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In *The Musicalization of Fiction*, Werner Wolf states that "the inevitable linearity of the reading process" fundamentally distinguishes the reception of literary writing from that of (polyphonic) music.[2] Yet, according to Bakhtin, "in the novel, we can always hear voices, even while silently reading to ourselves."[3] This article analyses musico-literary intermediality in the way it occurs in the works of three contemporary German writers, Rainald Goetz, Thomas Meinecke and Andreas Neumeister. There will be a special focus on the aspects of a) time, as the dimension in which both of these art forms manifest themselves, and b) the relation of words' semantic function and their acoustic materiality.

Intermediality is, by now, a well established field in literary and cultural studies. Studies of musico-literary intermediality in particular are often devoted to Romanticism, the period that regarded music and poetry as "sister arts,"[4] or to literary modernism, for example the works of Thomas Mann, Virginia Woolf, Aldous Huxley, or Paul Celan. But contemporary literature, too, has become increasingly intermedial, not just on a thematic but also on a structural level. German literature has taken many impulses from Pop, Pop Art and popular music since the 1960s, but especially the influence of electronic music has provided a field for experimentation with different forms of literary writing that opens up a space for meta-aesthetic reflections which might help illuminate some questions of intertextuality, voice and voices, time and temporality in narration as well as of the relation between text,

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[1] ["Word machine"] Rainald Goetz, *Rave*, p. 22.
[2] Werner Wolf, *The Musicalization of Fiction*, p. 21.
[3] M. M. Bakhtin, *Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel*, p. 252.
[4] See, for example, Wolf, p. 522.

author and reader.[5] I would like to discuss possibilities and limits of "musicalized fiction", to use Werner Wolf's term, by examining the works of Goetz, Meinecke and Neumeister, all of whom approach their production of literary texts in a way that is inspired by the production of electronic music, albeit in different ways and with different results.[6] While Goetz strives to render textually the physical experience of a techno rave, Meinecke creates a polyphony of voices by 'sampling' textual material from all kinds of sources – theoretical texts, historical documents, newspaper articles, advertisements – and tries to remove the author function from the production process as far as is possible, thus asking the famous question of "who is speaking" performatively.[7] Andreas Neumeister also samples material out of the textual archives, but he is more interested in words' acoustic surface structure than Meinecke, and, by using short, regular, simple sentences in a carefully arranged combination of repetition and variation, creates a sound that is perhaps similar to minimal techno's ongoing beat, if such an effect can be produced by language.

1. Rainald Goetz: "Textualizing the Rave"[8]

Rainald Goetz, disappointed at the usual merely descriptive, theoretical and distanced approach to the, at the time, relatively new phenomenon of techno music and raves, tried to convey the phenomenon in a more direct way that is, supposedly, more true to the actual physical experience of techno in his 1998 book *Rave*. *Rave* has no plot, a vast number of protagonists, most of whom appear only once or twice, and switches between narrative perspectives. It is more of a collection of fragments of recorded experience from different locations – clubs, parks, bars, hotels and homes mostly in Munich and in Ibiza – rather than a

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[5] The first intense phase of the late 1960s is often referred to as "Pop I", while "Pop II" refers to the second phase from the mid-1990s onward. See, for example, Andrew Wright Hurley, *Into the Groove*, pp. 4-8.
[6] Wolf, p. 3.
[7] Roland Barthes, *The Death of the Author*, 1466, Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 333.
[8] Andrew Wright Hurley, *Into the Groove*, p. 75.

novel. Its focus shifts from theorization and rationalization towards a more immediate and sensual approach, an impulse shared with works from the early German pop literature phase of the 1960s. This is also reflected in the close attention *Rave* pays to the practical handiwork of "mixing, cutting and scratching" and to the factors that influence a DJ's choice of a particular record at a particular time, an activity that is portrayed as very much focussed on communication with the audience through interaction and even collaboration, and therefore includes a strong element of responsivity.[9] This is then related to the process of literary writing which the protagonist reflects upon at regular intervals, asking, for instance: "wie müßte so ein Text klingen, der von unserem Leben handelt? Ich hatte so eine Art Ahnung von Sound in mir, ein Körpergefühl, das die Schrift treffen müßte"[10] ["How would a text that deals with our lifestyle need to sound? I sort of had an idea of a sound as a feeling which writing would have to meet"]. His thought stream runs parallel to the wordless music, the nondiscursive beat: "Ich tanzte mit und fühlte mich nicht gestört von den gleichzeitig mitlaufenden Reflexionen" ["I danced along and did not feel disturbed by the reflections I was having simultaneously"].[11] These "gleichzeitig mitlaufende" [simultaneous] reflections are sometimes triggered by the music and are part of the musical experience. On the other hand, the subsequent process of writing is always already present in these thoughts. The narrator is, for example, 'thinking' punctuation: "Und ich dachte, in einzelnen Worten: 'Wirrnis, – Komma, Gedankenstrich –, Doppelpunkt: ANGENEHM. Ausrufezeichen!'" ["And I was thinking, in individual words: 'Confusion, – comma, hyphen –, colon: PLEASANT. Exclamation mark!'"].[12] There is therefore no subsequent 'translation' of physical experience into written text; rather, both are mutually constructive, as illustrated by metatextual, self-referential passages like the following: "Es gab ja keine Handlung. Das war

