ROUGH SURFACES
THE COLLAGE WORKS OF ROLF DIETER BRINKMANN

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Abstract

*Rough Surfaces* examines the post-1970 works of the West German author and collage artist, Rolf Dieter Brinkmann (1940-1975). Around 1970, Brinkmann’s commitment to intermedial experimentation produces a broad critique of contemporary media decrying 1) the loss of sensuous particularity, and 2) the marginalization of forms of experience that operate outside of language. These forms of experience do not contribute to a distanced perceptual mastery over one’s environs, but instead establish the fact of the body’s extra-/para-/a-linguistic communication with other objects and bodies. The dissertation investigates the potential of the post-1970 collage works to draw their reader out of the state of diminished sensory-affective experience they themselves index. All posthumously published, these are: Rom, Blicke (1979), *Erkundungen für die Präzisierung des Gefühls für einen Aufstand: Reise Zeit Magazin (Tagebuch)* (1987) and Schnitte (1988). Alienation under modern urban conditions is made visible, audible, and above all, palpable to the reader through Brinkmann’s relentless register of a frenzied and repetitive excess of sensory information. *Rough Surfaces* identifies these texts as belonging to that class of aesthetic objects whose force-effects “touch” their viewer or reader, intending to restore affective and sensory experience to the individual living under conditions of increasing abstraction, acceleration and compression.

Chapter 1 introduces the productive resonances between contemporary affect theory and Brinkmann’s post-1970 psychophysical approach to literature. Chapter 2 builds on these resonances to demonstrate that the work is best read as non-representational. Chapter 3 establishes Brinkmann’s appropriation of American aesthetic models—specifically those of New York School authors, composers and artists—for his strategies.
The project then charts this influence on the psychogeographic and notational praxes that generate the collage works. Chapter 4 profiles a medial shift from Brinkmann’s pre-1970 appropriations of photographic techniques of representation to the late style’s adaptations of specifically filmic techniques that structure the work after 1970.

These praxes of remediation intend the sensuous registration of a body in space by means of a temporally-bound, i.e. embodied writing, reflecting the question that motivates them—namely, how is it possible to situate a body in space as abstraction further deepens the condition of alienation?
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Abbreviations

BH  Briefe an Hartmut
EK  Erkundungen für die Präzisierung des Gefühls für einen Aufstand: Träume Aufstände/Gewalt/Morde REISE ZEIT MAGAZIN (Tagebuch)
RB  Rom, Blicke
S  Schnitte
WW  Westwärts 1&2
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Introduction

Rolf Dieter Brinkmann’s poetics are grounded in a fixation on presence and the present: “Ich bin meinerseits an Gegenwart interessiert” (BH 87). This focus manifests in the author's notations of event in language, image and sound across a variety of media, all in service of the “Kampf um mehr Gegenwartsbewußtsein” (135). Born in 1940 in Vechta, Brinkmann’s earliest memories include the air raids and anxious chaos of the final years of the Second World War. His critique of West German culture is rooted in an analysis of the effects of conditions of sustained negative affect upon the individual. The atmospheric anxiety and repressions of the postwar years are an important point of departure for his later writings, which repeatedly feature registrations of his earliest memories. These post-1970 works, which this dissertation takes as its primary sources, are the collage books¹, the radio plays², and the poetry volume, Westwärts 1 & 2 (1975). Brinkmann was killed in 1975 crossing the street in London where he was participating in the first International Cambridge Poetry Festival alongside American poets John Ashbery and Ed Dorn; the collage books’ were published only posthumously starting in 1979 with Rom, Blicke, the best-known of these works.

By his mid-twenties, Brinkmann had become associated with the Neuer Realismus promoted by his publisher and mentor Dieter Wellershof, alternatively called the Kölner Schule to describe the group of authors working in Wellershof’s orbit

¹ In order of their publication: Rom, Blicke (1979), Erkundungen für die Präzisierung des Gefühls für einen Aufstand: Träume Aufstände/Gewalt/ Morde REISE ZEIT MAGAZIN (Tagebuch) (1987) and Schnitte (1988). These Materialienbänder were published posthumously with Rowohlt in the years indicated, but composed in the years 1970-1973.
² “Auf der Schwelle” (1970), “Der Tierplanet” (1972) and “Besuch in einer sterbenden Stadt” (1972) were commissioned and aired by the Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR).
around 1965. Alain Robbe-Grillet’s take on materiality was formative for Brinkmann and others in his circle: writing in an essay that Brinkmann’s likely read under the title “Für einen Realismus des Hierseins,” the present “simply is.” Importantly, the “Realismus der Oberfläche” developed in Brinkmann’s early literary circle rejected the automatized modes of perception that would deliver more conventional realist effects, and Brinkmann’s texts from the early sixties like the short stories collected in *Die Umarmung* (1965) resist narrative, opting instead to register, in his own words, the “Zustand der Person,” thus making the texts’ central figure the principle of unity for its detailed moment-to-moment sketches of perception (Bassler 22).

Precision in the observation and notation of surface effects is also evident in the early poetry of the mid-sixties and underwrites Brinkmann’s staunchly anti-metaphorical approach. From 1967 on, the author becomes increasingly invested in an intermedial approach to composition for its multiple and compounding means of registering sensation. He becomes a member of the Cologne film society, X-SCREEN, experiments with B&W and color 8mm film, publishes the visually collaged poetry volume *Godzilla* in 1968, and engages especially intensively with photography beginning in 1970, as well as with audio tape and sound collage post-’70, ultimately generating some 600 hours of auditory material admirably edited by Herbert Kapfer and Katarina Agathos into the five-disc set, *Wörter Sex Schnitt* (2005).

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In the case of the post-’70 works, notation occurs as part of an experimental protocol, often involving psychogeography. The three “material volumes” or Materialienbänder produced in the early 1970’s derive their particular character from the precise registration of sensation that, like the sensuous reality Brinkmann is committed to inscribing via text, image and sound, is conditioned and interpenetrated by contemporary media (Fig 0.0 below).
His works thus offer access not only to the percepts and affects of a Western 1970s’ urban present, but to the specific terms of their perception. Brinkmann’s late essay “Ein unkontrolliertes Nachwort zu meinen Gedichten (1974/75), the closing essay from the poetry volume *Westwärts 1 & 2* (1975), lays bare the aesthetic program developed in the “Raumerkundungen” of the collage works, whereby the author achieves a state of desubjectivization and begins to record the body’s reactions to its environs in an endlessly paratactic stream of images. The essay makes clear the author’s intent “mit seinem Schreiben den Komplexen Ablauf unbewusster psychophysischer Umweltreaktionen bewusst erfahrbar und beschreibbar zu machen” (Schönborn, “Bilder einer Neuropoetik” 216).

The intermedial registration of the perceptual mechanisms of Brinkmann’s given historical moment is a strategy that allows him to note more precisely the expansions and marginalizations of the different sense modalities in response to various types of medial conditioning. His experiments with the forms collage book, sound collage, radio play, 8mm film, and photography are marked by the author’s conviction that hybridity, rather than forcing literature further into the margins of aesthetic practice, in fact allows it to demonstrate its “differential specificity” or *Eigensinn*, to speak with Andreas Huyssen (Krauss 56). *Eigensinn* defines literature’s singular ability to “absorb critically and imaginatively” the new perceptual regime generated by contemporary media—in Brinkmann’s case, photography, film and popular music—instead of being limited to an uncomplicated imitation of the techniques of representation associated with them (Huyssen, *Miniature* 8).

Brinkmann’s remediations of these media are positioned to disrupt their purportedly seamless integration into modern life. The techniques he engages in the
disruption of linearity are, he admits, nothing new. “Unkontrolliertes Nachwort” also addresses his appropriation of fragment and montage:


Implicit in this discussion of the use of montage are its filmic origins. His modernist forebear, William Carlos Williams, was an advocate of early non-narrative cinema who “saw in the medium a match for his own anti-narrative impulse to break with ‘banality of sequence’ and ‘the paralyzing vulgarity of logic’” (McCabe 9). A disavowed influence, Gertrude Stein, was similarly invested in depicting the “‘present as it is’ and to expose the falsity of history as a linear, teleological progress” (57). What Brinkmann calls “Abflüge” are in fact the lines of flight afforded by montage and cut-

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4 For the reader unfamiliar with Brinkmann’s oeuvre, it might seem odd to invoke these American writers before modernist practitioners of collage or cut-up in the German-speaking context. Brinkmann was undoubtedly familiar with the 20\textsuperscript{th}-century art movements of the German-speaking world, but his montage practice bears little resemblance to Dadaist approaches. He instead took his poetological models from American experimental poetics, starting with the modernists and the Objectivists, through the Beats, and continuing up to the contemporaneous second-generation New York School.
up technique. But the dissertation seeks to overturn the assumption implicit in the author’s admission that he often “landed at the same point” from which he took flight, seeming to get nowhere because language in its ossification is ‘clumsy.’ I will argue in the following pages that these Abflüge which take off and touch down at the same point serve to underscore the practice’s achievements in non-linear, non-discursive thought and its provocation in a reading body. To extend the metaphor, it is not so much the starting and ending points that matter, but the flight path between them.

This intervention is necessary and timely, given that the texts I consider have been labeled unreadable, as “Materialienbände,” or “Unbücher,” unfit for study as literature. As a result, book-length studies of the late works’ formal qualities have proliferated, most examining the relationship between “Text und Bild.” In these works, scholars attend to what they consider Brinkmann’s significant innovations (the sustained intermediality and experimentation of the work) but treat with minimal interest its content or reception aesthetic. Most recently, Stephanie Schmitt takes great pains to lay out the terms of the author’s adaptations of techniques of representation borrowed from other media in her 2012 monograph, Intermedialität

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5 Few articles sum up this attitude as well as Anita-Mathilde Schrumpf’s “Wie lesbar sind Brinkmanns Materialienbände für die Literaturwissenschaft?” (2010). Regarding Schnitte, Schrumpf remarks, ”Bis heute sieht sich Literaturwissenschaft bezüglich dieser Publikation vor ernsthaften Lektüreprobleme gestellt,” citing its intransigence to traditional literary interpretation (193).
bei Rolf Dieter Brinkmann, but has little to say on the subject of readerly sensation beyond its central position vis-à-vis these intermedial appropriations: “Durch die Integration von Eigenheiten anderer Zeichensysteme im Text verfolgt Brinkmann neben der Generierung eines literarischen Ausdruck, welcher die medial verfasste Umwelt zur Darstellung bringen soll, das Ziel, die sinnliche Beteiligung des Lesers am Text zu maximieren” (8). There is ample explanation of the techniques used to register “maximum” sensation in his texts, but no in-depth study of why this reception aesthetic might be relevant to the project beyond an aesthetic of authenticity that dominated late ‘60s and early ‘70s literary discourse. Chapter 1 dedicates itself to establishing the productivity of reading Brinkmann’s work with theories of affect to answer this question.

There is a critical consensus that conceptual confusion “ist in Brinkmanns Collagebüchern und Essays noch einmal durch sein unmethodisches Vorgehen und seine oftmals fehlende logische Stringenz potenziert” (Herrmann 130). Undoubtedly, these texts present us with irresolvable tensions and contradictions, as well as some weakly defended and unnuanced political opinions. Most prominently throughout the post-1970 works, Brinkmann swings between the poles of an almost-disavowed hope for revolution and nihilistic despair. The author evinces a faith that images can be captured as percepts and affects by the body, developed in the writing process, and that the force-effects of the linguistically and visually mediated images preserved by the text may clear a space of imagination for another, better world. This stands to a certain extent in tension with his dismissal of teleological notions of history, particularly of the bourgeois or Marxist narratives of progress which appear to him to sell the future at the cost of the present. This position he summarizes with "Die beste
Utopie wäre, wenn es keine Utopie mehr gäbe" (*Film* 276). Brinkmann's ambivalence on the question of the possibility for radical social change in particular provokes frustration in a reader who is sifting through their assaultive and repetitive contents, imagining that an author with such a polemical style will assume an unequivocal position. One critic’s description of the frustrated reader’s experience of the collage book, *Schnitte*, addresses the works’ resistance to unified meaning:

> Der Leser [...] hat zu Beginn die Hoffnung, dass er den roten Faden findet. Durch Wiederholungen von Textfragmenten und auffälligen wiederkehrenden Fotos wird der aufmerksame und wohlwollende Betrachter wie an einer unsichtbaren Hand genommen. Sehr schnell sitzt er über einer dreispaltigen Text-Seite oder einem doppelseitigen Bild Cut Up und versucht, seine Assoziationen zu einem Sinnzusammenhang zusammenzubringen, was ihm aber letztlich nicht gelingt. (Fischer 8)

The affect of irritation or frustration arising from the failures to 1) disambiguate meaning, and 2) tolerate repetition and permutation is a defining feature of the experience of the collage works. It is a product of a commitment to opening the reader to difference through a program of attention to what I will call *texture*, as well as Brinkmann’s presentations of the affective paradox of optimism.

"Die beste Utopie wäre, wenn es keine Utopie gäbe" resonates productively with recent studies of the complexes of hope and optimism, and draws the political efficacy of literary representations of these affects to the fore: "Utopien sind alle schriftlich fixierte Ergebnisse, Literatur. Sie sind Literatur" (*Film* 276), "[die sich] auf

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7 From "Notizen und Beobachtungen vor dem Schreiben eines zweiten Romans 1970/74,” published in *Der Film in Worten.*
Wörter, Sprache, Begriffe, auf sprachliche Formulierungen [beziehen].” “Gedichte,” on the other hand, “sind nie utopisch [...] Im Gegensatz zur Prosa sind Gedichte keine Erklärungen” (WW 271). The aphorism heading this paragraph encapsulates the paradox as explored by contemporary scholars Lauren Berlant and Sara Ahmed in their recent high-profile studies of affect. Berlant's *Cruel Optimism* (2011) identifies our very optimism, defined as a set of hopeful expectations forming a narrative for a putative future, as an obstacle to our happiness and fulfillment. In the current economic and political climate, the reigning middle-class expectations are unattainable for most individuals, rendering such optimism "cruel." In light of this, Berlant agrees that the hegemony of these shared narratives of hopeful expectation must be challenged. To this end, Ahmed's "Happy Objects" (2010) suggests that we "reread melancholic subjects, the ones who refuse to let go of suffering, who are even prepared to kill some forms of joy, as an alternative model of the social good" (50). Her article interrogates a genealogy of expectation whereby we come to associate certain objects with a future happiness (41). Examples of happy objects include membership in a traditionally composed nuclear family, the accumulation of wealth and assimilation to the dominant culture.

In Brinkmann we find an opportune melancholic subject to reread. The subject of the late texts is a consummate killjoy who rejects the contemporary norms that would regulate his family and broader social attachments, refuses all opportunities to earn a living, and makes a life-practice of a criticizing the dominant media culture that drives social and economic expectations ever skyward. Brinkmann is fiercely unwilling to let go of his suffering in a present in which every promise of future happiness demands the neglect of that present—of immediacy and sensation. Out of this critique
arise fleeting images of a freedom felt in and through the body. As shown in the
analysis of the collage book passages in Chapter 2, these blocs of percept and affect
register the experience of subjectivity in the urban present of the Western European
'70s in terms of its affective burdens, but the fullness of their anguished detail
implicitly projects a utopian counterimage—in an explicitly Marcuse-inflected
tradition of negativity, that which could be but is not.

Brinkmann is dismissive of the contradictions his work presents. Language
skeptic Fritz Mauthner is his authority on the subject: "'Widersprüche gibt's [sic] nur
in der Sprache,' das heißt: im alltäglichen gelebten zu lebenden Leben entstehen nur
Widersprüche auf Grund von Wörter, Sätzen, wenn jemand sich auf Wörter bezieht,
Logik ist Sprachlogik und Ordnung, aber sie verstümmelt die lebendige
Körperbewegung" (BH 140). This dissertation reads the texts’ conceptual
inconsistencies and weaknesses as incidental parts of the process of archiving his
psychophysical reactions to the environs in the immediate present, in the act of
writing; moreover, as Chapter 2 is concerned to demonstrate, the poetics evinced in
this writing are best read as non-representational. This is to say that the work does not
aim to faithfully re-present the reality of which it is purportedly derivative. The
difficulty of the resulting text serves the larger strategy of readerly entrainment, in

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8 This too he considers as an effect of his engagement with American poetic models. As he
writes in the afterword to the anthology ACID, "Die neue amerikanische Literatur, voller
Widersprüche in sich, dennoch von einer einheitlichen Sensibilität ausgeprägt [...] scheint das
der bis heute gehandhabten europäischen Literatur an praktikablem, hinsichtlich der
effektiven Erweiterung des menschlichen Bewußtseins vorauszuhaben – zumindest im
Augenblick, wo das Gefühl für die Notwendigkeit gesellschaftlicher Umstrukturierung wächst"
(Film 224).

9 For an elaboration of Brinkmann’s “gewisse Inkonsequenz beim Umgang mit den
Koordinaten des eigenen Kunstverständnisses,” see Markus Fauser, “Einleitung,” Medialität
der Kunst. Rolf Dieter Brinkmann in der Moderne. Ed. Markus Fauser (Bielefeld: transcript,
which the reader’s frustrations with the author’s language and concepts are a desired consequence of the encounter. In this sense, Brinkmann refuses to allow the reader let go of suffering. Specifically, I argue for an understanding of this struggle with the negative affects—frustration, disgust and boredom—as a process of opening the reader to difference, to a different experience of both visual media and reading. Whether this manifests in the development of an ability to perceive minute variations in the repetitive images and phrases that comprise the collage works, or as the capacity to drop the frantic search for “den roten Faden” and allow a different, non-abstractive type of reading experience to prevail, I argue that the post-’70s works offer a program of sensitivity training.

To this end Brinkmann adapts techniques of representation across media to insist on the unity of the senses, deploying the haptically charged textual form of the collage book to create haptic visualities and auralities that act to produce a limited restoration of sensation in the reader. This will be examined in Chapter 4, specifically to examine the shift from the more static imagery of Brinkmann’s early production, which relies on the adaptation of techniques of photographic representation, to an increasingly filmic or cinematographic writing leading into the post-’70 period. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick outlined an anticipatory quality of haptic sensation in the following terms:

To perceive texture is to know or hypothesize whether a thing will be easy or hard, safe or dangerous to grasp, to stack, to fold, to shred, to climb on, to stretch, to slide, to soak. Even more immediately than other perceptual systems, it seems, the sense of touch makes nonsense out of any dualistic understanding of agency and passivity; to touch is always already to reach out,
to fondle, to heft, to tap, or to enfold, and always also to understand other people or natural forces as having effectually done so before oneself, if only in the making of the textured object. (*Touching* 14)

An object thus relates a certain history of its materiality in the perception of its haptic qualities, specifically of its making, its poiesis. The object’s haptic qualities act as the medium of transmission for this knowledge. When I claim that collage is a haptically charged form, I am drawing not only on the relations of the two- and three-dimensional collage elements touching one another, these being the constellative relations that arise out of the author’s decisions regarding *mise en page*. I am also drawing on the visually mediated haptic force-effects of the resulting collage upon a reader-viewer. While different to film, the action of this art form upon its perceiver is based on the introduction of “a tactile element into the heart of the optical sphere, [...] establishing an entirely new perceptual constellation” (Wilke 47). A haptic visuality, in other terms—one that produces knowledge (or a hypothesis, following Sedgwick) of the object’s felt texture and a sense of its material history.

In the first instance, discrete and disparate collage elements border one another, overlap one another, some with the rough edges (Fig 0.1) that come from hand-tearing newsprint or a glossy porno mag, while others evidence the haptics of their construction with the cleanly cut, but wavering edges of household scissors or an Xacto knife (Fig 0.2).
Fig 0.1 (S 24-25)
Einbahnstraße in den Tod

"Aufstände, Morde, Gewalt, merkwürdige Verstümmelungen."

"Wenn nicht?"

Das ist der Geschmack, der uns lächeln lässt:
Entdecken Sie ihn!
eine schwarz-weiße Bild-Parade/

"Wer ist das?"

ein unbezähmbares Zucken in den Augen

WER??
Hinter dem Schatten eines Phantom-Autos

"Ist der Kerl verrückt geworden?"

Montag, 27.9.71
schmieriges Bild, verschwach in dem schmierigen Regen, düstere Wolken, Hallo, Auf Wiedersehen, nicht in der Gegenwart?

Was kann ich denn dafür, daß sie mir unter den Händen verreicht ist?"

"Und WER?? stieg aus dem farbige gepolsterten Sarg? Schätze, das würden Sie nie raten."

/Schwarzer NH aus Hollywood und Tod.

"Große Ambitionen, wie?"

Fig 0.2 (EK 7)
The elements’ positioning on the page may function to crowd or isolate one another. Some collage elements comprise the entire visual field, leaving no space for a publishing convention like pagination (Fig 0.3).

*Fig 0.3 (RB 236-37)*

While the contents of the collage book I can order on Amazon are 2D reproductions of surfaces that were three-dimensional in their original composition (e.g. the ticket stub of Fig 0.4 below) this material, spatial history of the collage books’ assemblage remains legible in the haptic visuality I am concerned to describe.
As noted, Brinkmann’s investment in collage form for its mimetic registration of the fragmented and mediatized experience of modernity is not remarkable among its avantgarde and neo-avantgarde practitioners. However, the psychogeographic process upon which it relies produces an unusual textual object. Brinkmann’s intention with his psychogeography is the total registration of his sensory-affective experience, an obviously unattainable objective. To that Sisyphean end, he makes claims for an automatized vision and hearing, the result of a program of sensorial entrainment whereby he claims to see as a camera and hear as a recording device,
recognizing and appropriating the body as a site of inscription. To supplement his inscription, he takes hundreds of photos on his personal Instamatic camera, and walks the streets with a portable tape recorder or a Super-8 camera running. A system of notation using the maps of his routes records the location and nature of his sensuous activity (Fig 0.5).

**Fig 0.5 (RB 244-45)**

These processes of registration culminate in collage works that are the composite notation of the experience. The constellated texts and images are both found and original objects which are intended to preserve Brinkmann’s sensations on dérive.
In the second instance, with the phrase “visually mediated haptic force-effects,” I mean the virtual sensations preserved in and by the art object which become actual in the encounter between reader-viewer and the object.\(^\text{10}\) This argument proceeds from a Deleuzian ontology, in which art’s function is to preserve sensation, and which grounds my readings of the post-’70s works. As Deleuze and Guattari propose in *What is Philosophy?*

> Art is the only thing in the world that is preserved. It preserves and is preserved in itself [...] although actually it lasts no longer than its support and materials—stone, canvas, chemical color, and so on. The young girl maintains the pose that she has had for five thousand years, a gesture that no longer depends on whoever made it. The air still has the turbulence, the gust of wind, and the light that it had that day last year, and it no longer depends on whoever was breathing it that morning. If art preserves it does not do so like industry, by adding a substance to make the thing last. [...] What is preserved—the thing or the work of art—is a **bloc of sensations, that is to say, a compound of percepts and affects**. (163-64)

To answer the question of what the preservation of specifically haptic sensation offers Brinkmann, it must be clear what generates such texture—specifically the texts’ claustraphobic “thickness,” to speak with Sianne Ngai. This dense materiality makes itself legible in the *Vertextung* of Brinkmann’s sensuous experience, in which the

\(^{10}\) Brinkmann is known in the postwar field for the sustained intermediality of his production: he made films and photoessays, wrote *Hörspiele*, a novel, critical essays, and six volumes of poetry, many of which contained visual collage or photoessays by the author, in addition to the collage books under discussion. What I mean to point out here is that when discussing the collage works, a reader-viewer is the appropriate term for the reception aesthetics involved, but this figure is not a constant over Brinkmann’s oeuvre.
typescript generated on a manual typewriter, with its irregular strikes, intentionally uncorrected typos, strikethroughs, typeovers and handwritten comments, evidences the sensuous labor of its production (see Fig 0.6). This materiality is also made palpable in the repetitive registrations of his experience of the urban Alltag.
Sedgwick points out in her work *Touching Feeling* (2002) that *repetition itself engenders texture*. She begins with the unity of the senses in perceiving texture, which we can think as the haptic visuality of something like shag carpet, or the haptic aurality of the crunch of a potato chip:

[T]he need to discuss texture across senses brings with it a need to think about texture across different scales. Technologies of travel, for example, as well as of vision emphasize that, although texture has everything to do with scale, there is no one physical scale that intrinsically is the scale of texture. As your plane circles over an airport, texture is what a whole acre of trees can provide. But when you’re chopping wood, a single tree may constitute shape or structure within your visual field, whereas texture pertains to the level of the cross-grained fibers of the wood in relation to the sleek bite of the axe. Furthermore, whatever the scale, one bump on a surface, or even three, won’t constitute texture [...] *Texture* [instead ...] *comprises an array of perceptual data that includes repetition, but whose degree of organization hovers just below the level of shape or structure*” (15-16, emph mine).

This is no less true of texts, in which language and images comprise the structures or shapes of a given spread, but with sustained reading produce a meta-texture, an enveloping atmosphere, through their repetition. This accretion produces an undeniable materiality which I have referred to with Ngai as “thick” text. Thickness is produced largely by the assaultive repetitions of Brinkmann’s collaged texts and images, which are assaultive not only in their permutative repetitiveness in which cut
up functions like an affective battering ram, but also in their difficult, often violent or pornographic content (Fig 0.7).

Fig 0.7 (S 35)

Bodies are presented as partial object readymades lifted from the phantasmagoria, which makes pornography an important source material, and in various states of decomposition, turning the mass media into other important sources (Fig 0.8).
Having spent some intensive hours with these works, I can of course relate here what I and other critics and readers of the texts have experienced. While I am sympathetic to Eugenie Brinkema’s recent criticism of affect theory in film studies as the creation of a “teleological spectatorship,” which assumes an exclusive intent on the part of the art object to make a visceral impact on its viewer such that critique is forever based in the individual feeling critic’s swoonings and outrages, rather than on its objective forms—Brinkmann’s literary intervention does its best political work when making its reader uncomfortable in the very specific manner it does (33). Of course my subjective affective experience of a given set of texts alone is not legitimate

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11 Brinkema’s book *The Forms of the Affects* (2014) treats film studies exclusively, but the point, if not the designation “spectatorship,” is equally valid for studies of affect outside of her discipline.
grounds for critical analysis; however, the books in question are specifically composed to mediate the negative affect of Brinkmann’s spatial and temporal alienation in late capitalist urban space, to provoke and to mire one in their thickness, and by critical consensus, they do.

In an essay titled "Redundante Wiederholungen, wiederholte Redundanzen," Morten Paul claims of Schnitte that repetition has two main rhetorical functions which are the poles between which the text oscillates: "[die] Emphase" and "ein Verlust an Konkretion." Of the movement between these poles he writes,

So erklärt sich die trotz der unüberschaubaren Menge und komplexen Anordnung des Materials zu konstatierende inhaltliche Redundanz, welche von der Wortreihung 'Sex, Geld und Tod' erstaunlich zutreffend umschrieben wird. Es ist unmöglich, in Schnitte die unzähligen Bilder von Zerstörung, Körperrn oder Abfall zu übersehen. Doch die Betrachtung verliert sich in der Fülle des Ähnlichen, die einzelnen Abbildungen gerinnen dabei zu einem identifizierbaren Typus. Die Elemente sind zwar nicht identisch, verweisen aber auf das Gleiche. (196-97)

What Paul describes in formal terms is precisely what renders the readerly experience of the collage works; namely the affect “stuplimity,” coined by Ngai in her influential book, Ugly Feelings (2005), which will receive more thorough treatment in Chapter 1. For present purposes, stuplimity is an affect combining stupefaction and sublimity, and is particular to the reception of “thick” texts. Ngai’s locus classicus for thick text is Gertrude Stein’s Making of Americans: Being a History of a Family’s Progress (1925). Stein’s 900-page masterpiece of language made thick and strange by
repetition, permutation and idiosyncratic syntax makes this point regarding its own repetitive strategies:

This is now a description of such a one and the completed understanding must have in them an open feeling, a sense for all the slightest variations in repeating, must never lose themselves so in the solid steadiness of all repeating that they do not hear the slightest variation. If they get deadened by the steady pounding of repeating they will not learn from each one even though each one always is repeating the whole of them they will not learn the completed history of them, they will not know the being really in them. (301)

Such recursive and permutative language inspires a feeling of shock or awe not unlike that of the mathematical sublime that gives way via the “steady pounding of repeating” to a deadening, to stupefaction. In Morten Paul’s words, Brinkmann’s repetitions “congeal” [gerinnen] or solidify; that is, they “thicken” through redundancy into a homogenous, identifiable “Typus.” This “Typus” is in fact texture, an array of perceptual data whose repetitions refuse the “Konkretion” of a discrete shape or structure.

What is at stake in the creation of a haptically charged, thick text? The preservation of haptic sensation in the collage works manifests in the spatialized sensations of claustrophobia; or more precisely, of a disoriented and panic-inducing “Auswegslosigkeit,” which is the subject’s hellish experience of the eternal return of das Immergleiche (M. Brinkmann, Wörter unpaginated). These sensations are captured in the repetitions of the collage works, the texture of which thus becomes the medium of transmission for the material history of this experience of the
phantasmagoria. The shock that accompanies the dizzying number of presentations and representations of the same words and images which advertise the usual objects of consumption gives way to a dullness, deadening, and ultimately corporeal paralysis. Brinkmann uses repetition to summarize the experience in Schnitte:

(paralysierte Wörter in der Kehle, paralysierte Körper, von Wörtern paralysierte Körper, die Wörter paralysierte Körper) (38)

But the collage works do not exist merely to reinstantiate the battering experiences of the urban Alltag for a reader; while this gesture can lay claim to a deterritorializing or defamiliarizing effect by staging alienation in a literary form and thereby pointing up the subject’s sensorial deformations, Brinkmann’s ideal reader would go further. Encountering a text like Stein’s or the collage works, which assault with the permutative repetitions of language and image belonging to Brinkmann’s practice of cut-up, and via the meticulously recorded iterations of daily life, we first experience the dysphoria of shock and boredom associated with stuplimity. But such extreme experiences of repetition, permutation and recursivity give way, according to Ngai, to "a secondary feeling that seems strangely neutral, unqualified, 'open'" (Ngai 284). As described by Stein in the quote above, it is the development via the reading process of an ability to apprehend sensuous difference in the text, "to have a sense for all the slightest variations in repeating." While such variation in the collage books "verweisen [...] auf das Gleiche," they are emphatically not the same; their very repetition is what opens us to their difference from one another (Paul 197). Texture, whether text or carpet, is only texture through the differences that comprise the
patterns of its repetitions and tell of its poietic beginnings—otherwise, we would apprehend only a uniform field. Stein’s “open feeling” is a state of entrained alertness or responsiveness to texture. Its cultivation is the basis of Brinkmann's experimental and psychogeographic activity, which is an intensified attention to all the minute sensuous variations belonging to the repetitions of the everyday. This ability to discern difference is conferred by the text itself via the provocation of the affective state "open feeling" upon the reader who learns to sustain their attention to the text’s repetitions; that is, to its textures. It is by fostering such sensitivity that Brinkmann’s texts work against the "starke Automatisierung des Lebendigen," and the "[V]erhinder[ung der] Individualisierung" (RB 173). It is a striving to read without the filter that selects for identity, for sameness, for narrative, and it entrains us to read for difference, and against our own sensorial deadening.

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The question of Brinkmann’s individualism, tied to the elimination of the individual through the new “societies of control” and the homogenizing effects of their mass media, is rephrased in this dissertation as the author’s insistence on difference in the post-1970 works. Frank Schirrmacher reviewing Erkundungen for the FAZ in 1987 called it one of the "wichtigsten Documente über das Bewußtsein einer Generation." However: the work does not aim at verisimilitude, at a faithful representation of the early '70s scene of urban life in its totality, complete with typologies of the various groups comprising West German or Italian society. Instead, the text's idiosyncratically narrow focus on the author's experience of the present documents the limitations imposed on a single body by culture's inscriptions. In
Chapter 3, we will observe the influence of American poetic models on the psychogeographic protocols that underwrite this documentation and its exploration of limit. Brinkmann's work, as the register of his unique experience, is precisely not encyclopedic. The intermediality of photography, audio recordings, found materials, and original writings are deployed for a comprehensive focus on himself qua *Einzelgänger*, in the registration of his own responses to cultural formations\(^\text{12}\), in the notation of his unique psychophysical assays while on dérive. Rather than quantifiable data, he offers the affects and percepts of his individual experience and a narrow range of ephemera that provoke or prolong these affects and percepts of alienation. The eccentricities of his life and worldview as compared to the lives lived around him are preserved as blocs of sensation in his collages of language, images and audiotape. Focus on the individual is a refusal to present an "einhheitliche[s] erklärende[s] Weltbild[...]" and an attempt to explode the very notion of such unifying narratives (BH 148). For the author, *Neue Subjektivität* meant

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\text{daß die Autoren, also auch ich, kein verbindliches, für alle verbindliches Weltbild mit ihren Arbeiten mehr liefern, sondern genau das Gegenteil: die einheitlichen erklärenden Weltbilder mit ihren Arbeiten (Gedichte, Romane usw.) zersprengen, die einheitlichen Weltbilder waren ja nur wegen der Sprache und der Vermittlung der Sprache über die Sprache vorhanden. (BH 148)}
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The turn "inward" constitutes a critical practice, insofar as the post-1970 texts do not

\[^{12}\text{The collaged materials are largely the index of his fixations on mass media's manipulations of the language and images associated with sex, money, and death; the inventory of this particular cultural formation is notably comprehensive (see Figs 0.1, 0.2, 0.7, 0.8).}\]
present a sanitized and universal image of world, but instead preserve subjective sensations of panic, anxiety, rage, hopelessness, powerlessness, depression, frustration, desperation, to be actualized in the reader during their performance.\textsuperscript{13}

The emphasis on the individual and a valorization of "grosse Einzeln" provoked reproaches of apoliticality that were applied broadly to the New Subjectivity. Brinkmann's desire to intervene at this level is explicit ("Ich bin für den Einzeln, davon gehe ich nie wieder ab") and stems from the recognition that the erasure of difference is a dangerous effect of the technologized-mediatized reality we inhabit (RB 209). He identifies this limiting and alienating effect as a consequence of the reigning discursive system: he feels "fremd innerhalb eines reduzierten Universums, das durch den Vorrang von Technik reduziert ist auf Entweder-Oder, Ja-Nein" (RB 326). In the passage that follows, "Technik" could easily be substituted for "Abendländisches Denken":

Was ist der Schrecken des 20. Jahrhunderts?: Es ist die starke Automatisierung des Lebendigen [...] Und warum ist der Schrecken durch Technik so groß? Weil er die Ausprägung der Vielfältigkeit verhindert - denn Technik schneidet ab und legt auf das Ja-Nein/Entweder-Oder fest. Sie verhindert die Individualisierung.\textsuperscript{14} (RB 205)

Brinkmann apprehends in this lost diversity [Vielfältigkeit] a state of diminishment

\textsuperscript{13} Performance here is understood as reading, either aloud or as the "evocalization" of silent reading. Silent reading "locates itself [...] in the conjoint cerebral activity and suppressed muscular action of a simultaneously summoned and silenced enunciation" or evocalization. See Garrett Stewart, Reading Voices: Literature and the Phonotext (Berkeley: U of California P, 1990), here p. 1.

\textsuperscript{14} Clearly Brinkmann is not against technology \textit{per se}; given his experimentation with photography, film and audiotape, such a statement would contradict much of his activity. The passage continues "Warum sind Sie gegen Technik?: Ich bin nicht gegen Technik, aber wohl bin ich gegen Menschen, die Technik zur Reduzierung einsetzen" (RB 205).
imposed by the logic of either/or, “Ja-Nein, die alte aristotelische Masche” (RB 326). The impoverishment is recorded as "diese ärmliche, undifferenzierte Gegenwart überall aus kontrollierten Gefühlen und Empfindungen und das heißt kontrollierten Wahrnehmungen." Leaning on William S. Burroughs and Herbert Marcuse, Brinkmann’s "kontrolliert [...]" refers to the medial conditioning of the sensorium as well as the restrictions on thought, action and feeling imposed by the discursive regime (EK 336). Brinkmann’s texts are composed to escape this logic, which he calls the terror of the twentieth century. It is decried outright, as in the quote above, as well as implicitly via the rejection of representation that will serve as the focus of Chapter 2, which attempts to shed new light on Brinkmann’s Sprachskepsis. The non-representational poetics I propose as the armature for the late texts is an inventory of affect along what I will call a Barthesian gradient, a method of registration that refuses unified meaning.

Critics alleged a fascist denial of meaning in favor of focusing on the individual’s internal state. The refusal to take a position gave rise to this criticism before and after Brinkmann’s 1970 break with Pop and publishing. In the article "Die

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15 Aristotle becomes a metonym for binary logic in the collage books. From Rom, Blicke: "'Objektiv? Subjektiv? Alles Quatsch? Und Aristoteles? Abendland! A ist nicht Nicht-A! Wer begreift den apodiktischen Quatsch? Entweder-Oder-Haltung, Eindimensional" (193). The notion of one-dimensionality taken from his readings of Herbert Marcuse “hat mit lebendigen Vorgängen nichts zu tun, aber es hat mit unserem verbalen Ausdruck zu tun” (326). As Sybille Späth notes, in the collage works "die Aristotelische Philosophie [wird] zum ausgemachten Ursprungsort und Beginn der linearen Entwicklung des Abendlandes auf seinen Untergang hin" (279). But his condemnation of Aristotle comes to the author more specifically through his readings of Alfred Korzybski’s Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics (1933). Korzybski and his theories of General Semantics are cited throughout the collage books, Westwärts and the three Hörspiele (see WW 90, EK 224, RB, pp. 83, 176, 411, as well as Der Tierplanet/Besuch in einer sterbenden Stadt in Der Film in Worten, pp. 152, 195, and 200). Korzybski, alongside Wilhelm Reich, even features as a character in the radio plays ("Nur zwei Sprecher haben Namen erhalten, Korzybski und Dr. Reich") in order to present “Gedankengänge und Vorstellungen von ihnen” (Film 152).
neueste Stimmung im Westen" which appeared in *Kursbuch* 20 (1970), Martin Walser attacked contemporary American-inflected German-language Pop works as a literature of interiority that belies a "regressive Gereiztheit" and political disengagement (25):

> Das Desengagement führte zur Weigerung, mit Sprache Meinung herzustellen, und entwickelt eine artistische Methode der Reduktion des Ausdrucks auf Sprachfertigenteile, auf Montage und Collage und Bloßlegung von Sprachstrukturen. (20)

Walser claims that the poets of this new "mood," from Heissenbüttel to Handke and Brinkmann, evince a narcissism through which "die Bewußtseinspräparate für die neueste Form des Faschismus hergestellt werden," since "mit jedem Ausflug ins Innere [stirbt] eine demokratische Möglichkeit ab und die Möglichkeit zum Gegenteil—und das heißt Faschismus—nimmt zu" (36). While this critique from 1970 applied specifically to an earlier Brinkmann still practicing Pop, with the publication of *Rom, Blicke* the accusation of fascist or "faschistoide" tendencies surfaced in several reviews. Brinkmann’s former friend, Herman Piwitt claims in a 1979 *Spiegel* review to have read *Rom, Blicke* with "wachsendem Entsetzen" ("Rauschhafte Augenblicke" 252). In 1980, Michael Zeller wrote that *Rom, Blicke* contained "furchterregende Ausschweifungen hemmungslosen Denkens, lebensverachtenden Zwangsneurosen, Zuckungen eines Wahn-Sinns," concluding "[w]enn irgendeinen Sinn der Begriff noch decken soll: dies ist der Sprachgebrauch und das Menschenbild eines Faschisten" (390, 391). Such condemnations ignore the strident media critique of *Rom, Blicke*, preferring to focus misguidedly on Brinkmann’s furious individualism: apparently the
documentation in images of sensation of the urban phantasmagoria—a built environment so suggestively “real” (i.e. unmediated) that the subject experiences it as natural and coherent—is only good politics if backed by the proper academic citations of critical theory.

Some did accord the project legitimacy: Ulrich Greiner of the FAZ, for instance, asked fellow critics "ob nicht angesichts der gescheiterten Utopien und des schändlichen Ausverkaufs politischer Ideen ein radikaler Individualismus á la Brinkmann nicht doch eine Sprengkraft besitzt, die neues Gelände freigibt" (FAZ 4/12/1979). Greiner, however, lacked the vocabulary afforded by theories of affect to describe what such "neues Gelände" might be. It is my contention 1) that the new terrain opened by the collage books is the opening of the reader to difference through the sensations produced by the blocs of affect and percept they preserve; 2) his individualism is a quixotic attempt to preserve the category as such in the face of the new societies of control, as well as the necessary condition of experimental self-observation that began with Goethe, Purkyne, Plateau and Fechner.

Piwitt in his 1979 review of Rom, Blicke dismisses this individualism as “die größenwahnsinnigste und verkommenste Ideologie vom ‘Großen Einzelnen’” (“Rauschhafte Augenblicke” 254). Brinkmann’s insistence on the individual stems from a Burroughsian recognition of the transition from a society of discipline to one of control. In a control society “[w]e no longer find outselves dealing with the
mass/individual pair. Individuals have become ‘dividuals,’ and masses, samples, data, markets, or ‘banks’” (Deleuze, “Postscript” 5):

The disciplinary societies have two poles: the signature that designates the 
individual, and the number or administrative numeration that indicates his or her position within a mass. This is because the disciplines never saw any incompatibility between these two, and because at the same time power individualizes and masses together, that is, constitutes those over whom it exercises power into a body and molds the individuality of each member of that body [...] In the societies of control, on the other hand, what is important is no longer either a signature or a number, but a code: the code is a password, while on the other hand the disciplinary societies are regulated by watchwords (as much from the point of view of integration as from that of resistance). The numerical language of control is made of codes that mark access to information, or reject it [...] The socio-technological study of the mechanisms of control, grasped at their inception, would have to be categorical and to describe what is already in the process of substitution for the disciplinary sites of enclosure, whose crisis is everywhere proclaimed. (6-7)

These technologies evidence for Deleuze that we are not in-divisible subjects—quite the opposite, we as our information is endlessly divisible, yielding the term, “dividuals.” What starts as information specific to a given subject can be abstracted from her and reconstellated in a variety of ways without her consent or control. These

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16 Deleuze himself mentions Burroughs by name in his short essay as an early apprehender of this transition: “‘Control’ is the name Burroughs proposes as a term for the new monster” (“Postscript” 4).
data remixes are composed to yield whatever information those with access to it, whether government agencies or corporate advertisers, find most useful for their purposes. How can we be thought of as individuals with the inalienable and autonomous agency associated with conventional notions of individuality when we are divided into those with and without access? Individuality connotes the subject’s right and ability to effect their will (within limits) in the world. Access to material necessities, information, and the sensuous social relations implicated by such access comprise the *sine qua non* for the practices and discourses that constitute the individual in Western society.  

In an exchange of letters with Piwitt from *Rom, Blicke*, Brinkmann argues for the individual’s value and the abandonment of the mass. His argument is admittedly accompanied by unnuanced expressions of disgust and loathing for “das Mittelmäßige, der Durchschnitt,” whose interests, Piwitt insists to the contrary, the artist is obligated to represent. Brinkmann’s argument rests on the intuition that the mass/individual paradigm has passed into a paradigm in which the category “individual” itself is negated. His resistance to the erasure of the individual proceeds as the indexing of his own unique embodied attention to the present. The process-based approach to indexing attention in the psychogeographies intends to "register a form that is rarely taken into account: the stretching" (Barthes, *Neutral* 196-97). In Chapter 2, I will argue that this stretching is part of the inventory of the sensuous present registered along the gradient or continuum of intensities (that is, affects and

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17 Thomas Hobbes and John Locke in their development of notions of the social contract claimed that the subject’s survival was endangered by a government that did not guarantee the rights to property deemed primary to individuality, for instance. Of course, the definition of individual, i.e. which type of humans had access to property rights, was also limited to majority-age white males of the upper classes at the time of their writings.
percepts), which yawns wide to encompass both meaning and non-meaning, meaning’s embrace and concomitant suppression. In its stretching, the present is privileged over against the past or future. In Brinkmann’s words, "Überhaupt kam ich gar nicht zurecht mit dem Vorwärts, Weiter und Halt. Mir ist vielmehr nach einer ausgedehnten Gegenwart zu Mute" (S 135).

Chapter 3 explores the Cagean experimental protocols used to expand the present. To focus one’s full attention for a bounded period on its sensuous particulars is to ignore the impulse to think about the coming moment, or those past. In Brinkmann’s assessment, discursive thought tends to concentrate an anxious attention on the future while reinforcing a paralytic attachment to the past at the cost of an attention the sensuous present. ‘Stretching’ of the present is the reclamation of the spatial-sensuous dimension of experience in which the present expands to encompass the extensively detailed sensuous experience that the author’s hypervigilant attention—a “bemühte Aufmerksamkeit,” in his words—registers (RB 326). Jonathan Crary remarks on the resonances of the root of the word “attention” with those of tension, stretching and waiting. Attention “implies the possibility of a fixation, of holding something in wonder or contemplation, in which the attentive subject is both immobile and ungrounded” (Suspension 10). The stretching of Brinkmann’s psychogeography is its ability to facilitate a contained period of fixed attention to the present.18 This practice of attention generates an "ausgedehnten

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18 While Brinkmann is sometimes dismissive of Zen techniques of mindfulness keyed to develop and sustain such presence (and which were in vogue at the time of the collage works’ composition and notably practiced by John Cage) his literary program consciously maintains similar aims. (“[…] Obwohl ich wortlos weiß,das ist Es,bezweifele ich,daß es Zen ist,was hier in der Gegenwart weiterhilft!///” (EK 83).) For an analysis of the parallels between Brinkmann’s practice of “Still-Werden” and Zen Buddhism, see Karsten Hermann, Bewußtseinserkundungen, pp. 173-178.
Gegenwart”onto whose array of percepts and affects the order demanded by representation cannot be grafted without doing them significant violence. The refusal of a fixed position, of the conventions of representation is for Brinkmann an attempt to forge an ethics or "discourse of the 'lateral choice'." It affords in Roland Barthes' words, "a free manner—to be looking for [one's] own style of being present to the struggles of [one's] time," a consequence of the politics of post-meaning with which Brinkmann approaches urban reality in the collage works and the poetry of *Westwärts 1 & 2* (*Neutral* 8). The process-based poetics of the collage works, and the contemporaneous American experimental poetry generally, result in the development of a sensitivity to the near-inconspicuous affects of the body's everyday encounters with the world. In "stretching" the present, the registration of a maximum of sensuous experience becomes possible and enables a thinking-through-affect described by Barthes as serving "the passion for difference" (77).

