

## **Babylon Berlin\_Rejected Chapter.**

This chapter was originally written for a special collection. It evolved from an earlier, now published paper on this topic, which you can download for free here:

[The \(Trans\)national Appeal within Babylon Berlin? \(modernlanguagesopen.org\)](https://modernlanguagesopen.org)

However, this paper was rejected at the peer review stage. Although I could have taken this to other journals, I decided in this instance to share the chapter here so that the work can be available to students, scholars and any interested parties. I think it is important that as academics we not only share successes but also share that which does not succeed. I explain my decision-making process and the key questions I asked myself before reaching this decision in a post on my resources page ([Resources – HilaryPotterPhD](#)), in the hope it may also help others when deciding what to do with rejected publications, which is, after all, all part of the writing process. I remain open to discussions on this topic should you be interested in any future collaborations.

With warmest wishes,

Hilary

## **The Transnational Translatability of *Babylon Berlin*©**

**Hilary Potter<sup>1</sup>**

### **Abstract**

*Babylon Berlin* is the most expensive German-language series produced to date, and the most expensive non-English language production. Since its launch in 2017, *Babylon Berlin* has become an international success, in particular in the Anglophone sphere, even though German-language series do not always succeed on international markets. This chapter examines what makes *Babylon Berlin* different, asking what makes it travel. It argues that the series' success can be explained by a combination of factors including a wider interest in this period generally, the way in which the series indicates parallels between the past and the present. Key to *Babylon Berlin's* success, however, is transnational translatability, specifically the multiple levels of translation in the series and how these intersect, from its most visible manifestation in the form of subtitles to the invisible layer of translation at the writing stage, making the series into a “kind of translation into today” (Tykwer), which renders this German historical crime drama appealing to international audiences.

---

<sup>1</sup> This article is subject to copyright.

*Babylon Berlin* (2017–) creates a gritty vision of 1920s Berlin packed with crime, intrigue, and corruption amongst the glitz, glamour, and grime. The series draws on familiar tropes from the First World War, depicted via flashback sequences transporting the viewer to the Western Front, to shell holes, mud, and scenes of brutal death that engender ideas of lingering trauma for the lead character Gereon Rath, creating empathy from the opening seconds of the series. These flashbacks interlink with scenes of the “present” Weimar Berlin in 1929 with its depictions of the myriad complexities of Germany’s first democracy from its economic turmoil shown through mass poverty and unemployment, social issues portrayed through the female lead Charlotte Ritter and the abusive dynamics of her family, alongside the juxtaposition of sexual liberty and poverty-induced prostitution in the capital city. The series delves, on the surface at least, into political issues including Berlin’s mafia gangs and drug-fuelled criminality, the street fighting between Communists and the police. Then, of course, there are the Nazis who make their ominous presence felt. Many of *Babylon Berlin*’s tropes identified above are taken from long-established TV formulas, raising the question of whether these are what makes this transnational German-language series an international commercial success.

*Babylon Berlin* is co-written and co-directed by Tom Tykwer, Henk Handloegten, and Achim von Borries. Since its launch in 2017 this historical crime drama, set in the latter stages of Germany’s Weimar Republic, has received critical acclaim and become a commercial success. When it launched on Germany’s public broadcast channel ARD, viewing figures reached 8.5 million, giving it a 24.5% market share percentage.<sup>2</sup> *Babylon Berlin* succeeded internationally, as well, with distribution rights sold to 60 countries.<sup>3</sup> This is reflected in viewer comments including: “We continue to be enthralled by this series. It’s really hard not to binge watch. There are many plots, twists and turns and all the while you are aware of the rise of fascism in the background which adds to a sense of danger . . . brilliant! Highly recommended.”<sup>4</sup>

The series’ success on the domestic market is worthy of attention alone. However, it is its success internationally that is of interest in this article. Randall Halle has rightly observed that German-language productions do not always do well on the international market.<sup>5</sup> Yet strikingly, some subtitled series do travel well. *Deutschland 83*, discussed elsewhere in this

---

<sup>2</sup> (Roxborough, 2018)

<sup>3</sup> (Clarke, 2017)

<sup>4</sup> (Sand flower, 2020)

<sup>5</sup> (Halle, 2006)

volume, is an example of successful German export TV. Yet, as Halle's observation makes clear, such success is not guaranteed. *Babylon Berlin* is not only a German-language production, but it also makes use of regional dialect which is interspersed throughout the dialogue. Despite Halle's observation and the use of dialect, however, *Babylon Berlin* has proven popular internationally—and in the Anglophone sphere in particular.<sup>6</sup> Success against the grain is not the only remarkable feature. Budget is another. *Babylon Berlin* is not only the most expensive German-language TV series made to date, but it is also the most expensive non-English language TV series of all time.<sup>7</sup> The sheer scale of the series in terms of its commercial success is unusual but proves pivotal in paving the way for future German export TV successes. The size of the budget is also indicative of a further key point: the series had to succeed abroad in order to recoup the record-breaking production costs. Given these factors, this chapter asks why *Babylon Berlin* has proven an international success by examining the approach the directors have taken to ensure that the series appealed to multiple audiences. To this end the chapter uses translation theories to examine what makes *Babylon Berlin* different, focusing how these are integral in creating the series' transnational translatability, namely its ability to translate to audiences across cultures.<sup>8</sup>

The language of production is a significant factor in the series' exportability. As an international series *Babylon Berlin* could have been produced in English, but given that it is a German historical crime drama it would have seemed anachronous for the series to have been produced in any other language. Moreover, the success of series such as Anna and Jörg Winger's *Deutschland 83*, *Deutschland 86* and *Deutschland 89*, showed that using German as the language of production does not necessarily preclude international success.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the use of German in *Babylon Berlin* arguably adds to the series' exportability, creating a sense of authenticity through the use of language.<sup>10</sup> Even though international viewers may not be able to follow German and be reliant on the subtitles for meaning, being able to hear the German spoken in the dialogue adds to their interpretation; it provides them with auditory cues which aid viewer interpretation, supplementing and adding nuance to the subtitles.<sup>11</sup> The

---

<sup>6</sup> (Brockmann, 2020)

<sup>7</sup> Mund, 2017

<sup>8</sup> TV series that have succeeded internationally include *Deutschland 83*, *Deutschland 86*, *Deutschland 89* or *Dark*, whereas long-running series such as *Tatort*, or dramas such as *Eldorado KaDeWe—Jetzt ist unsere Zeit* have not done well on the international market, suggesting that even historical period alone is not a sufficient factor in a series' exportability.

<sup>9</sup> (Beier, 2017)

<sup>10</sup> Other forthcoming works look at this in more detail.

<sup>11</sup> (Winke, Gass, & Sydorenko, 2013, 254)

decision to produce the series in German required a level of translation in the process to enable it to become exportable beyond German-speaking countries. This, in turn, opens up an avenue for scholarly exploration. Translability functions on several levels and, as this chapter demonstrates, it is in an interpretation of the different levels of translation that are key to understanding how *Babylon Berlin* has become a successful TV export, even in the Anglophone sphere.

