

**FILM
CULTURE**

IN TRANSITION



Alexander Kluge

**Raw Materials for
the Imagination**

EDITED BY

TARA FORREST

AMSTERDAM UNIVERSITY PRESS

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*For Alexander Kluge
...and in memory of Miriam Hansen*

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Introduction

Editor's Introduction

Tara Forrest

Alexander Kluge, whose eightieth birthday coincides with the release of this book, is a key figure in the German cultural landscape, having worked prolifically – over some fifty years – as a film-maker, writer and television producer. Outside the German-speaking world, Kluge is best known as one of the founding members of the New German Cinema and as the director of films such as *YESTERDAY GIRL* (1966), *THE PATRIOT* (1979) and *THE POWER OF EMOTION* (1983).¹ Film, however, is just one of the mediums with which he has worked throughout the course of his career. In 1962, Kluge published *Lebensläufe*,² the first of several collections of short stories; he is the author (along with Oskar Negt) of a number of key books (including *Public Sphere and Experience*³ and *Geschichte und Eigensinn*⁴); he has written extensively on a diverse range of topics including (among others) film, television, history, politics, opera, literature and the public sphere; and – since the establishment of his own television company DCTP (Development Company for Television Programmes) in 1987 – he has produced thousands of programmes for German television,⁵ many of which can now be viewed on DCTP's fascinating 'theme park' website.⁶

As the first English-language sourcebook devoted to Kluge's work, the aim of this collection is to provide the reader with a comprehensive introduction to some of the key issues, themes, preoccupations and ideas driving the development of his groundbreaking film, television and literary productions. Following Thomas Elsaesser's introduction, the book is divided into eight thematically organised sections, the contents of which (as summarised below) contain a broad range of different texts, including: articles and stories by Kluge; critical essays on various aspects of his work; transcripts from some of his television programmes; and interviews with Kluge himself. Each of these texts explore central issues, themes and ideas that feature across Kluge's body of work, and the book as a whole encourages the reader to draw their own connections and associations between material that was produced both in different mediums and at various points in his career.

Kluge himself places great emphasis on fashioning texts (be they films, television programmes, interviews, or stories) that are neither closed nor didactic in their structure and that refrain from channelling the viewer/reader's thinking in a specific conceptual or ideological direction. As the subtitle of the book suggests, Kluge's work consists not of finished texts, but of 'raw materials' for the imagination: that is, images, stories, quotes, ideas, interviews, diagrams and

other found materials that encourage the viewer/reader to actively participate in the meaning-making process that is initiated, but not foreclosed, by his work. 'The film', Kluge notes in a programmatic statement that is true of his stories and television programmes more generally, 'takes on its existence in the spectator's head'.⁷ It is the imagination of the viewer/reader, and not Kluge himself, that 'fills out' the work in question.⁸

Film, Politics and the Public Sphere

The intersection between film, the imagination of the viewer and the task of an active public sphere is explored in the first section of the book which consists of a compilation of writings by Kluge and essays by Miriam Hansen and Heide Schlüpmann that explore, in part, the role that Kluge's films have played in the establishment of an 'oppositional' public sphere. Central to Kluge's work in this field is the distinction he draws between the role and function of an 'active' public sphere and the 'pseudo' public sphere generated by the culture industry. For Kluge, an active public sphere is an inclusive, dynamic and collaborative space where people participate in the meaning-making process surrounding issues, policies, events and ideas that impact on the world in which they live. 'The public sphere', he writes, is 'what one might call the factory of politics – its site of production' and, as such, it forms the 'basis for processes of social change'.⁹ While Hansen's essay focuses on Kluge's contribution to *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* (1978) – a collaborative film produced in response to terrorist activities that took place in Germany in the Autumn of 1977¹⁰ – Schlüpmann provides a critical analysis of three films (*YESTERDAY GIRL, PART-TIME WORK OF A FEMALE SLAVE* (1973) and *ARTISTS UNDER THE BIG TOP: PERPLEXED* (1967)) which questions, in part, the extent to which they could be seen to work for or against the women's movement.

Rethinking History

History is a topic that has preoccupied Kluge for many years and has been explored – in various ways and with different effects – in his film, television and literary work. The first chapter in this section, written by Anton Kaes, focuses on Kluge's film *THE PATRIOT* and its protagonist Gabi Teichert's highly idiosyncratic attempts to rejuvenate the high-school history curriculum. Like Teichert, who is sceptical of historicist narratives that describe a particular outcome as

'probable', 'necessary', or 'realistic', Kluge is driven by a desire to redeem those voices, memories, materials and ideas that cleave open a space within official accounts of the relationship between the past and the present within which the possibilities of both the past and the future can be imagined and explored anew. As both David Roberts' analysis of Kluge's literary montage piece 'The Air Raid on Halberstadt, 8 April 1945' (1977) and the short extract from the piece contained in this section make clear, the experimental form of Kluge's work in this field challenges the reader to conceive of the 'reality' of the past outside of the tightly organised, linear narratives that feature in the textbooks assigned to Teichert's students. 'It must', Kluge states, 'be possible to present reality as the historical fiction that it is. Its impact on the individual is real [...]. Men die as a result, are pulled apart, are subjected to bombing raids, are dead while alive, are placed in asylums as mad etc.',¹¹ but this does not mean that these realities could not have been prevented, that the 'deadly outcomes'¹² suffered by these people could not have turned out very differently.

Realism as Protest

The above quote is taken from an article that appears in this section: an extract from a book Kluge wrote in 1975 that contains, among other materials, a number of short essays that explore what Kluge describes as the task of a 'realistic method'.¹³ As both the article by, and the interview with, Kluge contained in this section make clear, realism is a concept that occupies a very central position in his work, and it is a term he employs in a dialectical fashion to both describe and undermine the limitations placed on our conception of what is and is not possible by politicians and the pseudo public sphere.¹⁴ As Kluge has maintained throughout the course of his career, the so-called 'real' state of affairs 'is not necessarily or certainly real'. Alternative possibilities and the roads not taken 'also belong to reality. The realistic result, the actual result, is only an abstraction that has murdered all other possibilities for the moment'.¹⁵ Drawing on Kluge's delineation of the role of a realist aesthetic, Eike Friedrich Wenzel's chapter in this section analyses a series of short films produced early in Kluge's film-making career (including, among others, *BRUTALITY IN STONE* (1960) and *FRAU BLACKBURN, BORN 5 JAN. 1872, IS FILMED* (1967)) in order 'to demonstrate how Kluge's idea of realism is concretised as an independent form of documentary observation'.¹⁶

Opera as a 'Power Plant of Emotion'

Among the contributions contained in this section are an interview with Kluge about his film *THE POWER OF EMOTION* and essays by Gertrud Koch and Caryl Flinn that explore the impact that Kluge's longstanding fascination with opera has had on his film, television and literary work. In her analysis of *THE POWER OF EMOTION*, Flinn highlights a crucial scene in the film that illustrates both the sense of inevitability generated by the 'fatalism of tragic operatic narrative'¹⁷ and (in keeping with his criticism of historicist accounts of history) Kluge's desire to overcome it. The scene in question features Frau Pichota (a character played by Kluge's sister Alexandra) in discussion with a singer who has performed the same role in a tragic opera eighty-four times in a row. When asked why, in act 1, he reveals a 'spark of hope on [...] [his] face', even though he knows – as a veteran performer of the role – that things are going to end badly in act 5, the singer suggests (in a matter-of-fact style reminiscent of Gabi Teichert's approach to history) that, in act 1, there is still a chance that the story could unfold in a different direction.¹⁸ As Kluge himself has noted, his aim in producing *THE POWER OF EMOTION* was to enact a 'disarmament of the fifth act':¹⁹ a practice which, as Koch points out, is also apparent in the reworking of opera plots that feature in his experimental literary and television work.

Storytelling and Politics

Since the publication of *Lebensläufe* in 1962, Kluge has produced several collections of short stories and other literary texts including, among other recent books: *Chronik der Gefühle* (2000);²⁰ *Die Lücke, die der Teufel läßt* (2003);²¹ *Tür an Tür mit einem anderen Leben* (2006);²² *Geschichten vom Kino* (2007);²³ and *Das Bohren harter Bretter* (2011)²⁴ – the first of which includes, in addition to new material, reprints and reworked versions of a number of Kluge's earlier texts.²⁵ As Andreas Huyssen points out in his analysis of Kluge's early writings in this section, what marks Kluge's literary work as distinct is the manner in which it systematically undermines the conventional channels via which meaning is communicated to the reader. 'All traditional notions of narration', he writes, 'such as plot, character, action – are suspended, and one has great difficulty orienting oneself'.²⁶ Kluge, however, states that 'confusion strengthens the muscles of [our] power of imagination',²⁷ and it is the open, the fragmentary, what Kluge describes as, the 'cut short' quality of his stories²⁸ (characteristics which – as the stories contained in this section reveal – are also exhibited in his recent

literary work²⁹) that encourage readers to become active 'co-producers' in the meaning-making process. As Kluge states in his speech on literature, realism and politics also contained in this section, the politics of such stories lies not in their development along the lines of 'a particular political praxis', but in the extent to which they can help 'to recuperate [...] what is considered unpolitical as a political matter.'³⁰

Television and Counter-Public Spheres

In the interview contained in this section, Kluge states that his work in television proceeds from the assumption that the public sphere is richer the more it engages the viewer at the level of his/her own experience. In keeping with both his delineation of the task of an active public sphere and his criticism of films that seek to pedagogically impress their ideas upon the viewing audience, Kluge's television programmes are constructed out of an eclectic collection of 'raw materials' (including photographs, drawings, diagrams, quotes, interviews, scrolling text and clips from fictional and documentary footage) that encourage the audience to draw on their own experience and imagination in an attempt to engage creatively with a diverse range of issues and ideas pertaining to (among other topics): war, fascism, history, love, opera, nuclear power, neuroscience, literature, philosophy, art, music, film, architecture and economics. While the essays written by Christian Schulte and I provide an overview of the unconventional form – and spectatorial effects – generated by Kluge's television experiments, Tim Grünewald analyses a series of programmes that Kluge produced on Islam in the post 9/11 period that 'resist mainstream aesthetic television conventions' in an 'attempt to circulate an alternative image of Islam within the mass media.'³¹

Television Interviews

In Schulte's analysis of Kluge's television interviews contained in the previous section, he highlights what he describes as Kluge's 'astonishing ability to simulate the imagination of his interlocutor' and 'to set in motion the work of memory'.³² The interview with Heiner Müller that Schulte cites by way of example is included in full in this section,³³ as are transcripts of television interviews with DJ and musician Jeff Mills and academic Joseph Vogl – each of which demonstrate the lively manner in which Kluge's intuitive mode of questioning seeks to

animate the conversation by igniting the associative and imaginative capacities of his interview partner.

Early Cinema/Recent Work

In 'On Film and the Public Sphere', Kluge states that he 'wouldn't be making films if it weren't for the cinema of the 1920s, the silent era' and, in his writings on film, he often highlights the important role that a return to the 'origins' of cinema could play in rejuvenating our conception of the possibilities of the medium. Citing the work of Georges Méliès and Louis Lumière as examples, he notes that '[i]n each of these origins, "cousins" and other relatives of what actually developed can be found, and these can be adapted for the New Media in interesting ways'.³⁴ As Miriam Hansen points out in her essay in this section, a number of stylistic devices characteristic of early cinema are employed in Kluge's film and television work in his attempt to 'reinvent [the] possibilities' of both mediums.³⁵ While Hansen provides a detailed analysis of the relationship between Kluge's fascination with early cinema and his writings on the public sphere, the final chapter in the book written by Christian Schulte focuses on Kluge's recent film *NEWS FROM IDEOLOGICAL ANTIQUITY: MARX – EISENSTEIN – CAPITAL* (2008): a film inspired, in part, by Sergei Eisenstein's plans to produce a film version of Karl Marx's *Capital*.

While the book as a whole explores many of the key themes, issues and ideas that have preoccupied Kluge throughout his career, when dealing with a figure as prolific as Kluge, it is difficult to do justice to the breadth and significance of his work in one volume. I hope, nonetheless, that the essays, interviews and stories contained in this collection (many of which appear here for the first time in English) spark thoughts and associations that inspire further thinking about Kluge's extraordinary body of work

Notes

1. The German title of the film, *DIE MACHT DER GEFÜHLE*, is variously translated by different authors in the book as *THE POWER OF EMOTION*, *THE POWER OF EMOTIONS* and *THE POWER OF FEELINGS*. I have not standardised the title because of the different associations drawn out by their own translations.
2. Alexander Kluge, *Lebensläufe* (Stuttgart: Goverts, 1962). A selection of these stories was first published in English translation as Alexander Kluge, *Attendance List for a*

- Funeral*, trans. Leila Vennewitz (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966). This collection was subsequently republished as Alexander Kluge, *Case Histories*, trans. Leila Vennewitz (New York/London: Homes & Meier, 1991).
3. Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere*, trans. Peter Labanyi, Jamie Owen Daniel, and Assenka Oksiloff (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993). The book was originally published in German as *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung: Zur Organisationsanalyse von bürgerlicher und proletarischer Öffentlichkeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972).
 4. Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn* (3 vols.) (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1993). An edited version of this book is soon to be published in English translation as *History and Obstinacy*, ed. Devin Fore (New York: Zone Books, forthcoming 2012).
 5. For comprehensive lists of the television programmes produced between 1988 and 2007, see 'Kulturmagazine' (1988-1999), in *Die Schrift an der Wand. Alexander Kluge: Rohstoffe und Materialien*, ed. Christian Schulte (Osnabrück: Universitätsverlag Rasch, 2000), pp. 401-438, and Beata Wiggen, 'Kulturmagazine 1999-2007', *Maske und Kothurn: Internationale Beiträge zur Theater-, Film- und Medienwissenschaft* (Vol. 53, No. 1, 2007), pp. 137-192.
 6. www.dctp.tv/#/themen/ (last viewed 1 February 2011). See also DCTP's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/dctpTV (last viewed 1 February 2011).
 7. Alexander Kluge, 'Pact with a Dead Man', in *West German Filmmakers on Film: Visions and Voices*, ed. Eric Rentschler (New York/London: Holmes & Meier, 1988), p. 236.
 8. Alexander Kluge, *Die Patriotin: Texte/Bilder 1-6* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1979), p. 294.
 9. Alexander Kluge, 'On Film and the Public Sphere', p. 40-41 of this book.
 10. GERMANY IN AUTUMN is just one of three collaborative films produced by Kluge together with other filmmakers and writers (including, among others, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Volker Schlöndorff, Stefan Aust, and Heinrich Böll). The other films include DER KANDIDAT (1980) and KRIEG UND FRIEDEN (1982).
 11. Alexander Kluge, 'The Sharpest Ideology: That Reality Appeals to its Realistic Character', p. 191 of this book.
 12. The phrase is taken from the title of Kluge's 1973 novella *Learning Processes with a Deadly Outcome*, trans. Christopher Pavsek (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 1996).
 13. See the section entitled 'Kommentare zum antagonistischen Realismusbegriff', in Alexander Kluge, *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin: Zur realistischen Methode* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975), pp. 187-250.
 14. For Kluge's analysis of this dialectical approach, see Ulrich Gregor, 'Interview', in *Herzog/Kluge/Straub*, ed. Peter W. Jansen and Wolfram Schütte (München/Wien: Carl Hanser, 1976), p. 160.
 15. Jan Dawson, 'But Why Are the Questions So Abstract?: An Interview with Alexander Kluge', in Jan Dawson, *Alexander Kluge & The Occasional Work of a Female Slave* (New York: Zoetrope, 1977), p. 34.
 16. Eike Friedrich Wenzel, 'Construction Site Film: Kluge's Idea of Realism and His Short Films', pp. 173-174 in this book.

17. Caryl Flinn, 'Undoing Act 5: History, Bodies, and Operatic Remains: Kluge's *The Power of Emotion*', p. 214 in this book.
18. See *ibid.*, p. 217, and Alexander Kluge, *Die Macht der Gefühle* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1984), pp. 78-79.
19. Alexander Kluge, 'Text der Pressekonferenz mit Alexander Kluge über *Die Macht der Gefühle* in Venedig am 5. September 1983', *Kinemathek* (vol. 20 September, 1983), p. 4.
20. Alexander Kluge, *Chronik der Gefühle: Band I – Basisgeschichten* and *Chronik der Gefühle: Band II – Lebensläufe* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000).
21. Alexander Kluge, *Die Lücke, die der Teufel läßt: Im Umfeld des neuen Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003). A selection of the stories contained in this book have been published in English translation as Alexander Kluge, *The Devil's Blind Spot: Tales from the New Century*, trans. Martin Chalmers and Michael Hulse (New York: New Directions Books, 2004).
22. Alexander Kluge, *Tür an Tür mit einem anderen Leben: 350 neue Geschichten* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006).
23. Alexander Kluge, *Geschichten vom Kino* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2007). A selection of these stories has been published in English translation as Alexander Kluge, *Cinema Stories*, trans. Martin Brady and Helen Hughes (New York: New Directions Books, 2007).
24. Alexander Kluge, *Das Bohren harter Bretter: 133 politische Geschichten* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2011).
25. These include (among others): *Lebensläufe*; *Lernprozesse mit tödlichem Ausgang*; and *Schlachtbeschreibung*. An earlier version of the latter text has been published in English translation as Alexander Kluge, *The Battle*, trans. Leila Vennewitz (New York/Toronto/London/Sydney: McGraw-Hill, 1967).
26. Andreas Huyssen, 'An Analytic Storyteller in the Course of Time', p. 272 in this book.
27. Alexander Kluge, 'Ich liebe das Lakonische', *Der Spiegel* (no. 45, 2000), p. 337.
28. 'A few of the stories', Kluge notes in his introduction to *New Stories, Notebooks 1-18: The Uncanniness of Time*, 'appear to have been cut short. Then it is precisely this being-cut-short which is the story'. See Alexander Kluge, 'Selections from *New Stories, Notebooks 1-18: The Uncanniness of Time*', trans. Joyce Rheuban, *October* (no. 46 fall, 1988), p.103.
29. These stories, which have been grouped together under the title 'At the 2003 International Security Conference' were originally published in German in *Die Lücke, die der Teufel läßt: Im Umfeld des neuen Jahrhunderts*. They were not, however, included in the selected collection of these stories that was published in English translation as *The Devil's Blindspot: Tales from the New Century*.
30. Alexander Kluge, 'The Political as Intensity of Everyday Feeling', p. 288 in this book.
31. Tim Grünewald, 'Reframing Islam in Television: Alexander Kluge's Interviews on Islam and Terrorism since 9/11', p. 331 in this book.
32. Christian Schulte, 'Television and Obsturacy', p. 326 in this book.
33. See also the subtitled interviews with Müller on the Cornell University Library website: <http://muller-kluge.library.cornell.edu/en/index.php?> (last viewed 7 January 2011).

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34. Kluge, 'Why Should Film and Television Cooperate', trans. Stuart Liebman, *October* (no. 46 fall, 1988), p. 99.
 35. Dawson, 'But Why Are the Questions So Abstract?', p. 37. 'I do not', Kluge claims, 'take up the silent film in my films for stylistic reasons but because it is a question of "radically" keeping open the elementary roots of the film'. 'The Sharpest Ideology', p. 195 in this book.

The Stubborn Persistence of Alexander Kluge

Thomas Elsaesser

As a film-maker with a modest but loyal transatlantic following, Alexander Kluge's oeuvre and career are markedly different from those of other European directors venerated by cinephiles.¹ Celebrating his eightieth birthday, he belongs to the same generation as Jean-Luc Godard, Jean Marie Straub and Theo Angelopoulos, but trained as a lawyer before making his first film in 1960. In Germany, he is equally if not more famous as a short story writer and the author of several volumes of sociology. To film historians, he is the legal brain and policy-shaper behind the New German Cinema of the 1960s and 1970s, having been the driving force behind the famous Oberhausen Manifesto of 1962 and the government film-funding legislation that followed.² In 1964 he co-founded West Germany's first film school (at the Ulm Institute for Design) and in 1972 he published, in his capacity as professor of sociology at the University of Frankfurt, a book with Oskar Negt which became a classic for the student generation of 1968, *Public Sphere and Experience*, a radicalised rejoinder to Jürgen Habermas's equally classic 1962 *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Co-author of other critical and political analyses, including a book-length study of the European film industry, Kluge remained, for more than two decades, the undisputed master strategist of the parliamentary lobby and the chief architect of a state film-subsidy system based around the concept of the *Autorenfilm* (auteur film) – before becoming, in the 1980s, one of its fiercest critics.³

Between 1966 and 1983 he directed some twenty films, of which about six have remained in active memory: *YESTERDAY GIRL* (1966), *ARTISTS UNDER THE BIG TOP: PERPLEXED* (1968), *OCCASIONAL WORK OF A FEMALE SLAVE* (1974), a segment of *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* (1978), *THE PATRIOT* (1979) and *THE POWER OF FEELINGS* (1983). On these titles rests his reputation as a film-maker, although for his fans, a few more remain to be rediscovered, such as *THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD IS A VERY DEAD END* (1974), *STRONGMAN FERDINAND* (1976) and *THE BLIND DIRECTOR* (1985).

By 1985 Kluge had changed tack, having entered into what many saw as a Faustian bargain with commercial television to produce late-night cultural magazine shows. *The Hour of the Film-makers: Film Histories, Ten to Eleven, News and Stories* and *Prime Time: Late Edition* are programmes that have been sponsored by, among others, the Japanese advertising firm Dentsu, and supervised by

Kluge with a consortium headed by the German news magazine *Der Spiegel*.⁴ They feature half-hour mini-films, ciné-essays and interviews on subjects as diverse as the guillotine and montage cinema, opera and Greek mythology, a 'sampling' of a scene from Godard's *CONTEMPT*, an interview about the Roman historian Tacitus with playwright Heiner Müller, or 'Fidel Castro, the Last of the Mohicans'. This output has averaged two half-hour programmes per week over the last twenty-five years, complementing a filmography of altogether thirty films (features and documentary shorts), in addition to a thousand short stories that run to ten volumes and a further sixteen works of nonfiction.

Faced with such relentless productivity in so many media, one's first reaction is awe, followed perhaps by scepticism and incredulity. For besides the books, the films and the hundreds of hours of television, there are also newspaper articles, polemics, interviews, press conferences and public lectures: if Kluge has become something of a myth, an institution even, one could be forgiven for also sensing something almost monstrous in so much talent. His energy never flags, his curiosity is inexhaustible, and no occasion is too ephemeral to ignite his enthusiasm for reform or creative engagement. Unlike that other German filmmaker of seemingly superhuman productivity, R.W. Fassbinder, Kluge has proven himself a marathon man, still going strong after more than fifty years on the front line: predating the generation of 1968, he has outlived even their pessimistic afterlife and (self-)defeat.

The sheer size of Kluge's oeuvre makes it enigmatic and not only because the man himself has chosen to remain so utterly private. He credibly maintains that film-making is only one way of pursuing his activist's agenda, and compared to the work of younger compatriots like Fassbinder, Herzog and Wenders, his features look deliberately improvised – brilliant compilations of aperçus and astonishing montages of 'bits and pieces' rather than self-sustaining masterpieces (one of his last films, from 1986, was actually called *MISCELLANEOUS NEWS*). Finally, in contrast to two film-makers of his own generation, Edgar Reitz and Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, Kluge seems free of the obsessive urge to undertake works of the *longue durée* like *HEIMAT* or *OUR HITLER*. Instead, he has chosen case studies of remarkable or odd individuals, like Anita G., the heroine of *YESTERDAY GIRL*; Ferdinand Rieche, the security chief of *STRONGMAN FERDINAND*; or the contrasting fate of two women, one an East German spy, the other a prostitute and shoplifter in *THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD IS A VERY DEAD END*. If asked, Kluge might argue that his film-making is 'work in progress', with each film more of a means to an end than a goal in itself – the documentation of a contingent history, not of himself as an artist, nor necessarily that of his characters, but of the historical body called 'Germany', belated nation and premature state, alternately bloated and divided, with which the film-maker is engaged in an un-

ending and unhappy dialogue, like an old couple for whom tenderness, aggression and mutual dependence have become inseparable.

The close links between Kluge's literary output and his film scenarios suggest that a web-like network binds his other activities to his cinema work and vice versa: many of his film protagonists first appeared in the story collections *Case Histories* (1962), *Learning Processes with a Deadly Outcome* (1973) and *The Uncanniness of Time* (1977). Some films are the result of utilising the out-takes from a previous film; others feel like slightly hysterical self-parodies. The director has even reworked and re-edited films in response to public discussions with audiences. But if the films are off-cuts from an ongoing dialogue, the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle fit into an overall design that is by necessity both self-directed and remote-controlled. Kluge's working method is best described in Harun Farocki's words as a *Verbund*, or 'network'. A symbiotic or mutually implicating arrangement of input and output, Kluge's *Verbund* is at once a dada collage and a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, where newspaper clippings, photos, snatches of popular music, Wagner, Verdi, home movies and *objets trouvés* serve as material for installations in a permanent museum of human idiocy, idiosyncrasy and heroic persistence. His work is furthermore held together as much by the structural contradiction of remaining an artist while servicing a culture industry, as by the exigencies of grappling with several media simultaneously. Like Brecht, Kluge wants to intervene from within, rather than, in the manner of Adorno, critiquing from without (to contrast two of Kluge's own master thinkers).⁵

Despite the public attention he generates through television (though he is never on screen in his shows, only a voice-off), Kluge is enigmatic also in the eccentric impersonality of his working method. Unlike others in the film business, he has never sought the limelight, nor presented himself as a visionary artist with a personal mission – the latter being the all-too-Germanic vice of other New German Cinema auteurs. What is immediately striking are the many collaborative projects and collective signatures, not only on manifestos and press releases, but also with the omnibus films *GERMANY IN AUTUMN*, *THE CANDIDATE* (1980) and *WAR AND PEACE* (1982), as well as one short and one feature, all made in conjunction with, amongst others, Ulrich Schamoni, Edgar Reitz, Volker Schlöndorff, Margarethe von Trotta and Fassbinder. Kluge often hands his television slots over to friends like Ula Stoeckl, Alfred Edel and Günter Gaus. Shaped by the collectivist ethos of the 1960s, with a deep distrust of specialisation and an abiding antipathy towards any division of labour, Kluge is an ideal advocate of cooperation. But in practice, he is the auteur as autocrat: even the most sprawling enterprises with which he is involved reverberate with the quirky logic of his mind – while being held in the steel grip of his formidable intellect, reclaiming as idiosyncrasy and stubbornness the very dis-

persal of authorship and self-expression that the collectivist projects and the different media outlets otherwise imply.

Where, then, in this massive output, this eccentric personality, this shadowy, publicity-shy presence, can one finally locate a centre? Is there a real Alexander Kluge, or merely a dazzling, and to some observers, irritating succession of disguises, masks, masquerades and performance pieces? To adapt a phrase originally taken from Walter Benjamin (who took it from Karl Kraus) and quoted at the beginning of *THE PATRIOT*: 'The longer one looks at [him], the farther [he] looks back at you'. The inventor of the *Autorenfilm* challenges all the usual assumptions of auteurism that would sanction the reading of his work thematically or as existential self-expression. On the other hand, given Kluge's own voluminous commentaries on his (cinematic) intentions, (reformist) aims and (didactic) methods, his views on everything and anything, his obsessive-compulsive return to certain phrases and references, it is tempting to quote the director on his own behalf and assume a strong autobiographical core. But it is a temptation (initially) to be resisted: reading Kluge and viewing his films can leave you with the blurry feeling of watching a spinning top only to realise that his self-analysis only deepens the enigma. What exactly does he mean by sound bites like 'film theory is film politics', 'public sphere is the productivity of the senses', 'opera is the power-house of feelings?' In the end, one abiding concern remains clearly discernible in everything he does: the why and where of his nation, his country and its history.

