

## Chapter 6

# MAPPING BERLIN

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## Space, Trauma, and Transnationalism in Dominik Graf's *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* and the Wachowskis' *Sense8*

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In the past decade, organized crime has come to define the televisual imagination of Berlin; murderous foreigners, gang rivalries, and the archaic rituals of the heavily stylized mob have become trademarks of series such as *Dogs of Berlin* (2018), *Beat* (2018), and *4 Blocks* (2017–19). In this respect, Dominik Graf's Berlin-set miniseries *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* (2010) and the Tom Tykwer-directed Berlin sections of Lana and Lilly Wachowski's *Sense8* (2015–18) are no different, as both revolve around the criminal distribution of power and space in the decades after German reunification. In these two series, however, the order imposed on the city space by its ganglands becomes a symbolic and structural idiom for the inherent epistemic violence of Berlin's historical transnationalization. In other words, both series' understanding of how the space of criminal Berlin shapes and is shaped by historico-political ruptures relies on a shared conception of reunification as both traumatic and transnational: an asymmetrical transposition of one country into another that is marked by the movement of a national border across its subjects. Furthermore, both series foreground historical events that evoke such spatial practices of (re-)drawing borders in the first place. This transnational rupture is represented through ensuing waves of criminal activity, and is marked as a hereditary trauma that can only be negotiated via imaginaries of transnational crime. At the same time, there are stark differences between the two shows in their

understanding of nationality, belonging, and the function of Berlin as a setting. Despite focusing on the eventually successful operations of its Jewish, Latvian-German protagonist Marek Gorsky (Max Riemelt), *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* regularly indulges in essentialist generalizations about national and religious identities in post-Wende Berlin, and it at times champions a re-entrenchment of the nation's borders. Highly ambivalent in its showcasing of the visual, spatial, and structural comparability between Berlin's allegedly "foreign" underworld and its police force, *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* may work towards a transnational aesthetic via its formal structures, but ultimately remains trapped in the ethnic organization of its turf wars.

As this chapter argues, *Sense8* attempts to pick up the loose ends and rewrite the disturbing ethnic innuendos of *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*. Albeit sporting a number of globally dispersed key settings, *Sense8* can be located in direct legacy of *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*, not simply through its casting of Max Riemelt as the Berlin section's lead, Wolfgang, or because its police officer protagonist is named Will Gorski (Brian J. Smith) in reference to Riemelt's intertextual alter ego, but primarily because *Sense8*'s televisual Berlin is equally caught up in a violent gang war that harkens back to German reunification. Fundamentally transnational in its imagery, use of space, and conception as a story about sensory transhuman connectivity, *Sense8* in particular draws upon *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*'s cinematic strategies to represent trauma as spatially encoded into Berlin's city space. However, in so doing, as this chapter will conclude, *Sense8* also adapts the fundamental tensions between an innovative cinematic appreciation of Berlin's potential as a structuring agent and storylines that are ultimately restricted by their traditional reproduction of nationalist, ethnocentric hegemonies.

## Transnational Connections

Before delving into aesthetic and thematic convergences between *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* and *Sense8*, I would like to explore the links between the two shows' production processes, with a focus on the lack of international reception of the former. *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*, a ten-episode police thriller miniseries directed by Dominik Graf which premiered at the Berlinale and on ARTE in 2010, is often heralded as *the* prime example of German quality TV. In particular, the complexity of 150 speaking roles, with long subtitled scenes that detail cultural

practices, weddings, birthdays, and funerals in the milieu of Russian, Ukrainian, and Baltic-Jewish immigrants, have garnered critical attention for their lack of victimization and narrative complexity.<sup>1</sup> The series has won numerous awards,<sup>2</sup> and elicited structural comparisons with benchmark “quality television” crime series such as *The Sopranos*<sup>3</sup> and *The Wire*,<sup>4</sup> not least by Graf himself.<sup>5</sup> In comparing his own work—favorably—with *The Wire*’s alleged lack of glamour and showmanship, Julika Griem points out that Graf “positions his product in an international field that he perceives as competitive.”<sup>6</sup> However, despite Graf’s positioning, *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*’s international DVD distribution, and its television debut on the Franco-German channel ARTE, if we discount anecdotal evidence of screenings on US campuses or by Goethe Institutes around the globe, there is no international reception to speak of. Notwithstanding its critical acclaim, and its much-lauded Berlinale premiere, even its local distribution was infamously flawed. Germany’s largest public broadcaster, ARD, scheduled the series on a Friday night slot, reaching a comparatively small audience of two million viewers per episode. As a result, the show’s final three instalments were ungenerously lumped together, leading to harsh criticism across the German press. Despite its immanent negotiation of a fundamentally transnational Germany, it might well be the series’ mostly local production—public service broadcasters and a German production company, Typhoon—that has forestalled international success.<sup>7</sup> As a result, the series’ ties to *Sense8* do not rely on its own structural transnational embeddedness, but on the industry-driven “conscious transnationalism”<sup>8</sup> of German cinema’s turn toward global distribution throughout the 1990s and early 2000s.

The success of these endeavors must include mentions of Tom Tykwer’s global box-office hit *Lola rennt* [Run Lola Run], produced by his decidedly internationally oriented production company X Filme Creative Pool.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, in the curious case of *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* and *Sense8*’s artistic and thematic kinship, *Lola rennt*’s international distribution plays a central role. Festival exposure throughout the world (and a 1999 Sundance audience award) contributed significantly to its international release, and spearheaded German distribution efforts in the following years.<sup>10</sup> Hailed as a breakthrough for Germany’s ailing industry, contemporary receptions of the film repeatedly paralleled its alternate timelines to films such as *Sliding Doors* (1998) and *Go* (1999), but also, as Tykwer himself has noted, to *The Matrix*.<sup>11</sup> Both films were released within three weeks of each other in the United States, and Lana Wachowski has named *Lola rennt* as one of the few films she went to see

multiple times in a row.<sup>12</sup> The three directors' mutual appreciation soon led to collaborations, from Tykwer contributing to the soundtrack of *The Matrix Revolutions* (2003) and eventually co-directing and co-producing *Cloud Atlas* (2012) before the team embarked on *Sense8* together.<sup>13</sup> It is no surprise, then, that *Sense8*'s references to *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* hinge upon Tykwer's involvement. Max Riemelt, for instance, cites Tykwer's appreciation of Graf's series as the main reason for his casting in *Sense8*.<sup>14</sup> As such, these seemingly individual, personal connections and appendant casting choices, these German-American word-of-mouth recommendations, must be read as expressions of an underlying, systematic interconnectedness between German and Hollywood film production, in which talent, narrative traditions, and aesthetic cross-pollinations are strategically deployed—even allowing them to productively draw upon a series like *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*, which may appeal to a vast number of Germany's industry professionals, critics, and increasingly scholars, but only to a limited, and decidedly national, audience.

