

collective experience of a place – Alexanderplatz – with the fate of an individual character, Franz Biberkopf. The place forms the locus of the epic, dissolving the solitude of the individual character into a reflex of urban experience” (Caygill, 1998: p. 71).

Walter Benjamin was one of the first theoreticians, who determined some fundamental concepts for reading Döblin’s novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, which could be taken as an example of a multiple uses of the counter-identification mechanism. As Benjamin indicates in the text of his review, Döblin’s lecture at the Prussian Academy of Arts in 1929 made a strong impression on him. Under the spell of this lecture, he contrasted Döblin’s “epic fiction” with André Gide’s idea of *roman pur*. Although Döblin knew about and was very impressed by James Joyce, Benjamin insisted that it was unnecessary to operate with artistic expressions (*Kunstaussdrücken*), or to talk about *dialogue interieur*, or recall Joyce while considering *Berlin Alexanderplatz*.

*Actually, this is something different. The stylistic principle of this book is montage. Petit bourgeois leaflets, scandalous stories, misfortunes, sensation from 28, popular songs, and advertisements sprinkle this text. The principle of montage explodes the novel, its form and its style, and it opens up new, very epic possibilities, mostly with regard to form. In fact, the material of montage is not at all random. Real montage is based on the document. In its fanatical battle against the artwork Dadaism has made use of it in order to ally itself with everyday life. For the first time, if only tentatively, it has proclaimed the sovereignty of the authentic. In its best moments, film has prepared us for it.* (Benjamin, 1991: p. 232)

In the case of Döblin’s novel the montage, as it has been brought forward by Benjamin, becomes a principle of counter-identification, which works for the author, a reader and, above all, for characters in the novel. As much as things are changing and one cannot speak about any unified field of literary theory, we can say that this theory – or better to say: set of theories – classifies, canonises and validates literary works as it interprets them and at the same time constructs a framework of interpretation. The literary theory undoubtedly declared *Berlin Alexanderplatz* to be an important novel worth of multi-dimensional interpretation: “Döblin’s brilliant play with traditions and *topoi* opens doors to an interpreter of the novel to diverse spaces and offers utmost differentiated possibilities of links to biblical