How could it be otherwise? For *any* German of his generation, history looms large, usually contracted to the twelve years of Nazi rule, its consequences and aftermath. Not so in Kluge, at least at first glance. In the dada *Gesamtkunstwerk* that is his oeuvre, the grand design is laid out in the second book he wrote with Oskar Negt, *Geschichte und Eigensinn (History and Idiosyncrasy)*.⁶ Translating literally as 'self-sense', the *Eigensinn* of the title can mean anything from obstinacy and persistence to resistance and self-determination. From Tacitus' account of Arminius' Teutoburg Forest victory to the Battle of Stalingrad, via the Stauffer Kings, Martin Luther's Reformation, Thomas Münzer and the Peasants' Wars, to the German Romantics and their contact with first the French Revolution and then the France of Napoleon, Kluge and Negt survey Germany's near-two-thousand year history not in order to extrapolate the German mentality or a putative national identity, but to observe generations of Germans at work, at battle and in their sleep, having nightmares in their fairy tales, passing on ballads and folk sayings, building cities and inventing the postal service. The patterns that emerge are perhaps predictable: the book's 1,250 pages document the endlessly self-blocking and deadlocking ways in which Germans over the centuries have built themselves a homeland only never to feel at home, have buried themselves in work only never to have a sense of achievement, have dreamt of hidden

treasures only to wake up to dreadful ogres, have imagined their future only to end up wrecking it for generations to come.

And yet the Nazi regime, World War II and the Holocaust are barely mentioned. Instead, according to Kluge, the dead of those two thousand years now look at the living and utter the phrase 'that's not at all what we had in mind'.⁷ This phrase echoes in *THE PATRIOT* and *THE POWER OF FEELINGS* through the sometimes scurrilous, sometimes distressing catalogue of futile efforts of Kluge's protagonists to forge a destiny out of accidents – 'a hundred thousand reasons which afterwards are called fate'.⁸ Kluge's preoccupation with history turns out to serve as a kind of 'dream screen' for an intense working over and obsessive return to the only question that seems to matter: 'How could it have come to this?' where 'this' is never named. In *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, Kluge and Negt opt for an answer of sorts in a Brothers Grimm fairy tale, *Das eigensinnige Kind* (*The Wilful Child*) about a girl who repeatedly disobeys her mother. She eventually dies, but even buried underground, her resisting hand digs its way up until the mother herself has to go out to the graveyard and chastise it with a rod. This terrible, but mysterious tale becomes a sort of leitmotif hinting at forms of resistance, but also self-destructive obduracy, that for Kluge becomes a kind of archetype for the sort of political action he both admires and fears, embodied as it is in female rebels against authority and the power of the state. The Wilful Child is Germany's own Antigone, who leads to the terrorism of the Red Army Faction, to Ulrike Meinhof and Gudrun Ensslin – in short to the Hot Autumn of 1977.⁹

Gabi Teichert, the history teacher in *THE PATRIOT* had already appeared in *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* (the documentary record of those six September-October weeks) suggesting subterranean links between the violent underground of Germany's protest generation and Kluge/Negt's efforts to 'read' the country's two thousand years of destructive/self-destructive 'patriotism' across Kluge's own coming to terms with political radicalism and the emerging feminist movement. Female *Eigensinn*, it seems, has to carry a lot of historical baggage, as well as a moral burden in Kluge: it stands for the ethical act of refusal par excellence (Antigone); for the way the popular imagination can work through historical trauma and memorise its history lessons; for legitimate liberation from (patriarchal) oppression; as well as for violence well beyond protest and entirely outside the law. Awe-d admiration for this peculiar obstinacy and persistence infuses several of Kluge's 1970s films, and their air of baffled urgency gives them a topicality worth revisiting today, when 'terrorism' and 'suicide' have taken on a quite different meaning and political charge.

The fairy tale of the self-willed girl also throws into sharper relief another peculiarity of Kluge's work, besides the gender of his protagonists, who are – with few exceptions – female. All are compulsively hyperactive, constantly at

work on something, full of schemes, life plans, grand designs. Their relentless motor-sensory apparatus is set to red alert, while their mental navigation is determined by self-directed admonitions like 'I'll just make the extra effort'. Is Kluge making fun of them? The viewer cannot be sure. To say that his protagonists are accident-prone would be an understatement: the dynamics of their lives have an inner momentum that turns their best intentions into their worst enemies, but it also makes them look stupid, sometimes irritatingly so. What critic Wolfram Schütte has called 'the conceptual slapstick of Kluge's characters'¹⁰ reflects an irrepressibly well-intentioned decisionism, responsible not only for the miscalculations that bring the characters down, but also for putting up the roadblocks to which the miscalculations are intended as the pre-emptive response.

Kluge, too, always seems in a hurry in his films, rarely letting a scene develop its own dramatic weight before butting in with a voice-over or cutting to a completely different location or moment in time. He shares with his heroines this restless, impatient spirit, which could make his satire more compassionate, but also contradicts his self-appointed role as chronicler of the nation's little people and custodian of their dreams. Peel away the layer of concern and empathy, and a salvage operation of a different kind is revealed, for which the lives caught on celluloid and in Kluge's prose narratives are mere energy coils, headed for entropy. In all the life stories and biographies that Kluge puts before us in such profligate profusion, much the same principle prevails: desires, hopes and wishes, seen from the vantage point of their eventual futility, take on a terrible mechanical quality. For not only are the characters' motives and intentions exposed as pitiable, their lives seem like impersonations of life, templates and ready-mades, formed and fashioned elsewhere and for another purpose. They may have acted like saints, ordinary mortals, or monsters, but especially in the short stories, they are miniaturised and serialised, they are more like wind-up toys, marching on and on, with Kluge watching them plummet or fizzle, or freeze-framing them when their time is up. It makes the characters both tragic and ridiculous, at once perpetrators and victims. This compulsion to repeat, the motor behind the characters' initiative and survival, could be called the dark side of *Eigensinn*, when obstinacy, perseverance and even resistance have become a 'programme', perfectly executed and replicated once installed. Repetition turns these 'drive-creatures' into phantoms of their own life plans, which is why it is ultimately irrelevant whether Kluge has faked his documents and merely invented their biographies: for these lives there can be no 'original'.

One is left with a paradox and a conundrum. On the one hand, Kluge's films are part of the New German cinema's mourning work, not unlike those of Syberberg, or early Herzog: speaking about the unspeakable by endlessly speaking about something else, unable to mourn 'the others' because not permitted to

mourn 'our own', thus always risking self-pity. On the other hand, Kluge's cinema is in a hurry, with time-lapse and fast-forward motion among his stylistic signatures. Is Kluge rushing to get to the future, in order to look back from there at the present and perhaps finally give the past a happy ending – and thereby overcome the infinite sadness of 'that is not what we had in mind at all?' If so, it suggests a possible answer to our initial enigma, namely how the cinema fits into his patchwork *Gesamtkunstwerk*: Kluge may have become a film-maker because he wanted to be a time traveller and he needed to be a time traveller in order to cope with the many deferred actions and hypotheticals (if only... what if...?) that make narrating German history such a tragic undertaking. It would explain why Kluge's commitment to the cinema does not require him to make films, and why he can be faithful to the redemptive power of cinema as a time machine even when abstaining from film-making. Such time travel is as much a matter of displacements in moral perspective and rearrangements in mental space as it is a science-fiction trope: in either case, however, it is a quintessentially 'cinematic' way of living time, memory and history.

In this light, Kluge's 'film theory as film politics' also takes on another meaning from that of successfully lobbying for production subsidy: it becomes the politics of memory and commemoration, knowing full well the cinema's ambiguous role as a medium of history – which on film can never quite come alive, just as it is never quite dead – and its inability to put the past to rest, since each viewing reopens the wound. As the constantly renewed experience of loss, 'truth 24 frames a second' is necessarily a melancholy truth. Kluge proposes a very particular kind of ethics of self-implication: since everything he satirises is an impersonation, it follows that this applies just as much to himself. But if the melancholy that emanates from his films derives in part from the fact that in mourning the 'wrong' Germans – a dead soldier frozen in Stalingrad in *THE PATRIOT* or the civilians burnt in the firestorms of Hamburg, Halberstadt, or Magdeburg in *THE POWER OF FEELINGS* – then this marathon perseverance of *Eigensinn* gains its energy from the hope of righting that wrong at another time, in another place. In 1995, five years after German unification, Kluge published the conversations he had had on his TV programme with Heiner Müller, the East German playwright, under the title: *Ich schulde der Welt einen Toten* ('I owe the world the [one] dead').¹¹ One of the more interesting and intriguing records of a nation's 'talking cure' conducted in the public media by leading artists, this television dialogue is a reminder that needs to be heeded not only by Germans, East or West. Elsewhere, too, in the aftermath of war or worse, such melancholy mimicry as found in Kluge's films, TV programmes and literary output may be the mourning work preliminary to recognising the debt the living have not only towards the future, but to the past as well.

Notes

1. See, for instance, the special issue on Kluge in *October* (no. 46 fall, 1988), with essays, among others, by Fredric Jameson, Andreas Huyssen and Stuart Liebman. On Kluge's reception in the US, see also Peter C. Lutz, *Alexander Kluge, The Last Modernist* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998).
2. For a more detailed account, see Eric Rentschler ed., *West German Filmmakers on Film: Visions and Voices* (New York/London: Holmes & Meier, 1988) and Thomas Elsaesser, *New German Cinema: A History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989).
3. Alexander Kluge ed., *Bestandsaufnahme: Die Utopie Film* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1983).
4. Alexander Kluge, 'Why Should Film and Television Cooperate?', *October* (no. 46 fall, 1988), and Christian Schulte and Winfried Siebers eds., *Kluges Fernsehen: Alexander Kluges Kulturmagazine* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002).
5. The third master thinker would be Ernst Bloch. Kluge's analysis of why fascism had been so successful in mobilising the libidinal energies of the working class derived from Frankfurt School thinking about the mass media, while his conception of a counter-cinema revives the more 'optimistic' outlook on how to reclaim popular culture for emancipation from Ernst Bloch's love of operetta, Karl May novels and sentimental popular chansons. See, for instance, Ernst Bloch, 'On Fairytale, Colportage and Legend', in Ernst Bloch, *Heritage of Our Times* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 153-168.
6. Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn* Volumes 1-3 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981). For an early commentary, see Eric Rentschler, 'Kluge, Film History, and *Eigensinn*: A Taking of Stock from the Distance', *New German Critique* (no. 31 winter, 1984).
7. 'For the last 2000 years, human beings have been working on a territory we now call Germany as a single product: German history [...]. If we could interview these dead generations who have worked on this product, whether the result of their work had been appropriated by reality differently from their intentions [...], and if all the dead had an overview over what the subsequent dead had done, then we could only assume the reply to be unanimous: it's impossible to identify with the result. Their answer would be: "that's not at all what we had in mind"'. *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, p. 499 (my translation).
8. Alexander Kluge, *Die Macht der Gefühle* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1984), p. 5.
9. *Geschichte und Eigensinn* opens with a description of the 'German Autumn', 1977, which is also the topic of Kluge's most famous omnibus film, *DEUTSCHLAND IM HERBST / GERMANY IN AUTUMN* (1977). The parallel of 'Das eigensinnige Kind' with Antigone is elaborated on pp. 767-769.
10. Wolfram Schütte, 'Alexander Kluges "Angriff der Gegenwart auf die übrige Zeit"', *Frankfurter Rundschau* (8 November 1985).
11. Alexander Kluge and Heiner Müller, *Ich schulde der Welt einen Toten* (Hamburg: Rotbuch, 1995).

Film, Politics and the Public Sphere

On Film and the Public Sphere

Alexander Kluge

Narrative Cinema¹

I wouldn't be making films if it weren't for the cinema of the 1920s, the silent era. Since I have been making films it has been in reference to this classical tradition. Telling stories, this is precisely my conception of narrative cinema; and what else is the history of a country but the vastest narrative surface of all? Not one story but many stories.

Montage-Film

This means montage. There can be no doubt that the narrative of an individual fate, unfolded in ninety minutes, can convey historical material only at the price of dramaturgical incest. The fictional threat displaces experience from the film. In the history of film, montage is the 'morphology of relations' (*'die Formenwelt des Zusammenhangs'*). Then there is also the artificial opposition of documentary and *mise-en-scène*. Mere documentation cuts off relations: nothing exists objectively without the emotions, actions and desires, that is, without the eyes and the senses of the people involved. I have never understood why the depiction of such acts (most of which have to be staged) is called fiction, fiction-film. But it is equally ideological to assume that individuals could determine history. Therefore, no narrative succeeds without a certain proportion of authentic material, i.e. documentation. Such use of documentation establishes a point of reference for the eyes and senses: real conditions clear the view for the action.

Auteur Film-Cooperative Film

I have always believed in the auteur film, in the continuation of early film history: Dovshenko, Griffith, Dreyer, Rossellini, Godard (if you like, Costard), Schroeter, and others. I find myself in good company among them. With delight

I discover that Woody Allen (MANHATTAN) and Frank Coppola – representatives of a completely different cinematic tradition – take recourse to the same vigorous principles; their editing style is associative, they appeal to film history, it is never a risk to make personal films, or to make compact films: ‘You got to rely on people.’

For the auteur there is no way back to the ready-made film (*Konfektions-film*). Nor can auteur cinema remain in its present state. It can not incessantly deliver single works, each of which individually reinvent film history. Cinema is a programme that is a relationship of production – if for no other reason than that this relationship exists in the experiences of the spectators which constantly recreate the cinema’s experiential horizon. The multitude of films in the minds of the spectators will continue to be infinitely richer than what can be seen in the cinema until a number of directors work at combining their professional skills and temperaments, their most personal feelings and impulses. This is actually a matter of respect for the spectator who always acquires experience with others, collectively. If you want to develop the auteur film further, because you believe in it, then the only way is through cooperation. Auteur cinema is not a minority phenomenon: all people relate to their experience like authors – rather than managers of department stores.

Leaving the Garden Paths

Making films is strictly anti-academic, an insolent occupation, historically grounded but inconsistent. In the present situation there is plenty of refined entertainment – refinement of ‘serious’ topics (*gepflegtes Problem²*) too – as if the cinema was a stroll on the garden paths of a park. The observance of the prohibition on leaving the garden paths has been known to have caused German revolutions to fail. Something as refined as that does not need duplication. Indeed, children would rather go back into the bushes just as they would prefer to play in the sand or in a junkyard. Happiness, says Freud, is the fulfilment of childhood wishes. I am convinced that film has something to do with happiness: film = movie = something constantly moving forward despite all those who would stop it.

The Critical Measure of Production: What is Left Out

These days German cinema is becoming famous abroad. The actual practice of German film-makers, however, is precarious. 'When skating on thin ice, the only way to keep from breaking through is to move as fast as possible.'

The Problem of Newcomers

In the last 17 years, the so-called New German Cinema has gone through four generations. First the Oberhauseners and pre-Oberhauseners (for example Wicki, Strobel, Rischert, Senft, Vesely, Kristl, Reitz and others), then the new ones after them (Schlöndorff, Syberberg, Fassbinder, Kückelmann, Herzog, Wenders and others), and then the third generation (Schroeter, Costard, Praunheim, Hörmann, Lemke, Kahn, Stöckl and others). Today, a fourth wave of young film-makers is emerging, quite numerous and evidently creative, which distinguishes itself clearly from the so-called established directors. In contrast to the original 'young German film-makers' who are now almost all in their forties, this fourth generation is the real young German cinema.

None of the institutions of public funding in the Federal Republic are as yet responding to the alternative conceptions of the cinema being developed by this new fourth generation. This younger generation is discriminated against as soon as it attempts to operate outside the narrow academic structures of the film schools. It will be impossible, however, to restrict them to these groves of academe. [...]

Institutional Independence and Politics of Production

If one compares the wealth of work and experience which make up our country with the extent to which these are represented in German films, then two observations can be made: 1) most of it does not appear in the films, and 2) the art of film since the 1920s is a promise which has never been fulfilled. The success of the German cinema abroad and with the united coteries of film directors mask the fact that, measured against the potential of the medium, the German cinema is *stagnating*. There is not enough historical depth, not enough documentation to create a sense of context. [...] In the domain of the conventional one-way film, the imaginative US competition is sure to defeat German products on the mar-

ket. This situation could be changed only if the principle of multiplicity were applied to the range of cinematic forms rather than just personal styles or subject matter. Such a strategy, which is being discussed among film-makers with great urgency, indicates a newly gained consciousness of production; we call it politics of production, institutional independence.

The Media are Standing on their Head

One speaks of 'film producers', of 'film auteurs'. Accordingly television, video corporations, the radio and the cinema consider themselves to be the media. In fact they are merely the *forms* and conditions under which the media exist. The true medium of experience, of desires, of phantasies, and actually of aesthetic appreciation as well, are the real human beings and never the specialists. People work at steady jobs, they toil away, which in turn means they work on their relationships, they work overtime in order to survive in both work and private relationships. This is the labour of inner balance, the work of a lifetime. Life is made up of these three powerful elements, the stuff of centuries with all its misery and errors. It is *thus* that the horizons of perception and the medium of social experience are actually produced. The so-called media feed on the returns of this labour. They only reflect something which depends on being filled out by the spectators from their own experience. There is not a single Mark or dollar that the media cash in at the box office, through rental or taxes, which is not earned by the spectator or non-spectator. Our responsibility is therefore to the non-spectator whom we deceive if *we* masquerade as the media. Both, that is, non-spectators and spectators together, constitute the media and produce its reception: i.e. it is *their* imagination that animates the screen.

Utopian Cinema

The art of the cinema is young, barely seventy years old. It does not have a feudal past. Compared to the refinement of forms which music, architecture, literature, oil painting and sculpture cultivated over the centuries, supported by the traditional unity of culture and property, the cinema displays an amazing vigor, robustness, at least in its early days. Not obliged to follow the intricate ways of 'civilisation and its discontents' (S. Freud), film takes recourse to the spontaneous workings of the imaginative faculty which has existed for tens of thousands of years. Since the Ice Age approximately (or earlier), streams of

images, of so-called associations, have moved through the human mind, prompted to some extent by an anti-realistic attitude, by the protest against an unbearable reality. They have an order which is organised by spontaneity. Laughter, memory, and intuition, hardly the product of mere education, are based on this raw material of associations. This is the more-than-ten-thousand-year-old-cinema to which the invention of the film strip, projector and screen only provided a technological response. This also explains the particular proximity of film to the spectator and its affinity to experience.

‘Under the Sign of the Hermaphrodite’

The standards of culture and aesthetic quality are ambiguous in relation to the cinema. To the future archaeologists of our film landscape, almost everything will appear as culture, even the so-called no-quality films. The federal subsidy system, however, insists upon top quality. The production of top quality films is hemmed in by bureaucracy, planning, private ownership, centralisation, business, censorship and a mechanical pragmatism which does not sound like censorship but actually represents one of the most effective instruments of present-day censorship.

This type of censorship benefits from the gallimaufry which plagues the standards of quality in film. James Joyce, Arnold Schönberg, and the late Beethoven quartets represent indisputable pinnacles of quality in literature and music. In the cinema, these same products would frustrate an equally valid desire in the spectators which consists in asserting their non-classical needs for expression and satisfying their libidinal economy.

[...] This is the true meaning of diversity; hardly an abstract ideal. For this reason the history of film contains a utopian strain – which is what accounts for the attraction of the cinema – but it is a utopia which, contrary to the Greek meaning of *ou-topos* = no place, is in existence *everywhere* and especially in the *unsophisticated* imagination. This unsophisticated imagination, however, is buried under a thick layer of cultural garbage. It has to be dug out. This project of excavation, not at all a utopian notion, can be realised only through our work.

The Spectator as Entrepreneur

The film and television corporations live off the money and the cooperation of the imaginative faculties (unpaid labour) which they extract from the spectator.

They designate anyone a mature citizen who is willing to pay. Kant says: Enlightenment is man's release (*Ausgang*) from his self-incurred tutelage (*selbstverschuldeten Unmündigkeit*). Leni Peickert says: 'People are mature when they have their day off [...].'³

In order to cheat spectators on an entrepreneurial scale, the entrepreneurs have to designate the spectators themselves as entrepreneurs. The spectator must sit in the movie house or in front of the TV set like a commodity owner: like a miser grasping every detail and collecting surplus on everything which has any value. Value per se. So uneasy this spectator-consumer, alienated from his own life so completely like the manager of a supermarket or department store who – even at the price of death (heart attack) – will not stop accumulating the last scraps of marketable goods in the storeroom so that they may find their buyers. How disturbed he is when people pass by his store; how nervous he gets about objects in the storeroom which do not sell immediately.

In a similarly entrepreneurial fashion the spectator – having reached the desired consumer maturity – scans films for their spectacle and exhibition values, for complete intelligibility, just as one is taught to gnaw a bone thoroughly, as the saying goes, so that the sun will shine. The sun, however, 'taking its thunderous course', according to its own habits and unconcerned with human communication, does not care the least whether or not we clean our plates.

Understanding a film completely is conceptual imperialism which colonises its objects. If I have understood everything then something has been emptied out.

We must make films that thoroughly oppose such imperialism of consciousness. I encounter something in film which still surprises me and which I can perceive without devouring it. I cannot understand a puddle on which the rain is falling – I can only see it; to say that I understand the puddle is meaningless. Relaxation means that I myself become alive for a moment, allowing my senses to run wild: for once not to be on guard with the police-like intention of letting nothing escape me.⁴

The Public Sphere⁵

Alexander Kluge: If we are discussing the term *oppositional public sphere* – and by this we mean a type of public sphere which is changing and expanding, increasing the possibilities for a public articulation of experience – then we must very resolutely take a stance regarding the right to intimacy, to private ownership of experience. For example, a group of people is faced with immi-

ment eviction from an occupied building – in the Schumannstrasse no. 69 in Frankfurt where four houses were actually demolished. We know already in November that it is going to happen, and they know it as well. They have dwelled in this house for three years and have always had the plan to return something to the community in exchange for occupying the house: a tenants' counselling service and all sorts of other services. That plan never worked out. Shortly before the eviction, their political energy finally takes shape: they would like to make up for whatever they did not do in the previous three years. We wanted to film the eviction and we could assume that it would take place at a time when the entire city was celebrating carnival. We told the house-occupiers that we wanted to start shooting before the eviction because only then could we really work together. They said, however: This is *our* fight and we will not allow our fight to be filmed by anyone who does not live in the house and fight with us. To which we responded: Our working schedule does not allow us to live here, but we can at least join you, we can be there with our camera when the house is cleared out; granted, in such a case we would be house-occupiers only in disguise because, having places of our own, we are not house-occupiers. To which they replied: All the less reason to allow you to film us since this is our struggle, it belongs to us. We continued to argue, although without success, and said: You can't claim private ownership of your struggle like an entrepreneur claims private ownership of his factory and would therefore order his security force to prevent us from shooting. Don't you realise that this is the same position with regard to the public sphere? Don't you see that you are copying something that the other side can do much better, namely producing a non-public sphere, producing a relationship of property and exclusion? It may be that you consider us prostitutes who exist everywhere and yet nowhere: to this we adamantly respond – exactly that is our job: it is not our business to live everywhere at once. If we were to make a film about farmers, the situation would be the same: we are not farmers and even if we lived like farmers for half a year we still would not be farmers. Just because we work in factories does not make us factory workers. We are always aware that we have another profession and can leave if we want to. A public sphere can be produced professionally only when you accept the degree of abstraction which is involved in carrying one piece of information to another place in society, when you establish lines of communication. That's the only way we can create an oppositional public sphere and thus expand the existing public sphere. This is an occupation which is just as important as direct action, the immediate on-the-spot struggle.

Klaus Eder: Would it not be appropriate to stop using the term oppositional public sphere – which dates from the time around May 1968 – since what you mean is a public sphere in the authentic sense of the term?

Kluge: We mean the opposite of a pseudo-public sphere, that is, a representative public sphere which is representative in so far as it involves exclusions. Television, for example, following its mandate of providing a universal representation of reality (a concept which its monopoly and its pluralistic authority are based upon) could never afford to show films that go so much against the grain that they would call attention to whatever scope of reality television does not include. This would destroy the facade of legitimacy on which the public sphere of television is based. If a pseudo-public sphere only represents parts of reality, selectively and according to certain value systems, then it has to administer even further cuts so it won't be found out.

This type of public sphere has recently met with competition from a public sphere appropriated by private enterprise. Within the latter, the Springer corporation is to some extent only a novice, retaining an element of personalism which sets its own limits: the reactionary attitude of the entrepreneur in fact reduces the sales figures. This will be technocratically corrected at some point, eliminating the personal aspect of Springer, and thereby realising the private appropriation of the public sphere. This is a great danger – if all forms of the classical public sphere have the tendency, as representative public sphere, to automatically reduce themselves. In this respect, the conception of a public sphere which is neither privately owned nor simply the classical type is of fundamental importance: the very conditions of politics depend upon it.

The public sphere is in this scene what one might call the factory of politics – its site of production. When this site of production – the space in which politics is first made possible at all and communicable – is caught in a scissors-grip between private appropriation (which is no longer public in the authentic sense) and the self-eliminating classical public-sphere (its mechanisms of subtraction and exclusion); when this public sphere threatens to disappear, its loss would be as grave today as the loss of the common land was for the farmer in the Middle Ages. In that period the economy was based on the three acre system: one acre belonged to everyone, one belonged to the lord and one belonged to the farmer. This system can only function as long as there is this common land, the public ground, which is the first thing that the lord appropriates. If he owns both the common land and his own acre, then he has superiority. No longer dependant on fighting with the sword, the lord can now also control the third acre and will soon have serfs. The loss of land also means a loss of community because, if there is no land on which the farmers may assemble, it is no longer possible to develop a community. The same thing is happening again, on a historically higher plane, in people's heads when they are deprived of the public sphere. This creates the phenomenon of the rubber wall: I sit in my room and have enough reasons for protest and for wanting to break out but there is no one to whom I can communicate these reasons, there are no proper addressees.

So instead I turn to substitute addressees by writing letters-to-the-editor, for example, to which nobody pays any attention. Or I support a politician who helps me out of my impasse by shifting concrete problems into the arena of world politics which I in turn mistake for my own interests believed to be realised via this displacement.

For these reasons, this use value, this product which is the 'public sphere' is the most fundamental product that exists. In terms of community, of what I have in common with other people, it is the basis for processes of social change. This means, I can forget about the concept of politics if I neglect the production of a public sphere. This is a claim to legitimacy which we must carefully insist upon and oppose against the many private needs – despite the fact that disappointment with the bourgeois public sphere, its failures, betrayals and distortions has led many leftist groups to reject a public sphere altogether.

