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Prole Politics – Adaptation as Appropriation of Techno in the Works of Rainald Goetz

The adaptation of one work of art into another can take a number of different forms. Regarding the relation between literature and music one can distinguish literary texts that refer to a specific piece of music, or describe the structure and effect of music or try to base the text itself on a mimicry of musical structures. Thomas Mann's novel *Dr. Faustus* (1947) is an outstanding example for the description of a certain kind of music as well as of its intended effects. An adaptation of musical structures into a fictional text can be found in Jonathan Littell's novel *Les Bienveillantes* (2006). Littell named the chapters of the book, "Toccata", "Courante", or "Menuet (en rondeaux)", referring to certain styles of ballroom dancing and the respective pieces of music.[1] Of course adaptations can work the other way around. In the context of popular music one can think of Mastodon's *Leviathan* (2004) and Sepultura's *Dante XXI* (2006), both loosely based on works of fiction.[2] Recently, Detroit rapper Danny Brown adapted J.G. Ballard's experimental novel *The Atrocity Exhibition* in his record of the same title. Without going into further detail whether these examples are adequate adaptations of their chosen source material, one can identify one thing they have in common: they illustrate the usual understanding of adaptation, which is based on the assumption that one piece of art is translated into another. From this follows that adaptation can be understood first as the process of translating or transferring any given content from one text into another, from one medium into another, and second as the product of an adaptation process, whereupon two distinct, individual works exist.[3]

But this is a rather narrow understanding of adaptation. In this article, I will argue for a different notion of adaptation as a form of appropriation that allows a more

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[1] For a systematic approach to music in fiction see Werner Wolf. *The Musicalization of Fiction. A Study in the History and Theory of Intermediality*. Amsterdam 1999.

[2] Mastodon has adapted Melville's *Moby Dick*, whereas Sepultura based their record on Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

[3] Cf. Julie Sanders. *Adaptation and Appropriation*. London 2006. For a critique of Sanders' approach see Pascal Nicklas, Oliver Lindner. *Adaptation and Cultural Appropriation*. In: Pascal Nicklas, Oliver Lindner (eds.). *Adaptation and Cultural Appropriation. Literature, Film, and the Arts*. Berlin/Boston 2012, p. 5: "In her book, Sanders, in fact, sails very much in the wake of French Poststructuralist theories of *jouissance*, *intertextualité* and *bricolage*. Her focus is neither on intermediality nor intercultural aspects of adaptation and appropriation but rather on the ›over-arching of intertextuality‹. Therefore, her definition of the terminology is strongly biased towards literary strategies and traditions of intertextual reference and the creative adoption of texts by latterday authors."

productive analysis of the literary works of German author Rainald Goetz. Therefore I will draw on a specific understanding of pop music, which derives from Diedrich Diederichsen *Über Pop-Musik* (On pop music). According to Diederichsen, pop-music is not limited to certain kinds of music, but moreover to the practices pop-music entails.

> Dieses Buch befasst sich mit Pop-Musik. Sein Autor hält Pop-Musik für einen eigenen Gegenstand. Pop-Musik ist für ihn kein Spezialfall aus dem größeren Gegenstandsbereich Musik. Und Pop-Musik ist nicht nur sehr viel mehr als Musik. Pop-Musik ist eine andere Sorte Gegenstand. Im Folgenden werde ich das Wort ausschließlich in diesem Sinne verwenden: Pop-Musik ist der Zusammenhang aus Bildern, Performances, (meist populärer) Musik, Texten und an reale Personen geknüpften Erzählungen. [...] Den notwendigen Zusammenhang aber zwischen z.B. Fernsehausstrahlung, Schallplatte, Radioprogramm, Live-Konzert, textiler Kleidermode, Körperhaltung, Make-up und urbanem Treffpunkt, zwischen öffentlichem, gemeinschaftlichem Hören und der Intimität von Schlaf- und Kinderzimmer stellt kein Medium her – die Hörer, die Fans, die Kunden von Pop-Musik selbst sorgen für diesen Zusammenhang.[4]

So, with regard to Rainald Goetz I will use adaptation as a means to describe the aesthetic implications of his writing as an attempt to translate the affective immediacy of experiencing pop-music, especially Techno. To this end Goetz abandons, even in most of his journalistic texts, any form of argumentative writing for a style of writing that could more accurately be described as "oral writing."[5] Furthermore, he is trying to diminish any form of critical distance to techno. Regarding the concept of adaptation, it will become clear that adaptation does not mean the translation of one work of art into another with the result of a new work of art. Goetz's adaptation of Techno resembles much more an ongoing and open process of writing, aiming at producing a specific form of immediacy that is able to mimic the experience of taking part in a rave. But Goetz's involvement with Techno does not exhaust itself on an aesthetic level. Furthermore, I will try to demonstrate what Goetz perceives as the political dimension of Techno as a commercial form of music. In reference to the politics of pop-music it is particularly interesting to see