In writing this chapter, the question I initially asked was: what is it about *Babylon Berlin* that has made this German-language series a success, notably in the English-speaking world? TV can travel, as Liebes and Katz demonstrated showing that meaning can cross borders and is refracted through the target culture.<sup>12</sup> However, this knowledge alone does not suffice in answering the question. For a TV series to be commercially successful it must resonate with its audiences. *Babylon Berlin* was developed for an international audience and with this in mind that initial question of what made the series a global success, is, in essence, the wrong one to be asking.<sup>13</sup> Instead, the question should be: when is Germany's past most commercially exportable? The answer to this question, as I endeavour to demonstrate in this chapter, is, when it is not really about Germany's past, rather when it is about a German past re-imagined along transnational lines.

To this end, I argue that a confluence of factors has contributed to the series' success outside of Germany. On one level, we need to factor in the wider context, namely the broader interest in World War One, interest in—and appeal of—the Golden Twenties, trends in television viewing habits, particularly around German export television, and allusions to these eras in the public imaginary both in terms of the rise of the populist right in multiple countries including the UK and Germany, coupled with concomitant concerns about the future. At the time of the series' launch in 2017, two patterns were already well established. The first is the influence of anniversaries focusing on remembering past trauma, loss, and suffering; at this point multiple countries were three years into a commemorative cycle marking the centenary of World War One. The past, it seemed, was ever present. As Anna Saunders has observed, “[t]he emotional resonance of history is burgeoning today: national and international commemorative calendars crystallize the past around iconic events and personalities to provide emotional, but also political, social and economic capital for contemporary society.”<sup>14</sup> This, she noted, was evident in “the unabated interest in marking historical milestones, as seen with

---

<sup>12</sup> (Liebes & Katz, 1993, 80-81)

<sup>13</sup> (Beier, 2017)

<sup>14</sup> (Saunders, 2020, 357)

the anniversary of the First World War.”<sup>15</sup> The conflict was, therefore, already well-established in the public imaginary by the time the series aired. That the series draws on World War One and its legacy thus capitalizes on and plays into that interest in the conflict. It benefits from this broad interest in the period, in the ideas of trauma and tragedy that are connoted with it, and also contributes to them in its depiction of Gereon as well as other characters’ enduring trauma resulting from the wartime experiences. *Babylon Berlin* draws on the public interest (in Germany, and elsewhere) in the period around World War One and all that followed, but also on the centenary of the emergence of the Weimar Republic, Germany’s first and failed democratic state, with the knowledge that World War Two would follow, thus further tying into ideas of trauma, tragedy, and suffering, a sense of the inevitability of what will happen, which in turn play into contemporary fears.

*Babylon Berlin* is fraught with trauma and turmoil, which arguably facilitates its exportability, particularly in the UK context. Randall Halle has observed how German series are refracted through a number of stereotypes in the British press, which can affect their reception. Films and series that have tended to succeed are those that are set against the backdrop of historical turmoil.<sup>16</sup> In this *Babylon Berlin* has much to offer viewers. The series opener is set in 1929, in a period known for its instability, the flashbacks to World War One provide reference to earlier turmoil, viewers know the Weimar Republic will fail in a short time and give way to the Nazi era; all of these factors feed into that trend around successful export of German series. The historical turmoil depicted on screen, however, links to more than televisual trends, rather it resonates with the contemporary climate: economic, social and political instability, poverty, economic distress, the rise of the far-right in several countries, the threats to democracy,<sup>17</sup> and a sense of what Levi and Rothberg have defined as a “future foreboding.”<sup>18</sup> Sara F. Hall argues that the series plays on “today’s cultural vocabulary of fear, especially fear about the political future.”<sup>19</sup> That cultural vocabulary of fear, to use Hall’s term, is not simply inwardly directed at Germany, though, rather as Adrian Daub notes, *Babylon Berlin* seeks to make points about democracy and its fragility in a conscious warning to others.<sup>20</sup> These messages were certainly picked up in the series’ press reception.<sup>21</sup> Kate

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> (Halle, 2006)

<sup>17</sup> (Temelkuran, 2019, 8-13)

<sup>18</sup> (Levi & Rothberg, 2018, 356)

<sup>19</sup> (Hall, 2019)

<sup>20</sup> (Daub, 2018)

<sup>21</sup> (Arscott, 2017)

Connolly noted that, “[t]he series charts the fragile democracy in the Weimar Republic shortly before the Nazi rise to power, and comes at a time when fears are growing over the successes of the populist right across Europe.”<sup>22</sup> Similarly, Robert Davidson of Sandstone Press (which publishes Volker Kutscher’s Gereon Rath novels in English translation) pointed to comparisons between Germany in 1929 and Britain and America in the present, stating, “[t]here appears to be in both countries a feeling of national failure, where a fairly large section of society reaches for the exclusion of the other.”<sup>23</sup> What all of this highlights is the timeliness of the series and public receptivity to it, but it is only when we examine the series closely, and through the lens of translatability, that we begin to see precisely how *Babylon Berlin* does this.

Having established the broader framing context we can then drill down to the specifics in exploring the levels of translatability in *Babylon Berlin*, and how they intersect with each other and with the framing context. To this end, this chapter examines the different modes of translation including subtitling (German–English in this instance) within *Babylon Berlin*. It argues that there are multiple layers of translation in the series—visible and invisible—but it is the level of translation at the writing stage, embedded within the plot, that renders this series exportable. This approach follows on from co-director Tom Tykwer’s observation that the series had to be a kind of translation, in terms of the themes as well as the era, into today; it needed to resonate.<sup>24</sup> To this end, the three directors created *Babylon Berlin*, adapting Volker Kutscher’s original novels, drawing on plotlines that may have been outwardly steeped in German history but inwardly were universal, overlaid with transnational visual tropes. This engenders an immediate sense of familiarity with the series’ content, and thus renders it appealing.

### **Translation in *Babylon Berlin***

Translation plays a significant role in *Babylon Berlin*’s exportability, rendering it accessible to non-German speaking audiences. Were it not for translation at the level of subtitling then the series would not have had the reach it has had. Given that it is commercially successful in so far as it has been distributed to 60 countries, even though, as noted above, German-language productions do not always travel well, *Babylon Berlin* makes a suitable case study for the role

---

<sup>22</sup> (Connolly, 2017)

<sup>23</sup> (Robert Davidson in Alberge, 2017)

<sup>24</sup> (Beier, 2017)

of translatability in a transnational production. To date, the role of translation in *Babylon Berlin* has received little scholarly attention. This is reflective of a wider trend in studies of transnational media productions. Mareike Jenner argues that translation is an element that is often either overlooked or addressed only fleetingly.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, Tiina Tuominen argues that studies of the media pay little, if any attention, to the role of translation in the viewer experience, or simply dismiss it—inaccurately—as a transparent rewording of the original.<sup>26</sup> Yet as Tuominen points out, viewer experience of foreign media is shaped by the translator and “the translator’s creative decisions are consequential in terms of the resulting media text.”<sup>27</sup> In line with Tuominen, Jenner also argues that translator decisions are significant. She argues that how the translation strategy used, modifying the translation to fit with the target cultures is key to making a series exportable.<sup>28</sup> This chapter concurs with Jenner as to the linkage of translation to exportability but broadens understanding of the levels of translation within *Babylon Berlin*, demonstrating that not only are there multiple, interconnected levels, both visible and invisible, translation is key to the series’ international commercial success. It is in borrowing and adapting Laurence Venuti’s hermeneutic approach that we can identify these different levels and how they function. If we take the position that a text is coded in the receiving audience situation and by comparing texts, we can identify a third space in which we can explore the changes between the one text and the other and the implications thereof, then we can understand both the TV series to be a text, and the novels from which the series is derived, to be another. By focusing on the omissions, amendments, and creations from the one “text” to the other reveals the values and ideologies, including shared morals and cultural tastes which are used to appeal to a particular audience, in this case the UK.<sup>29</sup>