### *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* and Berlin's Traumatic Spatiality

*Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*'s central storyline follows Marek Gorsky, a Latvian Jewish police officer in Germany, grappling with both his identity and his desire to avenge his brother, Grisha, murdered by the 'Russian' mob ten years before the events of the show. With his own family—mainly his brother-in-law, Misha (Mišel Matičević), and later, his sister Stella (Marie Bäumer)—involved in criminal activities, Marek eventually renounces his family's criminal code of honor and his ties to organized crime when he arrests Grisha's murderer, Sergej Sokolov (Georgii Povolotskyi), thus forgoing personal revenge. Throughout, *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* focuses on Marek's coming to terms with Grisha's traumatic murder, as he oscillates between taking tip-offs from his family's criminal associates and plotting revenge, on the one hand, and abiding by the rule of law on the other. If Marek's past, however, becomes a source of unrest and indecision that confronts him with multiple layers of unbelonging—a police officer from a criminal family, and a Baltic Jew in Berlin's white, German police force—his struggle stands metonymically for a larger negotiation of Germany's post-reunification identity, articulated in the very last episode by Marek's partner, Sven Lottner (Ronald Zehrfeld): "I read that in a hundred years there will

only be 10 million Germans left. Can you imagine what this place will look like?" Lottner's ethnicization of Germanness implies its incompatibility with immigrants—regardless of their nationality. In the context of *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*, these groupings can, with the exception of Marek and two corrupt colleagues, be neatly mapped along the lines of the German police and foreign criminals. Furthermore, over the course of its ten episodes, the series goes to great lengths to emphasize that the perceived "invasion" of organized "Russian" crime that spurs Lottner's fear of ethnic eradication is the result of the demise of the Soviet Union and reunification of Germany. Whether on a societal level (foreign organized crime) or a personal level (Grisha's murder), in *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* the very concept of pastness is imbued with catastrophe, threatening the disintegration of its protagonists' individual and collective identities. Such disintegrations, I argue, are primarily negotiated and made visible via the spatiality of Berlin. I will begin the following section by outlining how deeply intertwined the notions of space and trauma are on an individual level, before turning to the series' visual organization of the city space through crime.

## Cinematic Space and Individual Trauma

The series' diachronic approach, its general mode of visualizing traumatic pastness, relies predominantly on flashbacks and their appendant didactic repetitions of earlier scenes. Characters' recent screen appearances are visually recalled as "*Erinnerungsbilder*" when their names are mentioned again,<sup>15</sup> to the point where key images such as Sokolov's escape or Grisha's murder are constantly repeated throughout the series. Such strategies are not uncommon in Graf's work, but what sets these constant visual returns apart from his other works is *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*'s overall stylization as *Wende*-negotiation. Graf's earlier *München: Geheimnisse einer Stadt* [Munich: Secrets of a City] (2000), for instance, which "repeatedly shows us how each neighborhood, each street, each corner, and each building might elicit another memory and, by extension, another urban history,"<sup>16</sup> may thus operate with a similar obsession of returning to key locales, yet in *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* such returns and their spatial specificity within Berlin are marked as predominantly traumatic rather than nostalgic.

Such disruptive flashbacks are firmly established as a central narrative trope in the first episode, "Berlin ist das Paradies," via two sequences that focus on Grisha's death, and which are paradigmatic for the visualized past. The first of these takes place early on, when

Marek's voice-over recounts a small-scale raid to apprehend a fugitive Russian-German wanted for robbery (an event leading up to Marek and his team's involvement in the pursuit of organized crime). Entering the flat, they only encounter the fugitive's Russophone parents, his sister, and his younger brother, who threatens them with a gas pistol. The family constellation parallels Marek's own childhood: two brothers and a sister, a history of migration from Eastern Europe, and a motif of violence, the gun. As a result, Marek is reminded of a childhood episode in which Grisha's toying with a gun and his sister's intervention foreshadowed their eventual involvement in criminal activities—and, moreover, Grisha's death. However, cinematically the trigger for Marek's flashback is not the character constellation per se but rather the spatiality of the scene. It is only the sister's appearance in the doorway behind Marek, and hence the character arrangement within the flat and the scene's framing through Marek's point-of-view shots, that initiates the sequence of memories (Figure 6.1). As if to underline the convergence of Marek's traumatic flashback with his positioning in the room, the camera follows his gaze back and forth between the fugitive siblings, just like he gazed back and forth between his own siblings some ten years earlier. This first introduction of the series' flashback mode thus emphasizes traumatic historical repetition along three axes—character constellations, spatial arrangements, and cinematography. *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens's* focus on the spatiality of trauma becomes even more relevant once the series anchors Marek's traumatic memories within the space of Berlin.

The same function of space is visible in the episode's second flashback that cuts back to Grisha's murder. However, this time, the spatial recognition not only transcends Marek's memory, but it is also anchored in a recognizable space in Berlin. Visiting the scene of the crime, the series takes great care to place Marek underneath the street sign of Fidinstraße, in front of a now-derelict bar called Zur Sonne, as he waits for his sister to join him in paying their respects. A slow camera turn around the area completes this establishing shot, recognizably placing the scene on a typical corner of Kreuzberg's Bergmannkiez, opposite its prominent water tower. With ominous music setting in, *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* cuts to a flashback of Grisha's murder in front of the aforementioned bar. Here, as in the ensuing flashbacks that cut across Marek and Stella's mourning, it is not Marek's own recognition of spatial relations but the camera's establishment of the city space that triggers them. Indeed, the entire scene is permeated by framings and movements that harken back to Marek's memory, as well as to the series' own representation of Grisha's murder. If *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* has earlier



**Figure 6.1.** The framing of Marek’s point of view, and the spatial arrangement of the characters in “Berlin ist das Paradies” (top: 6:58) trigger his paradigmatic flashbacks (bottom: 7:00). Screenshots by Felipe Espinoza Garrido.

suggested that specific spaces and configurations evoke Marek’s traumas, the series’ second iteration detaches these from a personal perspective and reattaches them to the cinematic space of Berlin. I would like to stress this notion of a distinctly cinematic space, as *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* foregrounds its cinematographic visual matching that allows the viewers to delve into these red-tinted flashbacks. At times, the series cuts between flashbacks and present tense as if Marek could directly see into a past he never witnessed, but which is now ingrained in the cinematic city (Figure 6.2).



**Figure 6.2.** Marek's stare onto the empty pavement conjures up images he never saw, but that *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* engrains in its cinematic city space ("Berlin ist das Paradies," 22:37–22:42). Screenshots by Felipe Espinoza Garrido.



Furthermore, such matches include numerous little convergences and overlaps between Grisha's death and Marek and Stella's presence—for instance, the view down Kopistraße, or a boy running down the street, now echoing young Marek's panicked rush to the scene. These memories of the series *Urtrauma* are primarily space-bound, rather than character-bound, and their resonance throughout the scene emphasizes the everydayness and ubiquity of traumatic resonances as an integral part of the clearly delineated city space. Trauma, this paradigmatic scene suggests, resides in the cinematically encoded pavements, streets, and vistas, rather than in individual memories. In *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*, cinematic Berlin narrates history and historical trauma beyond an individual grasp, allowing its spaces to provide a distancing mechanism from the individual's entrenchedness in their storyworld. As a result, Grisha's murder itself becomes a metaphor for a larger, transgenerational traumatization that is presented as nationally and ethnically divisive.