Finally, Chapter 4 investigates a formal shift in Brinkmann’s remediations. In the years leading up to 1970, he moves from a writing that appropriates photographic techniques of representation to a writing that increasingly focuses on movement and process and to this end, adapts filmic techniques of representation. Brinkmann’s film-inflected text is used to demonstrate where and how literature can exceed film’s capacities to capture sensation and engender shock, to touch the body through its unique registration of percept and affect.
Chapter 1

_Schillernde Vieldeutigkeit:
Rolf Dieter Brinkmann’s Turn to Affect_

Am Ende des Gedichts dem eingestimmten schmökernden gefühligen Leser durch den Reim, der so plump und grob ist, auch einen Schlag in sein Gefühl, zum Aufwachen! (BH 191)

In what has become one of the most-cited passages in affect theory, Baruch Spinoza writes, "No one has yet determined what the body can do" (87). This statement contains two noteworthy implications. First, the body’s capacities are never defined in isolation; they are instead always supplemented by context, by the relations a given body assumes with its environment and other bodies. Neuropsychology now recognizes that processes of mutual affective regulation, largely studied between mother and infant, actively shape the brain as body and environment engage in a complex system of feedback, one which renders the debate between nature and second nature moot (Maturana and Varela 75-80). Second, if we fast-forward 300 years from Spinoza to the present day, we find a world still stumped by the question "What can a body do?"

Rolf Dieter Brinkmann limns the problem with the body’s relation to language in mind: “keiner weiß, wie die Umsetzungen von Lauten, Sprache, in den Zellen zu elektrischen Impulsen erfolgt, die ihrerseits sich umwandeln in chemische Aggregate, und der Stoffwechsel zieht so und so eingefärbt durch den Körper, das Gehirn fixiert in Bildern und Vorstellungen, da steht’n abgetakelter Baum vor dir, weißgeflecktes Blau überm Hinterhof [...] Gehirnrhythmen schwingen aus, good vibrations” (WW
273). In this chapter, I examine Brinkmann’s literary project post-1970 as the record of psychophysical field experiments performed with and upon his body and registered as percepts and affects. These experiments intend to index with a qualitative fullness the embodied effects of exposure to the wholly mediatized reality of the early Western ’70s. In their registration of experience as non-representational sensations, the works constitute an attempt to restore qualitative difference to perception.

Such qualitative difference began to erode with the advent of Fechnerian psychophysics in the 19th century, which effectively homogenized perception. Fechner’s formalization of perception

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19 A mocking allusion to Kant’s *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790), specifically §63, “Von dem eigentümlichen Charakter der Dinge als Naturzwecke.”
20 Comprised by the collage books, three radio plays, the poetry volume *Westwärts 1&2* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1975), and selections from 650 minutes of tape recordings for the Westdeutschen Rundfunk’s *Autorenalltag* released as *Wörter Sex Schnitt* (Munich: intermedium records, 2005). The collage books are: *Rom, Blicke* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1979) henceforth abbreviated RB; *Erkundungen für die Präzisierung des Gefühls für einen Aufstand: Reise Zeit Magazin (Tagebuch)* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1987), EK; and *Schnitte* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1988), S. The radio plays are: *Auf der Schwelle* (written 1970, aired 1971); *Der Tierplanet* (written 1971, aired 1972); *Besuch in einer Sterbenden Stadt* (written 1972/73, aired 1973). The collage books serve as a repository for much of the content that appears in the poetry volume and radio plays; the audio recordings and collage books have a two-way relationship, as each provides source material for the other.
21 From *Erkundungen*: “Ja, was betreibe ich eigentlich? Feldstudien!”; “Was ich seit 1968 gemacht habe? Könnte man als Feldstudien bezeichnen” (227, 264).
22 Gustav Theodor Fechner, physicist and philosopher who developed a Spinozist mind-body theory, coined the term “psychophysics” in his 1860 study *Elemente der Psychophysik*, which takes as its aim “eine exacte Lehre von den Beziehungen zwischen Leib und Seele” (v). In this work, Fechner develops a method that relates matter to the mind, objective world and subjective impressions. The initial inspiration for his ideas stemmed from experimental data on the sense of touch and the perception of light collected in the early 1830s by the German physiologist Ernst Heinrich Weber. His best-known work is on the minimum discernible difference in intensity of stimuli (“just noticeable difference”) which Weber had shown to be in constant proportion to an initial reference intensity. Establishing these thresholds of sensation meant that Fechner was able to make human perceptions “calculable and productive” by measuring the stimuli that produced them; with the determination of such measurable units of sensation, for the first time, subjectivity is “made quantifiably determinable” (Crary, *Techniques* 148, 152). Drawing on Michel Foucault’s work on Fechner in *Discipline and Punish*, Crary points out that via the homogenization of perception, psychophysics establishes the conditions for the rendering of a perceiver “manageable, predictable, productive, and above all consonant with other areas of rationalization” (147).
[...] renders the specific contents of vision irrelevant. Vision, as well as the other senses, is now describable in terms of abstract and exchangeable magnitudes. If vision previously had been conceived as an experience of qualities (as in Goethe’s optics), it is now a question of differences in quantities, of sensory experience that is stronger or weaker. But this new valuation of perception, this obliteration of the qualitative in sensation through its arithmetical homogenization, is a crucial part of modernization. (Crary, Techniques 147)

Brinkmann’s repetitive, meticulously detailed registrations of perceptual and affective difference are necessarily qualitative. By privileging difference between sense modalities as well as insisting on the heterogeneity of the media23 that convey percept and affect to the reading body, Brinkmann’s late work achieves a limited recuperation of aisthesis in the production of sensation as negative affect in their reader/viewer.

Looking to the physical sciences forty years on, neuroscience has yet to explain thought or consciousness in any satisfactory manner, but in light of developments in

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23 Following Walter Benjamin, Brinkmann believed that new technologies of perception could exercise crucial critical power in the individual’s understanding of historical change and oppression. I will argue in a subsequent chapter that Brinkmann adapts Benjamin’s notion of the artwork as “Geschoß,” the tactile projectile associated in the Kunstwerk essay with Dada and film, to generate physical shock effects with his texts and the media that determine them. Despite this embrace of a broad range of media (vinyl records, audio tape, film, and photography) Brinkmann loathed television, the hegemonic medium of the German 1970s. Television’s mix of media signals and blend of information and entertainment rendered it a “cesspool of undifferentiated signals [the author] deemed impenetrable” (Werbeck 220). This dangerous stew’s “flow” from program segment to commercial and back elides the differences between types of media; additionally, in its disingenuous self-presentation as a continuity of live and thus unedited sights and sounds, it blurs the boundaries between lived and recorded experience.
quantum research, new approaches to neurophysics have arisen.\textsuperscript{24} Previously dismissed as fantastical, most famously by Einstein, evidence for quantum entanglement\textsuperscript{25} has mounted over the last thirty years; in 2012, the process was captured on film.\textsuperscript{26} At this field's intersections with biology, neurophysics, and cognitive neuroscience, studies have been designed to determine whether quantum effects may account for consciousness\textsuperscript{27}: indeed, Einstein's "spukhafte Fernwirkung"\textsuperscript{28} or "spooky action at a distance" describing quantum entanglement may prove to be yet another thing we didn't know a body could do (69). If true, this implies that the


\textsuperscript{25} Very roughly, the association of two particles at a distance, such that each appears to be in two places at once. This means that action on one affects the other, even at great distances. Experiments with teleportation, i.e. the transfer of matter between two points without this matter transversing the distance between them, have allowed scientists to port a particle as far as 143 kilometers (89 miles).

\textsuperscript{26} Entanglement was successfully imaged by Viennese physicists for the first time in 2013; Robert Fickler and his team at the Vienna Center for Quantum Science and Technology (VCQ) published their findings in the journal Scientific Reports, May 2013.

\textsuperscript{27} Particularly in the form of the Penrose-Hameroff theory, which despite its formulation in the early 1990s has received attention in recent press as evidence for quantum entanglement accumulates and interest in quantum computing waxes. Physicist Roger Penrose and anesthesiologist Stuart Hameroff analogize the brain to a quantum computer, a device that relies on quantum mechanical phenomena (specifically, the fact that particles can be in two places at once) in order to perform calculations that are too complex to be solved by conventional computing. Penrose and Hameroff developed their ideas independently, but collaborated in the early 1990s on the Orchestrated Objective Reduction model. Penrose's work depends on a particular interpretation of the mathematician Kurt Godel's incompleteness theorem, which hypothesizes that no computer algorithm can prove certain types of results. Arguing that human mathematicians are capable of proving so-called "Godel-unprovable" results, Penrose claims that human brains exceed any analogy with conventional computers. In light of this superior ability, Penrose asserts that quantum mechanics must underwrite human brain processes. Penrose's theory does not explain how this proceeds, but insists only that the phenomenon is required if we are to account for the human mathematician's ability to solve certain mathematical equations. See Hameroff, “Consciousness, Neurobiology and Quantum Mechanics: The Case for a Connection” in The Emerging Physics of Consciousness, ed. Jack A. Tuszynski (Berlin: Springer, 2006), pp. 193-253.

\textsuperscript{28} From a letter from Einstein to Max Born dated March 3, 1947. As "spukhaft[...]" indicates, Einstein expresses skepticism about the phenomenon's existence in this document. While evidence supporting quantum entanglement has been slowly accruing since Einstein's 1935 paper denied its possibility, it was only in 1997 that quantum teleportation was first verified.
processes of consciousness themselves act on the world around them. Indeed, evidence is accumulating to support claims by physicists and cultural theorists alike that consciousness itself exerts a material force upon the world—is material, as Henri Bergson claimed at the outset of the 20th century.29

Affect theory, arguably still in its infancy, makes commonsense claims for the same. The well-known example of the "vibe" of a room and its ability to infect newcomers to that space30 1) implies that bodies communicate in a manner that does not proceed through language; and 2) argues for the body or matter's ability to produce this pre- or a-linguistic information and transmit it to other bodies, in turn implying a network of affect. Such concepts upend claims for the division of the individual into a thinking mind and a sensate body, which Brinkmann himself rejected: "Das Gehirn gehört doch zum Körper, ist Teil des Körpers!" (BH 264).31

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29 I am hardly celebrating the latest developments in the science of consciousness. If the lesson of psychophysics is any example, furthering our abilities in measuring, quantifying, directly manipulating, and/or reconstructing consciousness will likely have disastrous consequences for a majority of humankind. Quantum AI is already in the making at the Google Quantum AI Labs, NASA, and in robotics labs around the world. In October 2014, a team of physicists in China published a paper titled “Experimental Realization of Quantum Artificial Intelligence,” in which a quantum computer equipped with a camera eye learned to recognize handwriting (see Li Zhaokai et al., “Experimental Realization of Quantum Artificial Intelligence,” Physics Review, L 114, 140504 [2015], http://arxiv.org/abs/1410.1054).

30 Termed "affect contagion" by Silvan Tomkins, and re-termed "transmission" by Teresa Brennan in her study of the phenomenon, The Transmission of Affect (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2004). This aspect of contagion “is critical for the social responsiveness of any organism. It is only when joy of the other activates joy in the self, fear of the other activates fear within, anger of the other activates anger within, excitement of the other activates one’s own excitement that we may speak of an animal as a social animal. It is now known that the distress cries of of animals taped and reproduced over a loud speaker are capable of evacuating from a small town all animals of that species. In such a case it is a matter of indifference who is emitting a distress cry so long as it is heard” (Tompkins 296-297).

31 "Es ist nachdenklich machend [...] daß man sich den Kopf, die Gedanken, die Denkfähigkeit immer getrennt vom übrigen Körper vorstellt, sagt man das Wort Kopf, Gedanken usw. dabei passiert das doch jeweils immerzu in einem selber, und das ist man doch egal wo, an welchem Schnittpunkt! Das Gehirn gehört doch zum Körper, ist Teil des Körpers!" (BH 264)
Affect theory originated with a recognition of the inadequacy of dominant modes of analysis to certain basic forms of human experience. Poststructuralism's failure to recognize or integrate these aspects of lived reality—namely those that fell outside of signification—prompted the development of a new approach in the humanities. The privilege accorded language by poststructuralism "filtered out pre-cognitive modes of awareness that were felt to be more basic, even more real than the ideated forms of linguistic apprehension," since affects form a "level of experience [that] cannot be translated into words without doing violence" (Cronan 51; Gibbs 200).

In what seems a paradox, Brinkmann chooses to register his experience of embodied reality in language. Evident in the collage works32 is practice of sensory-affective engagement in which the body becomes an increasingly world-sensitive interface. Illustrating this engagement and techniques of its registration in order to explain his use of language as medium, I offer the opening of Rom, Blicke, the first of the collage books to appear in print after Brinkmann's death in 1975:

Freitag, 14. Oktober, Köln Hbf 0 Uhr 12, der Zug fährt an; (:Maleen auf dem düster verstaubten Bahnsteig neben leeren Karren und dem erloschenen Kiosk macht Abschiedszeichen in die ausgelaugte schmutzige Luft unter den weißen Neonlichtlampen/in schwarzem kurzem Samtmäntelchen und darunter Jeans – was konnten wir noch sagen?/zu oft in der vergangenen Zeit hatten wir spät abends über diesen Augenblick gesprochen, über das Weggehen, Träume von

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32 Composed between 1973 and 1975, these are: Rom, Blicke (1979, RB), Erkundungen für die Präzisierung des Gefühls für einen Aufstand: Reise Zeit Magazin (Tagebuch) (1987, EK) and Schnitte (1988, S). Published by Rowohlt, the scholarship refers to them variously as “collage books,” “Materialbände,” and even “Unbücher” for their registration of an immediate and discontinuous present.
Taxizentrale und im Wagen, während der Fahrt, ein neuer Ansturm der Bodenlosigkeit, keinen Ort zu haben und Erinnerungen an das Hin- und Hergereise seit Vechta, eine grauenhafte Unsicherheit, die ich begreifen lernte:/also wohin jetzt? dachte ich. Und wie weiter? - Weiter! [...] (RB 6)

The facing collage (Fig 1.1) includes his Cologne-to-Rome ticket stub; a charcoal drawing of a door open about thirty degrees, light streaming through the arc; an element clipped from an English print source reads "What are you waiting for?" and overlaps the door clipping's lower left corner by a centimeter; at bottom, an aerial image of an immense train station at night, likely a postcard.

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33 Charcoal drawing by the artist Günther Knipp, Brinkmann’s Villa Massimo colleague.
The cited passage is representative of the collage works first in its focus on negative sensation or affect, the products of the inescapable antagonistic energies of an urban present that fakes life. Per Brinkmann, this falsification can be detected only by engaging with it more bodily: “je mehr das Körpergefühl, in der Gegenwart anwesend zu sein, vorhanden ist, desto mehr ist das Wissen vorhanden, daß das, was erstarrt und aufgebaut ist, eine Kulisse ist, durch die man sich hindurchbewegt” (WW 272).

Second, the passage is representative of these works’ meticulous registration of sensory-affective detail in an image-text collage composed of found objects collected during the recorded duration, personal photography from Brinkmann's Instamatic camera, clippings from various print media, and blocks of original text. In its asymbolic and anti-metaphorical notation of event, it relies on a critical practice borrowed from the American poetry of the New York School (NYS)34, and its language-critical orientation, evident in the use of cut-up and fold-in technique, is an appropriation of techniques closely associated with William S. Burroughs35, an

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34 Rolf Dieter Brinkmann is widely considered the German satellite of the American post-war poetry scene, and is arguably "the most important bridge figure between contemporary German and American culture" (Jennings 190). Brinkmann’s poetry in the late 1960s was highly influenced by that of his American contemporaries, the second-generation New York School poets, as well as a key influence of this school, William S. Burroughs. With the 1969 publication of the anthology ACID: Neue Amerikanische Szene, Brinkmann was the first to introduce the work of Anne Waldman, Ted Berrigan, Lewis Warsh, Donald Barthelme, Joe Brainard and Kenward Elmslie to a German-speaking audience. Like these authors, Brinkmann looked to first-generation New York School models for his more general aesthetic positions. First-generation luminaries include his poet hero, Frank O’Hara, as well as John Ashbery, John Cage, Barbara Guest, James Schuyler, Bill Berkson and Kenneth Koch. Artists associated with the first generation include Willem de Kooning, Robert Motherwell, Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko.

35 Cut-up was of course practiced at least as early as the 1920s, with Tristan Tzara’s “Um ein dadaistisches Gedicht zu machen” (1920) outlining the basics of the procedure (“Nehmt eine Zeitung. Nehmt Schere […]”) (Tzara 25). Burroughs was introduced to the cut-up technique by painter and writer Brion Gysin, who had rediscovered it in the summer of 1959 while using an X-acto knife over newspaper intended for protecting an underlying surface. Burroughs, Gysin, and programmer Ian Sommerville went on to develop their version of the technique in collaboration; a manifesto and manual for the method, Minutes to Go appeared in 1960.
American author intimately connected to both Beat Poetry and the New York School.
As the extended citation of *Rom, Blick* makes clear, “Brinkmann’s poetry is based on
an aesthetics of perception, [...] its emphasis is not on language but on the sensuous
cognition that precedes linguistic representation” (Kagel 48). Brinkmann scholarship
thus far has not connected this quality of the work with ideas about the nature of a
prelinguistic “sensuous cognition” which we may call affect. Linking these allows me
to explain, if not resolve, certain contradictions in the aesthetic program Brinkmann
claimed for his late, i.e. post-1970 works.\(^{36}\) In the insistence that language\(^{37}\)

\(\text{(Minutes to Go was co-authored by Burroughs, Gysin, Beat poet Gregory Corso, and Sinclair}
\text{Beiles.) However, Burroughs’ use of cut-up differs significantly from Tzara’s: Burroughs}
\text{selects his source material by content, whereas Tzara flippantly recommends selecting a}
\text{newspaper article based on how long the author would like the poem to be. This ironic, anti-}
\text{aesthetic strategy makes chance an end in itself, whereas Burroughs’ method deploys chance}
factors but within a clearly calculated context, insofar as he uses clippings treating specific
themes. In Minutes to Go his material selections are noticeably strategic (eight of the ten cut-
up texts rework articles on a single motif: cancer, gene and virus research), with a
“predetermined set of issues preceding the indeterminate results” (Harris). Brinkmann also
works in this manner on themes of brain research, war and crime journalism, advertising and
and pornography. Fold-in is Burroughs’ own invention, which he describes in his short essay
“Note on Vaudeville Voices”: “In writing this chapter I have used what I call ‘the fold in’
method that places a page of one text folded down the middle on a page of another text (my
own or someone else’s)—The composite text is read across half from one text and half from
the other—The resulting material is edited, re-arranged, and deleted as in any other form of
composition—” (Jones 345). Burrough’s own language-critical stance was influenced by his
engagement with the General Semantics of Alfred Korzybski, whose works Brinkmann
encountered via Burroughs. Korzybski espoused a belief in an a-linguistic affective discourse
that he called “organismal psychological reactions” that occurred on a nonverbal or “silent”
level: “My analysis showed that happenings in the world outside our skins, and also such
organismal psychological reactions inside our skins as those we label ‘feelings,’ ‘thinkings,’
‘emotions,’ [...] occur only on the non-verbal, or what I call silent levels. Our speakings occur
on the verbal levels, and we can speak about, but not on, the silent or un-speakable levels”
(Manhood xlvii).

\(^{36}\) Holger Schenk classifies Brinkmann’s periods of production as follows: “Nach 1970 zog sich
Brinkmann weitgehend aus dem Literaturbetrieb zurück, und erst nach seinem Tod
erschienen die wichtigsten Werke, die er in den Jahren 1970-1975 schrieb: Der Gedichtband
Westwärts 1&2, der Gedichte von 1970-1974 enthält und im Mai 1975 erschien, sowie Rom,
Blicke [...] Dieser Band erschien erst 1979. In beiden Werken ist ein Bruch mit Beat, Pop und
Underground erkennbar, so daß diese Werke – in Abgrenzung zur ‘frühen’ (bis 1966/67) und
(viii).
necessarily excludes certain modes of human sensuous experience, Rolf Dieter Brinkmann’s psychogeographic poetics is shown in this chapter to be the mobilization of affect with the aim of counteracting perception’s homogenization. The late works intend to shake the governing structures of thought from within the communication networks through which they sustain themselves. It is for this reason that language remains Brinkmann’s primary medium.

The concept of affect has amassed a "sweeping assortment of philosophical/psychological/physiological underpinnings, critical vocabularies, and ontological pathways" and has received its share of criticism. However, owing in particular to its displacement of the centrality of abstractive cognition, as well as the possibilities it offers as an alternative to the much-heralded linguistic turn in evidence at the time of these post-1970 works' composition, the approach offers an untried avenue of study for the collage works (Seigworth 4-5). As a performance-based practice, Brinkmann's explorations have much in common with the affect theoretical orientation trending in the humanities today: both focus on understanding how the "outside" realms of the "pre-/extra-/para-linguistic" intersect with the proximal

37 Primarily via the Sprachskepsis of Fritz Mauthner and William S. Burroughs. Burroughs’ work influenced both Beat and New York School poetry, and beside Frank O’Hara, he is arguably Brinkmann’s strongest American influence post-1970. Brinkmann adopts Burroughs’ notion of language as a virus, as well as the cut-up/fold-in technique developed with Gysin and Sommerville. Brinkmann invokes Burroughs’ “soft machine” (a metaphor for language’s activity of inscription upon the body, metonymically figured as flesh or jelly, which Burroughs used to title of the first book of the Nova Trilogy) in order to discuss his own cultural inscription in all three of the collage works (RB 320, EK 143, S 33).

38 Cf. Ruth Leys’ "The Turn to Affect: A Critique," Critical Inquiry 37: 3 (Spring 2011), 434-472. Leys rightly points out that certain strains of affect theory reject ideology and meaning as categories because of their reliance on language. Brinkmann’s collage texts simultaneously embrace and refuse meaning in an effort to overcome the legacy of structuralism, a linguistic logic which elides difference in its insistence on binaries. This move leaves the work open to Leys’ critique and engenders a conceptual confusion that I will argue is intentional.
senses of touch, smell, taste and, importantly for Brinkmann’s movement-based project, kinaesthesia, balance, proprioception, rhythm, and ultimately with the autonomic nervous system. Both thus argue for a broader definition of the social or cultural. Also like Brinkmann’s intermedial practice, \textsuperscript{39} contemporary work on affect often focuses on the “ethico-aesthetic spaces” that are opened up by affective encounters with new technologies, music, dance, architecture and other non-discursive arts (7).

This orientation often takes affective encounters with infants and animals, beings outside the Symbolic order, into account. Brinkmann’s oeuvre does not engage animals as non-discursive entities, but his son, Robert, was physically and intellectually disabled by a brain injury incurred during birth and never learned to speak in full sentences. His experience of his son pushed him to acknowledge affect as a communicative force, though he of course does not specifically articulate it as such:

Du kannst an R. sehen (gegen alle Meinungen, die bestehen) daß die Sprache nicht das einzige Verständigungsmittel ist, auch nicht die viel gröberen Körperbewegungen, gegenüber der Sprache, \textit{ich bin fest davon überzeugt, daß nicht-sprachliche Kommunikation ständig passiert, es hängt von der Intensität der ausgestrahlten und empfangengen Gehirnwellen ab sowie von einem empfangsbereiten inneren Bildschirm – und dieser empfangsbereite innere Bildschirm ist bei R. stark vorhanden, wahrscheinlich stärker also bei einem ungestörten Kind, denn der lebende Organismus schafft sich einen}

\textsuperscript{39} See Stephanie Schmitt, \textit{Intermedialität bei Rolf Dieter Brinkmann. Konstruktionen von Gegenwart an den Schnitstellen von Text, Bild und Musik} (Bielefeld: transcript, 2012) for a discussion of Brinkmann’s “Integration von Eigenheiten anderer Zeichensysteme” (Schmitt 8). Schmitt specifically profiles the attempt to generate text that adopts aspects of (pop) musical and dance forms.
Ausgleich, das tut jeder gestörte, aus dem Gleichgewicht geratene Organismus.

40 (RB 416, emph mine)

Brinkmann instead calls it an “intensity”41 “radiated and received” via brain waves, an understanding informed by his extensive research into brain research and neurofeedback in particular. Neurofeedback was popularized in the ‘60s by British neurophysiologist, robotician, and cybernetics pioneer, William Grey Walter, whose *The Living Brain* (1963) was highly influential for the author’s conceptions of how body and environs affect one another, along with Rudolf Bilz’s *Psychotische Umwelt* (1962) and the works of Jakob von Uexküll.42

The reception aesthetic of the late work depends on the notions of paralinguistic communication developed through Brinkmann’s spatial reconnaissances of the psychogeography, the psychophysical writing protocols using

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41 This is also Deleuze’s term for the force of affect.

drugs and sleep deprivation, and such neurophysiological and psychological research.
The aesthetic intends to counteract the aforementioned state of exclusion and diminishment by producing sensation\textsuperscript{43} in the reader, in a process of reading to be explicated in detail in the following chapter. To trace its origins, we may look to the historical avantgarde whose approaches and ideals Brinkmann partially appropriates. The historical avantgarde understood art as a reorganizing (or better, a defensive training) of the human sensorium, and of the body and its organic functions in general. Though he derides engagement with these early 20\textsuperscript{th}-century cultural producers as an overly academic approach to art\textsuperscript{44}, he cannot escape designation as a neo-avantgarde. The psychogeographic protocol, while an excavation of Situationist practice, evinces a version of the historical avantgarde’s specific brand of aesthetic education; namely, a calculated training of the sense faculties that should defend against the deformation of the human sensorium’s organic functions. As László Moholy-Nagy writes in *Von Material zu Architektur* (1929), art should operate “als indirektes erziehungsmittel, das die sinne des menschen schärft und sie gegen alle möglichen überrumpelungen schützt” (15). Further, Brinkmann assumes the avantgarde’s embrace of technology, uniting it with the idea of such sensory education in his claims to having trained himself to see as precisely as a camera, and hear as a recording device. With this gesture, the author means to demonstrate that our perception has been conditioned so thoroughly by the media that it assimilates to their specific forms of inscription.

\textsuperscript{43} Affect is sensation, but not all sensation is affect.
\textsuperscript{44} See “Der Film in Worten” (1969) in *Der Film in Worten. Prosa, Erzählungen, Hörspiele, Fotos, Collagen 1965-1974.* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1982).
The collage books, the radio plays, and the poetry volume, *Westwärts 1&2* provide an inventory of affect belonging to an early '70s Western European urban present. By producing an assaultive-yet-tedious, shocking-yet-monotonous text whose repetitions and descriptive and syntactical “thickness” draw the reader into its materiality, the perceptual apparatus is trained to discern ever slighter differences within the recursions of the author’s cut-ups, fold-ins, and montages. The work thus produces a form of attention exquisitely sensitive to difference, and this sensitivity-to-text aims to maintain certain “organic” functions of the sensorium.

To create a text that will thus entrain its reader, Brinkmann registers his percepts and affects in minute detail. In his late lectures collected as *The Neutral*, Roland Barthes expresses a need for "a hyperconsciousness of the affective minimum [...] which implies an extreme changeability of affective moments, a rapid modification, into shimmer," “shimmer” being the swift movement of affects and percepts in flux that characterizes a moment-to-moment experience of sensuous reality (101). Barthes’ neutral is not a political neutrality, in no way an indifference to the events of the historical present, but a force that instead works to "outplay the paradigm" of binary opposition by referring to "intense, strong, unprecedented states" that cannot be defined as simple polarities or contradictions (7). It is in this sense of being unpolarizable that affect exhibits neutrality; it cannot be abstracted to a 0 or 1, the yes or no of a binary schema, and thus defies quantification. Barthes’ neutral means maintaining a sensitivity to the intensities that obtain in the dynamic relation between body and world, between body and body. It is the awareness and inventory of gradients of the "progressive accentuation, spatial or temporal, in the intensive dimension of a stimulus [...] or a comportment" (196). It therefore constitutes an
attention to processes underway, rather than of positions taken as in structuralist
binaries.

In proposing in *The Neutral* that we abandon the "yes/no" form of analysis in
favor of a "plus/minus" approach, Barthes describes a form of critique that manifests
as a neutrally inflected, immanent sensitivity. It is an "inventory of shimmers, of
nuances, of states, of changes" that compile into "affectivity, sensibility, sentiment,"
and serve "the passion for difference" (196-97, 77). This is to say that a registration of
sensation in flux, this "inventory of shimmers," becomes a means of thinking through
affect. It is a matter of "affectual composition," but composition in multiple senses: as
an ontology constantly in formation, but also literally as a writerly task, one that takes
written "inventory of the continuous, ever-changing gradations of intensities, of
singularities" with the aim of preserving difference (Seigworth 11).

Without having encountered Barthes' work on affect and neutrality, Brinkmann arrived by 1970 at a similar critical practice of sensuous inventory that
facilitates thought through affect. Sibylle Späth in her comprehensive work on
Brinkmann’s then-available oeuvre notes the “shimmering” (“schillernd[...]”) effects
of this poetics and their refusal of a fixed position: “Nicht nur der Verzicht auf eine
umfassende Gesellschaftstheorie und Geschichtskonstruktion und die Auflösung des
lyrischen, d.h. exemplarischen Subjekts im individuellen Sprechen, sondern vor allen
Dingen das Schwebende seiner Aussage, die selten eindeutig Position bezieht,

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45 The lectures that comprise *The Neutral* were given after Brinkmann’s death. Brinkmann
was a reader of Barthes, as evidenced by the dedication of the anthology ACID to Barthes
(among a long list of others), as well as the anthology’s closing quote taken from *Writing
Degree Zero*, published in German translation in 1959: “IM GEGENWÄRTIGEN
GESCHICHTLICHEN ZUSTAND JEDE POLITISCHE SCHREIBWEISE NUR EINE WELT
DER POLIZEIHERRSCHAFT BESTÄTIGEN KANN, GENAUSO KANN JEDE
INTELLEKTUELLE SCHREIBWEISE NUR EINE PARA-LITERATUR STIFTEN, DIE NICHT
WAGT, IHREN NAMEN ZU BEKENNEN” (403).
vielmehr eine schillernde Vieldeutigkeit dem Leser presentiert, machen Brinkmann zum literarischen Vorgänger der aktuellen Theoriediskussion” (Rettungsversuche 17, emph mine). The refusal of the paradigm of fixed positions and their opposites manifests as the registration of sensation—an inventory of the “continous, ever-changing gradations of intensities, of singularities,” producing Späth’s “schillernde Vieldeutigkeit.” By indexing gradations of affect and percept in flux, the model resists sense data’s polarization into quantities, facilitates attention to process/movement underway, and thus preserves difference.

Friedrich Kittler claims the registration of difference rather than meaning is a hallmark of the discourse network of modernity. As he presents it, it is in fact the science of psychophysics that turns language into writing, and he localizes this particular shift to Hermann Ebbinghaus’ memory experiments of the 1880s. In order to measure the inscription of noise upon the body (that is, to measure memory), Ebbinghaus uses a process of randomization to produce non-sense syllables, signs divested of any semantic value, and records the process of an observer (often himself) committing them to memory. David Wellbery’s foreword to the English translation of Aufschreibesystem 1800/1900 offers a concise description of the experiment and Kittler’s formulation of cultural inscription in the modern era that it exemplifies:

Ebbinghaus’s experiment, in its basic outlines, is quite simple. In order to measure memory he lets pass before his eye a series of nonsense syllables and counts the number of passes required for the memorization of combinations of these syllables. In this procedure Kittler discloses the complexity of a discursive beginning. There is first of all the body of the experimental subject: stripped of the cultural equipment of subjectivity, it has become a physiological surface...
upon which the syllables—once, twice, or several times—are inscribed.

Secondly, there is the source from which the syllables emerge: not books, not the maternal voice, but a mechanism for the production of random configurations. Having passed across Ebbinghaus's field of vision, having engendered there their instantaneous shocks, these syllables return to a storage mechanism of similar construction. Finally, there is the form of language the system employs, a language without syntactic coherence or semantic content, mere letters in their materiality and in the differential pulse of their alternation. The experiment, in short, institutes language as writing, a system of inscribed differences emerging as a selection from a reservoir of nonsense, etching their differences on the body's surface, and returning to the murmur of the source. The situation of Postal Inspector [August] Stramm is no different: the noise of letters and telegrams out of which some few pass across his desk in order to be reabsorbed in the turbulent sea of communication from which they had come. And neither the postal nor the experimental observer is there to interpret, but merely to count and quantify, to measure either for economic or scientific purposes, the differential values of the selections that confront him. According to Nietzsche, qualities are in fact quantitative differences of force. This is the view that Ebbinghaus's experiment proves. (“Discourse” xxix)

The observer position described—in which differential values are quantified or merely registered without the possibility to interpret or make meaningful such sense data—makes of the body a site for passive inscription. Brinkmann’s intervention is the development of a ‘third way’ or “third language,” as Barthes designates it in Roland
Barthes by Roland Barthes (50). This third way is the proposed plus/minus approach, which registers intensities (affects) along a gradient, rather than assigning them quantifiable, or non-neutral values. The third way is neither interested in the task of determining meaning, a procedure of grafting order onto experience such that aesthetic difference is severely reduced or no longer possible, nor passively admitting the inscription of nonsensical differentials whose only value lies in their eventual instrumentalization as quantities. Whether decrying the frozen and exclusionary categories by which we make judgments or the medial conditioning of our perceptions that informs them, Brinkmann views his office as a whistleblower exposing a state of sensory-affective impoverishment: “Sieht keiner, was läuft?” (EK 190). The project is to make perceptible our cultural inscription in the activity of documenting it along a polarization-resistant gradient of sensations.

This view of art as veil-tearing appears as early as his first published volume of poetry, Ihr Nennt Es Sprache (1962). A poem like “Von der Gegenständlichkeit eines Gedichts” refuses the traditional role assigned to poetry, instead depicting the poetic process as purely mechanical, a matter of assembling the media (“die Feder aus Stahl,” “das weiße Papier,” “der Tinte [...] königsblau”) which include language (“die angewandte Grammatik”) as just another material (Standphotos 17). The effect of this anti-metaphorical poetics is defamiliarizing: it disappoints conventional readerly expectations for poetry, through which “die Begierde nach Sinn wird als Arbeit und Unterwerfung des Lesers kenntlich, sobald dessen Automatismen in ihre Bestandteile zerlegt werden” (Bauer 32). The defamiliarization or deterritorialization achieved in such early work is similar to that of the post-1970 texts insofar as the author makes his process transparent, constitutive of the work; however, the terms of this making-
transparent differ significantly. No longer is the mere demystification of poetic writing an object. By 1970, Brinkmann has taken the whole of sensuous experience under modern urban conditions in his sights.

In making the inventory of sensation the object of his poetics, Brinkmann trains himself in a mode of affective engagement in which the body becomes an increasingly world-sensitive, that is, differential-sensitive interface. In treating media—which for Brinkmann, as for Kittler, are ultimately the message—as purveyors of noise and sights that shock and thus inscribe, the psychogeographic practice functions to store these sensations of inscription in a hybrid work of montaged texts and analog media. Thus archived, the work intends an inoculation of its reader against media’s ideological influence, against its manipulations of affect, by casting its inscriptions upon Brinkmann’s own body into relief. To this end, the texts register a generalized state of anxiety in the individual, induced by the media’s manipulations of images of money, sex and violence:

Und das Ganze ist wieder eine Kulisse aus Sex und Gewalttätigkeit///Für Amerika ist die Frau am wichtigsten.Nach 1945 wurde das mit den Hollywood-Filmen auch hier in die BRD permanent eingeschleust.Und jetzt?Kioske,vollgeklebt mit Titten und Fotzen und Hintern und Bäuchen,da lecken sie,sitzen aufeinander,kratzen sich vor dem Spiegel,immer in geschwollenen Larvenzustand///:eingesperrt in Geldprobleme, Sex-Probleme und Angst wird Leben total blockiert.///

Sieht keiner,was läuft?//Gegenwart? Fragte ich. ‘Zum Kotzen!’///::

Aufgabe,Anstrengung:permanent sich gegen die Tendenz in jedem Augenblick zu wehren,psychosomatisch Selbstmord zu begehen/// (EK 170)
The affects of disgust, anxiety and desperation are captured linguistically above in the author’s statements about the American culture industry’s growing hegemony after WWII. Hollywood’s singular focus on the image of the woman is linked to the recent proliferation of pornographic publications, their ready availability and open display of female bodies in urban space. The assaultive linguistic registrations of abstracted body parts and sex acts, themselves collaged (“vollgeklebt”) into the window of a news kiosk, evoke disgust and anxiety. The text further links this commodification of sex, with its disturbing prescriptions for sex appeal and sexual mastery that little resemble lived experience, with the provocation of a generalized anxiety in the author that obstructs life (“Leben total blockiert”). The desperation belonging to individuals thus trapped (“eingesperrt”) is registered as a constraint embodied straining (“Aufgabe, Anstrengung”) against an urge to commit “psychosomatic” suicide.

The same affects are captured in collages like Figure 1.2 below. American dollars and a handgun surrounded by loose ammunition evoke imperialism and the threat of its violence, and are constellationed with elements again referencing the cultural imperialism of “Hollywood-Filmen.” In this spread, a newspaper clipping references Bertolucci’s Last Tango in Paris (1972) (“‘Ultimo tango’ diventa erotica” [“Last Tango” becomes erotica]), a film notorious for its sexual violence and the aggressive masculinity of Marlon Brando’s portrayal of an American hotelier. It appears just below the image of a woman on a bed in stockings, peering left curiously. Her look could be interpreted as anxious or lascivious. Crouching soldiers with rifles are collaged below an image of a five-lane highway choked with cars with the headline “Viaggio in America” [Travel in America]. The original text blocks offer permutations
on a set of themes: dogs barking, street noise, vomit, shit, death, a black “Zylinder” that refers both to the top hat of the staid-looking gentleman pictured twice at top left and the cylinder of the handgun below, neon lights, cold ashes, money, the fakery of the commodified world figured as “eine papierne Gespensterwelt” and its actors, the “Comicfiguren der Gegenwart.”

Fig 1.2 (S 26-27)

The relentless focus on these sensations—primarily negative affects, or “ugly feelings” to speak with Sianne Ngai—provoked by the experience of a mediatized urban present forces their reader into a confrontation with this cycle of anxiety and the temporary relief promised by consumption. The initial negative affect is generated
in the encounter with the prescriptive imaging of desire, manifest in the post-’70 works as the recurrent Sex-Geld-Tod thematic of the Erkundungen citation, which is in turn followed by the attempt to assuage the resulting anxiety with further consumption. The late works illuminate via the registration of these sensations the media’s function as a sort of pharmakon, both cause and illusory cure, for our alienation. In the works’ reception—the reader’s becoming-captive to negative affect, or the training of her sensitivity to differential negativities—his or her attention is directed to the medial processes by which we are made to feel outside of fulfilment or happiness, then pushed to escape these instilled feelings of inadequacy and lack through a program of consumption.

Brinkmann’s treatment of the violence inherent to the Geld-Sex-Tod complex focuses on the embodied effects of that violence, and will be further explored in Chapter 4. He describes the anxiety and panic generated in the encounter with the advertising culture of urban space as deeply corporeal:

:ich war in den vergangenen 3 Jahren permanent zerbrochen, was zerbrach in mir, alle Voreingenommenheiten, und dann war die Panik da, und diese Panik war körperlich; sie heizte mich ein von innen [...] Zustand: Fühle mich vom Kopf aus körperlich gejagt!! Oft dachte ich: ich bin der letzte Mensch/ und ich war der letzte Mensch, wenn ich nachts so rumwanderte durch diese dumpfen Straßenkanäle, das elektrische Versuchslabyrinth, wo man von allen Seiten fertiggemacht wird. (EK 190)

The affect registered here as panic is “bodily” and specifically tactile, “heating” the author from within. It is a feeling of being physically hunted down, driven outside
himself in response to the experience of the metropolis’s forest of product-hawking neon, “das elektrische Versuchslabyrinth.” Such registrations of the author’s panic and desperation may serve to evoke the same affects in their reader.

I characterize these sensations as first-order affects. They are experienced and then recorded by the author, and may lead to the evocation of the same affects in the reader through the reading process. However, to conclude this chapter, I will focus on the primary second-order affect of the reading experience of the collage works, namely, stuplimity. As introduced at the dissertation’s outset, stuplimity is an affect resulting from a frustration or irritation with the text itself; specifically with its refusal to signify, with its resistance to consumption and to narrative. It is the affect that works most explicitly to defamiliarize or deterritorialize the reader of the collage works. A discussion of Sianne Ngai’s conception of the sensation underwrites the following analysis of its political and aesthetic functions in Rolf Dieter Brinkmann’s late work.

Anxiety tops the list of most frequently invoked negative affects in the post-1970 works. Looking at the collage works quantitatively, “Angst” appears 67 times in Erkundungen, 30 times in Rom, Blicke, and 14 times in Westwärts 1&2; by contrast, a

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46 A subset of the anxiety- and panic-inducing media of the urban streetscape, the news media represent an important site of affective manipulation that Brinkmann also takes pains to register. The techniques of the purposeful generation of negative affect are laid bare with the author’s constellation of the statement “::so wird wieder mit dem Stoff alles mögliche verbunden, Sex,Geld,Tod in der einen oder der anderen Angstkombination” with a newspaper clipping titled “Mit Drogen 2 Mädchen verführt” (EK 117). The byline reads “Für Rauschgift gaben sie alles.” The item luridly describes a "hash paradise" in which two women, ages 17 and 18, were given unlimited access to this and other unspecified drugs by two "italienischen Gastarbeiter." In exchange, the two men are alleged to have pimped the girls out of a car ("rollenden Bordell"). The themes sex and money are activated explicitly, while a misleading reference to death ("Für Rauschgift gaben sie alles") puts the third term of the Geld-Sex-Tod complex in an implicit role that either highlights the media’s exploitatively loose relationship to fact, or its extreme conservatism regarding the sexual emancipation of women (EK 117).
positive affect like “Freude” appears seven times in Erkundungen, zero times in Schnitte, and while there are 23 instances of it in Rom, Blicke, they are often in the context of happiness’s destruction (e.g. “Sie haben die Plumpheit und Wahnsinn besessen, die Freude am Lesen, an geistiger Entspannung, am Herausfinden, zerstören zu wollen”) (RB 336). Ngai notes anxiety's own special temporality as a "future-orientedness that makes it belong to Ernst Bloch's category of expectant emotions" (209). While affects like envy, greed, or admiration have attainable objects in the present, future-oriented affects like anxiety, fear, and hope "aim less at some specific object as the fetish of their desire than at the configuration of the world in general, or (what amounts to the same thing) at the future disposition of the self" (Bloch as qtd in Ngai 210). As Brinkmann notes throughout the late works, this puts these affects into a close relationship with time: what is successfully demonstrated via affect and percept is how the media's manipulation of the so-called "Angstkombinationen" (i.e. combinatory narratives uniting images of sex, money, and death in various permutations to drive consumption) initially arrests the individual's attention, barring her from any fixation on her embodied experience of the present. This attention is instead steered toward a putative future in which the individual is threatened with violence or privation unless she puts herself in a position to participate in the market as a consumer—which is to say, to become productive. Brinkmann discusses this as the “Ideologies des Vorwärts,” in which the German subject is under particular pressure to move forward, to make good the sins of the past with her productive contributions to society (Wörter, Orange CD, track 7). In the

47 Ngai sidesteps the question of emotion (affect personalized, made into the psychic property of the individual, according to Brian Massumi and Lawrence Grossberg) versus affect and uses the terms interchangeably in Ugly Feelings (2005).
author’s analysis, it is a chief means by which the media exercise control. Attention to the body is cut off, since sensuous experience belongs to the present\textsuperscript{48}: "Eine Kontrolle mußte in ihnen eingebaut sein, die sie aus ihrem Körper heraushielt, ihnen das Gefühl körperlicher Anwesenheit genommen hatte" (\textit{Film} 283).\textsuperscript{49}

One of Brinkmann’s images for the mechanism that generates this anxiety, turning the individual away from bodily presence ("körperliche Anwesenheit") and toward a speculative future, is Burroughs’ viral action of language: "Zuerst gilt es, einen Wirt zu finden durch Verletzungen, Zusammenstoß, Adsorption, mit Bildern, Stöhnen, Geschrei, \textit{schaﬀen anhaltende Angst, die jederzeit wieder abgerufen werden kann}, und der Effekt bleibt immer gleich, die Wirtszelle macht neue Virusteilchen, eine Gegenwart aus kontrollierten sinnlichen Eindrücken, kommt ständig neu rein" (\textit{Film} 288, emph mine). Inundated with the images and language of a putative future that recall the threats of a recent European past (the destruction and privations of war), the subject is cut off from the real, experiencing only the tightly controlled, manufactured, and self-reproducing perception of second nature, which filters data to produce linearity, itself a future-oriented device. Such states of anxiety

\textsuperscript{48} At least in Brinkmann’s understanding. The temporality generated by late capitalism is not so straightforward. Jonathan Crary’s \textit{24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep} (New York: Verso, 2013) explains that “24/7 announces a time without time, a time extracted from any material or identifiable demarcations, a time without sequence or recurrence” (29). In a 24/7 world, one not yet entirely realized in Brinkmann’s time but foreshadowed by the technologies already in place, we are unable to think the future because of the demands of this eternal present.