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[9] Rainald Goetz, *Rave*, p. 82.
[10] Ibid., p. 32.
[11] Ibid., p. 80.
[12] Ibid., p. 31.

ja der Witz" ["There was, after all, no plot/action. That was the point"], referring to both the

book and the protagonists' lives.[13] This "text that deals with our life" (or lifestyle) is not

imagined as a written, fixed artefact, but in acoustic rather than in visual form, and in

connection with the body that produces it, as the "sound" the narrator envisages suddenly

turns into (a pastiche version of) a Christian prayer:[14]

> eine Art: Ave –
>
> „Ave Maria, gratia plena."
>
> Sowas in der Art von: bene –
> bendictus – bist du –
> und gebenedeit auch unter deinen Leibern – [15]
>
> ["A kind of: Ave – 'Ave Maria, gratia plena.'
>
> Something like: bene –
> bendictus [sic] – art thou –
> and blessed, too, among your bodies –"].

The two phrases that the word "gebenedeit" [blessed] refers to in the prayer, namely

"women" (old-fashioned form "Weibern") and "thy womb" ("Deines Leibes"), are collated in

such a way as to make them relate to the rave situation of being surrounded by a crowd of

moving bodies. As one of the protagonists explains,

> Man dürfte diese Texte nicht nur rein vom Sinn her nehmen, sondern müßte sich das
> anders denken, nämlich betend, durch das immer wieder wiederholte Aussprechen der
> Worte mit dem Mund, sozusagen selbst mündlich Teil der Worte werden.[16]
>
> [You mustn't take these texts only for their meaning, but you have to imagine dealing
> with them as if praying; by way of a continually repeated pronunciation of the words
> with your mouth you become part of the words yourself, as it were.]

While this, again, draws attention towards the acoustic material reality of words, which is

given preference over their semantic function here, with the words appearing primarily as

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[13] Ibid., p. 23.
[14] Ibid., p. 32.
[15] Ibid., p. 32.
[16] Ibid., p. 33.

produced sound, and also as a ritual performance, it is also notable that there is no differentiation between reception of these (real or imagined) texts and their production. Rather than to "understand" them you have to perform them – enacting these words is how you "understand". This is one of the techniques Goetz uses to performatively 'produce' the present, to create a sense of immediacy that always points to the act of text production, and creates a sense of present rather than describing the present. This is also one of the ways in which the narrator asks what language is: rather than discussing what it is, he demonstrates what language is or can be, simultaneously asking about and performing the relation of language and reality or writing and artificiality.[17] It is also an attempt to suspend the spatial and temporal separation of production and reception that differentiates writing from DJing, however much inspired by its techniques it may be – if a text has to be (re)produced in order to be understood, then reception and production take place at the same time and in the same place, namely the body of the recipient who now also is the producer.

The narrator often stresses the impossibility of expressing in – after all, linearly arranged – words the whole range of simultaneous impressions at any given moment due to their sheer amount and intensity, suggesting a reality that exists beyond language which language can never quite get hold of.[18] The present moment, at least at a rave, is portrayed as so rich and intense that it comprises "everything", and the past is unnecessary and forgotten. This heightened intensity and different reality of the night is nevertheless an echo of the past:

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[17] See also the chapter on Hubert Fichte (""Salut an Hubert Fichte': Performativität, Aktualität, Pop") in Eckhard Schumacher, *Gerade Eben Jetzt*, pp. 155-205. Both Goetz and Meinecke often refer to Fichte both explicitly and implicitly by adopting similar ways of writing to pose this kind of questions about writing and the present performatively.

[18] For example: "Aber so war es in echt nicht, nie. Eine realitätsgerechte Darstellung – der ganzen Wirrnis und Gleichzeitigkeit aller gegensätzlichen Motive und moralischen Aspekte, – das emotional Triumphale der Güte und die Scham im Moment des Selbstbewußtseins der Richtigkeit der politischen Visionen – es kann aus der Sicht der Handelnden und Kämpfenden, der egal wie gebrochenen Helden wahrscheinlich nicht gezeigt warden" ["But it was not like that in reality, never. An adequately realistic description – of all the confusion and simultaneity of all conflicting motives, and moral aspects – the emotional triumphal of the goodness and the shame in that moment of self-consciousness of the rightness of the political visions – it probably cannot be shown from the point of view of those acting and fighting, of the heroes broken in whichever way"] Goetz, p. 220.

the "liminal space" of the techno and rave night is a reflection of the night of Romanticism.[19]

Another resonance of Romanticism, or of its predecessor *Sturm und Drang* [Storm and Stress, or Storm and Drive],[20] and one that is closely connected to the Romantic topos of "unsayability," is to be found in the many aposiopeses, interrupted sentences, as in this example:[21]

> Dann dachte ich –
> Und ich wollte sofort –
> Doch dann fiel mir ein –
> Das war ja das Tolle. [22]
>
> [Then I thought –
> And I wanted at once –
> But then I remembered –
> that was the great thing],