This prototype flashback—bits and pieces of this murder will be re-shown countless times throughout the series—also offers a central allegory for post-reunification insecurity: at the scene of the crime, Marek explains that, as a child, when with his older brother Grisha, he had felt safe, because he saw him as invincible; he felt nothing could harm Grisha. The analogy between *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*'s Latvian German protagonist and a collectivized East European memory of loss is clear: the surprising fall of the Wall, and the—to many people—shockingly sudden collapse of the Soviet Union as a collective trauma are embodied in Marek, who, as a consequence, decided to become a police officer, now occupying a liminal position. In the criminal context of his family he is a "*Musar*," a derogatory term for the police that roughly translates as "trash." So when Stella confronts his lack of Jewish friends and lack of Russian identity, labelling him as "only a German," and police chief Nico Roeber (Arved Birnbaum) questions his allegiance a few minutes later with the words "You're still mixed up in your tribe [*Sippe*]"—note the outdated racialization of the German "*Sippe*"—the *Wende*-trauma is directly linked to a current hybrid diasporic construction of migrational identity and a lack of belonging.

## Mapping Trauma in the Cinematic City

*Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*'s Berlin is immediately recognizable, not only due to the frequent reference to landmarks—the Berlin Television Tower, Ku'damm, the ICC and its prominent radio tower, to name but a

few—but also in its focus on street signs, the officers’ radio communication that often details their specific locations, and its close-ups of map details. Such recognizability necessarily differs for viewers with local knowledge, or lack thereof, and as a consequence the series’ imagination of Berlin is both inherently transnational and critically local. This is particularly important as the series hereby performs its rootedness in local city structures for even the most casual (inter)national viewer, grounding its portrayals of crime in realist conventions. At the same time, *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* thus provides ample indicators that allow a local audience to spatially retrace the characters’ movements. This is facilitated by the show’s use of recurring settings, such as the police station, the so-called *Russendisko*, Marek’s apartment, and Mischa’s restaurant *Odessa*, which *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*’s narrative mode continuously locates within the larger structure of Berlin’s cityscape. Graf himself has likened the series’ narrative procession to a clock—a circular movement from location to location and thus from storyline to storyline, all across Berlin (see Figure 6.3).<sup>17</sup>

Such local specificity is both emphasized and structured by the show’s repeated use of aerial establishing shots. As Britta Hartmann has outlined in detail, there is a link between these shots and the show’s investment to locate itself “in a multiracial post-reunification Berlin, with its coexistence of ethnic, cultural, and social milieus,” and as such, they fulfill an authenticating function.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, these “rhythmizing, structuring panoramic views” refer the series’ individual milieus and storylines back to the city space as the superordinate organizing principle that only becomes tangible in its kaleidoscopic particulars—“Only the totality of the sociotopes existing next to each other forms the macrocosm.”<sup>19</sup> If, to Hartmann, these narrative interjections that draw upon Berlin’s recognizable post-reunification spatial layout thus act as a guide to the story’s distinct yet interlinked stories and milieus, I would like to look at the ways in which *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* contours and comments on the city as ordering system. The notion of “guiding” is instrumental here: In “*Rosen fallen vom Himmel*” these characteristic aerial nobody’s shots are depicted as perspectives from a police helicopter in pursuit of the criminal businessman Heinrich Lenz (Bernd Stegmann) and his son. Here, *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* contextualizes its own ordering system by which the viewers make sense of the city and story alike as an investigative tool of police surveillance. In other words, the episode suggests that all along such interjections and their epistemic functions equate the viewer’s perspective with the police’s. However, the *Draufsicht* in both its visual aesthetic and its



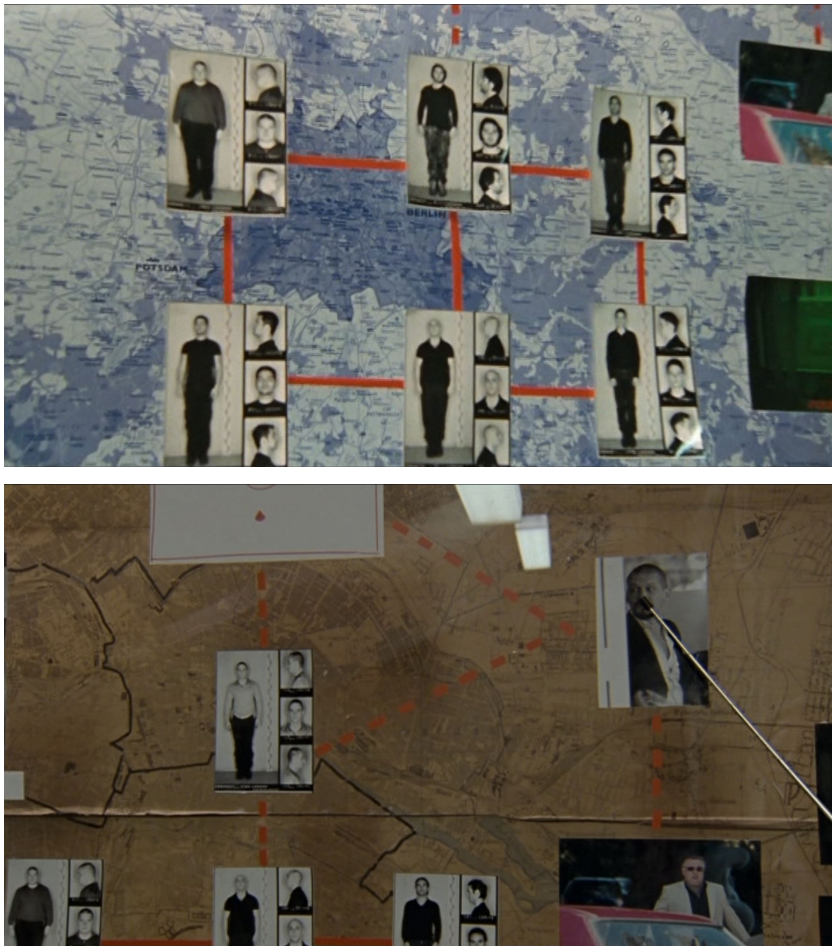
**Figure 6.3.** Aerial establishing shots introduce *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*'s multiple storylines and spaces (top to bottom: "Berlin ist das Paradies": 16:25, 34:28; "Der Überfall": 45:45; "Rosen fallen vom Himmel": 21:41). Screenshots by Felipe Espinoza Garrido.

guiding function also evokes the image and function of *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens's* ubiquitous maps, whose overall function is more ambivalent. Maps in *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*, in their digital or analogue forms, are certainly a policing tool, and frequent zooms onto the minutiae of such maps help identify and authenticate settings with even greater precision than the aerial interjections. Even the location of Lenz's illegal cigarette factory in the fictional town of Schnoetzwitz, some sixty kilometers south of Berlin, is mapped out in detail, with real reference points all around (Figure 6.4).