\textsuperscript{49} In this example, Brinkmann recounts witnessing an car accident in which two young men stumble from a wreck and are unable to register the details of their present: after running into a traffic signal pole, the driver turns off the lights before exiting the vehicle and his companion watches him do so from outside; a moment later, after pushing the damaged car into a sidestreet, the companion asks if the lights are turned off. "Beide waren nicht anwesend in der Gegenwart, sahen nicht, was sie sahen, und wußten nicht, was sie wußten, wie wenig das auch immer sein mochte" (\textit{Film} 283). Brinkmann’s point is that shock has the effect of removing us from the present, directing our attention past- and/or futureward.
and panic are repetitively registered in varying permutations of the same language. I will quote a typical inventory at length to give the reader a feel for Brinkmann's attention to the physical experience of anxiety:

lernen, und ich denke: ist alles nur Geschäft, Geschäft./ Jeder Flecken Erde, jeder Baum, jeder Stein, jeder Zaun, jeder Atemzug, jede Sekunde muß bezahlt werden, verrückt, denke ich ./ Zerfallene Häuser und die Kirche, jede Einzelheit wirkt auf mich gespenstisch, das Dorf ist eine Kulisse für einen Science Fiction-Film: die Reste von Leben auf einem total von Parasiten ausgezehrten Planeten, eine Zivilisation, die total im Zerfallen begriffen ist, 1 Hotel, das zum Kauf steht, die Farben ein grüngleiches Grau, unvermauerte Gerippe von Ställen, Fetzen von Mauern, Misthaufen und persiflierte kleine Vorgärten, blau, blaßgrün, klakig-weiß, darüber ein grauer Himmel, und ab und zu Düsenjäger, die darüber hinwegziehen, kaum Leute, ein großer Neubau, in dem ein Frisör sich eingerichtet hat, kleine Hühnergehege und Autowracks, und während ich dort allein entlanggehe, überfällt mich eine schrecklich Angst vor dem Tod, vor dem Ausgelöschtsein, und ich frage mich, was ich bin, während ich dort gehe, an den Misthaufen entlang und den abblätternden Mauern, manche sind notdürftig verputzt, dann schleicht eine alte Frau vor mir her, wer bin ich, denke ich, ich will nicht sterben, denke ich, habe ich etwa Krebs, die Brust sticht, eine namenlose Bedrohung ist vorhanden, jedes Wahrgenommene ist eine Bedrohung, ohne Bedeutung jetzt wahrgenommen von mir, gleichsam nackt, nachdem ich alle Bedeutungen zerfetzt habe, und ich gehe daran vorbei, und nun schwenkt meine Sicht um, plötzlich ist alles lächerlich, auch daß ich hier bin. (EK 359-60)

The body's surface is wracked by muscular convulsions, which extend to the face. Internally, anxiety concentrates in the pit of stomach ("zieht sich im Magen
zusammen"). Thoughts cycle inexhaustibly ("unermüdlich") around future threats, immediate and distant—the gas cartridge on the stove might explode; the author is failing and will continue to fail his family as a provider, i.e. every tree, stone, breath, second must be paid for somehow. Death is coming, perhaps he already has cancer—every percept has become a threat ("jedes Wahrgenommene ist eine Bedrohung"). All reference or meaning has been lost, even torn to shreds ("zerfetzt") by this anxiety: nothing can signify if everything appears as part of the same "namenlose Bedrohung." The physical breakdown registered is the consequence of Brinkmann's practice of attention. Its excesses shock and exhaust the practitioner. Presumably, the average individual operating under the veil has limited perceptual access to the real, but does not experience the state of physical crisis in the passage. S/he is instead turned futureward by this anxiety, and away from "das Gefühl körperlicher Anwesenheit" via the controlling, linearly ordering action of discursive thought. This ordering or narrativization is to assimilate the details of experience to a known structure, necessarily excluding those that do not conform, and produces the same "fixierte Ergebnisse" which negate possibilities for difference. As Berlant proposes, this known structure is the complex object of optimism (4). It is the hoped-for narrative outcome, and as such, experience does not often conform to its contours. The resulting affect of disappointment is less likely to cause the individual to adjust her hopes than to modify her perceptions of the self or situation; such adjustments do not

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50 From Cruel Optimism: "I described 'cruel optimism' as a relation of attachment to compromised conditions of possibility whose realization is discovered either to be impossible, sheer fantasy, or too possible, and toxic. What's cruel about these attachments, and not merely inconvenient or tragic, is that the subjects who have x in their lives might not well endure the loss of their object/scene of desire, even thought its presence threatens their well-being, because whatever the content of the attachment is, the continuity of its form provides something of the continuity of the subject's sense of what it means to keep on living on and to look forward to being in the world" (Berlant 24).
necessarily reflect the real but provide a narrative accounting for failure. This makes it possible for the subject of capital to preserve the "continuity of [the object of optimism's] form" because it "provides something of the continuity of the subject's sense of what it means to keep on living on and to look forward to being in the world" (Berlant 24). Continuity is guaranteed by narrative, ensuring that the subject remains positively disposed to (and in many cases, focused entirely on) the future—that is, "looking forward." Brinkmann's central insight into this complex is his observation and critique of the "kontrolliertes" perception of the masses, who are denied access to the real of the present via the media's manipulations of negative affect for capital's ends. They are kept permanently in an attitude of anxiety that directs their energies at an unattainable future satisfaction. His critique is made from a place of extreme precarity simultaneously outside and under such control, straddling its limits, as the cited passage attests.

To interrupt narrative is then to break the cycle of anxiety, the affective provocation that cuts the individual from the present, and leaves her limited to the perception of future threats (often informed by those of the past, figured in the text as the "Zwangsjacke der Vergangenheit"). To achieve this break, the collage works practice an aesthetics of stupefaction, which Ngai describes as "thick language" in her chapter on an affect she names "stuplimity" (249). Gertrude Stein's The Making of Americans amply illustrates the thick language that produces this affect; as the reader of Americans will attest, the text's repetitive permutations pile up to inspire a highly specific type of readerly astonishment and fatigue. Through John Cage, a father of American experimental poetry, William S. Burroughs, Jackson Mac Low, Andy Warhol, and particular members of the second-generation New York School (Ted
Berrigan and Bernadette Mayer, themselves influenced by Cage, Burroughs, and Stein), Brinkmann arrives at a writing practice that intentionally engages tedium with the aim of eliciting the affect termed "stuplimity" in the contemporary text.

Stuplimity is the unity of the affects shock and boredom, and, following Ngai’s argument, language is an excellent means of evoking it. Modern art, according to Susan Sontag "raises two complaints about language. Words are too crude. And words are also too busy—inviting a hyperactivity of consciousness that is not only dysfunctional, in terms of human capacities of feeling and acting, actively deadens the mind and blunts the senses" (Sontag as qtd in Ngai 261). The body's response to shock (in this case, its overwhelming by language such that consciousness becomes "hyperactive") results in something like boredom. This dulling and negatively experienced affect arises as there is no reprieve from the sensory assault of the present, and thus no dynamics to speak of; neurons fire and fire, culminating in a paralysis well-documented—as well as effected—by the collage books.\(^{51}\) Ngai notes with Ernst Bloch that both shock and boredom are categorized as "asthenic" rather than "sthenic" affects, "i.e. those which paralyze [rather than strengthen] heart innervation" (Bloch as qtd in Ngai 262). She points out that "[b]oth 'paralyzing' affects consequently inform aesthetic responses that tend to be written off as unsophisticated: from this point of view, only a philistine would be bored by the late Beckett’s fatiguing repetitions; only a naïf would be shocked by Jeff Koons's

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\(^{51}\) From p. 38 of Schnitte:
(paralysierte Wörter in der Kehle, paralysierte Körper, von Wörtern paralysierte Körper, die Wörter paralysierte Körper)
pornographic sculptures" (262). Thus she enters the question of what types of responses our culture permits us, considering that shock and boredom (along with anxiety) are prevailing negative affects today. Experiments in a deliberate tedium have produced some of the more innovative and “shocking” cultural productions. As far as Brinkmann's acknowledged influences are concerned, systematically recursive or permutative works by Stein, Andy Warhol, John Cage, Alain Robbe-Grillet, and Jackson Mac Low all attest to the frequent use of tedium as an aesthetic strategy in experimental literature. The vastness of Stein's human taxonomy of The Making of Americans, for example, is simultaneously shocking and draining, astonishing but tedious. Ngai invokes the sublime to describe the affect experienced in the encounter with this vastness, specifically the "sublimity of [information's] ability to thicken and heap up," only to say that this first "ugly feeling" as described by Kant is not in fact appropriate to a work like Americans (263). In the encounter with the text, the reader does not ultimately experience an "uplifting transcendence" in which s/he realizes an autonomy from nature issuing from the faculty of reason. The reader is instead "drawn down into the sensual and material domain of language and its dulling and irritating iterability," in no way elevated to a transcendent or supersensible plane;

52 Although he claims in a letter to Hartmut Schnell that he does not like "die Matrone Stein" for her excessive wordplay, as the most influential 20th-century practitioner of American Expressionism she was tremendously important for many of the second-generation NYS poets, and Ted Berrigan in particular (BH 124). Berrigan was Brinkmann’s favorite writer of the second-gen NYS; he translated a selected volume of Berrigan’s poems, published by März Verlag as Guillaume Apollinaire ist tot (1970). This was the only single-author translation of a New York underground author Brinkmann undertook.

53 Ngai works through the Kantian definition of sublimity, which is not the dysphoric feeling of awe or inadequacy to the apperception (an inadequacy, ultimately, of the imagination), but the euphoria the subject feels in realizing its transcendence or autonomy from nature, thanks to the absolute adequacy of its faculty of reason. She takes great care to distinguish fatigue or boredom as an outcome of shock or astonishment from the Kantian affect of Affectlosigkeit or apatheia, associated with the realization of autonomy.
in the case of the collage books, this is entirely the point of Brinkmann's tedious attention to sensory detail and use of repetitive language and images with assaultive content (267).54 As with the Kantian and popular sublimes, an initial sense of the subject's limitation is preserved, but this unpleasure does not resolve into a satisfying sense of mastery. Indeed, no account of the sublime includes the solicitation of boredom in the subject, central to the totalizing classification of a work like Stein's *Americans* and to the overwhelming detail of sensory-affective registration in Brinkmann's collage works. Ngai thus offers the portmanteau "stuplimity" invoked in my introduction to name the aesthetic experience in which a state of affective paralysis (boredom or fatigue) is paradoxically united with the affective excess of shock. In contrast to the Kantian sublime which "stages a competition between opposing affects, in which one eventually supersedes and replaces the other," a

54 As referenced in my introduction, in her book *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy and Performativity* (2003), Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick notes that *repetition engenders texture*. She begins with the unity of the senses in perceiving texture; it can be a tactile moment at the heart of an optical experience, like looking at shag carpet, or it can be audio-tactile as in the crunch of certain foods: "[T]he need to discuss texture across senses brings with it a need to think about texture across different scales. Technologies of travel, for example, as well as of vision emphasize that, although texture has everything to do with scale, there is no one physical scale that intrinsically is the scale of texture. As your plane circles over an airport, texture is what a whole acre of trees can provide. But when you're chopping wood, a single tree may constitute shape or structure within your visual field, whereas texture pertains to the level of the cross-grained fibers of the wood in relation to the sleek bite of the axe. Furthermore, whatever the scale, one bump on a surface, or even three, won't constitute texture. A repeated pattern like polka dots might, but it depends on how big they are or how close you are: from across the room you might see them as a flat sheet of gray; at a few feet, the dots make a visible texture; through a magnifying glass you'll see an underlying texture of paper or fabric unrelated to the two or three rounded shapes that make a big design. *Texture, in short, comprises an array of perceptual data that includes repetition, but whose degree of organization hovers just below the level of shape or structure*" (15-16, emph mine). This is no less true of texts, in which language and image acquire a tactile quality as they accrete in repetition; the accretion produces an undeniable materiality which I have referred to with Ngai as “thick” text.
concise description of the triumph of reason over affect, *stuplimity* is a tension that binds opposing affects to one another. The term allows her to "invoke the sublime—albeit negatively, since we infuse it with thickness or even stupidity—while detaching it from its spiritual and transcendent connotations [...]" (271).

Brinkmann's cut-up technique is responsible for the stuplimity-inducing linguistic and visual repetitions of the collage works. The apprehension by scholars of the collage books as the senseless presentation of the same over and again has lead to criticisms that the work is not intelligible and cannot be productively read with the tools of *Literaturwissenschaft* (Schrumpf 193). Such a reading reflects Brinkmann's own anxieties about the reception of his work. In a letter to Helmut Pieper, he earnestly expresses and then questions his anxiety regarding the reception of the 1970 radio play *Auf der Schwelle*, given the degree to which his cut-up practice infuses his text with thickness, or stupidity:

Das ganze Stück besteht ja aus Cut ups aus dem Hörspiel und nun erfinde ich Szenen und Gedanken dazu bis 20 Seiten. Da dreht manches durch, etwa so, was ich dann selber nur noch schwer verstehe: (manchmal, wenn ich so seltsam zusammen die Wörter, Sätze, Bilder gerinnen lasse, kriege ich ein bißchen Schiß, man möchte mich für blöde halten, fimschig, und das ist z.B. das, was ich mit kultureller Angst bezeichne, nämlich vor einer dubiosen und doch wirklich verrückt gewordenen Umwelt sich zu verteidigen etc. etc. Angstszene Kultur und Literatur, all der ganze Dreck, mit dem ich aufgewachsen bin. (EK 365)

The anxiety is stated baldly: "Man möchte mich für blöde halten, fimschig." "Fimschig"

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55 The "affect" associated with reason is a state of tranquility *"apatheia"* which is devoid of affect, either pleasure or unpleasure.
is Rheinland and Rührgebiet dialect for "pingelig" or “kleinlich”\textsuperscript{56}: meticulous in a negative sense, detail-obsessed to the annoyance (and, more significantly, boredom) of others. The author himself is taxed to understand what he creates: "Da dreht manches durch, etwa so, was ich dann selber nur noch schwer verstehe." He describes the thickness of his text with "gerinnen," to clot or congeal; the work solidifies into something thick, possibly stupid, but in any event opaque and unyielding to the impulse to narrative interpretation, and draws the reader "down" into language's materiality. Despite the misgivings expressed, his disgust with and dismissal of "die Angstszene Kultur" against which he must defend the work and himself confirm the intentionality behind the practice of generating "thick" text.

Ngai notes that stuplimity reveals the limits of our ability to comprehend an extended form as a totality, but through finite material in repetition as opposed to the conventional encounter with the infinite. In \textit{Difference and Repetition}, Deleuze notes that repetition is a hallmark of lyrical language: “Pius Servien rightly distinguished two languages: the language of science, dominated by the symbol of equality, in which each term may be replaced by others; and lyrical language, in which every term is irreplaceable and can only be repeated (2). Words, excellent examples of the finite and discrete in repetition, thus produce stuplimity in a reader:

\textsuperscript{56} After consulting several websites that crowd-source translations of regional dialect into High German, it is clear this meaning provides the basis for the regionally specific valences of the word. The general notion of an irritating meticulousness is extended to more specific denotations, i.e. pickiness in food, needing to have things “just so,” hypochondriac tendencies, or when an action or object becomes overly complicated or difficult. In the examples offered, \textit{fimschig} universally connotes the irritation of the other who must accommodate this difficulty, as in “Stell dich nicht so simschig an.” An alternative meaning translates roughly to the English “flimsy” and is applied exclusively to shoddily constructed objects; this, however, does not make sense in the context of Brinkmann’s letter. See: www.korrekturen.de/forum.pl/md/read/id/4510/sbj/was-heisst-eigentlich-fimschig/ http://www.mitmachwoerterbuch.lvr.de/detailansicht.php?Artikel=fimschich,&Eintrag1=456
Words possess a comprehension which is necessarily finite since they are by nature the objects of a merely nominal definition. We have here a reason why the comprehension of the concept cannot extend to infinity: we define a word by only a finite number of words. Nevertheless, speech and writing, from which words are inseparable, give them an existence hic et nunc; a genus thereby passes into existence as such; and here again extension is made up for in dispersion, in discreteness, under the sign of a repetition which forms the real power of language in speech and writing. (*Difference* 13)

In the late work, and the collage books in particular, the experience of the finite and iterable is as intimidating as any example of the imagination's struggle with infinite extension Kant gives—except that it is also frustrating and exhausting. The linguistic repetition associated with the specific form of tedium that belongs to stuplime experience again drags us down into the materiality of language, restoring sensuousness to the reading experience. Moreover, stuplimity according to Ngai, leaves us with an "open feeling." As noted in the introduction, the term is taken from *The Making of Americans*. For both Stein and Deleuze, all repetition is repetition that contains internal difference. In Stein’s words, it is "a feeling for all changing," in which people intent on "getting completed understanding must have in them an open feeling, a sense for all the slightest variations in repeating, must never lose themselves so in the solid steadiness of all repeating that they do not hear the slightest variation"

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57 Ngai distinguishes between various types of tedium deployed in aesthetic practice. Stuplimity is opposed to a tedium that hypnotizes and absorbs the reader/viewer (the work of painter Brice Marden is offered as an example), or the anti-absorptive but cynical tedium that reflects the flattening effects of cultural simulacra (Warhol and Koons’s vacuum cleaners and basketballs are cited). Stuplimity relies on "an anti-auratic, anti-cynical tedium that [...] deliberately risks seeming obtuse [...] It resides in relentless attention to the finite and small" (278).
(Stein 301, 294). Encountering a text like *Americans* which assaults the reader with a thick language of repetitive permutations in stacked or interlocking clauses, or the collage works, which batter the reader with their permutative repetitions and copious and precise registration of sensuous detail, we experience stuplimity. It is the extremity of these experiences of repetition that give way to the “open feeling” defined in my introduction. Such open feeling is a state of undifferentiated alertness or responsiveness, which I have elsewhere called a sensitivity-to-world, an openness to one’s own historical moment that Roland Barthes called “the neutral.” This ability to read the shimmering gradations of difference, and which simultaneously forms the core of a practice of sensory-affective registration examined in this dissertation, is developed in the exercise of reading Brinkmann’s text itself.
Chapter 2

*Das sind nur noch Sprechmaschinen:*
The non-representational poetics of the post-1970 works

Defining his work against that of his German-language contemporaries, Brinkmann rejected the politics he saw in practice for the limitations they placed on literary expression.\(^58\) In describing the prevailing West German poetry of the day as "zu eng," he notes that "Politiklyrik [...] hatte mit meinem eigenen Empfinden wenig zu tun" (BH 124, 123).\(^59\) This, however, hardly makes the work apolitical, or worse, "faschistoid[...]," as Martin Walser\(^60\) and others claimed. The word "Empfinden" itself

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\(^58\) The essay "Der Film in Worten" expresses the belief that art does not progress in any linear and teleological fashion; rather, it expands its horizons ("Kunst schreitet nicht fort, sie erweitert sich") (Film 232). Thus for Brinkmann, the dictates of the mainstream West German literary scene to advance a leftist political program are unacceptable and against art, since they narrow one's choices as an author. (Hans Magnus Enzensberger became his whipping boy for the political overdetermination of art.) Moreover, such a political program demands abstractions in language that the author rejects on aesthetic grounds. He explains his attraction to American poetry and his rejection of contemporary German lyric in "Notizen 1969 zu amerikanischen Gedichten und zu der Anthologie 'Silverscreen': "Das Überraschende der neuen amerikanischen Gedichte ist, daß sie zunächst einfach nur da sind. Daß ein Gedicht einfach nur da ist, stellt heute für das abendländische Bewußtsein von Gedichten sowohl für den Produzenten wie auch für den Leser den schwierigsten Ausgangspunkt dar. Denn besetzt von dem verschwommenen Wissen von einer sogenannten 'Moderne Lyrik' und deren abstrakt-theoretischen Implikationen, ist die Sensibilität der Aufnahme von Gedichten abgestumpft" (Film 248). In addition to fostering the reader's sensitivity for receiving poetry, which in its register of percept and affect is "simply there," New York School's understanding of the intersection of aesthetics and politics is more sophisticated: "Der Unterschied zu den europäischen Literaturprodukten der Gegenwart besteht darin, daß sich diese Autoren nicht haben besetzen lassen von der allzu billigen (und primitiven) Ansicht, das wäre schon 'fortschrittlich' und damit wäre schon etwas 'gewonnen', wenn sie ihre Arbeiten mit politischen Inhalt füllen. Sie gehen davon aus, daß eine literarische Arbeit selber ein Politikum darzustellen hat, indem sie Übereinkünfte des Geschmacks, des Denken und der Vorstellungen sowie hinsichtlich des Gattungsgebrauchs und der inhaltlichen Momente bricht" (Film 228).

\(^60\) In the article "Die neueste Stimmung im Westen" (Kursbuch 20, 1970), Walser attacked contemporary American-inflected German-language Pop works (naming Brinkmann
is telling. It is a sensibility he cultivates, and specifically the program of sensitivity-to-world. This honing of a faculty for discerning difference results in the individual reading body’s politicization, as she comes to an awareness of the sensorium’s function and conditioning in modern urban surroundings. The author’s continuous search for new modes of expression evidenced in the sustained intermediality of the work betrays an (at-times onerous) intent to bring the individual to awareness.

This sensitivity to difference engenders a state of precarity that produces misery, and, as seen in Chapter 1, the registration of this misery as an array of negative affects is the object of Brinkmann’s aesthetics. This is an inherently critical orientation. As Cara Benedetto asserts, precarity, a state of affective and cognitive insecurity, is the necessary unpleasant condition in which critical engagement may take place. It is “a condition [...] needed to learn anything, to engage people and not assume anything.” Robert Smithson echoes this sentiment in the 1966 essay “Entropy and the New Monuments,” regarding art works which evoke peculiar affective conditions—in his words, “more fragile states of mind” (22). To be in a precarious or fragile state entails a de facto suspension of our own claims to agency, to power, to

specifically) as a literature of pure interiority that, in its political disengagement, would give way to "die neueste Form des Fascismus" (36).


62 The article catalogs then-recent works which according to Smithson “provide a visual analog for the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which extrapolates the range of entropy by telling us energy is more easily lost than obtained, and that in the ultimate future the whole universe will burn out and be transformed into an all-encompassing sameness” (11). Some of the works’ engagement with decomposition provoke affects of disgust (e.g. Paul Thek’s *Hippopotamus* (1965)—a simulation in plastic of a putrefying hippo encased in plexiglass with tubes emerging from the box for drinking “blood cocktails”); but more generally, affects of unease arise in response to objects which hint at states of increasing disorder, “lethargy,” and decomposition: “This kind of nullification has re-created Kasimir Malevich’s ‘non-objective world,’ where there are no more ‘likenesses of reality, no idealistic images, nothing but a desert!’ But for many of today’s artists this ‘desert’ is a ‘City of the Future’ made of null structures and surfaces” (14).
mastery over ourselves: it is “a stage in which [one] can absorb, and extend, and consume [...] it continues of its own accord and it will wreak havoc” (Li Puma 93).

Sianne Ngai argues that such a suspension of agency (as in the "powerful powerlessness" of Melville's Bartleby) is exemplified by literature or art itself as a relatively autonomous and separate domain in an increasingly specialized and differentiated society (2). Ngai invokes Theodor Adorno's analysis of the historical origins of this aesthetic autonomy to suggest that literature “may in fact be the ideal space to investigate ugly feelings that obviously ramify beyond the domain of the aesthetic proper, since the situation of restricted agency from which all of them ensue is one that describes art’s own position in a highly differentiated and totally commodified society” (2). Negative affect made the focus of an art like the collage works can thus be thought "as a mediation between the aesthetic and the political in a nontrivial way" (3). Further, “[p]olitics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time” (Rancière 13). Brinkmann’s experimental psychogeographic project means to make not only visible or audible, but palpable the subject’s state of restricted agency and perception in modern societies of control. The qualitative inventory of embodied feeling is an attempt to democratize the “ability to see”; that is, to make the reader aware of who is allowed to speak and what they are allowed to say, and to make perceptible the properties of space and time via the registration of affects and percepts belonging to the artist—the individual most

\[63\] For Spinoza, the subject’s power to affect and be affected is of prime importance. This suggests a political approach to affect, but it is one that attempts to be as relevant to everyday life in all its sensuous specificity as to the events unfolding on the macropolitical scale. It is the transformative power underwriting Deleuze and Guattari’s understanding of affects as “becomings” and “mutual contagions.”
aware of the “distortions of sensory life produced by new environmental programming and tends to create artistic situations that correct the sensory bias and derangement brought about by the new form” (McLuhan, “Emperor” 339).

The registrations of affect that comprise the collage books demonstrate their author's understanding of affect’s political relevance. Critic Eric Shouse notes that “the importance of affect rests upon the fact that in many cases the message consciously received may be of less import to the receiver of that message than his or her nonconscious affective resonances with the source of the message.” For him, the power of many media consists “not so much in their ideological effects, but in their ability to create affective resonances independent of content or meaning” (Shouse qtd in Leys 435). Lawrence Grossberg argues along similar lines, "Affect is the missing term in an adequate understanding of ideology, for it offers the possibility of a 'psychology of belief' which would explain how and why ideologies are sometimes, and only sometimes, effective, and always to varying degrees [...] It is the affective investment in particular ideological sites (which may be libidinal or nonlibidinal) that explains the power of the articulation which bonds particular representations and realities. It is the affective investment which enables ideological relations to be internalized and, consequently, naturalized" (83). The collage works' register of their author's affective responses to the "image-stream" [Bilderstrom] of the urban present demonstrate that these images have lost all reference to the real, and are therefore devoid of embodied content. They are, however, convincingly faked representations of life that must be exposed as such. To this end, the collage works include a wide array of print media, much of it advertisement emphatically exploiting affect as it has always known to do, in order to point up the naturalization of these relations as the
"kontrollierte [...] Wahrnehmung" imposed by mass media upon the individual perceiving body (EK 336).

Focus on individual experience is common to Brinkmann’s project and that of many scholars of affect. Henri Lefebvre’s sociology has recently been recast as a theory of affect, insofar as he argued that sociologists needed to investigate not just institutions, but moments experienced by the individual, a “smashing” of experience into the smallest units for analysis. For Lefebvre, moments of intense affect like disgust, joy, love, hate, resignation, and desire are

[...] at once all-powerful and powerless [...] within the mysterious but actual realm of everyday life (not one’s job, but in one’s life as a commuter to one’s job, or in one’s life as daydreamer during the commute) of Lefebvre's project

[...] If recognized, they could form the basis for entirely new demands on the social order, because the thoughts one thought as one commuted to one’s job were satisfied neither by systems of transportations nor by systems of compensation. The rub was that no one knew how to talk about such moments. (Marcus qtd in Seigworth 20)

Like no other author working in the German-speaking milieu of the time, Brinkmann dedicated himself to the register of such moments. Via the psychogeography, the creation of event that underpins his collage and poetry, he engaged in a form of cultural study that similarly ‘smashes’ experience into ever

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64 Lefebvre wrote in a review of Tristan Tzara’s Sieben Dada Manifeste, "Dada has smashed the world, but the pieces are fine." He later found himself harassed on the street by Tzara: "So! You’re picking up the pieces! Are you going to put them back together?" Lefebvre replied, "No, I’m going to finish smashing them." In all this smashing and bashing to bits, we hear the war drums of the historical avant-garde: Hugo Ball wrote in 1916 that Richard Huelsenbeck “möchte am liebsten die Literatur in Grund und Boden trommeln” (80).
smaller pieces by bounding lived time in the manner described in the previous
chapter. In the process, time itself is reclaimed for individual embodied experience.

In an exchange of letters published in *Rom, Blicke* as a fold in, Brinkmann and
Hermann Peter Piwitt argue over the practicality of political action at the level of the
mass versus the individual. Brinkmann lauds the individual’s capacity for discovery
and transformation: “Sehen, Entdecken, Aussichten, Einblicke, Erfahrungen, er
verheißt auch Kühnheit, nämlich ausgefahren sein zu entdecken, er verheißt: da ist
jemand, der nicht fortsetzt, sondern der entdeckt – und sogleich fallen mir Fahrten
ein, Reisen” (260). In response, Piwitt cynically toes a New Left line:

[...] Hauptsache, die Reise geht nicht nach Innen. Das ist schon mal was. Denn
ich kann zwar von der Außenwelt etwas über die Innenwelt erfahren, aber nicht
umgekehrt. Und Rimbaud, den Du in diesem Zusammenhang herausstellst?
Ach bleib mir mit den Genies vom Leib [...] Auf die Idee, daß es darauf
ankomme, das menschliche Nervenzentrum statt die Nervenzentren der Macht
zu kontrollieren, konnten die [British neurophysiologist, robotician, and
cybernetics pioneer, Grey Walter and neurofeedback popularizer, Joe Kamiya]
nur kommen, weil sie in einer Zeit des Status quo, also der weltweiten
sozialrevolutionären Friedhofsruhe, glaubten, alles sei so, wie es ist, soweit in
Ordnung; nun brauche man nur noch den Gehirnfunktionen, dem autonomen
Nervensystem auf die Schliche kommen. Also eine Konzession an das, wie
Marcuse sagen würde, ödeste Realitätsprinzip. Mehr noch: eine schmutzige
Dienstleistung für die, die heute schon mein Unterbewußtsein und meine
Sinnlichkeit kontrollieren. (261)
This is a response to Brinkmann advocating for practices of neurofeedback\(^{66}\) by which the individual would master techniques of relaxation through “Reisen [..i]n den grauen Raum, die Gehirnkammer,” such that the urban environment’s onslaught of language and image might be divested of the power to provoke panic in the individual, and forestall the consequent suspension of embodied attention this panic produces (260). Piwitt rightly sees a danger in a program of self-regulation, which could be turned to nefarious purposes by the institutions of the contemporary society of control.\(^{67}\) In his response, Brinkmann rejects Piwitt’s insistence on the impractibility

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\(^{66}\) As noted in Chapter 1, this was popularized as “biofeedback” in the 1960s by William Grey Walter. Specifically, neurofeedback is a type of biofeedback in which real-time displays of brain activity are used to teach a subject self-regulation of brain function. A practice called “alpha-theta training” intends to keep the practitioner in a state of calm by teaching the individual to recognize and call forth alpha waves, neural oscillations that occur during “wakeful relaxation with closed eyes” (Collers 44).

\(^{67}\) Deleuze recognized that after the Second World War the society of discipline at the center of Foucault’s work had become “societies of control,” and points out William S. Burroughs early recognition of this fact: “Foucault has brilliantly analyzed the ideal project of these environments of enclosure [family, school, barracks, factory, hospital, prison], particularly visible wintin the factory: to concentrate; to distribute in space; to order in time; to compose a productive force within the dimension of space-time whose effect will be greater than the sum of its component pieces. But what Foucault recognized as well was the transience of this model: it succeeded that of the societies of sovereignty, the goal and functions of which were something quite differenc (to tax rather than to organize production, to rule on death rather than to administer life); the transition took place over time, and Napoleon seemed to effect the large-scale conversion from one society to the other. But in their turn the disciplines underwent a crisis to the benefit of the new forces that were gradually instituted and which accelerated after World War II: a disciplinary society was what we already no longer were, what we had ceased to be. We are in a generalized crisis in relation to all the environments of enclosure—prison, hospital, factory, school, family. The family is an ‘interior,’ in crisis like all other interiors—scholarly, professional, etc. The administrations in charge never cease announcing supposedly necessary reforms: to reform schools, to reform industries, hospitals, the armed forces, prisons. But everyone knows that these institutions are finished, whatever the length of their expiration periods. It’s only a matter of administering their last rites and of keeping people employed until the installation of the new forces knocking at the door. These are the societies of control, which are in the process of replacing the disciplinary societies. ‘Control’ is the name Burroughs proposes as a term for the new monster, one that Foucault recognizes as our immediate future” (“Postscript” 3-4).
and dangers of such a practice, and argues against the notion that all art answer a demand for naked political utility:

While his rhetoric concerning “der Durchschnitt” leaves him open to accusations of an underdeveloped understanding of Nietzsche’s Übermensch, the form of critique Brinkmann exercises in the collage books can only proceed from the registration of his unique, individual sensory-affective experiences of the urban Alltag, like that of traffic and its noise in the above citation. Formerly convinced of the emancipatory power of collective action prior to the failures of the student movement, post-1970 Brinkmann
attempts to celebrate what seems to be the single remaining avenue to a less alienated existence: the cartography of individual psychophysical experience under the prevailing social, economic, and medial conditions of this Alltag.

That no one knows how to “talk” about everyday, individual experience is very much the issue. Influenced in the years leading up to his break with Pop by Fritz Mauthner's Sprachskepsis, Brinkmann rejects conventional language as a means to apprehend anything of the sensuous experience of everyday life. In an interview for Harald Bergmann’s 2005 film, Brinkmanns Zorn, Brinkmann’s colleague at the Villa Massimo, Ben Willikens, notes that "für Brinkmann war Sprache [...] eine Lüge von der Gesellschaft selber, er wollte sie neu entdecken [...] Wenn er sie oft genug zerschlägt, kommt er an den Kern heran, darauf hat er gehofft" (DVD II; 39:35). This "zerschlagen" of language is enacted in the cut-up/fold-in technique of the collage works. In one of his assays with the WDF tape recorder, Brinkmann similarly uses "hauen" and "zerlegen" to describe his treatment of language, figured as a bashing to bits:

Gedanken: Hinter jedem Wort steht eigentlich etwas ganz anderes, eine größere Vorstellung oder ein Brodeln, oder ein Br—ach miese Wörter, man muss ihnen in die Fresse hauen, den Wörtern. [...] Schreiben ist etwas völlig Anderes als Sprechen, Sprechen, dazu gehören Situationen, zum Schreiben gehört Stille dazu. Und ein langsames Zerlegen in die einzelnen Bestandteile.

Durch viele Situationen gehe ich als Dichter, ich bin ein Dichter und gehe

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68 The Austro-Hungarian Fritz Mauthner (1849-1923) is best known for his Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache (1901-1902). Mauthner was ostracized from language-critical philosophy circles for his outsider status and interest in Spinoza, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. Brinkmann read Mauthner in the two years leading up to his break with Pop and publishing, noted in his Vita for Hartmut Schnell: "von 1968–1970: [...] Beschäftigung mit Sprachtheorien (u. a. Fritz Mauthner)" (BH 111).
Brinkmann found his primary language-skeptical model in the writings of William S. Burroughs. In his post-1970 texts he frequently cites or alludes to the American author’s proposition “Language is a virus” from *The Ticket That Exploded* (1962) of *The Nova Trilogy*. The silence of “Zum Schreiben gehört Stille dazu” is similarly appropriated from Burroughs, for whom “Silence” is the antiviral. It provides a means of resistance to representation, the “viral production of linear-linguistic sense” (Land 452). A strategy of non-representational writing determined Brinkmann’s surface-oriented aesthetics in his Pop phase, and also dominates his post-1970 production. These strategies “typify a reaction to cybernetic domination which Burroughs refers to, in Cageian terms, as Silence. The silence demanded by Burroughs is not a passive, a quietist, or a conservative silence, but rather a generative silence, a silence on the part of those faculties that manage representational meaning and enforce a

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70 Post-1970, Brinkmann’s works are peppered with dismissals of Pop (“Pop-Hokuspokus”); however, this resistance to representation pervades Brinkmann’s entire mature oeuvre (1963-1975) (RB 325).
controlling order on experience” (Wood 13). Language infects the body, freezing or ossifying ("erstarren" and "versteinern") the present ("die Situationen") with its preassigned associations and significations, which stand as a "größere Vorstellung oder Brodeln" "[h]inter jedem Wort," as language refers away from itself continuously in differance. This language-critical orientation of the post-1970 works 1) drives his use of montage and the cut-up/fold-in technique of Burroughs, Brion Gysin, and Ian Sommerville—composition processes that facilitate the "langsames Zerlegen in die einzelnen Bestandteile" of language and “offer[...] not so much a new form of sense, as a moment of silence within which the compulsion to make sense enables the possible emergence of new forms of sense and modes of subjectivization” (Land 452); and 2) pushes him to the intermedial experimentation71 for which he is known in the post-WWII cultural field.

In the first instance, this "zerlegen" or dismantling of signifiers is achieved with fold-ins72 found intermittently throughout all three collage works (most regularly in Erkundungen and Schnitte), and in his second and third radio plays as published in the volume Der Film in Worten.73 As is typical for fold-in, Brinkmann uses a columnal form in the collage works that forces the hyphenation or interruption of a greater

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71 Regarding his intermedial composition practice, Brinkmann understands himself in the cultural field of contemporaneous German literary producers as an “Einzelpacker”: "Wenn Du mich innerhalb der jüngeren westdeutschen Literatur sehen willst, dann bleibt Dir gar nichts anderes übrig, als zuzugeben, daß das, was ich mach, sich keiner Gruppe zuordnen läßt, daß ich ein Einzelgänger bin, weder gehöre ich zu dem westdeutschen Berliner Klan, der vorwiegend politisch orientiert ist (Delius, Born, Buch, Piwitt, Karsunke) noch gehöre ich dem Wiener Klann an (der vorwiegend formalistisch-sprachorientiert arbeitet (Wiener, Handke, Rühm, Bayer) [...]" (BH 138).

72 An adaptation of cut-up, fold-in takes two sheets of linear text (with the same linespacing), and folds each sheet in half vertically and combines with the other. This means that to read the text linearly, every other column must be skipped (see Fig 4).

73 The radio plays Der Tierplanet (1972) and Besuch in einer sterbenden Stadt (1972/73) are folded into one another in Der Film in Worten (1982).
number of words, which disrupts the gestalt process of reading discrete signifiers (see Fig 2). In collage spreads that incorporate images, original typescript text elements are similarly composed to disrupt signification via repetition and linebreaks.

Reproduced here is a representative detail from Schnitte (41, Fig 2.1):

(flashback): ver-wilderte Traumar rangemens verst ümmelte Tiere, ve rstümmelte Vege-tation, verstümme lte Menschen & w er spricht, “ich höre meine Gedan ken, sie werden v on anderen gespr ochen”, Licht stü rzt Dämmerung di e Halbschatten v ersunkener Tage [...]" 

We can mark a clear chronology of Brinkmann’s intermedial experimentation: his experiments with a Super-8 camera and color film began in 1967; around 1970, his engagement with photography intensified as his disillusionment with the possibilities of his former writing process peaked; finally, the psychogeographies with a portable tape recorder began in October of 1973 and demonstrate the degree to which these novel media interventions are intertwined with the synthesis of his collages in the Materialbänder and the poetry of Westwärts. By privileging experience's traces as

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74 Brinkmann was given a portable tape recorder by WDR-Hörfunk to create a "self-portrait" for their Autorenalltag series. In a period of three months he recorded over eleven hours (around 650 minutes) of material for his own purposes, accompanied by notes that indicate how they behaved as source material for poems or collage. The 2005 intermedium release Wörter Sex Schnitt is a selection of just over 360 minutes of this material. Some the lengthier monologues included in Wörter Sex Schnitt appear to have been improvised on the spot in response to a given situation. In others, it is clear Brinkmann is reading or reciting from notes which appear verbatim in Rom, Blicke and Erkundungen. The audiotapes thus make “Sprechweisen und im Modus der Mündlichkeit prozessierte Schreibverfahren hörbar”
registered by the differing technologies of perception, "dismantling" [zerlegen]
language via cut-up, and

Fig 2.1 (S 40-41)

deploying montage for its parataactical effects, Brinkmann creates a text-based art that
aims to overcome the ossifying effects of linguistic signification, and to restore

(Schumacher 89). Wörter Sex Schnitt’s publisher, Katarina Agathos, remarks on one of the
more striking examples of these experiments acting as found material for future works:
"Exemplarisch für die Frage nach der Entstehung mancher Passagen ist auch die Aufnahme
einer Strassen-Szene, in der Brinkmann von einer unbekannten, männlichen Stimme
aufgefordert wird, mit dem Aufnahmegerät weiter zu gehen. Dabei fällt der Satz die Tiere sind
unruhig. Nach dieser Straßensequenz wird das Band gestoppt. In der nächsten Sequenz
spricht Brinkmann das später in Westwärts 1&2 abgedruckte Gedicht Fotos 1, 2, das mit den
Worten Die Tiere waren unruhig beginnt" (Unpaginated liner notes to Wörter Sex Schnitt).
See also Cornelia Epping-Jäger, “Die verfluchte Gegenwart – und dann das Erstaunen, dass
ich das sage’: Rolf Dieter Brinkmann und das Tonband als produktionsästhetische Maschine”
in Das Hörbuch: Praktiken audioliteralen Schreibens und Verstehens (Fink, 2014).
marginalized sensations to the reading body. This recuperative impulse drove his assumption of American models, and is implicit in his criticism of modern German lyric over against the American poetry of the New York School (NYS). From "Notizen 1969 zu amerikanischen Gedichten und zu der Anthologie 'Silverscreen'":

_Das Überraschende der neuen amerikanischen Gedichte ist, daß sie zunächst einfach nur da sind. Daß ein Gedicht einfach nur da ist, stellt heute für das abendländische Bewußtsein von Gedichten sowohl für den Produzenten wie auch für den Leser den schwierigsten Ausgangspunkt dar. Denn besetzt von dem verschwommenen Wissen von einer sogenannten 'Modernen Lyrik' und deren abstrakt-theoretischen Implikationen, ist die Sensibilität der Aufnahme von Gedichten abgestumpft._ (Film 248, final emphasis mine)

An aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that where signification is directly involved in the work's composition, its role is to produce sensation in the reader. In the quotation above, Brinkmann makes this intent explicit when he notes the consequence of reading contemporary “Modernen Lyrik,” a poetry of concepts and abstractions: this type of work blunts the reader’s reception sensitivity. The criticism contains an implicit call for a reversal of this dulling; that is, for a poetry that sensitizes the reader, or hones the faculty for perceiving difference. Such a reversal, carried out by the new American poems, “presents the most difficult point of departure” for producers and readers working with a traditional understanding of poetry (“das abendländische Bewußtsein von Gedichten”).

The difficulty lies in the traditional understanding of poetry as composed of significations, which is to assume that it is representational. The surprising thing
about the new American work by contrast “ist, daß sie zunächst einfach nur da sind.” By this, I contend that Brinkmann means that they in fact do not intend to represent any exterior entity—neither concepts, nor some dimension of the real at a remove which would make the work derivative of an exterior reality. Instead, they are “simply there,” a part of the real unto themselves. Rainer Rygulla, Brinkmann's collaborator on the anthology ACID, points out that the work was determined "von dem unerbittlichen Drang, Literatur mit dem Leben zur Deckung zu bringen" (Carius 121). This is to say that the work strives to establish the equivalence of art and life's "realness." I argue that by insisting on this equivalence Brinkmann is claiming that art, just like soundwaves and sunlight, has force-effects of its own that act on perceiving bodies.

In the collage books, the author's extended thematization of the effects of a mediatized reality constitute a critique of media's forms and content through which he recognizes his alienation from his own needs, and their conditioning by an industry of consumption. Ultimately, he arrives via his perceptions at the bodily realization of an all-encompassing loss of reference. By alternating between the observation of content and form, the collage books rhyme with Marshall McLuhan's insight in Understanding Media that the 'content' of a given medium obscures the nature of

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75 Brinkmann paraphrases the influence McLuhan exercised on himself and the writers of his generation, suddenly prompted to think of their work in media theoretical terms and emphasizing the tactile nature (in McLuhan's sense) of contemporary media: "Auch völlig neu war, daß Literatur nur eine Vermittlungsart war (& da hat M. McLuhan mit seinen Theorien und der Propagierung von TV und Reklame, also der Propagierung des Visuellen und der Umstellung der anderen Sinne außer dem visuellen Sinn, Einfluß gehabt)" (BH 145). McLuhan emphasized the extent to which modernity marked a radical break from the hegemony of the visual, epitomized for him by text, and the replacement of visual with acoustic space. The television of the 1950s and '60s was for McLuhan “visually low in data” and “profoundly kinetic and tactile, because tactility is the interplay of the senses, rather than the isolated contact of skin and object” (Understanding 314). A superficial dismissal of this
the medium itself. Outlining media's effects on space and specificity, Walter Benjamin noted in the *Kunstwerk* essay the "leidenschaftliches Anliegen der gegenwärtigen Massen" "die Dinge sich räumlich und menschlich 'näherzubringen'," owing to "die Tendenz einer Überwindung des Einmaligen jeder Gegebenheit durch die Aufnahme von deren Reproduktion" (440). McLuhan's text considers these effects on space in a time contemporary with Brinkmann's production, describing modern conditions in which "acceleration tends to be total, and thus ends space as a main factor in social arrangements" (94). This destruction of spatial distance in the case of social-medial acceleration does not, however, allow only the far to become near; instead it bears in its social effects thoroughly dialectical consequences: "indem die 'alte' Ferne nah wird, gerät die 'alte' Nähe in immer größere Ferne" (Grossklaus 495). Insofar as the world appears to us as undifferentiated reproductions, we lose the potential for any immediate relation to it. In the author's translation of Burroughs: "Also ist Raum tatsächlich Traum" (EK 20). Brinkmann too renders the experience of the present as a space-dissolving and thus dizzying simultaneity with recourse to newspapers and television news: "Da geht alles an einem Abend durcheinander: Tote in Pakistan, Krieg, Truppenbewegungen, Spanien und die Kirche, Indien, Bonn,

notion appears in the 1973 essay “Work in Progress”: “(Blöder Hund, McLuhan, du Scheißkerl der Wörter, Katholik! Sehen=tactiler Kontakt? Arschloch.)” (*Film* 136). This citation is preceded by a series of percepts and affects that treat tactile experience in sex and seeing female skin ("als die nackte Bauchfläche zu sehen war [...]"), rather than the proprioceptive, more properly haptic experience of “the interplay of the senses” McLuhan is interested to describe.

