

# TRANSGRESSIONS AT THE POST OFFICE COUNTER

by Susanne Jany

*“The counter, thus, was not a space where a simple difference – between clerks and customers, internal and external, operational and public – was established but where a complex and seemingly ambivalent system of mutually dependent acts of openings and closings were enforced to keep business up and running safe.”*

Suggested citation: Jany, Susanne (2018). “Transgressions at the Post Office Counter.” In: *Interface Critique Journal* Vol.1. Eds. Florian Hadler, Alice Soiné, Daniel Irrgang  
DOI: 10.11588/ic.2018.0.44722

This article is released under a Creative Commons license (CC BY 4.0).



"Post office clerk behind letter collection counter in the post office Hamburg-Wandsbek 1" by courtesy of Museumsstiftung Post und Telekommunikation

The photograph depicts a postal counter in a post office in Wandsbek, Germany, during the first half of the twentieth century. A large wooden counter dominates two third of the image. The lower part of the massive wooden construction is paneled, the upper part is composed of windows that are either etched or blocked with translucent paper. A light source behind the counter is directed towards the opaque windows and produces hard contrasts; another lamp from above makes for dramatic shadows. The lower middle pane is cracked and seems to have been fixed with foil or additive paper that is partly torn down. Something lies on the small area in front of it – maybe the torn off remains as if the act of vandalism had just happened. On the left hand side, an opening can be made out, which is marked as a letterbox; an unreadable document is adhered to the glass underneath. On the right hand side stands a writing desk with a lamp drawn down and towards the wall. It is either switched off or broken because where its light-cone should hit the wall, its own shadow is cast. Behind the lamp hangs a calendar suggesting that it is or has been the tenth of some undecipherable month of some unmarked year. A blotting pad, a quill, and a pile of forms lie on the desktop with the blotting paper looming over the edge. It looks as if it is just about to fall and join the crumbled papers on the tiled floor that surround the wastebasket. In the middle of the

photograph one of the counter windows is drawn to the side for potential customers. While the service hall seems abandoned, a postal clerk sits behind the opening gazing blankly at something in front of him that is concealed by the covered windows.

The original photograph is part of the image collection at the *Museumsstiftung für Post und Telekommunikation*. The 219x167 mm black-and-white-print is titled “post office clerk behind letter collection counter in the post office Hamburg-Wandsbek 1” and was shot by Hamburg based architect and photographer Hubert Kapusta.<sup>1</sup> It is one among hundreds of photographs in the collection picturing the modern history of the German post – its buildings, its uniforms, its stamps, its vehicles, its equipment as well as its day-to-day work routines. But does Kapusta’s photograph really show an ordinary scene at the post office counter? Compared to other images in the comprehensive photographic documentation, the picture seems strangely staged. It almost appears like an artwork by photographer Jeff Wall who is known for taking pictures of orchestrated sceneries put together in studios, set up with props, and fitted with actors in costumes. There is a remarkable sense of artificiality to Kapusta’s picture. The clerk, to begin with, doesn’t look busy with counter duties but, rather, with holding completely still so that his head keeps perfectly fitting the counter opening. He is in fact so carefully placed that, firstly, his semi-profile is

1 “Postbeamter hinter Briefannahmeschalter im Postamt Hamburg-Wandsbek 1, Schloßstraße 39 [sic], mit Schild ›Briefeinwurf‹, Schreibpult, Wand-

lampe, Papierkorb, Deutschen [sic] Reichspost”, Inventory number 3.2011.2955, Museumsstiftung Post und Telekommunikation, Museum für Kommunikation Berlin.

well lit despite being in the uttermost background and, secondly, that the light, which is reflected from his glasses, produces a shimmer in the camera lens. The paper on the floor is scattered a bit too evenly to be random – as if someone with an eye for the overall photographic composition has planted it. Likewise, the piled up paper sheets on the desk are evenly fanned out and the blotting paper is carefully balanced out. But if the photograph is that deliberately arranged, why didn't the photographer stage a more pleasant scene? Why does his depicting of a postal counter situation emanate an atmosphere of desertion, decline, and crisis? There might be an obvious answer: The clerk wears a uniform; his hat shows an imperial eagle and a swastika, making clear that the historical background is the National Socialist regime in Germany. Kapusta took the picture in early 1939. Accordingly, the reason for the photograph emitting an apocalyptic atmosphere of doom and menace could be that it is a document of everyday-life under the Hitler dictatorship. At least for the non-contemporary viewer it might also evoke the dooming World War II. The Allied air bombing operation ›Gomorrah‹, in fact, will eventually destroy this post-office building in 1943 together with vast areas of Wandsbek and Hamburg. Still, I think that this mesmerizing photograph has to be seen in the context of something more than that, something that has