Or:

> Und es war -
> Und mir war so wie –
> Und mir fiel ein, eigentlich ohne Hast, daß ich gespannt war, ob ich da morgen –
> usw usw – [23]
>
> [And it was –
> And I felt like –
> And it occurred to me, without any haste, that I was curious if tomorrow I would –

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[19] Hurley, p. 108. The references to religion and its creative treatment (as, for instance, in the prayer text discussed above) are another Romantic echo. There are many references to techno culture as a religious practice, always with an ironic undertone. To mention just one example, where, as is quite typical, the social practice of the rave is translated into biblical language: "Die Zeit wird kommen, sprach der Herr, da ich zu den Menschen sprechen werde. Und er nahm sich als Werkzeug die Member, die da waren: Members of Mayday. Er sprach: seht her und kommt alle, denn ihr seid alle Teil von meinem Reiche, das da kommen soll, das königreiche Königreich der Räusche und Geräusche. Dann gab er seiner Musik diesen Namen: Sonic Empire. Und er führte die Hand seinen Musikern an den Maschinen glücklich" ["The time will come, said the Lord, when I will speak to the people. And he took as his instrument the members, who there were: Members of Mayday. And he spoke: see and come all, for you are all part of my kingdom, which will come, the kingly kingdom [pun untranslatable, K.B.] of raptures and sounds. And he gave his music this name: Sonic Empire. And he guided the hands of his musicians at the machines well and they prospered"]. Goetz, p. 79.

[20] Moritz Baßler points to the important Sturm und Drang novel *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* [*The Sorrows of Young Werther*]. With its numerous hyphens and exclamation marks, it is even visually quite similar to *Rave*. Moritz Baßler, *Der deutsche Pop-Roman*, p. 144.

[21] The so-called "Unsagbarkeits-Topos:", which Martin Huber, following Carl Dahlhaus, describes as follows: "Musik drückt aus, was in Worten nicht mitgeteilt werden kann, in ihr wird das Unsagbare zur Sprache" ["Music expresses that which cannot be conveyed in words; the unsayable becomes speech"]. Martin Huber, *Text und Musik*, pp. 17-18 (Translation from Hurley, p. 35).

[22] Goetz, p. 87.

[23] Ibid., p. 27.

etc etc –]

In Romanticism, music was idealised as the superior art form to which poetry should aspire – poetry and music were thought to derive from the same source, and a return to this lost origin, imagined as a golden age of unity and authenticity, with even a common (musical) language between all of nature's animate and inanimate elements, was the poetological aim of Romantic poets like Novalis, for example.[24] This was to be achieved by making language's inherent musicality audible again, a sign of re-found authenticity.

The idea of a Romantic unconscious authenticity is present in *Rave*, too, when the narrator tries to convey a thought stream that is characterised as "automatic" – "Wortmaschine" ["word machine"] is another term for it – which is also influenced, aided or interrupted by the music, as in this example:[25] "Beglückt dachte das Denken diese Gedanken. Und ich tanzte dazu" ["Happily my thinking was thinking these thoughts. And I danced along"].[26] But whereas the "automaton", also a prominent motif in Romantic literature, notably in that of E.T.A. Hoffmann, is, there, seen as something negative, threatening and ultimately destructive, as it is connected to "dark," compulsive, obsessive psychic drives, in *Rave* it is celebrated as something positive, as the "I happily danced along" indicates. So while "automaticity" is in a way presented as the new Romantic "authenticity", and *Rave* seems to subscribe to the idea that the music-inspired thought stream can be rendered somewhat adequately and authentically, at the same time the narrator points out that the "meaning" of music is constructed in discourse retrospectively; especially as the work of art, the music, is temporary:

> So konstituiert sich, neben dem unmittelbaren Erleben der Sache, auch im nachhinein, in vielen einzelnen Gesprächen eine Art imaginäres, nachträgliches

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[24] Giovanni di Stefano, *Musik als poetisches Ideal*, pp. 124, 127-128.
[25] Goetz., pp. 19, 22.
[26] Ibid., p. 80.

> Gesamtwahrnehmungsorgan für das eben erst enstandene und schon für immer vergangene Werk.[27]
>
> [So, besides the immediate experience, an imaginary collective perception organ constitutes itself retrospectively in many different conversations about the piece of art that came into existence just now and is already forever gone.]

The meaning of the music is, therefore, like the music itself, constructed retrospectively and in dialogues.

