

This thesis examines the urban and artistic themes found in the Berlin novels of Robert Walser. It is based on an exploration of the novels *The Tanners*, *The Assistant* and *Jakob von Gunten*. The introductory chapter defines the subject of research and sets out the aims of the thesis. The second chapter places the subject of the title in the historical and social context of the German-speaking world at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, while also taking in developments in Walser's native Switzerland. The third chapter examines the literature of the turn of the century, identifying the era's most important literary currents, and also looks at literary trends in Switzerland. As urban and artistic themes appear in such abundance in the literature of the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the fourth chapter is devoted to Walser's contemporaries, who also reflected on them in their work. Chapter five examines Walser's personality and, in connection with the subject of the title, briefly refers to the short prose of his Berlin period. Individual novels by the author are analysed in chapters six through eight, and compared in chapter nine. The concluding chapter then summarises the thesis's observations and findings.

Key words: Robert Walser, artist, society, turn of the century literature, Bildungsroman