Let us apply this theory to the opening scenes of the series. As the opening credits appear on screen, ten seconds into the first episode the viewer hears a quiet voiceover, the voice of psychiatrist Dr Anno Schmidt. As he speaks, a title card appears with the words ‘Berlin 1929’ on it. The text appears on screen, fading in and out as Anno speaks, before the scene switches to him and our lead character, Gereon Rath, as he undergoes hypnosis treatment. The screen fades in and out from the present-day (1929) to scenes we will later see in the series. The viewer sees Gereon walking backwards in a tunnel, as scenes that the viewer will see in

---

<sup>25</sup> (Jenner, 2018, 194)

<sup>26</sup> (Tuominen, 2019, 229)

<sup>27</sup> (Ibid, 230)

<sup>28</sup> (Jenner, 2018, 236)

<sup>29</sup> (Venuti, 2007, 33)

the series flash before their eyes, and as Anno tells him he will take him back, step by step, to the source of his fear and to the truth. At precisely 1:30 seconds into the series, the viewer is transported back, fleetingly, to the Western Front of World War One, to Gereon muddied on the battlefield, terror in his eyes as shells explode in the background. The next second is punctuated by the present and then we return again to the Western Front, to a shot of a horse on the battlefield as Anno says, “to the truth”, before transporting the viewer to Cologne where the soldier Gereon is praying in church after his brother and sister-in-law’s wedding. Gereon, the voiceover tells us, is desperate to go to war to escape his troubles, namely his love for his sister-in-law. The opening sequence closes with Gereon back in the tunnel screaming, and then the opening titles roll. Within the first 2 minutes and 39 seconds the viewer has been transported backwards and forwards between Berlin in 1929 to World War One.

The opening two and a half minutes set the tone for the series. The use of flashback here is used to signify moments of trauma, not only providing the viewer with snapshots of what is to come, imitating a series trailer, but also to encourage the viewer to identify with Gereon. The sequence is dizzying and disorientating, putting the viewer in Gereon’s position whilst giving the viewer an insight into what troubles him, linking war trauma and PTSD, with a troubled love and broken heartedness, thereby encouraging empathy between the viewer and the lead character. Creating this viewer empathy by hooking the viewer in is established not only through the visual and cinematographic rendering of the scene, the auditory cues in terms of the voice and voice tone, to the background beat, but for international viewers this is further created through translation—through the visible translation in the form of subtitles in the first instance and how they interact with the visual and auditory cues, and the invisible translation at the writing stage in the second.

Let us now focus on the subtitles in detail, which in this analysis are the English subtitles created by freelance translator and subtitler Stephanie Geiges.<sup>30</sup> The subtitles are punchy and precise in rendering the series accessible to English-speaking viewers. These subtitles not only render the series accessible, but in the opening sequence also play into the auditory cues. Anno’s voice slows as takes Gereon back to the scenes of World War One and the subtitles match this pace. As Anno says he will take Gereon back to the source of his fear, step by step, to the truth, the auditory cues, the background beat mimics a heartbeat, and the viewer reads the subtitles “to the source . . . to the source of your fear . . . I will lead you . . .

---

<sup>30</sup> With thanks to Stephanie Geiges for generously discussing her work processes with me and answering my many questions.



step by step . . . step by step . . . to the truth” they do so to the rhythm of a heart beating, the rate increasing with the stress Gereon is placed under; that heartbeat is simultaneously Gereon’s and the viewers, helping to encourage viewer empathy with the lead character. This results from a combination of factors, specifically the subtitler’s approach and theories of cognitive processing in the reading of subtitles.

Creating subtitles provides challenges on semantic, contextual, and technical levels. The subtitler must do all of this within the technical, spatial and time constraints of the medium. Subtitles must appear synchronously or fractionally behind the spoken dialogue, they need to be contained within two lines, the average viewer is expected to be able to read 15 characters per second, meaning that the faster the dialogue, the greater the constraints on the subtitler. Stephanie Geiges, who has over 23 years’ experience in the industry including subtitling over 100 films and TV series to date (English–German and German–English), has single handedly produced the English subtitles for all three of the *Babylon Berlin* series so far. She explains her process, which begins with the media clips and the original script. She then watches the clips and subtitles them as she watches, drawing on linguistic and cultural knowledge of both the source and target languages and cultures, but also on visual cues. Geiges replicates the position of the viewer—an approach that facilitates the subtitling process by putting the viewer in the centre of the decision-making process.<sup>31</sup> Placing herself in the position of the viewer means that Geiges undergoes the same cognitive processes, outlined below, which in turn makes the subtitles work in line with the cinematography and the auditory cues.

Whilst the viewer reads the subtitles, a process that takes seconds, they simultaneously read the scene, interpreting it in relation to what they see and what they hear. As Kruger et al. highlight, a considerable degree of cognitive processing takes place whilst the viewer watches a subtitled series.<sup>32</sup> “Subtitles are not static for more than a few seconds at a time; they compete for visual attention with a moving image, and they compete for overall cognitive resources with visual and verbal sounds.”<sup>33</sup> That the subtitles are embedded within a moving image and an accompanying soundtrack, they argue, facilitates the “processing of language in context.”<sup>34</sup> D’Ydewalle and de Bruycher suggest that this process “happens effortlessly and almost automatically.”<sup>35</sup> Arguably, in *Babylon Berlin*’s opening sequence, the subtitles complement

---

<sup>31</sup> (Geiges, 2021)

<sup>32</sup> (Kruger et al. 2015, 3)

<sup>33</sup> (Ibid, 3)

<sup>34</sup> (Ibid, 4)

<sup>35</sup> (D’Ydewalle and de Bruycher 2007, 196)

and augment the visual and the auditory, aiding the cognitive processes more than merely competing. The process by which the viewer interprets the subtitled scene can be depicted in the following diagram:

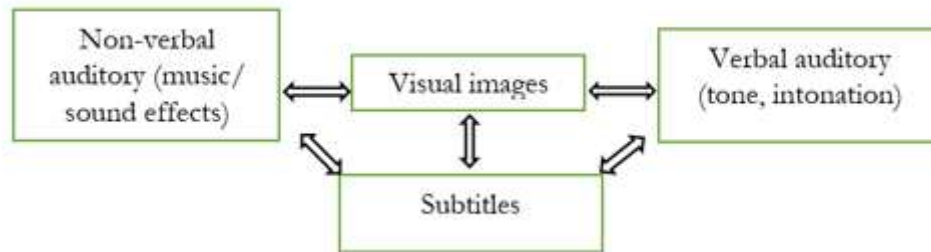


Figure 7.1. Visualization of the interrelated processes in viewing a subtitled production.