The many ellipses, incomplete sentences that suddenly break off, also give the text a hectic tone, befitting the impatient forward mode that is also pervasive: "Das kommt alles noch. Tolles Gefühl" ["All still ahead of us. Great feeling"] or: "Baßversprechen: gleich beginnt das große Fest" ["the promise of the bass: The great party is just about to start"].[28] This orientation towards the future is quite at odds with the pervasive old-school sexism, repeated homophobic slurs – the pretension of an "automatic", unmediated, unfiltered expression of emotions is just so convenient for these invectives – and even some inexplicable (and inexcusable) praises of the advantages of paedophilia that make one wonder whether the drug usage Goetz also enthusiastically advocates has not done some serious harm.[29] These are the worst moments of the book (and there are, unfortunately, not so few). In the better and more interesting passages, the rave night becomes, to conclude, a resonance of the romantic night, a magical, mysterious time of heightened intensity that eludes rationalisation and in which different rules apply. It is described, for example, as follows:

> Allein zwischen den ersten drei, vier Bier wird eine solche Masse Leben hin und her geshiftet, zwischen den einzelnen Menschen, wie nur hier möglich vielleicht, in dieser konzentrierten und kompliziert codierten Form. Dauernd von irgendwas wieder zerfetzt, gebrochen, dementiert und ganz speziell stilisiert.
> Thema: das Leben
> Die Menschen.
> Ein jeder.
> Und dein Leid und meines […]

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[27] Ibid., p. 87.
[28] Ibid., p. 21.
[29] Ibid., pp. 63-64, 119 ff., 131, 137 ff., and especially pp. 131-133.

Alle tuen immer so, als wäre alles anders, als es ist. Das macht den phantastischen Würdeappeal des nächtlichen Treibens und ewigen Feierns. Seine absolut hiesige und zugleich, doch, ja: utopische Dimension.[30]

[Such a bulk of life is being shifted back and forth between people, in this concentrated, complicated, coded form. Perpetually broken and repudiated, and stylized in this very particular way.
The topic: Life
People.
Every one.
Your sorrows and mine.
[…] Everybody pretends that everything is different than it actually is. This is the great and dignified appeal of the nocturnal goings-on. Its absolutely present and simultaneously, yes, indeed, utopian dimension.]

One difference to the night of Romanticism is that the rave night is not confined to the time between sunrise and sunset: these nights last for days. Time is not measured in the usual way here, the ravers are out of linear time, a point that is also stressed repeatedly. Points of time are specified as "Minuten später, Stunden früher" ["Minutes later, hours earlier"], leading to the question: "Was heißt vorhin?" ["What does earlier mean?"] since "Das sind ja alles Entwicklungen der letzten Minuten, vielleicht sogar Sekunden ["These are all developments of the last minutes, seconds perhaps"].[31] By constantly referring to the present ("jetzt" ["now"] is one of the most frequent words), the text creates what it itself calls "die Zeitgestalt des absoluten Präsens" ["the time form of the absolute present"], a seriality of moments which is related to the repetitive, non-linear techno music.[32] The endless moment-time of long techno nights is countered by the discovery, towards the end of *Rave*, that although the protagonists have for a long time experienced the same never-ending moments over and over again, years have in fact passed and time has changed the protagonists, and not for the better.

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[30] Ibid., pp. 70-71.
[31] Ibid., pp. 75, 59.
[32] Ibid., p. 261.

2. Thomas Meinecke: "Ich als Text" ["Myself as text"][33]

Thomas Meinecke shares with Andreas Neumeister the postmodern conviction that instead of creating something new and "original", authors use pre-existing material which they merely "re-mix" and rearrange, like DJs.[34] The sampling and rearranging creates a palimpsest-like, polychronic text that moves into more than one direction, and like Neumeister, as we will see, Meinecke gives up on linear writing altogether. Instead, following Bakhtin's theory that a monological narrator's voice can not be true to the deeper, multi-vocal structures of a text, Meinecke creates an archive of contemporary discourse by 'sampling' all kinds of textual material without using quotation marks at all, since they would falsely suggest the possibility of determining with certainty "who is speaking".

Like those of Goetz and Neumeister, Meinecke's novels only have a minimalistic plot. Instead, they constitute an archive of contemporary discourse loosely arranged around one specific subject, for example gender theory in *Tomboy* (1998), or postcolonial theory in *Hellblau* (2001). While Goetz dislikes theoretical, distanced descriptions of techno music and culture, since, in his opinion, it can only be understood or even approached by being experienced and "lived", Meinecke, on the other hand, lets his protagonists apply theoretical texts to their own lives, thus translating "theory" into lived experience. They also continuously reflect upon the processes of reading and writing. The plot of *Tomboy*, for example, consists of the protagonist writing her master's thesis on gender theory and discussing it with her friends. *Hellblau* and *Musik* (2004) switch between different first person narrators who are busy compiling their next publication. In *Musik*, this compilation includes material on events that are connected merely by the fact that they took place on the same date, in the same year as well as in previous years, so that a synchronic and diachronic

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[33] Thomas Meinecke, *Ich als Text* (2000), p. 187.
[34] Charis Goer, *Ästhetik der Grenzerfahrung bei Thomas Meinecke und Andreas Neumeister*, p. 174.

palimpsest is created according to a pattern that is both arbitrary and systematic. Meinecke

claims that he chooses the material he writes about spontaneously, letting himself be guided

from one topic to the next to create a rhizome-like "assemblage," where any point can be

connected to any other, rather than an ordered universe presented by a narrating subject.[35]