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[4] Dietrich Diederichsen. *Über Pop-Musik*. Cologne 2014, p. XI. "This book deals with pop-music. Its author believes that pop-music is an object in its own right. To him pop-music is no special case of music. And pop-music is not only much more than music. Pop-music is a different kind of object. Below I will use the word pop-music strictly in this sense: Pop-music is the connection between images, performances, (often popular) music, texts and narratives bound to actual persons. [...] But the necessary connection between e.g. TV appearances, records, radio feature, live-concert, clothing, posture, make-up, and urban venue, between public, collective listening and the intimacy of the bed- or children's room is not established by a medium – the listeners, the fans, the customers of pop-music generate this connection themselves." [transl. KF].

[5] The oral quality of Goetz's texts is obvious and the result of his appreciation of the act of talking: "Reden: toll. Dauernd passiert dabei so viel, und kein Mensch weiß, was alles und wie genau. Auf jeden Fall reitet auf dem / gesagten Text [...], das eigentlich Mitgeteilte mehr so aura-artig daher: wie einer lebt und denkt, das Ganze eines Menschen, seine individuelle geistige Gestalt. Sozusagen die Musik, die einer ist." (Westbam, Rainald Goetz. *Mix, Cuts & Scratches mit Rainald Goetz*. Berlin 1997, pp. 7-8). "Talking: great. In doing so a lot is happening constantly, and nobody knows what or how. In any case the actual message rides along on the spoken text [...] more or less like an aura: how one lives and thinks, the whole of a human being, his individual intellectual gestalt. In a manner of speaking the music one is." [transl. KF].

how Goetz subverts the conventional binary between Techno as an underground or subcultural scene and Techno as a commercialized or mainstream form of music. His stance on Pop in general was perceived as provocative, because it was in opposition to those who wanted Techno to be more than just another commercial commodity. So Goetz's attempt at an adaptation of Techno on a political level can be described as a form of appropriation, which means taking something out of one context and putting it into a different one to the effect that intentions are reversed.

To accomplish this, my argument takes the following form. First, I will present Goetz in the context of Punk, a style of music that bears striking similarities to Techno. Second, I will briefly sketch out the development of Techno as a style of music as well as a scene in order to make clear, which elements of Techno Goetz was interested in on an aesthetic level and why his appropriation of the political dimension of Techno was received as a provocation. In the third part, I will discuss the aesthetic implications of his adaptation of Techno. Finally, I will try to demonstrate in which way Goetz saw a political potential in Techno.

1. Punk and Pop

From the beginning of his career as a writer, Rainald Goetz was interested in pop-cultural phenomena. Regarding the appropriation of Techno in his works since 1997 it is important to notice the similarities between the development from punk to techno that characterizes the history of techno as well as Rainald Goetz's development as an author.

Goetz gained much attention with his appearance at the 1983 Ingeborg-Bachmann-Prize in Klagenfurt. The text he read at this event was titled *Subito* and consisted largely of an attack on the literary establishment and business (and one has to remember that the word establishment is deeply linked to the 1968 protest movement). Goetz's text was rather offensive:

> Daß ich jetzt dies Jahr hier schon wieder sitze und schon wieder so ein Blödel liest, die müssen sich das ja vier Tage soundsoviele Stunden an den Kopf hauen lassen, die ganze Literatenphantasie, so eine Riesenscheiße […]. Das muß ja dann eine Scheiße sein, wenn das so eine Scheiße ist, das Klagenfurt, dann fährst du da logisch hin, immer voll rein in die Scheiße, noch dazu wenn es so eine schöne Scheiße ist wie diese Klagenfurter Scheiße.[6]

But Goetz's attack was not restricted to the literary establishment but rather to its notion of literature or, in Goetz's words, to the "literarische Literatur,"[7] literary literature:

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[6] Rainald Goetz. *Hirn*. Frankfurt 2003 (1986), pp. 12-13. *Subito* is part of the volume *Hirn*, which contains several of Goetz's more journalistic texts. With the inclusion of a text like *Subito* one can see that the difference between literary and non-literary texts is of no great importance for Goetz. *Hirn* was originally published in 1986. I refer to the paperback issue of 2003. "This year I'm sitting again here and again a meathead is reading, they have to get hit in the head with this for four days for countless hours, the whole man of letters fantasy, such a huge pile of shit […]. It has to be shit, if it is such shit, Klagenfurt, of course you're going, fully head-on into the shit, especially if it's such beautiful shit like this Klagenfurt shit." [transl. KF].