In *Babylon Berlin*'s opening scenes, the viewer reads the subtitles in English, yet they also process visually and auditorily, as shown in the above diagram. Even if the viewer does not understand German, the timbre of the voiceover is calm and authoritative (verbal auditory cues), albeit in juxtaposition to the sound effects, which contrastingly heighten stress and tension: the echo of footsteps as Gereon first seems to walk backwards through a tunnel during his hypnosis, the music which increases in sound and speed as the scene moves through images of Berlin, and back to the Western Front, before slowing and calming as the scene locates Gereon, praying in church then speeding up again as he sees his newly married brother and sister-in-law, before the scene cuts again to Gereon under hypnosis, screaming into a void (non-verbal auditory cues). All of these aid the viewer in interpreting the scene. As the analysis above demonstrated, they are also amplified by the subtitles, that correlate to the cues, particularly in their mimicry of the non-verbal auditory cues, which feed back into the visual images of Gereon as a distressed individual in the present and a traumatized soldier in the past. What the viewer sees in those opening shots are images of war, specifically of the Western Front, that is to say images familiar to the viewer from the multitude of cultural representations already in the public domain. Thus, in line with the directorial intentions, the viewer may begin to empathize with the character.<sup>36</sup> The fear and trauma alluded to in the opening shots focuses the viewer on the character and on emotive responses as Gereon is positioned as the tragic, traumatized soldier, a war survivor. His screen portrayal fits well with the many images of the conflict, especially at the time of the series' launch, and particularly in the UK where

---

<sup>36</sup> (Beier, 2017)

remembrance of World War One tends to focus more on notions of heroism, and certainly more towards national pride than the more critical reflexive remembrance found in Germany. The images are thus already transnationally readable, especially in UK, as well as US and French productions. International audiences are used to images of conflict from a British or French perspective, even if international audiences are potentially less familiar with seeing these images from a German point of view. They are, nevertheless, familiar. What they are arguably less used to is seeing an empathetic rendering of the former enemy's perspective, one which depicts World War One as a traumatic experience for all involved, including Germans, hinting at a repositioning of how Germany's past is represented on screen. In *Babylon Berlin* World War One is mediated as a transnational experience, rather than a national one. Moreover, it finds receptivity, particularly in the UK, where nation-centric wartime narratives have been a cinematic staple for decades, a storytelling device of memory politics. Yet, recent filmic trends have identified a downturn in the triumphal British patriotism depicted on screen, suggesting the broader memory politics of the present, are influencing audiences making them more receptive to transnational series such as *Babylon Berlin*.<sup>37</sup>

Yet given the amount of information and processing that takes place in viewing a subtitled film or TV series, for that subtitled series to succeed internationally, it is possible that there are more factors at work than the subtitles alone and that subtitling is not the only translation strategy, certainly not in the case of *Babylon Berlin*. It is here that we turn to Venuti's hermeneutic approach to recognize the invisible layer of translation, as the images of Gereon the viewer is first introduced to—the terrified soldier on the battlefields of the Western Front—is in marked contrast to his novel's alter ego. It is the invisible translation, outlined in what follows, that this chapter contends, is key to the series' international success and exportability.

To understand the idea of the invisible layer of translation, depicted in figure 7.2 below, the following analysis will look at *Babylon Berlin* in the context of its adaptations from Kutscher's novels, and the choices the three directors made in the writing room, enabling *Babylon Berlin* to become, in their words, a kind of translation into the present.<sup>38</sup> Using Venuti's hermeneutic approach to this end, we can explore the omissions and amendments in the adaptation process to reveal not only ideals and values, but also how these adaptations

---

<sup>37</sup> (Leigh, 2022)

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

function as a layer of translation unseen to the viewer, but which simultaneously renders the series accessible. This renders the action familiar by translating characters and plotlines from the historically and culturally specific features of the novels to the more readily transnational of the TV series for which no real understanding of German history of the period is necessary. This will demonstrate that even whilst the characters and plotlines are framed by the history of the period and references that could be interpreted as specific German cultural referents including literary references to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe to Irmgard Keun, and with which international audiences may be unfamiliar, the characters and the plotlines have been translated to the extent that they also have referents beyond the German specific and in the transnational.

Figure 7.2 illustrates the multiple facets of the viewer's interpretation of the subtitled version of *Babylon Berlin*. As the analysis above around figure 7.1 and the opening scene has shown, a number of cognitive processes take place simultaneously as the viewer watches and interprets the images, sounds and words on-screen. Yet this alone does not explain the series' exportability, rather there is more to it. The analysis above also referred to the familiarity of what the viewer was seeing, which could be considered an example of the invisible layer of translation that surrounds and feeds into the cognitive processes already identified in the viewing process as shown in Figure 2. In this diagram the established cognitive processes are framed by the invisible translation process. This is a process that not only surrounds the interpretation of sound, image, and text, but is one that also precedes the actual viewing process. It is at a temporal remove by the time the viewer watches the series. This translation stage has long been completed and the viewer is unaware of it. To illustrate this, the analysis that follows focuses first on the lead character Gereon Rath, then on the female lead Charlotte Ritter, the fates of her mother, Minna, and friend Greta.

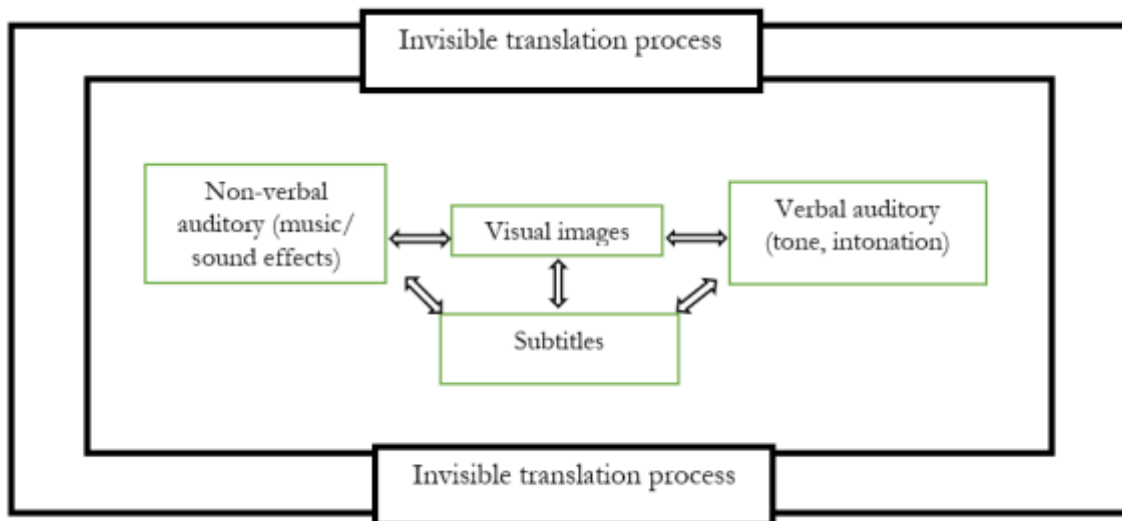


Figure 7.2. Visualization of the interrelated processes in viewing *Babylon Berlin*.