The literary text created in this way is, for some, comparable to the flow of a DJ set.[36] At the

same time Meinecke shares with Goetz the impulse to record "dieses Galoppieren der

laufenden Ereignisse" ["this galloping of current events"], to put as much of what is

happening in the present as is possible into textual form, but with an archiving and reflecting

impetus rather than in an attempt to convey an experience as "authentically" as possible.[37] In

Rave, the present is not just described but also created;[38] Meinecke's novels, too, produce an

"illusion of the present"[39] and create the very questions they discuss performatively. When, in

Tomboy, Korinna paraphrases a passage from *Gender Trouble* in which Butler quotes and

discusses Lacan, and the narrator tells us that Korinna says that Butler says that Lacan says

that the Other that lacks the Phallus *is* the Phallus – whose voice are we hearing?[40] The

quotation marks that are in Butler's text are described rather than reproduced, as Korinna,

ironically, points out in her oral report: "sein und sind natürlich in Anführungszeichen"[41]

["being and be in quotation marks, of course]." On another occasion, Vivian, reporting from

and discussing a textual source, does not say where exactly the quotation marks are but says:

"Du kannst dir vorstellen, welche Worte hier in Anführungszeichen gesetzt wurden" ["You

can imagine which words were put in quotation marks here"], summoning the reader's active

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[35] Gilles Deleuze/ Felix Guattari, *Introduction: Rhizome*, pp. 4, 7. The techno label *Mille Plateaux*, named after Deleuze and Guattari's influential work, is mentioned repeatedly in *Hellblau*.
[36] Ullmaier, *Von Acid nach Adlon*, p. 118.
[37] Meinecke, *Ich als Text*, p. 105.
[38] This is done even more consistently in *Abfall für alle*, Goetz's project of a "history of the present written in the present." See Schumacher, *Gerade Eben Jetzt*, p. 130.
[39] Thus Meinecke in an interview. Eckhard Schumacher, *Pop, Literatur*, p. 19.
[40] Meinecke, *Tomboy*, p. 245; Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 59.
[41] Meinecke, *Tomboy*, p. 245.

intellectual participation.[42] Quotation marks are used to point to the fact that signifiers are the result of discursive practice rather than natural or given; not to suggest originality, that is, but rather the opposite. The frequent mentioning of quotation marks draws attention to their lack in the usual function here, as well as to the practice of reading and writing and readers' interaction with the text ("Drei Absätze weiter unten:" ["Three paragraphs further down:"]; "Her mit dem Magic Marker" ["Magic Marker, come hither"]).[43] The play with quotations (of quotations of quotations…) and the insecurity about whose voice we are 'hearing' is a recurring theme (e.g. "Insgesamt, sagt mein Vater, sagte Vivian, handelt es sich um dreiundzwanzig Schreibtische" ["All in all, my father says, said Vivian, there are twenty-three desks"], "Originalton Schenzinger, so Pat" ["original quote, Schenzinger, Pat said"]), so that the text 'does' what it talks about, exposing its intertextuality and 'performing' the question of who is speaking rather than attempting to answer it, or as an attempt to answer it.[44] Well-known theoretical texts are often paraphrased in the words of the protagonists – these texts do not just influence the protagonists, but also vice versa. When Vivian tells Korinna about medieval conceptions of the relationship between body and soul, for example, she says: "Caroline Walker Bynum fragt nun: Wovon, Korinna, hängt die Identität des irdischen und des auferstandenen Körpers ab?" ["Caroline Walker Bynum now asks: On what, Korinna, does the identity of the earthly and the resurrected body depend?"], addressing Bynum's question directly to Korinna, while, of course, drawing attention to the fact that Vivian rather than Bynum addresses this question to Korinna, or, alternatively, asking Korinna a question in the voice of Caroline Bynum.[45]

Hellblau has three first-person narrators, but no distinct paragraphs, typographies or captions to indicate who is speaking at a given moment. Meinecke confesses that he himself

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[42] Meinecke, *Tomboy*, p. 233.
[43] Ibid., p. 144.
[44] Ibid., pp. 220, 97.
[45] Ibid., p. 233.

has to think for a moment to remember who is speaking.[46] Sometimes it is not just hard but impossible to tell, so that the question is in a way answered with Foucault's counter-question: "what does it matter who is speaking?," since writing is "an interplay of signs", a play of signifiers rather than the individual expression of an author subject.[47] This is especially the case if subjects, like the protagonists in *Tomboy*, are "individuelle, inkohärente und temporäre Diskursvernetzung[en] in beweglichen Machtstrukturen" ["individual, incoherent and temporary discourse networks in mobile power structures"], as they themselves say when reading Isabell Lorey's *Immer Ärger mit dem Subjekt* [*The Trouble with the Subject*], which they find very convincing.[48] Since *Tomboy's* protagonists are not presented as 'authentic' characters with individual psychological features but rather as the result of ascriptions relative to a particular situation, they are, throughout the book, referred to as, for example, "der Hobby-Biker" ["the hobby biker"], "die Darmstädterin" ["the woman from Darmstadt], "die Vorleserin" ["the reader"], "die Bewunderte" ["the admired one"], "die vierundzwanzigjährige Heidelbergerin" ["the twenty-four-year-old Heidelberger"] or "der arbeitslose Gelegenheitsarzthelfer" ["the unemployed part-time physician's assistant"].[49] Here, too, *Tomboy* does not just quote, paraphrase or discuss certain theories, but 'performs' them, doing and showing what it talks about. The analogy of a DJ who mixes pre-existing music perhaps illustrates how it is not the material itself but rather the arrangement that is new: "Das Alte […] plündern, zu Neuem […] montieren" ["plunder the old, assembling something new"].[50] Using things in a different context than the usual or intended one is also a typical method of techno, as is using media and technologies from different eras alongside