less to do with the historical background of the image but with the history of what it depicts: the postal counter itself. Kapusta's photograph, I would like to argue, envisions the counter as the highly critical and ambiguous space that it historically always has been since it first emerged.

## SPATIAL AMBIVALENCES

Post office counters, bank counters, or ticket counters came up as a new service facility in Western European and North American public buildings during the nineteenth century. In most post-offices from the eighteenth century only a window towards the street allowed for business and communication with the public.<sup>2</sup> Later, a corridor was added where customers would wait before they were called up.<sup>3</sup> Finally, high industrialization with its increased amounts of traffic and operations led to functional and spatial differentiation within larger post offices. This process culminated in the introduction of larger service halls around 1870 with counters and internal areas behind – a spatial scheme that proved so successful that it was almost instantly adopted in banks, railway stations, theaters, and administration

2 See Walther Schmidt, *Amtsbauten. Aus Betriebsvorgängen gestaltet, dargestellt am Beispiel der bayerischen Postbauten* (Ravensburg: Otto Maier Verlag, 1949), 22.

3 See Rudolf Duffner, *Das deutsche Posthaus von seinen Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Berlin: Tritsch & Huther, 1939), 75.

buildings as well.<sup>4</sup> The strategy of architecturally organizing postal and other workflows was to divide public and internal areas in order to prevent disturbances and keep postal operations – the packing, unpacking, sorting, labeling, and directing of mail – running smoothly.<sup>5</sup> Only at the counters were both spheres brought together spatially to allow for punctual interactions between employees and the public. The relation between internal and external spaces, architect Walter Schmidt wrote in his reference book on post office buildings, should be a tangential one: both areas should touch each other at the counter but never overlap.<sup>6</sup> Behind what seemed to be the architectural gesture of creating a service space for the public, lay the functional claim of strictly keeping it out of the operational realm.<sup>7</sup> To facilitate postal business was to isolate internal operations to the greatest possible extent. The counter as the interface between the post and the public, thus, produced a seemingly contradictory situation: It was supposed to serve the public by excluding it from the core of its business.

Kapusta's photograph from within the post office at Schloßstraße 41 in Wandsbek shows a typical counter

used during the first third of the twentieth century. It comprised a wooden wall spanning from floor to ceiling with several openings for communication between clerks and clients.<sup>8</sup> Of the six to nine panes per workspace only the lower middle window had transparent glazing. This did not primarily serve the customer but the clerk's supervision of the service hall. The window could only be moved aside by the staff in order to open up communication with the client and to exchange money, stamps, or forms. The other panes were fixed and rippled, frosted, or simply covered with posters, announcements, or adverts so that "the public couldn't oversee the objects on the clerk's desk, namely the money stock".<sup>9</sup> Small openings allowed for the handling of small objects and were to be closed for climatic and security reasons whenever they were not in use. Some counters were so closed off that they were addressed and built as "glazed and barred cabins" with a flat money tray being the only opening towards the service hall.<sup>10</sup> Even verbal exchange was mediated by a so-called ›speech diaphragm‹ – a membrane made out of animal skin, silk, or rubber that transmits sound waves

4 See Susanne Jany, "Operative Räume: Prozessarchitekturen im späten 19. Jahrhundert," *Zeitschrift für Medienwissenschaft: Medien/Architekturen* 12 (2015): 33–43.

5 See Susanne Jany, "Postalische Prozessarchitekturen. Die Organisation des Postdienstes im Medium der Architektur," *Archiv für Mediengeschichte*, eds. Friedrich Balke, Bernhard Siegert, and Joseph Vogl (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2013): 135–145.

