna Doose, Germany, TeamZuckerDoose

*Straight*, 2007, Nicolas Flessa, Germany, Käferfilm Produktion

*Taxi zum Klo (Taxi to the John)*, 1980, Frank Ripplloh, West Germany, Exportfilm Bischoff & Company

*The Berlin File*, 2013, Seung-wan Ryoo, South Korea, Filmmaker R&K

*The Big Lift*, 1950, George Seaton, USA, Twentieth Century Fox

*The Bourne Supremacy*, 2004, Paul Greengrass, USA/Germany, Universal Pictures

*The Fifth Estate*, 2013, Bill Condon, USA/Belgium, Dreamworks

*The Grand Budapest Hotel*, 2014, Wes Anderson, USA/Germany/UK, Fox Searchlight

*The International*, 2009, Tom Tykwer, USA/Germany/UK, Columbia Pictures

*The Monuments Men*, 2014, George Clooney, UK/Germany, Columbia Pictures

*The Pianist*, 2002, Roman Polanski, France/Poland/Germany/UK, R.P. Productions

*The Quiller Memorandum*, 1966, Michael Anderson, UK/USA, Rank

*The Reader*, 2008, Stephen Daldry, USA/Germany, The Weinstein Company

*The Spy who came in from the Cold*, 1965, Martin Ritt, UK, Salem Films Limited

*The Vampire Lovers*, 1970, Roy Ward Baker, UK/USA, Hammer Film

*Torn Curtain*, 1966, Alfred Hitchcock, USA, Universal Pictures

*Twilight*, 2008, Catherine Hardwicke, USA, Summit Entertainment

*Twilight: New Moon*, 2009, Chris Weitz, USA, Summit Entertainment

*Twilight Eclipse*, 2010, David Slade, USA, Summit Entertainment

*Twilight: Breaking Dawn part 1*, 2011, Bill Condon, USA, Summit Entertainment

*Twilight: Breaking Dawn part 2*, 2012, Bill Condon, USA, Summit Entertainment

*Unfinished Business*, 2015, Ken Scott, USA, New Regency Pictures

*Unknown*, 2011, Jaume Collet-Serra, UK/Germany/France, Dark Summit Entertainment

*Unter den Brückern (Under the Bridges)*, 1944, Helmut Käutner, Germany, Ufa

*Valkyrie*, 2008, Brian Singer, USA/Germany, United Artists

*Victoria*, 2015, Sebastian Schipper, Germany, Monkeyboy

*Warum Männer nicht zuhören und Frauen schlecht einparken (Why Men Don't Listen and Women Are Bad at Parking)*, 2007, Leander Haußmann, Germany, Constantin Film

*Was tun, wenn's brennt? (What to Do in Case of Fire)*, 2001, Gregor Schnitzler, Germany, Claussen & Wöbke Filmproduktion

*Westler (East of the Wall)*, 1985, Wieland Speck, West Germany, *Searcher Film*

*Who am I – Kein System ist sicher (Who am I – No System is Safe)*, 2014, Baran bo Odar, Germany, *Wiedemann & Berg Filmproduktion*

*Wir sind die Nacht (We are the Night)*, 2010, Dennis Gansel, Germany, *Constantin Film*

*Yella*, 2007, Christian Petzold, Germany, *Schramm Film*

*Zettl*, 2012, Helmut Dietl, Germany, *Diana Film*

*Zweiohrküken (Rabbit without Ears 2)*, 2009, Til Schweiger, Germany, *Barefoot Films*