This tendency is registered by the collage works on the level of content in recurrent collage elements like "'schneller, schneller, schneller'," or in the accelerated, filmic experience of landscape belonging to rail travel that Brinkmann inventories in language as well as with a Super 8 camera, but also on the formal level as fast-paced line breaks and the abandonment of spacing after commas, colons, and semi-colons (S 38, “Zorn” DVD I). Brinkmann quotes McLuhan on the subject directly in the essay “Der Film in Worten”: “today the globe has shrunk in the wash with speeded-up information movement from all directions” (*Film* 234).
Metallarbeiterstreik" (EK 324). In these few lines, the author sketches a maelstrom of information spanning the globe, in which "jedes reale Geschehen, wo immer und wann es sich ereignet, wie entfernt, auch immer der Ort des Geschehens sein mag, [kann] zum Nahereignis werden über sein mediales Abbild," but with a concomitant loss of the spatial-sensuous dimension of experience (Grossklaus 515). Brinkmann returns over and over again in the late work to the feeling of a waxing placelessness [Ortlosigkeit]: "Immer größer werdendes Gefühl von Ortlosigkeit" and "sich vergrößerndes Gefühl von Ortlosigkeit" are common formulations (EK 336). As the argument goes, telecommunications technologies offer an elsewhere that can be turned on and off with the flip of a switch, and this elsewhere no longer has anything to do with our concrete being-in-the-world. As a consequence, now, here, and today cease to signify: "Morgen wird Gestern dünn und verschlissen aus den Zeilen der Tageszeitung und dem huschenden Flimmern der Bilder aus dem Fernsehschirm aufsteigen" (EK 169).

As the events of the worldstage are ripped out of context and lose placeness in space and time, the now and here of their claims is negated in any immediate or sensuous sense, leading to a loss of meaning; Brinkmann calls them the "geisterhafte Nachrichten" of a "Phantom Gegenwart" (EK 232, S 9). As receivers, we are

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informed, overinformed; in response to a growing glut of essentially contextless/placeless information, we lose the ability to feel much about it. This apathy of informedness increases as the loss of sensuously concrete presence becomes ever more total. Events lose the quality of "eventness" [Ereignishaftigkeit] and float through human consciousness without sense or meaning as "[w]irre Zeichen und Chiffren" (EK 232). Fredric Jameson relates this replacement of the here and now by the aura of the simulacrum to the loss of our ability to represent our own experience:

"[I]t endows present reality and the openness of present history with the spell and distance of a glossy image. Yet this mesmerizing new aesthetic mode itself emerged as an elaborated symptom of the waning of our historicity, of our

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eigentlich umwälzende Leistung, die Radio und T. V. gebracht haben" (110). I can find no evidence of Brinkmann’s exposure to Anders, but the latter’s views expressed in “Die Welt als Phantom” exhibit an almost-perfect parallelism to Brinkmann’s own as regards thisphantomization and its effect on experience—a category metaphorized in both authors’ work as “Reisen” or “auf Fahrt [gehen].” In a section titled “Da wir beliefert werden, gehen wir nicht auf Fahrt; bleiben wir unerfahren,” Anders writes, “Da wir es in einer Welt, die zu uns kommt, nicht nötig haben, eigens zu ihr hinzufahren, ist dasjenige, was wir bis gestern „Erfahrung“ genannt hatten, überflüssig geworden. Die Ausdrücke “zur Welt kommen” und “erfahren” hatten bis vor kurzem für die philosophische Anthropologie ungewöhnlich ertragreiche Metaphern abgegeben. Als instinkt-armes Wesen hatte der Mensch, um auf der Welt zu sein, nachträglich, d. h.: a posteriori zu ihr zu kommen, sie zu erfahren und kennenzulernen, bis er angekommen und erfahren war; das Leben hatte in einer Entdeckungsreise bestanden; und mit Recht hatten die großen Erziehungsromane nichts anderes dargestellt, als die Wege, Umwege und Fahrtabenteuer, die er zu bestehen hatte, um, obwohl längst auf der Welt, schließlich doch bei ihr anzulangen. - Nun, da die Welt zu ihm kommt, zu ihm eingelassen wird, und zwar in Effigie, so daß er sich auf sie nicht einzulassen braucht - ist diese Befahrung und Erfahrung überflüssig und, da Überflüssiges verkümmert, unmöglich geworden” (114, emph mine). Anders also explicitly addresses the “Fußgänger” and experience: “Da wir, ähnlich dem Flieger im Unterschiede zum Fußgänger, weg-unbedürftig geworden sind, verfällt auch die Kenntnis der Wege der Welt, die wir früher befahren, und die uns erfahren gemacht hatten; damit verfallen auch die Wege selbst. Die Welt wird weglos. Statt daß wir selbst Wege zurücklegen, wird nun die Welt für uns „zurückgelegt“ (im Sinne der reservierten Ware); und statt daß wir zu den Ereignissen hinfahren, werden diese nun vor uns aufgefahren” (114).
living possibility to experience history in some active way. It cannot therefore be said to produce this strange occultation of the present by its own formal power, but rather merely to demonstrate, through these inner contradictions, the enormity of a situation in which we seem increasingly incapable of fashioning representation of our own current experience. (21)

This loss of making reference and presence to a historical moment motivates Brinkmann's textual strategy, which registers the effects of this disjunct in affect (the author's spleen, rage, disillusionment, and depression in the encounter are inventoried, for instance), and generates a text composed of his immediate sensuous apperceptions (percepts). In contradiction to the notion that Brinkmann was in fact trapped in “his own version of 20th-century Platonism,”78 his notations are not meant to signify, to refer back to a reality of which they are purportedly derivative, but instead to assault the reader with their blocs of affect and percept (Kagel 49). The assault elicits sensations that allow for the restoration of localized bodily feeling that facilitates the reclamation of space-time. Though Brinkmann's "Beobachtungs-Obessivität" generates an index and scores the activity he undertakes to restore difference in the recovery of eventness [Ereignishaftigkeit], it does not serve to represent in ideal detail his experience and thereby create in any Platonic sense a

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78 Martin Kagel in his article "Space to Breathe: Rolf Dieter Brinkmann's Late Poetry" (Mantis 6: Geographies (2007), 46-57), makes the claim that Brinkmann was “convinced that even the best poetry remained inferior to the original experience and inferior to that which it could only re-present,” while simultaneously acknowledging his abandonment of “a cohesive form of representation” in the later language-skeptical work (here Westwärts 1 & 2) (49, 50). Brinkmann in his Pop phase held the naïve view that there could be some kind of comparative aesthetic valuation between the poem and the embodied experience out of which it developed; as I will argue, post-1970, this view is not in evidence.
faithful copy of a superior reality external to it (Arnold 6). In his own words, in the context of a late defense against his early classification as a writer of the New Realism by his publisher, Dieter Wellershoff, "Das alles hat mit 'neuem Realismus' usw. oder mit Pop oder postmoderne eigentlich nichts zu tun/die Realität ist schon immer eine erstarrte Realität, und konkret gleich concret heißt ja auch Beton. Lasse ich mich darauf zu sehr ein, erstarre ich selber" (BH 127).

Brinkmann became a convinced reader of the theories of Alfred Korzybski through his engagement with Burroughs. The import of these ideas for the project is expressed in his 1972 paraphrase of Korzybski, addressed to the audience of the radio plays Der Tierplanet and Besuch in einer sterbenden Stadt, and further supports my claim against an alleged Neoplatonism: “Alfred Korzybski: [...] Wörter sind ganz und gar nicht die Dinge, die sie bezeichnen” (Film 152). While this could be read along Platonic lines (“the word is a mere shadow of the thing itself”), Brinkmann’s extreme position on the relation between word and referent is best understood as the rejection

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79 This point is argued in further depth in the following chapter.
80 Burroughs became interested in Korzybski’s General Semantics in the late 1930s after reading the latter’s Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics (1933). In 1939, he attended all sessions of a 35-hour lecture series by Korzybski held at the Institute of General Semantics in Chicago (Rae). Korzybski was key for Burroughs in formulating the latter’s concept of language as a virus, later taken up by Brinkmann. In Science and Sanity Korzybski attempts to show that the use of literal “identification”—his term for mistaking a word for the object it represents and thus flattening out layers of possible meaning—is a disastrous “infectious disease [...] transmitted directly or indirectly from parents and teachers to the child by the mechanism and structure of language, by established and inherited ‘habits of thought,’ by rules for life orientation, etc.” He continues, “There are also large numbers of men and women who make a profession of spreading the disease. Identification makes general sanity and complete adjustment impossible” (Korzybski xci). It is this “disease” of binaristic identification (also designated “either/or” thought) against which Burroughs and Brinkmann would strive in their use of language. Korzybski occupied both writers until their deaths, with Burroughs writing in a journal entry dated February 1, 1997, “Many come under the primal law of the physical plane: duality. White or black. Good or evil. That is — as Korzybski, founder of General Semantics, pointed out — ‘either/or thinking.’ Instead of ‘both/and’ –” (Last Words 77).
of any notion of copy and original. He asks mockingly in a fold-in elsewhere in *Erkundungen*, “Gegen Realismus: Sofern über den Begriff Wirklichkeit nicht hinausgelangt wird, sollte man gar nicht erst versuchen zu schreiben, he?” (EK 53)

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s collaboration of 1991, *What is Philosophy?* states that all art is composed of sensation. Brinkmann's late work is largely literally so and requires a different way of thinking about the experience of reading—one that attends to the reader's affective encounter with the text and shelves, at least temporarily, the abstractive question of its meaning. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari claim they themselves do not consider texts in terms of meaning:

We will never ask what a book means, as signified or signifer; we will not look for anything to understand in it. We will ask what it functions with, in connection with what other things it does or does not transmit intensities, in which other multiplicities its own are inserted and metamorphosed, and with what bodies without organs its own converge. A book exists only through the outside and on the outside. (4)

It is then a question of not of what a text means, but what it does. It means asking what connections can be made with an outside—a reader—rather than what the text represents. I propose this is the post-hermeneutic intent with which Brinkmann composed his works, which is supported by his idealized vision of literature: "In der Tat, damit wäre sie perfekt, die Erzählung als ein Kaleidoskop der objektalen Momente, das von aller Bedeutung freigehalten ist, das allein für sich selbst steht, autonom, auf nichts mehr über es selbst hinaus verweisend" (*Brinkmann* 10). For the author, the autonomy of art, and specifically text-based art despite the difficulty it
introduces, extends to a radical independence from any object exterior to it.\textsuperscript{81} This is only possible for a producer working with language, which by definition refers away from itself in eternal differance, if representation is abandoned.\textsuperscript{82} In this, Brinkmann’s approach anticipates Kittler’s analysis in Discourse Networks, insofar as the hermeneutic paradigm is abandoned in the recognition of its “radical finitude,” its status as a passing phenomenon, whose continued observance is a “paying homage to

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\textsuperscript{81} French Symbolism is a starting point for this impulse. Mallarmé’ wrote in a 1864 letter to fellow Symbolist poet Henri Cazalis, “I’m inventing a language which must of necessity burst forth from a very new poetics, which I could define in these few words: paint not the object, but the effect it produces” (Mallarmé 39). Laurence Porter points out that Symbolism was an appellation belied by the fact that of the leading practitioners of the movement, only Mallarmé tended to the dense use of symbols. More compelling affinities unite the poets of the epoch: “The unifying concept that can best explain French Symbolism is provided by Roman Jakobson’s model of the act of linguistic communication. Jakobson postulates an axis running from sender to receiver and characterizes it as follows:

\[ \text{SENDER } \rightarrow \text{MESSAGE } \rightarrow \text{[CONTACT]} \rightarrow \text{RECEIVER} \]

The message is comprehensible because sender and receiver share a code and context. Romanticism […] questioned the then-current code and context. French Symbolism carried this skepticism further. Instead of merely challenging the audience’s preconceptions regarding what poetry should say, and how, Symbolism disrupted the very communicative axis linking sender to message to receiver, thus calling into question the possibility of any communication whatsoever. The French Symbolist movement, then, was neither a coterie nor a system but a crisis. Each poet in turn passed through it and went on. The major French Symbolists focused on different cruxes of difficulty along the axis of communication. Mallarmé subverted the idea of inspiration (the link between sender and message); Verlaine vehemently mistrusted language itself; Baudelaire found that to make contact with his audience was impossible, or worse yet, pointless; and Rimbaud felt his audience to be attentive but irrevocably hostile” (Porter x). Brinkmann was sympathetic to the Symbolists for this language skepticism. Brinkmann particularly admired Rimbaud’s commitment to becoming-seer through a contrived disorientation of the senses in urban space: “[…] (wie Rimbaud sagte, “in den Städten erschien mir der Schmutz plötzlich rot und schwarz wie ein Spiegel, wenn im benachbarten Zimmer die Lampe umhergeht” (S 44). Rimbaud is cited the as an early influence in the Vita to Hartmut Schnell: “um 1955, 1956: Einfluß von G. Benn, Ezra Pound, Arthur Rimbaud” (BH 116).

\textsuperscript{82} Hans-Thies Lehmann, in his article ”Schrift/Bild/Schnitte Graphismus und die Erkundungen der Sprachgrenzen bei Rolf Dieter Brinkmann“ makes the argument that language is uncoupled from meaning or representation at least in the collage book Schnitte, but along very different lines: the multiplicity of forms in which text appears (in color, as print clipping, as typoscript, etc.) creates a visual field which ”den Blick […] auffordert […], die Seiten nicht als Text, sondern optisch zu erfassen“ (191). While Lehmann offers interesting points about how the viewer’s attention is drawn to the constructedness of the field, causing the ”Schnitt“ to become the focus, this elides the question of reading entirely.
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a form of language processing long since deceased” (Discourse x).

By refusing concepts and insisting on a splenetic register of sensory experience, the work resists, to varying degrees of success, its assimilation and eventual domestication. It lays specific claim to the real in its effect on the reading body, where the text becomes effective and significant in ways that signification cannot: it is intensity, it is force, and it acts upon and with a reader and so upon the world, even if "only" on the level of the individual being opened to difference. This register and subsequent engendering of sensation in Brinkmann’s works acts to deterritorialize the reader. At its most basic, deterritorialization points to change, difference, and individuation:

The function of deterritorialization: D is the movement by which "one" leaves the territory. It is the operation of the line of flight. There are very different cases. D may be overlaid by a compensatory reterritorialization obstructing the line of flight: D is then said to be negative [...] Among regimes of signs, the signifying regime certainly attains a high level of D; but because it simultaneously sets up a whole system of reterritorializations on the signified, and on the signifier itself, it blocks the line of flight, allowing only a negative D to persist. (Thousand 508)

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83 Brinkmann was a great reader of Nietzsche, despite the atmosphere of prohibition surrounding that work during his lifetime. Brinkmann’s interlocuter in Rom, Blicke, Hermann Peter Piwitt writes in a review of that text in Der Spiegel again toeing the New Left line on the philosopher, “Und dann der viele Nietzsche: Ich dachte, er mache Spaß […] Ich dachte, mit Nietzsche muß man bis spätestens mit zwanzig durch sein. Und nun dieser Haß auf die ‘viel zu vielen’, den ‘Durchschnitt’, das ‘schlechte Humane’, die ‘Demokratie’, die ‘Gleichmacherei’, das ‘Historische’ bei Brinkmann in ‘Rom, Blicke’!” (253) Nietzsche’s proclamation of the end of hermeneutics, a method that “places unjustifiable constraints on the free play of interpretation,” part of Nietzsche’s great “mistrust of all systematizers” is Brinkmann’s inheritance from him (Schrift 19).
Through the movement of deterritorialization, one leaves the territory or known ground, a place of safety, familiarity, and habit; it is to enter a state of precarity. A deterritorialization becomes negative when it is obstructed by reterritorialization, when its so-called "line of flight" is blocked. It is Deleuze and Guattari's metaphor (though they would refuse that term) for the way in which an art object directs the viewer or reader out of their familiar, naturalized way of experiencing the world. The distance gained from this second-nature perspective puts this receiver in a state of precarity, outside the familiar, and allows them to engage critically with it. Thus with regard to poetry, deterritorialization carries a sense of defamiliarization. While defamiliarization focuses some attention on the text as a construction, it also very specifically implies a change in the reader's perception of an object or event represented by the text, which in turn implies a continued investment in representationalism. But de- and reterritorialization are useful as concepts beyond representationalism and concepts of perception. Deterritorialization operates far more broadly; it is active not only in relation to perceptions of the world, but in the world itself. It therefore encompasses defamiliarization, whose effects can be characterized as deterritorializing. When an individual reads certain forms of literature, deterritorialization does not just affect their perception of whatever the poem refers to; instead, a change in the reader themselves occurs, which may be produced through a defamiliarization of their habitual forms of perception and thought (Clay 49).

This, of course, is a specific aim of the Brinkmannian project: that the reader becomes aware of perception’s medial conditioning, and of the reflex to interpret and think in linear terms in the process of the work’s reception. In the realm of thought, Brinkmann calls for the "durchbrechen [des Zirkels], den Zirkel des dikursiven
Gedankens," and produces a text attempting to unburden itself and its readers of the naturalized abstractive mode of thinking that forecloses possibilities for difference (EK 326). The effects of this foreclosure extend, as Brinkmann took great care to inventory, to every dimension of lived experience, diminishing our abilities for sensation and thought outside its confines.

De- and reterritorialization are not concepts simply imposed on experimental literature from the outside, but rather movements generated in the encounter with it. It is from these concepts that claims for the non-representational status of Brinkmann's work can be substantiated, since the work itself is generative of the forces and intensities that are to be understood as participating in the real, rather than representing at a remove. They cannot be grasped by readings that assume the collage works or the poetry of Westwärts are a representational signifying regime. Brinkmann commands openness to difference, to that which does not bring understanding, in the reading experience, and describes deterritorialization itself in a letter to Maleen from November 15, 1971:

Lesen:Das Ziel ist doch im Anfang wie am Schluß:das ganze Buch jeweils. Also mußt Du dich daran gewöhnen, unabhängig von den verstandenen oder nicht verstandenen Einzelheiten und Details, das ganze Buch durchzulesen - nicht auf Einzelheiten, die enthüllen sich im gewonnenen Gesamteindruck oft nachher überraschend. - Auch nicht sofort repetieren wollen, was man gelesen hat - zuerst:den Gesamteindruck eines Buches eines Themas erfassen, dann die Einzelheit [...] 

Die Einzelheiten eines Themas, eines Buches treten oft erst durch die nach den eben genannten Prinzipien der Arbeitsweise gelesenen Einzelheiten eines
zweiten Themas, zweiten Buches spontan auf und klar hervor.

So entstehen Beziehungen, Zusammenhänge. [...] (RB 199)

Brinkmann chooses his words with care: he speaks of a "Gesamteindruck," a general impression, and "Einzelheiten," details or particulars, rather than using words that denote conceptual understanding like "Verständnis." This idea of allowing oneself the space to encounter the whole of a text without the pressure of conceptual understanding, such that through the reading, one may end up surprised by the relationships and connections that arise. The constellative reading endorsed here coalesces spontaneously in a second, wholly unexpected book and is an excellent description of the opening of a reader to difference intended by Deleuze and Guattari with the term “deterritorialization."\(^{84}\) It is the unmaking of the familiar or expected, which pushes the viewer or reader to create his or her own unique "second" (meaning alternative, as opposed to secondary) experience of the encountered art, freed from the constraints of authorial intent, linear discursivity, and signification. In describing his idealized reading practice, Brinkmann exposes the aim of his writing: to make an art that reciprocally demands and inspires openness in its reading and viewing.

To privilege sensation, that which is under constant threat of diminishment in an increasingly mediated, manipulated reality, is to allow for difference, for the individual. For Brinkmann, this means the reclamation of space via the movement-based psychogeography of the collage works, which generates a text that restores sensuous experience to the reading body via these deterritorializing effects. These effects allow us to recognize and critically engage the reigning forms of abstractive

\(^{84}\) I have read deterritorialization as a positive force throughout this essay, with the assumption that the reader enters freely into relation with the text.
perception and thought that provide the grounds of our alienation from embodied experience. A critic and former friend, Bazon Brock, notes the author's explicit rejection of a representational model of poetry: "Brinkmann verabschiedete sich von den literarisch-feingeistigen Innenweltsignements mit Hilfe ergebnissicherer Technologien wie Film und Foto, nachdem ihn Mauthners Kritik an der Fähigkeit bloßen sprachlichen Hantierens veranlasst hatte, die Dichterei aufzugeben und sich dem realen Schmerz statt der besungenen Schmerzlichkeit auszusetzen, also mit den Dingen zu arbeiten anstatt bloß mit ihren symbolischen Repräsentationen" (18). By referring primarily to the "ergebnissicherer Technologien" of film as the means by which Brinkmann escapes the bonds of "literarisch-feingeistigen Innenweltsignements," Bazon may betray an incomplete understanding of the radicality of the move he describes, which extends to Brinkmann's use of language. If, however, Brock understands the “help” of film technologies as the practice of adapting film-specific techniques of registration (zooms, pans, cuts, slo mo) for linguistic use, then the quote offers an accurate summation of the author's position on representationality.

As material, language has force-effects of its own that act on individual bodies directly.\textsuperscript{85} Brinkmann expresses this conviction \textit{ad nauseum} in the post-1970 works. Its materiality as sound he points up in the line "[a]m Ende des Gedichts dem eingestimmten schmökernden gefühligen Leser durch den Reim, der so plump und grob ist, auch einen Schlag in sein Gefühl, zum Aufwachen!" but his understanding of

\textsuperscript{85} As Foucault demonstrated throughout his writings, a discursive regime, what Deleuze will call the \textit{énoncéable}—the sayable or that which is permitted as discourse, acts upon all bodies throughout a given society. I am speaking here of the particular affective impact literary language’s materiality has on an individual reading or viewing body.
language as material with material consequences extends well beyond the effect of its sonorities (BH 191). Language's materiality does not act solely on the level of form via qualities like rhyme, pitch, or stress (or any other aesthetic percepts on the surface level of the text). Looking past the quote’s surface, Brinkmann’s conviction that language has material effects on the level of content becomes clear: Sensation engendered in the reader in the encounter with the text proceeds through a relation of material (the bloc of sensation that constitutes the art work, having nothing to do with its “performance” as sound) to material (the visceral impact upon the body in the reception of that work). Brinkmann’s ideal reader is "eingestimmt[...]" or keyed into the work, "schmökernd[...]"](in the sense of lost or buried in a book, consumed by the reading experience), and most significantly, "gefühlig[...]"—literally, "feeling" but carrying the sense of being opened to feeling, sensitized; synonyms for Gefühllichkeit are Empfindsamkeit and the more pejorative Rührseligkeit, whose root rühren means "to touch." This engagement on the part of the reader implies that the percepts and affects present on the level of content must also exert material force on the reading body that draws it into a state of deep attention.

If the work is non-representational, i.e. linguistic signification does not function here as a commonplace understanding might have it, how then does it act in Brinkmann's late work? If art preserves sensation, how do authors of experimental

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86 By performance, the process of reading either silently or aloud is meant; this performance is a movement through the text, which may begin at any point (beginning, middle, end as dictated by reading convention) or direction (forward or backward). As in any collage, the viewer may read elements in a variety of permutations, which Brinkmann analogizes to becoming the editor of the one's own "Gehirnfilm" in the essay "Der Film in Worten": the reader may cut away to whichever elements they like, in whatever order they prefer, again encouraging non-linear reading practices. Elsewhere he quotes Gottfried Benn to describe this vision of literature: "'Lesen ist ein schöpferischer Vorgang.' / 'Indem ich lese, entsteht das Gedicht'" (BH 217).
poetry create using a medium (language) which in its conventional use "alle Sinnlichkeit geht verloren" (BH 171)? To answer this question, I will divide the work into the categories of form and content. Form we can understand as the aesthetic percepts we encounter on the surface of the text: *mise en page*, or the sonorous elements of the language, i.e. the stress, pitch, or loudness of a work that is virtual on the page and that, in conjunction with a reading body, becomes actualized through the movement of performance by that body. Content can then be considered the signifiers of which the text is made up. These signifiers do signify, *but in service of sensation rather than meaning*. (The work's form has a relationship with signification, but this relationship unfolds on the formal level of the poem's soundscape; for example, the observation that poetic stress often falls on more "significant" words.87) Signification plays a much larger role in the imaginative landscape of the poem's images and non-image-based sensations that are produced via signification. As the work is performed, i.e. read silently or aloud, the reader moves simultaneously in both planes, the formal and imaginative, as s/he moves through the bloc of sensation the work comprises.

While on the formal axis the focus is on *percepts* (nonpersonal sensory elements that cannot be reduced to a perception or the concept of perception, exist virtually in the work at all times, and become actualized in conjunction with a reading body), in the work's imaginative landscape, where signification has a greater effect, *affects* assume primacy. To reiterate, affects are "no longer feelings or affections; they go beyond the

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87 British poet Douglas Oliver (associated with the second-generation NYS through his marriage to Alice Notley, a NYS poet formerly married to Ted Berrigan, Brinkmann's favorite of the second-generation writers) writes in his work on poetry and performance, "a poetic stress is apparently an instant when we unify into a single conception some of our sense of the form of the poetic line’s sound as it has been developing over a small period of time. It necessarily involves unifying with our perception of the sound some conception of the meaning and emotional significance of the stress-bearing syllable in relation to the overall meaning and emotional significance of the poem" (5).
strength of those who undergo them” (Deleuze, *Philosophy* 164). Just as the percept cannot be reduced to a perception or assimilated to the concept of perception, affect cannot be reduced or assimilated to the concept of feelings. Affect, like percept, is non-personal; it assaults the individual rather than is possessed by her, hence Deleuze and Guattari's use of "undergo." Further, "We attain to the percept and the affect only as to autonomous and sufficient beings that no longer owe anything to those who experience them or have experienced them"—these entities assault or infect and so conjoin with readers from the outside because they exist as virtual forces within art and do not depend on a reader or viewer for their existence (168).

To examine these forces and effects in detail, let us begin with the aesthetic percepts of the text's surface from a two-page spread from *Schnittte* (Fig 2.2).
Fig 2.2 (S 38-39)

At top center we find "Welcome in DM-Country," cut from an ad in a German-language publication playing on the wildly successful Marlboro campaign "Welcome to Marlboro Country" (1963-1971). The clipping serves as the heading to Brinkmann's psychogeographic registration of a West European (likely Roman) street scene, present as a text block extending to the left and right margins occupying most of the page's lower half. Both the longer text block of the scene and the ad are augmented by a cloud of original text clippings, cut from a hand-typed source sheet. These collage elements comprise groups of sentence fragments and have the effect of asides, almost

88 Despite the predominance of English words, the preposition "in" indicates the source is aimed at a German-speaking audience.
of comic strip thought-bubbles. Three include quotes from Joseph Conrad in German translation, cited only with the initials "J. C." in parentheses. The upper half of the page is dominated by an image of two soldiers charging out of the frame, both carrying machine guns. At the bottom of the page, balancing "Welcome in DM-Country" is an element from an Italian source reading "Caos alle frontiere" ("Chaos at the border"). On the second page of the spread, we find original text bubbles hovering on or about four images. The upper right image features four, possibly five human skulls in the foreground, two of which sport hair, lying on sandy ground amid what could be clothing or debris. A shovel appears in the background. Immediately below this is an image of outer space with a nebula occupying the center field. Below this is a photo of a desert rock formation, possibly from Brinkmann's Instamatic, containing a small bridging, giving the impression that the formation may be an older man-made structure. The image evokes the pueblos of the American Southwest, where the author spent a semester as a lecturer at UT Austin. To the left of these horizontally oriented images is a vertical shot of a mushroom cloud in a barren scrubland with helmeted observers in the foreground, likely the Nevada Test Site.

The spread treats the violence of Brinkmann's *Sex-Geld-Tod* complex with a series of associated affects and percepts, but not with the intent to convey unified meaning. Instead, as I have argued, the author practices a form of media reception studies in the field, recording the effects of the mediatized present upon his own body. The images of machine gun-toting soldiers, the A-bomb test, and the skulls in the sand, ostensibly collaged from print journalism reporting contemporary news, offer percepts of war and death. When found in their everyday context (the print and television news cycles, the movies, the street), in which a saturation of such images
obtains, those of violence and death are received as de rigueur and provoke little response; the saturated viewer, though magnetized to such graphic content, has learned to receive them as simulacral. In Brinkmann’s terms, they have become "gespenstisch" or "geisterhaft" as all reference to the real is evacuated. By removing them from this context and concentrating them within a single visual field, as opposed to the linear presentation one would encounter in television news, Brinkmann achieves what Sibylle Späth calls a “Zerreißen eines geschlossenen Text-Bild-Kontinuums” (Brinkmann 115). Reconstellated in the artwork with original text they point up the viewer’s status quo of alienation from the images' grotesqueries, but more importantly, this concentration of the images within the unified space of the page function to point out a manipulative focus on violence, suffering, and lack. The apathy or non-feeling of the over-informed, overexposed modern subject is replaced with sensation in their encounter that may inspire media-critical insight. The affects of

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89 This sometimes-disputed commonplace has been borne out by cognitive psychological studies: “[M]edia violence meets the two critical conditions for desensitization: repeated exposure and a context incompatible with the negative emotional response to the distressing stimulus [...] Studies [...] have shown that habitual users of media violence displayed lower arousal to violent film clips and to depictions of real-life violence compared with people using violent media less frequently” (Krahé 115). Despite this well-documented desensitization (cf. Encyclopedia of Media Violence, ed. Matthew S. Eastin [SAGE: Los Angeles, 2013] and Violence and American Cinema, ed. J. David Slocum [Routledge: New York, 2013]), I will argue elsewhere that images of violence and suffering contribute in their displacement from lived experience to the state of generalized anxiety registered in the post-1970 works.

90 The adjectives "gespenstisch," "geisterhaft," "schattig"/"schattenhaft," "flimmernd," and "flackernd" appear hundreds of times in the collage works, and are used synonymously to get at the dreamlike and filmic (i.e. ghostly, unreal and above all, lifeless) quality of cities, streets, news stories, people, etc. which have lost reference to the real via the endless reproductions of their image in spectacle culture and through language’s reifications; Brinkmann quotes Burroughs’ metaphor of shadows in "Der Film in Worten" (1969) to illustrate this: "Zwischen Auge und Objekt fällt der Schatten, und dieser Schatten ist das vorher aufgenommene Wort" (Film 223). The substantives "Schatten," "Geister," "Träume," "Fieber," "Toten," and even "Rauch" function similarly. In the spread on pages 38-39 alone, we find "gespenstische Stadtprospekte," "gespenstische Straßenzonen," "starrte michgeisterhaft [sic] an," "flackernde Straßenzonen," "Ferne Schatten:am Rand der Gehirnrinde," "Schatten, die sich entlangtasten," "Fieberstädte," "Totenstädte," "Totengeräusche," "Verworrene Tierträume."
horror, fear, and disgust present virtually within the work are not what the text means, but rather what it does; neither is the critique of news media decipherable via close reading. Instead, the concentration of the constellated images acts as a gut punch, on the ballistic model of Benjamin’s “Geschoß” belonging to Dadaist artwork and to the filmic shock associated with montage.

One could argue with Adorno criticizing Benjamin’s “Das Paris der Second Empire bei Baudelaire,” that the montage approach to critique evacuates the interpreting, writing subject so utterly as to leave the reader with nothing to constructively connect the presented fragments with one another. However, unlike Benjamin’s, Brinkmann’s literary montages are comprised of his own percepts and affects, his own train tickets, the media and objets trouvés he encountered directly in the historical moment of their production. The affects preserved in the resulting text serves as the connective force uniting a neuronal web of juxtaposed fragments. For instance, read constellatively with the images of explicit violence of Fig 2.2, the dust of the nebula (resembling the rising column of smoke of the bomb cloud against which it is mounted) and the dusty remains of a previous civilization are percepts of destruction, lifelessness, sterility. Affects of fallenness and human insignificance prevail in the association. Looking to the signifiers accompanying the photos, the collaged phrase "Welcome in DM-Country" invokes currency as a means to defining national borders, with recourse to a certain cowboy capitalist spirit via the play on the Marlboro ad. Its spatial counterbalance "Caos alle frontiere" undercuts this—does money/currency order borders or create only a semblance of order and division, concealing the chaos of exchange and wars fought over these lines? While this and other meaning may occur to the reader, the montage provides no single unified
meaning, leaving us with the stronger experience of our affective responses which form the basis of our own critical reception of these images.

Looking to Brinkmann’s original text for further confirmation of affect's primacy, the long block reads:

Affects of confusion and anxiety verging on panic⁹¹ open the passage, registered as "ein verwirrendes Gefühl der Ortlosigkeit," pursuant to a threatening image of mass media "creeping" as an amorphous mass in a slithering or wriggling manner upon the observer. This image might belong to a dream, since it immediately proceeds "Ich wachte gegen 1 Uhr mittags auf," though the parataxis of the passage does not support such causal or linear reading. The speaker awakens to find himself unsure of his own presence ("anwesend und doch nicht genau anwesend"), lacking both a sense of place and of identity ("wo befand ich mich und wer war ich?"). He seeks refuge from this unnerving present in a past impression—in memory, where he might have access to specificity of place or identity—but sees in the past only the disintegration [Zerfall] of the present. Here he inventories the very feeling of difference's negation as effected by mass media's shapeless [amorphen] (i.e. disembodied, lacking any specificity in space or time) representations of reality. This shapelessness, a paucity of difference, transfers as contagion to the individual, who is both "anwesend und doch nicht genau anwesend," undifferentiated from the mass in his lack of psychological and spatial identity. In this, Brinkmann's registration echoes Roger Callois's drama of the mimicking self taken from the 1935 essay “Mimesis and Legendary Psychasthenia”:

“I know where I am, but do not feel as though I’m at the spot where I find myself.” To these dispossessed souls, space seems to be a devouring force. Space pursues them, encircles them, digests them in a gigantic phagocytosis. It ends by replacing them. Then the body separates itself from thought, the

⁹¹ In an unmounted strip of original text quoted by Maleen Brinkmann in the editorial notes to Schnitte, we find ":wo befand ich mich? (Panikbeleuchtung)/(: und weit erschreckt geöffnete Augen)” (159). Note the register of this panic via the body, in its posture of "weit erschreckt geöffnete Augen."
individual breaks the boundary of his skin and occupies the other side of his senses. He tries to look at himself from any point whatever in space. He feels himself becoming space, dark space where things cannot be put. He is similar, not similar to something, but just similar. And he invents spaces of which he is the convulsive possession. (30)

In entraining his sensorium to act as the mimetically capacious machinery of a camera, a tape recorder, Brinkmann comes so close to the objects of perception themselves in the act of receiving their sensory qualities as to become indistinguishable from them. His literary contribution is to register this state of “convulsive possession” by a space become devouring in the 20th century. Benjamin’s observation quoted above (“Die Dinge sich räumlich und menschlich näherzubringen” ist ein genau so leidenschaftliches Anliegen der gegenwärtigen Massen [...]) is purposefully taken to an extreme, resulting in dissolution of identity registered in the text as the sensation and affect of total disorientation. Brinkmann’s practice of perception induces a psychasthenic state, wherein the organization of thought and memory becomes impossible. He complains of these consequences, lamenting both being trapped in the spaces of the present and an inability to think clearly:

Gegenwart mit den Augen sperrt den, der sieht, auch mächtig in der Gegenwart ein. (RB 407)

The claustrophobic, disoriented reading experience of the collage works is determined in large part by the affects associated with this perceptual imprisonment by the spaces of Brinkmann’s urban present.

With a sequence of the author's signature punctuation ("/–") the scene cuts to the question "Wer soll hier verschaukelt werden?" The author explains his idiosyncratic use of en-dashes and colons in Erkundungen: "Querstriche und Doppelpunkte heißen Hier: da kann ich überall Szenen und Bilder reinschneiden" (228). Cuts, the titular Schnitte, function throughout the collage works to interrupt linearity, frustrating the reader's impulse to conceptual comprehension, and thereby reduce the work to a cohesive meaning. This is the action of deterritorialization.

Another such cut ("/–") follows the question, introducing a cryptic response: "Was verschaukelt werden muß, weg von der Bühne sind die Tierreflexe. Ich habe keine Zeit mich mit den Tierlauten abzugeben." Here the reader's impulse to decipher this statement conceptually is obstructed. Reading closely: Something (rather than someone) must be taken for a ride, be deceived in some manner. Our animal reflexes, the most primitive of neurological relays which cycle only to the spinal cord or brainstem, never reaching the grey matter or seat of consciousness and thought, are "weg von der Bühne."92 For these protective bodily or animal responses to be

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92 Brinkmann was engaged post-1970 with the study of neurobiology, with a particular interest in brain anatomy, as Sibylle Schönborn documents in her article "Bilder einer Neuropoetik. Rolf Dieter Brinkmanns späte Text-Bild-Collagen und Notizbücher der Schnitte und Erkundungen für die Präzisierung eines Gefühls für einen Aufstand: Reise Zeit Magazin (Tagebuch)." Medialität der Kunst. Ed. Markus Fauser (213-228). She theorizes his interest was motivated by his son Robert’s condition, caused by a brain injury at birth.
metaphorically absent, out of the spotlight (literally "away from the stage") gives us a feeling of their exclusion or loss, which Brinkmann seems to note as a liberation, or at minimum, a necessary action to move away from our reflex responses to language, as outlined in Korzybski’s critique of language. The "Tierlauten" of the following sentence also carry the suggestion of an animal or a-linguistic "speech.” In claiming he has no time to busy himself with this noise, the author acknowledges them as a fantasy—an escape from language which is acknowledged as inviable.

The passage continues after another cut to inventory a street scene in which a man vomits "einige Brocken verfaulter Sexwörter und das halbverdaute Abendessen" on a street corner, while another stands stroking his paunch. An affect of disgust accompanies the crudity of these percepts. The aggression inherent in the "verfaulter [...] Sexwörter" of the drunken man and the masturbatory overtones of the "streichelte [...] geschwollene Wampe" present an affect of anxiety in response to these threatening, sexually inflected percepts. Rats crawl out of the sewers into empty streets at dusk and “crippled” plant life springs from the cracks in the asphalt; further disgust and affects of fallenness and decay accompany these percepts of alienated nature. All is bathed in the light of flashing neon signage ("[e]in Labyrinth aus mechanischen Lichtblitzen"), which mediates the omnipresent language of advertising that renders urban space garish, assaultive, and unnavigable on one’s own terms. The inescapability of this nightmarish scene of disorientation engenders affects of anxiety bordering on claustrophobic panic, anger, and despair. It is again the case that exposure to the text's signifiers acts more to provoke sensation in the reader than to facilitate conceptual understanding.
This effect is furthered by a number of Brinkmann's aesthetic choices; namely, montage technique and the linebreaks of his American models. In long blocks like this, another form of media critique is in evidence: words extend to the margins absolutely (even obstructing the publisher's pagination at points\(^93\)), leaving a signifier like "Abendessen" broken into "Aben" and "dessen" on the following line. This is one means by which the text resists consumption or co-option into meaning by the reader, as the gestalt process of reading is interrupted by this dismantling of individual signifiers. Another is the use of cut-up technique within the long block itself, wherein the colon-and-dash system of indicating cuts effects parataxis between the small blocks of percept and affect bookended by these colons, dashes, and slashes. On the macro level, the montage technique of the larger spread achieves the same paratactical effect between collage elements. These composition processes all act to frustrate the reader's impulse to read linearly for conceptual comprehension.

Reading the large text block in conjunction with the images and smaller text elements of the greater montage, the interplay of affect and percept becomes increasingly complex and an idea of deducing unified meaning must be abandoned. On this level, the percepts of money, sex, and death described above come into relation with the percepts and affects of the smaller text elements. Some treat the relation of body and language in sensory-motor terms, registering through the body the effects of the urban present from which the collage's elements hail:

\(^{93}\) Brinkmann's layout of page 116 of \textit{Schnitte}, for example, leaves no space for pagination and is cited by Maleen Brinkmann as an example of the author's critique of publishing conventions in an interview for \textit{Brinkmanns Zorn}: "Brinkmann hat der Welt und dem Literaturbetrieb mißtraut [...] Er wollte eine neue Schrift, eine Hieroglyphenschrift entwickeln, er wollte die Formen sprengen, sich nicht den Vorgaben des Literaturbetriebs beugen, [...] Das war schon seine neue Schrift: von Rand zu Rand, von Ecke zu Ecke, nicht der Goldene Schnitt vom Druckgewerbe" (DVD II: 1971-73 Arbeitsbücher und Collagen).
The percept of paralysis plays off those of its synonyms, ossification ("steinerne leere Tür," "Neonschrift erstarrt [...]”) and death, present in the photos of the montage as well as in original text elements like:

in der Ferne Städte wie giftige Fallen, Fieberstädte, die in elektrischem starren Leuchten aufglühten, Totenstädte der Massenmedien, paralysierte Emotionen in fiebrigbunter

Such resonances amplify the affects of panic, anxiety, and despair at the seeming ineluctibility of this "elektrische[s] Versuchslabyrinth der Städte," whose mediations infect or poison its inhabitants in order to divest them of control over their very perception (E 117). The text's surface percepts—the breathless line breaks of the quoted block and the rejection of conventional spacing—engender a feeling of relentless acceleration that deepens the associated affects of loss and powerlessness. The text's repetitions of these sets of percepts, as variations on a language-critical theme, have the effect of driving home Brinkmann's language-critical points to the reader; but, crucially, this does not proceed via discursive logic. What Brinkmann achieves at moments in the collage works is bringing the reader to think "in Bildern [...] ohne Worte" as he enjoined readers in the 1970 essay "Spiritual Addiction. Zu William Seward Burroughs’ Roman Nova Express."94 This is thought through percept

94 Brinkmann quotes Burroughs in translation from a 1965 interview: "Wenn sie anfangen, in Bildern zu denken ohne Worte, dann befinden sie sich auf dem Weg" (Film 205). The essay is an explication of Burroughs’ cut-up/fold-in technique, which is intended to disrupt the viral colonization of the body’s neural network by language.
and affect made possible in language, owing to its relentless dismantling by the author via cut-up, fold-in, montage, which disrupt linearity and privilege sensation. The collage works provide images of the city as a ghostworld populated by the dead ("Totenstädte der Massenmedien")—individuals whose bodily paralysis is brought on by the saturation of space with images of sex and violence. These phantoms are largely unaware of their own suspended state of animation, but their ignorance brings the viewer to think their own relation to language and the body outside of the either/or of discursive logic.

I will now examine in further detail what occurs in the encounter of a sensing being with the art object. I have claimed that sensation is elicited and that changes are effected in the reader in the encounter with the text. But how does this proceed in a text like Erkundungen, in which many passages consist purely of text without visual images, via signification alone?

Even if sensation is privileged over signification, there is a direct relationship between them. As the readings offered above demonstrate, sensation relies on signification. Brian Massumi’s essay "The Autonomy of Affect," in which he considers the relationship of image and language in the production of affect, argues that there is no necessary correspondence between the force of an image and any meaning that might be connected to it through explicit signification. He draws a distinction between what he calls "effect" and "content," or between intensity and quality:

What is meant here by the content of the image is its indexing to conventional meanings in an intersubjective context, its sociolinguistic qualification. This indexing fixes the determinate qualities of the image; the strength or duration of the image’s effect could be called its intensity. What comes out here is that
there is no correspondence or conformity between quality and intensity.

(Parables 23)

The content or quality of an image is its shared meaning, or signification; the force of the image is its effect or intensity. Here Massumi is talking about moving images on television, and the language he discusses is that superimposed onto the image. In his distinction, the visual image is considered the carrier of affect while language is considered as pure signification. In the case of entirely linguistic texts, there is a necessary relationship between signification (quality) and sensation (intensity), but it is not one of straightforward correspondence. Massumi offers this clarification:

The relationship between the levels of intensity and qualification is not one of conformity or correspondence but rather of resonation or interference, amplification or dampening. Linguistic expression can resonate with and amplify intensity at the price of making itself functionally redundant. When on the other hand it doubles a sequence of movement in order to add something to it in the way of meaningful progression – in this case a more or less definite expectation, an intimation of what comes next in a conventional progression – then it runs counter to and dampens the intensity. Intensity would seem to be associated with nonlinear processes: resonation and feedback that momentarily suspend the linear progress of the narrative present from past to future. (24)

For Massumi, language does not simply provide information with regard to the image, but instead either resonates with the image or interferes with it. If the language imposes a narrative, conventionalizing the image, or if it translates the image into signified concepts—in short, if language takes priority over the image, over
sensation—then it dampens the image's intensity. If it remains supplementary, adding nothing to it "in the way of meaningful progression," it may amplify the image's intensity. Intensity is sensation; the essay provisionally identifies it with affect, but it could also be percept.

Massumi also elucidates the relationship between affect and emotion:

An emotion is a subjective content, the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal. Emotion is qualified intensity, the conventional, consensual point of insertion of intensity into semantically and semiotically formed progressions, into narrativizable action-reaction circuits, into function and meaning. It is intensity owned and recognized. (28)

Emotion is the conventionalization of affect and its transformation into personal and social meaning. Following Deleuze and Guattari, it is the nonpersonal sensation of affect, a nonhuman force that assails the reader, owned and so transformed into meaning, assimilated and thereby in a sense destroyed, since "intensity is the unassimilable" (Parables 27). Thus, intensity or sensation present virtually in the text cannot be assimilated and remain intensity. Assimilation here means linking intensity to what can be identified and recognized, and this provides the connection with narrative. Narrative literature is composed of sensations, as with all art in this paradigm—but, as Structuralism demonstrated, narrative largely conforms to recognizable structures that vary around central tropes (Clay 69). Narratives within a genre, for example, are all "the same," and yield as Brinkmann points out (significantly, with regard to utopia’s status as “Literatur”) "fixierte Ergebnisse" (Film
276). Without the introduction of some difference, narratives would become painful in their repetition for an adult reader, and are of course not the same. Narrative always escapes, is always in excess of its own essential structures (at least in modernist and postmodern work), but definitionally conforms to conventional progression, to linearity, to a logic of the same. Literature that strives against narrative therefore allows for the amplification of the intensity/sensation of its images because it does not contain within it the road map for their assimilation. It is in this way that the "dismantled" language and paratactical formatting of collage elements, which subvert meaningful progression or linearity, amplify the affects and percepts—intensity or sensation—of both the visual and linguistic images of the collage.