6 See Schmidt, *Amtsbauten*, 16.

7 See Postdienst-Instruction in vier Bänden (reprint), Beisel, "Der Postbaudienst der Deutschen

Reichspost, seine Entstehung und Entwicklung," *Archiv für Post- und Fernmeldewesen* 3 (1951): 346f.

8 See Robert Neumann, *Gebäude für den Post-, Telegraphen- und Fernsprechdienst*. Handbuch der Architektur. 4. Teil, 2. Halbband, 3. Heft. 1. Auflage (Darmstadt: Bergsträsser, 1896), 22–24.

9 Ibid. 22. [All translations by the author]

10 For the ticket counter at the railway-station, see: [Carl] Cornelius, "Das Entwerfen und der Bau der Eisenbahn-Empfangsgebäude," *Zeitschrift für Bauwesen* 63 (1913): 434.

from inside the cabin to the customer's side.<sup>11</sup> The massive wall that was the counter pared every interaction between clients and clerks down to utterly minimal openings.<sup>12</sup> The counter, thus, provided for physical and verbal exchange under highly controlled circumstances; its opening was conditioned by the highest possible degree of closing. This generated a potentially conflict-laden situation: Communication and interaction at the counter were enabled by the fundamental acts of segregation and control.

## SYMBOLIC TRANSGRESSIONS

Minimal architectural openings resulted in minimal modes of communication. Due to the specific counter architecture the post office clerk could avoid any eye contact with the customer and reduce conversation to its absolute necessities.<sup>13</sup> Not surprisingly, this caused unease, impatience, and disapproval with the public:

Often, customers would complain vividly, when they had to stand behind closed windows and wait for service for an indeterminate period without

being able to see what the clerk was actually doing behind the inscrutable counter wall.<sup>14</sup>

Even with only tiny transparently glazed openings left, "one has put up postings and inhibitions to complete the exclusion of the public." The result was: One "speaks against a wall and from another room hears the reply."<sup>15</sup> When a client was displeased with the post office workings and could only advance up to the counter, frustration was unloaded on what was within immediate reach: The clerk now served as an objective for objections, for distrust, resentment, and contempt. In addition, the client, as Couvé had observed, often perceived the postal clerks as exaggeratedly accurate and petty, as "strict, dry, matter-of-fact official[s]" sometimes "buttoned-up, at worst even grumpy".<sup>16</sup> These conceptions might appear stereotypical, but the clerk's arrogance and condescension towards clients was something that the authorities openly admitted:

The improper conversational tone with the public that can often be heard at the counters is mostly due to apprentices and beginners, who while fulfilling this important civil service have an exaggerated

11 See Schmidt, *Amtsbauten*, 22; Dietrich Lang, *Briefschalterhallen der Deutschen Reichspost, ihre Entwicklung und ihr Aufbau* (Würzburg: K. Triltsch, 1932), 51.

12 For a mediatheoretical approach towards the opening in architecture: Wolfgang Schäffner, "Architecture of the Openings. Windows, Doors and Switches," in: *Architecture of the Medial Spaces*, eds. Joachim Krausse, and Stephan Pinkau (Dessau: Anhalt University of Applied Sciences, 2006), 74–79.

13 See Jürgen Bräunlein, "'Die Pflicht der Artigkeit'. Kundenfreundlichkeit bei der Post – damals und heute," *Das Archiv. Magazin für Post- und Telekommunikationsgeschichte* 2 (2007): 94.

14 Wiese: "Neuzeitliche Schalter in Postgebäuden," *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 61 (1927): 211.

15 Richard Couvé, *Beamte und Publikum: Richtlinien für die Bestgestaltung des Verkehrs der Beamten und des Publikums* (Leipzig: Weimann, 1930), 34f.

16 Couvé, *Beamte und Publikum*, 12.

sense of their own dignity and exhibit a too ›spirited‹ appearance.<sup>17</sup>

In light of this, it became clear that the coming together of two qualitatively different spheres at the counter was *per se* a form of confrontation.<sup>18</sup> Clerk and customer, wrote railway professional Richard Couvé in 1930 about station buildings, tended to clash at the ticket counter because here they were “brought together particularly close to each other”.<sup>19</sup> Due to the mutuality of this encounter, the clerk would not only annoy the customer but the customer would also annoy the clerk. The reason could be “unapt guests hindering” business because they didn’t know what they wanted, because they were rude, or because they plainly talked too much.<sup>20</sup> This implied a not-to-be-underestimated potential for escalations: An agitated traveller, Couvé stated,

who requests information and is treated brashly, doesn’t understand the information, gets more agitated, asks again, threatens with complaints. If the clerk responds as agitatedly, a quarrel follows that slows the clerk’s work down,

makes the customer file an official report, and eventually claims the attention of further clerks.<sup>21</sup>

So, often enough, the counter became a scene of misunderstandings, insults, threats, and abuse;<sup>22</sup> the site for symbolic transgressions that clearly undermined the architectural principle of two spaces touching each other but never merging.