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[46] Meinecke, *Ich als Text*, p. 103.
[47] Foucault is quoting Beckett: Michel Foucault, *What Is an Author*, p. 205.
[48] Meinecke, *Tomboy*, p. 119.
[49] Ibid., pp. 97-99, 127, 134, 172-173.
[50] Ibid., p. 181.

each other.[51] Sometimes the spelling reveals that a passage is a quote from an older text rather than something the author 'invented', for example "Thränen."[52] So, are we hearing the textual or musical material itself rather than the author (the "TJ", text jockey, as some say) or the DJ?[53] Meinecke says he likes to "let the book write me, as it were. To let it be cleverer than the writer sometimes. To let the author, the alleged subject, become the object. Myself as text."[54] On the other hand, he likes to detail his writing techniques and intentions in numerous interviews in which he explains and interprets his work. As Eckhard Schumacher notes, Meinecke generally "[supplementiert] seine Bücher in einer Reihe von Interviews"[55] ["supplements his books with a series of interviews]," so that, while deconstructing the author figure within his texts, he reconstructs it again without them, inhibiting the direct communication between textual material and reader; or, as Foucault writes about the author principle, "imped[ing] the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition of fiction."[56] Neither does he publish his texts anonymously. The analogy to the DJ figure is illustrative in this respect, too, because (even techno) DJs have, by now, become pop stars and are treated as such, and they certainly possess some amount of power and authority. Thomas Ernst concludes that in Meinecke's case the author figure or function is less discarded than modified, relativised: the arrangement of textual (like that of acoustic) material is not arbitrary; instead, it points to a conscious subject, but this subject does not claim originality anymore.[57]

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[51] And of the early Pop Art and pop literature phase ("Pop I"), for example Rolf Dieter Brinkmann's work. See Schumacher, pp. 96-101, for more details.

[52] Obsolete spelling of "tears". Meinecke, *Tomboy*, p. 150.

[53] Carsten Gansel/Andreas Neumeister, *Pop bleibt subversiv*, p. 184.

[54] "Das Buch sozusagen mich schreiben zu lassen. Es auch mal klüger als den Verfasser sein zu lassen. Den Autor, als das vermeintliche Subjekt, zum Objekt werden zu lassen. Ich als Text." Meinecke, *Ich als Text* (2000), p. 187.

[55] Schumacher, p. 199.

[56] Thomas Ernst, *Literatur und Subversion*, p. 267; Foucault, p. 230. See also Ernst, p. 268.

[57] Ernst, p. 209.

The question is whether this layering of textual voices, of foreign voices resonating in one's own voice, and more voices echoing in those voices, even if accompanied by monological explanations as in Meinecke's case, results in a multivocality that grants literature a vertical, polyphonic dimension comparable to that of music. In *The Musicalization of Fiction*, Werner Wolf writes that even if one considers the polyphony of a plurality of voices in Bakhtin's sense,

> the alleged simultaneity is faulted by the inevitable linearity of the reading process and is at best an imaginary one, while in music simultaneous sounds and polyphony are (usually) an acoustic reality.[58]

However, the line between these "imaginary" voices and "acoustic reality" is not as simple to draw as these lines suggest. When we read something, we 'hear' the words in a way that is not so different from the perception of 'actual' sounds or words spoken out loud. As Garrett Stewart explains in *Reading Voices*,

> although audible phonetic sounds do not result from a text that is not read out loud, the "inner" articulation – or "endophony" – involved in silent reading not only actuates the whole range of phonemic differentials but latently engages the somatic or muscular activity […] whose acoustic result phonetics is designed to chart.[59]

Elaine Scarry confirms that "when we read [a] passage aloud or almost aloud, the sound of the words is sensorially present."[60] On this basis a current project at the Stanford Literary Lab determines and systematizes different degrees of loudness in novels with the help of digital data.[61] So the linearity or horizontality of the reading process cannot be the decisive criterion with which to distinguish between music and literature. Given the intertextuality of all texts – even those that do not make their intertextuality as explicit as Meinecke's – if one conceives of intertextuality in Julia Kristeva's broader sense, literary texts do indeed unfold a simultaneous, polyphonic, vertical dimension for which the notion of plain linearity is

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[58] Wolf, p. 21.
[59] Garrett Stewart, *Reading Voices*, p. 7.
[60] Scarry, p. 132.
[61] See Holst Katsma, *Loudness in the Novel*, pp. 1-25.

insufficient. Even if we cannot, while reading and 'hearing' a text, untangle the knot of all the references – especially as they change from reader to reader, situation to situation and so forth – or follow every single voice in the echo chamber, it is as impossible to follow every single 'voice,' let alone tone in a full-size orchestra. We can at best follow some; and yet all of them are there and, combined, constitute the musical experience, as do all the voices resonating in a literary text. This is not to suggest that the verticality of music and of literature are of the same kind, but to point out that a differentiation along the lines of linearity or horizontality versus verticality is problematic.