[7] Ibid., p. 18.

> [...] dann hast du die Identität, die Stabilität, und am Ende sogar noch einen Sinn. Da rief ich aus: Gehe weg, du blöder Sausinn [...]. [...] den sollen die Peinsackschriftsteller vertreten, die in der Peinsackparade, angeführt von den präsenilen Chefpeinsäcken Böll und Grass, [...] den geistigen Schlamm und Schleim absondern, den das Weltverantwortungsdenken, das Wackertum, unaufhörlich produziert, dieses ganze Geschwerl, dieses Nullenpack soll ruhig noch jahrelang den BIG SINN vertreten.[8]

One would miss a central element of Goetz's attack, if one were to understand it solely in a literary context. Without a doubt, his text is part of a tradition that goes back to the European avant-garde-movements like the French Surrealists and their manifestos and performances. But if one looks at the end of Goetz's performance in Klagenfurt, it is absolutely plausible to place him in the context of punk or performance art. When he read the sentences: "Ich schneide ein Loch in meinen Kopf, in die Stirne schneide ich das Loch. Mit meinem Blut soll mir mein Hirn auslaufen"[9], he took a razorblade and cut open his forehead, thus putting his words into immediate action. It is precisely this act of self-harm that makes Goetz's Klagenfurt-performance similar to a punk concert, e.g. of the Sex Pistols and their self-destructive bass-player Sid Vicious.

Obviously, this act of self-harm adds a special kind of authority or weight to Goetz's appearance in Klagenfurt, because what he read could hardly be construed as ironic or even metaphorical. But one has to take into account the specific context of the Ingeborg-Bachmann-Prize, i.e. the institutional boundaries of this well respected competition. One is expected to act like an author or artist, but when one actually bleeds for his art, one could argue that this is as an ironic commentary as well as the subversion of said irony by self-harm. Goetz's act of auto-aggression presents a curious case on the tension between the expectations of the audience towards an artist and the authenticity of his/her work and the necessarily staged, artificial performance of the artist. This sheds light on the relation between writing and living or theory and practice. In a weird and admittedly idiosyncratic way Goetz agrees with Adorno's view of modern literature and art. The concept of "literarische Literatur", i.e. literature as an autonomous and self-sufficient art form, has no social function anymore, because literature in its modern form has exhausted itself. But instead of employing Adorno's dialectical trick that it is the "Funktionslosigkeit" of literature and art that guarantees its impact on society,[10] Goetz disbands this notion of literature. He finds truth in areas Adorno despised:

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[8] Ibid., p. 19. "[...] then you got identity, stability, and in the end even something like a meaning. I exclaimed: Go away, you stupid ass meaning [...]. [...] the pain-in-the-ass-writers should represent this, the ones in the pain-in-the-ass-parade, led by the pre-senile pain-in-the-asses-in-chief Böll and Grass, [...] excreting the intellectual mud and slime, ceaselessly produced by the world-responsibility-thinking, the decentuary, this whole vermin, this bunch of zeros should go for years representing the BIG MEANING." [transl. KF].

[9] Ibid., p. 19. "I cut a hole in my head, in the forehead I cut the hole. With my blood my brain shall run out." [transl. KF].

[10] "Gesellschaftlich an der Kunst ist ihre immanente Bewegung gegen die Gesellschaft, nicht ihre manifeste Stellungnahme. Ihr geschichtlicher Gestus stößt die empirische Realität von sich ab, deren Teil doch die Kunstwerke als Dinge sind. Soweit von Kunstwerken eine gesellschaftliche Funktion sich prädizieren läßt, ist es ihre Funktionslosigkeit." (Theodor W. Adorno. *Ästhetische Theorie*. Frankfurt 1998 [1973], p. 336)

e.g. TV, popular music, or simply Pop. But Pop as an object is difficult to handle for a writer. To be interested in Pop – and that includes Punk and Techno – necessarily means to write in a different way than before. Pop demands a different kind of involvement from a writer because writing about Pop almost always fails to mimic the experience of being a part of Pop. Therein lies the challenge of writing about as well as the fascination with Pop. In Goetz's words:

> Pops Glück ist, daß Pop kein Problem hat. Deshalb kann man Pop nicht denken, nicht kritisieren, nicht analytisch schreiben, sondern Pop ist Pop leben, fasziniert betrachten, besessen studieren, maximal materialreich erzählen, feiern. Es gibt keine vernünftige Weise über Pop zu reden, als hingerissen auf das Hinreißende zu zeigen, hey, super. Deshalb wirft Pop Probleme auf, für den denkenden Menschen, die aber Probleme des Denkens sind, nicht des Pop. So simpel diese Unterscheidung ist, so schwierig ist sie zu realisieren im Schreiben über Pop.[11]

Here Goetz forms a concept of Pop that makes it somewhat impossible to write adequately about Pop, because one cannot react to it, other than being entranced by it. In this sense, Pop allows no other reasonable way of dealing with it than to become a part of it, and trying to adapt Pop to a written text is a difficult task.

2. A Brief History of Techno as a Subculture

Techno emerged in the mid-1980s in Detroit, but it was not until the late 1980s that it developed a scene in Berlin. The editors of the oral history *Der Klang der Familie. Berlin, Techno und die Wende*, Felix Denk und Sven von Thülen, explain the success of Techno based on three main reasons:

> Dass Techno der Soundtrack des Ausnahmezustands nach der Wende wurde, hat drei Gründe: Die Wucht der neuen Klänge, die Magie der Orte und das Freiheitsversprechen, das in dieser Musik steckte.[12]

The power of the new sounds as well as the promise of freedom are two attributes Techno shares with another subculture: Punk.

> Plötzlich, so schien es, konnte jeder seine eigene Welt programmieren: Platten auflegen, produzieren, Magazine gründen, T-Shirts bedrucken – Techno war eine Musik, die zur Teilhabe aufrief, ein Sound der flachen Hierarchien.[13]

The do-it-yourself ethos, the possibility to participate as a listener and as a producer, are two elements shared by Punk and Techno. Both react against

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[11] Rainald Goetz. *Hirn*, p. 188. "Pop's fortune is, Pop's got no problem. Hence one cannot think Pop, not criticize, not write analytically, but Pop is to live Pop, to view fascinated, to study obsessively, to tell with the maximum amount of material, to party. There is no rational way of talking about Pop, other than pointing enchanted at the enchanting, hey, awesome. Hence, Pop raises questions, for any thoughtful human being, that are questions of thinking, not of Pop. As simple as this distinction is, as difficult it is to realize it in writing about Pop." [transl. KF].

[12] Felix Denk, Sven von Thülen. *Der Klang der Familie. Berlin, Techno und die Wende*. Frankfurt 2014, p. 10. "There are three reasons for Techno becoming the soundtrack of the state of emergency after the Fall of the Wall: the impact of the new sounds, the magic of places, and the promise of freedom, encapsulated in this style of music." [transl. KF].

[13] Ibid. "Suddenly, it appeared, anyone was able to program his own world: play records, create music, launch magazines, print on T-shirts – Techno was a style of music, calling for participation, a sound of flat hierarchies." [transl. KF].

corporate Rock music with its relationship of star and fan, of crowds of followers worshipping the charismatic, Messiah-like lead singer. This relationship was and is reflected in the clear distinction between the stage and the auditorium which inhibited any interaction except for euphoric applause as a sign of appreciation. But in contrast to Punk, Techno went further in its refusal of Rock. In Punk one did not need any kind of musical skills to form a band and get on stage, but it held on to the idea of musicians, amateurs or dilettantes playing instruments. Techno in its purest form and vision wanted to delete any human factor.

> Nicht umsonst hieß es in den Anfangstagen von Techno immer, diese Musik brauche keine Stars. Für sie schien es gar keinen Platz mehr zu geben. Der Mensch verschwand ja aus den Stücken. Das Künstlersubjekt löste sich auf in den Schaltkreisen der Drum Machines, den binären Codes der Sampler und den immer neuen Projektnamen der Produzenten. Selbst der DJ war anfangs Teil der Party, nicht ihr Fokus.[14]

But, as Denk und von Thülen state in their introduction: this was in the beginning. By looking at Techno, one can learn many things about the corruption, or, to put it in a more neutral term, the popularization, of a subculture and its vision and ideals. The prime example in the case of Techno is the development of the Loveparade which started in 1989 as a political demonstration with 150 participants. Ten years later, in 1999, the Loveparade reached the peak of its commercial success and attracted around 1.5 million participants. By this time it was a huge, corporate-sponsored event. Techno's time as a subculture, as it was envisioned by its early protagonists, was over.