In the novels, as in the series, Gereon is a troubled figure, a loner afflicted by personal trauma. In the novels, however, his trauma is rooted in his police work following a chase that went fatally wrong; having shot a fleeing suspect who was well connected, Gereon became a hated figure in his home city of Cologne, where a media campaign was launched against him. He was transferred to the vice squad in Berlin and the reason for his transfer is hidden to all but two people, namely his new boss and Gereon's father, who as Cologne's Chief of Police had arranged his son's transfer to Berlin. Thus in the novels Gereon, who is mistrusted by his new colleagues, has a past he wishes to keep secret, is traumatized by flashbacks and nightmares linked to the shooting, and on occasion seeks refuge in drugs, a habit that brings him into the sphere of Berlin's mafia gangs. So far, then, Gereon of the novels and Gereon of the TV series share similarities, both troubled by their pasts, and seeking to maintain secrecy about them. Yet a policeman mired in controversy and helped out of it by family connections evokes less of an emotional response and empathy in the viewer than a traumatized war veteran, whose suffering is easier to identify and bound up within a global tragedy, one that is prominent in the public imaginary; hence Gereon has been translated for a transnational audience.

Further parallels and contrasts exist. In the novels, Gereon is a veteran of World War One, a man who lost one brother, Anno, on the Western Front, with his loss having a lasting effect on the Rath family. In the novels, unlike the TV series, Gereon was one of three brothers. His other brother, Severin, refused to fight for the Fatherland. He became a conscientious objector and went into exile in the United States, cast out from his home country and his family. As for Gereon himself, he never saw active service on the battlefield, having been in basic

training when the conflict ended. Throughout the novels there is a continual thread of nation-criticality and anti-nationalism that is diametrically opposed to the tragic and nationalist sentiment of the series. In considering this particular narrative shift, we can apply Venuti's hermeneutic approach, enabling us to see that shift in values away from a critical-reflexive towards an empathetic tragic-nationalist reimagining of Germany's past. The translation from novel to screen is effectively invisible but it functions at the level of the plot, rendering the series accessible to a non-German speaking audience, in conjunction with—but also beyond—the language used in the subtitling, and in line with the shift identified above in which the German experience of World War One is being internationally mediated from an empathetic perspective. Playing into nationalist sentiment around war suffering, including the coup plotting of the German generals in the series, the presence of the far-right runs throughout the series. The ever increasing presence of the Nazis in the series (a point to which I return) is utilized to create in the viewer a sense of the fragility of the democracy depicted on screen and to raise questions and draw uncomfortable parallels with the present, tying into the sense of future foreboding identified in the broader trends at the beginning of this chapter. This is reflected in the press reception of the series in which *Babylon Berlin* was called a timely reminder of the “dangerous allure of simple solutions,”<sup>39</sup> as a police drama that “has plenty of contemporary resonance,”<sup>40</sup> drawing readers' attention to the fact that the series “comes at a time when fears are growing over the successes of the populist right across Europe.”<sup>41</sup> The directors claimed that they were responding to contemporary events even whilst making the series, with Tykwer arguing that, “[a]s an idea, democracy is up for negotiation again, as much a topic of the series as it is now,” stating how they were struck themselves by the parallels, finding them “rather creepy.”<sup>42</sup> These shifts from the novel to the screen, and the reasons underpinning them, are invisible to the viewers who are not also familiar with the novels but form that layer of translatability that frames the viewing process, thereby enabling international audiences to recognize the parallels and to feel a sense of familiarity with what is depicted on screen and identify it.

Thus far the chapter has focused on the lead male character, Gereon, but the same process of analysis of understanding the shifts from the novels to the screen can be applied to the women in the series, including the series' female lead Charlotte Ritter, which provides

---

<sup>39</sup> (Arscott, 2017)

<sup>40</sup> (Wollaston, 2017)

<sup>41</sup> (Connolly, 2017)

<sup>42</sup> (Tykwer in Connolly, 2017)

further examples of invisible translation at work in the series, above all the application of gender tropes around women and their on-screen portrayal, whilst also highlighting a number of myths and prejudices of the Weimar era.

### **Invisible Translation from the Female Perspective**

The transformation of Charlotte Ritter's character from page to screen is perhaps one of the starkest. The astute, independent character of the novels is rendered all but unrecognizable on screen into a working class, the down at heel, plucky heroine, who as the main breadwinner of a large, impoverished, and dysfunctional family, works piecemeal as a stenotypist for the police by day and a prostitute of the Berlin club scene by night. As a prostitute—a criminal offence in the Weimar era—she is then forced to spy on Gereon for his corrupt boss, Bruno Walter, who exploits Charlotte sexually and blackmails her over her prostitution, which would end her aspiring career if it came to light.<sup>43</sup> Although Walter eventually enables her to leave prostitution by season 2, in season 3 we see her return to the seedy underworld out of financial need in order to provide money for her ailing older sister's medical treatment. On this occasion, she features in a porn film, in which she is instructed it is better if she does not know in advance what will happen; what ensues before the scene cuts away, is the beginning of a gang rape scene.

Whilst hostility towards women, especially sexually liberated women, is hardly a new topic, it is again in the transformation of the character between page and screen that is as stark as it is revealing. The Charlotte of the novels is very much a character in the guise of the *Neue Frau*, or New Woman of the age. The *Neue Frau* was typically believed to be independent, sexually liberated, someone who worked in a professional occupation, who believed in equality, and who aimed towards self-reliance.<sup>44</sup> The *Neue Frau* was simultaneously a figure some aspired to become and who others despised.<sup>45</sup> In the novels, Kutscher skilfully subverts and plays with the Weimar era anti-female stereotypes and prejudices, but the specificity of the *Neue Frau* and the complex history bound up in responses to her would not travel as easily across international borders as a character who viewers can more easily identify with. Her character is in some ways much reduced from those in the novels. To an extent, she has been

---

<sup>43</sup> (Elder, 2010)

<sup>44</sup> (Weitz, 2018, 305)

<sup>45</sup> (Ibid, 307)

reduced to an objectified female character who is drawn from a succession of tropes around women on screen: impoverished, plucky, defined by her sexual behavior, and castigated for it. Yet she retains a degree of the independence of the novel version of her character as it is she who sets out to change her fate and who takes care of her family, and manages to support herself when they cast her out. In some respects parallels can be drawn to Irmgard Keun's character Doris in *Das kunstseidene Mädchen* (*The Artificial Silk Girl*),<sup>46</sup> in so far as she both reveals the inner contradictions of the Weimar era for women, the appearance of glamour, and the grime underneath it, but is able nevertheless to negotiate her way through the circumstances she finds herself in with relative success. Whilst Charlotte does have parallels drawn from German literary culture, for a wider audience she also appears to fit within the mold of many female characters from different eras. Her character has also been adapted both in terms of the persona and the plots she is involved in from the more complex character of her time in the novel version, to one whose actions and attitudes are not anchored temporally. The first time we see her character on screen, she is returning to the dirt and squalor of her dilapidated home.<sup>47</sup> For UK viewers the image evokes a Dickensian scene just as much as it does a Weimar Berlin one, and it is likely to evoke similar references in other national contexts since, as Liebes and Katz have shown, audiences tend to decode series within their own cultural frameworks of reference.<sup>48</sup> By season three the viewer learns that Charlotte was in fact not her father's child, but rather was the product of a brief illicit affair her mother had. This evokes viewer empathy, rendering her an identifiable character. Her parentage and her mother's affair situate both mother and daughter in timeless literary and filmic tropes whereby women are punished for all kinds of sexual deviancy. Charlotte's mother, Minna, dies in season two from syphilis, which she contracted as a result of the same affair through which she conceived Charlotte. After Minna's death, Charlotte is cast out from her remaining family and the adult family members only turn to her when they want something. It also seems that, as season three intimates, Charlotte's biological father was likely a member of one of Berlin's mafia gangs, or a shady character at the very least, thereby suggesting further misery will come her way as she discovers her paternal heritage. In the novels, by contrast, Charlotte is the only surviving child of

---

<sup>46</sup> (Keun, 1932/2002)

<sup>47</sup> This is also seen in the more recent series *Eldorado KaDeWe—Jetzt ist unsere Zeit*, where one of the character's lives in impoverished circumstances whilst putting on an appearance of glamour for her job in the department store, suggesting that the success of *Babylon Berlin* has influenced further productions set in the era.