Eder: The promotion and production of documentary films would thus in the end be a political question – all the more since in general only that which stabilises domination is possible.

Kluge: Yes, but it is not the case that the domination that confronts us is a conscious one. All methods of domination and those of profit (which do not want to dominate but rather to make profit and thereby dominate) contain a calculation of marginal utility. This means that the fence erected by corporations, by censorship, by authority does not reach all the way to the base but stops short – because the base is so complex – so that one can crawl under the fence at any time. Even television producers and board members can be examined in light of this calculation of marginal utility. In the hierarchy, a producer is subordinate to the manager who is in turn subordinate to the television board which is again responsible to still others: the producer must obey orders or he will be fired. This, however, is only true for half of his soul, so to speak; another part of him may be very curious. While in the course of time he may become resigned, nevertheless, in terms of his labour power he is more than just the functionary who is employed there. This means that in every television producer there exists a conflict and no system of domination in the world can reduce the producer completely to the functionary. In this conflict we must take the side of the television producer. We can count on the fact that no oppression is total. The issue then becomes the learning of proper ways of dealing with people (*die Lehre der richtigen Umgangsformen*).

We must produce the self-confidence which is necessary to discover the objective possibilities of production underneath these fences and we must take the offensive in fighting for this position. It is just as important to produce a public sphere as it is to produce politics, affection, resistance, protest, etc. This means

that the place and the pacing of the struggle are just as important as the struggle itself.

On the other hand, in order to envisage a public sphere – of which we know very well that there is all too little – we need an almost childlike feeling of omnipotence. When, for example, the summer vacation begins I vacillate as to whether one can express oneself publicly at all: I don't believe in a single product that I could make and so I withdraw and write my secret texts, that is literature, of which I know that it will remain essentially marginal to the public sphere. Since I will not incite any large masses of people through the medium of a book, I can write whatever I like knowing that it will never engender attack. I even had the idea – in a mood of resignation – of hiding a print of my next film in the Munich Film Museum and waiting to see if any film philologist would discover it there ten years later. This merely out of frustration about the incredible struggles and compromises involved when one wants to see a film through to the public sphere.

Only among ourselves as film-makers could we attempt to create a self-confidence that considers everything as possible. In this we will only succeed, however, if we recognise the importance of producing a public sphere. We must consider the degree to which it is essential that people live with one another in a society and that community is not something alongside of work for special occasions and future hopes, but rather that community is itself an element of social change.

The Significance of Phantasy

Q: What is the significance of phantasy (for the production of the public sphere)?

Kluge: Phantasy is a capacity that is universally employed. Everyone uses phantasy. But the proportions, i.e. in what measure we make use of it, are beyond social control. Phantasy is kept outside the public sphere, regarded as a gypsy (the unusual effect, for example, of imagining a gang of children playing away in the control booth of a nuclear power plant). As a result of this suppression, phantasy escapes domestication to some degree. It pays for this status by not using certain kinds of discipline. Other elements of phantasy, however, are made to conform. And then again, a certain amount of phantasy is absorbed by the economy of inner balance which human beings need if they want to survive in both work and personal relationships. Even as I take part in alienation, I

counteract it by exporting my problems, by compensatory moves, by bribing myself. This is a form of phantasy under domination.

There is no social agreement regulating the common use of phantasy. When you continue to speak even after the other person has understood, then you exceed a norm; if you threaten another person with a gun and he or she surrenders but you shoot anyway then you are a criminal; if you eat until you're full that's normal, but if you continue to eat, then that's for psychological reasons. This is to say that in all these cases there is a sense of proportion. But in the workings of phantasy, the sense of proportion is missing. On the one hand, phantasy may be used in excess while on the other hand – when you suddenly cannot imagine anything – it may be severely repressed. Phantasy also provides a kind of temporary glue which keeps people from falling apart through the production of illusions which enable them somehow to live with themselves.

In addition to language, which is public, the public sphere should grant phantasy the status of a communal medium, and this includes the stream of associations and the faculty of memory (the two main avenues of phantasy).

A continuous shifting of perspectives is typical of phantasy. In phantasy I can transport myself to Africa without effort or I can imagine myself involved in a love scene in the middle of a desert – all this happens as in a dream. The obstacles of reality cease to exist. If phantasy has good reasons to disregard these real obstacles – as a compensation for the reality principle – then the question is how can you, for the sake of whatever cause, encourage phantasy to develop such perspectives on it (i.e. perspectives different from those inherent in things as they are). In documentary film this could only be realised via a mixing of forms – the only method which permits radical changes in perspective.

Günther Hörmann: Documentary film faces three problems. First, to a large extent it gives an account of specific instances and can generalise only with difficulty. Second, documentary film presents people in a public sphere which is itself insensitive to that process and as a result tends to expose them. Third, by depicting reality as it really is, documentary film runs up against defence mechanisms especially among people who are afraid of reality.

Documentary film should develop forms which would make it possible to overcome these defence mechanisms. In political situations, there is the language of silence. In the psychological realm there is the fairy tale onto which real problems are transposed. In documentary film such forms do not yet exist.

Eder: The present is not one-dimensional but rather a product of history; it is coated with layers of the past. Of what significance is this for the cinema?

Hörmann: This is a problem of such complexity that one can hardly deal with it as an individual any more. When I make a documentary on a strike, I don't have the time to simultaneously pursue traces of the past into which one would have to delve as well.

Kluge: When you look at an image of a factory, it is very difficult to distinguish between the ahistorical present and history. But, for example, the history of the plough, which in 8 A.D. already looked like it does today, or the history of tools cross-cut with footage of a strike – that I might be able to do something with.

Eder: So you would intercut the synchronic view (*Querschnitt*) with a diachronic perspective (*Längschnitt*), ideally with an infinite number of diachronic perspectives?

Kluge: And since every cut provokes phantasy, a storm of phantasy, you can even make a break in the film. It is exactly at such a point that information is conveyed. This is what Benjamin meant by the notion of shock. It would be wrong to say that a film should aim to shock the viewers – this would restrict their independence and powers of perception. The point here is the surprise which occurs when you suddenly – as if by subdominant thought processes – understand something in-depth and then, out of this deepened perspective, redirect your phantasy to the real course of events. This is perspectivism. One basically takes the standards according to which one composes a film image (framing, perspective, depth of field, contrast) and applies them to the dramaturgy of context.

Let us take, for example, the story of a young man and a young woman, a story which certainly does not conclude with the happy ending of the film. What the two of them are doing is work; it works, they work, their feelings work, their subconscious works, their prehistory works; and when the two of them speak to each other, there are really six people there, since the two pairs of parents sit invisibly among them. This is how I maintain the historical dimension.

In literature, the interaction of all novels amongst each other constitutes the context. And in the gaps between *Ulysses*, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the complete works of Marx, Diderot's *Encyclopédie* (and the unploughed fields between them are quite elementary), in these gaps lies phantasy.

Five Aspects of Realism

The first level: the relationship between author and representation, the ideal of authenticity. A single shot of a bush near Königsberg, for instance, is authentic if I set this image clearly off from other images (were I to include a blade of grass and a house and a smokestack, then the image would not be so distinct). So I first decide on the focus, the delineation, and then on the question of context – is this bush sufficient? If, for example, I want to say that this bush is threatened by a nuclear power plant and I show nothing but the bush, then this would remain an empty assertion; I would fail to establish a context. Realism involves conceptualisation (*Arbeit des Begriffs*), and requires an exploration of both the experiential horizon and the individual motif (*Motiv*). A distinction and a horizon: these two constitute a concept (*Begriff*).

If I proceed to combine a number of individual elements into something that can be projected onto a screen, a mere pattern will acquire significance. That is the case even for a single shot – if I show nothing but a tree for ninety minutes, then this takes on a privileged meaning relative to everything I am not showing. When Clausewitz says that all the potential battles – those that do not take place – are just as important as those that do, he has understood a certain dialectic: he acts like a realist.

Next comes the relationship of the film-maker to the product and to each individual shot, the interaction with the spectator which takes place even if the film-maker is absent. That, too, is the film-maker's responsibility: to assess whether this relationship is realistic, to take sides [*eine parteiliche Haltung einnehmen*]. There is, however, a contradiction in this relationship in that the film-maker works for six months or a year on a single film, the spectator, however, only ninety minutes: in terms of the quantity of time spent, even the most modest author starts out with an advantage over the viewer. The film-maker has to bridge this gap, as if by translation, knowing that the viewer will decipher a code of meaning out of the first sequences which will determine the reading of the entire film. This code affects both the mode of comprehending the film (the track) and the kind of information which will be absorbed (the vehicle on the track). Both processes in turn (that of information being absorbed on the level of content and that of the code structuring the reading of a film primarily by means of form or through the difference between form and content) involve a two-fold reading: a reading determined by the pre-existing (previously acquired) cultural understanding of the spectator (which is not at all objective but is actually itself produced by a resistance to objectivity) as well as a desire for objectivity. It is with these real, ambiguous, subjective-objective interests of the spectator that the film-maker interacts.

The next step is to consider the question of realism in the sense that the spectator never deals with single films but with clusters, with relationships between films – the films the spectator knows, his or her concept of cinema, genre expectations. This is why only films in series have a proper influence and function in the public sphere.

The real product is thus neither the single shot nor the combination of shots in one film, neither the relationship of the film-maker to the spectators nor even the reception by the spectator – but rather the production of a public sphere. The public sphere provides a structure upon which depends all future communication of experience in a society. In that sense, all the products of new German Cinema are flawed: they leave out broad aspects of the experience of reality. On this point, there is absolutely no difference between Wildenhahn's position⁶ and my own; we obviously share the notion that 'the critical measure of production is what is left out'. Rather than defending hermetic viewpoints which we could easily use against each other, it is more important to create such a public sphere through joint efforts, through cooperation, by changing the products.

Montage, Authenticity, Realism

Eder: To what extent are your films conceived before you begin shooting, or, to what extent are they created on the editing table?

Kluge: Montage is a theory of relationships. When making films, I am always confronted with the problem that whatever I can see does not actually contain these relationships. On the subject of realism, Brecht says:⁷ Of what use is an exterior view of the AEG if I cannot see what is going on inside the building in terms of relationships, wage labour, capital, international investments – a photograph of the AEG says nothing about the AEG itself. Thus, as Brecht says, most of the real conditions have slipped into the functional. This is the heart of the problem of realism. If I conceive of realism as the knowledge of relationships, then I must provide a trope for what cannot be shown in the film, for what the camera cannot record. This trope consists in the contrast between two shots which is only another way of saying montage. At issue here are the concrete relations between two images. Because of the relationship which develops between two shots and, to the degree that movement (the so-called cinematic) is generated between such shots, information is hidden in the cut which would not be contained in the shot itself. This means that montage has as its object something qualitatively quite different from raw material.

The employment of montage exclusively, however, would not be sufficient; it would be absurd for it would eliminate the basis which makes montage at all possible: the immediate, identificational representation in which the object of which I speak is also present in the image. But how many objects are there in the world which are completely self-contained (that is, for our Western type of imagination, in Poona⁸ that might well be otherwise)? Take a tree for example. I can shoot trees; it might be boring to watch trees in the wind for ninety minutes, or a tree over the course of the seasons, and yet it would still be a self-contained piece of information. But then again, I could also say: This bush near Königsberg is unaware of the fact that Königsberg is no longer part of Germany and is now called Kaliningrad. This is an authentic statement which is self-contained. It needs no further explanation since from the perspective of the bush it is of no consequence in which country it is located. However, if the tree were growing next to a nuclear power plant or in a courtyard, then it would no longer be a self-contained object which I could present in a single take. I would have to communicate this context by means of a cut, since no image could convey this information.

In the case of the bush near Kaliningrad (*DIE PATRIOTIN*), I felt it was necessary for the film as a whole to shoot this scene. This is to say that the bush existed before the entire film; the bush and its relationship to Kaliningrad. It subsequently disappeared among the outtakes and was only incorporated in the final version of the film. There is thus a decision being made during shooting which calculates the proportions which relate this information to all other information. When you start shooting a film, you simply lay in supplies.

A puddle on which the rain is falling is likewise a self-contained object: it can not be so old as to have any connection with the bombings of 1945. Basically it has a history of three days and, as a result, represents a non-human patriotic attitude. One could think of further examples representing nothing but a single object or a person in repose. This is the starting point. I cannot convey the perspective of two thousand years without such a starting point, a zero degree of proportion against which to measure.

A montage is successful if the spectator can distinguish (in pure Aristotelean fashion) between two radical poles, two designations of time and place, because only then can one decode everything else, independent of whether such decoding is actually carried out. If a sailor such as Odysseus, for example, is sailing on the Mediterranean, he can determine his locations by taking the measurements of two stars; calculating the distance between the stars and between stars and horizon with the help of a sextant, he can figure out his position. Montage involves nothing more than such measurements; it is the art of creating proportions. What is decisive in this case is that Odysseus does not measure the location itself, but rather the relationship; it is this relationship which is contained in

the cut, at exactly that point where the film does not show anything. Whatever is shown, on the other hand, is both the insignificant part of the message and yet, to a certain extent, the condition of its communicability.

Eder: Do you reject the practice of associational montage?

Kluge: Montage involves associations and encourages them; but these associations are basically contained in the cut. If I were to structure my montage in an associative fashion, then I would neglect the proportions and that would be a very arbitrary act. This is basically no different from the situation where poets write poems and schoolchildren are forced to memorise them – why on earth should people with a phantasy of their own be forced to learn something by heart which was conceived in an associative fashion by somebody else? It is necessary to impose a structure on these associations which functions in extremes. Between two extreme poles I can proceed to work with all the intermediate values in an associative manner.

Q: To come back to that bush near Kaliningrad which you mentioned earlier, would it be legitimate and would it correspond to your notion of authenticity if you were not to shoot it near Kaliningrad but rather somewhere else and then cut it into the film?

Kluge: I would have to consider if the substitution of an authentic bush by just any bush would have a different use value for the spectator, whether it would change something. If I assume that the bush near Kaliningrad conveys a relationship rather than just a bush, an object, then this relationship can be created in the mind of the spectator independently of where I have shot the bush. However, I would not look for doubles for Strauss or Schmidt, for example. In other words, if I want to work from an object or a person as such, then I would have to accord to reality.

Notes

1. This and the following excerpts are taken from *Die Patriotin* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1979).
2. The German term 'Problemfilm' does not have an equivalent in English but would certainly extend to such films as *Kramer vs. Kramer*, *Ordinary People*, or *Making Love* (translators' footnote).
3. 'Mündig ist der Mensch, wenn er Ausgang hat [...]'. From Alexander Kluge, *Die Artisten in der Zirkuskuppel: ratlos; Die Ungläubige; projekt Z; Sprüche der Leni Peickert*

(Munich: R. Piper, 1968), p. 131. Leni Peickert (Hannelore Hoger) is an expert in circus reform and the protagonist of Kluge's film *ARTISTEN IN DER ZIRKUSKUPPEL: RATLOS / ARTISTS UNDER THE BIG TOP: AT A LOSS* (1968) and the short *DIE UNBEZÄHMBARE LENI PEICKERT / THE INDOMITABLE LENI PEICKERT* (1970) (translators' footnote).

4. Fafner in (Wagner's) *Rheingold* was once a powerful giant. With his brother, he built Walhalla, a feat the gods themselves had been unable to accomplish. Then he killed his brother and is now guarding the treasure. He sits there like a dragon.
5. This and the following pieces were originally published in Klaus Eder/Alexander Kluge, *Ulmer Dramaturgien: Reibungsverluste* (Munich: Hasner, 1980).
6. German documentary filmmaker who is a strong spokesman for a classical realist concept of documentary; cf. *Ulmer Dramaturgien*, pp. 135 ff.
7. The actual passage reads as follows: 'The situation is complicated by the fact that less than ever does a simple "reproduction of reality" tell us anything about reality. A photograph of the Krupps factory or of the AEG yields practically nothing about these institutions. The genuine reality has slipped into the functional. The reification of human relations; the factory say, no longer gives out these relations. Hence it is in fact "something to construct", something "artificial", "posited". Hence in fact art is necessary'. – Bertolt Brecht, *Der Dreigroschenprozess* (The Three Penny Trial) *Gesammelte Werke* vol. XVIII (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp), p. 161. Translation cited from Ben Brewster, 'From Shklovsky to Brecht: A Reply', *Screen* (vol. 15 no. 2 summer, 1974), p. 93 (translators' footnote).
8. A slur against the Ashram-Baghwani sect popular in the Federal Republic which used to have its centre of pilgrimage in Poona, India (Bombay Province). The pseudo-documentary *Ashram in Poona* (cf. *Pflasterstrand* [no. 77 April, 1980]) is also being shown in this country.

Translated by Thomas Y. Levin and Miriam B. Hansen

Cooperative Auteur Cinema and Oppositional Public Sphere: Alexander Kluge's Contribution to GERMANY IN AUTUMN

Miriam Hansen

In 1962, the signatories of the Oberhausen manifesto proclaimed the death of the old German cinema. They welcomed the collapse of the German film industry (the ill-fated UFA had folded the previous year), because it removed the economic ground for a conventional mode of film-making, thereby giving the new film a chance to come to life.¹ Less than interesting in its actual content and rhetoric, the manifesto presented the first public and collective statement by young German film-makers in the Federal Republic. As such it has become something of a mythological point of origin for critics and historians, as if the current international celebrity of New German Cinema had evolved more or less organically from an otherwise forgotten pioneer act in the past. To return to Oberhausen in an essay on GERMANY IN AUTUMN² (1978) risks participating in a similar vein of mythologising; if a continuity nevertheless is claimed, it has to be traced through the contradictions and aporias which evolutionist myths tend to elide. What might appear as a detour from the development of one kind of cinema, may in fact open up alternative routes towards a cinema different in kind.

In a study published in 1973, Michael Dost, Florian Hopf and Alexander Kluge, co-signatory and spokesman of the Oberhausen group, analyse the situation of West German cinema against the background of other European film industries and the supremacy of Hollywood. A decade after the Oberhausen manifesto, the old cinema was hardly dead; its descendants were still thriving in the ruins, competing for the ground on which the Oberhausen film-makers had hoped to rebuild an altogether new German cinema. Dost, Hopf and Kluge state the existence of two warring factions in German film production. On the one hand, there were the aesthetically unspeakable enterprises of commercial cinema – polemically dubbed *Pornokultur* – which barely disguised their audience appeals under such pseudo-genres as Lederhosen comedies, doctors' romances, or housewives' 'reports'. On the other hand, the authors discerned a *Kunstfilmkultur* struggling for economic existence as well as for an audience; works by young German film-makers, barred from access to domestic theatres, premiered instead at international film festivals in Paris, London, or Stockholm.³ The split between commercial and *auteur* cinema (*Autorenkino*⁴) was

seen as detrimental to German film culture as a whole. By imposing conventional divisions on film production ('art' vs. 'entertainment'), this split not only diminished the creative potential of either branch, but effectively departmentalised the interests of the spectator along the same lines. Thus it widened the gap between production and reception, between the interests of film-makers and the experience of the spectators; only a reorganisation of the former in the interest of the latter – rather than in the interests of box-office returns – would, in Dost, Hopf and Kluge's view, provide the aesthetic and social foundations for a viable new cinema.⁵

Dost, Hopf and Kluge's study primarily aimed at the legal and economic conditions of West German cinema, determined as these were by an effective (though not explicit) alliance of the moribund domestic industry, Hollywood interests and the federal government's subsidy policy.⁶ The particular focus of the authors' attack was the 1967 Film Subsidies Bill which perpetuated the split between commercial and *auteur* cinema, giving preferential treatment to the former while evoking the threat of political censorship for the latter. Subsequent revisions of the bill in fact succeeded in redressing the balance somewhat in favour of independent film-making, especially the 1979 amendment which provides subsidisation for first and low-budget films and also grants support to small distributors and exhibitors, including community-run theatres (*Kommunale Kinos*). As the tendency of the last amendment indicates, however, the basic dilemma of a state-subsidised cinema seems to persist: even if funding prior to box-office success may be available, even if commercial control of distribution can be circumvented by means of alternative channels, film still depends upon and aims at an audience – which cannot be legislated. Between the relative independence from prevailing commercial conditions and the more subtle dependence on political institutions (including the programme committees of TV stations), an 'autonomous' film practice is bound to return to the questions thrown out along with consumer-oriented cinema.

The problematic imbrication of audience appeal with marketability was to take on a different dimension in the years to come. Dost, Hopf and Kluge's study prefigures this development in its ambiguous reference to an 'international standard' (*Weltmaßstab*) such as the German cinema had attained in the 1920s and its simultaneous insistence on a spectator-oriented cinema. From an economic point of view, the notion of an international standard seemed highly plausible: if German films were to compete with Hollywood imports – or, for that matter, with international co-productions sheltered by Common Market regulations – they had to become marketable both at home and abroad. Add to this the historical perspective that the provincialism of post-war German film production was seen as an extension (and a consequence) of the policy of autarchy governing film production in the Third Reich, and the recuperation of an

internationally recognised technical and aesthetic standard presented itself as an unquestionable necessity.⁷ The drawbacks of such an orientation, however, also seemed quite obvious: it did little to improve the precarious relations with domestic audiences. 'Should German cinema refine itself into an abstract, finally self-annihilating, international standard, or could it succeed in developing its own particular, language-bound basis of production and reception in our country?'⁸ The question is of course a rhetorical one. With all the obligatory references to an international standard in economic terms, Dost, Hopf, and especially Kluge, argue for a reconstruction of German cinema, in aesthetic and political terms, which takes as its point of departure the actual conditions of reception in the Federal Republic and develops a language of its own, sharing the cultural and linguistic specificities of a given and potential audience.

A keyword in this project is the term *Öffentlichkeit*, the notion of a public sphere which organises the diversity of human needs and qualities in a social form but not necessarily in the interest of those whom it purports to represent. In a major study published in 1972,⁹ Kluge and sociologist-philosopher Oskar Negt show how the decaying structures of a bourgeois public sphere are superseded by a new, industrialised public sphere, as represented by the vertically integrated consciousness industries. Unlike the classical media of the 'Culture Industry', which Horkheimer and Adorno could still describe as separate branches, these new media do not merely produce an ideological surplus but directly exploit, as their raw material, the living experience by which human beings reproduce themselves beyond their bare economic existence. The increasing socialisation of human qualities and needs, however, generates a potential opposition which, in Negt/Kluge's theory, could provide the basis for an autonomously organised, 'proletarian' public sphere – a utopian concept, to be sure, but one that already manifests itself in rudimentary forms, in the interstices of contradictory and non-linear social and historical processes. In this context, the institution of the cinema is as much part of the existing public sphere – even though its status is increasingly threatened by (and dependent on) the new media – as it has become a political terrain for developing an oppositional public sphere: *Gegenöffentlichkeit*.

Kluge's concept of *Öffentlichkeit* as the social and political context of film production restructures the concept of production itself.

The concept of production not only includes the manufacturing of the film but also its exhibition and appropriation by the imagination of the spectator. One might even reverse this argument: it is the spectator who actually produces the film, as the film on screen sets in motion the film in the mind of the spectator.¹⁰

In that sense every film production is a collaborative project and therefore requires an assessment of the scope of collective experience, of the specific con-

stellation of cinema audience and public sphere. The degree to which a filmmaker seeks and stimulates the cooperation of the film in the mind of the spectator, according to Kluge, determines the measure of *Öffentlichkeit* generated in the process and thus the potential role of the cinema in the transformation of the public sphere. By this standard, the problematic split within post-Oberhausen film production can be grasped in more precise terms: neither the so-called consumer-orientation of commercial film nor the emphatically independent stance of 'art' or *auteur* film acknowledge the participation of the spectator as the basis of their productions; they both fall short of creating a public sphere for and through the cinema.

Meanwhile, two decades after Oberhausen, the diverging implications of *Weltmaßstab* and *Öffentlichkeit* have created a new field of force in German film production. Apart from the still lingering parasites of commercial film, New German Cinema seems to be regrouping along two major tendencies. To make a somewhat crude distinction: there are now film-makers who orient their work towards export, and there are others who primarily address domestic audiences. The first group of film-makers can roughly be identified as those directors who represent New German Cinema to, for instance, most American audiences – Fassbinder, Herzog, Wenders and, to some degree, Schlöndorff. The other tendency can hardly be delineated by mentioning a few names. It includes a number of film-makers whose works, at best, reach this country at festivals and through screenings sponsored by the Goethe-Institut. It spans several generations of film-makers, beginning with Oberhausen veterans such as Edgar Reitz and Alexander Kluge, founders of the Ulm Institut für Filmgestaltung; it encompasses a variety of schools, individuals and genres ranging from documentary to avant-garde; it includes regional and political groupings as diverse as the Berlin school of *Arbeiterfilme* or the growing number of women and feminist film-makers.¹¹

The differences between these two major tendencies are by no means clear-cut or stable. While the better known directors engage in financing schemes that involve international production companies (and, as in Fassbinder's case, tax shelter money), most German film-makers rely heavily on having their productions co-sponsored by German television stations; the former nonetheless – and often more easily than the latter – benefit from government subsidising. The difference in financial scope both reflects and determines a difference in modes of production: on the one hand, a continuation of a post-Oberhausen cottage-industry style of production; on the other, a technically more efficient, quasi-industrial production style emulating that of Hollywood.¹² If international co-productions guarantee access to distribution in other countries, the technical standard of the films themselves usually ensures popularity with foreign audiences. Yet even those films which do not find a commercial distributor in this

country, for instance, can be said to enter the export circuit on a secondary level: subtitled with a grant from Internationales, exhibited by branches of the Goethe-Institut, they function as cultural advertisements for German products at large.

Nor does it seem appropriate to draw the line between an author-oriented and an issue-oriented New German Cinema. While the post-Oberhausen film-makers naturally turned to the French New Wave for a model, German *Autorenkino* was not only less homogeneous than its French counterpart but also developed different notions of authorship.¹³ The emphasis was necessarily more on a 'politique des auteurs', the political struggle for independent film-making in a country which did not have a film culture comparable to that of France. Among the German film-makers who did achieve a distinctly personal style – in the auteurist sense – we can be sure to find the director-stars of international reputation; yet there are others, with an equally unmistakable handwriting and strength of vision, like Kluge or Achterbusch, who are barely recognised as *auteurs* abroad. Not that such recognition is by all means desirable, or that it could be gained without cost. The manifestation of an individual style, the artist's signature, in the work of a Fassbinder, for instance, has encouraged a primarily aesthetic reception abroad – at its best in terms of avant-garde film theory, at its worst in the American blend of auteur criticism or celebration. Such approaches tend to occlude the more specifically political dimensions of Fassbinder's films which – his fascination with American genre film notwithstanding – address problematic continuities of German history on a more complex level than merely that of subject matter.¹⁴

German-ness of subject matter, whether historical or contemporary, is obviously not the mark of distinction either. On the contrary, topics drawn from German history have proved quite marketable in this country, linking the success of *THE MARRIAGE OF MARIA BRAUN* or *THE TIN DRUM* with the depoliticised appeal of such Hollywood productions as *JULIA*. German milieu and atmosphere, packaged in beautiful images, can easily be absorbed into the export circuit and thereby drained of social or political impact. This is less likely to happen in the case of documentary films, which are also the least likely to be shown in this country. It is no coincidence that German film-makers and critics are only now, at this stage in the development of German cinema, engaging in debates on documentary aesthetics.¹⁵ The majority of productions, however, still fall under the heading of fiction film, even though – and this is characteristic of the 'other' New German Cinema – they tend to contain a strong documentary element, whether on the level of story construction and setting, or by inclusion of documentary footage. In addition to the documentary strain, an emphasis on linguistic, sometimes regional particularities, contextualises the potentially universal (i.e. exportable) appeal of the image track, thus drawing a film into a closer interaction with domestic audiences and vice versa.