3. Techno in *Heute Morgen*

Techno becomes one of the central themes in Goetz's fifth book *Heute Morgen* (*Today in the morning; or Today Tomorrow*), which consists of the volumes *Mix, Cuts & Scratches* in collaboration with DJ Westbam (1997), *Rave* (1998), *Jeff Koons* (1998), *Dekonspiratione* (2000), *Celebration. Texte und Bilder zur Nacht* (1999; Celebration. Texts and Images for the Night), *Abfall für alle. Roman eines Jahres* (1999; Waste for all. Novel of a Year) und *Jahrzehnt der schönen Frauen* (2001; Decade of Beautiful Women).[15] As the publication of *Mix, Cuts & Scratches* is based on collaboration with the DJ Westbam it is clear that Goetz was not interested in Techno as a subculture. As the founder of the music label Low Spirit, organizer of the Techno event Mayday and, since 1993, one of the organizers of the Loveparade, it seems accurate to regard Westbam as one of the people who helped to popularize, or depending on the point of view, to vulgarize Techno. It is not surprising that Westbam increasingly became a controversial figure within the

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[14] Ibid. "It is no coincidence that in the starting days of Techno it has always been said, this style of music does not need stars. There seemed to be no place for them. Humans disappeared from the songs. The artist dissolved into the circuits of the drum machines, the binary codes of the sampler and the constantly renewed names of projects of the producers. Even the DJ initially was a part of the party rather than its focal point." [transl. KF].

[15] Technically, *Mix, Cuts & Scratches* is a book by Westbam with a contribution by Rainald Goetz, but the thoughts expressed by Goetz seem to justify to view this book as a part of his overall project *Heute Morgen*.

Techno community. And for a lot of the old school protagonists like DJs Tanith and Wolle XDP it was Westbam with his label Low Spirit who sold out Techno.[16] Consequently, Rainald Goetz as a kind of chronicler of Techno was far from being accepted. Dj Tanith recalls meeting Goetz at a Mayday event.

> Ich hab auf der Mayday Rainald Goetz kennengelernt. [...] Ich war total begeistert, weil ich alle seine Bücher gelesen hatte. Das war einer meiner Lieblingsschriftsteller. Ich wusste nicht, dass er Raver war. Rainald fand alles super, alles. Ich kannte den als den RAF-Schreiber, den fand ich super, später schleppte er Sven Väth und Westbam die Platten. Der war komplett ausgetauscht.[17]

Two things are important here: The first is that Tanith conveys the impression of Goetz being completely, and maybe uncritically, enthusiastic about Techno and it is this form of excitement that Goetz tries to adapt to text. This leads him to experiment with a different style of writing. The second is that Tanith perceives Goetz as some sort of lackey for the famous and commercially successful DJs Westbam and Sven Väth. He deprecatingly describes Goetz as the record carrier. Both things combined demonstrate what kind of personal involvement Goetz was willing to undertake and what kind of Techno he was interested in: Techno not as an isolated and closed scene of insiders, but as a mass movement open for

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[16] Cf. the statement by the musician and now producer Thomas Feldmann in *Der Klang der Familie*: "Pop ist für mich absolut kein Schimpfwort. Man kann ja sehr guten Pop machen. Was Low Spirit gemacht haben, war in meinen Augen einfach Scheißpop. Als die mit den Platten von Marusha und Mark Oh an den Start gekommen sind, gab es endgültig klare Abgrenzungen. Die Platten, die sich plötzlich an der Spitze der Charts wiederfanden, waren für mich mit meiner Idee von Techno vollkommen unvereinbare Produkte. Das war Major-Business mit allen Nebeneffekten." (Felix Denk, Sven von Thülen. *Der Klang der Familie*, p. 375; "For me Pop isn't a swearword. One can produce very good Pop. From my point of view, what Low Spirit had done, was just shitty Pop. When they released the records by Marusha and Mark Oh, finally there were strict demarcations. These records, going to the top of the charts, were products completely incompatible with my understanding of Techno. It was major business with all side effects.") In contrast to Feldmann Goetz saw nothing wrong with the success of Low Spirit: "Westbams Plattenfirma ›Low Spirit‹, neulich 10 Jahre alt geworden, hat das alles mit erfunden: die Musik, den Überbau, die Riesen-Raves, die kommerzielle Geschäftsgrundlage, richtige Teenie-Pop-Stars wie Mark Oh und Marusha und obendrein das ideell Allübergreifende einer ganzen Jugend-Kultur. / Die Kritik war immer zur Stelle. Die House-Puristen, die Kultur-Reaktionäre in der sogenannten taz, ganz normale Publikums-Blätter [...]: alle haben den Erfolg von ›Low Spirit‹ besonders gerne unter dem Aspekt dargestellt, was es daran zu ›enthüllen‹ gibt. Könnte es etwa gar sein, daß damit Geld verdient wird? Eine unglaubliche Sauerei. Wer hätte das gedacht?" (Westbam, Rainald Goetz. *Mix, Cuts & Scratches*, p. 10; "Westbam's record company Low Spirit, recently turned 10 years old, has invented all of this: the music, the superstructure/überbau, the giant raves, the company's commercial base, real Teeny-Pop-Stars like Mark Oh and Marusha and on top of that an overall Ideal of a whole youth culture. Critics were always there. The House purists, the cultural reactionaries of the so-called taz, ordinary magazines [...]: they all presented the success of Low Spirit with emphasis on what could be ›disclosed‹. Could it be they are making money? What an incredible mess. Who would have thought?")