In order to prevent this, a whole apparatus of literature, guidelines, measures, and training films was enforced in the early twentieth century trying to educate both clerks and customers. While the public could only be kindly asked to behave and be prepared when approaching the counter, employees could actually be made to maintain strict rules, issued by the German *Reichspost*. All counters were to be opened during big rushes, personal conversations were to be omitted, clothes needed to be kept clean, and predefined polite phrases were to be used.<sup>23</sup> At the end of the nineteenth century, Heinrich von Stephan had aligned the German post with a modern, economical, and service-oriented enterprise. As the counter was the representative interface between the post and the general public – even more so than the direc-

17 Richard Couvé, *Vom Verkehr mit den Reisenden. Ein Ratgeber für Verkehrsbeamte* (Berlin: Verlag der Verkehrswissenschaftlichen Lehrmittelgesellschaft m.b.H. bei der Deutschen Reichsbahn, 1926), 15.

18 Jany, “Postalische Prozessarchitekturen,” 142–145.

19 Couvé, *Beamte und Publikum*, 5.

20 *Ibid.*, 3, 5; N.N., “Das Publikum,” *Das Neue Posthorn. Illustriertes Familienblatt* 18 (1926/27): 294.

21 Couvé, *Vom Verkehr mit den Reisenden*, 12.

22 See Couvé, *Beamte und Publikum*, 5.

23 See Reichspostdirektion Berlin, *Hundert Fragen und Antworten am Schalter in deutscher, französischer und englischer Sprache* (Berlin: 1936); Taschenbuch für den Postbetriebsbeamten. Bd. 1: Schalterdienst, ed. Postinspektor Maetz (Berlin: Koenig. 1925), 20f.

tor's office or the façade of the building – the clerk had to weather any difficulties:<sup>24</sup> The postal clerk was

the flagship of the company, the face of the German *Reichspost*. This he has to remember! According to his expertise, his sophistication, his appearance, and his manners the outsider judges the whole institution.<sup>25</sup>

The underlying logic was: A helpful employee makes for grateful and polite guests, which smoothens the overall operations – eventually leading to happy customers and maximum profits. One would think that behind all these measures stood the rational that critical and ambivalent situations at the counter ought to be neutralized instantaneously. This was not the case; at least not for the postal clerk. Efficient counter services were only guaranteed when the most central of all rules was met: Insults, impoliteness, and verbal transgressions from guests were never to be replied but to be tolerated and endured; any frictions whatsoever were to be obviated in order to avert the kind of escalations mentioned before. Couvé pushed for “most comfortable service”, general acceptance of most customer wishes, and a general goodwill-attitude. Even though an open, equal, and balanced relationship between both parties was aimed for, at the core of counter duty stood the principle that differences between clerk and customer were not to be

eliminated. Rather, power imbalances at the counter were kept up in favor for the client. The immanent ambiguity of the counter, thus, was actively enabled and maintained.

## PHYSICAL TRANSGRESSIONS

Transgressions at the counter were not only tackled in the realm of the symbolic but also materially: In the 1920s and 1930s, the postal administration tried to improve counter communication by deconstructing its massive architecture. The novel ›open counters‹ were supposed to be a step towards the customer by getting rid of wooden panels and using glass walls as transparent divisions between the counters. Material separations between client and clerk were given up completely. The underlying idea was that architectural openness and proximity between clerk and client would automatically lead to a new kind of interpersonal closeness, openness, and cooperation. These transformations of the counter architecture were, in fact, validated positively. Architect Peisker observed in the main post office in Potsdam:

On the strength of the past experiences, the following can be said about the purposefulness of the new counter facility. There is a bigger, almost solemn quietude in the service

24 See Peter Becker, “Überlegungen zu einer Kulturgeschichte der Verwaltung,” *Jahrbuch für Europäische Verwaltungsgeschichte* 15 (2003): 332.