It is unavoidable that some assimilation (that is, the conversion of affect to emotion) occurs in the reader of even the most insistently non-linear texts. Emotion, as Massumi defines it, is affect conventionalized into personal meaning, recognized and assimilated to whatever personal narrative-circuit is associated with the emotion. But because sensation (whether percept or affect) is not assimilable by the personal and does occur and persist without its utter conversion to emotion in the reader, it has the power to connect her/him to that which is nonhuman without wholly converting it to conceptual meaning, without assimilating it to a logic of the same that tames or destroys it. Experimental poetic work like Brinkmann's, and that of his American models intends to open the human to difference via this deterritorializing force. However, the collage works, and Erkundungen in particular, are composed of sensations that are largely produced by language, out of signification. Here, language does not come to sensation from an outside to resonate with, or dampen it; signification itself works to produce the sensations the work comprises. Deleuze and
Guattari write:

Art undoes the triple organization of perceptions, affections, and opinions in order to substitute a monument composed of percepts, affects, and blocs of sensations that take the place of language. The writer uses words, but by creating a syntax that makes them pass into sensation that makes the standard language stammer, tremble, cry or even sing [...]. (*Philosophy* 176)

Literary language, as it "passes into" sensation, assumes forces actualized in the encounter with a reader, in the body of the performed text. It operates on the level of the real in ways that mere signification cannot. It is intensity, it is force, and it acts on the reader in their encounter, and therefore on the world. The reader is thus brought into confrontation with difference—with a new that is worthy of the word.

With these ideas in place, let us turn now to an entirely linguistic passage from *Erkundungen* with the handwritten heading "Zurück in der Gegenwart" (Fig 2.2). As is typical for much of *Erkundungen*, the section contains only a block of original text, a cut-up of the essay "Notizen und Beobachtungen vor dem Schreiben eines
Fig 2.2 (EK 146)

95 In a preliminary note, Brinkmann explains that this essay, initially composed in winter 1970, is a "Mischform" consisting of "Dialogen, abgebrochenen Reflexionen, Zuständen ohne besonderen Anlaß, stenografischen Beobachtungen, essayistischer Anstrengung [...] Zitaten, kurzen Nacherzählungen," to which he added "immer ad hoc" further notes in 1973 and 1974, when he gave the piece as a talk at the Villa Massimo and as a colloquium presentation at UT Austin, respectively (Film 275).
I reproduce here the section I wish to discuss:


Brinkmann's tone is oppositional and rings with a high irony; the text following "Freundlichkeit" in fact inventories the images of an urban wasteland and names the forces of capital responsible ("Wer sitzt an den Kontrollstellen? Geschäfte und Finanzen"). The "Lebensaura" of a cinematized reality hangs in the poisoned air: it is a film so depressing, it "kann nicht gezeigt werden, weil das demoralisieren würde." A student of physical bodies' functions in living systems, "der joviale Physiologe" discusses his job as "fun," despite the image of lifelessness immediately preceding him, and expresses surprise that he is paid for his labor. The Tautavel man, a subspecies of homo erectus discovered July 22, 1971 in Arago Cave, appears out of time to pass judgment on the society and news-cycle that reanimates him.96 It is his

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96 Mention of the "Steinzeit" and stone-age man recur throughout the late work as a means of theorizing alienation. Humans are "physiologisch noch immer in der Steinzeit," but exhibit changes to their sensoria wrought by the media technologies of the modern era which are
voice that speaks emotionlessly, "Du kannst das in der Luft liegen sehen." Chaos is the
watchword of the passage; "[z]urück in der Gegenwart," the confusions of identity in
space and time belonging to "Ortlosigkeit" reign. The chaos of spatiotemporal
disorientation, a product of business and finance, is likely the modern condition to
which the Tautavel man will be forced to assimilate: "Der Mann von Tautavel muß
chaotisch werden?" The slow extermination of nature at the hands of industry is
linked to a depressing stripshow that sunders bodies into fetischizable parts ("der Zug
aus Titten-mit-Gliedern"), dressing them up in the trappings of a music video to
create a multibodied machine, a "Lokomotive Der Liebe." A cynicism that depends on
the laziness of the cut-up perfuses the final lines of the passage. Here it is business
and finance that "machen Spaß," for which an unidentified speaker is "sogar dafür
bezahlt."

The images signify but not to convey any unified meaning, leaving us with the
stronger experience of the text's affects virtually present in them. Brinkmann writes to
simultaneously engage and suppress signification. This results in the development of a
"third language," whose unexpectedly nondiscursive qualities privilege difference.
Instead of the unified meaning we expect of most texts, the work is composed of an
affect of fallenness that arises out of the quoted percepts—most literally in the rusting
metal, molding pipes, broken glass, and miasmatic air of the opening line, but which is
no less present in the images that follow. "Fallenness" is, I repeat, not what the text
means, but what it does. The heaviness of the air and the ossified life-aura it
metaphorizes, the demoralization experienced in its encounter produce in us the
difficult or impossible to reconcile with our biological hardwiring. "Steinzeit" is also wordplay
for a present in which living bodies are "versteinert" via the ossifying effects of language [Film
283].
sensations of the weight of our intellectual and technological histories, the technologized and polluted surrounds to which they have led, and under which sensuous life is crushed. These are affects of loss, regret, depression, and hopelessness. Overlaid is an affect of clear-sighted objectivity registered in the authorial voice whose judgment appears as a tired disgust (present most prominently in the text's descriptors "faulendes," "träge," "höhnisches," or "öde," and in the phrases "weil das demoralisieren würde" or "Verrottung der Realität") for the observed, which thinly conceals a disappointed hope for something better.

In terms of the passage's deterritorializing effects, the compositions of affect presented are complex and operate to deterritorialize and reterritorialize the reader simultaneously. In the passage, s/he is initially deterritorialized by the dissonance between what "Freundlichkeit" signifies and the percepts of urban decay that Brinkmann introduces to the work's imaginative landscape. At the same time, concerning the affect of fallenness, the work evokes comparison with the genre Trümmerliteratur to which we may ascribe reterritorializing effects because a reader might expect this affect in post-war German art. However, the ruins registered appear more the by-product of industry's longstanding abuses than of the instantaneous devastation legible in a bombed-out streetscape. While this may undercut reterritorialization, we may agree with Brinkmann that the two are functionally indistinguishable in their effects on human life and the natural landscape. Indeed, throughout the post-1970 works, he insists “Der Krieg hat nie aufgehört” (Wörter, Orange, Track 2). The affect of objectivity stemming from the disaffected clear-sightedness of the authorial voice is deterritorializing because we expect more linear lines of thought between observations made by a voice of authority. On the other
hand, a seemingly objective and authoritative voice poses questions and offers answers, meeting our expectations for a polemical text, and is thus at the same time mildly reterritorializing. But the (il)logic of the answers arrived at or the absence of answers to posed questions engenders affects of frustration or confusion at their crypticness. This is more strongly deterritorializing. The reader's impulse to decipherment, the need to make discursive sense of the passage, is activated, only to be frustrated by the randomized montage effects of cut-up. Readerly frustration calls this impulse to decipher into question, since we must consider that the work has steadily refused representationality in its use of language both via cut-up and montage, these lines proving no exception. This calling into question of the acquired mode of discursive thought is deterritorialization *pur*.

Let us now examine a line from the passage which is entirely conceptual: "'Es macht Spaß,' sagte der joviale Physiologe, 'und ich werde sogar dafür bezahlt.'" The words in this phrase are recognizable, they appear to signify, their meaning should be easily grasped and assimilated. But their meaning is not recognized, and they signify only in an abstract sense. The physiologist appears out of nowhere in the passage; there are no previous examples of physiologists in *Erkundungen*. The text offers no explanation as to what activity is fun for him, assumably the reason he is "jovial" and for which is he is paid, though we may assume it is something to do with the office of "physiologist." Physiology as such is a broad field, encompassing the study of anatomical function in living systems. That he and this study have some relation to the world of business and finance comes only from the proximity of this line to the words "Geschäfte und Finanzen," which, taken with the seemingly inappropriate affect of joviality in the face of the wasteland percepts that precede it, engenders an affect of
complicity—possibly ignorant, possibly malicious. In short, the phrase signifies but only incompletely. Of course we can choose to make any number of narrative leaps that attempt to explain the relationship between a world of living systems (bodies) and the reifying activities of "Geschäfte und Finanzen"; however, the fact remains that this form of experimental poetry with its insistence on non-linearity pushes us beyond such modes of interpretation and comprehension. What is signified ultimately serves not to produce meaning but sensation, though each individual word may have no sensation of its own and the phrase does not produce an image. While the phrase is entirely conceptual and signifying, its signification is short-circuited as it passes from concept to sensation as the affects of complicity, ignorance, or malice. The language is simple, yet it stammers to produce a deterritorialization as signification breaks down and does not fulfil its standard, habitual function.

As poetic language becomes sensation it becomes part of the present for as long as it is performed by body and thus in movement. I agree with Jon Clay that sensation in poetry is movement when it is actualized, while in its virtual form it exists statically in the poem. We can thus conclude that all actualized poetic sensation belongs to the present,97 as it is felt in the body (by mouth, ear, and/or mind) of the reading subject.

97 Clay argues for sensation’s belonging to the present despite its reliance on signification (which cannot belong to the present): [As for actualized poetic sensation’s belonging to the present,] there are two different concepts of time at issue. Derrida writes: "It is because of différance that the movement of signification is possible only if each so-called "present" element, each element appearing on the scene of presence, is related to something other than itself, thereby keeping within itself the mark of the past element, and already letting itself be vitiates by the mark of its relation to the future element, this trace being related no less to what is called the future than to what is called the past, and constituting what is called the present by this very relation to what it is not: what it absolutely is not, not even a past or a future as a modified present." [...]In differance, each element of signification is present only in relation. Signification "is" only as not-past and not-future, thereby carrying both of them with it such that, ‘really’, there is no present of signification. The present is not insofar as it is considered as a locatable presence in space. The present is movement. However, it should be
This is important for the relationship between sensation and meaning in poetry: literary sensation that participates in the present means it has an immediacy that signification does not. Given that the sensations issuing from what I have called the imaginative dimension of the work are produced initially via signification (despite its short-circuiting in the process), this complicates the relationship between poetic sensation and signification.

Sensation acts directly on the nervous system of a sensing body: Deleuze claims of Francis Bacon's paintings that "The Figure is the sensible form related to a sensation; it acts immediately on the nervous system, which is of the flesh" (Francis 34). If signification, a system of nonpresence, engenders sensation, how can we maintain the argument that the sensation produced, supposedly virtually present in the text, acts directly and immediately on the body? Language, characterized by a simultaneous and eternal difference and deferral from and of itself, seems an impossible medium for generating immediacy and presence. We can resolve this contradiction by returning to Brinkmann's statement that the brain is of the body, and cannot be thought in separation.

“As a system of non-presence, signification acts largely through the intellect, requiring executive processing to make the affective associations that are virtually present in the text, rather than directly on the nervous system. Although signification passes into the body via the intellect, it is that passage itself that actualizes the

_Recalled that differance is concerned, first of all, with signification and not sensation. Signification moves on in eternal differance while sensation produced out of signification in the intellect of a reader makes an immediate assault on that reader's nervous system. What is present in the movement through signification's differance is the process of the production of signification, while it is signification itself, as such and in the fullness of being, that is never present. If signification were fully present, it would not signify but would simply be (71)._
sensations that exist virtually in an unperformed work. The intellect, whatever set of processes it comprises, is the site of sensation's actualization for text-based art. It is one of a number of interfaces between reader and text; thus sensation produced via signification acts on that reader's nervous system from an "internal site" (Clay 70). As I have endeavored to show in this chapter, Brinkmann's post-1970 project rests on this assumption: "Es ist nachdenklich machend [...] daß man sich den Kopf, die Gedanken, die Denkfähigkeit immer getrennt vom übrigen Körper vorstellt, sagt man das Wort Kopf, Gedanke usw. Dabei passiert das doch jeweils immerzu in einem selber, und das ist man doch egal wo, an welchem Schnittpunkt! Das Gehirn gehört doch zum Körper, ist Teil des Körpers!" (BH 264, emph mine)

Chapter 3

98 If indeed human consciousness depends on quantum effects as is provisionally suspected, the demonstrated materiality of this consciousness would further shore up this argument, since consciousness itself would be proven to exert material force on bodies, both intra- and intersubjectively.
Limit Case:  
Score Function in the Psychogeographies

“Zeit heißt doch Bewegung, oder sollte ich mich irren?”

—Erkundungen

In 1974, Jerome Rothenberg, the poet, critic and anthologist, proposed that a new model for American poetry had developed after World War II: “Since the 1950s [...] we have been working increasingly with a performance model of the poem, for which the written versions serve as the notation of the score” (Rothenberg 519). The performance model in question arises for Rothenberg as he considers the problem of a "coercive propositional language," one that attempts mastery of the world, rather than "participates" in it (512). He illustrates this performance model by citing his own "Alphabet Event" from \textit{Poland/1931} (1974):

(1)
Recite the 221 alphabets while walking in a circle.  
Repeat the event 442 times.

(2)
Do the first Alphabet Event walking backwards.  
Recite the alphabets starting from the end.

Here language calls for participation \textit{qua} performance. The resulting poem reminds us that it does not solely consist in its notation or even its utterance, but rather in "the totality of the event," which includes its prior or potential enaction in the world (519). In this model, the poem on the page functions as the score for an event.

Brinkmann is widely considered the German satellite of the American post-war poetry scene to which this performance model belongs, and is arguably "the most important bridge figure between contemporary German and American culture"
Brinkmann’s own poetry in the late 1960s was highly influenced by that of his American contemporaries, the second-generation New York School poets; with the 1969 publication of the anthology *ACID: Neue Amerikanische Szene*, he was the first to introduce the work of Anne Waldman, Ted Berrigan, Lewis Warsh, Donald Barthelme, Joe Brainard and Kenward Elmslie to a German-speaking audience. Like these authors, Brinkmann looked to first-generation New York School models for his more general aesthetic positions. (First-generation luminaries include his poet hero, Frank O’Hara, as well as John Ashbery, John Cage, Barbara Guest, James Schuyler, Bill Berkson and Kenneth Koch. Artists associated with the first generation include Willem de Kooning, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, and Robert Motherwell.)

99) The mature result of Brinkmann’s engagement with these ideas is the series of collage essays produced in the years 1971-75. These collage works constitute not just a psychogeography, but the *score*, recorded in language, of the author’s movement through urban spaces, later to be augmented with found and personal images. I argue that it is owing to this engagement with score practice that the collage works "look to

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99 For a comprehensive list of associated figures, see David Lehman’s *The Last Avant-garde: The Making of the New York School of Poets* (New York: Anchor Books, 1999).

100 Despite other critics’ assertions to the contrary (cf. Steinacker), the collage works have very little in common with Dadaist montage practice; however, the psychogeography is an excavation of Situationist practice and it is this dimension of the project that confers Brinkmann’s status as a neo-avantgarde. I call Brinkmann’s walks "*dérive,*" but his practice differs in certain minor regards from his Situationist predecessors’. His activity, like the Situationists’, is not to be confused with “classical notions of the journey and the stroll”; it also reaches various stages of equilibrium between planned and chance routes and is conducted with high standards of empiricism, all falling under the heading "experimental comportment" (Debord 51). *Détournement*, or the appropriation of prefabricated aesthetic elements occurs, but Brinkmann’s walks are never collective undertakings and Situationist architecture is not of interest (McDonough 14). And while the surrealists and their lettrist/situationist successors often drew out the positive and ludic elements of their disorientations during psychogeographic exercises, Brinkmann tells us that his own experience is a “Non-Stop-Horror-Film der Sinne und Empfindungen” (RB 34). That these exercises are *experiment* in the Situationist paradigm and Brinkmann’s is significant, since the experiment is classically conceived as a specifically bounded period of time during which phenomenal observation will take place.
American sources for their formal properties," rather than to cultural objects of the European historical avant-garde (191). As I will show, the implications for this score practice are far-reaching. Its adoption is Brinkmann's attempt to tweak the failed model of participatory writing he deployed during his tenure as the "ChefpiLOT der Pop-Lyrik" in the period between 1966 and 1970 (Asche 15).

The North American 1960s saw the emergence of a wider discourse on “score function” or “score practices” not only in poetry but across the disciplines of musical composition, visual art and architecture (Kotz 49). Diverse and radical notational practices arose out of happenings, fluxus, and conceptual art, and each required its own singular two-dimensional representation, “no longer a score in any traditional sense, [but] simply a catalyst for action or a program for activity” (Hitchcock 387). This turn to notation, and subsequently to a focus on process, begins with John Cage and finds its fullest expression in the Conceptual Art of the 1960s. The associated artists and writers of the decade were concerned with the process—the ideas and meanings of which can be readily represented as scores—that produces, and is produced by, artistic practice. Artists and composers like La Monte Young and George Brecht, both students of Cage in the late '50s and early '60s, created event scores in a format similar to the Rothenberg’s "Alphabet Event":

COMPOSITION 1960 #10

to Bob Morris

Draw a straight line and follow it.

October 1960

—La Monte Young (1960)
By manifesting as score or the notation of event, the art object itself undergoes what Lucy Lippard theorized as "dematerialization." In this model, the object in the gallery or publication is in fact the mere notation of an event or undertaking that occurred outside the institutional space in which it ultimately appears. The "work" itself is only an abstraction from this event; the Conceptualist critique of the ideological space of the aesthetic institution thus reveals artistic practice’s inscription within the conventions of language and so uncovers a previously unrecognized subordination to institutional power (Buchloh 136). The appeal of such a critique to Brinkmann should be immediately evident, and it is one he anticipates in his 1968/69 essay on Frank O'Hara, his favorite of the first New York School poets. In the O'Hara essay he discusses the "längst unbewußte" elitism of the German literary establishment, an ideological entity that privileged an arbitrary and abstractive set of formal conventions and an objectionably stuffy approach to Dichtersein (214). O'Hara's *Lunch Poems* (1964) and his "I do this, I do that" poetry offered Brinkmann a countermodel of "unmittelbare Präsenz" in their straightforward rendering of daily lived experience ("Film" 215). Observe the score character of O'Hara's "A Step Away From Them" (1956) from *Lunch Poems*:

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101 Michael W. Jennings argues eloquently in his article "Brinkmann's *Passio: Rom, Blicke* and Conceptual Art" for the likelihood of Brinkmann's knowledge of the Conceptual Art movement. While there is no ACID or Silverscreen to "make the connection manifest," Jennings cites 1) Brinkmann's reverence for the ideals of the first-generation NYS, which demand direct contact by the poet with the contemporary art scene; 2) his residence in Köln, the seat of the West German art scene and portal through which all American art entered Germany; and 3) most compellingly, the form of the Materialienbänder themselves, which bear a strong resemblance to works like Dan Graham's "Homes for America" (1966) and Robert Smithson's "A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic New Jersey" (1967), appearing in *Art in America* and *Artforum*, respectively (192-193).
It's my lunch hour, so I go for a walk among the hum-colored cabs. First, down the sidewalk where laborers feed their dirty glistening torsos sandwiches and Coca-Cola, with yellow helmets on. They protect them from falling bricks, I guess. Then onto the avenue where skirts are flipping above heels and blow up over grates. The sun is hot, but the cabs stir up the air. I look at bargains in wristwatches. There are cats playing in sawdust. (18)

In such work, consisting in the simple notation of event with light gestures to the pop culture that suffuses the urban everyday (Marilyn Monroe over the grate in The Seven-Year Itch (1955), real bottles of Coca-Cola that could just as easily be billboards), Brinkmann sees the possibility for writing that is participatory, an involved "Tun," which refuses the trappings of conventional, "erstarrte" poetic practice: an "Elitebewußtsein" and a sustained "Mystifizieren des Schreibens" to which the contemporary German literary establishment—represented in specific by poets Helmut Heißenbüttel and Jürgen Becker and the Gruppe 47 in general—has, in his view, damned itself (Film 214). Brinkmann reads O'Hara's own condemnation of this literary pretension to a distance from lived reality in the lines, "Hell, half the world wants to be like Thoreau at Walden worrying about the noise of traffic [Verkehrslärm] on the way to Boston; the other half use up their lives being part of that noise. I like the second half. Right?" ("Standing" 94)

102 After quoting his contemporaries' highly abstract views on their own poetics, Brinkmann writes, "Leute, packt Eure Schreibmaschinen ein, kauft keine Zeta-Mattpost mehr, macht einen Trödelladen auf... denn was sich in solchen Abstrakta ausspricht, ist ein Elitebewußtsein, das längst unbewußt worden ist und trotz aller scheinbaren Aufklärung eine ästhetische Schablone weitertransportiert, die außer für "Literatur" nirgendwo mehr passen will" ("Film" 214).
At the time of the O'Hara essay's publication in 1969, Brinkmann's commitment to participation in this Verkehrslärm of the 'second half' manifested as the total involvement of his Pop practice, which continued until it reached crisis in 1970. This earlier practice demanded a radical openness to the sense stimuli of a wholly commodified urban present, which left the subject's sensorium open to untrammeled cultural inscription. Its aim was to exceed an abstractive mode of perception, get beyond the ideological filter of second nature, and reach a utopian instant of unbounded, ecstatic being. While it did achieve a de-subjectivization, its effects on the body revealed its ultimate consequence: in surrendering the ability to create distance between sensuous self and object, the opposition between body and intellect is resolved; this, however, allows stimuli, without being diverted and processed in thought, to inscribe themselves directly on the body. In Brinkmann's words, this penetration and inscription culminates in a "zerbrochene Magnetfelder des Ichs" (EK 20). The body is thus opened to unopposed manipulations by its technologized surrounds.

The twin failures of this involvement and the '68 revolts to transform either individual or society provoked Brinkmann's 1971 break with Pop, publishing and most of his social circle. From hopes of a freed subject, Brinkmann moves to a view of the present as a "Scheiß-Zeit [in der] wir leben müssen," where the time for revolution "ist längst verseucht" (EK 32). The noise and sight of traffic has come to symbolize capital and its wars, rather than lived participation: "Der Wagenverkehr erinnert mich an Krieg, an endloser, kriegerischer Wagenkolonnen, die irgendwohin ziehen, zerstören, ausnutzen, kaputtmachen, Geld verdienen" ("Wörter" CD 5:1, 8:45).
From this position, Brinkmann began to formulate a new tack. No longer was the stream of images ("Bild-Parade"), sounds, smells and haptic experiences to be met with the total affirmation of involvement. The result of this shift is described as akin to the experience of seeing for the first time: "als öffne man zum ersten Mal die Augen und sieht. Vor Schreck möchte man sogleich wieder zumachen" ("Film" 150). The first lines of the collage essay *Erkundungen für die Präzisierung des Gefühls für einen Aufstand* read, ": also reiste ich mit ruhigen Blicken durch die Augenblicke / ich reise kühl und unbeteiligt durch die Bilder & Sätze / ich sah zum 1. Mal den tatsächlichen Schrecken hier in der Gegenwart ///" (6). This non-affirmative lifting-of-the-veil forms the basis of the sensory explorations conducted in the collage essays' psychogeographies. The essays evince a new critical attitude toward contemporary culture and, as I will show, advance the technique of the event score or performance model.

The books present their reader with the record of the author's experimental writing praxes that aim at a temporary, i.e. *strictly bounded* de-subjectivization. In one model, Brinkmann cultivates an absolute attention to his sensorium that resembles his pre-1970 practice of involvement, but for the controlled interval of a *dérive* and followed by a regimen of psychic and somatic decontamination. This decontamination proceeded through a stream-of-consciousness writing technique on a manual typewriter that recorded his sensory experiences during the psychogeographic exercise. It was carried out in the carefully constructed "Sinnes-Entzugs-Kammer" of his study, from which images and extraneous noise were banned (RB 333), and produced a state of bodily calm:
Dieses Durchschütteln von Wörtern und Bilder im Schreibakt selber, ohne links und rechts und um mich herumschauen, ohne Rücksicht auf Konstruktionen und Folgerichtigkeit, erfahre ich beim Schreiben tatsächlich als eine physiologische Befreiung aus dem zusammengezogenen, geduckten Verharren. (EK 187)

Another approach achieved the desired de-subjectivization according to the scientific protocols outlined in the work of Robert Bilz, whose study Psychotische Umwelt. Versuch einer biologisch orientierten Psychopathie (1962) fascinated Brinkmann. In a study of alcoholics observing a regimen of sleep deprivation, Bilz described changes in brain function that produced a state of “dissoziiertes Wachsein,” in which subjects became hyperaware of their surroundings and could not distinguish between real and imagined perceptions (7). Brinkmann reproduced Bilz’s experiment with sleep deprivations of 24 or more hours, augmented with heavy alcohol, nicotine and caffeine intake and unspecified uppers, to achieve psychophysical states of intensified attention to the body, in which the usual filtering processes of consciousness were suspended for a bounded period:

((::was steckt denn dahinter,wenn jemand sich fertigmacht bis zur Erschöpfung mit Alkohol,Rauschgift,Kaffee,Zigaretten Wachsein,((::Wachsein über 24 Stunden produziert sofort Einsichten wie in einer High-Stimmung:Abstand,Gleichgültigkeit gegenüber den gegenwärtigen Formen,Einsicht in bizarre Körpersituationen und Verhaltensweisen,der

Desubjectivization could also be triggered by withdrawing from the list of substances above, also under conditions of sleep deprivation, as the author did at Longchamp in 1971 (EK 360). The writing thus produced are detailed registrations of the sensations and affects that occur during the bounded period of heightened attention.

These innovations beg the question of origin. It is my contention that the outlined procedures were developed with Brinkmann's knowledge of avant-garde poetic models from across the Atlantic: those of the Black Mountain poets and first-generation New York School, and of John Cage in particular. Cage reconceptualized sound as a “perceptual readymade” to be framed by the written work in its dictation of a durational limit and understood this notation as “a way to produce something” (Kostelanetz 63). The paradigmatic example is 4’33" (1952), a three-movement score composed for any instrument during which nothing is played. What is captured or framed by the work are the ambient noises that occur by chance in the four and a half odd minutes of its performance. At its premiere on August 29, 1952, David Tudor took his place on the piano bench, closed the keyboard lid to indicate the beginning of the first movement, then sat without playing a note while observing the score. It is the first instance in which music is structured solely by lengths of time rather than by a

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104 Cage was associated with both. He taught at Black Mountain College in the summers of 1948 and 1952 and was in residence the summer of 1953. In 1952, he staged the first "Happening" in the United States at the College, a theater event with multiple simultaneous performative elements. Other poets teaching or studying there around this time included Charles Olson, Robert Creeley, Denise Levertov, Robert Duncan, Jonathan Williams, Ed Dorn and John Wieners; similarly engaged figures from the worlds of art and architecture included Buckminster Fuller, Walter Gropius, Robert Motherwell, Willem de Kooning, Robert Rauschenberg, Cy Twombly and Aaron Siskind.
harmonic system. It presents time as a neutral container, an empty frame that can hold whatever events or sounds that might happen during its course. Though it was composed as a piece of music, it was also possible to notate 4’33” entirely in words and numbers and a text version of the score circulated widely in the 1960s (Kotz 13). In her book *Words to be Looked At: Language in 1960s Art* (2007), Liz Kotz teases out the significance of this radical notational shift for both Conceptual artists and the New York School poets of the sixties. She documents La Monte Young and George Brecht’s experimentation with word-based composition, which resulted in event scores like Young's cited above, and notes that in such works, notation no longer describes "what we hear but what we do" (17). In this model, notation becomes a register of process over time.

Lawrence Halprin, landscape architect and former student of Walter Gropius formalizes such notational schema thus: “Scores are symbolizations of processes which extend over time. The most familiar kind of ‘score’ is a musical one, but I have extended this meaning to include ‘scores’ in all fields of human endeavor. Even a grocery list, a calendar [...] are scores.” Further, he writes, “planning for future events is the essential purpose of a scoring mechanism. Scores are notations which use symbols to describe processes over a period of time [...] Scores are devices used for controlling events, of influencing what is to occur” (1, 5).

In poetry, this transformation to a procedural model\(^\text{105}\) begins with writers associated with Black Mountain College and the first-generation New York School. John Ashbery’s collage work *The Tennis Court Oath* (1962) or Jackson Mac Low’s

\(^{105}\) What Jerome Rothenberg called the "performance model of the poem." As we now see, "procedural model" more precisely articulates the strategy behind it.
chance-composed poems of the 1950s combine the use of Cagean musical strategies and the borrowing of language from source texts to generate one text from another. In these cases, chance-derived mathematical rubrics were used to systematically cull language from the source text, allowing the poem to function as an open container, a notational structure permitting any kind of textual fragment or spacing to appear. As Cage proposes for sounds in his "perceptual readymades," meaning and affect may result even from words that occur together in random order. I contend that Brinkmann appropriates this open-container strategy as well; however, concerning the psychogeography he develops, his method is more akin to the functioning of a piece like 4'33" than these examples. His perambulations in this practice occur within an explicitly Cagean treatment of time: the time-frame of the walk or period of desubjectivization is the bounded duration that acts as a neutral container for the perceptions and actions that occur within. All occurrences during this time—thoughts, sensory perceptions—and their subsequent recording in the "Sinnesentzugskammer" comprise the event, which is determined by a "score" in the sense Halprin invokes. Walks follow a pattern of spatial explorations in which the author attends intensively to his perceptual experience of his environs, to be recorded in detail at the promenade’s end. After retreating to a space specially prepared to regulate sensory experience, Brinkmann meticulously registers his thoughts and sensory stimuli according to a procedure of memory for which, if we take him at his word, he has “trained” himself (RB 36). As noted in the previous chapter, he claims to see as a camera, hear as a recording device and register those other sensory experiences for which no technological means of mediation exists analogously. (He will also bring his Instamatic or, during the period October through December 1973, a WDF tape
recorder and microphone to supplement his sensorium.) This score thus has a *bounding function*: in place of an ideological filter, the author installs a behavioral pattern that takes place within a Cagean durational limit, which, to speak with Halprin, “controls” his exposure to an otherwise overwhelming sensual present.

Brinkmann asks of his practice, "Was mache ich eigentlich hier? "Grenzen", denke ich" (RB 379). This drawing of boundaries he speaks of is the creation of a score, the formation of the open container, and it is a controlled means of exploring the effects of time on the sensing body. In *Rom, Blicke*, he speaks qualitatively of time as an impenetrable ("gar nicht durchschaubare") monolith:

> [...I]ch schrieb, daß die Zeit nicht verändert im Sinn des Erhofften (:das Erhoffte ist meistens 1 Schnittmusterbogen des Bewußtseins), sie vermag hervorzubringen, etwas mitzuentwickeln helfen, was in einem steckt, oder sie vermag das, was in einem Einzelnen steckt, zu zerstören [...] Und die Zeit, das ergänze ich hier, Zeit als qualitativer Begriff, nicht als Quantität von Tagen, die sich hintereinanderreihen zu Wochen und Monaten, dieser Kalender-flache Begriff, reduziert auf sture Addition, spielt mit vielen Schattierungen, jahreszeitlichen Färbungen, Färbungen der Orte, der Bewegung auf den Nerven - sie ist, Zeit, eine doch gar nicht durchschaubare Größe. (RB 342)

Time, not in the sense of calendar days accreting, but in its twentieth-century lived qualities is ascribed a manipulative agency: it "plays" or even "toys" with the sensing body's experience of place and season, "tinting" it in ways that may either call forth or destroy elements of the self. Brinkmann describes this condition of bodily manipulation: "meine eigenen Bewegungen waren noch nicht von mir kontrolliert
genug, aber ich lernte schnell [...] mich zu fragen, wer und was meine Bewegungen kontrollierte hier in der Gegenwart/ und da mußte ich also zuerst einmal lernen, ein anderes Problem zu lösen, nämlich wie ich mir meine Zeit wieder beschaffen konnte" (EK 76). It is only in the drawing of temporal "Grenzen," i.e. the creation of a open container to be filled by chance experiences, that Brinkmann's field studies can succeed in reclaiming time for himself. By setting boundaries or limits on a Cagean model, he is able to penetrate or "see through" [durchschauen] the otherwise bewildering effects of lived time on the sensorium, and thus reassert a measure of control over these effects. It is an attention to the body while on dérive that makes this possible:

So glitten wieder die Tage und Wochen ineinander und ergaben ein zusammenhängendes Netz aus gleichbleibenden Eindrücken und tief verwurzelten Bedürfnissen, die immer nur so erwähnt wurden/ aber ich spürte körperlich wieder meine eigenen Zusammenhänge, die gar nichts mit den Zusammenhängen draußen zu tun hatten, obwohl ich mitten im draußen war/ und diese Kontinuität war eine Kontinuität von Reisen quer durch die Gegenwart/ und ich sah, wie diese Kontinuität jetzt langsam wieder von mir selber gesteuert werden konnte.\textsuperscript{106} (EK 102)

The psychogeography, this "Reisen quer durch die Gegenwart," generates a feeling of coherence ("Zusammenhang") or continuity based in the moving, sensing body. As it is framed here, such coherence suggests the maintenance of a boundary between self

\textsuperscript{106} Brinkmann's unconventional spacing and punctuation is reproduced here exactly as it appears in the text. As most lines would require the interruption of a [sic], I ask the reader to accept all citations as faithful reproductions without this editorial marker.
and environment ("meine eigenen Zusammenhänge,die gar nichts mit den Zusammenhängen draußen zu tun hatten,obwohl ich mitten im draußen war"), further implying the shielding or exposure-controlling effect of the practice, and ultimately made explicit in the line: "ich sah, wie diese Kontinuität jetzt langsam wieder von mir selber gesteuert werden konnte." Brinkmann's walks parse time—that is, his bodily experience of the present—into a discrete, manageable form, and it is this parsing function of the psychogeography that demands its recognition as score. The text continues:

/so kam ich wieder raus und konnte fort/und wo ich dann war ,das war eine Bewegung/ich hatte diese Wörter und Bilder unter Kontrolle/so machte ich weiter auf den verschiedenen Ebenen des Körpers/[…]und ich war nicht verreckt und schließlich konnte ich wieder sehen/und ich brauchte gar nicht mehr das Wort sehen benutzen// (EK 102)

Again, attention to different bodily "levels" (the sense modalities) allows for an interruption, however brief, of the urban present’s mediations; this rupture is initially metaphorized as "seeing" and the restored immediacy of embodied sensation allows for a brief respite from the mediations of language itself ("ich brauchte gar nicht mehr das Wort sehen benutzen").

The actions of the desubjectivized period themselves produce a second score in the Sinnesentzugskammer—the sights, sounds, smells and haptic sensations of the day are notated and can be read. Another effect of score practice becomes evident at this point: the perceptual readymade's ability, in Cage's words, "to produce something" is perhaps better articulated as its generativity. In Brinkmann's work, the
generativity of this type of notational practice manifests 1) as the score of the psychogeography yields the written work through a process of translation from notes, photographs, recordings, *objets trouvés*, memory of the experience, or direct transcription when Brinkmann wrote during desubjectivization, 2) as the resulting text produces, or possibly re-produces, sensations as percepts and affects in the reader.

Concerning the translation of experience that occurs in the writing/collaging process that follows these bounded periods, Brinkmann looks to the Objectivist and Black Mountain poet, Charles Olson. Not only Olson’s objectism, which he defines as “the getting rid of the lyrical interference of the individual as ego, of the ‘subject’ and his soul” in the 1950 manifesto “Projective Verse” informs Brinkmann’s practice. Olson also makes the claim in that essay that the typewriter will offer poets capacities for the notations of time and sound resembling those of a musical score:

> It is the advantage of the typewriter that, due to its rigidity and its space precision, it can, for a poet, indicate exactly the breath, the pauses, the suspensions even of syllables, the juxtapositions, even of part of phrases, which he intends. For the first time the poet has the stave and bar a musician has had. For the first time he can, without the convention of rime and meter, record the listening he has done to his own speech [...] (22)

Thus, beginning in the 1950s, the typewriter is conceived as the recording medium of the rhythms of poetic speech (syllables, phrases) and the kinetic experience of recitation (breath, the speaking of syllables and phrases) for the poet. By these means, a mechanical device restores to the writer the somatic energies of language that were
denied expression by traditional poetic practice and industrial print culture (Kotz 114). Brinkmann, writing in the early ‘70s, radicalizes this idea: the typewriter, camera and microphone become the recording media not only for the speech of the poet, but also for the kinesis of an entire body through space. Rather than merely recording this “listening” he has done to his own speech, Brinkmann attempts to record the sensory apprehension of all his actions over a determined period of time: he registers a metaphorical "listening," i.e. the visual, auditory, olefactory and tactile observation he has performed of his own body. This leap creates connection between language and the moving, not only speaking, body.

The resulting graphic notation exhibits almost no white space (in particular, conventional spacing after punctuation is abandoned); interruptions of his attention to one sense modality, action or thought are marked with the forward slashes in Brinkmann’s idiosyncratic system of punctuation (see also Fig. 3.1):


107 In “Die Lyrik Frank O’Haras” written in December 1968/January 1969, Brinkmann contrasts the activity of the Black Mountain poets with that of the New York School in just these terms: “Es kennzeichnet die Gruppe New Yorker Lyriker nicht eine einheitliche Dichtungstheorie, wie sie von den Autoren beispielsweise der Black Mountain Gruppe ausgeprägt wurde, deren hauptsächliches Interesse der genauen Fixierung des Atem- und Sprechrhythmus in der Zeile galt, dem “Muster” – also kein in den Mittelpunkt des Schreibens gestellter ausdrücklich formaler Aspekt, sondern – was hinsichtlich New Yorks nahe lag – ein Interesse für Malerei, mehr oder weniger direkte Kontakte mit der Kunstszene” (Film 207). Brinkmann eschews the idea of a “mehr und mehr spezialisierten Sprach-Thematik” to which the work of the Black Mountain poets is subject on the example of Robert Creeley’s Words, as he has no use for language’s sonority, scored or otherwise, in his own writing; nevertheless, he refers to his registrations of spatial experience as mapping, and includes annotated maps of his routes to capture the index of his movements (208). This scoring function is undeniably analogous to the Black Mountain or Projectivist poets’ “Fixierung des Atem- und Sprechrhythmus in der Zeile,” with which Brinkmann was obviously familiar.
gestalteten sie Natur mit Hügeln rings um die Stadt./17.3, heute, Freitag, mitten im Dreck, ein tiefer friedlicher Augenblick, im Blau rosa Lichtsreifen fern, darin einige flatternde Vögel, die Letzten?/Sich entfernde [sic] rote Wagenrücklichter auf der Straße. Auf der weißen Bank daneben saß ein Türke. Über ihm stand die Mondsichel, und ein Stern./Schweifgelber Dunst ränderte den Horizon, rauchiges Licht, das verschwand./Ich hustete./[...] Händler tauchten am flimmernden Rand des Gehirnrinde auf und begannen Bilder zu handeln./Ich hatte den Geruch dürren raschelnden Herbstlaubs wieder im Gedächtnis, obwohl es Anfang des Jahres war./Und für den einen Augenblick wurde die Pizzeria erschreckend schmierig./Eine Lokustür schlug krachend ins Schloß und das Geräusch füllte den Raum der Essenden./Olive tropften fettig in den Salat. (S 152)

In general dashes introduce speech; colons often function like conjunctive adverbs to signal the delivery of a synthetic statement; slashes indicate a turn of attention and can be read as line breaks. As in works by his NYS contemporaries, the open field of Mallarmé, Williams and Pound championed in Olson’s manifesto has been radicalized into a field that observes no line-breath correlation. The speaking body’s kinesthetic action, localized to the lungs and mouth, is replaced by the kinesthetic action of an entire sensing body. Rather than identifying speech as the “solid” of verse, the “secret of a poem’s energy,” Brinkmann finds the poem’s energy in the motion of a body in space (Olson 16). He shares this with his second-generation New York School contemporaries Ted Berrigan and Bernadette Mayer. Certain of Berrigan’s and
Mayer’s works are also composed by a psychogeographic process\textsuperscript{108}; but it is Mayer and Brinkmann who make the total registration of perception their object. Mayer's *Hunger*, for instance, opens with, "I had an idea before this that if a human, a writer, could come up with a workable code, or shorthand, for then transcription of every event, every motion, every transition of his or her own mind, & could perform this process of translation on himself, using the code, for a 24-hour period, he or we or someone could come up with a great piece of language! information" (2). The possibility of the aesthetic production of knowledge drives the method.

\textsuperscript{108} Works like Berrigan’s "Train Ride" (1971), and Mayer’s *Moving* (1971) or *Hunger* (1975) are exemplary.
These authors take Olson’s enjoinder for projectile verse to an extreme:

ONE PERCEPTION MUST IMMEDIATELY AND DIRECTLY LEAD TO A 
FURTHER PERCEPTION. It means exactly what it says, is a matter of, at all 
points (even, I should say, of our management of daily reality as of the daily 
work) get on with it, keep moving, keep in, speed, the nerves, their speed, the 
perceptions, theirs, the acts, the split second acts, the whole business [...] USE
USE USE the process at all points, in any given poem always, always one perception must must must MOVE, INSTANTER, ON ANOTHER!” (17)

This move, from the registration of the breath and other energies of speech via the typewriter to the registration of a kinetic praxis via the typewriter, camera and tape recorder, explains in part the shift away from a fixation on the sonorous arrangement of language in Brinkmann's work. Musicality and the concern with its reproducibility is left behind in favor of a score practice meant as an index of activity and sensation, not as precise instructions for the work's future performance. The importance of this difference is made clear in the previous chapter, wherein the relationship of the works to the reader was brought into focus.

The writing of experience in the collage works is a translation of perception occurring during and through movement, through process. It is Brinkmann's innovation to equate movement and process; this equation produces the unique strain of aesthetic mapping we see in the collage works, one that is registered with a technologized process of poetic notation. It is in this sense that the author's artistic practice is a doubled movement and so a doubled process: the experiment begins upon leaving the house, entering the state of dissociative “Wachsein”; various notational practices are deployed (the Instamatic, the recorder and microphone, various notational practices are deployed (the Instamatic, the recorder and microphone,

109 Here I mean to highlight the fundamental difference between Olson’s and Brinkmann’s conceptions of the literary possibilities these recording technologies bring to bear. Olson’s enthusiasm is for the precise notational capabilities of the typewriter to register breath and break, such that the reader could perform the recorded piece precisely as the author indicates. As other authors have noted, this capability of the typewriter is somewhat exaggerated by Olson, since there is no consensus on convention as with musical notation, such that a first-time performer of a poetic work could "correctly" sight-read another author's piece. Brinkmann, of course recognizes this and makes his objective is not to render his scores performable by their reader; his interest lies in the total registration of his sensuous activity as well as in the process of its recording. The typewriter, camera and microphone in concert allow him to create a system of symbolization that captures both of these processes.
techniques of memory, direct transcription) as motion generates a multitude of 'situations'; the body reaches the experiment's upper bound upon entering the *Sinnesentzugskammer*, at which point a new process begins. Organization of collected data and further notation commences, until this second movement is completed to the author's satisfaction. The register of these dual processes becomes their score, one designed as index rather than general instruction. Brinkmann and/or the reader may take from this index cues for future activity, but its very indexicality counterindicates precise reproduction.110

Maleen Brinkmann's editorial notes from *Wörter Sex Schnitt* (1973) suggest that the author's investment in cut-up technique seen in the collage works is in part a result of this psychogeographic Cagean score practice:

Es ging ihm darum, die entstandenen Fixierungen und Festlegungen in den Wörtern, dem Verhalten der Körper und des Charakters des Einzelnen aufzubrechen. Dabei wollte er sehen, was zu sehen ist, alle Wörter vergessen, Hinsehen [sic], was tatsächlich da ist. Um die Fixierungen zu erfassen und abzulösen suchte er nach Grenzsituationen, brachte Menschen zum Sprechen, Körper an das Ende der Kraft, Sinne zum Toben. Es erinnert an ein Versuchsfeld in engem Raum, an Gefangenschaft, Befangenheit. Aus der Ausweglosigkeit führten ihn neue Bedeutungszusammenhänge durch Schnitt-Stellen,
The Grenzsituationen or "limit situations" of which Ms. Brinkmann writes are, of course, brought into being by the establishment of boundaries (again, "Grenzen"): limits on time, and so movement, in the author's practice. What this practice allows Brinkmann to achieve is the Heraclitean insight, "Zeit heißt doch Bewegung," which echoes this equation of movement and process I propose (EK 13). Through the psychogeography, time is measured in periods of sustained motion, reflecting a deeper truth about experience and the temporality upon which it depends. Time is generally treated in quantum mechanics as having a direction: the arrow is directed from past to present toward future. With the passage of time or a body through space, change in perceptual stimuli is inevitable and is one of the ways in which the human body registers time's passing (Reichenbach 56). The cut becomes means to register on the two-dimensional page movement and the passage of time; transition between collage elements becomes a marker of the experienced time of the psychogeographic exercise.

The "limit situations" of Brinkmann's kinetic experience are metaphorized in the “cutting together” of the collage's surface, which is its limit. The page in this way comes to represent the durational limit of the walk. Time is represented in the montage works as filled pages; the collaged pages are as much diary entries faithful to the day's perceptions as those chronologically dated and presented conventionally. Cut-up technique allows Brinkmann to register the continuous reconstellating of percepts and affects experienced through motion, through process. The surface of

Brinkman’s collage itself can then be read as a boundary—a skin—at which elements touch, are folded onto one another, or cut from each other. These elements, which are notations of discrete perceptual events, produce new knowledge and affect in their combination on the page: new two-dimensional Grenzsituationen are generated from those experienced in three dimensions.

The above quote from Ms. Brinkmann also emphasizes the experimental nature of her husband's endeavor, analogizing his practice of constructing "limit situations" to the creation of a "Versuchsfeld" ("experimental field") that more closely resembles a prison or a labyrinth. The hopelessness of these situations, their Auswegslosigkeit, is overcome by the forces of the cut and of movement. Brinkmann constructs these Grenzsituationen so as to defy their bounds by these means—for as we will see, the generativity of limits ultimately rests in their transgression. Brinkmann describes in Erkundungen what will occur if one does not endeavor to transgress his limits. Discussing "[d]as einige, tatsächlich ernsthaft und dringende Problem, das heute so rasch wie möglich gelöst werden muß"—namely the daily inscription of the human body "auf allen Körperebenen" by a media-generated "Angst" that cycles around the “Reiz-Reaktions”-trifecta of "Geld-Sex-Tod"—he notes "[d]as ist die Grenze, die überschritten werden muß, in jedem Augenblick, an jeder Stelle, wenn jeder nicht vor seiner eigenen Grenzen liegenbleiben will und dort vergammeln will" (EK 131). Movement, instead of an immobilized "liegenbleiben" and rotting away within one's own limit, is prescribed as antidote.