Experiments in genre crossings and modes of address represent a characteristic aspect of domestic film production in a more programmatic sense, encompassing individual film-makers or particular films. The search for a new language in German cinema seems to be moving, not so much towards an evolution of individual styles, but rather towards forms of mediation between personal experience and the structures of the public sphere. In a number of recent films directed by women, for example, the subjective focus on a woman character is cast in a specific social and historical setting: Jutta Brückner's *HUNGERJAHRE* (1980) intercuts the traumatic experience of puberty with the political taboos of the post-war period and documentary footage of the June 1953 uprising in the GDR; Helke Sander's *REDUPERS* delineates a woman photographer's everyday life along the peculiar circumference of the public sphere of West Berlin, punctuating the narrative with a collage of radio voices. An important part of these films' mediating activity, however, is not visible in the films themselves: their position within the institutional framework of West German cinema, their relationship to other films of similar orientation, their functioning for and partly through an already existing oppositional public sphere – that of the women's movement – and their potential impact on a larger public sphere, i.e. television audiences (both films cited as examples were co-produced by ZDF). Relevant in this connection is the building of an organisational substructure, beginning with the first women's film seminar in Berlin in 1973 and the founding of a feminist film journal, *Frauen und Film*, in 1974; more recently, these efforts have led to the formation of the *Verband Deutscher Filmarbeiterinnen* (1979) and to instituting a distribution system for women's films (temporarily through Chaos-Filmverleih and – after this folded in 1981 – through Basis Film Verleih Berlin). Relevant in this connection also seems the token acclaim granted by male critics to some women film-makers but not to others, as well as the precarious relationship between women's cinema and the male-dominated Oberhausen tradition in New German Cinema.

If it is possible to generalise at all about such recent developments in German film-making, there seems to be emerging a broadened sense of film politics, characterised by a concern for cinema's position within the public sphere and by an increasing awareness of the need for cooperation. The positions representing this type of film politics are by no means unanimous, as the tensions between feminist film-makers and critics and the more established group of male directors may illustrate. Neither is there a unified notion of what actually constitutes the public sphere and according to whose interests in particular it should be reorganised; nor can one expect a consensus on questions of strategy. As an alternative to the traditional *Autorenfilm*, the journal *Filmfaust*, for example, has been advocating a rather elusive concept of *Zuschauerfilm* (spectator's film). In response partly to the attacks waged in *Filmfaust*, Kluge and other di-

rectors have engaged in a critical and practical revision of the *Autorenfilm*. This revision focuses on *Produktionspolitik*, a politics of collaboration which involves individual films as well as more ambitious projects, such as the development of new genres through a coordination of productions etc. In conjunction with this politics of production, the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Neuer Deutscher Spielfilmproduzenten in Munich is compiling a comprehensive documentation (*Bestandsaufnahme*) – an effort to take stock of the experience accumulated in the two decades since Oberhausen.¹⁶

In this process of reorientation, the production of *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* served the function of a catalyser. If for the film-makers participating it initiated a rallying of forces, to others – including critics – the film itself has become something of a test case for the scope and potential of its programme. Beyond the general invocation of the spirit of Oberhausen – its emphasis on solidarity and the public sphere – a more empirical link was given in the participation of Kluge and Reitz. As the above outline of constellations in West German cinema already owes much of its analysis to the writings of Kluge, the following presentation of *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* will focus on Kluge's contribution, not only in detail but also to the degree to which his theories can help understand the overall conception of the film.

The collective effort of *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* was prompted by a series of shocks that ruptured the surface continuity of the West German public sphere in the fall of 1977: the kidnapping of Hanns-Martin Schleyer, leading German industrialist and head of the Daimler-Benz corporation, by members of the RAF in early September; the highjacking of a Lufthansa plane and its subsequent recapturing by a special unit in Mogadishu on 18 October, the simultaneous news of the alleged suicides of Baader, Ensslin and Raspe in the top security prison of Stuttgart-Stammheim, these being the terrorists whose release had been demanded in connection with the above actions; the following day, the discovery of Schleyer's body in a car across the border near Mulhouse. The aftermath: state ceremonies for Schleyer and a public debate as to whether the terrorists should be buried in a Stuttgart cemetery, the subsequent funeral turning into a police trap for everyone who attended. Meanwhile the political atmosphere throughout the country – already strained by increased state supervision of 'radical' activities, e.g. *Berufsverbot*, as well as fear of terrorism – was reaching a peak of hysteria: citizens were asked, for instance, to call familiar telephone numbers, i.e. those usually reserved for the results of the state lottery, to report on anybody whom they considered suspect of subversive activities.¹⁷

Yet the catastrophic concatenation of events provoked other reactions besides the aggravation of prevailing tendencies; it seems to have lifted, for a moment at least, the veil of historical amnesia which had protected the growth of German

self-confidence since the early 1950s. Associations of the current events with 'war', or '1945', were widespread, confirming Kluge's observation that such a moment of shock briefly illuminated the falsely integrated elements of German history as a fundamentally impossible relationship.¹⁸ It was the historicity of the whole situation – not only of the officially chronicled events of Mogadishu and Schleyer's death – that was perceived before all analysis. Confusion, along with feelings of grief, despair, powerlessness, overwhelmingly struck intellectuals from left to liberal. *GERMANY IN AUTUMN*, operating in the crevices of historical consciousness, presented an attempt, among other things, to turn this confusion into a creative strategy: the failure of a 'rational' political discourse made way for a collective effort at *Trauerarbeit* (work of mourning).

The immediate challenge to film-makers in this situation was given by the total ban on information passed by the authorities. The 'discourse of public events', as it flickered across TV screens, had assumed the monotonous rhythm of black Mercedes cars arriving and departing from the *Krisenstab* meetings; the *Bild-Zeitung* and other Springer papers voiced their usual rhetoric of sensationalism and witchhunt. One of the radio stations had first commissioned and then rejected a TV feature on the events. The idea of a film project was initially suggested to Volker Schlöndorff by Theo Hinz of the Filmverlag der Autoren.¹⁹ Schlöndorff, for his part, sought the cooperation of writer Heinrich Böll and other film-makers. Rudolf Augstein, editor of *Der Spiegel* and chief creditor of the Filmverlag, put up the sum of DM 500,000. (The film actually remained within budget limits, partly owing to the fact that most of the actors and collaborators gave up their honoraria.) The long-standing dilemma endemic to state-subsidised cinema was exacerbated, yet crudely clarified under the pressure of events: how could a film set out to subvert the government's politics of information and at the same time ask for public funding?

Regardless even of the political obstacles, the inertia of committee procedures had to be avoided. By the time of the Schleyer funeral and state ceremony, Schlöndorff and Kluge were already shooting on location in 35mm and colour. A total of eight camera teams were set in motion, working with nine different directors. Decisions were made collectively by a body consisting of all the directors plus the editor, Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus and Fassbinder's mother, who also plays a part in the film. Arguments during these conferences focused on the proportion of documentary to fictional material as well as on the question of whether to make a six-hour film which would search for the roots of the present situation in the ruins of German history or whether to seize the opportunity and, in Fassbinder's words, to 'react promptly and directly'.²⁰

The result is a compromise, bearing both the scars of topicality and the fruits of improvisation. Remarkable as the collective effort may appear, the more remarkable achievement of *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* came into being on the editing

table. Unlike the French collaborative production of *LOIN DU VIETNAM* (1967), edited by Chris Marker, with contributions by Resnais, Klein, Ivens, Lelouch and Godard, *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* does not offer a collection of individual episodes and statements. In close consultation with Kluge, Mainka-Jellinghaus created an overall yet open structure, interweaving documentary and fictional passages, personal and impersonal points of view, historical perspectives and unresolved bewilderment in the present tense. Unlike the French Vietnam film, one might add, *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* took on a political situation at home – which involved the working conditions of film-makers on a more pragmatic level than, say, the one on which Godard problematises his work in *LOIN DU VIETNAM*. In that respect – and given the montage structure of the whole film – *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* seems to seek an affinity with the Soviet tradition of newsreels, surveys and chronicles, e.g. Vertov's *Kino Pravda* and *Kino Eye* series.

Of the episodes situated within a frame of funeral footage (Schleyer's state funeral as a prelude, the terrorists' state-supervised funeral at the end), only four represent distinct, continuous narrative units with a personal signature: Fassbinder's aggressively exhibitionist self-portrait; Cloos/Rupé's rather embarrassing sketch – with *Tatort* touch – of everyday paranoia in a lady pianist; Reitz's sequence of a border crossing, featuring a stogy dialect monologue of an 'ordinary' customs officer; and, finally, Böll/Schlöndorff's satire of a TV production of Sophocles' *Antigone* which gets postponed by the programme committee because of its untimely subject matter. This last episode picks up previous leit-motifs such as refused burial, terroristic women, resistance to authorities, and effectively combines them with a critique of the programming strategies of public television; it almost too strenuously spells out a unifying significance which the film in its overall structure rather seems to evade.

The contributions of Sinkel and Brustellin, collaborators on a number of previous films, consist in a more loosely structured arrangement of scenes which appear to be testing a variety of genres as to their political efficacy: a melodramatic sketch, 'Violence in Everyday Life', accompanied by a song by Wolf Biermann; an extensive interview – in prison – with Horst Mahler, putative co-founder of the RAF, which we witness alternately live and in a screening room with members of the production team; then, following the Cloos/Rupé episode, the production of a show featuring Biermann with his poem 'Mädchen aus Stuttgart' and a parody of a revolutionary propaganda film of the 1920s, or rather of the attempted revival of this genre by a political group of the 1970s. Franziska Busch, a member of this group, has a film project of her own which her male inventors generously display in its embryonic stage – an attempt at purely perceptual film. Franziska Busch is present throughout all of these scenes and thus furnishes a mock connection between the heterogeneous modes of representation. The voice-over commentary 'explaining' her character is spoken by Kluge,

such a distancing device being itself a familiar – and not unproblematic – technique in his own films.

The sequences most clearly bearing Kluge's signature are spread out over the whole film. Already the pre-credits sequence exhibits some basic features of his narrative method. The film opens with pan shots of celebrities arriving for the Schleyer funeral – among them ex-chancellor Kiesinger. We hear Kluge's voice reading a letter written by Schleyer to his son in the early days of his captivity, as we are informed by a silent title. The soundtrack of the event – a priest administering funeral rites, a chorale – is interspersed non-synchronously with shots of the coffin parade and close-ups of wreath streamers spelling the names of Franz-Josef Strauss, the metal workers' union and others. While Kluge resumes the reading of the Schleyer letter, the camera pans to the margins of the event – Esso flags, police on horseback, a reserve supply of umbrellas. The sequence closes with a silent title, quoting Frau Wilde, April 1945: 'When cruelty has reached a certain point, it no longer matters who started it – it should just stop'. (This sentence – uttered by 'a mother of five', who had been buried alive after a bombardment, to an American army psycho-specialist – establishes a link between the autumn of 1977 and spring of 1945. What this link actually may mean will not be explained in the course of the film – 'why should we be smarter than the viewers', the film-makers say in the programme notes.²¹) The insertion of such a quotation as a written text interrupts the viewing activity; it turns the viewer into a reader. Borrowed from the form language of silent film, the text is however not subordinated to the visual narrative; it is an image in its own right. Similarly, the use of voice-over commentary, a technique usually reserved for documentary, does not provide information complementary to the visual, but adds another dimension, counterpointing that of the image track. The panning to the margins underlines the decentering effect produced by the disjunction of sound and image; its polemical thrust is towards a deconstruction of the hierarchy of newsworthy events as presented by public television.

Much as this method may owe to the rehabilitation of montage in the French cinema of the 1960s, especially by Godard, it distinctly reflects Kluge's own intellectual and political background.²² Strongly influenced by extracinematic sources such as the Frankfurt School and literary modernism, Kluge's film-making and theorising engages in an active rereading of film history (in particular the Soviet and American 1920s), testing the use value of cinematic forms for an alternative organisation of experience. Against the ideal of seamless continuity of illusionist narrative, the mainstay of commercial cinema, Kluge insists on montage as the locus of filmic production. Against the grammar of continuity editing which renders its stitches invisible and thus beyond the control of the spectator, the emphasis is on the tension between the heterogeneous elements of narrative, challenging the dominance of the visual through an independent

significance of musical, verbal and written elements. The minimal unit of this kind of montage is not the individual shot, as for Eisenstein, but its negation – to use Kluge's hyperbole: the empty space between shots.²³ Consequently, the effect intended by montage is not a dialectically predetermined third meaning, an abstraction resulting from the juxtaposition of separate representations, but rather an indeterminacy of meaning, a suspension of traditionally fixed associations. Thus the locus of signification is programmatically shifted from the screen to the spectator: 'Meaning does not materialise in the film itself but in the head of the spectator by means of the ruptures between the various elements of cinematic discourse'.²⁴

The trope of the film in the head of the spectator links Kluge's aesthetics of montage with the politics of *Öffentlichkeit* discussed earlier. While recent theoretical writings on the 'cinematic apparatus' (e.g. Metz, Baudry, Kuntzel) centre on a psychoanalytic grounding of the spectator's involvement, Kluge focuses on the social and historical mediation of individual experience as the basis of cinema.²⁵ In effect, he proposes a structural affinity of cinematic discourse with the stream of associations in the human mind – the 'ten-thousand year old cinema', to which technical inventions like camera, projector and screen only responded on an industrial scale.²⁶ This stream of associations is characterised by a dimension of protest, of resistance against unbearable realities (cf. the notion of the 'block of real life' in *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*). As such, it is more specifically defined by its opposition – even if only on the level of fantasy – to dominant modes of discourse which control the production of meaning in a concrete historical and social context. Against an abstract rationality imposed by dominant modes of production, the film-maker becomes an ally of the 'suppressed classes' of the human senses, dramatising – and aiming to stimulate in the spectator – qualities like curiosity, memory, stubbornness, the hunger for seeing, hearing and correlation ('*Sinnlichkeit des Zusammenhangs*').²⁷

The emphasis on these oppositional energies of experience is part of Kluge's concept of realism, a realism of protest rather than a realism which merely re-duplicates the 'wicked fiction of reality'.²⁸ A major strategy of the 'antagonistic' realist is the crossing of documentary and fictional modes. The conventional division of labour between fiction and non-fiction genres, according to Kluge, disregards the 'coexistence of fact and desire in the human mind' or – to externalise the perspective – the painful discrepancy between the schemes of history and the 'stories' of human life. Fictional discourse, predicated on the child's libidinal investment in primal objects, seeks to impose the structures of these personal relationships on the world; only the utopian drive of that quest can be called realistic.²⁹ The ideology of documentary authenticity, on the other hand, denies the subjectivity of the camera, the film-maker, the genre expectations in the head of the spectator in the construction of reality and therefore offers a

unique opportunity to sell fictions to people (*'eine einzigartige Gelegenheit, Märchen zu erzählen'*).³⁰ Kluge instead proposes a crossing of radical observation and radical fiction which would leave neither genre intact.

In *GERMANY IN AUTUMN*, for example, the fictional character of Gabi Teichert (Hannelore Hoger), a history teacher in search of the foundations of German history, will be discovered taking notes at a non-fictional event later in the film, the convention of the Social Democratic Party staged shortly after the events of Stammheim and Mogadishu. This mock *mise-en-scène* device brings out the fictional element inherent in the political muscle show: it makes Gabi Teichert's curiosity and hunger for first-hand experience appear more real than the rhetoric of model democracy intoned by Swiss writer Max Frisch, one of the speakers at the convention.³¹ Similarly, on the level of montage, the mixing of documentary footage with scenes or images of a varying degree of fictional and representational coding creates a space in which alternative readings of political events become possible. This technique is essential to Kluge's particular fashion of opening up historical perspectives on the present.

The dimension of history – specifically the inadequately digested lessons of the Nazi past – is introduced in Fassbinder's discussion with his mother who advocates, not without a subtle smile, an authoritarian ruler who would be benevolent and also 'quite nice and neat'. A montage of still images, taken from Caspar David Friedrich and popular illustrations, suggests romantic visions of a 'better' Germany: idyllic landscapes, legends of maidens, knights and monsters. The sequence is accompanied by Haydn's violin quartet in C-major, the Kaiserquartett, which provides the melody of the German national anthem. References to the *Deutschlandlied* will occur throughout the film – as music, as text (with its preposterous now banned first stanza), as a symbol resonating with horror and nostalgia.³² It is loosely associated with the research project by Gabi Teichert, unhappy protagonist of Kluge's subsequent film, *DIE PATRIOTIN/THE PATRIOT* (1979), who trudges through a blue-filter winter landscape with a shovel – in search of the foundations of German history. Admittedly a corny trope, it literalises the presence of the uncanny in Kluge's lyrical landscapes, whether in the shape of a mythological monster or of the camouflaged tanks of a Bundeswehr manoeuvre later in the film.

A further montage of still images introduces the theme of suicide: panopticum illustrations of the Schloss Meyerlinck tragedy (the suicide of the Austrian crown prince and his mistress) and of the popular ballad theme of a marked woman throwing herself in front of a train; voice-over commentary: 'Suicide – the choice of those who have no place in this world'.³³ Newsreel footage, copied from the editing table, superimposes another 'suicide': that of Feldmarschall Rommel, the 'desert fox', poisoned for his connections with the resistance against Hitler in autumn 1944. At the state-funeral ceremony for Rommel, we

see a boy in uniform, Rommel's son, today mayor of the city of Stuttgart. It was the younger Rommel who, in the face of a popular campaign to the contrary, made the immediate decision to grant the dead terrorists a burial in the cemetery of Stuttgart-Dornhalden. Apart from this coincidence (and the parallel of public rituals), there is no logical connection between the historical footage and the events of autumn 1977 – rather the montage assumes the associational, 'Kraut-und-Rüben' pattern of Gabi Teichert's mind.³⁴ This type of 'illogical' connection resonates with more complex contingencies of German history: the dubious tradition of official suicides, the failure of the German resistance, the tragedy of liberalism, the contradictory continuity of the German combat spirit (a British newspaper had hailed the 'liberators' of Mogadishu as 'desert foxes'). A more logical connection, for example, could have been drawn from the biography of Hanns-Martin Schleyer, a former SS officer and already an important industrialist in the Third Reich. This link, which long before his kidnapping had established Schleyer as a symbol of the continuity of industrial elites, is significantly absent from *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* – as if to elude the equally mythologising patterns of historiography on the left.

The dominant source of public mythology, however, remains television – and it is in opposition to the politics of exclusion and amalgamation perpetrated by German TV stations that *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* develops its interventionist strategy. Television, given its public status in the Federal Republic, occupies a precarious position in the changing structure of the public sphere, as Negt and Kluge have shown in *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*.³⁵ Not quite subsumed by the sphere of commodity circulation, as the privately owned media would have it, television has largely taken over the functions – the prerogatives as well as limitations – of a defunct bourgeois public sphere (among them, for instance, the patronage of non-commercial film-making). Negt/Kluge analyse how the mechanisms of television as a 'programme industry' work to organise – or rather to de-organise – the viewers' experience in terms of a pluralistic abundance of material and systematic shortage of time (*'Stofffülle und organisierter Zeitmangel'*³⁶), thus creating a mediocre amalgam of 'general' concerns with the exclusion of vital interests of both entertainment and information. If the programming policies of public television provide a general backdrop against which Kluge's concept of the cinema as *Gegenöffentlichkeit* projects itself, in *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* they are foregrounded on the level of format and subject matter.

The challenge to television is present throughout the film. A pan to the klieg-light of a TV crew shooting the Schleyer ceremony establishes its own crew on the opposition bench. Polemically rejecting the hierarchy of perception ordained by the dramaturgy of TV news, Schlöndorff/Kluge's camera pans to the margins of the public events, discovering there a Turkish labour immigrant stopped by the police for carrying a rifle with which he had planned to shoot a pigeon for

his lunch. Or it lends itself to the strategic problems of the subsequent banquet. The video transmission of the ceremony for the management and white collar workers of Daimler Benz yields one of the film's most memorable images: a series of identical, larger-than-life overhead projections of Schleyer's photograph shot across a series of black mirror-finished antique Mercedes models. Later on, we witness Herbert Wehner's speech at the SPD convention on a monitor in the foreground, whereas the speaker himself is only seen from an angle in the background. Finally, after Böll/Schlöndorff's satire on the postponed TV production of *Antigone*, the terrorists' funeral intercuts video footage with 35mm film, underlining the impossibility of 'private' mourning in the face of a ubiquitous host of police cameras; the slow pace and duration of the whole sequence reclaim its significance as a public event.

More important than all these references, however, seems the film's attempt to undercut the overall structure of daily television programmes as a unified totality of arbitrary diversity. As a radical alternative, *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* offers an equally comprehensive yet self-consciously heterogeneous format with a different timing, thus allowing space for contingencies, contradictions, inconsistencies to unfold – ruptures in which the viewer's own imagination can begin to work. In its method and scope, the film stakes out claims for a communicative praxis, which is the basis for an alternative organisation of the public sphere. Its mode, however, is one of anticipation: as a single film, it is necessarily 'synthetic' (*künstliches Öffentlichkeitsprodukt*³⁷); it presents itself as a product of the very public sphere that it aims to construct.

The value of a model depends on its reception in the broadest sense: its viability will only be proved (and improved) by other films of similar intentions.³⁸ The immediate reception of *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* should caution against premature optimism. While the film expressed an actual need, in audiences and film-makers alike, for a more comprehensive and alternative political discourse, it was accused of failing to create such a discourse from the point of view of precisely those groups in whose interest it might have presumed to act. In fact, some of the harshest reactions came from the radical left and feminist positions.³⁹ The film's refusal to adopt an unequivocal stance towards the events, however, is closely related to its politics of perception and concept of montage. Though certainly more accessible than a traditional avant-garde or experimental film, *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* to some extent shares the modernist impulse of Kluge's aesthetics. To project a *Gegenöffentlichkeit* for and through new modes of discourse betrays a utopian element, not unrelated to the enterprises of historical modernism in painting and poetry. Unlike a feminist film practice, as indicated above, which can draw on an oppositional public sphere of its own, even a collective version of *Autorenkino* may in the end merely fall back on ad hoc left to left-liberal audiences. Whether its projects can reach beyond the combined

political and cineaste subcultures to the larger audiences of Hollywood super-productions or daily television programmes, is not so much an open question but itself the challenge that motivates the project.

The political dynamics of the cinema's intervention in the public sphere ultimately turns upon the question of authorship: who speaks for whom, who speaks of whom, who actually speaks. When criticised for not focusing on any workers in the final version of *GERMANY IN AUTUMN*, the film-makers replied that they could only, 'in all honesty, represent the subjective reactions of a specific group of bourgeois intellectuals'. This is only legitimate – but if subjectivity determines the scope of representation one might have wished for it to be at issue, too. Of all the film-makers participating, only Fassbinder exhibits himself in the film – a problematic presence, to be sure, but one that makes the spectator most uncomfortably aware of his or her position as a spectator, similarly caught between agitation and powerlessness. Whether dramatising the displacement of political frustration onto personal relationships – exploiting his lover, browbeating his mother – or just another exercise in self-exposure, Fassbinder's stylisation of self graphically illustrates the distance between *auteur* cinema and public sphere. Kluge, by contrast, is visually absent from *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* (except for an extremely short video appearance on the Stuttgart-Dornhalden cemetery). Throughout most of the film, however, we hear his voice – quoting, observing, distancing the viewer with his unmistakably wry, laconic, tenderly ironic commentary. While Kluge's use of voice-over commentary is important to breaking the spell of the image track and disrupting unmediated identification with characters, its own status remains unquestioned. Separated from the body, a voice is more likely to resume functions of authority and closure proper to traditional documentary and narrative genres. In particular, this appears problematic in the context of a sexual division of labour: a disembodied male voice 'explaining' a female character who is physically present on screen only underlines the general dilemma of transsexual identification and projection. Kluge's voice, with all its amiable idiosyncracies, eludes the risks of personal exposure which Fassbinder provokes with his own body. Yet such exposure alone does not make up a truly subjective stance, nor would such a stance, taken exclusively, suffice in dealing with the complexity of an objectively oppressive situation. The tension between Kluge's concept of cinema, pursued with uncompromising integrity since the days of Oberhausen, and Fassbinder's insistence as an international star director to nevertheless address issues at home may illustrate the shortcomings of individual intervention in each case; juxtaposed in one and the same film, however, they implicitly present a critique of each other and thus alert the spectator to questions of strategy and authorship.

GERMANY IN AUTUMN was introduced in this essay as a catalyst for new directions in German cinema, especially the revision of *Autorenkino* through a col-

lective politics of production. As for the different tendencies emerging between a New German cinema oriented towards export and another focusing on the West German public sphere, the case of *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* again illustrates the difficulty of clear-cut distinctions. With Schlöndorff and Fassbinder participating in the project, a moderate commercial success seemed guaranteed, and the film even found a distributor in this country – though, for obvious reasons, very little resonance.⁴⁰ In the eyes of younger film-makers working in a similar direction but with hardly the same resources, *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* once more demonstrated the efficiency of a small group of established directors in promoting their own products, even if ostensibly staged as a response to a situation of political emergency. In the eyes of those who expected a more clear-cut, partisan statement, *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* certainly lacked in political effectiveness. But the situation itself was too complex to afford unequivocal statements of any kind, and the film first and foremost aimed towards a recognition of this complexity which, after all, was effectively being denied by the government's politics of information. The issue was not merely pressing one interpretation over another, but rather opening up an alternative political discourse – a discourse that would allow space for contradictions and inconsistencies to be articulated and thus leave the spectator with the burden, but also the freedom, of political evaluation. There is no point in claiming perfection for *GERMANY IN AUTUMN*, whether in terms of process or political correctness, not to mention the status of an artistic masterpiece. At the time it was released, the film certainly fulfilled an important communicative function, asserting the need for *Trauerarbeit* even as the possibility of political interpretation was jeopardised by the events. A few years later, *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* still conveys a sense of mourning as a collective, politically essential project, adding to it the value of a historical document. Beyond the traumatic, confusing and infuriating impact of the events, the film itself documents both the potential and the limitations of current directions in German cinema.