25 Schaltdienst, 19; cf.: Firsching, “Schalträume,” *Verkehrs- und Betriebswissenschaft in Post und Telegraphie* 8, no. 14/15 (1932): 214.



hall. The guests experience the waiting for service as less tiring and irritating than the previous standing before a closed counter because the customer actually sees the clerks working. Heated disputes or discussions of people at the end of the queue are ceased almost completely. Frictions occur only rarely because both parties inflict more restraints on themselves. [...] The supervisors and counter clerks can easily oversee the service hall and in case of standstills quickly intervene. [...] The oral understanding without dividing walls is more convenient. The clerk can instantly and clearly see his opposite instead of just a head in a window. Therewith alone, both parties are brought closer to each other.<sup>26</sup>

Still, there was a reason that a full opening towards the general public was never realized: The walls and divisions at the glazed counter never completely disappeared because verbal transgressions were not the only transgressions at the post office counter. As the counter was the site for the exchange of various valuables, it, at the same time, became the very site for criminal acts: for theft, fraud, and robberies. Actually, these threats were the background against which the former massive and fully-closed cabin-counter was introduced in the first place: It “evolved out of a double

need for security: Protection against clients as well as protection against colleagues.”<sup>27</sup> The general suspicion was directed against greedy robbers and thieving staff alike. On February 12th in 1880, an armed robbery happened in the Wandsbek post office of the time, located at the corner of Lübecker Straße and Schulstraße, in which a twenty-two year old post office worker was killed. A man pretending to buy stamps lingered near the counters. In an unattended moment he opened a window lock in the service hall. During the following night he entered through the window, encountered the young night guard and subsequently killed him. Although there were more than 3900 Mark stored in the post office, the intruder could only lay hands on 500 Mark before he fled the scene. The next day, the employee of a nearby guesthouse noticed a man with a crowbar and a lock pick and called the police. Upon searching his room, the police found 500 Mark, burglary tools, bloody clothes, and a sleeping person that later confessed to both the robbery and murder. In another post office in the western part of Germany, to name just one more example, another incident took place. The report from 1883 recounts:

An incredible brash robbery attack happened in the evening hours of January 13th to the counter of post office no. 1 in Hagen (Westphalia). It might have been 6.30 pm when two men appeared in the vacant

26 Peisker, “Die neuzeitlichen Schalteranlagen des Hauptpostamts in Potsdam,” *Archiv für Post und Telegraphie* 55, no. 1 (1927): 4.

27 Schmidt, *Amtsbauten*, 22.

service hall, one of which asked the postal clerk Langenbach at the counter for letters *poste restante* under the name ›Meyer‹. While Langenbach searched for the required mail, for which he had to turn towards the cabinet where the letters were stored, the man broke up the window at the counter with the help of a tool, reached for the cash box inside the bureau and together with it, he took to his heels.<sup>28</sup>

When towards the end of the nineteenth century, big amounts of money were no longer transported via overland mail coaches, but rather transfers were ordered telegraphically, the respective amounts of money were received, dispensed, and stored at local post offices. So eventually, the counter became the ultimate target for raids and robberies.

Generally speaking, for the operations manager, the counter was the operational space that stood for foreclosure, separation, and security, where internal information and values were closed off from the public. For the criminal, on the other hand, the counters in post offices and saving banks symbolized the best possible point of access, the operational weak-point. Physical transgressions actively undermined Schmidt's claim of never having public areas merge with internal ones. So, what seemed like an opening of the heavy and isolated counter cabin during the 1920s

and 1930s in order to improve the material conditions of customer-clerk-relations, in fact, produced just more subtle separations. The counter stayed the central barrier between clerk and customer that it always had been. Glass walls displaced wooden walls and in order to keep valuables and documents safe, lockable compartments were introduced. Also, the clerk's desk was turned away from the customer in a 90° angle in order to preserve privacy of correspondence. Grids were drawn straight through the service hall to secure the building after hours.<sup>29</sup> Even if there were no divisions between clerk and client, walls behind the clerks' desks kept the general public away from internal areas and therefore from critical intelligence about workflows, money stashes, and security measures.<sup>30</sup> Just as the internal areas were hidden away, so were the emergency bells that the clerk could reach when he felt the need to call for help.<sup>31</sup> The architectural challenge, therefore, was not to plainly enforce security in a both symbolic and material way, but to guarantee for business under these conditions. The counter, thus, was not a space where a simple difference – between clerks and customers, internal and external, operational and public – was established but where a complex and seemingly ambivalent system of mutually dependent acts of openings and closings were enforced