[17] Felix Denk, Sven von Thülen. *Der Klang der Familie*, p. 228. "I met Rainald Goetz at Mayday. [...] I was completely enthusiastic, because I had read all of his books. He was one of my favourite writers. I didn't know he was a raver. Rainald was excited by everything, everything. I knew him as the RAF-writer, which was awesome, later he carried the records of Sven Väth and Westbam. He had changed entirely." DJ Tanith here is referencing of course Goetz's novel *Kontrolliert* (In control) on the Rote Armee Fraktion, not the Royal Air Force.

everyone. In this regard, his involvement with Techno is a continuation of his interest in Pop since the early 1980s. But in contrast to the destructive tendencies which were a trademark of Punk, Techno delivered a different message, and that was happiness, to be happy as an individual, to be happy as part of a large crowd. And incidentally, for Goetz, both were made possible by a commercial art form.

In *Mix, Cut & Scratches* Goetz gives an outline of the aesthetics of Techno as a form of music. Techno as a style of music can be characterized as a form of electronically generated dance music which is bass-focused and, in terms of composition, relies on repetitive arrangements of different sounds and soundscapes. According to Goetz the achievement of Techno marks the "Abschied vom Terror der Tonalität, dem Knast der Akkordwechsel in Kadenzen, diesen alten Traum der Frühmoderne, für den sich angeblich ja auch der sogenannte Jazz interessiert hat."[18] But for the writer Goetz not only the changes on the musical level are important in his appreciation of Techno, it is primarily its relation to language that interests him.

> Außerdem, neben diesem umfassenden musikalischen Selbst- und Neuerfindungs-Fundamentalismus, hat Techno im Raum der Sprache gearbeitet und dort bekanntlich das Diktat der auktorialen Erzählung durch einen die Musik immerzu mit sprachlicher Mitteilung und dem Gestus des Expressiven behelligenden Text abgeschafft. Gerade anfangs, 1988, beim ersten Acid-House-Boom, kam einem das wie eine Erlösung vor. Kein Rock-Geschrei, kein Rap-Teaching mehr: das pure Parlament der vielen Stimmen eines kollektiven Glücks: Monotonie und Einzelworte, Fetzen, Reste.
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> Nichtkohärenz, Nichttext. Danke.[19]

It is interesting that Goetz claims here that Techno has brought on a change in the way language is used in music.[20] Techno has replaced the 'dictatorship of the omniscient narrative', the rock-screaming and rap-teaching with the many voices of collective happiness. These voices are characterized by monotony and single words without any context, shreds of language. The result is, as Goetz states, a form of non-coherence and non-text. So Goetz's appreciation of Techno can be

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[18] Westbam, Rainald Goetz. *Mix, Cuts & Scratches*, p. 16. "[...] farewell to the terror of tonality, the jail of altering chords in cadences, this old dream of early modernism, which allegedly the so-called Jazz was interested in." [transl. KF].

[19] Ibid. p. 18 "Besides, in addition to this extensive musical self- and re-invention fundamentalism, Techno has labored in the space of language, and, as is well known, got rid of the dictatorship of the omniscient narrative, which always bothered the music with linguistic message and the bearing of expression. Especially early, in 1988, during the first Acid-House-Boom, it was like a salvation. No rock-screaming, no rap-teaching anymore: the pure parliament of the many voices of collective joy: monotony, single words, shreds, remains. Non-coherence, non-text. Thank you." [transl. KF].