How can we differentiate between music and literature, then, if literature with its plurality of voices is, even when read silently, perceived acoustically as well? There still is the semantic function of literature or language in general, of course (an imperfection in the view of Romantics).[62] Is it unique to language? As Calvin Brown formulates in his early attempt of a survey of the field, *Music and Literature* (1948): "The sounds out of which the literary work is constructed must have an external significance, and those used in music require no such meaning."[63] But this differentiation is not absolute and stable either, and, as Brown sees it, may be due to different stages of development: Whereas literature has, historically, moved from concreteness to abstraction, music has made the opposite move, from abstract patterns to the description of concrete scenes or events, as is most obvious in program music.[64] Instrumental music, he writes, is still "a very young art," and he asks therefore: "Is it not possible […] that music simply has not yet had sufficient time to develop its capacities for the expression of things outside itself?"[65] Werner Wolf would probably

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[62] Di Stefano, pp. 127-128.

[63] Calvin Brown, *Music and Literature*, p. 268.

[64] Ibid., pp. 269-270.

[65] Brown, p. 270. Steven Scher, another early explorer of the relation of music and literature, argues that this movement towards a transgression of medial boundaries is an important impulse in all of the several arts. According to Scher, the visual arts, for example, as they exist primarily in space, strive to be perceived in time, and therefore try to create an illusion of time, whereas the "auditory arts," existing primarily in time, seek to be

answer that music has already made such a development in the past: Baroque music used a "codified system" of musical expression to "conventionally signify emotions rather than directly appeal to them."[66] In *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739) [the perfect chapel master], for example, Johann Mattheson calls instrumental music "Klangrede" [sound speech] and explains it with the help of the rhetorical figures of discursive language.[67]

So, if it is possible for music to develop a semantic function, can words develop musical quality without losing theirs? And if so, would we achieve the kind of unity the Romantics hoped for?

3. Andreas Neumeister: "Menschmaschine sagt: Der Ton"[68]

At the time of Romanticism the idea that language is too prosaic to truthfully render emotional experience prevailed. The notion that language lags behind the complexity of sensations is a topos, "as often repeated as hardly ever believed."[69] Today, we tend towards the opposite idea, that thoughts can only follow language, but only do so in a constant inadequacy to a depth of sense that is impossible to fathom.[70] When literature or, especially, poetry, is approximated to music, it is always in danger of losing its semantic function; words, reduced to their acoustic surface, as in sound poetry, lose their ability to refer to something beyond themselves. The phonetic surface of language is then "locked", as Blumenberg calls it, rather than condensed as is normally the case in poetry.[71] What Romantics considered something to aspire to, namely to use words like "keys on a musical

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comprehended in space and thus to create an illusion of space. Steven Paul Scher, *Notes toward a Theory of Verbal Music*, p. 154.

[66] Wolf, p. 32.

[67] Johann Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, p. 180.

[68] ["Human machine says: the tone"] Andreas Neumeister, *Gut laut*, p. 26.

[69] "[...] ebenso oft gebraucht, wie kaum je geglaubt." Hans Blumenberg, *Sprachsituation und immanente Poetik*, 137-138. "Semper mens est potentior quam sint verba" ["the mind is always more powerful than words"], as the baroque jurist Matteo Mattesilano formulates. See Blumenberg, ibid.

[70] Hans Blumenberg, *Sprachsituation und immanente Poetik*, pp. 138-139.

[71] Blumenberg, p. 149.

instrument," is, for Blumenberg, a threat for a language that is too poeticized.[72] When words are used for the mere sake of their acoustic qualities – to create a particular sound, a 'melody' – they become, like abstract, instrumental music, free of semantic meaning, so that the closer language is brought towards music, the less are the possibilities for a multiplicity of meaning.

Andreas Neumeister walks the thin line between a language that opens up a greater space for multiple meanings, as poetry does, and language that becomes mere sound surface. In his 1998 book *Gut laut* [*Real Loud*], he 'samples' music history as well as his own musical socialisation history by quoting lyrics, record titles and music-related events to create a non-narrative, non-teleological text that "suspends teleological time, foregrounds moment time, and evokes a sense of stasis."[73] Surprisingly, it is still a readable and enjoyable text, with inserted rhythmical passages where well-known phrases are taken out of their usual context to foreground their musical quality, resulting in a sound perhaps comparable to that of minimal techno. In Neumeister's 2002 novel *Angela Davis löscht ihre Website* [*Angela Davis Takes Down her Website*], this same technique is used for a more political purpose.[74] *Angela Davis löscht ihre Website* consists entirely of phrases taken from the mass media, mostly from TV, which are rearranged and transformed, turned into lists, catalogues and series with variations. Some critics have read this as a sign of resignation, especially with regard to the title of the text.[75] In this view, *Angela Davis löscht ihre Website* presents our thought stream, judgement and the very language we speak as consisting entirely of a discourse produced by the mass media; words, phrases and the reality they produce have infiltrated our lives by a constant stream of 'infotainment' that we are permanently exposed to. Our world view is controlled by media images in such a way that it is impossible to tell our own thoughts from

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[72] „Der Poët braucht die Dinge und Worte wie *Tasten* [...]." Novalis, *Schriften*, Bd. III, p. 451.