28 "Gewaltsame Beraubung der Schalterkasse des Postamts in Hagen," *Deutsche Verkehrs-Zeitung* (1883): 20.

29 See Peisker, "Die neuzeitlichen Schalteranlagen," 2.

30 See Lang, *Briefschalterhallen*, 48.

31 See *ibid.*, 47.

to keep businesses up and running safely.<sup>32</sup>

## COUNTER STORIES

Spaces of exclusion fuel the collective imagination. In a post office like the one in Kapusta's photograph, a civilian could only advance up to the counters when entering a public agency. Wooden panels, frosted glass screens, and the barring of the counter wall normally blocked one's sight into the offices and the procedures there. Additionally, low and small windows, bill postings, and minimal pass-through features left anything beyond the counter in the dark. When the counter black boxes its business, an information gap between the involved parties is produced – the phantasm of an obscure, bureaucratic, and cumbersome apparatus emerges that Franz Kafka in his novel *The Trial* put into haunting literary form. Is that what Kapusta's photograph evokes? Does it express the experience of an obscure, conflict-laden, and highly critical counter that inheres the potential for diverse forms of transgressions? However, there is a historical explanation for its atmosphere of crisis, abandonment, and decadence.<sup>33</sup> When the photograph was taken in 1939, the building at Schloßstrasse, built in 1770 and remodeled as a post office in 1890, had

become too small for the growing city of Wandsbek and its increasing mail quantities. The year before, in 1938, the official decision had been made to erect a new post office building. In early 1939, just when building work was about to start and Kapusta shot his photograph, a general building freeze for official non-military buildings was declared. Suddenly, the already given up post office was not demolished after all but had to keep up provisional postal service together with a nearby barrack, before later that year more and more clerks were called for military service. So, what we witness in the photograph is the moment when the postal service in Wandsbek was institutionally falling apart. Still, what the image also evokes, is the history of its very subject: the counter as a critical and highly ambivalent space where two qualitatively different spheres are brought together under highly controlled conditions; where they are supposed to touch each other but never to merge. The encounter at the counter, this is what I intended to show, turns it into a space of diverse transgressions, of misunderstandings and misbehavior, of insults and assaults; a space where an institution's reputation and profits, a person's strength of nerves and sometimes even an employee's life is at stake. The post office counter is by no means the dull, trivial, and predictable setting of conventional every-

---

32 As a general strategy in architecture: cf. Dirk Baecker, "Die Dekonstruktion der Schachtel. Innen und Außen in der Architektur," in *Unbeobachtbare Welt. Über Kunst und Architektur*, eds. Niklas Luhmann, Frederick D. Bunsen, and Dirk Baecker (Bielefeld: Haux, 1990), 99.

33 For the following historical synopsis see: *Postgeschichtliche Blätter Hamburg* (special issue *Wandsbek*) 23 (1890): 54–56.; Walter Kindermann, "Zur Postgeschichte Wandsbeks", *Wandsbek früher und heute* (Hamburg-Wandsbek: 1965), 48–50.

day services. That it evinces just that – the ambiguity, perilousness, and uneasiness that comes with the counter – is what makes Kapusta's photograph exceptional within the hundreds of images conserved in the museum's collection documenting the modern history of the German post.