As the historical avant-garde recognized, the movement and the cut have the power to create "neue Bedeutungszusammenhänge," reconstellating elements of what at first seems an inescapable Immergleiche until these elements in concert signify
something new, outside the established control of linguistic convention. The reconstellation of fragments offers "eine Möglichkeit […], dem Zwang, jede Einzelheit, jedes Wort, jeden Satz hintereinander zu lesen, und damit auch logische Abfolgen zu machen, wenigstens für einen Moment nicht zu folgen" (WW 263). The resulting collage is Brinkmann's navigation of the “elektrisches Versuchslabyrinth”: through a score that limits his motion, he appropriates what he encounters during the experiment and organizes this material to preserve the associated sensations, developing an affective and bodily knowledge of space through collage practice. This poetics, rather than reducing language to sonorous fragments, takes prosaic and everyday expression seriously as poetic material, thus forming a countermodel to earlier avant-garde practices that focus on musicality or a contrived asyntacticality for semiotic disruption. It represents a complex transformation of previous collage aesthetics, resulting in a procedural model that understands the field notes/poem/collage as the record of a process. While Brinkmann is not the originator of this transformation, in its dual stages, his program is first to incorporate the body in such a committed fashion. Movement itself is the first process, with its chance encounters with perceptual stimuli; the collage then registers its own procedure of composition.

A concept important to this transformation is that of "event." Deleuze asks in The Fold, "What are the conditions that make an event possible? Events are produced in a chaos, in a chaotic multiplicity, but only under conditions that a sort of screen intervenes." By screen, we may understand a surface onto which something is

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112 Again, this transformation to a procedural model begins with writers of the Black Mountain College and the first-generation New York School.
projected, but also, more significantly, some kind of agency that sifts through this chaos, screening or bounding what is received as stimuli by a body. Deleuze continues, "Chaos does not exist; it is an abstraction because it is inseparable from a screen that makes something—something rather than nothing—emerge from it" (86). Deleuze’s screen is a means of limiting, of singling out something from nothing. Limits or bounds, placed by an individual, act generatively to create something out of a chaos of perceptions, and the result is an event.

Brecht and Young co-opted the word 'event' to denote an emerging score form, one that allowed a "focused, discrete structure—a concept or an event" to develop from the chaos of everyday experience (Kotz 72). Brecht explains this appropriation by noting that "the word 'event' seemed closer to describing the total, multi-sensory experience I was interested in" (Poulin 250). The event used in this sense encloses the entirety of perceptual experience in a given duration; it is the "everything that happens," as Brecht puts it when acknowledging Cage's influence on his own work (Ross 196). In Brecht's endeavors, "the event form works like a little device for cutting into the perceptual flow of this 'everything that happens'" (Kotz 78).

Brinkmann's practice of the psychogeographic score relies on this same cutting device. It is a sampling: a meted dipping into a flow of perceptual information to isolate a parcel of experience. This indexical dimension of the endeavor points out the archival action of the work, whose materials are in part dated and ordered in diaristic

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113 Cage's 4'33" is the first instance in which music is structured by lengths of time rather than by a harmonic system. It is paradigmatic for this technique of presenting time as a container, an empty frame that can hold whatever events or sounds that might happen during its course. Brecht's own "each event comprises all occurrences within its duration," the performance note accompanying Three Telephone Events (1961), thus inscribes his work in an explicitly Cagean framework.
While Brinkmann's development of the technique does not produce imperative texts like Brecht's event scores, they do generate happenings that can be variably repeated and not just by the author. Moreover, their similarity extends to their intent to bring everyday occurrences into evidence, ones that otherwise pass unnoticed. Discussing readymade aesthetics, George Maciunas notes that Duchamp's concern was with readymade objects; Cage's, with readymade sounds, and Brecht's, with readymade actions, like flipping a light switch (Miller 185). Brinkmann's concern is with a cutting together ("neu Zusammenschneiden") of a multiplicity of readymade objects, sounds, actions—all registered as sensation. His readymade is the whole of perception. The transfer of this aesthetic strategy from the fabricated object to temporal perception, like Brecht's, proceeds via Cage in its reliance on the bounded duration of the event and is accomplished through language. While Brinkmann also includes images in the collage works, it is language that allows him to mediate not only objects, but actions, interiority and haptic experience. This apprehension of the event in language results in a fragment excised from a larger whole of perceptual experience. Again, the resulting visual artifact can be considered a "snapshot" not only of this perceptual fragment, but also of a textual procedure, as an instantaneous

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114 One could ask then, how does Brinkmann reconstellate found materials whose place in the work would seem to be dictated by its position in a fixed temporal order? How does the author determine the amount of freedom he allows himself in the collage's composition? Some evidence supports the idea that Brinkmann again uses a Cagean durational limit: print media clippings are collected and dated so as to be used alongside writing dating within a set, though arbitrary time limit. This is speculation based on an interview conducted in February 2011 with Mark Terrill, Brinkmann's English-language translator. While working with director Harald Bergmann on the film Brinkmanns Zorn (2005), Terrill briefly had access to some of the compositional materials from the collage volume Erkundungen which Maleen Brinkmann had provided to Bergmann for use in the film. Clippings and other found materials were ordered by date of collection and a comparison with the published work would indicate the limit schema above. At present, there is no access to the materials that would comprise Brinkmann’s literary archive and my attempts to correspond with their guardian, Maleen Brinkmann, have been unsuccessful.
recording of language made possible by the typewriter. This language’s reference is often not as much to the sentence with its narrative and linear structure as to the gridlike two-dimensionality of the newspaper, ad, ticket, poster or map, with their discrete textual groupings arranged on the page. In an explicit appropriation of newsprint form necessary to Burroughs’ fold in technique, many typewritten sections, particularly in *Erkundungen* and *Schnitte*, are columnal.

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Fig 3.2 (EK 114-115)

As noted elsewhere, this aesthetic necessitates hyphenations and makes not only the writer’s task of typing, but also the reader’s task of digesting the material considerably
more difficult, as the gestalt process of reading individual signifiers is interrupted. The uncorrected typoscript with its handwritten amendments and this adherence to the margins of the narrow line are a constant reminder of the sensuous labor involved in generating the work. The layout of images accompanying such columns convey their hand-made character as well, in the less-than-plumb lines of the cuts and their sometimes skewed placement on the page. Process and the kinetic energy required for its execution are made evident in all of these gestures.

Further, the energy required to impose limits and so act as a screen—one that cuts something out of the nothing of perceptual chaos—registers as a splenetic exhaustion in the text. Brinkmann is regularly shoved up against his own subjective limits within the duration of his Raumerkundungen: his tolerance for the noise, smells, sights and claustrophobia of his urban present, for the visual and auditory media barrage presented on all surfaces, is regularly exceeded, inducing panic and rage. This provokes a series of questions that interrogate the conditions producing this "[v]on Furcht zerfetztes Bewußtsein," a modern consciousness harried by a fearmongering media apparatus, whose most effective images Brinkmann abbreviates as the unholy trinity "Geld-Sex-Tod" (EK 130). These questions take a multiplicity of forms, of which the following are more or less representative: concerning money, "arbeiten, wofür? Zu welchem Ziel????"; sex, "Frauen??"; death, "Kann man, ich, leben?" (EK 241, 113, S 127). The occasional combinatory formulation also appears: "Job=Staat=Steuern für was=Fragen=Ohne Antwort=Tod=Leben????????" (240)

The fear these three themes inspire, "[die] Angst, die im menschlichen Körper und den Körperreaktionen versteinert ist," is, as quoted above, the "Grenze" or boundary Brinkmann identifies as most important to overcome in the late-twentieth-
century present (EK 131). This requires investigation of such an inscribed, penetrated body's limits, and it is this chapter's aim to demonstrate that Brinkmann's investigation of the present's surface in the creation of collage is the scored (and so delimited) exploration of the body's limits, those of subjectivity, and those of language and literature by extension.

Georges Bataille offers the following perspective on the potential, not-yet-kinetic energy contained within limits:

There is always some limit which the individual accepts. He identifies this limit with himself. Horror seizes him at the thought that this limit may cease to be. But we are wrong to take this limit and the individual’s acceptance of it seriously. The limit is only there to be overreached. Fear and horror are not the real and final reaction; on the contrary, they are a temptation to overstep the bounds. (144)

The limit calls for “overstep[ping]” or “overreach[ing]”—transgression’s figuration is spatial, kinetic and assumes a body with feet and hands with which to step and reach. The body becomes a desiring body, a body ‘tempted’ to motion, when a limit is set before it. In this understanding, desire demands limit: it can be thought as the urge to exceed limit, but a limit that is not defined by lack. To rehearse the theory of desire presented in Deleuze and Guattari’s Anti-Oedipus, desire does not lack and is not lack, but is instead productivity: “Desire does not lack anything; it does not lack its object. It is, rather, the subject that is missing in desire, or desire that lacks a fixed subject; there is no fixed subject unless there is repression. Desire and its object are one and the same thing” (26). The subject’s own limits (self-imposed or otherwise) draw him to the object, and desire is that drawing power, a power that moves the subject in
response to these limits. When the individual denies desire and refuses to be drawn outside herself, this repression preserves a “fixed” subjectivity, as the subject is constituted by a refusal of the outside, by its adherence to the limits it sets. Desire in this model is positive, a generative force that moves and creates in response to limits, and it corresponds well to the generativity of the Cagean score. As we have seen, it functions by setting limits, framing durations and placing constraints, which are then overstepped or transformed through translation and/or performative interpretation. Limits do not engender powerlessness, but instead draw us to and beyond them. Their rupture, however, has consequences.

Brinkmann’s full understanding of the desubjectivizing properties of desire came at the close of the sixties, a revelation that ultimately brought about his break with Pop and publishing. After 1970, he published only the radio plays out of material necessity until the poetry collection Westwärts 1 & 2, which appeared shortly before his untimely death in 1975. From 1971 onward, he was occupied by the Raumerkundungen and their notation in the posthumously published collage books.

For the purposes of examining Brinkmann’s experience of the break, let us rewind a few years to 1968, when he was heralded as the "Chefpiilot der Pop-Lyrik" (Asche 15). At this time, he was engaged in the practice of radical openness to his sensory present limned above: the "involvement" that aimed at a temporary desubjectivization. Predicated on the subject's surrender of his/her body to its immediate environmental stimuli, the activity represented a bid to recover an imagined wholeness lost to the technologized world. By the late sixties, environmental stimuli were constitutive of a reality entirely penetrated by commodity fetishism. This secondary reality, dominated by images and sound bites that appear in unrelenting
and discontinuous succession, creates in the subject a “Bilderhäufung” in which “der bildhafter Alltag und alltägliches Bild nicht mehr voneinander geschieden sind” (“Der Film” 243, Groß 42). Involvement required the total affirmation of this experience, which left an indelible mark on the perceptory apparatus, as the rapid accumulation of images creates a new, unmediated sensation of reality. The utopic instant of the practice occurs in the momentary “happiness” produced by this novel relation between subject and object, one that purportedly transcends any marginal “Trosterfahrung” (“Silverscreen” 267). The subject is conceived as ecstatic, unbounded, and ultimately destined to overcome its enslavement to second nature; the poetic self is meant to influence reality and not the reverse.

Thomas Groß notes that Adorno’s apodictic insight, “[d]ie Autorität des Neuen ist die des geschichtlich Unausweichlichen” applies very well to the position Brinkmann espoused in the essays of the late sixties; there he insists on a historical newness that no one can escape (Ästhetische Theorie as quoted in Groß 45). Its embrace, rather than its rejection, is the practice of involvement outlined above that characterized the new sensibility of the time. This newness is in fact the reality of a world in which the sensuous present has become eternal; specificity and uniqueness of objects and moments has evaporated, and consequently, meaning can no longer be attached to such things—the replacement of Sinn durch Sinnlichkeit. Things are merely there, their facticity undeniable. To engage the familiar argument concerning postmodernity, it is at this stage in western society's development that things take on a life of their own, behaving more like subjects than objects. Brinkmann perceives this early on; ascribing movement to commodity images, he imagines “ein langer Zug von Bildern, die vor dem Produkt, für das sie werben, ihre Eigenbewegung durch gesetzt
haben” ("Film" 225). At this stage, it is this “life” of things themselves that makes the practice of literature in the conventional sense obsolete:

[Der 'Tod' der Literatur kann bloß durch Literatur selber erfolgen, indem Geschriebenes sich nicht mehr dem zuordnet. Also: aufhören über ‘Literatur’ zu reden...Literatur, Literatur...als ob es noch darum ginge. Ich blicke auf die grüne Kiste, die in der Ecke steht, Ralf-Rainer kommt herein und sagt: es sind die Dinge, die sich bewegen [...] (Film 236-7)

This promise of objects that behave like subjects extends to the written word itself. Here Brinkmann sees possibilities for a radicalized literature of “Leben” and “Lebendigkeit”; a literature in which words are no longer words on paper, but words “in life,” in accordance with the views of one of his late-sixties heroes, Leslie Fiedler. In allowing the commodified world of signs total access to the senses and consciousness, however, the subject opens itself to dissolution. In this new relation, objects do not merely call to a subject in order to reveal a marvelousness in their very banality; inevitably, the coercive force they radiate penetrates the subject. In Brinkmann’s words, “totale Aufmerksamkeit” is demanded; the momentary elation of involvement and the bondage of the senses become one and the same (RB 376). This fragmentation of the subject was welcomed for its ability to break down an instrumental, abstractive and bourgeois mode of sensory perception. At the time, Brinkmann was able to think this aesthetic praxis as an admirable, emulable—though perhaps doomed—heroism. His poet idol, Frank O’Hara, for instance is admired because “er riskiere in seinen Gedichten alles”—and by “alles,” Brinkmann means the negation of his subjectivity (Film 213).
The full recognition of this “Kehrseite” of involvement—construed negatively only after its failure to transform society—provoked Brinkmann’s break with the sixties poetics (Herrman 122). Its particular effects on the body reveal their ultimate consequence: in surrendering the ability to create distance between sensuous self and object, the opposition between body and intellect is resolved; however, this allows stimuli, without being diverted and processed in thought, to inscribe themselves directly on the body.

Brinkmann’s response to the revelations of ’68–’70 is to exchange this destructive dialectic for the psychogeographic practice of the Raumerkundungen. It is the immediacy tactile sense modality that is credited for penetrating the phantasmagoria of an urban present: “ich war erst 33 jahre auf diesem Planeten & tastete mich durch die gespenstershow::/” (S 182). The basis for spatial reconnaissance is again “der Körper, diese lebendige Maschine” (RB 43).

But in this approach, rather than affirming a boundless openness to the senses, he maximizes his adherence to limits in recognition of their generative and protective powers. Instead of the unquestioning affirmation of the sensory experience of late 20th-century material culture that characterized the work of the late sixties, an investment and an investigation is made in(to) boundaries: the limits between self and non-self, between extero- and interoceptive perception, between body and language. The emphasis on limit returns me to my proposition that attention to the skin, as a bound between inside and outside, and its attendant tactile sense modalities underwrite the project. For the reader, the collage works are not an exercise in decipherment; one “feels” meaning in the text sooner than one cognizes it. It is a text in which, as Jean-Luc Nancy argues, “one has to understand reading as something
other than decipherment. Rather as touching, as being touched. Writing, reading: 
matters of tact” ("Corpus" 198). It is in this way that critique, Kritik—from krinein, to 
separate, to create bounds between—is reborn in the poet’s practice after 1970. The 
body is opened to cultural inscription for a bounded time and then closed again by 
entry into the Sinnesentzugskammer. Here these inscriptions on the body and its 
prostheses (the Instamatic, as well as audio- and videotape) by a wholly commodified 
urban landscape will be captured by the technology of the typewriter in tandem with 
the Xacto-knife. This attempted exorcism gets at the root of what I have discussed 
thus far and what I believe to be Brinkmann’s investigative aim for the late works: the 
boundary between body and language, the nexus of which is desire. The limit between 
them calls for Bataille’s overstepping, overreaching; post-1970, Brinkmann must 
retreat from a utopic vision of embodied “lebendige Wörter” to find critical ground on 
which to negotiate the effects of language and its abstractions on the body—and to 
find a means to “speak” back to language with that body. I have begun to make a case 
that haptic sense modalities play a large role in this endeavor, but the desideratum of 
the following chapter is to come to a more satisfying understanding of this relation as 
it is registered by the collage works.

Thus far, I have identified R. D. Brinkmann’s collage works as investigations of 
limit, insofar as the author 1) uses a Cagean notational method that depends on the 
imposition of a durational bound that acts as a neutral container for experience, 2) 
chooses the collage form to register time and movement, and 3) attempts to register 
the entirety of his perception. This procedural model, in its examination of limits, 
allows the author to investigate subjectivity through the body. His project is, unlike 
Cage’s, not directed at achieving an "aesthetic of indifference" in which the author's
subjectivity is programmed out of the work via chance operations or, as in conceptual art, banned in the cultivation of an attitude of neutrality—Brinkmann's montage works are instead marked by a "relentless subjectivity" fused to a score practice to which, in its original conception, the insistence on a subject position is wholly alien (Jennings 197). He is not simply "using [his] body as a piece of material and manipulating it," as Bruce Naumann has said of some of his works; Brinkmann's is an integrated approach that does not reduce the body to mere matter to be directed in experiment by a distinct "I" (Naumann as qtd in Jennings 195). His registrations of sensory experience are precisely not deadpan reports of his physical state; post-1970, it is such a dislocation of the physical and psychological aspects of his personhood that he endeavors to avoid. The individual body is reinvested with the ability to produce knowledge, to "understand" the present in a manner beyond cognition, before language. The investigation is aimed at the difficult task of producing (and documenting the production of) a subjectivity not based in language.
Chapter 4

The word-film: Haptic Visualities, Haptic Auralities

The life of a village is a narrative . . . In the city the visual impressions succeed each other, overlap, overcross, they are cinematographic.

—Ezra Pound, 1922

With even greater range and significance than war or the automobile (albeit on a continuum with both), as the predominantly visual mediation of material relations, cinema ceaselessly coordinates global economic forces with the extremely local (meaning regional, but also interior to particular individuals) productions of affect, trajectories of desire, and proprioception.


The perception of texture carries with it a certain assumptive knowledge of its tactile qualities and material history. “More immediately than other perceptual modalities, the sense of touch makes nonsense out of any dualistic understanding of agency and passivity; to touch is always already to reach out, to fondle, to heft, to tap, or to enfold, and always also to understand other people or natural forces as having effectually done so before oneself, if only in the making of the textured object” (Sedgewick 14). The force and appeal of the sense of touch for Rolf Dieter Brinkmann lies in part in this leveling of a subject/object duality, insofar as haptic experience provides a site at which Aristotle’s excluded middle cannot reasonably go excluded. Brinkmann’s own denunciations of the terms that allow us to neatly position subject against object, the feeler against the felt, again bring him in line with contemporary thinkers of affect. There is a shared recognition of a missing term: the intensity or

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115 See Chapter 3, p. 64, footnote 53.
force that conjoins actor and acted-upon, which both determines and composes their relation. Brian Massumi reformulates this notion in Spinozan terms:

Spinoza’s ethics in the philosophy of becoming-active, in parallel, of mind and body, from an origin in passion, in impingement, in so pure and productive a receptivity that it can only be conceived as a third state, an excluded middle, prior to the distinction between activity and passivity: affect. (32)

It is the aim of this chapter to demonstrate that Brinkmann’s struggle to illuminate the contours of this third state of intensities for himself and his reader leads him to the filmically inflected writing practice of the early ‘70s. These specifically filmic approaches to the registration of experience are mobilized to evoke intensities in the reader approaching filmic shock, that “taktische Qualität”116 of the artwork turned “Geschoß”— the ballistic or projectile of Benjamin’s Kunstwerk essay. Despite the contemporary saturation of space both public and private with moving images, the insight that film’s presentation of sensuous event in visual and auditory images, “stoßweise auf den Beschauer eindringen,” holds true today: film’s conventions of representation have evolved to keep pace with increases in the sensorium’s shock threshold, and the medium thus continues to boast the capacity to penetrate the viewer’s sphere of experience to engender tactile and kinetic sensations (“Kunstwerk” 463). Literature, however, maintains an abiding power over cinema, insofar as it can preserve certain forms of marginalized sensation as images, as we shall see.

116 I am using Michael W. Jenning’s translation of the first version of “Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit” (Grey Room 39 (Spring 2010): 11-37) as a supplement to the versions available in the Gesammelte Schriften.
Describing the tactile quality at the center of the optical experience of film and its subsequent “Chockwirkung,” Benjamin, following Eisenstein, identifies montage as the source of filmic shock:

Aus einem lockenden Augenschein oder einem überredenden Klanggebilde wurde das Kunstwerk bei den Dadaisten zu einem Geschoß. Es stieß dem Betrachter zu. Es gewann eine taktische Qualität. Damit hat es die Nachfrage nach dem Film begünstigt, dessen ablenkendes Element ebenfalls in erster Linie ein taktisches ist, nämlich auf dem Wechsel der Schauplätze und Einstellungen beruht, welche stoßweise auf den Beschauer eindringen. Man vergleiche die Leinwand, auf der der Film abrollt, mit der Leinwand, auf der sich das Gemälde befindet. Das letztere lädt den Betrachter zur Kontemplation ein; vor ihm kann er sich seinem Assoziationsablauf überlassen. Vor der Filmaufnahme kann er das nicht. Kaum hat er sie ins Auge gefaßt, so hat sie sich schon verändert. Sie kann nicht fixiert werden. (463-464)

The shifts of “Schauplätze und Einstellung” generate the movement that denies the viewer the deep attention of contemplation and engenders instead the tactiley inflected mode of cognition “Rezeption in der Zerstreuung.”117 Gilles Deleuze makes a relevant distinction between cinema and painting in his second book on film: because pictorial images are “immobile in themselves [...] it is the mind which has to ‘make’

117 While Benjamin imagined a critical judgment accompanying reception in distraction, this form of attention, in the rapid movement of its shifts of focus, today resembles the cognitive mode Jonathan Crary designates as “permanent low-level attentiveness” which clearly has not proven to facilitate critical awareness (Suspensions 77). More recently termed “hyper attention” (opposed to “deep attention”) by Katherine Hayles, this mode is characterized by “switching focus rapidly among different tasks, preferring multiple information streams, seeking a high level of stimulation”—terms satisfied by the contemporary haptic experiences of film, gaming, and Internet navigation (187).
movement. [...] It is only when movement becomes automatic [in cinema] that the artistic essence of the image is realized: *producing a shock to thought, communicating vibrations to the cortex, touching the nervous and cerebral system directly*” (Time-Image 156).¹¹⁸ Filmic shock depends for its haptic effects on an automated movement. Owing to this particularly haptic exertion of force upon the viewer or reader, Brinkmann identifies filmic techniques of registration as a means to investigate the interplay of forces (affect), prior to the distinction between activity and passivity, at work in the aesthetic regime.

While Brinkmann agrees with Deleuze that film cannot help but fail to realize the revolutionary potential its great pioneers imagined (“if an art necessarily imposed the shock or vibration, the world would have changed long ago, and men would have been thinking for a long time”), he recognizes in filmic strategies of representation not only the opportunity to broaden the reigning aesthetic boundaries laid down for literature in the post-war German context, as outlined in the essay “Der Film in Worten.” Rather, he is determined that filmic shock, “that other violence of a movement-image developing its vibrations in a moving sequence that embeds itself within us,” can be successfully appropriated and adapted to language (Deleuze, Time-

¹¹⁸ Deleuze continues, “Because the cinematographic image itself ‘makes’ movement, because it makes what the other arts are restricted to demanding (or to saying), it brings together what is essential in the other arts; it inherits it, it is as it were the directions for use of the other images, it converts into potential what was only possibility. *Automatic movement* gives rise to a *spiritual automaton* in us, which reacts in turn on movement. The spiritual automaton no longer designates [...] the logical or abstract possibility of formally deducing thoughts from each other, but the circuit into which they enter with the movement-image, the shared power of what forces thinking and what thinks under the shock [...] Heidegger said: ‘Man can think in the sense that he possesses the possibility to do so. This possibility alone, however, is no guarantee to us that we are capable of thinking.’ It is this capacity, this power, and not the simple logical possibility, that cinema claims to give us in communicating the shock. It is as if cinema were telling us: with me, with the movement-image, you can’t escape the shock which arouses the thinker in you. A subjective and collective automaton for an automatic movement: the art of the ‘masses’” (Time-Image 156-157).
The conviction of the post-1970 period is that the montage techniques of the collage works and radio plays can successfully generate the force-effects that would make sensible the medial conditioning of the sensorium (157).

These effects are figured as violent shoves in the Kunstwerk essay. Tobias Wilke writing on “tacti(c)ality” notes,

Indeed, for Benjamin, filmic shock effects arise precisely at the point where filmic stimuli effectively transcend the category of purely optical impressions—conceived as impressions generated and received from a distance—by penetrating into the experiential space of the viewer. The spectator then feels this sudden “proximity” as a shot or a shove, and in this perfectly concrete sense the cinematic montage can be said to bring about a “regrouping of apperception” [Umgruppierung der Apperzeption]. By inscribing a tactile element into the heart of the optical sphere, the experience of film establishes an entirely new perceptual constellation. (47)

As I have argued in Chapters 1 and 2, the psychogeographic, language-skeptical project under discussion attempts to “regroup” and thus recuperate sensuous experience beyond the impoverished affective economy of the printed text. The resulting art object penetrates the experiential space of the viewer using techniques of linguistic and visual repetition and permutation, as well as montage, in order to instantiate a broad media critique. It is an art equally text- and image-based and its transmedial adaptation of filmic techniques of representation allows the author to introduce shocks of divergent orders by drawing on these techniques’ efficacy in

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119 See pp. 37-38 of this chapter for an explanation of Wilke’s coinage.
rendering haptic sensation and affect, while defamiliarizing the experiences of both cinema and reading. The reading/viewing body is thus deterritorialized in the experiential gap between film and word-film.\(^\text{120}\)

Such a poetics exploits the visual and aural haptics of film to achieve the reception aesthetic analyzed in Chapter 2—the evocation of affect. The question I contend Brinkmann is concerned to answer via the psychogeographic or otherwise experimental writing praxes and the word-films they produce—namely, how can a body be situated in space, given deepening conditions of alienation—is necessarily bound up with the question of how to assimilate and register haptic experience, insofar as it is a privileged site for the investigation of affect. Considering that it provides us with our most basic sense of embodiment, haptic experience is central to a project of awakening and entraining the sensorium to the experience of somatic or interoceptive perception. I argue that this form of touch—the body touching upon itself as proprioception, kinaesthesia, and the vestibular sense—grounds Brinkmann’s investigations of the interplay of forces enacted by and acting upon a body.

A second aim of this chapter is thus to delineate the role and import of haptic sense perception for these investigations of affect as they appear in the author’s psychogeographic activity and post-1970 production. On dérive, it is the body’s limit of the skin that forms the physical boundary that environmental stimuli compromise. The psychogeographer heads into the field with the intent to be touched—indeed, “broken into” in Baudelaire’s terms—at this limit by the world encountered. The

\(^{120}\) I will return to the author’s adaptation of filmic techniques of representation presently to explicate the differing approaches to this transmedial tactic of writing, pre- and post-1970. See Jan Röhnert and Stephanie Schmitt, who provide the most comprehensive analyses of the approach.
breach in Brinkmann’s case, the result of a purportedly automated vision and hearing,\textsuperscript{121} is intended to enable an unmediated perception, an impossible access to the raw data of experience without the filter of second nature. With the current research available, we know that touch, as well as our other senses, is always already mediated.\textsuperscript{122} Brinkmann’s misconception aside, haptic experience is a productive site to examine the interpenetrative force relations between the individual and a given spatio-temporal context; that is, for the development of a haptic aesthetics. Touching and being touched can create a sense of identity with objects: if “[t]ouch gives us the ‘insides’ of things,” this idea of an occult interiority accessible via touch moves beyond the notion of trespassing the physical boundary of the skin and begins to function as a figure for movement into the subject’s interiority, as evidenced by “I’m touched” as a metaphor for the evocation of affect (Herring 214).

\textsuperscript{121} I refer to Brinkmann’s claim to see as a camera, the neo-avantgarde echo of Dziga Vertov’s 1923 claim to an automated vision: “I am a mechanical eye. I, a machine, show you the world as only I can see it. Now and forever, I free myself from human immobility, I am in constant motion, I draw near, then far away from objects, I crawl under, I climb onto them [...] I plunge and soar together with plunging and soaring bodies. Now I, a camera, fling myself along their resultant maneuvering in the chaos of movement, recording movement, starting with movement of the most complex combinations” (Kino-Eye 17).

\textsuperscript{122} By this I mean that the psycho-physiological definition of touch derived under laboratory conditions is not identical with our lived experience of it. Touch works as a broad sensory modality using an array of differing sensory receptors embedded in the cutaneous and subcutaneous flesh. As embedded, this flesh necessarily mediates between all forms of stimuli and receptors. From a psycho-physiological view, perception of temperature (thermoreceptors), pain (nocireceptors), position (proprioceptors), and pressure (mechanoreceptors) all fall under the umbrella of touch. If the data of touch issue from such disparate organs, is touch a single sense or rather the “felt coherence of a combination of various data unevenly distributed throughout the skin and flesh”? (Paterson, “Introduction” 130) Aristotle posed this question in his discussion of touch in De Anima, when he noted that while sound is the object of hearing, and light that of sight, it is difficult to discern the “single underlying thing common to touch” (422b). Contemporary psychology and physiology have come to the same conclusion: in the case of touch, there is no one-to-one correspondence between a medium and a single sensory organ. “Touch” instead describes the “totality of the experiences of temperature, pain, pressure, position, and texture” (Paterson 132).
A practice that examines the limits of sensation, bringing “der Körper an das Ende der Kraft, Sinne zum Toben,” must arrive at an awareness of this state of intensities that levels the distinction between activity and passivity (M. Brinkmann, Wörter unpaginated). It is a crucial step in producing a sense of space and place, determined by an individual body’s singular interactions with its environs and itself, the registration of which I have referred to as Brinkmann’s aesthetic mapping. Merleau-Ponty’s discussion of reflexive touch, of one hand touching the other, illustrates in greater depth the fluidity of agency and passivity involved in haptic experience:

[T]he two hands are never touched and touching at the same time with respect to each other. When I press my hands together, it is not a matter of two sensations felt together as one perceives two objects placed side by side, but of an ambiguous arrangement in which the two hands can alternate in the role of “touching” and “touched.” What was meant by talking about “double sensations” is that, in passing from one role to the other, I can recognize the hand touched as the same one that will in a moment be touching.

(Phenomenology 93)

The experiment reveals a significant phenomenological reality: the actively touching hand does indeed lose some degree of localized sensation as its “proprioceptively felt qualities recede” (Paterson, Senses 31). In the last sentence of the citation, Merleau-Ponty recognizes an anticipative orientation in the fluid shift between “active” and “passive” hands, that the “touched [...] will in a moment be touching.” These ideas are refined in the unfinished The Visible and the Invisible (1968) to include a kinaesthetic
dimension of touch by which we become tangible beings, for ourselves and for other bodies, and moves away from the binary activity-passivity:

This can happen only if my hand, which is felt from within, is also accessible from without, itself tangible, for my other hand, for example, if it takes its place among the things it touches, is in a sense one of them, opens finally upon a tangible being of which it is also a part. Through this crisscrossing within it of the touching and the tangible, its own movements incorporate themselves into the universe they interrogate, are recorded on the same map as it; the two systems are applied upon one another, as the two halves of an orange. (133)

Brinkmann’s interest in haptic experience is partly motivated by the described action of taking one’s place in the world as a tangible being, with the recognition that one affects and is affected by a greater universe of embodied being. Recognition of this simultaneity is imagined to produce a state of reduced mediation and alienation. He defines this as a life in which causal relations no longer determine being, one in which a fluid and engaged attention is substituted for the assumptions of causality: “ich hasse ein Leben, das nach kausalen Verknüpfungen vonstatten geht: schmierige gedankliche Nützlichkeit – doch das Gegenteil ist nicht Schlamperei, es ist bemühte Aufmerksamkeit” (RB 326). This “bemühte Aufmerksamkeit,” in contrast to Crary’s “low-level attentiveness” or Hayles’ hyperattention,123 is a practiced deep focus that constitutes the core of the psychogeographic practice. It is the mode of comportment the author seeks to foster in the reader of his texts by adapting the aesthetics

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123 Crary and Hayles’ terms indicate modes of attention observed in contemporary subjects; however, incipient forms of the divided attention and short periods of focus are described by Brinkmann throughout the post-1970 works.
associated with the kinaesthetic and tactile experience of cinema to his two-dimensional works.

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Writing in 1974, the author refers to himself as “wohl ein visueller Typ,”\(^\text{124}\) emphasizing that visual stimuli call forth sensation and affect powerfully for him (BH 126). It is manifest in his use of personal and found photography, his experiments with 8mm and Super 8, and his statements regarding his entrained sensorium’s ability to see as a camera.\(^\text{125}\) This has provoked a body of scholarship focused on the visual, i.e. filmic and photographic, aspects of his writing practice. What has not been adequately illuminated, however, is the motivation and significance of his shift from a photographic method of writing pre-1970 to a writing that self-consciously adapts specifically cinematic techniques of registration post-1970.\(^\text{126}\)

\(^{124}\) The quote, however, continues, “obwohl ich neuerdings eine mir mal manchmal auf die Nerven gehende Gehörempfindlichkeit bei mir feststelle, gegenüber dem Reden, was jemand sagt, wie er es sagt usw, also auf Sprache reagiere […]” (BH 126). Throughout the collage books, the author undermines his more overt ocularcentric statements, offering in synaesthetic registrations of various sense modalities an integrated and dehierarchized conception of the senses.

\(^{125}\) But as I just noted, the author simultaneously claims an equivalent precision for his other sense modalities in the following example, olfactory and haptic perception: “Manchmal dachte ich, daß meine guten scharfen Augen mir nur hinderlich waren beim Umherblicken, denn jede schäbige unbedeutende Einzelheit mußte ich auch sehen. Dasselbe ist mit den Gerüchen und dem Tastsinn” (RB 407). For scholarship focusing on the role of photography throughout Brinkmann’s oeuvre, see Thomas Steinaecker, *Literarische Foto-Texte. Zur Funktion der Fotografien bei Brinkmann, Kluge und Sebald* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2007); see also Martin Hubert’s excellent article on “Bildlichkeit” in *Keiner weiß mehr in Politisierung der Literatur – Ästhetisierung der Politik* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1992) pp. 253-261.

\(^{126}\) The later works also evince Brinkmann’s on-going engagement with photography; in both *Erkundungen* and *Rom, Blicke*, the author notes shooting hundreds of photos on his Instamatic. These images appear throughout the collages, and are presented most explicitly as photoessays in the pages opening and closing the poetry volume *Westwärts 1 & 2* and “Wie ich lebe und warum 1970/1974.” However, the “vertexten” of experience during this period that comprises the bulk of the work cannot be said to emulate photographic techniques of representation.
The scholarship, with notable exceptions, has neglected his work as a filmmaker, though his impassioned consumption of cinema is regularly mentioned. Brinkmann’s essays demonstrate an expert familiarity with the medium (noir, sci fi, and B-movies are particular favorites), its stars, and technical aspects of filmmaking. He shot the short films *Atomic Man*, *Tod* and *Portrait* in 1968 and 1969. In 1968 he also signed a contract with the WDR to produce a more commercial film project, “Der Abstieg,” a treatment of the “Geschichte eines Popsängers,” but the work was never finished (Späth, *Brinkmann* 117). A member of the Cologne experimental film group XSCREEN, he was exposed to a program of American experimental film that included work by Kenneth Anger, Stan Brakhage, Jonas Mekas, Gregory Makropoulos, Michael Snow, and Andy Warhol (Hein 122). The transmedial adaptation of specifically filmic gestures (e.g. zoom, slo-mo, montage, inserted stills) in his texts is widely and simply understood as a means “die bildliche and sinnliche Dimension der Literatur zu verstärken” in service of a reception aesthetic in which “[d]ie Erhöhung des Potentials der sinnlichen Anteilnahme des literarischen Rezipienten ist das Anliegen, das Brinkmann dazu veranlasst, sich an der Ästhetik des Films für die schriftstellerische Produktion zu orientieren” (Schmitt 167, 159). While not entirely without merit, analyses of Brinkmann’s intermedial practice tend to lump together the photographic and filmic strategies of representation in evidence, and stop of short of answering the question of what this “sinnliche Anteilnahme des literarischen Rezipienten” itself achieves in terms of literary value, beyond the attention to

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127 Jan Röhnert’s *Springende Gedanken und flackernde Bilder* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007) is the most comprehensive study of Brinkmann’s engagement with film. Of the possible reasons for this neglect, the fact that very little other than Harald Bergmann’s publication of a handful of the 8mm films in *Brinkmanns Zorn* have been made available to the wider public stands out.
subjective sensation prevalent in the literature of the New Subjectivity. The author recognizes the *moving* picture’s superior capacity to store and evoke specifically haptic sensation\textsuperscript{128}—the grounds for the perception of our embodiment—and elects for this reason to transmedially adapt its techniques to language. The written word remains the primary medium for an author who, like Benjamin, distrusts images alone and remains focused on text in an urban present oversaturated with the visual.

Pre-1970, Brinkmann’s poetry, while experimental, adheres to the poetic conventions of *mise en page* of the day: the page’s white space is preserved around blocks of text with returned line breaks. His poetry of the 1960s wages war on the loathed “Wort-Kult” primarily in language, but a language that assumes techniques of representation specific to photography. In composing these *Text-Fotos* or *Text-Bilder*,\textsuperscript{129} Brinkmann confines language to the concrete and sensuous to create largely static images. In the note to the volume “Die Piloten” of 1968, Brinkmann expresses his belief that the poem is “die geeignetste Form, spontan erfaßte Vorgänge und Bewegungen, eine nur in einem Augenblick sich deutlich zeigende Empfindlichkeit konkret als snap-shot festzuhalten” (*Standphotos* 185). In the poem “Einfaches Bild” from 1967 we encounter an image comprising static, purely visual percepts, and recalling William Carlos Williams’ “The Red Wheelbarrow” or Ezra Pound’s poetry in his brief Imagist period.\textsuperscript{130}

\begin{flushright}
Einfaches Bild
\end{flushright}

\textsuperscript{128} There is of course a temporal dynamism that photography can communicate to the viewer that reads as a kind of movement.

\textsuperscript{129} Thomas von Steinaecker’s terms.

\textsuperscript{130} Brinkmann began reading Pound in 1955 and acknowledges his continuing influence in 1974. “In the Metro,” likely the single most well-known Imagist poem, is referenced in the opening lines of Brinkmann’s “Fragment zu einigen populären Songs” written in 1974 (BH 116). He discovered Williams around 1963, and was captivated by the American author’s maxim “No ideas but in things” (BH 39).
Ein Mädchen
in
schwarzen
Strümpfen
schön, wie sie
herankommt
ohne Laufmaschen.
Ihr Schatten
auf
der Straße
ihr Schatten
an
der Mauer.
Schön, wie
sie
fortgeht
in schwarzen
Strümpfen
ohne
Laufmaschen
bis unter
den Rock.

This type of poem appears throughout the volumes of the ‘60s, titled simply “Bild” or some variation thereon, often focusing with voyeuristic intensity on female bodies. They are the most static and literal of the “snap-shots” of a photographic poetry that remains on the level of optical percepts. Despite the implied motion of her “herankomm[en]” and “fortgeh[en],” the poem’s attention to her clothing along with Brinkmann’s presentation of his poetry qua snapshots creates the impression that the woman’s observer is shooting a series of still photos as she walks the runway of the streetscape.
After a period of experimentation with 8mm and Super-8 film in the years 1967-1968 while editing the anthologies of Beat, Pop and New York School works, the poetry volumes from 1967 on feature increasingly filmic strategies of writing and engage Brinkmann’s cinephilia. Was fraglich ist wofür (1967) is the first publication to contain a poem titled “Film” rather than the recurrent “Bild.” “Film” records the author’s reaction to hearing of Polish actor Zbigniew Cybulski’s death:

Ich hatte
gerade
das Bett
aufgeschüttelt

und mir Kaffee
gemacht
als der
Sprecher im
Radio sagte
Zbigniew Cybulski
ist tot
als ob

ein heißer Tropfen
auf den Handrücken
fällt und

es tut nicht weh
während er
auf dem
Schutthaufen

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131 Many of these producers, and Frank O’Hara in particular, openly engaged with film as part of their writing praxes, a fact Brinkmann points out in the essays “Der Film in Worten” and “Die Lyrik Frank O’Haras.”
132 These are: Was ist fraglich wofür (1967), Godzilla (1968), Die Piloten (1968), Standphotos (1969), and Gras (1970).
134 Cybulski was compared to James Dean in the popular press of the time. Unlike Dean who was killed while driving his Porsche 550 Spyder, Cybulski died running for a train.
stirbt und
noch einmal
auf dem Breslauer
Bahnhof beim

Aufspringen auf den
fahrenden
D-Zug und

stürzt.

Unlike the poem “Einfaches Bild,” which dwells on a single image, we move
through the poem-scene in a series of shots. It begins with a person shaking out the
bed, then cuts to the speaker in the kitchen making coffee with the radio on. As the
announcement of the accident begins, we zoom onto (or cut to an extreme close-up of)
a drop of hot coffee falling and landing on the back of the person’s hand, an image of
intensely haptic visuality. By this, I mean the haptic affect evoked in the reader/viewer
observing steaming coffee, and then a close-up of this liquid touching, presumably
burning, the tender skin on the back of a hand. On the level of content, the poem
treats the media coverage of a film star’s death, while on the level of form, the author
deploys this close shot of the drop and the hand, an event which should cause pain.
With “als ob/ein heißer Tropfen/auf den Handrücken/fällt und/es tut nicht weh,” the
poem deftly demonstrates the shock and absorption—and thus the suspension of
embodied sensation—one experiences in receiving the first of the media’s
innumerable replays of a cinematically grisly death. The critical “noch einmal” of
“während er/auf dem Schutthaufen/stirbt und/noch einmal/auf dem
Breslauer/Bahnhof beim/Aufspringen auf den/fahrenden/D-Zug und/stürzt”
announces the certainty of a future saturation of the airwaves with the violent images
of Cybulski’s death.
The author’s note in Die Piloten (1968), which dedicates the volume to the memory of Frank O'Hara, makes the turn to the appropriation of these filmic techniques of registration on American models explicit. The piece closes

Ich gebe gerne zu, daß ich mich von der deutschsprachigen Lyrik nicht habe anregen lassen. Sie hat meinen Blick nur betrübt. Dankbar bin ich dagegen den Gedichten Frank O'Haras, die mir gezeigt haben, daß schlechthin alles, was man sieht und womit man sich beschäftigt, wenn man es nur genau genug sieht und direkt genug wiedergibt, ein Gedicht werden kann, auch wenn es sich um ein Mittagessen handelt. Zudem war O'Hara ein leidenschaftlicher Kinogänger, was mir in jedem Fall sympathisch ist. Ich widme deshalb den vorliegenden Gedichtband dem Andenken Frank O'Haras und dann all denen, die sich immer wieder von neuem gern auf den billigen Plätzen vor einer Leinwand zurücksinken lassen. Sie alle sind die Piloten, die der Titel meint. (Standphotos 187)

At this time—spring of 1968—Brinkmann was convinced of the possibilities for self-determination implied by the figure of the pilot, itself borrowed from William S. Burroughs, whose literary practice required he become a “cosmonaut of inner space” (“Future” 294). The following year, Brinkmann’s essay “Der Film in Worten” appeared. “Film” outlines the necessity for intermedial experimentation, the product of an open exchange between artistic disciplines observed in American experimental writing. Shortly thereafter, the failures of the student movement and practices of
‘involvement’ triggered Brinkmann’s break with publishing\textsuperscript{135} and the literary world. By his own account of the break, he found himself in a state of constant panic after apprehending the consequences of a synthetic reality. The panic manifests as a corporeal paralysis—a suspension of embodiment in which he is unable to attend to the sensuous present. Thus post-1970, his practice becomes one of maintaining attention ("bemühte Aufmerksamkeit") to the sensuous present, and therefore specifically to the register of haptic experience, in order to defend the organic functioning of his sensorium. It is at this point that the writing of experience can no longer be described as the transmedial adaptation of techniques of a still photography. Uns suited to the capture of the psychogeographies’ movement in which the body traverses space and encounters images sequentially (if chaotically), a photographic writing gives way to a fully filmic registration of the present. Because of film’s ability to engender physical shock, the haptic sensations belonging to psychogeographic activity are best registered in a language (language being the author’s declared primary medium) that adapts film’s techniques of registration.