**Figure 6.4.** Map details as authentication and policing epistemology in “Alles hat seine Zeit,” whether real locations around Kurfürstendamm (top: 26:42) or the carefully mapped fictional town of Schnoetzwitz (bottom: 28:41). Screenshots by Felipe Espinoza Garrido.

These maps are not only intimately interwoven with the series' aerial shots—the Schnoetzwitz map is even used as an establishing shot—but their semanticization and visual arrangement comments directly on the traumatizing hierarchies that *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* has established as the basis of its cinematic post-reunification Berlin. Maps not only help the police solve crimes, they also become the literal background for police work, contextualized, overlaid, and thus visually overwritten and restructured with images of criminality and the show's multiple criminal organizations and branches (Figure 6.5).



**Figure 6.5.** Mapping crime in *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* marks new divisions of the city space (top: “Rosen fallen vom Himmel,” 48:11; bottom: “Nur ehrliche Liebe ist gute Liebe,” 19:33). Screenshots by Felipe Espinoza Garrido.

Crime and its abstracted, visual connections crisscross and divide the mapped city space, superimposing new visual structures. Nowhere is this more obvious than in one of the series' most intensely debated scenes, Roeber's motivational speech in "Der Verrat," which is worth quoting here:

These gang bosses, they're all businessmen. They're married. They live like CEOs. But under them, is the old, raw meat. They're greedy, ruthless. In their eyes, it looks like we Germans are a dying breed. We're just their customers: buying women, drugs. We're dumb German money. They're the victors, the proud barbarians. They've inundated the country. They're superior to us in their will to live and their strength.

Set to the series' theme, the scene cuts back and forth between Roeber in front of one such map and the subjects of the speech, officers and criminals. Kathrin Rothmund has argued that the map and the criminal connection it depicts refer to the series' layering of spaces and storylines, which in conjunction with the frequent zooms on the police officers in the room and the criminals creates a "network of relations, which connects the political, economic, and criminal spheres."<sup>20</sup> Rothmund stresses the map's metaphorical use as a guiding system through the complexities of the series' "polycentric narration,"<sup>21</sup> which, akin to Hartmann's reading of the film's aerial interjections, is the result of constant movement between spaces and milieus, characters and storylines, and which is constantly made visible through the presence of maps.<sup>22</sup> Such interconnections, however, are also at play when we consider the speech's references to *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens's* *Urtrauma*, the "barbaric invasion," to use Roeber's terminology, following German reunification and immigration from Eastern Europe. Focusing on the ethnicizing implications of the speech, Jill Suzanne Smith has outlined how "[w]ith Roeber's monologue, Graf's series gives a voice to contemporary German xenophobic fears by reinvigorating nineteenth- and early twentieth-century anxieties regarding degeneration and invasion,"<sup>23</sup> and thus foreshadows Lottner's eventual belief in German *Überfremdung*. This conflict of identity and belonging once more focuses on the mechanisms by which Germanness is either granted or revoked, claimed or negated, in *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*. What is at stake in the interpretation of Berlin's maps and the visual language they share with the series aerial shots is no less than *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens's* understanding of spatial and cinematographic organization as structuring devices of a Germanness in the face of its transnationalization.

The ambivalence between the series' insistence on distinct spaces and spheres—and, as a result, possibly also nationalities—while emphasizing their interconnectedness has been remarked upon.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, likable gangsters who abide by their strict codes, corruption, and the ambivalence of Stella's eventual continuation of her deceased husband's criminal empire, along with Marek's familial involvement with his brother-in-law, certainly point to a general eradication of categorical and normative boundaries in the series. However, it is particularly Roerber's reference to *Fleisch*, the inherently biological, bodily constitution, which to him seems to underpin his demarcation of lawful Germanness and criminal alterity, that proves more troublesome in the series (Figure 6.6). As Smith contends,

With very few exceptions, the Russian Mafiosi are depicted as lean and muscular fighters (Stella's husband, Mischa, trains in the boxing ring, while his wolfish antagonist Andrej is pictured jogging), while the Germans tend to range from paunchy (the corrupt policeman Hollmann) to obese (the decadent, corrupt investor Lenz is repeatedly called "Fat Lenz").<sup>25</sup>

The comparison between these groups relies on what I have earlier outlined as the series' cinematography of trauma: where in Marek's case, visual convergences map individual traumatic experiences onto the



**Figure 6.6.** Framing difference in *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* relies on the contrast between allegedly different national physicalities (Left column: "Wo wir sind, ist vorn": 5:21, 4:35; right column: "Der Überfall": 30:30, "Der Verrat": 44:11). Screenshots by Felipe Espinoza Garrido.

larger canvas of post-reunification Berlin, the same visual comparisons emphasize the police's bodily inadequacy, and as such, the series' biologicistic differentiation between the "proud barbarians" and the doomed Germans. As *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*'s cinematography constantly contrasts these two homogenized and ethnicized national groups—Germans and their East European, Othered counterparts—historical trauma and its appendant loss of control become embodied expressions of cultural difference. Therefore, despite the series' emphasis on structural connections between and across all sorts of porous layers and boundaries, its ambivalent toying with German ethno-nationalism suggests a re-entrenchment of national boundaries and essentialist generalizations about "Germanness" and "Russianness" (which here encompasses Ukraine, the Baltic states, and others in the tradition of the propagandistic Cold War singular use of *der Russe*).<sup>26</sup> This fundamental ambivalence of indulging in overblown clichés as a method of revealing a sense of truth about Othered, marginal actors of society—an ambivalence that Graf as well as scholars acknowledge<sup>27</sup>—is expressed nowhere as clearly as in Roeber's speech. Thus, in the exact moment, in which *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* augurs the essentially destructive aftereffects of German reunification, the overwritten map, a Berlin divided among criminals, thus becomes the emblematic expression of a fundamental trauma. In other words, the trope of bodily inadequacy and the series' intertwined reordering of the city both rely on the same cinematographic trope as trauma: on visual convergences that literally map past ruptures onto the present cinematic city plan. Its pre-1990 historical division into sectors and along national borders is transformed into a no-less-violent separation of spheres.