<sup>48</sup> (Liebes & Katz, 1993, 80-81)



Christian and Luise Ritter, a prison-warder and housewife respectively.<sup>49</sup> Luise Ritter is widowed and has left Berlin, but returns occasionally to visit Charlotte, with whom she has a difficult relationship. Thus, returning to the diagram in figure 7.2, whilst the viewer is processing the visual images, the auditory verbal cues, and the non-verbal cues, their interpretation is framed by that invisible layer of translation at the plot level, which translate Charlotte into a widely recognizable character with whom the viewer can sympathize, rather than the complex character of the novels.

Charlotte and Minna are not the only female characters who are so transformed between page and screen that they reveal the invisible translation at the plot level; Charlotte's friend Greta Overbeck provides a further example. In the series, Greta, like Charlotte, is impoverished. Alone having been cast out as a result of her illicit affair, she chances upon her old friend Charlotte. Rejecting her friend's first suggestion that she also become a prostitute on the night-club scene, she gains a position as the maid in the Chief of Police Benda's household, where she initially seems to revel in her return to a place in the patriarchal, class-ridden order. Yet her happiness is to be short-lived. She meets and falls in love with Fritz, a man she believes to be a committed communist rather than the Nazi infiltrator he turns out to be. She believes she is helping him in a just cause, which results in her planting a bomb under the Chief of Police's desk. She realizes Fritz's double-crossing treachery and attempts to right the wrong but her efforts come moments too late, and her actions result not just in the death of her boss, but his daughter as well. Meanwhile, Fritz has disappeared having been aided by powerful men and Greta takes the fall, not just for her own actions, but also for him by refusing to disclose his identity since she is wracked by guilt at what she has done. For domestic audiences and those familiar with German cultural references, there are echoes of German literary heritage here. The name Greta is similar to the diminutive Gretchen, the character in Goethe's *Faust*, who is first exploited by Faust and the devil who disguises their true identities, and who takes full responsibility for their actions. The specific reference does not necessarily travel, but that more universal trope of the deceived woman does. The trope of the woman who also not once but twice transgressed perceived sexual norms, first in the affair in which she bore her son out of wedlock and then in her liaison with Fritz, and therefore must be punished is more recognizable, as are the allusions to Christian imagery and notions of atonement to international audiences.

---

<sup>49</sup> Charlotte Ritter's complicated back story is developed partly in the novels and also in Volker Kutscher and Kat Menschick's graphic novel spin-off *Moabit*. (Kutscher & Menschick, 2017).

Greta is sentenced to death by guillotine in season three, and although Charlotte and Gereon attempt—but ultimately fail—to save her from her fate, she goes to her death calmly, having first written a letter to her son in which she expresses her love for him whilst drawing on Christian imagery of self-sacrifice, atonement for her sins and visions of her looking down on him from heaven, a guardian angel of sorts, perched upon a cloud. The viewer is also aware that Greta was blackmailed into not giving away the Nazis' involvement in order to protect her son, thus heightening the idea of her self-sacrifice further. As she is led to her execution, the emotional scene is heightened by Charlotte's frantic race to the prison to bring proof of legal cause for a stay of execution. However, like Greta before her on the night of the bombing, she is moments too late to stop the events that have been set in motion and can only watch on as her friend dies a brutal death. Greta, then, is emblematic of an individual led tragically astray and yet simultaneously she can also be seen as emblematic of the future of Germany. Nonetheless the fact also remains that Greta is a supposedly fallen woman, deceived and wronged as well as wrongdoing. However, in circling back to her illegitimate son and her illicit affair, the viewer is reminded of Greta's sexual promiscuity and like many characters before her in *Babylon Berlin* as elsewhere, she must therefore suffer as a result. This makes the stark contrast with her literary counterpart all the more intriguing. Here, Greta is Charlotte's closest friend and confidante: strong, loyal, intellectual, fiercely independent, and a constant source of guidance and support for Charlotte. In the novels Greta does become embroiled with a Nazi and in book eight (*Olympia*), it is Greta who exploits her Nazi lover rather than the other way around—and she does so in order to help Charlotte, who by this point is engaged in subversive activities smuggling German Jews out of the country. The chasm between the two versions of the character is insightful and by applying the hermeneutic approach, it reveals an uncomfortable trend in the portrayal of women on screen but one that, if *Babylon Berlin* is anything to go by, proves commercially successful.<sup>50</sup>

Greta's fate links to a further point in the series' exportability, namely the prominent placing of Nazis within the plot lines, or more specifically the positioning of the Nazis as a clear and present danger in 1929. Founded in 1920, the NSDAP had been all but wiped off the electoral map in 1928; in the main, even in the late 1920s, the extent of the threat they posed was not recognized and they were largely regarded as rabble rousers. They also feature throughout Kutscher's novels, reflecting their growing presence and the unseen—or little recognized—danger. This raises the question as to why the directors chose to make National

---

<sup>50</sup> (Seale, 2018)

Socialists so prominent in *Babylon Berlin* and part of a central plot line with the assassination of the Chief of Police, August Benda. The answer to this goes back to the question posed earlier, namely that of when Germany's past is most exportable: the past is most exportable when it deals with Nazis. The viewer needs no specialist knowledge of Germany and its history to follow this plotline. The prominent inclusion of National Socialists functions as a shorthand for the future to come and signals the coming demise of the Weimar Republic and the tragedy to follow. Consequently, the series is laden with emotional impact and it is this, according to Thorsten Schaumann, that is key from an international perspective.<sup>51</sup> Randall Halle has shown how cultural barriers shape critical responses to German cultural imports such as TV and film with some periods proving more successful on the international market than others.<sup>52</sup> Part of *Babylon Berlin*'s success may be attributable to its proximity to the Third Reich and the presence of Nazis within the Weimar Republic, thereby feeding into the myth that it was doomed to fail and once again this marks a shift from the novels to the screen in a form of translation at the plot level into something easily recognizable. At the same time, it offers a more nuanced perspective in terms of showing the future perpetrator nation not simply as one of Nazis and their dissenters, but a nation with a diverse population with qualities and shortcomings, thereby also moving beyond typical narratives of this era. In this regard *Babylon Berlin* has moved on from heritage film style narrative and plot structure that had previously been successful. The heritage genre, a European cinema-style with nation-specific variations, tended in the German context towards a conservative nostalgia of conciliatory narratives of overcoming difference in order to work through trauma and suffering. As Lutz Koepnick explained, heritage films presented the past as a site of comfort and orientation in the present *vis-à-vis* the past.<sup>53</sup> Yet *Babylon Berlin* does not do this; it is neither a source of conservative nostalgia, a longing for an earlier time, nor does it offer any sense of comfort in relation to the past. Nevertheless, in some respects it does still mirror the German heritage film. Where the German heritage film attempted to create a sense of a shared German past, *Babylon Berlin* is arguably presented as a reflection on the precursor to the present, creating a new shared history that reflects on the fragility of contemporary Germany as much as it does on that of the Weimar Republic.<sup>54</sup> Given how *Babylon Berlin* plays into notions of future foreboding and the vocabulary of fear in the present, the series presents Weimar Germany as complex, susceptible,