Notes

1. Hans Günther Pflaum and Hans Helmut Prinzler, *Film in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (München: Hanser, 1979), p. 9. For an English translation and a critical perspective on the manifesto and its consequences see Jan Dawson, 'A Labyrinth of Subsidies: The Origins of New German Cinema', *Sight & Sound* (vol. 50 no.1 winter, 1980/81), pp. 14-20.
2. *DEUTSCHLAND IM HERBST* (March 1978, 125 min.); a film by Heinrich Böll, Alf Brustellin, Hans Peter Cloos, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Alexander Kluge, Maximiliane Mainka, Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus, Edgar Reitz, Katja Rupé, Volker Schlöndorff, Pe-

- ter Schubert, Bernhard Sinkel et al. (Filmverlag der Autoren; U.S. distributor: New Line Cinema, New York).
3. Michael Dost, Florian Hopf and Alexander Kluge, *Filmwirtschaft in der BRD und in Europa: Götterdämmerung in Raten* (München: Hanser, 1973), p. 129.
 4. The translation of *Autorenkino* as 'auteur cinema' is highly problematical. While both terms have common roots in the French New Wave, the notion of 'auteur cinema' as developed in the *Cahiers du Cinéma* and popularised in this country by Andrew Sarris became a critical tool in claiming traditional aesthetic value for the work of Hollywood directors like Ford, Hawks and Hitchcock (leaving aside, in this context, structuralist versions of the auteur theory such as Peter Wollen's). The German concept of *Autorenkino*, closer to the original *politique des auteurs* as advocated by director-critics like Godard and Truffaut, was primarily a programmatic principle with the goal of providing the director with absolute artistic and financial control. Cf. Klaus Eder, 'Die Zukunft ist schon vorbei: Zur Situation des Autorenfilms', in *Jahrbuch Film 77/78*, ed. Hans Günther Pflaum (München: Hanser, 1977), pp. 113-23; Sheila Johnston, 'The Author as Public Institution: The "New" Cinema in the Federal Republic of Germany', *Screen Education* (no. 32/33 winter, 1979/80), pp. 67-78; Edgar Reitz interview, in Jan Dawson, 'A Labyrinth of Subsidies: The Origins of New German Cinema', *Sight & Sound* (vol. 50 no.1 winter, 1980/81). With all these caveats, the term auteur seems more appropriate than that of 'author', precisely because it refers to cinematic practices in distinction to literary ones.
 5. Dost, Hopf and Kluge, *Filmwirtschaft in der BRD und in Europa*, p. 85 and passim.
 6. Thomas Elsaesser, 'The Postwar German Cinema', in *Fassbinder*, ed. Tony Rayns (London: BFI, 1976), pp. 1-16; Pflaum and Prinzler, *Film in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (respective entries under 'Sachlexikon zur Filmpolitik'); Eric Rentschler, 'Critical Junctures Since Oberhausen: West German Film in the Course of Time', *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* (vol. 5 no. 2 spring, 1980), pp. 141-156; Hans-Bernhard Moeller, 'New German Cinema and Its Precarious Subsidy and Finance System', *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* (vol. 5 no. 2 spring, 1980), pp. 157-168.
 7. Dost, Hopf and Kluge, *Filmwirtschaft in der BRD und in Europa*, pp. 72 ff.
 8. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
 9. Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung: Zur Organisationsanalyse von bürgerlicher und proletarischer Öffentlichkeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972). For a first English summary of the book see Eberhard Knödler-Bunte, 'The Proletarian Public Sphere and Political Organization', *New German Critique* (no. 4 winter, 1975), pp. 51-75.
 10. Dost, Hopf and Kluge, *Filmwirtschaft in der BRD und in Europa*, p. 67. Also cf. Alexander Kluge, *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin: Zur realistischen Methode* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975), pp. 208 ff.; and, more recently, in Alexander Kluge, *Die Patriotin* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1979), pp. 294 ff.
 11. The emphasis on these two tendencies in recent German cinema does not intend to diminish the importance of film-makers whose work is neither commercially successful on the export scale nor in any particular sense oriented towards a domestic public sphere. This may be the case for a large number of avant-garde film-makers, for instance Werner Schröter, Ulrike Ottinger or Rosa von Praunheim (the latter also addresses the gay subculture on both sides of the Atlantic). The names of Straub and Huillet raise the problem of emigration and illustrate the gap between the poli-

- tics of the avant-garde on an international scale and its political impact on the West German public sphere.
12. Klaus Eder, 'Der Glaube ans große Geld: Über einen industriellen Ästhetizismus', *Jahrbuch Film* 79/80, ed. Hans Günther Pflaum (München: Hanser, 1979), pp. 100-107.
 13. Johnston, 'The Author as Public Institution' (see n. 4, above).
 14. Thomas Elsaesser, 'Primary Identification and the Historical Subject: Fassbinder and Germany', *Ciné-Tracts* (no. 11 fall, 1980), pp. 43-52; cf. n. 25, below.
 15. The debates involved documentary film-makers like Klaus Wildenhahn, Günther Hörmann as well as Nina and Willi Gladitz. See contributions in *Filme* (no. 4 August, 1980) and in *Filmfaust*, numbers 20 through 23 (November 1980-August 1981). Also Alexander Kluge, 'Auseinandersetzung in Duisburg', reprinted, with further discussions on documentary film, in Klaus Eder and Alexander Kluge, *Ulmer Dramaturgien: Reibungsverluste* (München: Hanser, 1980), pp. 135 ff. In relation to this debate also see the issue on documentary film of *Frauen und Film* (no. 16, 1978).
 16. 'Stichwort: Bestandsaufnahme', in Klaus Eder and Alexander Kluge, *Ulmer Dramaturgien, Reibungsverluste* (München: Hanser, 1980), pp. 85-89; the book is conceived as a first step towards the project. For alternative views on the viability of *Autorenkino*, see Eder, 'Die Zukunft ist schon vorbei' (n. 4, above), and Reitz, 'Das Kino der Autoren lebt!: Gegen die Verkäufer, Rezeptbäcker und Profiteure', *Medium* (May, 1980), pp. 32-34. Issues of collectivity and collaboration are discussed in *Frauen und Film* (no. 8, 1976), and (no. 25, 1980), pp. 22-32. On 'politics of production', see Helke Sander, 'Filmpolitik als Produktionspolitik', *Frauen und Film* (no. 16, 1978), pp. 48-49.
 17. Tatjana Botzat, Elisabeth Kiderlen and Frank Wolff, *Ein deutscher Herbst: Zustände – Dokumente, Berichte, Kommentare* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Neue Kritik, 1978).
 18. Alexander Kluge, 'Deutschland im Herbst', in *Die Patriotin* (n. 10, above), p. 29. Also cf. the most recent Negt and Kluge collaboration, *Geschichte und Eigensinn* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1981).
 19. The Filmverlag der Autoren started out in 1971 as a cooperative of film-makers (including Hark Bohm, Uwe Brandner, Peter Lilienthal, Wim Wenders) who tried to produce and distribute their work independently of the commercial machinery; by 1974, it had become an operation exclusively devoted to distribution. Despite production funding, primarily through German television, the Filmverlag incurred considerable financial difficulties and could only be saved from bankruptcy in the spring of 1977 by selling a majority of its stock to *Spiegel* proprietor Rudolph Augstein. Cf. Uwe Brandner's report in Dawson, 'A Labyrinth of Subsidies' (n. 1, above), p. 20. For the Filmverlag's role in the production of *GERMANY IN AUTUMN*, see the polemical interview with Theo Hinz in *Filmfaust* (no. 7 March, 1978), pp. 16-17.
 20. Interview, 'L'Allemagne en automne: un film, un acte', *Jeune Cinéma* (no. 111 June, 1978), p. 4. For a presentation of the film by some of its makers, also see the important interview with Brustellin, Kluge, Reitz, Schlöndorff and Sinkel, "'Deutschland im Herbst" oder "Modell Deutschland"?', *Filmfaust* (no. 7 March, 1978), pp. 3-14; Kluge, *Die Patriotin*, pp. 20-23.
 21. 'Deutschland im Herbst: Worin liegt die Parteilichkeit des Films?', *Ästhetik & Kommunikation* (no. 32 June, 1978), p. 124.

22. The various branches of Kluge's career – as a writer, film-maker and theorist, teacher, lawyer and film politician – are described in Rainer Lewandowski, *Alexander Kluge* (München: C.H. Beck/Verlag Text+Kritik, 1980), ch. 1. For bibliographic and filmographic reference – excluding GERMANY IN AUTUMN – see Lewandowski's *Die Filme von Alexander Kluge* (Hildesheim/New York: Olms Presse, 1980). For Kluge's relationship to Godard, see for example Lewandowski's interview with Kluge, *ibid.*, p. 53. Kluge accounts for various influences that shaped his own film aesthetics as well as the programme of the Ulm Institut für Filmgestaltung in *Ulmer Dramaturgien* (n. 15, above), pp. 34 ff., 38, 102 and especially p. 116. For a short introduction in English, see the chapter on Kluge, in John Sanford, *The New German Cinema* (London: Oswald Wolff; New York: Barnes and Noble, 1980). The significance of Critical Theory and literary modernism for Kluge's aesthetic of film is discussed in the present author's essay, 'Alexander Kluge: Crossings between Film, Literature, Critical Theory', in *Film und Literatur*, The Thirteenth Amherst Colloquium on German Literature, forthcoming (Bern: Francke, 1982).
23. Ulrich Gregor, interview with Kluge, in *Herzog/Kluge/Straub*, ed. Peter W. Jansen and Wolfram Schütte (München: Hanser, 1976), pp. 153-178; 158, 166 ff.; Enno Patalas and Frieda Grafe, interview with Kluge, *Filmkritik* (vol. 10 no. 9, 1966), pp. 487-491; 490. The significance of these 'empty spaces' (*Leerstellen*) in the process of reading has been explored in greater detail for literary texts, for instance by critics like Wolfgang Iser who draws on traditions such as Phenomenology and Russian Formalism. In film history, this concept recalls Dziga Vertov's emphasis on 'intervals' as part of his concept of montage as practical epistemology, which met with increasing opposition within Soviet cinema, including from colleagues such as Eisenstein. On the differences between Kluge's and Eisenstein's concept of montage see Hansen, 'Alexander Kluge'.
24. Edgar Reitz, Alexander Kluge and Wilfried Reinke, 'Wort und Film', *Sprache im technischen Zeitalter* (no. 13, 1965), p. 1020 (repr. in *Ulmer Dramaturgien*).
25. Attempts to theorise the spectator's position within a Lacanian and – to some degree – Althusserian framework of categories run the risk of succumbing to a kind of idealist ontology similar to the one they discover operating in the ideological mechanisms of cinema (cf. Christian Metz's writings since 1975, especially 'The Imaginary Signifier', trans. in *Screen* [vol. 16 no. 2, 1977], and Jean Louis Baudry, 'Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus', *Film Quarterly* [vol. 28 no. 2 winter, 1974/75], and 'The Apparatus', *Camera Obscura* [no. 1, 1976]). As Thomas Elsaesser convincingly argues for the case of Fassbinder (n. 14, above), these theorists' emphasis on the mirroring effect of cinema, the specularisation of subject/object relations and the return of a transcendental subject subsumes yet also abstracts from the social and historical dimensions of the subject for, with and against whom these mechanisms operate; as such, however, they are foregrounded by Fassbinder in his explicit identification of exhibitionist and paranoid structures with those of German fascism. Likewise, Kluge's film theory and practice shows certain parallels with recent directions in French theory and its British and American partisans; although far less systematic, Kluge's writings appear a lot more substantial when it comes to assumptions about spectatorship, as they are grounded in constellations and blockages specific to the West German public sphere in the wake of German history's major catastrophe.

26. Kluge, *Die Patriotin*, p. 295; Jan Dawson, 'An Interview with Alexander Kluge', *Film Comment* (vol. 10 no. 6, 1974), repr. in Dawson, *Alexander Kluge and The Occasional Work of a Female Slave* (New York: Zoetrope, 1977), p. 31.
27. Kluge, *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin* (n. 10, above), pp. 241, 212 ff. and passim; Herzog/Kluge/Straub (n. 23, above), pp. 22 ff., 165 ff.; Kluge and Reitz, 'In Gefahr und größter Not bringt der Mittelweg den Tod', *Kursbuch* (no. 41 September, 1975), pp. 41-84; 66: 'Es geht uns darum, den Scheinfrieden dieses sogenannten [Erziehungs-] Bewußtseins, das wie ein Produktionsverhältnis auf der selbständigen Arbeit des Sinnenapparates, z.B. Augen, Ohren, Assoziationen, Erinnerung liegt, nachhaltig zu strapazieren. Darin liegt unsere parteiliche Auffassung darüber, was im Kino geschieht'.
28. Kluge, *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, pp. 215-222: 'Die schärfste Ideologie: daß die Realität sich auf ihren realistischen Charakter beruff'. [See translation in this book, ed.]
29. Kluge, *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, p. 204 ff. A translation of this and other passages from Kluge's writings was published by Hans Bernhard Moeller and Skip Acuff in *Wide Angle* (vol. 3 no. 4, 1980), pp. 26-33.
30. Kluge, *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, p. 202 ff.
31. Cf. Kluge's comments on a comparable scene in the film *GELEGENHEITSARBEIT EINER SKLAVIN/PART-TIME JOBS OF A DOMESTIC SLAVE* (1973) where the protagonist Roswitha Bronski (Alexandra Kluge) joins a group of state government officials on a tour through Frankfurt labour-immigrants' tenements: '[...] there's a strong element of fiction in the enterprises of these real ministers. [...] It has nothing to do with reality: they're not at all interested in the social situation; they're performing a play. And the play only becomes real because I add a fictional character to it. By adding fiction, I turn the fictional character of the non-fiction into non-fiction' (Dawson, *Alexander Kluge*, p. 35).
32. This politically complex use of the *Deutschlandlied* goes back to Kluge's first feature film, *ABSCHIED VON GESTERN/YESTERDAY GIRL* (1966) where it underlines the cruel contradictions of German history along with its frustrated utopian yearnings, especially as Anita G. (Alexandra Kluge) starts humming the Becher/Eisler version of the text ('*Glück und Frieden [...] uns beschieden*').
33. '*Selbstmord begeht, was nicht in diese Welt paßt [...]*' (*Die Patriotin*, p. 15); cf. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), p. 93: '*Dem wahr ist nur, was nicht in diese Welt paßt*' (a sentence Kluge quotes in support of his 'realism of protest', *Gelegenheitsarbeit*, p. 218).
34. Why Kluge prefers to project this associational anarchy onto the minds of female characters and often makes them the agents of what by 'adult' standards might be called irrational behaviour, is a thorny question. Apart from the general problem of a 'woman's film' produced by a male director (though not, as the traditional 'woman's film', for a predominantly female audience), it involves Kluge's analysis of specifically female modes of production as vital to patriarchal society, yet never completely assimilable to the standards of industrial capitalism (*Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*, pp. 44 ff., 50; *Gelegenheitsarbeit*, pp. 223-241; *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, pp. 309 ff.). The first major feminist critique of Kluge – mainly directed against his film, *GELEGENHEITSARBEIT EINER SKLAVIN*, and its treatment of abortion and other issues – was launched by Marlies Kallweit, Helke Sander and Mässi Kemper in *Frauen und Film* (no. 3, 1974), pp. 12-25; also see Kluge's response in *Filmkritik* (vol. 18 no. 6, 1974), pp. 279-283. Heike Hurst raises some of the same objections in her review of

GERMANY IN AUTUMN, 'Vom großen Verhau zum großen Verschnitt: "Deutschland im Herbst"', *Frauen und Film* (no. 16, 1978), pp. 15-21. The reviews of Kluge's subsequent film, *DIE PATRIOTIN*, indicate a somewhat subtler stance in that controversy: Claudia Lenssen, Uta Berg-Ganschow and Sigrid Vagt, 'Kein Dunkel hat seinesgleichen: Zu Alexander Kluges Film *Die Patriotin*', *Frauen und Film* (no. 23, 1980), pp. 4-13. The feminist issue with Kluge is rather complex, for it implicates the critic's own hierarchies of perception and standards of rationality. Moreover, traces of idealisation, most palpable in the films featuring Kluge's sister, are usually counterbalanced by gestures of spontaneity and stubbornness on the part of the actress. As critics from Enno Patalas to Gertrud Koch have pointed out, Kluge's female protagonists come across as authentic characters mainly in contradistinction to the male characters who – with few exceptions – merely represent caricatures, character masks. This, however, does not exempt the relationship of male director and female character from projection and idealisation. Gertrud Koch suggests (in conversation) that the qualities projected onto the female characters correspond to an androgynous dimension of Kluge's creative personality and therefore could be seen as the sensual embodiment of a utopian mode of aesthetics. Granting that possibility would still not resolve the difficulty that while some of Kluge's women succeed in creating their own presence as sensual human beings – in Kluge's highly allegorical mode of *Sinnlichkeit* – they very rarely do so as sexual ones.

35. Negt and Kluge, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung* (n. 9, above), ch. 3.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 201.
37. Quoted in Karl-Friedrich Baumgärtel et al., 'Assoziativ montiert: Materialien zur *Patriotin*', *Zelluloid* (Köln) (no. 9, 1980), p. 61.
38. The project's continuation was asserted with the collaboration by Stefan Aust, Alexander von Eschwege, Kluge and Schlöndorff on *THE CANDIDATE*, a film about and against Franz Josef Strauss, released a few months before the federal elections in 1980. The production was hampered by internal and external difficulties, the public resonance a little less than encouraging. If *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* had important consequences, they were primarily of a personal, political and organisational nature (e.g. Hamburger Filmfestival 1979, *Produktionspolitik, Bestandsaufnahme*), indicating a generally heightened awareness of the cinema's public responsibility and potential. A number of collaborative projects, focusing on topics of German history or contemporary issues of a wide political scope, are still under discussion (cf. Kluge, *Die Patriotin*, p. 22 ff.). On a smaller scale and with less explicit interventionist intentions, *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* actually has a precursor in Reitz and Kluge's 1974/75 production of *IN GEFAHR UND GRÖSSTER NOT BRINGT DER MITTELWEG DEN TOD/IN DANGER AND EXTREMITIES THE ROAD OF COMPROMISE LEADS TO DEATH*, a brilliant montage film which deals with the fragmentation of public events and private experience as observed during the Frankfurt *Häuserkampf* of February 1974; cf. *Kursbuch* (no. 41 September, 1975), pp. 41-84, translated in excerpts in *Wide Angle* (vol. 3 no. 4, 1980), pp. 28-31.
39. Cf. contributions by Lothar Schwab and Alexandra von Grote in *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* (no. 32 June, 1978); Berliner Filmarbeiterinnen, 'Offener Brief an den Filmverlag der Autoren und die Regisseure des Films "Deutschland im Herbst"', *Frauen und Film* (no. 16, 1978), pp. 22-23, and Heike Hurst's review, *ibid.*, pp. 15-21 (also see n. 34, above). Some of the same objections are raised by Jan Dawson, 'Ger-

many in Autumn & [Der] kleine Godard', *Take One* (6/12 November 1978), pp. 14-15, 44-45. For a scathing critique based on documentary standards see Hans Helmut Prinzler, 'Gegeninformationen: Notizen zu neuen Dokumentarfilmen aus der Bundesrepublik und zu *Deutschland im Herbst*', *Jahrbuch Film 1978-79* (Munich: Hanser, 1978), pp. 48-61.

40. Even for audiences of the art house and college circuit the film seems to have presented difficulties which might have been alleviated but not eliminated by more informative subtitles and programme notes. Critical responses deploring a lack of narrative coherence, documentary self-evidence or of a unified propagandistic purpose in *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* may indeed have registered fundamental differences in the concept of cinema implicit in the film – which returns to the question of whether or not exportability and political use value for the domestic public sphere are necessarily incompatible. Among the reviews in the English language, only Jan Dawson's and Ruth McCormick's (*Cinéaste*, vol. 9 no. 3 spring, 1979, p. 53 ff.) testify to their authors' familiarity with the political dynamics of recent German cinema. Vincent Canby's review in the *New York Times* (5 April 1979) is worth mentioning only because it illustrates the workings of the auteurist fallacy in the reception of a film like *GERMANY IN AUTUMN*. While Canby finds the whole film very uneven, 'sometimes startlingly beautiful, often obscure and confusing, sometimes funny and mostly disturbing', he manages to identify the contributions of Fassbinder ('he stars in it') and of novelist Heinrich Böll, despite the absence of individual credits in the film. Since the whole film apparently has something to do with politics, Fassbinder's episode, as the auteurist's *pars pro toto*, must be the apex of the film's political aesthetics: 'It's typically, intentionally disorienting in the Fassbinder way, photographed and acted with such intense self-absorption that it has the effect of transforming narcissism into a higher form of political commitment'.

‘What is Different is Good’: Women and Femininity in the Films of Alexander Kluge

Heide Schlüpmann

The real problem is therefore not the issue of legitimation – who will be permitted to take up women’s issues. Or does there exist a sort of right of private property relating to this theme among certain groups because they themselves are struggling, because they must suffer oppression on their own bodies? The problem is, rather, to what extent the experience of oppression can be understood at all by those who are not oppressed in the same way. The capacity is what is being brought into question, not the authorisation.

Alexander Kluge, *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin: Zur realistischen Methode*

Alexander Kluge formulated this statement in the early 1970s, when he took issue with the protests raised by those in the women’s movement against his film *GELEGENHEITSARBEIT EINER SKLAVIN/PART-TIME WORK OF A DOMESTIC SLAVE* (1973). In order to determine the meaning of ‘female productive force’, the film had attempted to depict a ‘femininity’ [*Weiblichkeit*] that was oppressed, but which, unaccommodated to its oppression, resisted it. The doubt that arose in the course of those discussions as to whether that attempt had been successful – indeed, whether it could have succeeded – to some extent still remains today. At the same time we must admit that the original debate was not free of moralistic overtones. Women who had been working hard towards a repeal of Paragraph 218,¹ and who were daily confronted with the problems of birth control and illegal abortions, were understandably unsympathetic to the filmic documentation of an abortion that did not support their struggle. Marlies Kallweit wrote:

Here we see, once again, how Kluge purports to side with women while at the same time trivialising their most important problems. He goes even further than this: abortion is characterised as criminal without Kluge’s ever questioning this characterisation. At the end of the abortion scene he shows how the small white embryo lies pitifully in the garbage. Through this method of representation, he stabs in the back those women working for the repeal of Paragraph 218.²

In fact, as Ruby Rich later concluded, the production of *PART-TIME WORK OF A DOMESTIC SLAVE* ignored the public sphere of the women’s movement.³ While the film dealt with oppressed female capabilities, it bypassed the efforts of wo-

men to engage as subjects in the political public sphere. Little wonder that Helke Sander, who had founded the feminist film journal *Frauen und Film*, could see only evidence of disdain for her own political work in Kluge's film and reacted with lapidary anger. 'The message of the film', she wrote, 'is that women's efforts will lead to nothing'.⁴ Kluge's statements on the conflict, in turn, have a sufficiently patriarchal ring to suggest that those who protested at the time had a point.⁵

On the other hand, Kluge took pains, after the fact, to establish contacts with the women's movement, which he had not previously had. To Ulrich Gregor's question in a 1976 interview, 'What do you have to say about the negative reactions of the journal *Frauen und Film* to this film?' he responded:

I take this criticism very seriously and have confronted it painstakingly. Even if I could pull to pieces each of the arguments individually, I must still ask, what is the impetus behind this criticism, where does the energy for this protest against the film come from? And I basically only wrote the book *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin: Zur realistischen Methode* as a response to it.⁶

During the latter half of the 1970s, Kluge – primarily because of this book, *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, as well as the book he wrote with Oskar Negt, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*⁷ – was one of the male authors most discussed by the women's groups that dealt with issues of politics and aesthetics. This history must be taken into account in any assessment of the political value of the film, that is, in determining whether it worked against the women's movement or was productive for it.

But the terms of the discussion of this film need to be broadened for another reason. Kluge had expressed himself very strongly in his thematisation of femininity and, because of this, provoked considerable anger among women. Nevertheless, in retrospect the initial discussion within the women's movement now seems somewhat misdirected: with *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, Kluge had attempted to take up, on the level of content, what was constitutively lacking in his films on the level of form – the reflection of sexual difference. What repelled us about the film was its abstract treatment of female difference; and the fact that the film was successful only on the abstract level is grounded in an aesthetic-political conception that underlies all of Kluge's film work. Female difference, abstracted from the dimension of or claim to equality, remains the mark of a defect, the helpless 'glorification' (Helke Sander) of which represents a revaluation of values, which more readily disavows than accelerates emancipation.

The utopia of emancipation is most prevalent in Kluge's films of the 1960s, in *ABSCHIED VON GESTERN/YESTERDAY GIRL* (1965-1966) and *DIE ARTISTEN IN DER ZIRKUSKUPPEL: RATLOS/ARTISTS UNDER THE BIG TOP: PERPLEXED* (1967). They only incidentally contain reflections on the situation of women. The more

openly they present themselves to the desires and fantasies of a female public, the more they celebrate a notion of unlimited potential, which is in contradiction with the narrowness of real possibilities in the Federal Republic. The eruptive mood of these films is similar to that of the student movement; indeed, they held out the promise of a collective subjectivity, and they permitted individual experience again to be found in public form, even as this promise was already being disappointed within the movement.

There are two themes central to *YESTERDAY GIRL* and *ARTISTS*: the possibility – or, as the case may be, impossibility – of living after Auschwitz, that is, of accommodating oneself to the society of the Federal Republic, and the necessity of finding an alternative to the bourgeois production of art and culture. But the experiences specific to woman's socialisation, her repression and exclusion from culture, were sublated (*aufgehoben*). The radical aspects of these films could not have been formulated without the contribution of Critical Theory, which was returning home from exile. The fact that since *YESTERDAY GIRL*, Frankfurt has been the primary location of Kluge's films vouches for the fundamental importance of Frankfurt School theory, as well as the utopia of its emphatic, and not merely literal, return. In a certain sense, Kluge's films attempted to use history and existing conditions (*Lebensverhältnisse*) against the new immediacy of Frankfurt, as well as to insert subjectivity into the crushing space of social objectivity. They established a counter-public sphere of the gaze in which genuine experience was possible.

But any possibility of this counter-public sphere's being shared by a female public was impeded in *YESTERDAY GIRL* by the role of the female protagonist. The 'heroine' creates the impression that the experience represented is that of woman, as if that experience were not first being constituted in the mind of the female spectator. In its formal method, the film is a false celebration of woman's singularity (*Besonderheit*). If, as the film proceeds, the female spectator ascertains her own capacity for experience, the woman in the film masks the abyss of powerlessness that she simultaneously represents. Although the gaze of the camera is on her side, she does not herself produce this gaze, but is instead a seismograph whose reactions are observed. *YESTERDAY GIRL* encouraged female adherence to the sensitising process, which could best be understood as a politics of refusal, of positing oneself against the rationality of political action. In other words, Kluge advocated a political behaviour which, in *PART-TIME WORK OF A DOMESTIC SLAVE*, he asserted to be essentially female, but which originates more in a male desire for the woman than in woman's desire itself.

The role of the female protagonist in *ARTISTS* is different, and this difference depends on the larger framework of the film's concerns. On the one hand, it constitutes a reflection on the concept of 'authorship' within the tradition of bourgeois culture and, on the other, on cinema as a form of bourgeois cultural

entertainment. Both aspects combine to effect a return to the issues and revolutionary moments of early cinema that have not only been destroyed by the development of the culture industry, but also repressed from public memory.