If we draw these thoughts together, *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* emerges as a highly ambitious project to explore and rephrase German identities in Berlin, a city that the series imagines as a historical nexus that constellates a microcosm of traumatic and often conflicting sensations of belonging and unbelonging. Visually and narratively complex, such pastness in the series is engrained in both the material city space—experience is spatialized and mutable in the city's abstractions through maps—and feeds into Berlin's tableau as a dimension of its cinematography. Despite such cinematic potential for nuanced differentiation, the series' post-reunification Berlin is structurally superseded by new nationalism, and the eradication of one border eventually only brings into sharp focus new spatial divisions, couched in the same visual language: red lines across maps that symbolically prohibit German collectivity. Effectively, thus, *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*'s "exploring gaze"<sup>28</sup>



that strafes across its diverse milieus is not transnational in the sense of traversing what Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller have called the investigative prism of “methodological nationalism,” which has hegemonically framed both artistic and sociological understandings of migration.<sup>29</sup>

### ***Sense8*, Intertextuality, and Global Criminal Landscapes**

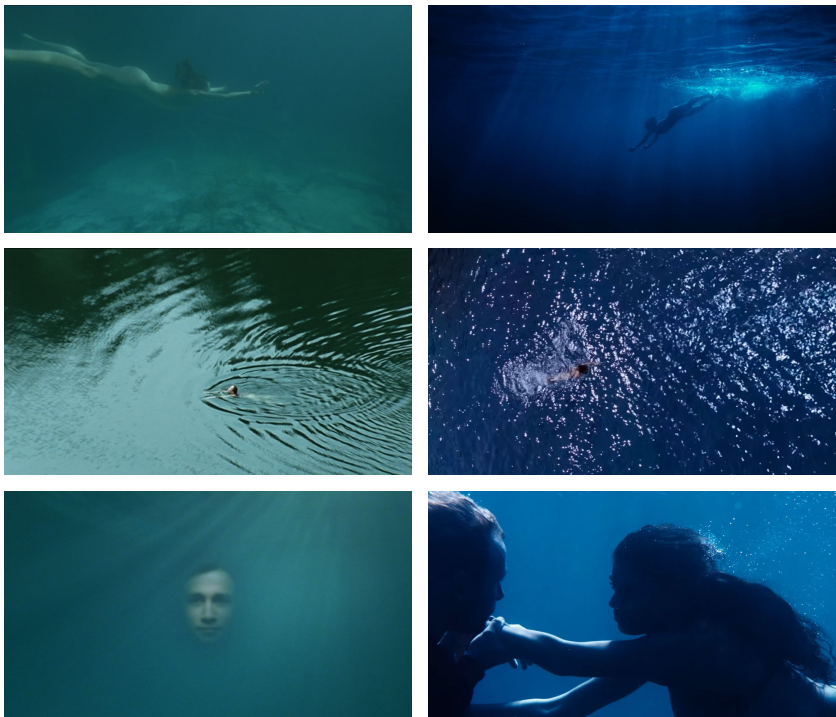
The Wachowskis’ *Sense8* relates the intermingled storylines (and equally intermingled experiences) of eight sensates—*homo sensorium*—an evolved branch of the human species. Birthed into so-called clusters around the world, they share sensory impressions and presences, allowing the protagonists to visit each other telepathically, to help each other, but also to experience each other’s emotions and suffering. Alexandro Segade argues in this respect that “[w]hile most television is built on interwoven character arcs, *Sense8*’s characters are woven into one another, . . . representing this slippage among identities.”<sup>30</sup> In this sense, the series’ basic setup already suggests a more radical take on the notion of cinematic interconnectedness when compared to *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*, even if both stake much of their narrative on reckonings with the past via the links between spatially distinct locales. Where the first season focuses on the sensates’ shared overcoming of individual traumata—including transphobic childhood abuse, closetedness, loss of a partner and a newly born daughter in an accident, reckoning with incestuous family histories and patricide—season two foregrounds the cluster’s resistance to and eventual victory over the corrupted Biologic Preservation Organization (BPO), forestalling its aim of total control of sensate life. Throughout all of this, *Sense8* borrows heavily from *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*, ostensibly in an attempt to globalize and cosmopolitanize Graf’s series’ unfulfilled promise of a transnational imaginary anchored in Berlin.

Such connections to *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* go beyond the aforementioned production contexts, as *Sense8* openly articulates its relation to Berlin, national identity, gang wars, and, not least, *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*. This is particularly the case when we consider the series’ meta discussions of its own criminal activity. These take place chiefly in two episodes: “Happy Fucking New Year,” which outlines the post-*Wende* divisions of Berlin’s ganglands, and “Obligate Mutualisms,” which contextualizes and ridicules stereotypical imaginations that *Im*

*Angesicht des Verbrechens*'s writer Rolf Basedow has termed "ethnically organized gangs."<sup>31</sup> Via these episodes, *Sense8* unmask the realist stylization of *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*'s criminal clichés, while at the same struggling to offer a decidedly more inclusive vision of transnational collectivity.

*Sense8*'s references to *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* are manifold, and draw upon multiple filmic dimensions that are visual, organizational, thematic, and, last but not least, spatial. Season two's opening proves paradigmatic for *Sense8*'s basic referencing strategies. Whereas *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* opens with Jelena's swim in a lake, seeing a vision of Marek, the man she will fall in love with, "Happy Fucking New Year" opens with Kala swimming in the sea and telepathically encountering her love interest, Wolfgang (Figure 6.7).

The scene continues with all other sensates jumping into the sea, diving alongside the lovers, thereby positioning their romantic story arc



**Figure 6.7.** *Sense8* mirrors *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*'s opening shots (left column: "Berlin ist das Paradies": 1:01, 1:28, 2:07; right column: "Happy Fucking New Year," 1:10, 1:41, 2:59). Screenshots by Felipe Espinoza Garrido.

in an intricate web of relations between the eight sensates. The scene makes visible how *Sense8* relies on a scaled-up, cosmopolitan configuration of *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*'s character- and location-bound storylines. Luis Freijo's description of *Sense8*'s spatiality, for instance, directly speaks to a globalized adaptation of *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*:

[T]he eight protagonists are scattered across the world, bridging the differences that can arise between citizens of far-flung places. Yet, on the other hand, each of these characters rooted locally in a major city—Mexico City, Berlin, Mumbai, Nairobi, Seoul, San Francisco, Chicago, and London/Reykjavik—is narrated through the lens of their respective sensate inhabitant.<sup>32</sup>

Such semblances between the two series are complemented by thematic tropes such as a gangster's funeral,<sup>33</sup> an ongoing gang war in Berlin, and inherited criminal empires, but they also coalesce around Max Riemelt's characters. In her work on transnational German stardom, Erica Carter has outlined how "traveling stars, through a migratory independence that is often bolstered by an exceptionally eroticized star image, destabilize national imaginaries, rendering the boundaries fluid and their body politics insecure."<sup>34</sup> In contrast to other German actors of international renown, such as Matthias Schweighöfer and Daniel Brühl, Riemelt's acting has, throughout his career and in his career-defining roles, embodied such eroticization, with collections of his nude scenes a common find among his international internet fandom. Marek's narratively motivated nakedness in *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*—a moment of transformation<sup>35</sup>—translates seamlessly into both parody and eroticism in *Sense8*: parody, when Wolfgang is jokingly referred to as "Conan" in reference to fellow Germanophone Arnold Schwarzenegger's shirtless international breakthrough; and eroticism when Wolfgang is shown in much-discussed full-frontal shots. If *Sense8* thus seems acutely aware of Riemelt's general international appeal as a German actor, the series also draws upon his *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* role in particular. Despite playing a police officer and a criminal, respectively, *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* and *Sense8* emphasize the familial nature of crime to Riemelt's characters, and embed his respective roles within gang wars that define the fundamental order of Berlin's cinematic city space. In fact, it is productive to read Wolfgang as Marek's intertextual alter ego, acting out Marek's mostly unfulfilled desires and his negated choices. Where Marek's trauma motivates his career as a policeman, Wolfgang's no less traumatic patricide as a boy has him gleefully accepting the challenges and the perks of a life of crime. Where Marek's