## REFERENCES

- Baecker, Dirk. "Die Dekonstruktion der Schachtel. Innen und Außen in der Architektur." In *Unbeobachtbare Welt. Über Kunst und Architektur*, edited by Niklas Luhmann, Frederick D. Bunsen, and Dirk Baecker, 67–104. Bielefeld: Haux, 1990.
- Becker, Peter. "Überlegungen zu einer Kulturgeschichte der Verwaltung." In: *Jahrbuch für Europäische Verwaltungsgeschichte* 15 (2003): 311–336.
- Bräunlein, Jürgen. "'Die Pflicht der Artigkeit'. Kundenfreundlichkeit bei der Post – damals und heute." In *Das Archiv. Magazin für Post- und Telekommunikationsgeschichte* 2 (2007): 90-97.
- Cornelius, [Carl]. "Das Entwerfen und der Bau der Eisenbahn-Empfangsgebäude." In: *Zeitschrift für Bauwesen* 63 (1913): 235–262, 431–446, 621–630.
- Couvé, Richard. *Beamte und Publikum: Richtlinien für die Bestgestaltung des Verkehrs der Beamten und des Publikums*. Leipzig: Weimann, 1930.
- Couvé, Richard. *Vom Verkehr mit den Reisenden. Ein Ratgeber für Verkehrsbeamte*. Berlin: Verlag der Verkehrswissenschaftlichen Lehrmittelgesellschaft m.b.H. bei der Deutschen Reichsbahn, 1926.
- Duffner, Rudolf. *Das deutsche Posthaus von seinen Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*. Berlin: Triltsch & Huther, 1939.
- Firsching. "Schalterräume." In *Verkehrs- und Betriebswissenschaft in Post und Telegraphie* 8, no. 14/15 (1932): 214-216.
- Gesellschaft für deutsche Postgeschichte, ed. *Postgeschichtliche Blätter Hamburg* (Sonderheft Wandsbek), Heft 23, Hamburg: 1980.
- Jany, Susanne. "Operative Räume: Prozessarchitekturen im späten 19. Jahrhundert." In *Zeitschrift für Medienwissenschaft: Medien/Architekturen* 12 (2015): 33–43.
- Jany, Susanne. "Postalische Prozessarchitekturen. Die Organisation des Postdienstes im Medium der Architektur." In *Archiv für Mediengeschichte*, edited by Friedrich Balke, Bernhard Siegert, and Joseph Vogl, 135-145. Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2013.
- Lang, Dietrich. *Briefschalterhallen der Deutschen Reichspost, ihre Entwicklung und ihr Aufbau*. Würzburg: K. Triltsch, 1932.
- Kindermann, Walter. "Zur Postgeschichte Wandsbeks." In *Wandsbek früher und heute*, 41–50. Hamburg-Wandsbek: 1965.
- Neumann, Robert. *Gebäude für den Post-, Telegraphen- und Fernsprechdienst. Handbuch der Architektur*. 4. Teil, 2. Halbband, 3. Heft. 1. Auflage. Darmstadt: Bergsträsser, 1896.
- N.N. "Das Publikum." In *Das Neue Posthorn. Illustriertes Familienblatt* no. 18 (1926/27): 294.
- N.N.: "Gewaltsame Beraubung der Schalterkasse des Postamts in Hagen." In *Deutsche Verkehrs-Zeitung*, 7, no. 3 (1883): 20.
- Peisker. "Die neuzeitlichen Schalteranlagen des Hauptpostamts in Potsdam." In *Archiv für Post und Telegraphie*, 55, no. 1 (1927): 1-5.
- Postdienst-Instruction in vier Bänden (reprint). In Beisel. "Der Postbaudienst der Deutschen Reichspost, seine Entstehung und Entwicklung," In *Archiv für Post- und Fernmeldewesen*, 3 (1951), 346f.
- Reichpostdirektion Berlin. *Hundert Fragen und Antworten am Schalter in deutscher, französischer und englischer Sprache*. Berlin, 1936.
- Schäffner, Wolfgang. "Architecture of the Openings. Windows, Doors and Switches." In *Architecture of the Medial Spaces*, edited by Joachim Krausse, and Stephan Pinkau, 74–79. Dessau: Anhalt University of Applied Sciences, 2006.
- Schmidt, Walther. *Amtsbauten. Aus Betriebsvorgängen gestaltet, dargestellt am Beispiel der bayerischen Postbauten*. Ravensburg: Otto Maier Verlag, 1949.
- Taschenbuch für den Postbetriebsbeamten. Bd. 1: *Schalterdienst*, edited by Postinspektor Maetz. Berlin: Koenig, 1925.
- Wiese. "Neuzeitliche Schalter in Postgebäuden." In *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 61 (1927): 211–215.