[73] Hurley, p. 92.

[74] The title refers to Angela Davis' deleting her America-critical website in the wake of the events of September 11th 2001.

[75] See, for example, the review "Believe the Hype! Zu Andreas Neumeisters neuer Phrasensammlung *Angela Davis löscht ihre Website.*" *Textem*, 26 Feb. 2005.

those that we have been conditioned to hold: "Wieder und wieder kreisen fremde Gedanken und Weltbilder als eigene Gedanken und Weltbilder um die ewig gleichen Formeln" ["Time and again, foreign thoughts and world views disguised as one's own thoughts and world views circle around the same formulae"].[76] I would argue, though, that Neumeister's technique has the opposite effect, that words' inherent poetic potential (the potential to produce *multiple* meanings) is activated when everyday expressions are taken out of their usual context and installed in a different one, and that this reveals their immanent aesthetic and poetic quality rather than reducing them to any definite meaning. "Marschflugkörper" [cruise missile/s, both singular and plural], for instance, is dissected into the word's three components:

> der Marsch
> der Flug
> der Körper[77]
>
> [the march
> the flight
> the body]

These simple, short, basic and, compared to the compound noun, innocent-sounding words evoke a plethora of associations and possible references. Just by spelling the word (which is still recognizable) in such a way as to reference its basic elements, a definite and, at the same time, significantly, destructive meaning is (re)turned into an open space of endless possibilities. As Novalis writes: "Er [der Dichter] bedarf oft wiederkehrender, durch den Gebrauch ausgespielter Worte. Seine Welt ist einfach, wie sein Instrument, aber ebenso unerschöpflich an Melodien."[78] ["[The poet] requires words that recur often, that have been used and played out often. His world is simple, like his instrument, but as inexhaustible of melodies."] This is what, in Novalis' opinion, would activate their (poetic) magic. When the

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[76] Andreas Neumeister, *Angela Davis löscht ihre Website*, p. 44.
[77] Ibid., p. 49.
[78] Novalis, *Schriften*, Bd. II, p. 533.

words "Kriegsfilm" ["war film"] and "Antikriegsfilm" ["anti-war film"] are turned into questions the seeming unambiguousness of the words becomes doubtful: Which is which? Where are the lines of demarcation exactly?[79] This is sometimes done by confronting often-used formulae with their opposite, such as

> finite justice
> infinite justice[80]
>
> or
> friendly fire
> unfriendly fire.[81]

Drawing attention to their not usually employed opposites makes familiar terms unfamiliar (*un-heimlich*) and strange again and challenges us to reconsider the meaning that we conventionally attach to them. So, not although, as Blumenberg feared, but *because* words are turned (or returned, as Novalis would say) into music are they freed of the one meaning that we tend to assign to them, and are given back to ambiguity. This puts into focus language's tendency towards a multiplicity of meaning, or, as Blumenberg puts it, "aesthetically retransforms the real into the horizon of its possibilities."[82] What all of the intermedial works discussed in this article have in common is that the reader (or listener) is granted a more emancipated role than that of a mere recipient: The dialogicity of various and dynamic voices is not just confined to within the text; even the more monological *Rave* narrator stresses that the 'meaning' of music, or of a musical and social event, is constructed in dialogue, or rather in dialogues. Meaning, contained in the inherent ambiguity of language, is worked out in dialogue with the reader/recipient, and is therefore dynamic and infinite. The

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[79] „Kriegsfilm? Antikriegsfilm?" Neumeister, p. 45. This is done even more explicitly in another passage: „soll das der angekündigte Kriegsfilm sein? soll das der angekündigte Antikriegsfilm sein? soll das die angekündigte Kriegsberichterstattung sein?" ["is this supposed to be the advertised war film? is this supposed to be the advertised anti-war film? is this supposed to be the advertised war correspondence?"] Neumeister, p. 47.
[80] Neumeister, p. 46.
[81] Ibid., pp. 50-51; "friendly fire" and "unfriendly fire" are the only words on their respective pages.
[82] „Die Freigabe der Tendenz der Sprache auf Vieldeutigkeit [enthüllt sich] als das Korrelat der ästhetischen Rückverwandlung des Wirklichen in den Horizont seiner Möglichkeiten." Blumenberg, p. 151.

conscious use of quotations and the rearrangement of pre-existing textual material indicates that texts can always appear in new contexts which are impossible to control. The techniques of quoting and rearranging reveal the act of writing as well as the reading process as an open-ended procedure whose outcome is, in Bakthin's words, "still in the future and will always be in the future."[83]

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[83] Mikhail Bakthin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 166.

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