---

<sup>51</sup> (Schaumann in Halle, 2006, 258)

<sup>52</sup> (Halle, 2006)

<sup>53</sup> (Koepnick, 2002, 51 in Potter, 2018, 135)

<sup>54</sup> With thanks to Stephan Ehrig for this suggestion.

and fragile, and thus invites parallels with many democracies today faced with the challenges of the populist right. As such, this layer of translation frames interpretations and resonates with the viewers, making the Weimar period more recognizable and identifiable with, across international borders.

## Conclusion

The popularity of *Babylon Berlin* as an international export is seen in the continued demand for it ahead of the fourth season. As one reviewer stated: “This is an outstanding German drama giving insight into the decadence and chaos of 1929 Berlin. It is a tense thriller with both funny and sad moments. Can’t wait for Season 4.”<sup>55</sup> Five years since the series launched, the appetite for it remains amongst international audiences, especially in the Anglophone sphere. The series’ continued success as a German TV export, as this chapter has shown, can be explained by a combination of interrelated factors. What underpins them all, however, is the notion of translatability and more specifically multiple levels of translation that intersect with one another. This is evident in Tykwer’s observation that the series had to be a kind of translation into today and thus this fed into the series’ production, plotlines, and characterisation.<sup>56</sup> The extent to which the series portrays the fragility of democracy in Weimar Germany in ways so as to also ask questions about democracy in the present is echoed in both Sara F Hall’s work and in Tykwer’s assertions.<sup>57</sup> The answer as to how the series’ directors Tom Tykwer, Henk Handloegten, and Achim von Borries achieved this can be found in what has been termed here as an invisible level of translation, one that takes place at the plot level and in the writers’ room, long before any post-production visible translation in the form of subtitles takes place. It is this invisible level of translation that frames the visual level of translation and is part of the cognitive processing that the viewer goes through when watching the subtitled series. As this chapter has shown the subtitles not only render the series accessible, but, in the case of the English subtitles, they complement the cognitive processing that the viewers undergo in watching this subtitled series (see figures 7.1 and 7.2).

The multiple levels of translatability become apparent when Venuti’s hermeneutic model is applied to an analysis of the TV series and the original novels by Volker Kutscher on

---

<sup>55</sup> (Reviewer Comment, Patterson, 2022)

<sup>56</sup> (Beier, 2017)

<sup>57</sup> (Tykwer in Connolly, 2017)

which the series is based. In line with the stated directorial aims of making the series resonate with the present, the directors re-drew the characters and plotlines so that viewer empathy with them could be evoked. As this chapter has demonstrated, the lead character Gereon Rath has been transformed from the complex troubled detective of the novels into a traumatized World War One veteran, who continues to suffer 11 years after the war's end and who attempts to hide his suffering from others lest it hold him back. This empathy is achieved through the flashback scenes in particular as it is his backstory that is narrated throughout the series. In this way the directors were able to evoke empathy by drawing on universalized images of the World War One soldier as a victim and of the Western Front at a time when images of the conflict were prominent in the public imaginary as a result of the conflict's centenary and the multiple events as well as cultural productions that marked it, particularly in the Anglophone sphere. At the same time, the series seeks to evoke the fragility of democracy by bringing Nazi characters to the fore far earlier than in the novels. This serves to signal a clear and present danger as the protagonists are unable to halt their rise and are thwarted in their attempts to do so, as seen in the plotline involving Charlotte Ritter and Greta Overbeck that runs through the first three seasons. This sense of democratic fragility and individual powerlessness resonates with the present and taps into contemporary concerns around the rise of right-wing populism and the dangers to Western democracy.<sup>58</sup> In bringing this chapter to a close, if we return to the question of what makes this German-language TV series an international export success, we can see that the answer lies in its translatability from the visible to the invisible and the ways in which these different levels of translation interact with one another and resonate with the viewer, even as the viewer remains both unaware of the very process in which they are engaged. It is this invisible translation that is key to *Babylon Berlin*'s exportability.

**Hilary Potter** is an Honorary Associate at Royal Holloway, University of London. Her research in German Studies focuses on Cultural History and Memory. Her research interests also include translation, disability, and pedagogy. She is the author of *Remembering Rosenstrasse: History, Memory and Identity in Contemporary Germany* (Peter Lang, 2018) as well as several articles, including forthcoming work on *Babylon Berlin* as well as on translation

---

<sup>58</sup> (Levi & Rothberg, 2018, 356; Temelkuran, 2019, 260-268.)

and hypermobility. She has taught at the universities of Cardiff, Leeds, Newcastle, and Royal Holloway, University of London. She currently works at NCELP at the University of York. She is the Co-Chair of the UCML Early Career Academic Special Interest Group and the Joint Representative for Early Career Academics at Women in German Studies. She is also a contributing editor at YWMLS.

### Bibliography

- Alberge, D. 2017. "Nazis, noir and Weimar decadence: Babylon Berlin recreates an era for TV detective drama." *The Observer*. 20 August 2017.
- Arscott, Jack, 2017. "Germany's Soul Laid Bare in New TV Epic." *The New European* 16 November 2017. Accessed 03.11.2018.
- Beier, L-O, 2017. "Tykwer, Handloegten und von Borries über "Babylon Berlin" Schluss mit Pappmaché-Retro-Nostalgie!“, *Der Spiegel*, 12.20.2017.
- Brockmann, Stephen. 2020. *A Critical History of German Film*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. London: Camden House.
- Clarke, Stewart, HBO Europe Picks Up German Drama 'Babylon Berlin'. Tom Tykwer's mega budget German series rack up international sales. *Variety*. 12 October 2017 [Accessed: [HBO Europe Picks Up 'Babylon Berlin' - Variety](#) 28 October 2018]
- Connolly, 2017. "Babylon Berlin: lavish German crime drama tipped to be global hit." *The Guardian* 29 October 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/29/babylon-berlin-lavish-german-tv-drama-tipped-global-hit>. Accessed 03 November 2018.
- Daub, A. (2018, February 14). What Babylon Berlin sees in the Weimar Republic. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved February 16, 2018 from <https://newrepublic.com/article/147053/babylon-berlinsees-weimar-republic>
- D'Ydewalle, Géry and Wim De Bruckner. 2007. 'Eye Movements of Children and Adults While Reading Television Subtitles', *European Psychologist* 12(3): 196-205.
- Elder, Sace. 2010. *Murder Scenes: normality, deviance, and criminal violence in Weimar Berlin*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.
- Famurewa, Jim. 2017. "Babylon Berlin actress Liv Lisa Fries on the scandalous new Sy Atlantic series." *The Evening Standard*, 1 November 2017.
- French, Paul, "How a German Detective Series Becomes an International Hit. The Unlikely Journey of Volker Kutscher's *Babylon Berlin*." *Crime Reads*, 30. January 2018,

<https://crimereads.com/how-a-german-detective-series-becomes-an-international-hit/>.