The 'utopia of film' attempts to resume the efforts of early cinema that would lead to a counter-public sphere and an oppositional aesthetic. Kluge had already published an essay on this subject in 1965 in the avant-garde *Autorenfilm* journal, *Film*.⁸ This utopia is the subject of *ARTISTS*. When the female protagonist of the film moves from the circus to television, she represents the hope, once bound up with early cinema, of an escape from bourgeois culture. That escape contained, not least, the possibility of ending woman's exclusion from culture. And yet, by 1914, this hope had already been extinguished by economic and ideological developments. The *Autorenfilm* – as it was already being referred to at the time – was implicated in bringing this early cinema to a close, insofar as it reestablished a repression of the female perspective and of the autonomy of the actress. Against this background, what does it mean that Kluge represented the emancipation of art through a fictional 'artiste' narrative in which the artist is represented by an actress? Is *ARTISTS* an attempt, using the methods available to the *Autorenfilm*, to make up – to the actress, the female narrative perspective and the female public – for the injustice done by the *Autorenfilm*?

The German *Autorenfilm*, as it first appeared in the years 1912-1913, signalled not only the *embourgeoisement* of cinema, but also the concentration of film on the male psyche, the problematics of which, vis-à-vis women, mesh with the functional elements in film. This was true not only of *DER ANDERE* (1912) and *DER STUDENT VON PRAG* (1913), among others, but also of German films after World War I, especially those of the expressionists. When Kracauer analysed German film 'from Caligari to Hitler', he found reflected in it the identity crisis of the male middle class. Kluge's intention to reestablish a connection with pre-fascist film does not, however, immediately confront these structures. Aside from the fact that the impetus for the New German Cinema originated in the French cinema of the *nouvelle vague* and the *politique des auteurs* of *Cahiers du Cinema*, Kluge's *Autorenfilm* is marked by the kind of critical reflection he found in the work of Brecht and, above all, of Benjamin from the 1920s and 1930s.

Walter Benjamin's reflections in 'The Author as Producer',⁹ in which he concerns himself with the role of the poet or writer in society, were developed around the same time as those in 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'.¹⁰ These reflections are aimed at politicising the author, which is not identical with impressing upon him his obligation to produce 'tendential literature' (*Tendenzliteratur*), but is rather a demythologising and socialising of his role. If the early *Autorenfilm* had attempted a subordination of the technical medium to the literary author, and thus succeeded in assisting in a rehabilitation of bourgeois culture, so the medium itself, most recently in the face of fas-

cism, dialectically forces the author to revise his position. Otherwise he will be liquidated by the universal development of technology, which is economically and politically controlled. Reflecting the ideas of Brecht and Tretiakov, Benjamin referred essentially to three aspects of the altered role of the author, which are also evident in Kluge's concept of the *Autorenfilm*: a revision of the 'separation of author and reader' with a view towards 'turning (...) readers and spectators into collaborators'; the requirement that the specific artistic 'production apparatus' not be used without its being modified, so as not only to promote attitudes, but also to engage with the institutionalised public; and, as an example of such a modification, the transcending of the 'barriers between writing and image' in the sense of a 'literarisation of all the conditions of life (*Lebensverhältnisse*)'.¹¹

The author's reflection, and the revision of his role, also determines film theory's altered interest in the technical medium. Benjamin's perspective on film is thus directed against the flow of the economic and ideological development of film and towards revolutionary beginnings. In a similar way, in the 1960s, when the task at hand was that of opposing the post-war film of the Federal Republic, Kluge made use of the heritage of early cinema, the cinema that preceded the UFA tradition. The characteristics of this cinema were the 'variety format' (*Nummerprinzip*) – a series of short films instead of the one-and-a-half-hour films that proceed in dramatic waves – and the highly stimulating mixture of documentary and fictional genres. Kluge permits both aspects to regain their validity within established narrative cinema, but in opposition to its aesthetic-ideological form. The series of episodes in *ARTISTS* – which ranges from the documentation of a circus performance, a lecture and a literary gathering to fairy tales and science fiction – is only loosely interconnected and maintained by the protagonists Anita G. and Leni Peickert. This serial principle or 'variety dramaturgy' (*Nummern-dramaturgie*) is even more in evidence in Kluge's later films, such as *DIE PATRIOTIN* and *DIE MACHT DER GEFÜHLE*, than in *YESTERDAY GIRL* and *ARTISTS*. The mixture of the documentary and the fictional even within individual scenes – fictional figures acting in an unarranged, real-life scene – is among the most characteristic features of early cinema and is present, as a form of self-reflexion, in the most interesting of Kluge's films. The reestablishment of the elements of early cinema occurs here as a critique of mainstream cinema: the cinema of identification is undermined to the same extent that genres are transcended.

In this completely altered film landscape, however, the heroines of classical narrative cinema remain and function as erratic figures. Kluge's films take up the heritage of early cinema and turn it against established forms of film, but they also represent yet another revised version of the *Autorenfilm*. Certainly a critique of the reified image of woman must be part of any opposition to main-

stream cinema, but it is not enough simply to counter the *Autorenfilm's* exclusion of the female narrative perspective. This problem was not broached in Benjamin's reconceptualisation of the author in the wake of technology, a lack that becomes apparent in Kluge's films. Miriam Hansen correctly locates something tensely compulsive in these films when she asks: 'And why does Kluge only and always send women into the experimental field of genre crossing?'¹² In these images of women, robbed of the context of the classical narrative cinema, the repressed female perspective returns without the author being able to help it find its own language. Would this language transcend that of the *Autorenfilm*?

'It is pure opportunism to disregard it (the *Autorenfilm*)', was Kluge's response to Ulrich Gregor's question: 'Do you consider the concept of the *Autorenfilm* a historical one or one that is still valid?'¹³ If, in point of fact, we understand 'the introduction of the subjective side' as 'the principle of the *Autorenfilm*',¹⁴ then the *Autorenfilm* remains an option, perhaps the only option, for saving the one form of cinema that is both aesthetically productive and politically oppositional. With respect to the introduction of the subjective side, Kluge's theoretical statements about film are part of a rescue attempt; the author moves one step back from the immediate production and becomes a theoretician under whose gaze the cinema opens up beyond the limits of his authorship.

'Film is not a matter for authors, but a dialogue between the spectators and the author'.¹⁵ Is the author more far-sighted, as theoretician, than he is able to be as film-maker, and does the reflection on spectatorship also take account of the female perspective, drawing the *Autorenfilm* into the horizon of his deliberations? This question can be quickly answered in the negative. Nevertheless, Kluge has, with his theoretical statements on cinema, marked out the coordinates within which such a reflection on a 'female productive force' in cinema could occur. These coordinates are: the productive force of the spectator, or the 'film in the spectator's head'; the production of the public sphere as a vital part of film culture; and fantasy – whether socially absorbed as a sort of 'glue' or kept in the margins as a 'gypsy' – as 'the most important form of human labour'.¹⁶ All of these elements have been repressed from mainstream cinema and need to be brought to consciousness and reestablished. There is no other role for the author than that of mediator between oppositional efforts and the rudiments of a future cinema – the author as the champion of the utopia of film. The observations on 'market structure and necessity' in the book jointly edited by Michael Dost, Florian Hopf and Kluge, *Filmwirtschaft in der BRD und in Europa: Götterdämmerung in Raten* (1973), explicitly contest the importance of the author as creator of the film; the maker of the *Autorenfilm* comes no closer to utopia than does the commercial producer:

In this sense the film medium is only apparently the product of the individual ideas and views of businessmen or *Autoren*: It is in reality always a collective expression of

this society. Film loses its connection to reality whenever the organisation of film production breaks down this real connection and repeatedly makes only purely individual decisions determinant for the creation of the film. In this case, the subjectivity of the author-filmmaker in this medium does no less damage than the formula-following and arbitrary collectivism of the film producer who orients himself only to the box office.¹⁷

Now, the subjectivity in Kluge's *Autorenfilme* cannot be reduced to mere individualism; to a much greater extent, it is bound to the generality of language. Or, to put it another way, although the *Autorenfilm* – insofar as it models cinema on the will and views of one individual – negates itself as a collective productive force, it simultaneously renders the collective tradition of literary culture productive for cinema. Kluge considers the formation of such a connection important. In contrast to earlier urgings that film be delineated in opposition to written language – to celebrate the emancipation of the language of the body from the repression of literary culture, as Béla Balázs, among others, proclaimed it – Kluge writes in the *Ulmer Dramaturgien* that:

Film has until now been placed alongside photography in any ranking of the arts. A careful review of the history of the expressive forms of film would probably reveal, however, that film is more at home in literature than in photography.¹⁸

Film is not only dependent on language; rather, language dominates the total preparatory and developmental arena of film. Without a highly differentiated linguistic articulation, a film director cannot move his ideas towards realisation. The author, cameraman and producer cannot make themselves adequately understood in the jargon that is typical for the industry.¹⁹

The new conception of the expressive form of film represented by the *Ulmer Dramaturgien* assumes an old quality, one that the *Autorenfilm* had always brought to cinema: a literary education.

The difference between the visual medium and language was and is, however, not always that between a false immediacy and cultural reflection, nor that between photography and literature. The difference is, above all, that between silent film language and spoken language. Film's silent language produced montage, but even more than this it belonged, to a degree we can hardly imagine today, to the profilmic reality that the camera provocatively registered. In the silent cinema woman had a chance, as actress, to express herself, because her silence could be seen as the expression of her exclusion from linguistic subjectivity at the same time as her gesticulations communicated her opposition to repression. She could thus reflect the experience, the fantasy and the desire of the female public and bring them to bear upon the patriarchal structures of film.

There is in Kluge noticeably little reflection on the actress's role, or indeed on the actor's. And yet actors such as Alfred Edel or Heinz Schubert exercise a much greater degree of autonomy than do Alexandra Kluge or Hannelore Hoger. The *Autoren*-film-maker reflects upon the limits of his filmic possibilities in order to produce a cinema of collective expression. At the same time, he sublates his own intentions in the aesthetic project of a 'literarisation' of cinematic culture. The problem of sexual domination and the role of woman in cinema thus falls through the cracks between these two interests. The repression of the autonomous female gaze that the *Autorenfilm* – even as it was constituted in 1912 – effected is repeated. In this respect, Kluge does not take up the challenge of early cinema's potential.

This lack of interest in the repressed female perspective is reflected not only in the position of the actress, but also in Kluge's concept of the spectator as a productive force. This concept concerns the interaction between the early cinema and the empirical spectator, but at no point does it refer to sexual difference. 'One fundamental', Kluge says, 'is that the film is not more important than the spectator imagines it to be'.²⁰ The film-maker is dependent on the viewer: 'The productive force of "cinema" can only be developed by the perceptual powers of the spectator; it is therefore not just a question of the film-makers' efforts, of whether or not they get stuck on the way to a "unity within variety"'.²¹ Kluge has recognised the necessity of renouncing the peremptory gesture. Film must be, according to the *Ulmer Dramaturgien*, 'as weak as the spectator really is'.²² In none of these general observations on the author-spectator relationship, however, is any mention made of the fact that, when viewed in a sociohistorical perspective, this relationship contains a structural distribution of power that is gender-specific: male *Autor*/female public. Now, we could relinquish this reflection to feminist film theory were it not for the fact that it concerns the contiguous social realms of public sphere and female experience – which Kluge also attempted to deal with in *PART-TIME WORK OF A DOMESTIC SLAVE*. This concern, or the lack of it, is central to his aesthetic.

Kluge's aesthetic concept of the spectator's productive force, of spectatorial reception, is both sociologically and psychoanalytically mediated, but it is marked predominantly by *Lebensphilosophie*. In 1965, Kluge wrote in 'Die Utopie Film': 'Cinematic movement is very similar to the flow of thoughts and images in the mind; it is a matter of entrusting oneself to this flow'.²³ In a similar way, Henri Bergson had concluded that film could not be separated from the consciousness of the spectator if we understand film as more than the mechanical unreeling of individual images. Its rhythm is determined by the inner flow of life, by *la durée*. 'Film as such', he wrote in the introduction to *La pensée et le mouvant*, 'is therefore probably connected with a consciousness that is continuous and that regulates its movement'.²⁴ Yet in the book, *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer*

Sklavin: Zur realistischen Methode, Kluge speaks of a 'generic' (*gattungsförmig*) form of protest: 'A recognition of the realism of protest and of the realism of the human mind, which reacts to reality by transforming it, i.e., of a generic form of protest, is the fundamental prerequisite of realism'.²⁵

Kluge is able to integrate psychoanalysis into the conceptual framework of *Lebensphilosophie* because he understands it exclusively as the theory of a natural, essentially human structure of instinctual drives. Freud's reflections on sexual difference or the self-destructiveness of the species have no place in Kluge's writings. From an organisational standpoint, Kluge still turns to history in his concept of 'historically developed structures of the capacity for fantasy'. Psychoanalysis, understood as a theory of the natural construction of human drives, serves to substantiate the Marxist differentiation between true and false needs, in order, ultimately, to determine the task of aesthetically and politically responsible film, which is, to lead the 'artificially created' needs of aggression and destruction 'back into the total context of the human capacity for fantasy and thus [to] dissolve them'.²⁶

When it does not place itself at the service of dominant ideologies, however, cinema must inevitably refer to a damaged, historically deformed 'total context of fantasy'; it must refer to 'artificial needs', since there are no natural needs to which cinema could appeal. Within existing society, it is not the reality feeding the protest that is generically human, but ideology. In the course of a history of the repression of drives and the destruction of the relationship between the sexes, sexuality has survived solely under the primacy of the species in which the dominant masculinity refers always to itself. Under the influence of the latest technology, the reproduction of the species has become altogether a second nature, which renders sexuality superfluous. The realism of protest has more to do with the historical relationship between the sexes than with a natural species identity.

Kluge confronted forms of women's protest most pointedly in *PART-TIME WORK OF A DOMESTIC SLAVE*. In retrospect, this film appears to have been an attempt to introduce into cinema the female perspective that had been suppressed by the *Autorenfilm*. The first thing he did was to concede to the actress an influence over the film that ran counter to his own conception. Kluge subsequently described the twist that his sister, Alexandra Kluge, gave the film in the role of Roswitha Bronski:

The most telling action in my script, which was to have taken place outdoors, could certainly be seen as a caricature of the Long March towards Yenan; [the Bronski family] was to proceed from the peripheries of the city to its center. This in itself would have represented the height of emotion and the decision-making ability in a family morass of this kind. [...] It seemed to me that an understatement of this kind had experiential content. But my sister insisted on overstatement, because, she said, there

must still be revolution, and it can only exist in business enterprises – and she is such an expert that she perceives very precisely that it will not take place within the family, and must therefore be assigned to another site with which she is as yet unfamiliar. Just like the utopian who thinks: I want to be where I am not, since that is where the horizon is open [...]. And I actually had to make two films, because I can't say that what I want to express is more important than what my sister wants to express.

[Ulrich Gregor:] Are there then two scripts which overlap one another?

Yes, that's how it is. And I must say, it is more explosive to document my sister's mistakes.²⁷

This strategy of showing an interest in the ideas of the actress, while at the same time judging them to be mistaken, is mirrored in the film. It is also what lends the film its 'pedagogic' quality. The woman is represented as making a mistake, which is, however, a mistake from which 'one' (*man*) can learn something – a woman perhaps less so. Beyond the conceptual breaks, the film is ambivalent; attention to the female protagonist and her actions is accompanied by a dismissal of these actions. This ambivalence is reflected in the 'literarisation' of *Gelegenheitsarbeit* (part-time work).

The film is an attempt to establish an interaction between the author, the actors and the female public. Kluge's conception of cinema – as that of a complex formation in which the *Autor* and the *Autorenfilm* represent only one instance – found in this film a realisation that responded to the position of women and the women's movement of the time. But this response entailed no change in the aesthetic structures of Kluge's *Autorenfilm*, nor did it initiate a transcendence of the repression of the female perspective that had been perpetuated in these films. Even in the film itself, the treatment of female difference is manifested largely as a corruption of Kluge's aesthetic. One notices in the film that the role of woman is accepted in terms of content, but that it is not *formally* accommodated: the reflections of the *Autor*/commentator remain more external to the film than in earlier films and are at the same time more frequent. The non-professional performance before the camera is, in the long run, not elevated to the level of a 'counter dramaturgy' aimed at the cinema of illusion, but exposed as amateur theatre.

These assessments do not reduce the importance of the attempt. But among the contradictions that finally led to the film's failure is the fact that the critical female audience did not see itself in the protagonist Roswitha Bronski, with whom it might have been able to form an alliance against the *Autor*, Kluge. Kluge underscored this problem even further when – responding to the key point in the debate, the attitude expressed in the film towards abortion – he

affirmed his unequivocal position against Paragraph 218, and at the same time wrote:

On the other hand, the woman playing Roswitha is personally opposed to abortion. She says that women, as they are constituted by past history, will never as a majority (and she certainly won't) be against children on the basis of alleged self-determination or for so-called rational reasons, if such a negative attitude towards having a child is not absolutely compelled by circumstances. If society forces women to fight for abortion, then we are fighting the wrong battle.²⁸

But here, as well as in his films, Kluge pushes woman to the foreground only in order to have her express one of his own ideas. Kluge, who sidesteps an aesthetic-political concept of the productive force of the female spectator, affiliates himself in his conceptualisation of female productive force with the bourgeois idea of a specifically female capability that has been in force from Rousseau to Horkheimer – that of a 'natural' capability; specifically, that of bearing children.

If his conception of cinema fundamentally bypasses any reflection on sexual difference and the role of woman, the film work of Kluge as a whole still contains an openness towards the appropriation of cinema by women, and nowhere more clearly than in *ARTISTS UNDER THE BIG TOP: PERPLEXED*. The question of woman's role in film presents itself to Kluge ultimately – and not least of all in the sense of his conception of cinema itself – as that of the role of his film work *for* women. If he stands firm with the *Autorenfilm* in opposition to commercial film, if he does not fully return to the forms of early cinema, in which the female narrative perspective could be expressed through the actress, this is because he sees a transcendence of the *Autorenfilm* as impossible. Even if the *Autor*, in the interest of women, wants a return, the way back is cinematically, politically blocked.

ARTISTS, however, constitutes a self-reflection on the part of the *Autorenfilm* that also includes the question of the role of the actress. The film allows the female spectator a moment of appropriation, within which she can ascertain her own relationship to the cinema, which the *Autorenfilm* had played a part in suppressing. If we take the idea of the 'film in the head of the spectator' seriously, then Kluge's films are only inadequately understood as works as such, even within the context of his theoretical commentary, for their relevance is revealed only in the moment of appropriation that makes it possible to differentiate them from the *Autoren*-concept. This moment is always one which is socio-historically concrete and individual. Thus, *ARTISTS* – a film that permits the female spectator to become conscious of and sure of her own emancipatory involvement in cinema – coincided with developments within the women's movement, which was just beginning to reform in the Federal Republic. Within this movement there was an avid interest in film as a medium for political work.

Helke Sander, a protagonist of the movement and a film-maker, is but one example of this phenomenon. This was the first time in the history of the women's movement that such an interest had been shown.

The earlier women's movement had ignored the film medium during a period in which it was extremely important to a wide spectrum of the female population. A historic opportunity was thus missed. By 1969, most women were no longer going to the cinema; women film-makers had to realise their work within a changed social and political context. In such a context, *ARTISTS* was of crucial importance regarding the problem of the lost female spectator, even if the film did not constitute a speculation about a new mass public. On the contrary, the content and form of the film corresponded generally to the actual situation, in which a few people who were not interested in film specifically, but who were interested in culture and politics, occasionally went to the movies – as did, for example, members of the student movement. The film anticipated just that audience it could realistically expect. For this audience, however, *ARTISTS* won back a history that had been lost, one which the audience could now consciously lay hold of as their own stake in cinema and which ran counter to the established form of the medium. In that moment, since the only practical alternative that remained open to women film-makers was to go the way of the *Autorenfilm*, *ARTISTS* contributed to a critical, utopian theory of cinema as the female satrap of the public, cinema as a collective expression 'from below'. Kluge's film work did not simply benefit from Critical Theory; it also mediated the theory through perspectives on film that had not been apparent to the Critical Theorists themselves.

The departure from bourgeois, *Autor* art and the turn towards the media of technical reproduction comprises the thematic content of *ARTISTS*. To the extent that this content is linearly narrated, it is the story of Leni Peickert, the heiress of the circus artist, Manfred Peickert. Leni wants not only to establish a circus, but also to change it, 'because she loves it'. In this she does not succeed, although she does learn to accept the fact that art must be changed from within the structures of capitalism, and she does inherit the assets of a 'socialist, scholarly institute in Frankfurt am Main'. She dissolves her circus and studies the 'mass-media theories' of Erich Feldman. At the end of the film she is working with her former colleagues in a television studio and working on a serial novel at night. The film's ending remains open. 'At some point it all comes together: the love for the circus, the novels and film technology'.²⁹

We are by now familiar with the feminist argument that the stories of women presented in mainstream cinema have nothing to do with the real lives and problems of women, that there are, in many films, 'sub-narratives' that negate the gender of women. The narrative in Kluge's film, however, reveals – rather than conceals – its subnarrative: it is concerned with relations of production and

the productive force of the author. When, for instance, Leni Peickert wants to build a reformed circus from the inheritance of the Frankfurt institute, it is clearly apparent to the audience that this is less a matter of finances than a representation of Kluge's own intellectual formation.

This does not mean, however, that the heroine functions merely metaphorically. Kluge's narrative does not disavow the fact that verbal narration preceded filmic narration. Metaphoric structure connects spoken and written language to the filmic medium. Within Kluge's film, however, this type of metaphoric structure is transcended, as the visuals (*Bildlichkeit*) take on a life of their own, and the words acquire a new literality (*Wortlichkeit*). This is true as well for the heroine of the narrative, the circus artist Leni Peickert. Everything about her is negotiated visually, on the one hand, and verbally, on the other. The beginning of the film is a reflection on the visibility of the actress, independent of her characterisation as a circus artist. We see a photographic portrait of Hannelore Hoger and hear her voice off-camera, speaking in sentences that represent the male perspective rather than the view of the woman: '[...] and I saw in her eyes a tenderness that I recognised immediately as love'. The text continues: 'So I took her body more securely in my arms and kissed her genitals like in the old days'. The voice of the woman we see speaks of an act which, if it were formulated in the heads of men looking at the woman, would render fetishisation superfluous.

We already see in this first scene how Kluge appropriates formal elements of early cinema as a critique of mainstream cinema. In the early years of film, it was not yet a matter of creating a perfect illusion, but rather visual values, sensations; the presentation of an actress or actor before the beginning of a film acted as a tease. In addition, Kluge's use of sound – in a manner different from that of the cinema of illusions – links him to early silent film practices. Rudolf Hohlweg has already pointed out how the use of musical quotations reestablishes the tradition of musical accompaniment in the movies. Music is reproduced, not specially composed for the cinema.

A closer investigation of the aural material in Kluge's films reveals that the sounds are damaged. They show 'traces of use', are second-hand goods. They originate from old phonograph records, which rustle and crack, from an acoustically uneven clip of an operatic performance, or a circus performance.³⁰

Instead of serving to substantiate the illusion, the language on the soundtrack functions independently, as it did in silent cinema. Kluge uses intertitles – the literalness of the narrative – to excess. The spoken texts likewise do not disavow their origins in the narrative; the speakers are fictional narrators within the narrative. The sound film makes it possible, however, to give these fictions different voices. The sensual differentiation relativises the identity of the authorial

perspective, even if it does not transcend it. In *ARTISTS* the diversity of voices, and the fact that they are frequently female voices, is more striking than in *YESTERDAY GIRL*, and quite different from *PART-TIME WORK OF A DOMESTIC SLAVE*. These sequences are without exception shot in isolated locations and appended to the silent image of woman. If the *Autorenfilm* is hardly able to return a degree of independence to the silent language of the actresses, *ARTISTS* makes use of the potential of sound film and posits the autonomy of the female voice against the tendency in mainstream cinema to fetishise by installing a male gaze. A critical reflection of this kind on the role of the actress is continued in the film itself – for example, when Leni Peickert despairingly practices 'bowing before the public' and her choppy movements express her resistance to the proscribed female gentility, or when the Swiss artiste who is looking for a job discovers in the 'reformed' circus that she no longer has to bend herself into forced representations of feminine beauty. The film also displays a level of understanding among the women that is uncommon in mainstream cinema, and this understanding is communicated more through gestures than words. When Leni Peickert frees the Swiss artiste from the hairdresser's false braid, standards of beauty that encourage competition begin to totter; when she laughs and eats together with the female Soviet sectional head in the Ministry of Culture, ideological borders become untenable. There are almost no such scenes in *YESTERDAY GIRL*.

The presentation of the actress reestablishes the repressed gaze of woman. The gaze first falls – and this is significant for the entire film – upon a text in which the basic theme of the film is presented. It is followed by the title, *ARTISTS UNDER THE BIG TOP: PERPLEXED*. This perplexity (*Ratlosigkeit*), or 'being at a loss', has two aspects, of which the subsequent sequences, 'The Work of Mourning (*Trauerarbeit*), I & II', are reminders: documentary shots of 'The Day of German Art, 1939', and images of a snowy landscape (Stalingrad), remind us of fascist 'art', and an 'aestheticisation of politics' that leads to war; the 'Prehistory' of Manfred Peickert serves as a reminder of the futility of the mythic spell of artistic genius. The memory of fascism and war permeates the entire film, mediated in different ways, but always with a view towards the question of art after Auschwitz. The remembrances of Manfred Peickert are personified in the film by Leni Peickert, who attempts to 'transcend' her heritage.

Kluge's choice of the circus artist/artiste to emblematised the artist generates specific images and a general critique. Research into the history of the circus contributed graphic material such as old photographs, engravings and drawings, but more than anything else Kluge films the artists at their labours in the menagerie, in the animal cages, on the circus grounds. No 'meaning' is attributed to this material; instead, the montage helps to create its own meaning, which is established in part by the object itself, but also in part by an entire

history of circus films – in contrast to this, the film transcribes, at one point quite literally, the characterisation of the circus into the context of autonomous art. Under the heading ‘At This Point in Time, a Convention of Circus Entrepreneurs Took Place in Nuremberg’, there follows a documentary sequence that shows a meeting of the Gruppe 47. This is intended neither as a mere joke, nor as a mere decoding of the parallels between circus entrepreneurs and artistic geniuses of capitalism. With these documentary shots, the film binds the theoretical problem of the role of the artist after Auschwitz to the practical debate on the same subject which took place in the Federal Republic, for example, in Gruppe 47. The filmed meeting in 1967 was the group’s last; the film *Autor* Alexander Kluge said goodbye to the context in which he had represented and profiled himself as *Autor*, but which had not offered much support for the New German Cinema.

ARTISTS not only thematises the break with bourgeois art – which had been understood by Benjamin as auratic and by Adorno as autonomous – and the turn towards technical reproduction; it also initiates a self-reflection on the *Autorenfilm*. This determines the film’s form, in which the choice of the artiste-image is of primary importance. It has not been chosen arbitrarily, nor only on account of its visual opulence; it is essential for the subject. The film-maker wants to reflect upon his own, already completed move from literary author to film producer in order to liberate himself from the domination of the principles of bourgeois art, which had been transferred by the *Autorenfilm* to the mass media, and to get a glimpse of the conditions and potential of the technical medium. The provocation for these reflections is the history of German fascism. After Auschwitz, a return to the production of bourgeois art under the conditions of technical reproduction is no longer possible. But it remains unclear what an altered art would ultimately look like. Surely, it will establish links with early cinema, which developed as an alternative to bourgeois culture, but this new cinema cannot repeat the early form. After Auschwitz, bourgeois art and the early cinema slide closer together and the reliance on the new technical medium by the bourgeois artist no longer appears as an encroachment, but rather as the expression of an affinity. The German word *Artist* denotes the modern bourgeois artist as well as the performer in the lesser arts, but in this double meaning it also encompasses the intelligible character of the film *Autor*, who bears ‘two souls’ within himself.