Brinkmann’s neo-avantgarde appropriations of Situationist\textsuperscript{136} and montage techniques, and the 650 minutes of audio tape recordings produced for the WDF Autorenalltag series, evidence the author’s dependence on visual as well as non-visual recording technology for his aesthetic reconnaissances. What he refers to in his letters to Hartmut Schnell simply as “Bild” is a figure for the product of a process of

\textsuperscript{135} With the exclusion of the radio plays and a handful of essays, which were published out of material necessity.
\textsuperscript{136} Brinkmann’s dérive is Situationist rather than Surrealist; his routes are generated not by surrendering to the dictates of the unconscious, but with exquisite attention to urban space and the dynamism of its sensory-affective effects on his person, and détournement is crucial to his collage practice. Conceptually, his opposition to all ideologies and his critique of mediation puts him firmly in line with Situationist thought.
recollective registration applied to the whole of perception, rather than the
documentation of a purely visual image:

Bild (Vorstellungsbild, Gehirnbild) (Postkartenbild, Erinnerungsbild), wieder
Licht, Helligkeit, Klarheit – in der Erinnerung: Erinnerung als eine
Dunkelkammer? Photo entwickeln, mit Licht, klar machen, deutlich machen,
was? Einen gespeicherten Gehirnvorgang, worin das Gefühl festhält? (BH 55)

This transmission of feeling (Gefühl) formerly stored within the body to the artwork
occurs on analogy to the procedure of developing photographs in a darkroom. 137
Writing thereby becomes the development of an image of sensation. While the analogy
is photographic, post-1970 Brinkmann is concerned to integrate and dehierarchize the
sense modalities in this ‘development’ of sensuous experience, as in the example of a
“weiche, röchelnden Morgenlicht” (“Film” 25). Light here is assigned both tactile and
auditory qualities: it is soft, as well as rattling or wheezing. While “soft light” is as
much a commonplace in German as in English, “gaspung,” “wheezing,” or “rattling”
light exceeds any common use. Indeed, Brinkmann’s use of “weich[...],” alongside
“röchelnd[...],” revives the tactility of the former, thawing out the cliché. In the
development process which I have referred to variously throughout the dissertation as
“registration,” “capture,” or “inventory,” light is the metaphorical means by which
remembered sensations are made clear or sharp (“deutlich”) in their externalization.

137 As discussed in the second chapter, Brinkmann’s post-dérive writing practice often
included a literal withdrawing into a “Sinnes-Entzugs-Kammer,” a space suggestive of a
darkroom, insofar as one enters without knowing exactly what images will be produced in the
development process: “Entzieht man sich einmal den Reizen der Umwelt, reduziert man die
Umwelt, an die man angeschlossen ist wie an einer riesigen Schalttafel=Großstadt, deutet sich
ein Effekt an wie in der Sinnesentzugskammer, dem absolut dunklen, schalltoten Raum.
Wenigstens etwas. /Was dabei herauskommen soll? Was ich mir erwarte von meinen
einfach mehr wissen, erfahren. Nicht zuletzt von mir” (RB 333, 406).
Light, however, remains figurative for this process-based writing practice, and even where literal, the author ascribes it haptic and aural qualities. This reflects not only an insistence on the nonhierarchical registration of the senses’ unity, but also Brinkmann’s recognition of and reliance on film’s visual and aural haptics. These are forces of filmic shock that underwrite a two-pronged offensive of 1) exposing the medially conditioned disfigurement of the human sensorium and spirit; and 2) preserving sensation and difference in the notations of event that comprise the collage works. These are tactics meant to politicize a reading/viewing body through the actualization of the aesthetic principles of sensation and affect contained within their pages.

Brinkmann is hardly the first 20th-century writer to deploy filmic strategies of registration. With the advent of film at the close of the 19th century, Modernist and avantgarde poetry underwent a “cinematographic shift,” the effects of which continue into present-day experimental poetry (Röhnert 10). As early as 1959, German critics

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138 I am indebted to Tobias Wilke’s work on tactility/tactics and the role of the historical avant-garde in Walter Benjamin’s media theory. He writes that it was in the historical avant-garde movements in which “the idea of human perception as historically conditioned, and hence transformable, found some of its earliest and most ardent proponents. Indeed, this belief in the alterability of perception lies at the heart of numerous aesthetic experiments from the early 1910s to the mid-1930s; it fostered the avant-garde’s interest in new technologies and their perceptual effects and helped produce, in the process, a groundbreaking redefinition of art, one that literalized the Greek aesthesis by turning aesthetics into a training ground for sensory capacities” (“Tacti(ca)lity” 41). Emphasizing language taken from historical avant-garde (“training ground”) Wilke discusses the significance of the military metaphor upon which these aesthetic movements drew; more significantly, he demonstrates the text’s impoverishment caused by Benjamin’s editors in their decision to replace the multivalent “taktisch” with “taktil” as it appears throughout Benjamin’s writings. “Taktisch” contains both concepts of tactics or strategy, both military and literary, and tactility and allows Wilke to recuperate a lost sense of tactical strategy evident in the activities of the historical avant-garde.

noted genre-specific resonances between film and poetry: “Die Frage: was ist der Vers? Muß schon den Sinnhorizont der Bewegung von einem Vers zum anderen schon mit umfassen. Der Vers in diesem Sinne wird immer als Bewegung erfahren, und zwar als akustische Bewegung im Gegensatz zum Film, der ja auf optischer Bewegung aufgebaut ist” (Kayser 12). It is, of course, nonsense to confine poetry’s movement to the acoustic sphere, as if movement sensation cannot be stored visually-haptically on the page, as in the case of concrete poetry, or as we will observe in Brinkmann’s “Bruchstück No. 2” from Westwärts 1 & 2. Poetry depends for its movement on line breaks, its alternation between percepts and affects, whether fast or slow, and mise en page; cuts in film constitute a rather general analogy. Brinkmann is explicit about the respectively cineastic and photographic functions of his system of punctuation: "Querstriche und Doppelpunkte heißen Hier: da kann ich überall Szenen und Bilder reinschneiden" (EK 228, emph mine). These en-dashes and colons, along with the conventional forward slash indicate line breaks, changes of scene or image, and create the kinetic, forward-rushing sensation of the work (See Fig 1). While this invention in its function is unique to Brinkmann’s work, his use of cut-up and fold-in as the

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140 On the level of imagery, comparisons between the two media have also been made. Imageric similarities, however, cannot be traced back to transmedial influence, for prior to film’s invention the creation of sensuous images was immanent to poetry, as seen in the associated classical tropes of metaphor, metonymy, and synecdoche.

141 Gottfried Benn’s work exerted considerable influence on Brinkmann, as it did on an entire generation of German-language postwar lyric, owing much to Benn’s treatment of poetry as “an activity or even a product […] that allows the misery of history to enter consciousness” (Travers 290). Benn’s use of unusual combinations of punctuation appear throughout his oeuvre. En- and em-dashes mark ellipses and are often paired with colons, semicolons, question marks and exclamation points, offering Brinkmann a model of alternative punctuation to denote elliptical pauses (in the latter’s case, ‘cuts’). Examples from across Benn’s works include: “Der Arzt II” (1917) (“Die Krone der Schöpfung, das Schwein,
textual equivalents of filmic techniques belonging to time-image cinema is borrowed from Burroughs. In the 1964 essay “The Future of the Novel,” the American author espouses his belief in the necessity of intermedial experimental writing for his psychic cartographies:

In my writing I am acting as a map maker, an explorer of psychic areas [...] as a cosmonaut of inner space, and I see no point in exploring areas that have already been thoroughly surveyed—A Russian scientist has said: “We will travel not only in space but in time as well—” That is to travel in space is to travel in time—If writers are to travel in space time and explore areas opened by the space age, I think they must develop techniques quite as new and definite as the techniques of physical space travel—Certainly if writing is to have a future it must at least catch up with the past and learn to use techniques that have been used for some time past in painting, music and film [...] In writing my last two novels, Nova Express and The Ticket That Exploded, I have used an extension of the cut-up method I call “the fold-in method”—A page of text—my own or someone else’s—is folded down the middle and placed on another page—The composite text is then read across half one text and half the other—The fold-in method extends to writing the flashback used in films, enabling the writer to move backward and forward on his time track—For example I take page one and fold it into page one hundred—I insure the resulting composite as page ten—When the reader reads page ten he is flashing forward in time to page one

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hundred and back in time to page one—the déjà vu phenomenon can so be produced to order. (294-95)

I will discuss the significance of these interventions into the temporal order for Brinkmann’s post-1970 works shortly. His thesis in “Der Film in Worten” expresses a similar commitment to the “Erweiterung der Kunst, deren Formen sich nach dem vorgefundenen Material richteten” and laments the belatedness of German literature which seems determined to not to “catch up with the past” by adopting/adapting techniques traditionally associated with the other arts (*Film* 230). This broadening, opposed to a notion of progress (a subsection of the essay serves as motto for its thesis: “Kunst schreitet nicht fort, sie erweitert sich”), manifests for the author in the various intermedial experiments of the Beats and the first- and second-generation New York Schools (232). Kerouac, Ginsberg, Burroughs, Warhol, O’Hara, John Perrault, Gerard Malanga, Tom Veitch, Anne Waldman, as well as Ur-practitioner Marcel Duchamp, are mentioned by name.

“Der Film in Worten” describes the type of images an “erweiterte” literature offers in haptic terms: “ein Film, also Bilder – also Vorstellungen, nicht die Reproduktion abstrakter, bilderloser syntaktischer Muster . . . Bilder, flickernd und

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voller Sprünge, *Aufnahmen auf hochempfindlichen Filmstreifen Oberflächen verhafteter Sensibilität* (Film 223, emph mine). The skin of the film, the “highly sensitive [...] surfaces” whose inscription by light allows for the capture of sensation, is also a metaphor of the body on dérive. What is inscribed upon its surface must then be developed—‘vertextet’—in the darkroom of composition. The entrained sensorium, equipped with recording capabilities for haptic sensations that largely defy mechanized mediation outside of filmic shock, captures the traces of experience which must then be externalized to become legible to an outside. What better medium to adapt than that which most complexly indexes sensuous experience, and thus provides the tactical/tactile *Stoß* of shock? Film’s ability to capture and transmit sensation and affect to percussive or ballistic effect is also a source of its inscriptive power, which shapes the sensorium such that human perception now assumes the contours of film—something else Brinkmann would like to make legible via the montage techniques of the collage books.

To this end, the adaptation of filmic techniques of registration for their ability to convey this haptic aurality and visuality constitutes a critique of mastery, as the reader/viewer is made physically vulnerable to the work’s force-effects. As Laura Marks notes,

The ideal relationship between viewer and image in optical visuality tends to be one of mastery, in which the viewer isolates and comprehends the objects of vision. The ideal relationship between viewer and image in haptic visuality is one of mutuality, in which the viewer is more likely to lose herself in the image,

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143 This is the title of Laura Marks’ 2002 book, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment and the Senses* (Durham: Duke UP, 2000), which is concerned to address haptic visuality in international experimental cinema.
to lose her sense of proportion. When vision is like touch, the object’s touch back may be like a caress, though it may also be violent [...]—a violence not toward the image but toward the viewer. Violence may occur in an abrupt shift from haptic to optical image, confronting the viewer with an object whole and distant where she had been contemplating it close-up and partial. Haptic visuality implies a tension between viewer and image, then because this violent potential is always there. Haptic visuality implies making oneself vulnerable to the image, reversing the relation of mastery that characterizes optical viewing.

(*Skin* 185)

In Brinkmann’s case, I would argue that this is less a reversal (the simple installation of the observed for the formerly dominant observer) than a leveling of the relation observer-observed. Instead of identifying active and passive parties, the haptic visualities and auralities of the collage works shift focus onto the affects evoked by the interpenetration of subject and context. By borrowing from the semiotics of film, Brinkmann’s poetics of the word-film allows him to register a maximum of sensation while at the same time logging the effects of the medium’s aesthetics upon perception:

 [...] blablablabla/nnn?/(mümmeln)/(Atem,keucht)/huuäh?
Schuβ in den Kopf? Backpulver/flickernde miese Schau/schwarz und weiß/keine Aussicht auf Veränderung so lange Veränderung ein
Wort bleibt/und ein Wort ist verkrampfter Muskel,he?/splittern-des Lachen über die Gehirnrinde/verseucht Emotion/leckt mich!/
tote Herbstblätter im marmornen gesprungenen Hausflur/ein ver-wischtes Bild/kannstes sehen?/“Ich bin da.” [...]
Ja siehste so geht Das Leben Immer Weiter/Schwarze und Weiße Bilder Schau/Springende Flickermaschine Und durch Wörter Und Bilder gemarterte sprachlose Körperebenen Flammend Rot Schar-lack/Dieser Wortausschlag Wenn Ich Ein Bestimmtes Bild bei je-
manden benutze und Diese Flimmernde Bilderschau unkontrolliert sobald Wer???meine Wort- und Bildkombination bewußt oder unbe-
wußt erreicht(endlos dann ausnehmbar, schmieriger zäher Dunst)/So hält Einer Den Anderen In Schach/Wer ist Matt???/Gesetzt In Ein Paar Wort-Und-Bildzügen?/Mit gemartertem Selbst/Ist noch nicht definiert/wird ständig neu stimuliert arm und zittrig zu Jetzt/auf den verschiedensten Ebenen/Wort und Bild/und die Grundbedürfnisse erstarrt durch Wort und Bild/Würgen Im Hals/ Ticken In der Kehle/Versteinerner Rücken/Durch Ein Wort Gehängt/Ist schwierig zu existieren(Aufgabe:wie in der Schule:müßte Ich Eine Hieroglyphe entwerfen vom gegenwärtigen Typ deutsch/und Das Ist ein Bild/Ich würde Einen schiffenden scheißenden Typ vor Angst zeichnen Der immerz [sic] Arbeitet)sagt Wer In Ich Ohne Sein Das heißt Ohne Körper Hier in der Gegenwart/Kollernde Laute/ permanente Kurze Montagen Von Verzweifelten Erinnerungen Ohne Körper fallen Hier in der Gegenwart an/flammend und rot und in (S 105)

The technique introduces an internal contradiction to his production of word-films, one that is structurally identical to the contradiction his use of language presents: In the Brinkmannian project, film and language are simultaneously the media of social
transmission and control, and, while transmedially in the case of film, those of his critique. This doublesidedness reflects historical anxieties regarding film’s ready cooption by forces of capital on the one hand, and on the other, hope for film’s emancipatory potential, and belies Brinkmann’s engagement with texts concerned with film from the critical theory canon. This engagement is likely in the case of Benjamin’s essays,\textsuperscript{144} and certain in the case of Siegfried Kracauer’s work.

Brinkmann’s blanket objection to critical theory\textsuperscript{145} translates in his texts to avoiding direct admissions of meaningful exposure to it. Kracauer, for whatever reason, seems to fall outside this prejudice. Brinkmann read *Theorie des Films* in 1966, and “Der Film in Worten” at an undocumented point prior to the composition of “Der Film in Worten” (BH 137).\textsuperscript{146} Unlike the earlier Kracauer of “Die Photographie,” in which photography is faulted for lacking depth, which is to say lacking the truth-content of memory, the theses of *Theorie des Films* are close, though not identical, to

\textsuperscript{144} Brinkmann was a furious reader and a committed participant in the student movement of ‘68. The 1967–68 rediscovery of Adorno and Benjamin by the theoretically informed SDS makes it highly probable that Brinkmann read their available works.

\textsuperscript{145} Brinkmann’s issue with the Frankfurt school lay largely in the wholesale endorsement of its truths by the contemporary West German academy and literary practitioners, and its privileging of an elevated form of discourse that refused all other modes and media of expression for their purported participation in the culture industry. His concern was to resist a totalizing consensus in the contemporary theory of the day that proscribed alternative forms of artistic production, itself remaining trapped within its own aesthetic prescriptions: “Während die theoretischen Kritiker im Kreise gehen und ihre Gedanken von Satz zu Satz fortschreiten, drückt sich das ‘andere’ Denken real in der Benutzen des ungeheuren Formenreichtums aus, der heute zur Verfügung steht und entstanden ist aus der Vermischung verschiedener Gebiete und Gattungen. Es ist ein ‘schöner’ Ausverkauf, er schafft Platz für Neues, während das, was ‘kritische Theorie’ heißt, oft genug nur eine bloße Abfassung von Wörtern ist – zu welchem Zweck?” (*Film* 232).

\textsuperscript{146} Which Brinkmann also read. In “Der Film in Worten,” he makes a dismissive play on Kracauer’s discussion of the image of the grandmother in a crinoline (what, for Kracauer, is the pure surface of the image that yields nothing of the grandmother’s lived person) in “Die Photographie”: “‘Der Jugend gehört die Zukunft’, sagt meine Großmutter, die ‘Krinoline’ heißt” (*Film* 237). Kracauer’s early essay is also cited in the final sentence of Brinkmann’s: “‘Ist die Großmutter verschwunden, so ist doch die Krinoline geblieben’ (S. Kracauer). Die Gegenwart stellt nur einen Sinn in ihrem Begriff dar, der äußerst profan ist und daher radikal: nämlich Zukunft werden zu wollen” (247).
Brinkmann’s own position as concerns its revelatory potential, its alleged ability to disclose physical reality without the filter of ideology. With this gesture, film is harnessed to the task of enlightenment: “Indem das Kino uns die Welt erschließt, in der wir leben, fördert es Phänomene zutag, deren Erscheinen im Zeugenstand folgenschwer ist. Es bringt uns Auge in Auge mit Dingen, die wir furchten. Und es nötigt uns oft, die realen Ereignisse, die es zeigt, mit den Ideen zu konfrontieren, die wir uns von ihnen gemacht haben” (Kracauer 395). In the attempt to reveal the subject’s medial conditioning enabled by film and television’s cooption by the forces of capital, Brinkmann’s post-1970 works take as motivation the ethical consequences of this conception of film’s task—using the techniques of the medium itself.

The following analysis the types of punctuation denoting Brinkmann’s cuts gives a general impression of the word-films generated on dérive, and focuses on how haptic visuality and aurality perfuse his registrations of percept and affect in the collage works. From Rom, Blicke:

Und weiter weiches gedämpftes Sonnenlicht jetzt, eine milde Sanftheit, die den Körper erfüllt, inmitten furioser Architektur-Schinken, mit gelblicher Sonne darauf, in dem Licht fallende große Platanenblätter.

Also sanfte weichte und zart-gefilterte Nachmittagshelligkeit, in der ich dort ging, für mich, hellwach, sehr bewußt, (: verdammtnochmal, warum ist das eingerissen, daß verträumt abwesend bedeutet?), (:verträumt hellwach und tagträumerisch, das heißt doch: gesteigertes Bewußtsein, denn nun ist eine andere Qualität des Daseins, des bewußten Zustandes hinzugekommen das verträumte Hellwachsein des Tagtraums!), (:oh nee, ich meine nicht
historische [sic] Reminiszenzen, ich meine nicht einen abrufbaren Wissenskatalog, ich meine: Achtung, Aufnahme, Foto, innen!), und weiter durch das zarte Nachmittagslicht in kleinen engen vergammelten Straßen mit erbärmlichen Fiats, mit Gurkendosen, in denen Blumen stehen, an abblätternden Mauern entlang, hellwach-verträumt. (Das kann man sogar bei exakten wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten behalten, denn die Exaktheit ist gesteigerte Anwesenheit und keine philologische Einstellung! Verdammt, verdammt, was sind wir verrottet!) [...]

The combination “(:” introduces a thought-image provoked by the images flashing by on his walk along the Tiber, which I read as narration. The parentheses without a colon above [“(Das kann man sogar [...])”] indicate we have returned to the register of narration, as what follows belongs to the previous train of thoughts. Light is again assigned a haptic visuality that leaves the reader with the affect of being cozily surrounded; it is “soft,” “tenderly filtered,” and “gentle.” Narrow, scruffy (literally “rotting”) streets and peeling walls create a scene of complex surface textures, which evoke the according haptic sensations in the reader. I will remind the reader of Sedgewick’s insight: “To perceive texture is to know or hypothesize whether a thing will be easy or hard, safe or dangerous to grasp, to stack, to fold, to shred, to climb on, to stretch, to slide, to soak,” assuming that by “perceive,” the author means “perceive visually, prior to tactile contact with the perceived.” Affects belonging to the haptic

147 The use of present tense for these thought-images suggests the text is diageital, which is to say these thoughts were provoked in the moment by sensations registered immediately prior. I have therefore chosen to designate it narration as opposed to voiceover, which is by definition non-diageital.
sensations of claustrophobia mix with those of the warm, perhaps all-too enveloping, afternoon light.

The passage continues

_/:Jeder macht Cut-Ups mit seinen Augen, die durch Gedanken und Wertmuster in der Abfolge bestimmt sind. (Das Dritte ist der Gedanke, der die Wahrnehmung steuert, worauf sie fällt.) [...]

Zu einer kleinen Brücke: (Foto/:und das gelegentliche Fotografieren macht wach und aufmerksam, Ponte Sisto – wenig befahren und schmal.

Fig 4.1 (RB 135)
Ich ging an das andere Ufer,

da stand wieder so ein Kamikaze-Motorradfahrer, loddelhaft, mit seiner Honda – diese Motorradfahrer tauchen im Straßenbild häufig auf und jagen mit wahnsinniger Geschwindigkeit und mit lautem Heulen durch den trägen Verkehr. (Sie wirken auf mich wie fette Ratten, die aus irgendwelchen Abwässerhöhlern herausgekommen sind.)

Plötzlich, herausgetreten aus dem Gewirr und Verkehr, begann eine zarte und ruhige Stimmung sich in mir auszubreiten.

Affenartig-verhangen und träge-schlaff saß ein Junge auf dem Pfleifer am Ende der Brücke, ohne Regung und ohne Interesse, eine schlaffe Erloschenheit.

Und langsam zurückgehen, rechts die Silhouette des Petersdomes (Peters? Wer ist dieser Herr Peters?), dann der weißengrauem Kanal des Baches, links eine entfernte Brücke mit schemenhaftem Verkehr.

Ich wurde zunehmend entspannter, offen, überquerte die Straße und ging in eine dieser vielen kleinen Bars der Seitenstraßen (man denkt dabei immer an Whisky und Pläsch und gedämpftes Licht, an einen Abend, aber hier stehen Postkartenwände, eine Vitrine mit Backwerk, ein Stand mit Süßigkeiten und gegenüber die Bar plus Kaffemaschine und Getränken, keine Bar-Hocker, alles im Stehen, auch nicht lange). – Trank ein Bier, das 150 Lire gekostet hat, im Vergleich dazu beim Sitzen vor dem Pantheon 500. – Offene Tür, der Blick auf eine verstaubte Kirchenkette gegenüber: San Salvador in Onda. Leser ich, und darunter der Name des Pfarrers, der sie besitzt. – (Am Eingang der Straße war auf eine Hauswand ein total verstaubtes Marienwandbild gemalt, davor brannte eine kleine elektri-

*Fig 4.2 (RB 136)*

da stand wieder so ein Kamikaze Motorradfahrer, loddelhaft, mit seiner Honda – diese Motorradfahrer tauchen im Straßenbild häufig auf und jagen mit wahnsinniger Geschwindigkeit und mit lautem Heulen durch den trägen Verkehr [...]
Plötzlich, herausgetreten aus dem Gewirr und Verkehr, begann eine zarte und ruhige Stimmung sich in mir auszubreiten.

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A quiet, gentle mood “spreads itself” throughout Brinkmann’s body, according to the autonomy of affect. The youth at the end of the bridge is described by his slack posture, his lifeless, hangdog manner of inhabiting space. The texture of dust coating the kitchen door and a Madonna mural outside the bar’s entrance yield a run-down affect, which intensifies with the appearance of the “bulgy” old woman, whose aspect
gives the observer the haptically uncanny feeling that her bones are pushing out of her skin in the wrong places.

In terms of cuts between series of related images, forward slashes followed by a colon (“/:Jeder macht Cut-Ups”) often indicate that an insight connected to the preceding percepts and affects will follow. Stand-alone forward slashes and en-dashes also signal cuts, with the en-dash leaving a shorter, faster impression than the forward slash. The slash typically introduces a greater shift in attention, often a return to the actions or internal state of the narrating self:

 Dann war diese feurige Sonnengeleemasse weggesackt, die milde, weiche Helligkeit lag überall leicht und schwerelos auf./Ich trank den Rest Bier und ging noch einmal an den Fluß.

Stieg die 70 engen, steilen Treppenstufen am Anfang der Brücke nach unten auf den Schmalen Streifen. Ich wollte jetzt den Augenblick allein sein./Ich hatte noch wenig gegessen und das Bier verteilte sich im Körper rasch und rief ein unbekümmertes Empfinden hervor, allein und gut [...]

The setting sun is registered in visually haptic terms as a fiery mass of jelly; similarly, the indirect sunlight that remains after this mass is no longer visible “lay” weightlessly upon the surroundings, soft, yielding, and mild.

It would hardly be a Brinkmannian psychogeography if there were no shifts in focus to the uglier details of what I will presently introduce as an “any-space-whatever” (here the non-place of the small strip of quay below the bridge, directly on the water), which prompt the familiar embittered lament of the language and images that turned the urban landscape simulacral:

Kühler, die Distelsamen von der Jacke und Hose abschlagen, mit häßlichem Lärm verreckt hier alles, jahrelang, hundert Jahre, langsam und träge wie ein schlammiger, seuchiger, fahlgrüner Fluß auf dem imaginäre Häuser
schattenhaft standen, und imaginäre Bäume und Mauern und Blätter [...]

Realität?: Ist ein Klumpen Geräusch. (Sie summen alle.) Und der nirgendwo, an keiner Ecke fehlende Baukran, der über die Allee ragt und die Dächer der Häuser. [...] Kein Platz ohne Tote, kein Fleckchen Erde, keinen Zentimeter, der nicht mit Vergangenheit gedüngt ist, wo sinde denn die kräftigen Nahrungs- und Düngungsmittel?

Wrruummmmm, Autos!Ampeln!Fassaden!Idioten!Menschen!Gar nicht zu fassen!: Scheiße!: (kann ich nicht mehr mich ausdrücken?)

Du gehst schmierige Straßen entlang, an verklebten Grundmauern vorbei, an blöden Gesichtern, und entlang an Parolen, die schon seit gestern verrottet sind, du gehst an diesen Fetzenhaften [sic] Ausdrücken vorbei. Du läßt das alles hinter Dir:jede Parole will glauben lassen, in ihr enthalte sich die Weltformel für Leben, was für ein Quatsch.

Wörtern sind wir aufgesessen statt Leben, Begriffen statt Lebendigkeit, sollte es wundern wenn wir erstickt werden von Wörtern und Begriffen? (:Für einen Moment Entspannung, für einige Augenblicke das Alleinsein mit sich, und in was für einer Umgebung ist dieser Zauber passiert?Tempotaschentücher steif voll ranzigem Sperma, vergammelte Kondome, Unkraut, und dahinter der Petersdom, der sie alle gesäugt hat wie milchende Kühe, sie schwanger gemacht hat mit Ideen, Vorstellungen die zu nichts führten, blödsinnigem Humanismus!)
Treten, Schritte, Sehen:klack, ein Foto!:Gegenwart, eingefroren. (RB 134-139)

While the author speaks directly of photographing his environs and complements the text with photos from his on-site experience, the action of “Treten, Schritte, Sehen” that makes the movement (marked by the punctuation of his cuts) between percepts and affects possible generates far less a snapshot of sensuous experience than a film in words. However, this filmically inflected textual form can potentiate haptic sensation through haptic visuality and aurality in ways that film or video cannot.

“Tempotaschentücher steif voll ranzigem Sperma” is an instance of a haptic visuality that packs a particular affective wallop. This specific sensation of a stiff and stinking tissue could not be stored on film without the auxiliary function of narration or voice-over. By contrast, “Wrruummmm, Autos!” renders a haptic aurality by transliterating the Doppler effect of a car’s engine whipping by the body of a pedestrian. It stores not only the auditory sensation, but also that of the wind created by the car body’s displacement of air which gives someone on foot a threatening little shove. Film could well store this affect with either a pedestrian’s POV shot or a medium shot of the body lurching in the automobile’s wake.

The passage is representative of the poetics at work throughout the collage books. Words are used primarily to call forth concrete, sensuous images, as opposed to the abstractions of ideological, theoretical, or political statements. Brinkmann attempts to explain his seemingly contradictory condemnation of language, his own primary medium: “Was haben Dichter mit Wörtern und Sätzen [...] zu tun? [...] Ein Schriftsteller, irgendeine einzelne Person in dieser Gesellschaft, dessen Mittel die gegebene Sprache ist, kann gar nicht anders [...]”, also immer wieder darauf
hinzuzweisen, daß Sprache gar nicht so wichtig ist” (WW 260). It should be noted that the author treated the paradigmatic shift from word to image as an incontrovertible fact. This is one impetus for the unceasing intermediality of his literary practice, its flux and boundary-pushing. The conceived task of the author here is to use whatever means necessary—whether image, sound or language-based collage, film, or radio play—to generate sensations in the reader that lead “aus der Sprache und den Festlegungen raus” or in the alternative formulation, “daß Sprache gar nicht so wichtig ist” (WW 9, 260).

While language incontestably remains Brinkmann’s primary medium, the program outlined makes clear that the post-Gutenberg era demands a writing which makes perceptible the fact of our medially conditioned perception, and proceeds by simulating the function and techniques of film on linguistic analogy. In this manner, writing becomes an act of medial reflexivity. As such, Brinkmann’s use of the ‘word-film’ or Gehirnfilm metaphor varies considerably across and within his works. While “Der Film in Worten” embraces the introduction of film-specific techniques of representation to literature and promotes Burroughs’ call for a thinking in images to resist language’s reality-structuring pull, Brinkmann also discusses reality as “Filmbildern [...] dieser ganzen Kulisse,” and asks in scorn: “Wer dirigiert den täglichen Film?” (EK 218, 223) Elsewhere he makes photos of mediatized public space function as the subject for the text element “ist bloß’n dreckiger Wortfilm,” by collaging these words below images of urban streetscapes taken on his Instamic (386).

Whatever the contradictions between the emancipatory art object “Wortfilm” and its bad other (the mass media-engineered and omnipresent word-film of urban reality), Brinkmann’s writings evince the following convictions: 1) Modern urban
reality is perceived by human consciousness as a film; that is, as piecemeal fragments with associative cuts, pans, and changes of perspective; 2) As a dimension of everyday experience subject to the second nature perception particular to modern urban space, cinema determines and prefigures our view of this reality; 3) Cinema’s projections, in both the concrete and metaphorical senses, act upon the individual’s perception and determine her access to reality, thus dominating consciousness; 4) In order to comprehend and decipher this perceived “reality” as always already fictionalized and mediated, the author deploys the iconographic code of film in his texts so as to defamiliarize it, deterritorializing the reader (Röhnert 286). This dismantling procedure does not, however, exclude the possibility that the author feels a certain affinity, based on personal, autobiographical interest, with the medium and its pictorial language, techniques, or historicity. His collages feature excerpts from journals of brain research and experimental psychology; his writings document his digestion of these materials, as well as theories of memory and perception, and further demonstrate the overlap between his interests in film and in the functioning of human consciousness.

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No longer merely a means to broadening literature’s too-narrow horizons as the 1969 essay insists, Brinkmann’s post-1970 poetology of the word-film becomes the most effective demonstration of the struggle to maintain and linguistically mediate a vigilant, striving attention to the experience of embodiment. In a chapter called “Modernity and the Problem of Attention,” Jonathan Crary situates 19th-century research into attention as not only “crucial to the larger disciplinary and
administrative apparatuses for the management and control of human subjects, but as part of what Foucault calls the great eschatological dream of the nineteenth century.” This is the notion that knowledge of man produced by the new human sciences would free him from his alienations, the acquired self-knowledge thus liberating him “from all the determinations of which he was not the master” (Suspensions 45). But the attempt to determine empirically the specific physiological and practical conditions under which a perceiving subject could be most acutely attentive to the world through the exercise of a sovereign will, guaranteeing her self-possession and position as a conscious organizer of the perceptible world, failed. Scientific psychology instead discovered that attention “contain[ed] within itself the conditions for its own undoing—attentiveness was in fact continuous with states of distraction, reverie, dissociation, and trance […] Attention finally could not coincide with a modern dream of autonomy” (45-46). The notations of Brinkmann’s psychogeographies serve to confirm this conclusion: the individual can make the attempt by force of will, i.e. a practice of attention, to make perception its own; however, attention is also ever the “means by which a perceiver becomes open to control and annexation by external agencies” (5). As the collage works successfully evidence in their registration of negative affect, there can be only extremely limited self-determination under the phantasmagorical conditions that obtain. The author’s practice of attention admittedly retains some of this hope for self-determination in his claims for the automatism of his vision. But in its direction of attention toward marginalized forms of sensuous experience, these notations point up their diminishment and establish the terms of their loss as a consequence of the sensorium’s medial conditioning. At the
same time, this attention, a direction of force, underwrites his investigations of a-
linguistic intensities that defy binarization into activity and passivity.

The struggle or “Mühe” of “bemühte Aufmerksamkeit” is a fight against a force
Brinkmann identifies as “d[ie] allgemeine Entropie.” This he conceives as an
irretrievable dissapation of energy, “bedingt durch verwahrlostes Verhalten, durch
falsche Vorstellungen von Erziehung, von Geschichte, von Gegenwart,” but not
synonymous with distraction (RB 160). Neither is this entropy thought as the
opposing term of order, but instead as the process that undermines sensitivity-to-
world. The character of this entropy is confirmed in a letter from November 30, 1972
to Helmut Pieper. Brinkmann begins by asking his former friend “wie Du es fertig
bringst, diese Schizophrenie, etwas anderes zu denken, einzusehen, und zwar mit
ziemlicher Kraßheit, als das konkrete Verhalten darstellt, und etwas anderes im
Verhalten zum Ausdruck zu bringen, als es sich gedanklich äußert, zu ertragen an?”
(RB 341) Brinkmann reproaches the performance of enjoying what one in fact feels
hatred or disgust for as part of the general “Kulissen-Schieberei” of the simulacral
present. This simulation of enjoyment or approval “kommt [ihm] unlebendig vor, die
unterscheidenden Wertungen beziehen sich auf eine bürgerliche Welt im
schlechtesten Sinn, das Capriziöse, wofür ist es ein Ersatz? In dieser
Ersatzwirklichkeit” (346). This denial or suppression of negative affect in favor of a
performed enjoyment is identified as the crux of the problem: “darin kommt Entropie

148 In his discussion of architecture and film, art forms received both optically and haptically,
Benjamin stages attention and distraction as polar opposites: “Zerstreuung und Sammlung
stehen in einem Gegensatz, der folgende Formulierung erlaubt: Der vor dem Kunstwerk sich
Sammlnde versenkt sich darein; er geht in dieses Werk ein [...] Dagegen versenkt die
zerstreute Masse ihrerseits das Kunstwerk in sich” (456). Brinkmann’s “bemühte” attention
establishes that it is not a diffuse direction of perceptual energies, but neither does he oppose
this striving attention to Benjamin’s tactiley inflected “Rezeption in der Zerstreuung” (460).

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zum Ausdruck, erstarrte Energie, Schlacke, nicht mehr umzusetzen, und die 
Bewußtseins-Entropie nimmt zu und erstickte alle. (Man kann es auch unsensibel 
nennen. [...]” (348, emph mine). The energy of affect is diffused as the individual 
diverts attention away from it in order to convincingly simulate feelings she does not 
in fact feel.\textsuperscript{149} This act of self-imposed desensitization is the medially conditioned 
outcome of belonging to a socius that cannot tolerate expressions of difference.

The diversion of attention away from affect and embodiment more generally, 
is, as I have argued, what Brinkmann hopes to expose to the reader of his texts. He is 
thus concerned to examine experiences that engender insensitivity or numbness— 
instances in which sensuous perception is suspended. This culminates in the collage 
works as a focus on the mass media’s representations of the relations between 
touching bodies, specifically where haptic experience is used instrumentally in the 
aestheticization of violence. In his first radio play, “Auf der Schwelle” (1970)\textsuperscript{150} 
Brinkmann lifts dialogue from gangster films\textsuperscript{151} to collage the voices of the mafioso, 
his victims and associates,\textsuperscript{152} with those of nameless everywomen and –men. The

\textsuperscript{149} The desire for consensus and identity is often so strong that such a “simulation” has 
become second-nature; that is, the consensus affect is no longer consciously simulated but in 
fact felt. See Brennan on “contagion,” pp. 48-49.

\textsuperscript{150} Composed in 1970 and first broadcast on July 14, 1971 by the Westdeutschen Rundfunk 
(WDR), “Auf der Schwelle” is a cut-up text of simultaneously uttered dialogues, presented in 
two columns on the page. I include it and Brinkmann’s other two \textit{Hörspiele} in my discussion 
of the collage works, as sections of the radio plays are cut ups of materials found in collage 
books.

\textsuperscript{151} The genre and that of the American B-movie are favorites of Brinkmann’s for their roughly 
cut, often non-linear imagery that registers experiences from everyday life: “Brinkmanns 
Interesse am Gangstergenre richtet sich auf die Komposition der Szenen, auf scheinbar 
nebensächliche Details, die von der Handlung abzweigen, auf überraschende Alltagsszenen 
und dinghaft-konkrete Vergegenwärtigungen einer urbanisierten Außenwelt, wie sie bereits 
früher von Kracauer und Benjamin am Filmmedium nachgewiesen worden waren” (Röhnert 
287).

\textsuperscript{152} Figures like Benjamin “Bugsy” Siegel and his girlfriend and business partner, Virginia Hill 
are exemplary historical persons whose images, by virtue of their association with the codified
contrast between the two types of discourse (the menacing patter and explosive yet casual violence of the gangster; the colloquial banality of what were likely overheard conversations in public spaces) points up the fact that despite radical differences in register and dialect, both are equally consumed with [violence]. Brinkmann registers the effects of the media’s appropriation of the gangster’s image upon reality: “


Violence in this instance is mediated as sound, a haptic aurality that “drives deep into the body.” Brinkmann’s treatment of the subject with the \textit{Hörspiel} form allows him to collage in acousmatic elements like the sounds of explosions and car crashes to demonstrate this point to his listener. In the introduction to \textit{Auf der Schwelle} he writes:

Die Spannung, die von einem Verbrechen ausgeht, hat wenig mit der Störung des verbalen dualistischen Konzepts von Ordnung oder Unordnung, Recht oder Unrecht, Gut oder Böse zu tun. Diese Abstraktionen beruhigen und möchten darüber hinwegtäuschen, wie stark allgemein die Faszination ist, die von einem sociopathy of the mafia, has been appropriated and exploited by film, television, and print media.

\textsuperscript{153} From the essay “Ein Unkontrolliertes Nachwort zu meinen Gedichten. 1974/1975” in \textit{Westwärts 1&2}. 

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The perception of an act of violence generates tension ("Spannung") and thus attention—a fact upon which mass media, whether in the form of the news cycle or the Hollywood blockbuster, rely. The relationship of these two states sheds light on the experience of the body addressed and fascinated by the perceived "Gewaltakt," an event in which bodies touch and mark each other.\textsuperscript{154} The multilateral transmission of intensities mediated by the auditory and visual images\textsuperscript{155} of this injurious touch carry within them a message ("ihr grausamer Ausdruck") immediately legible to a third observing body. The proposition that the human body is addressed directly when witnessing violence is borne out by everyday experience. We’ve all cringed—a definitionally haptic gesture of cramping together and shrinking away—at the image of another’s physical suffering. We have likely felt so-called ‘sympathy pains’ mimetically ghosting through the parts of our body we observe injured in the other. Brinkmann’s reflections reveal the a-linguistic operations of affect upon the body—here a haptics operating at the heart of the aural and visual images of violence. These images “speak” directly to the body with the tactile and kinaesthetic sensations they store.

\textsuperscript{154} Or touch and mark themselves in acts of autoviolence, or their surrounds, in the case of violence against inanimate material.

\textsuperscript{155} Which are exclusively aural in the case of the \textit{Hörspiel}. Again, Brinkmann experiments with a wide range of available medial forms post-1970 to engage the full range of sense modalities to preserve difference. He strongly opposed the idea of homogenizing media signals into a master medium that would elide the ruptures of lived experience—a tendency he observed and loathed in television.
The body thus “spoken” to enters a state of suspended perception as the energy of attention is wholly consumed with the montaged tension-inducing images of violence encountered in the mass media. On the etymological relationship between tension and attention, Jonathan Crary writes, “The roots of the word attention in fact resonate with a sense of “tension,” of being “stretched,” and also of “waiting.” It implies the possibility of a fixation, of holding something in wonder or contemplation, in which the attentive subject is both immobile and ungrounded” (Suspension 10). In Brinkmann’s account, the attentive, perceiving body becomes both immobilized and ungrounded as the haptic visuality and aurality of an act of violence “spricht [ihn] direkt an.” In the dissociation or reverie that follows, “Der Körper beginnt auf einer nicht verbalen geschundenen Ebene zu träumen”; that is, to be sunk in a disembodied contemplation of the violent haptics before it, which bar it access to the sensations of an on-going present. The dream space is elsewhere described as a “gedankliche[...] und gefühlsmäßige[...] Abwesenheit aus der Gegenwart, zu der man täglich mehr und mehr gezwungen wird” (WW 267). This echoes Crary’s conclusions regarding the suspensions of perception and attention required by the cultural logic of capital: its

\[\text{156} \text{ Michael Taussig uses the term “optical tactility” in Mimesis and Alterity (1993) to describe similar visual haptics. Taking up Benjamin, Adorno, and Horkheimer’s ideas on mimesis, Taussig rearticulates that “famous ‘sixth sense’ [...] a formidable mimetic faculty, the basis for judging similitude” (213). Taussig believes this is “the nature that culture uses to create second nature,” which suggests an area of overlap between the role of “sensuous” and “non-sensuous similarity” (and thus a pre-linguistic sense operating behind the creation and identification of resemblance or correspondence) in human experience and culture (xiii). His project intends the recuperation of “powers of mimetic production and comprehension” that Benjamin believed were effectively liquidated in his own time. In opposition to the overemphasis on the representational importance of language and a rationality rooted in the Enlightenment, Taussig makes the case that symbols are of prime importance and that our ability to communicate via images and other sensuous means offers a valuable alternative way of perceiving and acting in the world. Mimesis invokes an “optical tactility, plunging us into the plane where the object world and the visual copy merge” (35). Mimesis as Taussig defines it is not representation.} \]
flows, manifest as a “stream of heterogeneous stimuli (whether film, radio, television, or cyberspace),” require a subject who can rapidly shift her attention between not only content but content presented in divergent medial forms. The attentive plasticity and agility demanded by such conditions results in a “permanent low-level attentiveness [...which] is maintained to varying degrees throughout large expanses of waking life” (Suspensions 77). This is obviously not the affirming attention to embodied experience Brinkmann indicates with “bemühte Aufmerksamkeit,” but an institutionally competent attention to the medial barrage that induces the subject’s absence from the sensuous present. Absence, figured as a form of reverie with the verb “träumen,” is for Brinkmann is not dreaming in any emancipatory sense, but the suspension of movement and sensation provoked by the perceptual “Stoß” that inheres in media’s montage of haptically charged images. Shock thus engendered leads to the dreamlike suspension of sensation—a suspension in which fantasies reflecting back the image’s violence obtain, as with the man, “[der] den Impuls verspüre, wenn er auf einer Straße geht [...] und den Krach eines Wagens hört, der ihm tief in den Körper fährt, den Fahrer zu erschießen.”

The ubiquitous Geld-Sex-Tod image complex of the post-’70 work exists to illustrate these effects of suspension and fantasy as they produce in the reader/viewer the various affects associated with perceptions of violence. The violently hierarchical relations between bodies implicit in the contemporary heteronormative representations of sex and the atomized nuclear family, and the violence of capital with its threats of privation, war, and death are writ large in the images disseminated by mass media, and are thus ripe for the critique their constellation introduces. Brinkmann argues with these constellations, both visual and textual (see Fig 2), that
exposure to these images produces the physical, intellectual, and spiritual
“mutilation” [Verstümmelung] of the perceiving subject. The suspension of embodied
feeling, a response to the spectacle of repetitive, disembodied representations of
violence and death, is a process of simultaneous desensitization and sensitization of
the body: it provokes a reduction in immediate physical sensation while generating a
massive surge of negative affect. The process turns bodies spectral in Brinkmann’s
metaphor: “traumhaft” or “geisthaft,” but above all “verstümmelt” by a state of
unremitting anxiety, the lingering effect of the affects of war which have penetrated all
bodies of a generation:

Characteristically, the process of stimulation, paralysis, and disfigurement of the
sensorium is repetitively registered in the texts from the late period. Brinkmann

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157 As I have argued in the previous chapter, this anxiety turns bodies spectral insofar as it
directs attention away from the experience of a sensuous present and toward abstractive
speculations on an uncertain, threatening future.
summarizes in “Notizen und Beobachtungen vor dem Schreiben eines zweiten Romans. 1970/1974”: “Ich bin festgesetzt in der Gegenwart, die zu immer schmierigeren Bildern des Zerfalls, des Todes und der Gewalt zusammenschrumpft, ein comic in monotoner Häßlichkeit aneinandergereiht. Ausblicke sind keine. *Die Wahrnehmung durch die Sinne wird durch das Wahrgenommene verstopft*” (*Film* 278, emph mine). The reduction of the present to these images of disintegration, death and violence can offer the subject nothing but percepts and affects that dis-figure and desensitize the sensorium in their very apperception. If reality per Brinkmann is a terrible film, scholars of screen violence have remarked on the same phenomenon of desensitization: “The hunger for kinetic sensations in cinema becomes like a century-long drug addiction in which you need more and more to accomplish less and less” (Charney 48).

The state of alienation registered in Brinkmann’s texts is the “gewöhnlichen, alltäglichen Albtraum[...]” of a monolithic mediatized reality, which “nur noch aus Gespensterstrassen und Gespenstermenschen besteht” (*Film* 150, WW 258).