being single is marked as troubling loneliness, Wolfgang's sexual prowess and his indulgence in casual (and not so casual) sex is repeatedly foregrounded. Maybe most importantly, however, Marek's intervention into the criminal (re-)organization of Berlin's city space is predicated on stately justice, not revenge, whereas Wolfgang's primary story is book-ended by it. From the tense childhood murder of his abusive father, and the overtly cinematic execution of his violent cousin by rocket launcher, to season one's climactic shootout, in which Wolfgang empties an entire magazine into his uncle's throat for covering up the said childhood abuse against him and his mother—Wolfgang's cruel vendetta, which the series legitimizes by the monstrosity of his father—leaves his family's criminal empire and thus the pre-existing order of Berlin itself in tatters. Considering this chapter's detailed focus on the structuring cartography of *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*'s transnational Berlin and its traumatic connotations, the multiple convergences between the two series beg the questions, then, of how Berlin is mapped in *Sense8*, and furthermore, how the relation between Berlin, its criminal underworld, and the other intersecting storylines is mapped out.

After the death of his uncle, Wolfgang meets with his now-widowed aunt Elke (Marina Weis) when she and her consigliere, Fischer (Douglas Reith), confront him with a map of Berlin's criminal "kingdoms"—a term favored by his aunt for the "nice dynastic ring to it." Much like *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*'s Stella, who eventually inherits her late husband's criminal empire, Elke as a late "king's" widow is charged



**Figure 6.8.** Redrawing the map of Berlin ("Happy Fucking New Year": 1:00:33). Screenshot by Felipe Espinoza Garrido.

with managing it, for fear of a brutal gang war over the now-leaderless territory.

Wolfgang's claim to the symbolic throne in this male-dominated sphere "will forestall more unnecessary bloodshed" and solidify the territorial arrangements mapped out on screen. It is worth noting here that similar motives and similar language of restructuring and reordering is also prevalent in *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*'s conclusion of the intra-clan warfare. During the final episode's mediation between the warring factions, patriarch Sascha (Ryszard Ronczewski) underlines such a reading in his opening remarks: "There is too much chaos in this city. Too much blood is flowing. . . . If we want to work in peace, order must be restored. But order does not restore itself. We must restore it." In both series, the cinematic map of Berlin, reordered by criminal practices, needs stabilizing. In the case of Wolfgang, his metonymic relation to the city is verbalized directly: "[T]o anyone who understands this map you are still a Bogdanow," implying that his (originally Russian) last name, his heritage, and thereby his narrative arc are vital for *Sense8*'s ordering of Berlin.

Fischer's map, however, is not without its history or trauma, and much like *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*, *Sense8* is at pains to point out German reunification as the point of departure for the city's new order. If the map at hand visually evokes the historical partition of Berlin and its different sectors (note that the East is marked in red, Figure 6.8), these links are further emphasized a little later when Wolfgang and Felix attend West Berlin "king" Volker Bohm's (Martin Wuttke) new year's party on a rooftop next to the Brandenburg Gate. His home, the seat of his criminal empire, Bohm brags, "was built on the site of the very first sector of the Wall that was pulled down," but adds that "the real division, the only one that has ever mattered, was never horizontal. It's vertical." In the very moment that *Sense8* articulates its seemingly *spatial* semantics, the series links these to Berlin's traumatic historical reference point as well. In this context, Bohm's casual dismissal of the Wall's significance and his idealization of his kleptocapitalist achievements speak directly to the show's identification of his West German identity. *Sense8* here consciously comments on its seemingly simplified use of cinematic space: the horizontal division of Berlin into various criminal kingdoms at war with each other; and the vertical, economic stratification that separates the guests at a glitzy rooftop party overlooking Brandenburg Gate from "the losers down there." It does so by highlighting that all of the show's spatial divisions of the city are intimately interwoven with Berlin's political his-

tory. Along with the map's obvious visual allusions to the city's partition during much of the late twentieth century, *Sense8* thereby evokes an intersecting ordering system that is decidedly temporal, traumatic, and transnational, but which, on the surface level, is negotiated via territorial grievances.

Repeatedly, *Sense8* stresses that its own territorial concerns reflect upon, and are thus once removed from, Graf's series' "mere" focus on transnational (but thematically and spatially contained) crime as a negotiation for German identity. In what we should consider a direct reference, *Sense8* introduces its discussion of Berlin gang wars with an aerial establishing shot of the Reichstag, before one of Berlin's criminal overlords, Sebastian Fuchs (Lars Eidinger), dismissively describes his rivals: "The competition lacks vision. I'm not talking about just stupidity, I'm talking about monkeys banging on typewriters. They smuggle girls from Bosnia or some such place. They rig football games, labor the margins with numbers and drugs. Talentless chicken thieves with pickpocket ambition. . . . Theirs is the old world. It's tribal, it's primitive." Offering an upscale view of the Berlin Cathedral when compared to that from Marek's apartment (Figure 6.9), the milieu Fuchs denigrates is that of *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*: provincial feuds by unduly "proud barbarians," whom Fuchs imagines through the lens of racialization and Otherness. Consequently, and as a result of *Sense8*'s embedding of Berlin into its global imaginary, *Sense8*'s hyper-criminals seek to capitalize on the fact that "[m]oney flows into this fine city from all over the planet" instead of merely exploiting "dumb German money." If *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*'s suppression of gang rivalries is necessitated by local concerns of stability and if this suppression ultimately solidifies notions of distinct national identities, the global scale and the increased cinematic and spatial interconnectedness of *Sense8*'s narrative symbolically indicates that resolving Berlin's territorial disputes will establish a global and, finally, an equitable order. As such, we might argue that *Sense8*'s Berlin plot offers a paradigm for the series' negotiation of transnational interconnectivity and traumatic temporalities underlying each of the eight sensates' backstories. The show's multiperspectivity thus adapts German history as a structure for its intradiegetic interconnectedness.

Andrea Merodeadora has observed the prominent placement of the Berlin episodes, to the point of "Wolfgang's turf war taking up a good half of the screen time even before he is involved in the A-plot."<sup>36</sup> Epitomizing the fact that *Sense8* is highly skewed towards representing its white characters (a fact I will return to later), in the case of the



**Figure 6.9.** In contrast to Marek’s distant view of the cathedral in the background, narrowly framed by cheap curtains and old windows (top: “Alles hat seine Zeit”: 25:16), Wolfgang’s access to Berlin’s criminal upper echelons and the camera’s unrestricted view indicate that *Sense8* scales up *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*’s limited criminal milieu for a global stage and global audiences (bottom: “Obligate Mutualisms”: 27:57). Screenshots by Felipe Espinoza Garrido.