ARTISTS is constituted by its attempt to free itself from this schism, to combine the elements common to both into one – which would then be designated as the ‘artist’ – in order to make the transition to a new form of artistic production. The film moves between two levels: the filmic, visual level, which is represented by the ‘lower’ art of the circus performer, and the verbal level, which clearly refers to the role of the ‘autonomous artist’. Statements such as this one by Leni Peick-

ert – 'In view of the inhumanity of the situation, the only thing left for the artist is to increase the degree of difficulty in his art' – recall Adorno's defence of hermetic art as political.

Into the negotiation process, the border-crossing between both planes, a woman is thrust forward, as is always the case in Kluge. This corresponds to literature's tried-and-true pattern of projecting onto woman the longings for unity within the fragmentation of bourgeois society. In *ARTISTS*, however, there is a difference: this unity is not simply represented by woman; it is her image alone that directs the gaze towards the future. In the past, utopia was male. The artist as a phenomenon of modernity is seen in the film as a product of the bourgeois revolution, as the 'new revolutionary human being'; he is the radical representative of enlightenment, who still clings to its utopia even under capitalism. The artist wants to arrive at his new nature via the domination of nature. He therefore represents the bourgeois protestant work ethic – 'genius is the strength to exert oneself unceasingly'. He does not, however, represent it in the interests of capital. This carries his efforts to dominate nature over to the side of those who are dominated; the efforts of the artists in the circus are on the side of the animals. Manfred Peickert's utopia consists in freeing nature from gravity; he wants to 'haul the elephants up to the top of the big top'. Though *ARTISTS* is filmed predominantly in black and white, the scenes in 'Second Labour of Sorrow: Manfred Peickert R.I.P.' are in colour. The circus, the dressed-up animals, the costumes, the menagerie, thus impart their own exotic glitter and magic.

The utopia of the artist is the new nature. Since it is a nature which does not acknowledge death, the artists risk their lives every day. Manfred Peickert is only one in a series of victims of art for whom the 'work of mourning' is valid. The film alternates between shots of the powerful bodies of animal tamers and acrobats and interspersed texts, including quotations from classical authors such as Schiller: 'And if you don't put your life at risk, you will never win it.' The end of Manfred Peickert's story is marked by his fall from the high trapeze and a composite quotation from Hegel and Nietzsche: 'Death is the final negation of time. And yet all desiring desires eternity.' Like the music, the text bears the 'traces of use'. Bourgeois art played a part in the domination of nature, of the body, of sexuality, while it sought its own liberated reality. Seeking a life without death, it produced its own victims. This finally drove artists into a state of *Ratlosigkeit*, of being at a loss: 'They had forged ahead to the limit, and now they didn't know what else could be done. Exerting oneself alone was useless.' With this statement the film has already left the colourful utopia of the circus. In black-and-white shots whose breathtakingly melancholy 'naturalism' recall early circus films, and which have the effect of an afterimage of an afterimage, the circus is very slowly taken down at night (the work of disassembling is

filmed at accelerated speed), and the mighty tent canvas sinks as if it were exhaling.

Trauerarbeit, the work of mourning, has as its object a patriarchal world of art, which woman has learned to love. Her sorrow at its loss, however, is linked to an older pain, that felt by her sex at its exclusion from this culture. This older pain is now made more visible in light of the recent historical experience of fascism. With the great expectation that she will finally cease to be excluded from that which she loves, that she will now be able to assume the heritage of her fathers, the female spectator is introduced to Leni Peickert for the first time: 'Manfred Peickert's Heiress During the Clean-up after a Car Accident'. This means that, for the female spectator, the woman protagonist is much less the player in the *Autor's* process of self-reflection than in her own. As she is educated in the tradition of bourgeois aesthetics, she also becomes conscious of its oppression of her sex. Can she, as a self-aware woman, take over the tradition of enlightenment and at the same time emancipate herself from the mystic drive to be its victim? Can she suffer the loss of that which she loves without abandoning it? Leni Peickert wants to establish a circus of her own, but, because she loves it, she also wants to change it. To the comment, 'because she loves it, she will not change it. Why? Because love is a conservative impulse', she initially responds, 'That isn't true!' But what must certainly change are her ideas. She decides to disband the circus because of the utopia that it once embodied. After abandoning the idea of investing her love for autonomous art in its restoration, the female spectator finds herself, at the end, like Leni Peickert before the television, at the cinema, curiously contemplating the film medium.

If, on the level of production, *ARTISTS* is a self-reflection on the *Autorenfilm*, on the level of reception it enables a self-reflection by women who have made the heritage of bourgeois aesthetics their own. While this reflection opens onto the horizon beyond the *Autorenfilm* for production within the medium of technical reproduction, it initially focuses awareness on the technical medium itself – cinema becomes a site around which those who are oppressed by bourgeois culture can rally. The protagonist Leni Peickert is not simply a mediator between the planes of autonomous art and professional showmanship; for the film also reflects on the fact that it is a female heroine who mediates, and it gives her a life of her own. It offers us scenes of her private life, of a 'relationship' outside the world of the circus. These scenes represent a view of the everyday – for which women have historically been secretly responsible – which have been structurally edited out in the male struggle for utopia. Insofar as these scenes demonstrate the feminist claim that 'the personal is political', the film regains a quality of early cinema: it combines a story that is embedded in the image-rich world of the circus with observations on the everyday. The pre-World War I German film dramas linked the lures of the fictional – exoticism, erotic fantasies,

etc. – to everyday situations in which women could be found as wives, lovers, prostitutes. This combination lent their fantasies an element that was oppositional vis-à-vis reality, and their perspective on everyday life a moment of distanciation from its spell.

In *ARTISTS*, scenes that elaborate an ambivalent love of bourgeois tradition are juxtaposed with others that show Leni Peickert as she reads in the bathtub, talks with her boyfriend Dr. Busch, visits a publicity specialist in his apartment and returns home. These everyday scenes are not loaded with the dramatic implications that are superimposed on such scenes in mainstream cinema. In the sobriety of these scenes, the 'demystifying' power of the medium is confirmed; the emotional tension remains focused entirely on the question of art after Auschwitz, which is articulated in the alternation of levels, of circus images and literary texts.

This juxtaposition of observations of the everyday with aesthetic-political analysis, on the one hand, opposes the filmic exploitation of problems for purposes of political propaganda and, on the other, keeps the spectator's emotional energies concentrated on the intellectual problematic. At the same time, sexual domination, the constitutive moment in bourgeois culture, is not presented as an intellectual problem. In other words, the female spectator expects a reflection of her own problem with patriarchal art and follows the protagonist to the point of developing an involvement with the technical medium, but the question of emancipation from sexual domination, which strongly motivates her participation, is at no point objectified in the film. This problem remains confined to the contemplation of the female spectator.

The observation of the relationship between the sexes, namely, the relationship between Leni and Dr. Busch, is not only kept free of false dramatising; even the real dramatic element in it does not appear. The sexual lives of all the protagonists of the film seem to be concentrated around orality.³¹ Shots of Leni Peickert, her friends and colleagues while eating recur constantly; Dr. Busch has Leni massage the nape of his neck while he concentrates on sucking on his cigar. Or he lies in the bathtub, surrounded by food, lectures, the TV – and his girlfriend, who sits next to the tub. Excess in the form of overeating is also demonstrated by Lüptow, Leni Peickert's substitute, during an intermission at the circus. Here these images of a sexuality that is repressed or held back do not appear to be the result of the film's remaining silent because of censorship. On the contrary, the film permits a view of unconcealed male genitalia when Dr. Busch gets into the bathtub – something which was unusual enough in 1967 outside the pornographic cinema. The phallus seems to have lost its menace. Leni Peickert narrates the story of her 'love' for Dr. Busch off-camera, while we see him puttering around on his balcony, watering the flowers, etc. This narra-

tive captures the undramatic essence of the relationship and at the same time throws light on the undramatic form of its representation:

I have gotten used to Dr. Busch. I've known him since I was fourteen years old. He enticed me into his room and peeled me an apple, which I ate [...]. Then he said to me: I need a nap, and insisted that I lie down on the bed. He began to stroke my head and asked me whether it felt good. I said yes, so as not to be rude. I said, what if I scream? He took off his trousers and said that I should take a look. I said that I wasn't interested in that, and that I had already seen one before.

The voyeuristic curiosity of the female spectator, like that of Leni Peickert, is inhibited in *ARTISTS*. Although the phallus has apparently lost its menace, the eroticism between the sexes has not thereby been salvaged – it, too, has been lost.

The female spectator is all the more present at the level of the problematics of art. There she not only finds her own dilemma again in the relationship to patriarchal culture, but also finds it linked to her more general experience of sexual repression. With this reflection, however, she remains ultimately on her own, she is no longer able to criticise the contemporary power structure of sexual relations. *ARTISTS'* attempt to transcend the limits of the *Autorenfilm* by using its own methods ends up estranging the film in *Autorenfilm* problematics. While the film recalls an earlier era of cinema when women were accorded more importance, it offers contemporary women no visual pleasure. The strongest impressions the film leaves are those made by language, by statements that appear in written or spoken form. A statement like 'the wounds of the spirit heal without leaving scars, but the wounds of the body poison the spirit' impresses the female spectator because it seems to her to state the misery of the female sex – the problematic of her damaged subjectivity. This sentence occurs in one of the most striking sequences of the entire film, the 'Burning of the Elephant House in Chicago', which is about fascism and revolution. The meaning of the theory in the head of the (male) spectator reveals in the practice of the female spectator not only an emancipatory, but also a restrictive side: the gaze remains centred on, limited to, individual experience and is ultimately not directed beyond. Kluge's film upholds a traditional practice of literary culture, that of solitary reading, even as it attempts to reestablish in cinema the subjectivity of the female spectator.

Notes

1. This paragraph of the penal code outlawed abortion in the Federal Republic.
2. *Frauen und Film* (no. 3, 1974), p. 13.

3. B. Ruby Rich, 'She Says, He Says: The Power of the Narrator in Modernist Film Politics', *Discourse* (no. 6 fall, 1983), p. 34.
4. *Frauen und Film*, p. 17.
5. See especially the interview with Ulrich Gregor, in *Herzog/Kluge/Straub*, ed. Peter W. Jansen and Wolfram Schütte (München: Hanser, 1976), pp. 113-130.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 160.
7. Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung. Zur organisationsanalyse von bürgerlicher und proletarischer Öffentlichkeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972).
8. Kluge, 'Die Utopie Film', *Film* (February, 1965), pp. 11-13.
9. Lecture given on 27 April 1934, at the Institute for the Study of Fascism in Paris, which appears in Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. II, no. 2 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), pp. 683-701. The English translation used here is from Walter Benjamin, *Reflections*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), pp. 220-238.
10. The first version appeared in French in 1936, in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*. In 1938, Benjamin completed the second version, which was first published after the war. Both versions are found in Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. I, no. 2, pp. 431-508. An English translation appeared in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, edited and with an introduction by Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), pp. 217-252.
11. Benjamin, 'The Author as Producer', pp. 230-233.
12. Miriam Hansen, 'Part-Time Work of Alexander Kluge: The "Literarization" of the Cinema and the Transformation of the Public Sphere', unpublished manuscript, p. 27. In her essay 'Alexander Kluge: Crossings between Film, Literature, Critical Theory', published in the collection *Film und Literatur: Literarische Texte und der neue deutsche Film*, ed. Susan L. Cocalis and Henry A. Lea (Bern: Francke, 1984), pp. 169-196, Hansen refers to the fact that the crossing of genre borders does not affect the border-crossing protagonists themselves – they are not included in the process of transformation and deconstruction (see p. 188).
13. Interview with Ulrich Gregor, p. 163.
14. See Alexander Kluge, 'Zum Autorenfilm', in Klaus Eder and Alexander Kluge, *Ulmer Dramaturgien: Reibungsverluste* (München: Hanser, 1980), p. 101.
15. Kluge in the interview with Ulrich Gregor, p. 158.
16. 'Marktstruktur und Bedürfnis', in Michael Dost, Florian Hopf and Alexander Kluge, *Filmwirtschaft in der BRD und in Europa: Götterdämmerung in Raten* (München: Hanser, 1973), p. 75.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
18. Eder and Kluge, *Ulmer Dramaturgien*, p. 26.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Interview with Ulrich Gregor, p. 160.
21. Alexander Kluge, *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin: Zur realistischen Methode* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975), pp. 208 ff.
22. Eder and Kluge, *Ulmer Dramaturgien*, p. 106.
23. Kluge, 'Die Utopie Film', p. 11.
24. Henri Bergson, *La pensée et le mouvant*; German version, *Denken und schöpferisches Werden* (Meisenheim am Glan: Anton Hain, 1948), p. 31.

25. Kluge, *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, p. 218.
26. Dost, Hopf, and Kluge, 'Marktstruktur und Bedürfnis', p. 84.
27. Kluge interview with Ulrich Gregor, pp. 159 ff.
28. Kluge, *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, p. 182.
29. Texts and dialogue from the film are quoted from the script which was published as a book: Alexander Kluge, *Die Artisten in der Zirkuskuppel: ratios. Die Ungläubige – Projekt Z. Sprüche der Leni Peickert* (Munich: Piper, 1968).
30. Rudolf Hohlweg, 'Musik für Film-Film für Musik: Annäherungen an Herzog, Kluge, Straub', in *Herzog/Kluge/Straub*, ed. Peter W. Jansen and Wolfram Schütte (München: Hanser, 1976), p. 54 ff.
31. This is true of Kluge's films in general. See, for example, Miriam Hansen's essay, 'Space of History, Language of Time: Kluge's *Yesterday Girl*', in *German Film and Literature: Adaptations and Transformations*, ed. Eric Rentschler (New York/London: Methuen, 1986), pp. 193-216.

Translated by Jamie Owen Daniel

Rethinking History

In Search of Germany: Alexander Kluge's THE PATRIOT

Anton Kaes

For the people, history is and remains a collection of stories. It is what people can remember and what is worth being told again and again: a retelling. The tradition flinches at no legend, triviality, or error, provided it has some connection with the battles of the past. Hence the notorious impotence of the facts in the face of colorful pictures and sensational stories.

Hans Magnus Enzensberger

When crises occur, one searches the depths of one's memory to discover some vestige of the past, not the past of the individual, faltering and ephemeral, but rather that of the community, which, though left behind, nonetheless represents that which is permanent and lasting.

Saul Friedländer

If we want to approach our buried past, we have to go about it in the manner of someone who is digging.

Walter Benjamin

Nomadic History

'We must begin to work on our history. I mean something very concrete by that; we could even start by telling each other stories'.¹ Alexander Kluge made this statement in his Fontane Prize acceptance speech in September 1979; it announced a programme that he himself wanted to fulfil in his film *DIE PATRIOTIN/THE PATRIOT*, which premiered in the same month.² Although the original conception of the film goes back to the fall of 1977,³ it had lost none of its relevance two years later. On the contrary, at the beginning of 1979 the American television series *Holocaust* had reignited interest in German history. And a film entitled *THE PATRIOT* seemed to answer those critics of *Holocaust* who wanted German history to be represented not by American television specials but by German films. Kluge had indeed intended to make a German film about German history, and to counter *Holocaust* in every respect. In its treatment of history as

well as in its way of dealing with stories and images, *THE PATRIOT* differed radically not only from the Hollywood television series, but also from the classical narrative cinema. Kluge's aversion to the conventional narrative film, apparent since his first feature film of 1966, *ABSCHIED VON GESTERN/YESTERDAY GIRL*, shaped *THE PATRIOT* as well.

In fact, none of Kluge's films (with very few exceptions) tells a continuous, coherent story. Like the Austrian novelist Robert Musil (and later the postmodernist Jean-François Lyotard),⁴ Kluge relinquishes the 'narrative thread' that holds all the strands together in a logical order. In his film, fragments of several stories seem to lie around, isolated parts of different puzzles. It is up to the viewer to piece together the various parts, a process that liberates the imagination but also demands considerable associative aplomb and a willingness on the part of the viewer to collaborate in the construction of meaning. Unlike *Holocaust* and innumerable other conventional history films, Kluge's films do not reconstruct the past as a backdrop for stories of love and suffering; nor do they relate tales and historical events in the past tense. Instead, his films deal with history from the perspective of the present, shedding new light not only on the past (as a prelude to the present) but also on the present itself in its historical dimension.

Ferretting out this dimension calls for the strength of memory as well as an investigative energy. In *THE PATRIOT*, Kluge employs the device of a fictional character who is involved in exploring and researching German history.⁵ Hannelore Hoger, a well-known stage actress, plays Gabi Teichert, a Hessian history teacher who harbours an obsession with German history that goes far beyond her official responsibilities.⁶ As an amateur archaeologist, she searches for traces and vestiges of the German past. In her expeditions through two thousand years of history, she digs up so many contradictory things that she can no longer make sense of them. History becomes a mere jumble to her. The more she grows suspicious of the linear, radically reductionist explanations of history found in schoolbooks, the more she questions a job that calls on her to teach German history in neat 45-minute segments. When Gabi Teichert shows interest, for instance, in the hundreds of little everyday stories that have been excluded by the 'official' historiography, she deals with German history in the spirit of Kluge's project: 'And what else is the history of a country but the vastest narrative surface of all? Not *one* story but *many* stories'.⁷

Alexander Kluge himself is many things: a writer as well as a film-maker who has won many prizes; moving spirit and signatory of the Oberhausen Manifesto of 1962; a tireless and skillful strategist, promulgator and activist of the New German Cinema; a lawyer, teacher, scholar (mostly in collaboration with the philosopher Oskar Negt), media theorist and essayist. Born in 1932, he belongs to a generation that felt the impact of German history more strongly than suc-

ceeding generations. Other members of this generation include the novelists Günter Grass and Martin Walser (both born in 1927), the poet, playwright and essayist Hans Magnus Enzensberger (born in 1929), the novelist and essayist Christa Wolf (born in 1929), the playwright Rolf Hochhuth (born in 1931), the film-maker Edgar Reitz (born in 1932), the novelist Uwe Johnson (born in 1934), and the film-maker Hans Jürgen Syberberg (born in 1935). This generation grew up under Hitler and lived through the Third Reich and the war as children and adolescents. They were old enough to experience National Socialism in school, if not at home, but too young to be actively involved in the regime of terror and to be guilty themselves.⁸ But all of them were victims of the war. At age thirteen, at the very end of the war in April 1945, Kluge watched American bombers attack his hometown and witnessed the bombardment and destruction of his parents' house in Halberstadt.⁹ He barely escaped death himself. The image of the burning city must have engraved itself indelibly on his consciousness; he returns obsessively to the motif of the individual's helplessness in the face of 'attacks from above' in almost all of his works.

Kluge's first literary works, the collection of stories entitled *Lebensläufe* (*Curricula Vitae*, 1962) and the documentary description of the German defeat in Stalingrad *Schlachtbeschreibung* (*Description of a Battle*, 1964), can be seen as a rehearsal of the main theme that he explored continuously in text, image and theory over the subsequent two decades: private lives in collision with history writ large, for which war is a symbol. Kluge's first feature film, *ABSCHIED VON GESTERN/FAREWELL TO YESTERDAY*, in English known under the title *YESTERDAY GIRL* (1965/1966) is based on one of the stories published in Kluge's 1962 collection. It deals with the life of the young woman Anita G., daughter of Jewish parents, who leaves the German Democratic Republic in 1957 for the Federal Republic. We see her as she wanders, suitcase and purse in hand, from job to job, from lover to lover, never finding a foothold in West German society. Her past makes it impossible for her to fit in. The camera tracks her pointless journeys, exploring the reality of West Germany in the late 1950s with a critical eye – the calcified conditions in the political and educational institutions and in daily life, as well as the patriarchal terms of interpersonal relations. Anita's role as outsider makes her a sharp observer of the dominant mentality, a seismograph of West German society under Adenauer.¹⁰ Fifteen years later Kluge used a similar dramatic structure in *THE PATRIOT*. An independent and impulsive woman, a teacher who thinks of herself as a patriot and likes to teach German history in its 'patriotic version' (59),¹¹ Gabi Teichert becomes an outsider by virtue of her independent spirit and stubbornness. From that position she is able to see West German society, particularly its educational system, in a critical light. The more deeply she digs in search of the roots of German history, the more alienated she becomes from her colleagues, her students and their parents.

She is accused of being disorganised, undisciplined and insubordinate. The viewer recognises all this as the necessary consequence of her serious preoccupation with German history.

A few short scenes showing Gabi Teichert digging with a spade for German history first appeared in *GERMANY IN AUTUMN*. These scenes recur in *THE PATRIOT*, where digging for Germany's buried history serves as the film's central metaphor. Kluge once again took the figurative phrase 'digging for the treasures of the past' literally, illustrating it through the concrete image of Gabi Teichert digging into the frozen earth.¹² What results is a kind of image pun in the tradition of Luis Buñuel or Karl Valentin, which has the effect of distancing the audience. The viewer is obviously asked to respond to the eccentric actions of Gabi Teichert not with empathy, but with a critical, ironically detached scepticism. Similarly, when she wants to translate the knowledge contained in thick historical tomes into sensory experience, the film shows her taking apart and 'working on' history books with saws, drills and hammers and dissolving the pages in orange juice in order to swallow them. She thus 'bores her way into history', she 'makes history a part of herself', she 'digests' it, and so on – all figures of speech which, translated from their Heideggerian literal meaning, generate surrealistic dream images. As an amateur archaeologist, she participates in illegal excavations at the city wall in the hopes of finding prehistoric everyday objects in order to 'grasp' (*be-greifen*) the past; only when she can touch it does she understand it sensually.

Gabi Teichert collects fragments of the German past, a 'form of practical remembering', as Walter Benjamin once put it.¹³ Like the piles of shards gathered by archaeologists, her finds are amassed before her: images (illustrations and documentary film clips) of political history from Napoleon to Stalingrad; curiosities from the history of everyday life, ranging from the wish list of twelfth-century peasants to the price of geese in Silesia in 1914; references to the history of the imagination, from Grimms' fairy tales to comic strips; a plethora of anecdotes and life stories; quotations from the history of music, painting and film. The accumulation of heterogeneous fragments, typical of the postmodern understanding of history, resists all attempts at systematisation.¹⁴ The multifarious, the marginal and the idiosyncratic all sabotage general categories of order. The film takes a stand against abstraction: Gabi Teichert's 'greatest difficulty', according to Kluge, is that she appears to be unable to 'learn history from the small print of thick books'.¹⁵ Gabi Teichert's conception of history, based on sensory experience, the joy of discovery and active personal involvement, underlies the whole film. *THE PATRIOT* is itself, as a film, an illustration of a practical, robust attitude towards history.

Kluge's technique for dealing with history is both nomadic and analytic. His plan to scour unsystematically through two thousand years of German history

runs counter to the traditional linear, chronological approach that characterises historical narratives. Like Brecht in his historical novel, *The Business Affairs of Mr. Caesar*, Kluge draws a sharp line between past and present; only if the reconstruction of the past is itself made the object of inquiry can the past be seen in a critical light.¹⁶ By recognising the past as something foreign, something to be actively searched for and selectively reconstituted in the present, he is able to lift events, persons, texts and images from their historical contexts and to use them as quotations. Benjamin's maxim, 'Writing history means quoting history',¹⁷ describes Kluge's approach exactly.

The numerous anecdotal life stories embedded in the fictional space of *THE PATRIOT* seem like case studies from which lessons can be drawn for the present. The experimental arrangement is seldom so clearly emphasised as in the sequence introduced by the written title, 'The Relation of a Love Story to History'. After a short montage of documentary photographs from fascist Italy of the 1930s, we see a long, static shot of a newly-wed couple observing each other silently in front of a mirror. The voice-over gives us details: they are a German officer named Fred Tacke and his wife Hildegard, née Gartmann, who happen to be honeymooning in Rome in August 1939, shortly before the outbreak of World War II. Suddenly the scene shifts to the pair frantically packing their suitcases and leaving the room. The abrupt cut is explained by the voice-over: 'September 1. He has to join his regiment' (111). These scenes are followed by shots of Tacke's activities at the front and of his wife at home waiting. The off-screen voice comments on a photograph which shows an elderly couple: 'In 1953 Tacke returns from Russia, where he was a prisoner of war. Now the two are supposed to continue the love story of August 1939' (112). The story, radically reduced to major plot reversals, demonstrates to the viewer the irreconcilable antagonism between personal and public history, between subjective happiness and the demands of the state. The destruction of private life by politics – the classic conflict between private and public history – is compressed into a ten-minute miniature film within the film. It is a conflict that recurs as the central narrative in several other films from this period: in Helma Sanders-Brahm's *GERMANY, PALE MOTHER*, as well as in Fassbinder's *THE MARRIAGE OF MARIA BRAUN*.

THE PATRIOT presents German history not only from the perspective of the living but from that of the dead as well: as a patriot, Gabi Teichert takes an 'interest in all the dead of the Reich' (50). An off-camera voice speaks in the name of those who died for Germany. In another of Kluge's bizarre conceits, the voice identifies itself as the knee of a certain Corporal Wieland, who fell at Stalingrad on 29 January 1943. The image comes from Christian Morgenstern's grotesque poem, 'The Knee':

In war one time a man was shot,
 They shot him through and through.
 His knee alone was in one piece,
 As if it were a holy relic.
 Since then: a knee walks lonely through the world.
 It's just a knee, that's all.

With the use of this image, Kluge has found a perspective that allows him to criticise the history of the living. 'I must clear up once and for all', the voice-over says, accompanied by pictures of Stalingrad, 'a fundamental error: that we dead are somehow dead. We are full of protest and energy. Who wants to die? We speed through history, examining it. How can I escape the history that will kill us all?' (58). Kluge focuses on the critical perspective of the dead on the living, because history, as Benjamin says, has always been written by the survivors, the victors: '*Even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy if he wins. And this enemy has not ceased being victorious'.¹⁸

In terms of conventional narrative structure, the idea of having a knee represent the dead belongs to the realm of the fairy tale: it is odd, naive, silly. The knee, anatomically nothing more than a joint that makes movement possible, can in this context also be read literally, as a concrete image for the 'between'. It functions here as an allegory for montage and *Zusammenhang* – a central category for Kluge, which can be rendered only approximately as 'seeing things in their interconnection'.¹⁹ Just as the knee links the upper and lower leg and is itself only the 'articulation' between the two, the knee as commentator mediates between past and the present, the dead and the living, memory and anticipation, the dream world of history and the waking world of the moment.

Gabi Teichert and the knee of the soldier who died at Stalingrad – both narrative roles of the implied author – assume an investigative attitude towards history, exemplifying the attitude of constant searching and questioning that the viewer is meant to adopt in relation to history. Because *THE PATRIOT* gives the process of mediation the same weight it gives to what is mediated, it has an open, dialogic, discursive form, allowing viewers to test their own experiences against those offered by the film. The numerous breaks and 'gaps' in this film imply and, indeed, demand viewers who are willing to fill in the blanks and draw connections between their stories/histories and the history seen on the screen.

