**The Birth of Autotune and the Loop of (West) German Identity**

A year after Kraftwerk included German-language lyrics on their international bestselling album *Autobahn*, Rolf Dieter Brinkmann wondered in *Westwärts 1 & 2* “Maybe German will soon be a dead language. It is so bad to sing.” A scant two years later, West German punk bands such as S.Y.P.H., Pyrolator, and Die tödliche Doris began to articulate—for some obliquely—the socio-cultural and linguistic tension between the buttoned-up, technologized aesthetics that Kraftwerk used to imagine a German identity liberated from National Socialism with the dystopic, violent aesthetics in Brinkmann’s attempt to bring forth Germany’s ultimate demise. Punks’ turn to Kraftwerk’s technological means of representation and simultaneous trafficking in Brinkmann’s avant-garde practices of collage and détournement illustrate, in part, the process of adaptation and continuation that underwrites punk’s efforts to undo the regressive and violent politics of its present. Rather than (re)confirming aesthetic links in a chain of subcultural processing and thereby reading the intersection of sound and identity diachronically, I propose to parse synchronic anxieties about, orientations of, and potentials for analog distortions audible in the twerps, bleeps, and samples in music of selected bands. My essay will examine how the aesthetics of sound and text responded on an explicitly technological level to a genealogy of violence. To that end, I want to unfold the sonic architecture and tensions of the seventies and eighties not as a Teutonic “obsessive repetition” (Deleuze) of post-war aesthetic practices creating a new German identity, but rather via a differentiator as (electronic) process. By reading electronic sounds as lateral representations dependent on a rate of change and amplification, I aim to show how the repeated reimaginings of the past in German sounds impacted a future present’s images of the past that they sought to reimagine. Put otherwise, I query whether the obstinate hacking of experience of post-war German identity through musical subcultures vacated the original referent—German identity in the age of National Socialism—or whether technological modifications to aural representations of identity—in today’s parlance, autotune—made possible different reckonings with the echoes of the past in the soundscape of the Federal Republic.