Berlin arc this is, as the structural similarities between *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* and *Sense8* already indicate, also a matter of plotting and narrative causalities.<sup>37</sup> When *Sense8* directly adapts and modulates *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*’s spatial mapping of ethnic belonging in Ber-

lin—moving from one space/story to the next—these different spaces are always already multiply inhabited and experienced in *Sense8*. Distinct recurring locales are never separate spaces but, given the sensates' abilities, they are by definition potentially open, interlocked, and in a simple sense transnational, enabling a shared space across national borders through the sensates' abilities. Within this network of perception, *Sense8*'s central utopian ideal of global, borderless, and epistemically uncategorized cohabitation is narratively set in motion in Berlin. When Wolfgang refuses Lila's offer to embrace his inheritance as a Bogdanow crime lord *and* as a sensate (which would include committing genocide against *sapiens* and rule as king of the *sensates*), his reply "This is Berlin. These are my people" emphasizes *Sense8*'s obvious desire to represent a storyworld that moves toward the eradication of boundaries and discriminatory practices and institutions per se. Wolfgang's shared bond with his city and its inhabitants exemplifies that, as Luis Freijo argues, "Wolfgang's arc in S01 has parallels with his city, then, as it consists of liberating himself from his violent family and, in S02, dealing with his heritage."<sup>38</sup> Drawing upon the same basic configurations of Berlin's cinematic city space, *Sense8* ostensibly seeks to deny the ethnic factionalism of Graf's series in favor of a globally shared meta-humanitarianism in the widest sense, transgressing even the boundaries of the human as species.

### Conclusion: The City as Resistance?

Reading *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* through *Sense8*'s partial adaptation not only reveals wide-ranging structural similarities in configuring the cinematic imagination of Berlin as post-trauma space, but ultimately also points to some limitations of complexified, highly sophisticated cinematic meaning-making mechanisms that seek to instill a transnational, equitable *form* onto a *histoire* mired in regional particularisms and built on hegemonic power structures and constructions of alterity. In *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*, the story's constant reiterations of ethnic strife and a conscious commitment to nationalist clichés result in the series' multifaceted tensions—between ambitious formal experimentation and detailed realism, but also between a lack of corresponding nuance in negotiating its own categorizations, whether religious or national. By contrast, *Sense8*'s cosmopolitanization and transposition of Graf's ethnicized factions onto a global cast and an equally global narrative makes visible the provinciality of *Im Angesicht des Verbrech-*



*ens*'s failed transnationalism, while promising to rectify such shortcomings. However, a number of critics have outlined how *Sense8*'s aesthetic inventions and modifications are eventually beset by problems not unlike those of *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*. Given cinematic Berlin as the structural and thematic lynchpin for the show's negotiation of traumatic pasts, and offering a systemic roadmap to deconstructing even transhuman boundaries, Cael M. Keegan's verdict on the ambivalence of *Sense8*'s general narrative tactics is instructive: "*Sense8* thus mobilizes race, gender, and nationality as stereotypic forms of personhood, even as it metanarratively comments on them as constructs—a bimodal strategy the series forces both its characters and audience to straddle."<sup>39</sup> In the same vein, the series' focus on predominately white characters has not only elicited criticism for their white saviorism and the foregrounding of European and US storylines, such as the paradigmatic Berlin episodes, but also for the "reproduc[tion of] the whiteness of liberal humanism that refuses to practically engage with the colonial histories and imperialist gaze that continually produce the non-western other,"<sup>40</sup> as a result of which *Sense8* fails in its *global* transnational utopianism. Tying these internal contradictions back to this chapter's discussion of cinematic Berlin as a structuring agent, it might ultimately well be the city's resistance to being thus ordered and functionalized that can metaphorically account for the show's shared structural limitations.

As such, the cinematic imagination of Berlin in both series allows us to consider some ramifications for transnational German television and for representations of Germany (and German television) in a transnational context. This ties in with Randall Halle's question about post-*Wende* broadcasts—"what has happened to television as a medium for the democratic public sphere?"—and his concerns about the scarcity of "developing and distributing programming for minorities and marginalized groups."<sup>41</sup> While Halle asked this with an eye to the market-oriented professionalization of public broadcast television in Germany vis-à-vis an increase in private corporations' reality television, it remains a pressing concern when we consider the potential of a television culture that is not only transnational in its production contexts, but is a culture that embraces transnationalism's critical potential. Such potential can unsettle the nation state as a central category to understand belonging and its affective attachment, and it does so with a view to plural modes of equitable participation beyond the hegemonic structures of the nation state. Participation in this sense necessarily extends to questions

of representation, and as such, to transnational television's capacity to decenter the nation as arbiter of self and Other—to aspire to, in Halle's words, a "democratic public sphere" that transcends a narrow understanding of Germanness. Critical transnationalism, then, includes the recognition of "[n]etworks of migrants and transnational cultural and religious connections that lead to other forms of identification than national construction."<sup>42</sup> Neither of the series addressed in this chapter, however, embraces its potential for such a transnational project. In *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*, transnational space is one of conflict and strife, owing to a post-*Wende* Eastern Europe that is limited to histories of crime-oriented emigration, instead of, for instance, histories of transnational reform around the *Wende* that contemporary historiography often stresses as foundational for contemporary German and East European understandings of identity.<sup>43</sup> *Sense8* also cannot come to terms with this notion of transnationalism, as it continuously emphasizes the narrative potential of the Global North and its distinctly recognizable nation states, despite its allegedly equitably interwoven storylines. In thus failing to fulfill their transnational aspirations, however, both series do attest to the structural inextricability of German television in an increasingly transnational, even global entertainment economy. As both series allow us to better understand the inherent tensions brought on by competing notions of the transnational—whether as a critical project or a material fact—we might read them less as cautionary tales of undue ambition, and more as roadmaps to evaluate the inevitable, productive, and continuing transnationalization of both German television and Germany on television.