[20] Cf. Elizabeth Bridges' assessment of Techno: "Techno was and is a music of dissolution, lacking clear boundaries both musically and in terms of its relationship to authorial intent and notions of 'the artist' as an elevated entity. The typical techno track lacks a centrally authoritative narrative at the musical level, based instead on a particular bass-driven pattern that gives techno its signature 'thumping' rhythm, which serves as a theme and which variations are layered subsequently throughout the track. Techno has little if any verbal content to give it the recognizable 'chorus verse chorus' verbal narrative structure often associated with other popular musical genres such as pop and rock." (Elizabeth Bridges. "BerlinTM. Techno and the Ambient Politics of Venue." In: Gerd Bayer (ed.). *Mediating Germany. Popular Culture between Tradition and Innovation*. Newcastle upon Tyne 2006, pp. 92-106, p. 97).

understood as a commentary on his own poetological agenda which then needs to be translated into literary texts, though, as stated before, the term literary is somewhat confusing, because part of this program is that distinctions like literary and non-literary, fictional or non-fictional are being blurred in the process of writing.

One example is Goetz's "Roman eines Jahres" (novel of a year) which despite its paratextual characterization as a novel resembles no conventional novel. "Abfall für alle" (waste for all) can be understood as the most extensive realization of his aesthetic program. The text is a chronicle of the year 1998 and consists of entries of different lengths on various topics. There is no particular topical or artistic order to them, the entries just follow a chronological sequence, starting on February 2nd 1998 and ending on January 10th 1999. And because there is no such order, everything is of the same value, no topic is more important than any other. There are, to be sure, repetitions of certain topics, such as literature in general, criticism as profession, the current TV-program. But all this is embedded in descriptions of numerous errands Goetz had to run on a particular day, e.g. when he had trouble with his insurance company, or in listings of stuff. This way of writing has another literary dimension to it which can be traced back to Techno. As I have said in the beginning about the history of Techno, part of the fascination and of the potential to refuse rock ideology was the idea that in electronic music you can delete the human factor and thus de-subjectify the production process of art. In a similar way Goetz tries to de-subjectify the production of text in "Abfall für alle" as well as in *Dekonspiratione* or *Rave*. Take for example this text passage from *Rave*:

Olaf sagte: ›Wir waren Gefangene des Drogenbarons der Insel.‹

Ich rief: ›Ja!‹ und lachte.

Dann sagte wer: ›Die eine von vorhin war gerade nochmal da.‹

›Echt?‹

Und ich sagte zu Hardy: ›Auch den – ‹

›Hey!‹

›Wie?‹

›Gut.‹

Max sagte: ›Gut, gut, gut.‹

Und ich wiederholte das direkt: ›Gut, gut, gut.‹

Heiterkeit, Gelächter, usw usw –[21]

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[21] Rainald Goetz. *Rave. Erzählung*. Frankfurt 2001, p. 27. "Olaf said: ›We were prisoners of the drug-lord of the island.‹
I yelled: ›Yes!‹ and laughed.
Then someone said: ›The one from before was just here again.‹
›Really?‹

In most of the texts since his Techno phase, the appropriate understanding of the writing process would be that Goetz rather records than writes his texts.[22] Hence, on an aesthetic level the adaptation of Techno entails a new way of writing which can be properly construed as an act of recording.

4. Techno and Politics

According to Goetz, the political dimension of Techno is based around the experience of happiness, the experience of being part of a mass and the attempt to write about it adequately. In *Celebration,* a collection of interviews and journalistic texts, Goetz has to defend his political idea against the criticism of Isabelle Graw and Astrid Weigel, the editors of the magazine *Texte zur Kunst*. Subject of their discussion is an article Goetz had written for the newspaper supplement of the weekly paper *DIE ZEIT*. In the article, which is captioned "HARD TIMES, BIG FUN. Das Kapital des Glücks und seine Politik," (The capital of happiness and its politics) Goetz on the one hand tries to describe the experience of being at the Loveparade, and on the other tries to outline his perception of the politics of Techno.

> Sie nannten es: Techno.
>
> Diese Geschichte wurde oft erzählt, und es war immer eine andere. Es war immer die Geschichte der letzten, gerade erlebten Nacht. In unendlicher Variation wurde ein ums andere mal neu mit Worten dem irgendwie unfaßbar Erlebten hinterher geredet. [...]
>
> Jede Nacht ging es auf genau diese Art irgendwie um alles, nicht zuletzt um Auslöschung. Auslöschung von Erinnerung, Bewußtsein, Reflexion, Vernichtung von Geschichte.[23]

In this passage one finds, again, the already known problem of capturing what was "just experienced." The snap-shot quality of the experience leads to the effacement of memory, consciousness (because it is focused on the body as the medium of the experience), history. All is reduced, or better, condensed to the moment and to the body which experiences this moment. Herein lies the difficulty of writing about this specific experience which derives out of the difficulty to translate a body experience into language, or at least into conventional journalistic writing.