Brinkmann continues with his description of phantasmagoria, “Gespenstervororte, Gespensterentzückungen, Gespensterbanken und Gespensterautos, Gespensterfamilien und Gespensterschulen, ist der Krieg tatsächlich vorbei?” (WW 258). In the introduction to his second and third radio plays, the author lays out the

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158 The two works are laid out next to one another as a fold-in: Column [I] is the Hörspiel text “Der Tierplanet” and column [II], the text for “Besuch in einer sterbenden Stadt.” “Besuch” is the shorter of the two pieces and in order for it to appear alongside “Tierplanet” as a fold-in in order to create “eine optische Raum/Zeit-Relation der beiden nebeneinanderstehenden Hörspiele,” Brinkmann double-spaced its text. “Der Tierplanet” was composed in June 1971 and broadcast by the WDR in 1972; “Besuch in einer sterbenden Stadt” was written 1972/1973 and broadcast June 28, 1973. According to Maleen Brinkmann’s editorial notes from *Der Film in Worten*, the Hörspiel should have contained further visual elements: “Um den Absichten des Autors zu entsprechen, eine optische Raum/Zeit-Relation der beiden
form of this spectral and thus dis-figured reality, calling the Hörspiele themselves “die Erweiterung” of the typical, everyday nightmare, “der damit beginnt, daß man eine Zeitung aufschlägt und zu lesen anfängt.” Images of the bloodless horrors the reader of a newspaper encounters (“Geisterhafte Schnellzüge fahren aufeinander zu und explodieren lautlos [...] zu lautlosem Zischen der Schneidbrenner und farblosem Geschrei, das sich vermischt mit dem Lächeln eines Filmstars”) appear in series. The text transitions seamlessly to the following montage of felt percepts from embodied daily life:

[...] während leise Gas ausströmt, im Hausflur ein Kind schreit [...] Und wieder treiben wie bei einem Unfall einzelne Körperteile durch die Vorstellung, während Sie eine Straße entlanggehen, hier die Knie eines Mädchens, hier gewelltes Haar leicht auf der Schulter eines anderen Mädchens, hier die Augenpartie eines Jungen, der Schritt einer Frau, die Handbewegung einer anderen Frau, wieder Schultern einer anderen Frau und der Mund eines Jungen zu den überkreuzten Schenkeln wieder einer anderen Frau, eines anderen Mädchens, zusammengeschnitten zu was für einem imaginären Monstrum? Jetzt nehmen Sie von der Titelseite einer Illustrierten das buschige Schamhaar mit. Dann fügen Sie das trockene, mühsame Husten eines Passanten hinzu, der Sie gerade in dem Moment überholt. Und irgendeine Frau sagt, er zwang mich zu den schaurigsten Dingen, bis ich nicht mehr konnte. Ein Mann sagt aus, es sei schwer gewesen, mit der Gartenschere die Rippen zu zerschneiden. [...] Und Sie fügen nun das blasige, staubige Tageslicht hinzu [...] Sie fügen das lange, schleifende Bremsen von Wagen hinzu. Und Sie schneiden es immerfort zusammen zu einem endlosen, schmierigen Comic der Furcht, jeden Tag neu, mit imaginären Verstümmelungen, stammelnden Lauten an den Straßenecken und Hauseingängen, aus denen sich verblaßte Streifen Urin über das Pflaster schängeln, das leise, schwingende Glockenspiel eines Spielautomaten, das sich fortsetzt mit einem höhnischen Grinsen, das irgendwer zurückgelassen hat, als ob Sie eine kräftige Spritze Adrenalin verpaßt bekommen hätten: der Organismus befindet sich im Zustand höchster Wachheit und Abwehrbereitschaft, das gilt für das Psychische wie das Körperliche (Erregung, Gespanntheit, weite Pupillen, schneller Puls, hoher Blutdruck, Mobilisierung der Blut- und Zuckerreserven usw.)

nebeneinanderstehenden Hörspiele zu erreichen, wurde das Druckbild von ‘Besuch in einer sterbenden Stadt’ durch Vergrößerung der Zeilenabstände verändert. Den in seinen Aufzeichnungen erwähnten Plan, dieses Hörspiel mit Tagebuchcollagen als fold-in zu erweitern, konnte Rolf Dieter Brinkmann nicht mehr realisieren” (unpaginated editorial notes from Film).
With “zusammenschneiden,” Brinkmann makes explicit his view that this “Comic der Furcht” is in fact a film cut together by the learned actions of consciousness, producing a narrative out of the disparate images to be projected on the “inneren Bildschirm” (EK 28). At once endlessly new and the same, this narrative is the mimetic reproduction of the experience of television or film. Its trigger of the sympathetic nervous system\textsuperscript{159} manifests in a list of explicitly haptic sensations associated with an acute stress response, confirming that despite a century or more of metropolitan life, shock remains a defining element of daily urban experience. As Brinkmann speaks to us over the roar of Cologne traffic: “Der Krieg hat nie aufgehört” (\textit{Wörter}, Green CD, track 2).

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In titling a volume of the collage works “Erkundungen [...] für einen Aufstand” (“reconnaissances [...] for an uprising”), repeatedly making the claim across the post-1970 works that the war continues, and focusing on the body’s inscription by images of violence, its penetration by associated affects (“die latente Bedrohung der Kriegsatmosphäre [...] die diffuse Angst”) Brinkmann establishes the militant or tactical intent of his psychogeography, and signals his relationship to the historical avant-garde (The very adoption of the term “avant-garde” by aesthetic movements of the early 1910s through the mid-1930s was a conscious deployment of a military metaphor, which occurred precisely at the moment when the military avant-garde

\textsuperscript{159} The branch of the autonomic nervous system (ANS) responsible for fight-or-flight response.
became obsolete (Wilke 43). Like the Situationists before him, Brinkmann’s psychogeography (re)literalizes the activity of the original vanguard: an instrument of pre-World War I militaries, these specialized troops performed geographic reconnaissance, assessing terrain as well as enemy position and numbers, notating and relaying this information back to the greater corps. As with the military vanguard, the author’s ability to perform these actions inheres in a “corporeal mobility on the ground” (43). Tobias Wilke harnesses with the coinage of “tacti(ca)lity” an overlooked but crucial ambiguity contained in the German word taktisch: this corporeal mobility is an embodied and therefore haptic tactic, to be contrasted with modern warfare’s distanced action of military surveillance via air and radio communication.\textsuperscript{160}

Such tactical/tactile explorations of space for the purposes of a future resistance are provoked by the proliferation after the Second World War of what Gilles Deleuze, following Pascal Augé, calls “any-spaces-whatever”:

\textsuperscript{160} This focus on the polysemy of taktisch comes from its use in the first draft of Benjamin’s “Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit.” The editors of his Gesammelte Schriften problematically chose to replace taktisch with taktil. The decision was based on an argument about Alois Riegl’s use of taktisch in Spätrömische Kunst-Industrie which described the optically operative tactility of Egyptian art, and on a French version of the Kunstwerk essay authorized by Benjamin himself, in which taktisch was translated as the French word tactile: “What Benjamin’s editors overlooked and, far more significant, what they obscured for generations of future readers when they ‘corrected’ Benjamin’s original vocabulary was a calculated semantic play on the relationship between two different etymological roots. Benjamin kept using the word taktisch precisely because of the ambiguity that Riegl had wanted to preclude, an ambiguity that allowed him to operate with both meanings at once—with τακτικός and taktilis, tactical and tactile—in a way that could never have been reproduced in French, where tactique never means ‘tactile.’ This semantic oscillation accounts for the significance, indeed indispensability, of the term for Benjamin’s project” (Wilke 48-49). On the advent of the First World War: “The technologization of warfare rendered the military function of the avant-garde increasingly obsolete, as tactical exploration became more a matter of radio transmitters and airborne surveillance than of corporeal mobility on the ground. Perhaps not accidentally, this period of diminishing significance within the original, military domain coincides historically with the appropriation of the avant-garde concept by the aesthetic realm” (43).
The fact is that, in Europe, the post-war period has greatly increased the situations which we no longer know how to react to, in spaces which we no longer knew how to describe. These were ‘any spaces whatever’, deserted but inhabited, disused warehouses, waste ground, cities in the course of demolition or reconstruction. And in these any-spaces-whatever a new race of characters was stirring, kind of mutant: they saw rather than acted, they were seers.

*(Cinema 2 xi)*

Independent of film, these are “*deconnected or emptied spaces*” of towns “demolished or being reconstructed, its waste grounds, its shanty towns, and even in places where the war had not penetrated, its undifferentiated urban tissue, its vast unused places, docks, warehouses, heaps of girders and scrap iron [... in which] characters were found less and less in sensory-motor ‘motivating’ situations, but rather in a state of strolling, of sauntering or of rambling which defined *pure optical and sound situations*” *(Cinema 1 120).*

As readers of the collage books know, the register of such spaces in the act of strolling, sauntering or rambling are constitutive of the work. For Brinkmann, a great proponent of “*Tun,machen,Tat,schreiben,*” touching, tasting, hearing, and seeing within the nonpurposive space-time of dérive are among the most important acts the artist can commit. Whether recording the ruin or the ceaseless rebuilding of the metropolis (“Ich sah die ständigen Umbauten innerhalb der Kulisse, durch die einzelne Personen gehen, Musikräume, Spielhallen, Speiserestaurants, Rechtsanwaltsbüros, und Ärtzezimmer, die letzteren sind am beständigsten gewesen, vor allem die Banken und die Versicherungshochhäuser, Betonplateaus, einige dünne
Rasenstreifen davor, darum rotieren die andern Räume\(^{161}\), the ugliness of rundown and red-light districts, or of post-industrial wasteland (e.g. “lieengelassene, aber schon längst verplante Gelände voll wunderlichem Wirrwarr an Unkraut, die Gebüsch tragen Plastikfetzen, rostige Sprühdosen im grünlichem Schimmer von Brennesselwäldern, gebogenes Grün, kriechende dünne Ranken, Blätter, lichtdurchlässig, feinste Umwandlungen, ein rostiger Drahtzaun, eingetampelt, Papierfetzen”), Brinkmann’s psychogeographies are inarguably aesthetic mappings of Western European any-spaces-whatever (WW 269-70).

Of this cartography, Martin Kagel writes,

Brinkmann does not offer an alternative conception of history and there is no utopian Other hidden behind the destruction he records. However, his poetry does contain its own topography: a delineation of spaces in and beyond the negative reality he experiences. Other than the moment itself, which marks the space of the discontinuous, there [...] are the spaces of the \textit{posthistoire}, scenes of urban decay or industrial brownfields that the author discovers, ‘landscapes where for moments it is possible to breathe again’ \[\text{\textit{Landschaften, in denen für Momente noch ein Aufatmen möglich ist}.} (54)\]

The proprioceptive and kinesthetic metaphor of liberation (the body’s literal expansion into space with the intake of breath that stands in for a figural reclamation of time) registers a felt freedom from the tyranny of utility, of rationalism. In their quiet, disuse, and slow reclamation by nature, these spaces exhibit an enviable

\(^{161}\) “Kulisse” is the author’s word for the constructed nature of urban environment that masquerades as unmediated, as ‘natural.’ The built environment is in fact an ever-changing studio set.
purposelessness and contrast starkly with the frenzied pace and noise of a society that demands purpose of all things and persons. The space becomes one of a liberated embodiment, in which a ceaseless action is not demanded of the subject and one can pause to breathe, to acknowledge the body and its sensations. One is free to “see, rather than act[...],” or to become seer, to speak with Deleuze. Any-spaces-whatever “r[o]se up where the modern affects of fear, detachment, but also freshness, extreme speed and interminable waiting were developing” (121). It is the purposelessness of any-space-whatever that causes what Deleuze calls the “shatter[ing of ...] the action-image” that occurs in conjunction with a blurring of determinate location (121).

The concept of any-spaces-whatever are derived in the books on cinema. One of the important basic distinctions Deleuze makes in these works is between movement-image cinema, in which frame follows frame causally and according to the necessities of action, and time-image cinema, which frees time from causality. Movement-image cinema is exemplified by mainstream film, in which the conventions of verisimilitude prevail. A shot of an action-hero grabbing a weapon is followed by that hero dispatching his enemies with that weapon. Images here are instrumentalized to generate narrative efficiently and are designated action-images: in them, the conventions of causality prevail. By contrast, in time-image cinema, a protagonist seen grabbing a gun could be followed by anything at all—s/he reaching for it again in slo-mo, a jump cut to an entirely different point in time, s/he falling into contemplation, stalling what seemed an imminent action. Deleuze attributes the rise of time-image

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cinema to post-war European directors like Rossellini, Antonioni, and Godard\textsuperscript{163} and ascribes great importance to any-spaces-whatever in the liberation of time from causality for the works of these filmmakers. They are the disjunctive spaces of postmodernity that, in their visceral or affective effects upon a perceiving body, open the viewer to the experience of time: instead of action following upon action, in any-spaces-whatever, action \textit{cannot} proceed from action. Time spools backward or forward; it slows and stretches as the actor, for example, becomes lost in thought. Brinkmann transposes the lessons of these directors onto lived experience in the act of \textit{dérive}. His use of Cage’s open container technique to “stretch” the present requires the aesthetic mapping of these spaces to reclaim the experience of time through the evocation of affect.

For Deleuze, any-spaces-whatever constitute images that arouse an affective/visceral response, which he terms the \textit{affection-image}.\textsuperscript{164} As I argued in the previous chapter, the registration of affect to arouse such a response comprises the

\textsuperscript{163} Brinkmann was invested in the cinema of these directors. In a 1972 letter to Piwitt, Brinkmann holds Antonioni and Godard up as examples of the type of directors he wishes West Germany could produce: “(Es ist schon sehr übel, was hier in der Bundesrepublik läuft, seit 25 Jahren haben sie keine richtige Musik mehr hingekriegt, keinen Schlager, keinen Star, keinen Film, der anregend oder vergnüglich war, nichts in der Art von Antonioni oder Fellini oder Godard, nie ist eine junge Generation aufgetreten, alles immer im Anfang abverreckt, mit Stipendien hochgepäppelt, von alten Herren gelobt, in Altherrenzeitschriften und mit akademischen Schmand versehen publiziert, richtig zum Ekeln!)” (“Piwitt” 88). Of the New German Cinema, Brinkmann takes Alexander Kluge in his sights, specifically the film \textit{Artisten in der Zirkuskuppel: ratlos}, deriding it as a “Bilderfrikassee” in which the abstractions of \textit{Denkakrobatik} are pushed to an extreme, the result of a “zu intensiver Faschismus erfahrung […] Sie vermag es nicht, sich in Beziehung zu ‘Maschinen’ zu setzen – ihre Assoziation kommt sogliche auf ‘Vernichtungsmaschine’ . . . und so entsteht das Vorurteil, das Alexander Kluge in seinem Bilderfrikassee ‘Die Artisten etc.’ verbraten hat: Angesichts der unmenschlichen Situation bleibt dem Künstler nur übrig, den Schwierigkeitsgrad seiner Künste weiter zu erhöhen!” (\textit{Film} 226)

\textsuperscript{164} The cinema books offer a complicated typology of images belonging to movement-image and time-image cinemas. In this typology, affection-images are associated with the close-up, shots of a face or equivalently expressive body part or even object. (A close shot of the gleaming edge of a knife expresses intensity in much the way a close-up of a crying eye does for Deleuze.)
core of Brinkmann’s psychogeographic practice, rather than any attempt at a representation derivative of the real. Because representation begins by grafting order onto “the delicate milieus of overlapping perspectives, of communicating distances, divergences and disparities, of heterogeneous potentials and intensities,” it robs us of the very experience of difference, and especially the difference of space (Deleuze, Difference 50). Brinkmann’s rejection of representationality is paired with a strident rejection of causality after 1970. This results in a writing resistant to linear reading which manifests the ideals of time-image cinema in its mapping of the any-spaces-whatever of Rome, Cologne, Longkamp, Olevano.

Where the poetry of the late sixties adopts filmic strategies of what the author carefully calls “wiederg[eben]” (to render, to express), as opposed to any explicit synonym for representation (e.g. “beschreiben,” “abbilden,” or “darstellen”), the images from this earlier period adhere more closely to the model of the action-image (Standphotos 187). Their pop sensibility, which prizes the register of the everyday and embraces consumer culture as a dimension of that everyday,\(^\text{165}\) mimicks as a matter of course the simple narrativity of popular mainstream film in its rendering of event:

\(^{165}\) At the time of his Pop phase, Brinkmann remained caught in the contradiction inherent to Pop’s West German reception by the New Left. Outlining the problem, Andreas Huyssen asks “how was it possible that an art expressing sensual joy in our daily environment could at the same time be critical of this environment?” (“Cultural Politics” 146). Brinkmann’s ambivalence toward the possible critical function of Pop, in which the satire of consumer culture masquerades as its wholesale celebration, bears the mark of his alignment with American models of writing and political thought. In West Germany, a “wave of pop enthusiasm swept the Federal Republic [...] As an ‘emancipation euphoria’ spread [...] pop in its broadest sense became amalgamated with the public and political activities of the anti-authoritarian New Left”—while in the U.S., Pop was not widely understood as protest and criticism (141). Brinkmann’s understanding of his American influences pushed him closer to the belief in the value of Pop’s ability to break down Huyssen’s “great divide,” than in its critical potential. For deeper analysis of these national differences in Pop’s reception, see Huyssen’s “The Cultural Politics of Pop” (The Great Divide, Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985) pp. 141-159.
Noch einmal

Meine Frau auf einem Bein, nackt
das andere Bein auf den Badewannenrand
aufgestützt fragt nach der Uhrzeit wie spät
und ich sehe den kleinen Fleck Haar
zwischen ihren Schenkeln für sie eine Stelle wie
ejede andere zum Waschen und denke warum nicht
während sie noch einmal fragt, nackt
das Standbein gewechselt.

The poem is taken from Die Piloten, composed between 1967 and 1968, and is representative of Brinkmann’s adoption of O’Hara’s Lunch Poems approach (also known as “I do this, I do that” poetry) which comprises much of the late sixties corpus. If considered the beginnings of an increasingly filmically inflected poetics, the poem is composed of a single shot: a nude woman washing herself while addressing the person
behind the camera. “Noch einmal” differs from “Einfaches Bild” (cited above as an example of photographically inflected writing) insofar as the woman’s shift in position from one leg to the other creates a focus on a small, deliberate movement in an otherwise static image, and her question repeated “noch einmal” generates linear temporality, uninterrupted by any turn of thought that might require cutting to another scene.

By contrast, 1975’s Westwärts 1 & 2 deploys cut up and a far more complex use of white space, informed by the collage practices of Erkundungen, Rom, Blicke, and Schnitte. Line breaks and meter complexify consequentially, producing a text that conveys far greater movement as shifts in the force of the author’s attention. The register of sensuous experience is composed as a montage of impressions, interspersed with cuts to thought-images:

Bruchstück Nr. 2

Erschöpft wachte ich
auf, öffnete das Fenster
des schäbigen Raums,
kein Vogelgeräusch, keine Bäume,
einige gelblichgraue Wolken, aufgehäuft
über den Dächern, fern am Rand des Horizonts,
ich sah auf einen leeren Taxiplatz
und das Grau des Platzes
erinnerte mich an einen Traum, in dem ein Telefon klingelt wie ein
umgekippter Abfallkorb, überall
die Wiederspiegelungen im Fensterglas, im Lack
der Wagenkarosserien, der Rückspiegel und
der vorübergleitenden Wagen
und Augen, das sind
gebrochene Flächen, Brandmauern,
Perspektiven, keine Visionen
oder Entzuckungen des Körpers, [sic]
in der Stille ist das blöckende Husten
einer alten Frau zu hören,

auf dem Fußboden liegt mein Unterhemd,
ich hebe es auf und rieche daran,
wend ich es anziehe,

und der Morgen riecht nach Kinderurin und
Schule, riecht nach alten Tageszeitungen
und Küchenuhren, riecht nach Bürokalendar

und alltäglicher Verrücktheit
die Beschreibungen der Welt sind
mit den Stadtplänen und Telefonbüchern und
Reisebüros vorläufig zu Ende, eine

alltägliche Verrücktheit
leerer Körper, die durch die Gänge
in den hellerleuchteten Supermärkten
gehen, sie werden leerer und leerer, [...] 

The poem “Bruchstück Nr. 2” announces itself as a fragment. It is a sampling of
experience captured by the open containers of the recorded time period and the poem,
and rendered as a series of shots. Again, we enter a scene in which the author is just
waking up to the business of “bemühte Aufmerksamkeit.” The ensuing poem congeals
as a collage of visual, olfactory, auditory, and haptic percepts and negative affects. The
text springs from one image to the next, as the spontaneous action of the environment
dictates the author’s focus, as action leads the camera in open form cinema.\[166\] From a
POV shot, we zoom in on an empty taxi stand from the author’s vantage point at a

\[166\] The poetics of the open field, championed by Charles Olson in his 1950 essay “Projective
Verse,” adheres to similar conventions, most saliently in the principle that content must
determine form. Olson took Robert Creeley’s assertion “form is never more than an extension
of content,” and paired it with Edward Dahlberg’s notion that “one perception must
immediately and directly lead to another perception” to argue that concerns with rhyme,
meter, and sense should be abandoned in favor of an attention to the breath and the ear. This
meant that fixed forms (sonnet, villanelle, pantoum, sestina, etc.) were to be forsaken. The
breath alone should determine the line, and the ear, the syllables and syntax, so that the poem
was not robbed of its energy with the imposition of an arbitrary structure, which might
otherwise obstruct the possibilities of breath and ear, speech and sound.
high window, then jump cut to a dream sequence in which a telephone “rings like an overturned trashcan.” The latter image of a clattering bin, its lid noisily revolving to a stop, then pans to the wider street scene with its plethora of shiny surfaces (reflections in windowglass, in the high-polish lacquer of automobile bodies). These creating a disconcerting *mise en abyme* of reflected and re-reflected images, figuring an infinite regress of the simulacra composing the urban environs. We hear the piteous bleating of an older person’s cough, cutting back to the author perceiving the sound in his hotel room while lifting a dirty shirt from a dirty floor and sniffing exploratorily as he pulls it over his head. A series of olfactory percepts follows, demonstrating literature’s abiding power over cinema\(^{167}\) to preserve such marginalized forms of sensation as images. We transition to a thought-image, perhaps with a voice-over, in which the world comes to the individual ready-mapped by media and mediators (city plans, telephone books, travel agencies), rendering our bodies “empty” as sensuous experience becomes epistemically superfluous, an extravagance from the standpoint of utility.

The poem continues:

> […] und ich starre die Zimmertapete
> dies er schäbigen Ewigkeit an, die mit immer
denselben Vögeln bedruckt ist, Vögel aus
> Goldfarbe, verblichene Vögel,

Wie man den Himmel anstarrt, gedankenlos,
Unwichtig und ohne Bewunderung,

\(^{167}\) Barring the short-lived whimsies of Smell-O-Vision or AromaRama, the failures of which lay in the difficulty of mediating smells. John Waters’ 1982 “Odorama” version of *Polyester* went some way to resolving the problem by issuing movie-goers scratch-and-sniff cards with numbered spots, to be scratched at when the corresponding number flashed on the bottom right corner of the screen. This form of mediation found no traction in mainstream film, likely owing to the clumsiness of the mediation procedure (see the flashing number, find and scratch your card at the appropriate spot, sniff, return to conventional viewing).
Und draußen ist eine Ewigkeit aus
Schmierölflecken und Regenwolken,
draußen ist eine Ewigkeit
aus Nachrichtensprechern,
draußen ist eine Ewigkeit,
aus verbrannten Gärten, Packpapier und
Konten, draußen ist eine Ewigkeit

aus Vorzimmern, Vorzimmerhöllen, gepolsterten
doppelten Türen, Drehstühlen, Wartezimmern und

Kruppeln, krummen Hunden, Wachsblumen,
Straßen, die in Straßen einmünden,
Kindergeld, Renten, verschollenen

Gewinnen: eine Hölle aus Umsatzzwängen, “schlag die
Gewinne raus,” eine Hölle der Fakten,
eine Hölle ausgepowerter Träume

Ansprachen, Interviews, Verzögerungen, Planspiele,
Bespitzelungen, Denunziationen, Programme,

Statements, auf den Toiletten abgegeben,

Ämter sondern den grauen, zählen
Schleim toter Wörter ab,

die alltäglichen Ängste
aufgeschminkt, und ich starre, wer bin ich,
träume ich, daß an den Mauern
öffentlicher Gebäude, an den Wänden der Schulen
zu lesen ist: Poesie, aber nicht länger
Notwendigkeiten,

und haben sich tatsächlich die alltäglichen
Verhältnisse geändert, bin ich alt und
schäbig, deswegen verlange ich nach
einer Änderung der Realität

* sofort,
******
****** vielleicht
*** ein Schluck Wasser aus dem
Wasserhahn, vielleicht
lieber in dieser schämigen
Ewigkeit jetzt ein Apfel,
vielleicht jetzt ein
fantastischer Gedanke, ich sollte vielleicht jetzt das Taschenbuch aus lesen, vielleicht sollte ich jetzt sofort die schäbige Ewigkeit dieses Hotel Zimmers verlassen, ohne das Gedicht zu Ende zu schreiben und ohne zu bezahlen,
überhaupt aufgeben, mit den Dingen fertig werden zu wollen, gleichgültig angesichts der Hässlichkeit der Umgebung, vorbei an einem ewigen mürrischen Portier, der vor dem Schlüsselbrett dieser schädigen Ewigkeit hockt und in der Zeitung liest,
Ziellos durch die Straßen gehend, dem Geräusche meiner eigenen Schritte inmitten der vielen Abwesenheiten zuhörend,
und ich bin in meinem Körper, lebendig, und die Verkrampfung durch Kunst, hol's der Geier,
da ist wieder ein Bretterzaun, und verlängere ich, was ich direkt vor Augen habe, die Wirklichkeit, führt sie zu endlosen Schreckens Visionen und Ängsten, doch der Himmel ist original blau, aber er hängt heute in Fetzen über der Stadt, &
der Tag zerfällt in Einzelheiten, die lärmn, [...] (WW 196-200)

In this section of “Bruchstück,” we encounter a fast-paced montage of unrelated but affect-laden images, of which there is an “Ewigkeit”: oil stains on the pavement, rainclouds, newscasters, burned gardens, packing paper and accounts, waiting rooms with upholstered doors, swivel chairs, cripples, dogs, waxflowers, labyrinthine streets, government subsidies, pensions, and lost winnings. With these
final items on the list, we transition into a grouping of intangibles that film could never successfully montage at such a pace without resorting to language in the form of voice-over or narration: items like the “pressure to maintain sales volume,” facts, burnt-out dreams, speeches, interviews, delays, trial simulations, espionage, denunciations, programs, and statements “made from the toilet” close out the list.

With the next couplet, we arrive at a dangling conjunction and preposition (“Ämter sondern den grauen, zähen/Schleim toter Wörter ab”) which seem to have lost their action verb in the cut up procedure. The elision performs the ineradicability of the “viscous mucous of dead words”: they should be “________ ab,” but with the verb missing, any “abschaben” or “abschleifen” is impossible. Remaining on the level of thought-image, we then jump cut to the walls of public buildings, of schools, upon which “Poesie” (or alternatively “Poesie, aber nicht länger/Notwendigkeiten,” depending on how we parse the phrase) is written: a literalization bzw. visualization of Brinkmann’s metaphor for the sensuous impoverishment that language’s supersession of the body has wrought, and literature’s sorry turn to a set of unquestionable abstractions under institutional control. We remain clearly on the level of thought, as the author toys with the images of possible actions (drinking water from the faucet, eating an apple, having a fantastic thought), until we land on a series of yet-potential actions (leaving the room without paying, and so failing to finish the poem he was writing there) that may or may not have been realized once Brinkmann is passing the porter, emerging “ziellos” onto the street for yet another round of exposures, and into a day that will decompose into “lärmen[den...] Einzelheiten.” A series of thoughts that could be voiced over to the sound of his footsteps announces, however, his continuing commitment to the world of intensities that concludes this section: “und ich bin in
meinem Körper, lebendig,/und die Verkrampfung durch Kunst,/hol’s der Geier.” The remainder of the poem, which I will leave uncited, is the familiar registration of the thoughts, affects, and percepts belonging to his walk.

The turns of thought and changes of scene of “Bruchstück” are sudden, which is to say they do not proceed linearly from proximate actions or thoughts; instead, observations and thoughts wind around one another digressively. The author’s movement on the walk is “ziellos,” as are the entirety of his actions and observations encapsulated by the word-film. This is a time-image cinema in which causality’s suspension means that action cannot stem from action. Our protagonist Brinkmann does not act, but has become consummate seer. His haptic visions make palpable his, and the reader’s own state, of alienation.
Conclusion

*Rough Surfaces* traces the contours of an experimental writing practice that intends to actualize a body’s expression, its extension, under the medial conditions of an urban present that acts on all fronts to paralyze it. The affects that culminate with the neurotic paralysis recorded in the post-1970 works are anxiety, panic, depression or hopelessness and apathy, and they are registered as passive responses to the continuous sensory-affective onslaught of a commodified present. The author counters this inscription with the activity of a relentless subjectivity whose defining expression is the affect of rage (*Zorn*). The engine of the late writing is constituted by the movement between the poles of the registered passive negative affects and the active expression of rage against the conditions that engender these reactive affects (anxiety, panic, hopelessness etc.). As its title announces, Harald Bergmann’s 2005 film *Brinkmanns Zorn* takes Brinkmann’s rage-based strategy of resistance as its focal point. Bergmann’s adaptation of the WDR audiotapes (DVD 3, *Die Tonbänder: 1973-75*) makes immediate to the viewer the feedback loop of Brinkmann’s actions and reactions on and to his environs as no other historical document available to us can; the immediacy of the film and the audiotape it collages gives access to Brinkmann’s politics of expression in practice that print media cannot.169

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168 A selection of which was also released in 2005 on intermedium as the five-disc set, *Wörter Sex Schnitt*.

169 Bergmann stages scenes that use the audiotape from the over 600 hours of recordings Brinkmann made on the WDR’s portable tape recorder. The film’s actors lip-sync to the recordings.
In his book *Rage and Time* (*Zorn und Zeit*, 2006), Peter Sloterdijk argues for a reinvigoration of what he calls the “thymotic impulse.” *Thymos*, once the righteous fury of the epic hero whose associated character traits of irritability and short-temperedness underwrite his capacity for the just expression of violent affects\(^{170}\), has been domesticated into bourgeois “stout-heartedness” (*Beherztheit*) (21). Stout-heartedness for Sloterdijk is the affect that defines the new masculinity required by urban space: the affective capacity to assert oneself, to extend the body in space both public and private, but within the limits deemed admissible by polite society. Brinkmann rejects this transformation of rage into a stoic impassivity he identifies with the image of the city as prison, in which bodies are locked away in “kleinen Kästchen,” denied the freedoms of movement, extension and expression (*Die Tonbänder* 39:45). His position resembles that of Sloterdijk in his call for society’s increased thymotization: “Since ‘society’ primarily suffers from an unforgivable lack of manifest rage with regard to its own conditions, the development of a culture of indignation through the methodically exercised excitation of rage becomes the most important psychopolitical task” (119). However, in these concluding remarks, I would like to treat his countering expressivity as a problematic radicalization of Sloterdijk’s call.

Sloterdijk’s interest in the question of a politics of rage is timely, and the successes and failures of Brinkmann’s aesthetic strategy may offer insights into contemporary conditions. Sloterdijk introduces a recent “irritation” in the developed

\(^{170}\) Sloterdijk’s point of entry for his treatment of *thymos* is the rage of Achilles, an affect that flows through the warrior to serve the purposes of the gods and makes him the medium for their willed actions. Sloterdijk quips, “In Homer’s world […] it is not the human beings who have their passions, but rather it is the passions that have their human beings” (9).
world with a ventriloquization: “Westerners raise an alarm: ‘Hatred, revenge, irreconcilable hostility have suddenly appeared again among us! A mixture of foreign forces, unfathomable as the evil will, has infiltrated the civilized spheres’” (45). As if the energies of rage and its organized, directed form, revenge, had been entirely exorcised by the 18th century’s invention of civilized society and the rule of law, modern Western subjects, insulated from mass suffering by their relative and obscene wealth, claim an inflammatory naivete regarding the real, defined by Sloterdijk as “the enemy” or “what could kill” (46). He identifies in his study a defining failure of Western culture: the present conditions of global capitalism are such that rage, an affect all too human and thus unlikely to remain silent despite the Enlightenment’s gag orders, cannot be collected or organized. No “movements or parties are visible that could […] take on the function of a world bank for the utopian-prophetic use of thymotic impulses” (203). Today’s rage-carriers lack a narrative by which to orient themselves, and thus a regression to ethnic or subcultural narratives with their divisive othering tendencies is to be expected. In specific, contemporary media, the instruments of the “bourgeois public sphere”

cannot function as collectors or as accumulation and cultivation media for thymotic subjects [...] which means that they are incapable of moderating the transformation of rage into pride or hope. It is beyond doubt that modern mass media possess the potential to initiate affective epidemics—topics that could spread according to the principle of viral infections. At the same time, the media neutralize topics in order to subject all events to the law of standardization. It is their democratic mission to create indifference by eradicating the difference between major and minor matters. (205)
Brinkmann’s post-1970 works document the psychic damage of having lived through not only the intolerable conditions of early childhood for Germans born around 1940 (Allied air raids spent in bomb shelters holding his mouth open; the devastated landscape, material deprivations and fear- and shame-based social programming of the immediate post-war years) but also through the painful disappointment of failed revolution, a reliable source of resentment and fury in his post-’70 texts. With the ubiquitous critique of the Geld-Sex-Tod complex, Brinkmann identifies and rages against the role of the mass media in the diffusion of revolutionary/thymotic energies, which proceeds through the leveling of sensuous specificity across space and time and the manipulation of erotic and thymotic impulses to encourage consumption and distraction. Brinkmann’s furious individualism is in part a consequence of the acknowledgement that the mass media, bound to the flows of capital, act only to dampen and redirect affect, never to allow its accumulation into what Sloterdijk calls a “rage bank” (65). For Sloterdijk, “[r]evolution cannot be a matter of the resentment of an isolated private person, although such affects are also instantiated in its decisive moment. Revolution rather implies the creation of a bank of rage whose investments should be considered in as precise detail as an army operation before a final battle [...]” (64). Under the medial conditions of his historical moment (which is to say, largely convinced of the certainty of revolution’s failure), Brinkmann assumes the problematic stance of a one-man rage repository engaged in a solitary war on those conditions. Importantly, his investments have not been considered in the precise tactical detail Sloterdijk recommends. While his post-1970 works, as I have argued, might serve as a bank of negative affect for a
collective of readers with the specific affective entrainment effects I describe, his commitment to the creation of situations that engender rage and make of his body a reservoir of fury has highly destructive consequences for his intimate sphere.

Organized around the familiar production sites of Brinkmann’s fury, Bergmann’s cinematic audiovisual collage investigates the violence instantiated by what I have called a radicalization of Sloterdijk’s thesis, and may be more properly understood as its (impossible) individualization. Brinkmann holds that society’s unforgivable lack of outrage requires uncompromising resistance, and must therefore be countered with unmitigated affective intensities as they occur. *Brinkmanns Zorn: Die Tonbänder* thus constitutes a loose taxonomy of rage-triggering situations, each with differing witnesses to, or recipients of, his unfiltered bursts of affective intensity. The film opens with the actor playing Brinkmann, Eckhard Rhode, trudging through a classic Brinkmannian any-space-whatever: a field alongside the tracks just beyond a train station on the outskirts of Cologne. Throughout the film, Rhode does not enunciate his lines, but instead performs an extraordinary lip-sync to selections from the WDR audiotapes. In this desolate landscape, he/Brinkmann screams at the sky in a ninety-second, highly rhythmic litany of abuse (Fig 5.1):

“Ein gelber, schmutziger Himmel, ein gelbschmutziger Himmel, ein
gelbschmutziger Himmel, ein gelbschmutziger Himmel über mir, ein
gelbschmutziger Himmel, ein gelbschmutziger Himmel über mir, ein
gelbschmutziger Himmel, ein Himmel der überhaupt nicht aufhört, ein
gelbschmutziger Himmel der überhaupt nicht aufhört in diesem Augenblick,
ein gelbschmutziger Himmel, ein gelber, schmutziger Himmel, ein gelber,
schmutziger Himmel, ein mieser, gelber, dreckiger, schmutziger Kölner
Himmel, ein mieser Himmel, ein verdammter Scheissdreck von Himmel, ein mieser, gelber, schmutziger, Kölner, verfluchter, elender Kackhimmel [...]” (Die Tonbänder, DVD 3, 0:29-2:00)

Here Cologne’s industrial pollution and its inescapable visual corruption of the horizon draws his ire. Just as in the collage works, this type of lyrical and permutative cursing, his affective response to his immediate surrounds expressed by the speaking body, is captured repeatedly on the audiotapes and correspondingly, repeated instances of it appear in the film. Bergmann’s staging of this scene highlights Brinkmann’s isolation in such moments on dérive. There are no other human bodies to witness or be inscribed by its violence. Its provocation is addressed to the tape’s future listener, but in the film’s temporality falls on no ears but his own.

Fig 5.1 (DVD 3, 0:45)
The viewer/listener, however, gains access to the disturbing intersubjective dimension of Brinkmann’s politics of expression in the recordings of his home life. They contain not only Brinkmann’s endless expressions of negative affect, which are also found in the written works, but also the responses of his intimates. Through the recordings the listener comes to understand Maleen as an unwilling but largely compliant participant in the audio-writing experiment unfolding in her apartment over a period of two years. As director, Bergmann chose to adapt a scene from an ‘interview’ between husband and wife. In it the actress playing Maleen, Alexandra Finder, lends visual expression to the anxious insecurity heard in Maleen Brinkmann’s recorded voice. She speaks in a quiet, unsure tone and is unable to confidently formulate the kind of incisive author-interview question we assume she has been prompted to ask. She seems to irritate her director-husband with a nervously whimsical non-sequitur about the contents of a cabinet:

MB: Jaaa...welches Buch ist denn für dich wichtig, so, für die Arbeit, und welches findest du schön...umm, wie siehst du das überhaupt im Verhältnis zu einander und...was steht bei dir so im Schrank?


Certainly, the collage works and the epistolary materials reproduced in Rom, Blicke in particular yield impressions of the author’s stormy relationships with his family and friends. While some of their actual written responses are included, the texts lack the immediacy of the unscripted responses recorded on the audiotapes.
MB: Jaaa...heilig? Was meinst du damit?

RDB: [suddenly loud, aggressive] Bücher sind für mich nicht heilig! Kein Buch ist für mich ehrwürdig, vor keinem Buch verneige ich mich.


RDB: [somewhat patronizing] Woran hast du denn gedacht?


RDB: KEINS. (15:30-17:02)

The interview, presumably staged by Brinkmann, is a format that reinforces the viewer/listener’s sense that the woman has been set up to fail and be bullied. The taped exchange suggests that she is excluded from his work and ideas as a general rule, but is now expected to practice discussing them with her husband, who plays the role of a disappointed and impatient tutor. Maleen’s ignorance of his literary interests and commitments, which the interview format seems designed to expose, he treats as just another condition of the present against which to rage and ties into the misogyny found in the post-1970 works. Women are deplored for an ignorant and purportedly greater deference to reigning conservative sexual mores, guilty of participating in the commodification of sex by acting as gate-keepers who drive up its value by conforming to the images of desire circulated by mass media and then withholding it. In these interactions from the author’s intimate sphere, we learn that his ethic of expressivity spares no one his ‘righteous’ anger. It is loosed indiscriminately, wherever cause can be found or invented through the production of such situations. But in the private intersubjective dimension the audiotapes reveal, rage ultimately acts not to shock its witnesses into an awareness of their deficient, alienated state of ignorant
complacency, but instead to exercise control over their speech and behaviors. The traces left by Brinkmann’s violent outbursts at home are evident in his wife’s sullenly deferential attitude caught on the WDR tapes and find emphasis in Bergmann’s film.

In particular, Die Tonbänder underscores Brinkmann’s persistent goading of his friends and family members to speak into the microphone, to engage with their sensoria and give their immediate sensory-affective experience expression. His repeated direction of their voices and actions for the purposes of his experiments is met with anxious compliance in the film, staged most tendentially in scenes with Robert. In Maleen’s case, her microphone shyness seems one part fear of saying the wrong thing and another, sullen annoyance at being interrupted with a request that she is fearful of refusing outright. Throughout the film, Brinkmann approaches Maleen during household tasks to ask, for instance, that she taste her cake batter. She resists the direction, causing her husband to instruct her “So, mit dem Finger.” When she does not apply herself to describing the taste with more than a list of the batter’s ingredients, she is prompted like a child to think about its flavors, their station on her tongue and their temporality. She begins to consider and describe, shyly, with a now-familiar measure of quiet resentment and tentative but hopeful compliance (54:45-56:22). The viewer is given a strong impression that she has just avoided a confrontation of a kind that frequently erupts in the apartment.

She is capable of other more assertive responses to the demand to describe her sensations, but not without risking confrontation. In another scene Bergmann opted

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172 The film insists on affects with the actors’ visual expressions that the tapes only suggest. In Robert’s case, it is impossible to intuit from a few recorded monosyllables if he was fearful of failing to meet his father’s expectations of compliance.
to adapt, Brinkmann asks Maleen in explicit language to describe what oral sex feels like for her. When she refuses, he shouts at her “Du hast immer eine Pose vor dem Mikrophon!” and begins to rant about the value of these “ernsthaften Fragen” and the necessity of authenticity. The fight ends with a demand that she leave: “Du sollst weggehen, Maleen! Endlich mal weggehen von meinem Bereich!” (1:06:52-1:07:40) In another scene, she enters a bedroom where he is recording and he gives her a less emphatic command, cajoling “Maleen, komm her! Maleen, doch! Komm her. Sag ein Wort. Es ist vollkommen egal was” (25:43-25:51). We then hear the door slam and his dry, verbal notation of her silence and exit into the mic.

The imperatives “Sag” and “Bitte sagen” are repeated in selected scenes with Brinkmann’s physically and mentally disabled son. Robert Brinkmann is six and cannot utter more than monosyllabic sounds, and in Brinkmanns Zorn, his father is shown using a special-needs reading primer to elicit and record the boy’s speech. Brinkmann, while gentle with Robert, firmly insists on compliance with the repeated command “Sagen,” with the mic pushed into his chest. In a markedly surveillant two-shot over their shoulders, Bergmann has directed the child actor to become frustrated with the father’s demand to speak the sign. The child places his hands over his face and eventually drops his head to the desk, obscuring the primer’s language from the camera. Brinkmann on tape remains calm, but quietly, stubbornly insists that Robert make another attempt. The visual dimension of the film capturing Rhode’s intent facial expressions and tense, solemn manner emphasizes the controlling sternness heard on the audio document.
On one hand, the parent’s need to equip the child with a basic life skill makes the scene wholly understandable; on the other, it is strange to watch a man so opposed to the programming effects of language forcibly stuff words into his child. It is clearest here that the quiet threat of affective violence functions explicitly in the Brinkmann household as a means of controlling those in his immediate environs for his purposes: unlike Maleen, Robert cannot be brought to express his sensations in language. Insisting on the child’s compliance after he shows signs of frustration and exhaustion can be rationalized as a paternalistic gesture (“This is for your own good!”), but, given the presence of the tape recorder, it is more likely a provocation intended to draw the a-linguistic expression of negative affect from his son.173

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173 The condition that bars Robert entrance into the Symbolic provokes many of Brinkmann’s insights into extra- or a-linguistic communication. He terms the transmissions of affect that Robert uses to communicate his thoughts and feelings “Intensitäten” and observes these communications cannot be reduced to his “groberen Körperbewegungen” (RB 416). It is a
Indeed, the experiment of the WDR tapes seems to be the confrontational provocation of others’ sensation and affect, consonant with my thesis regarding the sensation-producing intent of the collage works. There are scenes of tension with strangers in the park; Brinkmann riles one man’s barking dogs in order to record their and their owner’s increasingly uneasy responses. At the duck pond he frequents in Cologne, an old woman asks why “Sie immer mit den Tieren Aufnahmen machen” and he shushes her aggressively (40:32). Further, Bergmann’s film picks up on a link Brinkmann makes between tactility and aurality, which the author uses on multiple occasions on the tapes as a Reizmittel for provoking others. The film stages three scenes in which a microphone is rubbed or scratched to generate sound; this tactile, vibratory stimulus is transduced into the recorded sound waves that aurally stroke or assault their listener. The first is an example of the tender sensuality that Brinkmann is capable of in certain moments with his wife: he records the sound of stroking her nylons and culminates with him slowly dragging her fingernail across the wire microphone head (22:50-23:01). The next examples are more energetically assaultive attempts to inscribe their listener. Bergmann chooses the kitchen as the location to stage tape of the microphone itself being banged and scraped against unknown objects. Rhode plays Brinkmann as a mad scientist in his laboratory. The din is terrific, frantic. Rhode is filmed furiously banging, scratching and rubbing steel pots and pans, books and other objects to make noise that is sporadically rhythmic and violently loud to the point of distortion (42:29-44:02).

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short speculative leap from this scene to assume that he might also provoke his child to study these forms of expression.
In a third scene, Brinkmann speaking to a sound engineer, assumably at the WDR studios. The engineer observes Brinkmann touching the microphone and asks frantically, “Was machen Sie? Was soll das sein?!?” to which Brinkmann replies “Ein Geräusch.” Brinkmann resumes touching the mic and the engineer cries out “Nicht kaputt machen!” The author responds with characteristic choler by scratching the mic which is feeding directly into the engineer’s headphones. Over the sounds of his continued scratching, he asks in a slow cadence, “Denken Sie, denken Sie, denken Sie, dieses Geräusch sei ein krallendes Geräusch an Ihrem Althirn? An Ihrem Stammhirn?” 1:21:12-1:22:47) With this gesture, he makes the notion of a bodily, neural inscription by a haptic-aural stimulus as explicit as possible, again drawing the connection between tactile percept and violence.

Rage is notably expressed in these last instances by a body’s haptic actions that leave an acoustic trace of similar intensity. The scenes are representative examples of
Brinkmann’s abiding will to inscribe those around him in the most lasting manner he can imagine—with the penetrating force of negative affect. Where Sloterdijk envisions the politically productive mobilization of a collectively held *thymos*, Brinkmann is trapped in a self-imposed isolation practicing—interpersonally—a nihilistic and self-legitimating program of violent expression. Indeed, it is hard to speak of a “politics” of expression, negative affect or simply rage, if the hope for a *polis* has been categorically excluded. While defensible in his literary works as an aesthetic strategy that, by engendering negative affect in the reader, acts to kindle Sloterdijk’s thymotic impulse in a collective body, Brinkmann’s politics of expression as observed through the available audio materials and the focusing lens of *Brinkmanns Zorn* is indefensible as a mode of comportment in the individual’s life. He lived to regret this aspect of his writerly being. A 1975 postcard to friends sent shortly before Brinkmann’s death responds to Maleen and Robert’s permanent departure from his daily life: “Gewalt ist ein Abfall, damit bin ich durch.”
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