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## Notes

1. For detailed visualizations and explanations of the show's numerous plotlines and events, covering each episode with timecodes, see Schwemann, "Im Angesicht des Verbrechens."
2. *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* won two of Germany's most prestigious television awards, the 2010 German Television Award (Deutscher Fernsehpreis) for best series and best cast, and the 2011 Grimme Award for best fiction format.
3. See Renger, "In the Face of In-Betweenness."
4. See Prager, "Gegenspieler und innere Dämonen," 216, 219–20; Hartmann, "Berlin ist das Paradies," 173–74.
5. For a brief assessment of *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*'s status as "quality TV," see Rothemund, "Was kostet Berlin?" 50–53. For further references on the euphoric reception of the Berlinale premiere, see Prager, "Gegenspieler," 217. International competition also played a role in the production process. According to ARTE's commissioning editor, Andreas Schreitmüller, *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* was, in part at least, acquired and funded to remedy a perceived lack of daring and innovative German miniseries compared to recent output in, for instance, the US, UK, Canada, and Israel. Schreitmüller, "Ein Ausschnitt, wie zufällig eingefangen," 248.
6. Griem, "Zwischen deutschem Gesellschaftsroman und *The Wire*," 390.
7. The series' production history of *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* is well documented in Sievert, *Dominik Graf*. It is noteworthy that *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* was initially developed for the German private television station Sat.1, who declined after an earlier miniseries by the same production company, Typhoon, had underperformed—incidentally, also due to poor scheduling. See Bullemer, "Von der Herausforderung, es zu Ende zu bringen," 255–56. With a view to the series' production context, ARTE's involvement should not, however, be overstated. Schreitmüller stresses that it was particularly the petitioning of editors at Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR), whose involvement enabled the production. In a transnational perspective, perhaps Graf's first collaboration with the Franco-German broadcaster, *Doktor Knock (oder Der Triumph der Medizin)* (1996), might yield more insights. This loose adaptation of French playwright Jules Romains' 1923 *Knock*, which transposes the setting from rural France to rural Bavaria, certainly caused a stir among the French section at ARTE. Schreitmüller, "Ein Ausschnitt," 245.
8. Halle, "German Film, European Film," 252.
9. Modelled after United Artists, X Filme's founders Stefan Arndt, Wolfgang Becker, Dani Levy, and Tom Tykwer set out with the deliberate aim of producing international films in a variety of locations and languages, but also of embracing Hollywood aesthetics and fusing them neatly into traditional German arthouse style. See Baer, *German Cinema in the Age of Neoliberalism*, 80–82; Halle, *German Film after Germany*, 56–58. Christine Haase describes *Lola rennt* in particular as "Hollywood pleasure without giving up its *Heimat* identity. . . . [A]n apt expression of the *zeitgeist* at the turn of the millennium: the film typifies a growing global tendency for transcultural appropriation and hybridization" (original emphasis). Haase, "You Can Run, but You Can't Hide," 397. Further X Filme productions include international big-budget films like *Cloud Atlas*, but also Michael Haneke's *Das weiße Band* (2009) and *Amour* (2012), as well as the international hit series *Babylon Berlin* (2017–), which has been distributed to over 140 countries to date.
10. Halle, *German Film after Germany*, 55.

11. Wachowski, Wachowski, and Tykwer, "Wachowskis, Tom Tykwer on *Cloud Atlas*, *Matrix* Sequels, and Out-of-Line Journalists (Q&A)."
12. See, for example, Wachowski and Wachowski, "*Cloud Atlas*: Andy and Lana Wachowski Speak."
13. More recently, Tykwer also worked on the soundtrack to *The Matrix Resurrections* (2021). For a detailed account of Netflix's commissioning practices and *Sense8*, see Lotz, "What's Going On?"
14. Riemelt, "Interview mit Max Riemelt"; Riemelt and Desai, "*Sense8*."
15. Rothemund, "Was kostet Berlin?" 57.
16. Frahm, "Architectures of Images, Avalanches of Memory."
17. Graf, "TV-Serie *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*."
18. Author's translation. Hartmann, "Berlin," 173.
19. Ibid. Here, Hartmann furthermore argues that this particular conception of Berlin is in keeping with the traditional 1920s trope of the "Moloch Großstadt" or "Großstadtschungel." It seems more than fitting that when Walter Ruttmann pioneered aerial shots of the city in *Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt* in 1927 he could do away with traditional intertitles, as the audience was expected to be familiar with the locations. Sinka, "Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt," 40.
20. Rothemund, "Berlin," 57.
21. Ibid., 58.
22. Ibid., 58.
23. Smith, "Policing the East," 214.
24. See, for example, Hartmann's argument that "the division of spheres, however, does not present itself as a strict separation of 'good' and 'evil,' of 'normality' and 'deviation,' with a clear line of demarcation. Rather, we are dealing with spaces and normative areas that overlap and interpenetrate each other" [author's translation]. Hartmann, "Berlin," 171–72.
25. Smith, "Policing," 214–15.
26. It seems noteworthy that such sentiments reflect the production's overall approach to nation and nationality, reverberating, for instance, through a number of paratexts collected in Sievert, *Dominik Graf*. Composer Florian Van Volxem relates his struggle with Graf's notion of capturing "the Russian soul" [author's translation]. Van Volxem and Rossenbach, "Die Filmkompositionsfalle," 292. Likewise, Graf himself has, in interviews, stressed the essential characteristics of Russian pride, for instance in Graf, "TV-Serie *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*."
27. Graf's own assessment that national clichés "are sometimes right—and most of the time they say nothing at all" [author's translation] is severely complicated when, a few sentences later in the same interview, he compares Russian gangsters' misogyny with German society in the 1960s, implying a narrative of German progress and superiority. See Graf, "TV-Serie." Furthermore, scholarly criticism's attempts to see *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* as a map to allegedly unknown spheres of Berlin's new post-reunification reality have come under scrutiny for their lack of differentiation, as in Smith, "Policing," 207–8.
28. Hartmann, "Berlin," 178.
29. Wimmer and Schiller, "Methodological Nationalism." One might contrast this approach with that of *4 Blocks* director Marvin Kren, who had initially planned to stage *4 Blocks* in the vein of *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*, as a more traditional police series. As Kren himself has explained, however, the series' producer, Anke Greifeneder, "wanted to change the point of view and tell the story from the perspective of an Arab family. This allowed me to dive deep into the lives of my characters—other-

- wise the view of Neukölln would always have remained that of a stranger" [author's translation]. Kren, "Die Straße ist die beste Schauspielschule."
30. Segade, "We Belong."
  31. Author's translation. Basedow, "Im Angesicht des Verbrechens."
  32. Freijo, "Sense8 and the City," 141.
  33. Such funerals are staged in *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens*, "Alles hat seine Zeit," and *Sense8* (season one, episode one), "Limbic Resonance."
  34. Carter, "Transnational Stars," 127.
  35. See, for example, Lenz, "Urelemente und Milieu," 212–13.
  36. Merodeadora, "The Problem With *Sense8*."
  37. Wolfgang's refusal sets in motion the key events that structure the remainder of season two: his betrayal by Lila Facchini (Valeria Bilello), his subsequent abduction and liberation in Naples, and the cluster's eventual defeat of the BPO. It is via the Berlin storyline that the second season's antagonist, Lila and thereby other sensate clusters are introduced, and at the very end, it will be Lila's shunned boss and Berlin crime lord, Sebastian Fuchs, who furnishes Wolfgang with the weapons to literally bring her and the BPO down.
  38. Freijo, "Sense8," 144.
  39. Keegan, "Revisiting the Cluster," 223. For a comparable problematization of how, as Keegan argues with respect to the Wachowskis' *Cloud Atlas*, the "impulse to use trans\* to evacuate race illustrates how the Wachowskis' work, which often engages trans\* to explore racial hybridity and cross-racial encounter, may simultaneously activate preexisting racist logics," see Keegan, *Lana and Lilly Wachowski*, 91, see also 90–100.
  40. Asante, Baig, and Huang, "(De)politicized Pleasures."
  41. Halle, *German Film after Germany*, 176.
  42. Wimmer and Glick Schiller, "Methodological Nationalism," 598.
  43. See, for example, Harrison, *After the Berlin Wall*.

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