

tage as the “principle” that affected the narration style of the novel thus envisaged a change in Döblin’s position on film. Accordingly, it can conclusively be said that Döblin indirectly acknowledged the filmic effect in his writing retrospectively; at the same time, this retrospective acceptance was helped by the emergence of sound film because Döblin, reportedly in his early comments on cinema, perceived the absence of the spoken word in films as an impediment to film as a full-blown art.

Reading Berlin Alexanderplatz

Walter Benjamin presented Döblin’s principal novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz* in his essay *Krisis des Romans* in a very condensed manner. The discourse of the review of the novel moves through interdisciplinary fields (as one could say nowadays) such as comparative literature and cultural analysis. There are statements and opinions in the review that should be read together with Benjamin’s *Arcades Project*. Howard Caygill rightly connects the project to Benjamin’s reflection on the “epic,”: “/. . ./ whether the epic theatre of Brecht and the epic novels of Victor Hugo and Döblin, or the anti-epics of Kafka and Baudelaire. The various themes are brought together in the genealogy of modern urban experience as the destruction of tradition undertaken in the *Arcades Project*” (Caygill, 1998: 64). Benjamin’s inspiration for simultaneous poetic and theoretical descriptions of the complexities of urban experience in the *Arcades Project* must have been Döblin’s novel. Hence, Benjamin’s *city reading*³ – which obviously mingles with Döblin’s travels through the various urban and social layers of Berlin of the 1920s as sensed through Franz Biberkopf, the antihero of the novel – reveals the economic and political realities of the structure of Berlin’s urban environment. Bourdieu developed the concept of social (and symbolic) space decades later through his reflexive sociological and philosophical conceptual apprehensions of complexities of modern society. Bourdieu’s notion of social space incorporates basic aspects of meaning that I have tried to present above: “This space is defined by a more or less narrow correspondence between a certain order of coexistence (or of distribution) of agents and a certain coexistence (or distribution) of properties. Consequently, there is nobody that is not characterized by place where he is situated more or less in a permanent manner” (Bourdieu, 1997: p. 162). The aspect of urbanity has a structuring role because it is inscribed in the constituting movements of individuals as represented by the characters of the novel. “Döblin’s epic unites

3 This term was proposed and developed by David Henkin (1998).