Accessed 03. November 2018.

Geiges, Stephanie, email to the author, 19 August 2021.

Hall, Sara F. 2019. 'Babylon Berlin: Pastiching Weimar cinema', *Communications* 44(3): 304-322.

Halle, Randall. 2006. 'German Film European Film: transnational production, distribution and reception', *Screen* 47(2): 251-259.

Jenner, Mareike. 2018. *Netflix and the Reinvention of Television*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Keun, Irmgard. 1932/2002. *The Artificial Silk Girl*, translated by Kathie von Ankum. London: Penguin Classics.

Koepnick, Lutz. 2002. 'Reframing the Past: Heritage Cinema and the Holocaust in the 1990s', *New German Critique*, 87: 47-82.

Kraub, Florian. 2018 'Quality series' and their production cultures: transnational discourses within the German television industry', *International Journal Of TV Serial Narratives*, 4(2): 47-60.

Kruger, Jean-Louis, Izabela Kreiz and Agnieszka Szarkowska.. 2015. 'Subtitles on the moving image: An Overview of Eyetracking Studies,' *Refractory: A Journal of Entertainment Media* 25: 1-14.

Kutscher, Volker. 2016. *Babylon Berlin*. Dingwall: Sandstone Press.

Kutscher, Volker. 2007. *Der Nasse Fisch*. Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.

Kutscher, Volker. 2020. *Olympia*. Munich: Piper.

Kutscher, Volker. and Kat Menschik. 2017. *Moabit*. Berlin. Verlag Galiani Berlin.

Leigh, Danny, 2022. 'Battle fatigue: will Britain's second world war obsession ever end', *The Guardian*. 7 January 2022 Retrieved 3 March 2022 from [https://www.theguardian.com/film/2022/jan/07/battle-fatigue-will-british-cinemas-second-world-war-obsession-ever-end?utm\\_source=dlvr.it&utm\\_medium=facebook&fbclid=IwAR0ZvBAI2J0O2JooMPIZqYEbuVY2NNrnzOT1EC-hSV5L0S25dGXoA86ac9U](https://www.theguardian.com/film/2022/jan/07/battle-fatigue-will-british-cinemas-second-world-war-obsession-ever-end?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook&fbclid=IwAR0ZvBAI2J0O2JooMPIZqYEbuVY2NNrnzOT1EC-hSV5L0S25dGXoA86ac9U)

Levi, Neil. and Michael Rothberg. 2018. 'Memory Studies in a moment of danger: Fascism, postfascism, and the contemporary political imaginary,' *Memory Studies* 11: 355–67.

Liebes, Tamar and Elihu Katz,. 1993. *The Export of Meaning: cross-cultural readings of Dallas*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Meza, Ed. 2019. 'Babylon Berlin 3' Sells to More Than 35 Countries, Including Netflix for U.S. (EXCLUSIVE)', *Variety* 8 April. Retrieved 23 October 2019 from

<https://variety.com/2019/tv/news/babylon-berlin-3-sells-35-countries-netflix-north-america-1203183271/> Accessed 23 October 2019.

Mund, Heike. 2017. 'Babylon Berlin': The most expensive non-English drama series ever produced', *Deutsche Welle*. Retrieved 16 October 16, 2017 from <https://www.dw.com/en/babylon-berlin-the-most-expensive-non-english-drama-series-everproduced/a-40965401>

Oltermann, Philip. 2017. Sex, seafood and 25,000 coffees a day: the wild 1920s superclub that inspired Babylon Berlin. *The Guardian*. 24 November 2017 Retrieved 27 March 2018 from . <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/24/babylon-berlin-real-1920s-superclub-behind-weimar-era-thriller>

Tykwer, Tom, von Borries, Achim & Handloegten Henk, *Babylon Berlin Series 1-3*, X-Filme Creative Pool, ARD Degeto Film, Beta Film, Sky Deutschland, Westdeutscher Rundfunk

Patterson, J C A. Amazon customer review of *Babylon Berlin*, 19 January 2022. [https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/profile/amzn1.account.AFUXEZHT4QFRZGTOJQOKDGPV OI2Q/ref=atv\\_dp\\_cp\\_url](https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/profile/amzn1.account.AFUXEZHT4QFRZGTOJQOKDGPV OI2Q/ref=atv_dp_cp_url)

Potter, Hilary. 2018. *Remembering Rosenstrasse: History, Memory and Identity in Contemporary Germany*. Oxford: Peter Lang.

Potter, Hilary. 2020. 'Man kann der Verantwortung nicht entrinnen. Remembering Rosenstrasse 75 Years On,' *German Life and Letters*. 73(3): 383-400.

Roxborough, Scott, 2018. How the 'Babylon Berlin' Team Broke the Rules to Make the World's Biggest Foreign-Language Series. The team behind 'Babylon Berlin,' including German director Tom Tykwer, broke all the rules to make the world's biggest foreign-language series. *The Hollywood Reporter*. 26 December. Retrieved 15 March 2020 from [How the 'Babylon Berlin' Team Broke the Rules to Make the World's Biggest Foreign-Language Series – The Hollywood Reporter](https://www.therestaurant.com/story/2018/12/26/how-the-babylon-berlin-team-broke-the-rules-to-make-the-world-s-biggest-foreign-language-series-110000)

Saunders, Anna. 2020. 'Anniversary Capital: An Introduction,' *German Life and Letters*. 73(3): 357-364.

Sand Flower (alias) Amazon customer review of *Babylon Berlin*, 07 September 2020.

Seale, Jack, 2018. 'From Bond to ITV's Strangers: Why is everyone 'fridging'?' *The Guardian*. 21 September . Retrieved 10 October 2018 from <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2018/sep/21/from-bond-to-itvs-strangers-why-is-everyone-fridging>

Temelkuran, Ece. 2019. *How to Lose a Country: The Seven Steps from Democracy to Dictatorship*. London: 4<sup>th</sup> Estate.



- Tuominen, Tiila, 2019. 'Experiencing translated media: why audience research needs translation studies,' *The Translator* 25(3): 229-241.
- Tykwer, Tom, von Borries, Achim & Handloegten Henk, *Babylon Berlin Series 1-3*, X-Filme Creative Pool, ARD Degeto Film, Beta Film, Sky Deutschland, Westdeutscher Rundfunk
- Venuti, Lawrence. 2007. 'Adaptation, Translation, Critique,' *Journal of Visual Culture*, 6:1, 25-43.
- Weitz, Eric . D. 2018. *Weimar Germany. Promise and Tragedy*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, Centennial Edition.
- Williams, Seàn, M. 2020. 'Anniversaries, The Public and Academia,' *German Life and Letters*. 73(3): 490-517.
- Winke, Paula, Susan Gass and Tetyana Sydorenko. 2013. 'Factors Influencing the Use of Captions by Foreign Language Learners: An Eye-Tracking Study,' *The Modern Language Journal*. 97(1): 254-275.
- Wollaston, Sam. 2017. 'Babylon Berlin review: political maelstrom, a populist right on the march – sound familiar?,' *The Guardian*. 6 November 2017.