And I said to Hardy: ›Even the –‹
›Hey!‹
›How?‹
›Fine.‹
Max said: ›Fine, fine, fine.‹
And instantly I repeated: ›Fine, fine, fine.‹
Cheerfulness, laughter, and so on, and so on." [transl. KF].

[22] Appropriately one of the volumes of Goetz's next project *Schlucht* is captioned *loslabern*, which could be translated as babbling or blabbering and has the paratext "Bericht" (report).

[23] Rainald Goetz. *Celebration. Texte und Bilder zur Nacht*. Frankfurt 2004, p. 213. "They called it: Techno. This story has often been told, yet it was always a different one. It was always the story of the last night, just experienced. In endless variation one tried repeatedly to get hold of the somehow inconceivable experience with words. [...] In the same way it was somehow every night about everything, not least about extinction. Extinction of memory, consciousness, thinking, annihilation of history." [transl. KF].

If it seems impossible to put techno into words, mainstream media and pop-culture magazines like *SPEX* nevertheless try to do this and, according to Goetz, fail.

> Die selbstbezogene, fast autistische Komponente dieser Demonstration der Glückserfahrung war vielleicht, weil so irritierend, mit ein Kern-Politikum. Und das hochnervöse ›Neu‹-Organ, das die Realität dauernd fahrig suchend durchzuckt, meldete sofort: He, was ist da los?
>
> Gerade, weil die Aktivisten selbst es nicht so genau wußten, schon gar nicht sagen konnten, entstand im Nu ein hochstereotypes Medien-Mantra: wie verrückt die Leute ausschauen, wie lange sie tanzen, wie laut und dumpf die Musik wäre.[24]

Because Techno resists the usual analytical categories and defies description as well as definition, most people in the media reduced it to the unconventional clothing-style and the loudness and simplicity of the music. For Goetz, however, it is not only this element of resistance that makes it political, it is precisely the openness of the event to everyone that makes it possible to understand it as an egalitarian utopia.

Ironically the vision of equality is the result of the commercialization or vulgarization of techno. In the beginning only the usual night-life people took part in techno, but now, Goetz states, everyone could join: the unhappy creatures, the mass of simple-minded, and the broken and dumb people. The reason for this lies in the permanent availability of techno. In the beginning focused on a group of insiders who knew the rules and codes and thereby could function as filters, techno became a commercial commodity which everyone could buy or at least listen to on the radio:

> Das Schöne dabei: gute Ideen, die man kaufen kann. Keiner muß denen beitreten, nirgendwo muß man sich ausweisen, der Zutritt wird nicht über Exklusiv-Mitgliedschaft vergeben und verwehrt.
>
> Man dreht einfach das Radio auf.
>
> Das sind für mich glückliche Momente für, ich wiederhole, die Demokratie.[25]

Goetz concludes his thoughts on Techno with a comparison to art in general. As I have pointed out, strangely he agrees with Adorno on the lack of a social function of art and literature. While the early Goetz adapted Punk to attack certain institutions and ideas, his adaptation of Techno wants to articulate the possibility of changing the world.

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[24] Ibid., p. 214. "The self-involved, almost autistic component of this demonstration experiencing joy was maybe, because it was so irritating, a core political issue. [...] Because the activists themselves didn't really know, let alone couldn't talk about it, a highly stereotypical media-mantra arose: how crazy the people look, for how long they dance, how loud and dull the music is." [transl. KF].

[25] Ibid., p. 233. "The beauty is: good ideas one can buy. Nobody has to join them, nowhere one has to identify oneself, access is not granted or denied by exclusive membership. Just turn on the radio. These are happy moments for me, and, I repeat, for democracy." [transl. KF].

> So ist insgesamt durch Dance geschehen, wovon Kunst, seit es sie gibt, träumt: mitzuwirken daran, daß es eine neue Welt gibt, die – und sei es nur ein Mikrobißchen – besser ist als die, die war.[26]

Based on the assumption about the world-changing ability of Techno, Westbam and Rainald Goetz even outline "Prolegomena zu einer Theorie des real existierenden Prollismus" (Prolegomena to a Theory of real existing Prolism) based on the idea of societal happiness and the complete immersion of the individual in a dancing mass. And although it sounds silly and ironic, they were serious.

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[26] Ibid., p. 235. So, in general Dance made it happen, what was dreamt of by art since it was invented: creating a new world which is, even just for a little bit, better than before." [transl. KF].