The Constructivist Method

The method of this work: literary montage. I have nothing to say. Only something to show. I will not appropriate any ingenious formulations, will not pilfer anything of value, only the rags, the rubbish: I will not describe them, I will show them.

Walter Benjamin

Kluge's films erect dams to stem the flood of images. In one of his earliest essays, entitled 'Die Utopie Film' (1964), he agrees with Adorno in his claim that the flow of film images naturally tends to hinder rather than to stimulate the critical faculties of the viewer:

The film is aimed at mature and immature people. Even mature people cannot maintain the continuity of their thoughts and their critical attitude in the face of a film's shock effect. The film superimposes its own sequence of associations on theirs. Walter Benjamin says: We do not watch films in a concentrated frame of mind [...] The viewer will normally not assume a critical attitude towards a film, and it is also not appropriate to the film medium. The film must rather *anticipate* the critical attitude of the viewer and his right to be treated as an enlightened person.²⁰

Kluge's awareness of the manipulative power and the magic spell of images, all too well known from the films of National Socialism, and his fear that viewers will yield without resistance to the seductions of visual pleasure caused him to take radical preventative measures. Compared to the Hollywood narrative cinema, his films seem consciously uncinematic. In order to enable, if not to force, the viewer to maintain the critical distance Kluge demands, his films systematically violate the conventions of representation established by traditional feature films. Kluge uses the film medium, but he resists its suggestive power. 'I like to go to the movies; the only thing that bothers me is the picture on the screen', Theodor W. Adorno is supposed to have said to his student Alexander Kluge, exaggerating only slightly.²¹ Kluge himself talks about the 'annihilation of images' necessary to 'move human beings'.²²

Like Godard, Kluge draws on Brecht's epic theatre and demands that film become 'literary': verbal elements (in the form of writing and commentary) are given the same importance as the visual ones. The words do not heighten the impression of reality created by the sequence of images, as is usually the case in the classical narrative film; language does not emerge 'realistically' from the story. Instead, voice-over commentary, texts projected on the screen and intertitles (as used in silent film) are juxtaposed with the film images in an openly 'unrealistic' manner. This technique recalls Brecht's experiments at making the theatre 'literary' in the 1920s – attempts that in turn drew from the silent film

and its mixture of images and written text. In his 'Notes to the *Threepenny Opera*', Brecht writes:

The screens on which the titles of each scene are projected are a primitive attempt at literarizing the theatre. This literarization of the theatre needs to be developed to the utmost degree, as in general does the literarizing of all public occasions.

Literarizing entails punctuating 'representation' with 'formulation'; gives the theatre the possibility of making contact with other institutions for intellectual activities; but is bound to remain one-sided so long as the audience is taking no part in it and using it as a means of obtaining access to 'higher things'.

The orthodox playwright's objection to the titles is that the dramatist ought to say everything that has to be said in the action, that the text must express everything within its own confines. The corresponding attitude for the spectator is that he should not think about a subject, but within the confines of the subject. But this way of subordinating everything to a single idea, this passion for propelling the spectator along a single track where he can look neither right nor left, up nor down, is something that the new school of play-writing must reject. Footnotes, and the habit of turning back in order to check a point, need to be introduced into play-writing too.²³

In *THE PATRIOT*, representation is 'punctuated' repeatedly by projected texts and intertitles, by still photographs or illustrations. These islands in the midst of the stream of images allow us to stop for a moment and reflect; they foil the temptation to be swept along by the continuous narrative flow. The juxtaposition of different kinds of sign systems – moving images, interposed written texts (aphorisms, short poems), and still pictures – also destroys the illusion that the film reflects some self-contained historical world 'out there'. Kluge's Brechtian approach to film emphasises at all times that representation is a construct.

The voice-over commentary provides a counterpoint to the images and has the function of both engaging and distancing the viewer. It gives the viewer the sense that there is an authority present who has arranged the images and stories in a definite, often ironic way. The off-screen voice is Kluge's; here, as in most of his films, he makes comments about the images from outside the fictional space, even though he slips into different roles. The same voice introduces the pictorial material, summarises it aphoristically, and sometimes communicates directly with the viewer about what is being shown; it even goes to the extreme of undermining its own omniscience: 'At this point I wanted to say something more about the collapse of the army corps, but I forgot what I wanted to say.' (176).

This dialogic relation between the commentator and the viewer results in irony; it also affects the relation of the viewer to Gabi Teichert. The voice-over describes in short, often dry and witty sentences what the protagonist is doing

and why. During long stretches of the film, the disembodied *male* voice speaks for the female character; she, as a consequence, seems naive, often clownish and child-like (not unlike Alice in Wonderland) in her inappropriate reactions and her literal misunderstandings.²⁴ Since the analytical off-camera voice offers a perspective beyond that of the characters – a perspective that cannot be perceived by them – the viewer can easily feel superior to the characters of the film. Even a viewer who is unaware that the voice is Kluge's could reasonably relate the off-screen voice to an authorial consciousness that selects the images, controls what is shown, tries out experimental arrangements and tests new combinations. This running commentary, a didactic gesture which is sometimes parodied through exaggeration, creates a distance from the fictional space of the film and undercuts identification.

Kluge uses montage as a technique that allows him to link, through a quick cut, two images or sequences that at first glance seem unrelated, thereby producing new interconnections that are 'realistic'. In his *Ulmer Dramaturgien*, Kluge writes:

If I conceive of realism as the knowledge of relationships, then I must provide a trope for what cannot be shown in the film, for what the camera cannot record. This trope consists in the contrast between two shots, which is only another way of saying montage. At issue here are the concrete relations between two images. Because of the relationship which develops between two shots, and to the degree that movement (the so-called cinematic) is generated between such shots, information is hidden in the cut which would not be contained in the shot itself. This means that montage has as its object something qualitatively quite different from raw material.²⁵

Montage, according to Adorno the cornerstone of all modern art,²⁶ figured centrally in early film theory until the end of the silent era. The 'dialectical' montages in the tradition of Eisenstein and the Russian film of the 1920s were particularly influential for a political conception of film-making in the Weimar Republic. Kluge places himself squarely in this tradition: 'I wouldn't be making films if it weren't for the cinema of the 1920s, the silent era. Since I have been making films it has been in reference to this classical tradition'.²⁷ It is a tradition that became obsolete with the arrival of 'realistic' sound at the end of the 1920s. The classical Hollywood cinema, from the early days of D.W. Griffith, had always resisted the use of conspicuous montage effects, which draw attention to the film's construction and fabrication;²⁸ self-conscious editing was consistently played down so that the spectator might retain the *illusion* of being witness to a self-contained, continuous action, instead of one spliced together on the cutting table. For the sake of a semblance of reality, editing had to become more and more invisible. Kluge, in contrast, does not believe in this self-effacing 'sem-

blance of reality', which suppresses the marks of enunciation in favour of a seemingly self-evident story that somehow unfolds all by itself.²⁹

For Kluge, montage becomes a means of taking issue with the world around us, an approach that no longer yields truth simply through representation. 'In montage', Ernst Bloch notes in his *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*, 'the context of the old surface is destroyed, a new context is constructed. This is possible because the old context reveals itself more and more as appearance, as fragile, as simply a surface'.³⁰ In this sense the principle of montage is a form of protest that disrupts old coordinates of meaning and establishes new ones: 'One would have to perceive the subjective splinters (of the old meaning), collect them and use them to reassemble a world centred around human values'.³¹ To perceive, collect, assemble: the constructivist principle offers a critical counter-history, demonstrating the possibility of an alternative organisation ('assembly') of reality and its experience.

According to Kluge, reality can always be construed alternatively and be changed. His view contradicts the idea that circumstances have an inherent inevitability. He contrasts the 'dramaturgy of *Zusammenhang*', based on principles of montage, association and multiple interconnections, with the 'dramaturgy of inescapable tragedy', which characterises nineteenth-century opera. In his view, a plot whose action points to a tragic outcome should be interrupted by a sudden change of perspective, like the one made possible by montage. He believes that the tragic literature of the nineteenth century should be rewritten in this way. In Bizet's *Carmen*, for instance, Kluge suggests that, seconds before Don José stabs Carmen, the prompter should intervene and say, 'This situation calls for an immediate discussion'.³² The sudden unexpected shift of perspective would allow for distance and a possible alternative, according to Kluge. The constructivist principle of montage is prefigured in the works of the German realist writer Theodor Fontane: 'Fontane is absolutely not in favour of inevitable tragedy [...] He is never infatuated with the terror of real circumstances; instead, he always looks for ways out, and one reason for montage-technique, for the "novel of multiple voices" is precisely this search for alternatives [...] Seeing things in context (*Zusammenhang*) always provides an alternative, a way out'.³³ In *THE PATRIOT*, Gabi Teichert constantly searches for *Zusammenhänge*, for interconnections in German history. Perturbed by the putative inexorability of historical events and circumstances, she constructs alternative *Zusammenhänge* in her mind. Thus, for instance, in the case of Gerda Baethe, who was buried under bombs in 1944, she imagines that it probably would have taken the combined efforts of 'seventy thousand teachers working for sixteen years' (148) to have possibly prevented Gerda Baethe's fate.

The playful manipulation of the course of history corresponds to the idea of film as a 'time machine' that can alter (stretch, shorten, fragment) any faithfully

recorded action through editing and montage. 'In each of its stages, (1) during filming, (2) during editing, (3) during screening, film is a mechanical construction for the production of temporal sequences that do not exist in this form in society. It is a machine for producing time'.³⁴ This 'machine' translates historical time into film time and consequently frees it from all contingencies. As if to remind us of the difference between film time and real time, Kluge shows banks of clouds floating over Frankfurt in time-lapse photography, an effect (also used in the 1983 film *KOYAANISQATSI* by Godfrey Reggio and Philip Glass) that illustrates how temporal sequences can be manipulated on film.

The splintering and disintegration of the narrative continuum in *THE PATRIOT* follow from Kluge's conviction that two thousand years of German history cannot be grasped from the single perspective of a psychological, causal story. Even an individual historical event like Stalingrad, for instance, exists only as a multitude of perspectives, a point already exemplified in Kluge's 1964 book about Stalingrad, *Schlachtbeschreibung*.³⁵ History in this view no longer unfolds as a neat, self-contained narrative; instead we find a gigantic collection of heterogeneous texts, images, life stories, songs, statistics and anecdotes, a plethora of fragments and scraps without centre and without internal coherence. As a 'bricoleur',³⁶ the author picks up fragments, selecting and assembling them. Here art is no longer the expression or confession of a creator but a technique based on reflection and combination. As early as 1917, Viktor Shklovsky wrote in his pioneering essay 'Art as Technique': 'Poets are much more concerned with arranging images than with creating them. Images are given to poets; the ability to remember them is far more important than the ability to create them'.³⁷

Kluge's film also undermines the classic institutional distinction between documentary and fiction film. In his view, the strict separation between the two needs to be broken down for the sake of realism. To the extent that the documentary film limits itself to simply recording the visible surface and the fiction film abstracts from historical reality, neither is 'realistic':

Mere documentation forecloses *Zusammenhang*: objectivity does not exist without emotions, actions and desires, that is, without the eyes and the senses of the people involved. I have never understood why the depiction of such acts (mostly they have to be staged) is called fiction, fiction-film. But it is equally ideological to believe that individuals could determine history and their story. Therefore, no narrative succeeds without a certain measure of authentic material, i.e., documentation. Such use of documentation establishes a point of reference for the eyes and senses: real conditions clear the view for the story. (41)

Montage places fictional and documentary parts in a dynamic and contradictory relationship; on the editing table new *Zusammenhänge* can be constructed, new connections arise. For instance, in *THE PATRIOT* a squadron of bombers is

shown in grainy newsreel footage, followed by a cut to a woman with two children in an air-raid shelter. The commentary says: 'This is staged! These bombers are *not* authentic. That is, I do not know whether it was *this* bomber whose bomb hits the shelter. I do know the bomber is up there' (69). Kluge does not allow the historical material to speak for itself but instead works with it, shaping and manipulating it through editing and commentary. He calls this analytical activity 'construction work, no different than the work of people who build railroads or bridges or who found cities, except that it does not operate with straight lines'.³⁸

Kluge's film is a hybrid of documentary and fiction that corresponds to the intermingling of facts and desires in the mind of the viewer.³⁹ This deliberate confusion between fact and fiction allows him to have a fictional figure take part in the documentary filming of a real event. The actress Hannelore Hoger, whom we know in the film as the fictional character Gabi Teichert, visits the Social Democratic Party Congress in Hamburg in the fall of 1977 and in her role as the Hessian history teacher interviews several deputies and delegates 'live', including well-known party members, who were probably not aware that they played a part in a feature film. She asks them with a provocative naiveté how the 'raw material' for the history lessons she has to teach could be improved. The presence of a fictional character undermines the unquestioned public spectacle of a Party Congress and makes it seem staged. Through this figure Kluge creates a critical perspective *within* the scene (not, as usual, by juxtaposition or commentary). Gabi Teichert, the scholar of history – and that means, in her own words, also being an investigator of the present reality (108) – would like to participate herself in 'improving' history. She makes the following proposition to a deputy from Lower Bavaria: 'I am a history teacher. I have come here because I would like to work with you to change history. What do you think of that?' (75). The reaction of the 'historical' deputy, partly affable and partly condescending, is scrutinised by the sharp gaze of the fictional figure. Hoger, playing Gabi Teichert, also listens when a vote is taken and notes: 'For three thousand years government has been arranged so that I can vote for what I want only if I also vote for what I do not want' (83). The democratic process and private wishes are shown to be incompatible.

Other documentary sequences of the film, shot as cinema-vérité, include the staged teachers' conference, where the headmaster says: 'I have official notice that there is no such word as "*Berufsverbot*" ["professional proscription" – a government response to prospective state employees sympathetic to terrorists of the late 1970s], even though the thing itself might exist' (119), and the police detail in the department store during the Christmas season, ironically summarised with the self-revealing description: 'The purpose of the police detail is the disturbance of the Christmas peace in the department store by young men'

(142). These sequences use a restless hand-held camera to record statements, gestures and attitudes that betray a deficient understanding of democracy. In the context of the film, these partly fictional, partly documentary passages function as semiotic training grounds where split-second recognitions of authoritarian gestures and phrases are playfully tested and probed.

Kluge's work of deconstructing standard oppositions such as document versus fiction, history versus present, reality versus imagination, representation versus articulation, resembles an expansive excavation and construction site with its continuous digging, building, rasing and reassembling. Thus many 'building blocks' from THE PATRIOT are found in Kluge's literary works *Schlachtbeschreibung* and *Neue Geschichten* as well as in his theoretical book *Geschichte und Eigensinn*. His films and literary texts, his numerous speeches, theoretical reflections and interviews all have a dialogic, unfinished and open character; all call for supplementation. The (de)constructivist principle that is derived from film montage has become the signature of Kluge's work in general.

Archaeology and Imagination

Prefer what is positive and multiple, difference over uniformity, flows over unities, mobile arrangements over system. Believe that what is productive is not sedentary but nomadic.

Michel Foucault

Once upon a time: that means, as in a fairy tale, not only something past, but also a brighter or happier somewhere else.

Ernst Bloch

'The collector really lives as in a dream. For in a dream the rhythm of perception and experience is also changed in such a way that everything – even the most apparently neutral thing – thrusts itself upon us, concerns us'.⁴⁰ Walter Benjamin's theory of perception, influenced by surrealism and its interest in Freud's work on dreams, can be applied to Kluge's film-making. In THE PATRIOT, Gabi Teichert collects fragments and objets trouvés from the German past and assembles them according to a principle that has more in common with dreams than with narrative logic. Everything in German history, even the incidental, abstruse and obscure, seems to concern her personally. According to Benjamin, dreams open up a world 'with special, secret affinities', in which things enter into 'the most contradictory connections' and can exhibit an 'indeterminate relatedness'.⁴¹ What is fixed and frozen dissolves in a dream, and persons, events and

things appear outside of their usual context and unconstrained by conventional logic and hierarchy, free to enter into new relationships.

Kluge calls cinema the 'black communicative space of dreams, wishes, and unconscious images'.⁴² As in a dream, film can break up what has become congealed and encrusted, through the use of condensation, displacement, leaps, associations and substitution. Kluge derives from this similarity a dramaturgy of movement specific to film. For example, in *THE PATRIOT* the grainy, black-and-white, noisy documentary footage from the Social Democratic Party Congress is followed by sudden silence and a still colour photograph. The contrast could not be greater. In the scene of the plenary session of the Party Congress, filmed with an erratic hand-held camera and accompanied by loud, often distorted original sound, the language is extremely abstract, dealing with legislative bills, the voting behaviour of the majority, and such things as partial construction permits for energy plants. Suddenly a quick cut catapults us out of the political discussion and confronts us with a colourful, exotic picture from Hindu cosmology: Seven elephants stand on a giant turtle; a snow-capped mountain rests on the elephants; golden stars shine against a violet sky. The voice-over says: 'Human wishes assume many forms'. Kluge remains quite aware of the effects of such editing:

The viewer now hears this sentence – human wishes assume many forms – and sees more than just this image. Since the image is not realistic and cannot easily be made to fit into the context, it becomes an image that stays with the viewer. It has an after-image. In the film, the after-image is what matters. Before it, something has been emptied out, and after it, there is an image that does not belong. I call that the subversive work of the cinema. Film can do that. Compared to that the written word is less effective.⁴³

The cut from the unsteady cinema-vérité images to the motionless, brightly coloured illustration creates a connection between the reality of everyday political life and the realm of human wishes. Things that normally belong to two radically different areas are brought into relation by a bold juxtaposition, as in a dream. This ability of film to join together things that are usually separate, distinct and incompatible through abrupt cuts challenges the imagination and expands the perceptual boundaries of the viewer.

Kluge's 'delight in the improbable',⁴⁴ his enthusiasm for the world of fantasy and fairy tale, is directed against the ideologically established 'main routes of experience', against suppressed and impoverished perception, and against a 'logic of meaning' that robs everyday life of its wishes:

When I point the camera at an everyday event and film it with 'available light', I have curtailed the everyday by an essential element – by its wishes. The wishes that do not become reality in the everyday world but that are present in the mind and that cause

our eyes never to see everyday reality as it actually is. Our eyes falsify reality through our wishes. They demand something else in a film. So in the following sequence I have to portray this everyday scene again but this time through the eyes of our wishes. Wishes give the everyday a completely different light.⁴⁵

In THE PATRIOT, the 'eyes of our wishes' point to an imaginary Germany seen across the centuries: Pictures from the twelfth century (a sequence of medieval illustrations with the title: 'Wishes in the twelfth century – something very simple'), followed by a poster of the 1941 Nazi propaganda film HEIMKEHR/HOMECOMING by Gustav Ucicky, a film about the murder of a German minority group by Poles shortly before the outbreak of World War II; this, too, is an image of the fantasy production of the Germans. Next comes a drawing of an absurd plan proposed by the Nazi Organisation Todt to build canals over the Alps; then glimpses of paintings by Caspar David Friedrich and pictures of the Brothers Grimm with shovels in their hands. The voice-over comments: 'At the time of this emperor [a portrait of Napoleon I], the scholars Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were digging intensively into German history. They dug and dug and unearthed the fairy tales. Their content: how a people deals with its wishes over a period of 800 years' (123).

History and fairy tale: imaginary wish production and the real experience of suffering supplement and comment on each other. Kluge's film assumes that collective hopes, dreams, anxieties and disasters have left their traces in fairy tales over the centuries. As popular myths of Germany, they have come to terms with history in a special way. In an improvised documentary-interview sequence, Gabi Teichert asks a lawyer and aficionado of fairy tales about the story of the seven ravens, in which the father wants to have his seven sons killed so that his only daughter can inherit the kingdom. 'From a legal point of view there is nothing to say about this story', says the expert, who as a hobby analyses fairy tales from a legal point of view. 'The father has the *patria potestas* and is king here, absolute ruler. He can have his children killed with impunity' (126). Then there is an abrupt cut, and the camera pans over a map with names of cities like Verdun and Fort St. Michael. The voice-over comments: 'Fairy tales have a historical core. And that tells of great disasters' (126). The viewer must make the connection in this sequence between the king in the fairy tale who can have his sons killed at his whimsy and the Kaiser who sent his subjects to death at Verdun in World War I. The montage establishes a constellation whose critical potential sheds new light on the circumstances of domination and the power over life and death in fairy tales as well as in history.

Fairy tales are history written from below – anonymous, ubiquitous, full of excessive, often hidden subversive energy. Their narrative simplicity stimulates the imagination. In addition, fairy tales have always been screens for the projec-

tion of the secret dreams of Germans, allowing them to measure the scope of the compensatory fantasy work that was necessary to balance out the historical misery of the people. 'Anyone who laughs at fairy tales has never suffered' (129).

'L'imagination au pouvoir!' ('Power to the imagination!'), the French students wrote on the walls of the Sorbonne in May 1968, demanding a politics guided not by the reality principle but by free-floating imagination, and based on the pleasure principle. For Kluge, too, fantasy is 'the most important productive force' when it comes to 'people themselves determining their relations to their history, to their life, to the things they produce and to each other. In film this power is at issue'.⁴⁶ *THE PATRIOT* shows the activity of the imagination as a form of historiography. The division between fiction and historiography, between imagination and the search for facts does not exist for Kluge. In *THE PATRIOT*, the imagination roams nomadically through past and future, through distant lands and imagined worlds, calling on the viewer's powers of association and memory, breaking up sedimented contexts and opening new realms of experience. 'A constant shifting of perspectives', Kluge wrote in 1980, 'is typical of fantasy. In fantasy I can transport myself to Africa without effort or I can imagine myself involved in a love scene in the middle of a desert – all this happens as in a dream. The obstacles of reality cease to exist'.⁴⁷

The film as dream. And history in this dream? It becomes a product of fantasy that illuminates connections, challenges perception and correlates images and texts from different centuries and different cultures. It may well be that Kluge's associative approach to history ultimately denies the effect of objectively existing conditions (for instance, in the economic sphere) and actual consequences (for instance, in politics) by relativising and 'de-realising' them in a loose network of free associations, intertextual references and allusions. Kluge's 'savage' montages (in the sense of Lévi-Strauss's 'savage mind') dehistoricise images; torn from their original contexts, they are freely interpretable fragments, easily used for historical constructs that proceed associatively and ahistorically, with the license of a dream. In his 'historical miniatures' – as he calls the intermittent montage sequences of illustrations, stills, film clips and short commentaries – Kluge is obviously not much concerned with logical, rational explanations of history. He wants to plough the 'field of history' and turn over material to induce the viewer to grasp historical reality in a sensual and unmethodical way.⁴⁸ No other film depends so much on the disposition of the recipient for its eventual effect as the open, evocative and polyphonically resonating film of Kluge's.

His work on the 'expansion of the perceptual horizon'⁴⁹ demands from the spectator a mature capacity of association and memory, a readiness to establish connections between film and one's own life experience. He believes that view-

ers can more easily relate their own experience to a film that is diffuse and has ruptures and mistakes than to a 'perfect', aesthetically closed film.⁵⁰ For this reason even incomprehensible passages are included in his films: 'When the knee speaks Latin', Kluge says, referring to a scene in which the voice-over switches to rapid Latin to explain a point, 'I do not at all assume that anyone understands that, at least not anyone who interests me as a viewer'.⁵¹ The renunciation of meaning, which Kluge here propounds in an ironic exaggeration, is the final consequence of a realistic, 'robust' attitude towards history, which should appear to us as something that remains unfamiliar, distant, not easily assimilated. The recourse to Latin also alludes to the learned language of the humanists, who for a long time restricted the knowledge of history to a small minority. At the other extreme, history today is totally 'democratised' and socialised through the technical media of photography, film and television; all foreignness has been driven out of it. Television in particular has trivialised history into easily accessible information bites or shallow entertainment; history no longer engenders experience.

A film like *THE PATRIOT*, in contrast, demands effort, concentration and active intellectual involvement on the part of the spectator. What Kluge said in 1984 about his film *DIE MACHT DER GEFÜHLE/THE POWER OF EMOTIONS* applies even more to *THE PATRIOT*: 'One problem with the film is that it must be seen several times so that the individual images and the structure of their arrangement are retained in memory. The experimental attitude that the film advocates needs time to develop and is easily overtaxed. The more so since the film abstains from using crude means of orientation'.⁵² Kluge's films tend to overwhelm the viewer's imagination with heterogeneous signs, contradictory messages and narrative motifs that are often merely hinted at, in order to keep all possibilities for association open; they definitely need imaginative and creative spectators.

To give an example, in one of the first montage sequences in *THE PATRIOT*, we see Gabi Teichert at the telescope of an observatory. We also see in rapid succession the image of a crescent moon; a factory with smoking chimneys; tall buildings by day; night shots of a fire in a high-rise (commentary: 'This high-rise belongs to the industrialist Selmi. One evening it burns. The fire department's hoses do not reach to the top'); the birth of a child (commentary: 'Frankfurt-North, 10 P.M. '); and the picture of a puddle with raindrops falling on it (commentary: 'A puddle has a history of three days'). Each part of the sequence lasts only a few seconds. One way of dealing with such a montage is to search for hidden connections beneath the associative flow of images. Thus the sudden shift in perspective from cosmic space to the birth of a human being and then to the image of a puddle might well be seen as an attempt to visualise the relativity of our concepts of time and history and to make this abstract thought accessible to our senses. But the centrifugal motifs in the images cannot be reduced to

a single meaning. We are also prevented from falling back on the intention of the author. 'I do not claim that I myself always understand their connections', Kluge writes in the foreword to his *Neue Geschichten*.⁵³ Ideally, we become stirred up and stimulated to relate the images that flash by with dreamlike alacrity to our own waking world. Kluge provides us with pictures which help us assemble our own films that are projected continuously in our imagination.

The New Patriotism

All my life I knew no Germany.
 Just two foreign states forbidding me
 Ever to be German in the name of a people.
 So much history, to end this way?
Botho Strauss

It is strange to hear the German national anthem as a leitmotif in a film like *GERMANY IN AUTUMN*, one of the few films of the New German Cinema not made with government money. It is as if the love for Germany could only be articulated when one felt free of the government. In the autumn of 1977, the German Left believed the government had thoroughly discredited itself with its massive use of police, with its hunt for so-called leftist sympathisers and its *Berufsverbot*, and not least of all through the unexplained deaths of the terrorists in the maximum-security prison of Stammheim.⁵⁴ As distrust of the government mounted and old questions resurfaced (especially abroad) about whether the Germans were capable of democracy, a growing need was felt in the Federal Republic to reflect on the foundations of the state. Was the West German state worth saving if it could so easily be attacked and destabilised? Was there such a thing as a German identity? If so, what did it consist of? Many people posed these questions during the crisis of 1977, searching for points of orientation that promised historical continuity and stability beyond the fickleness of everyday politics.

Germany itself seems to provide an answer: Not Germany as a political entity – the Left had only contempt for that – but Germany as a place that validated individual identity, a place to which people were undeniably bound by birth and childhood, through their language and earliest experiences. The leftist love of *Heimat*, the yearning for a peacefully reunited Germany, was patriotic, not nationalistic. It was also opposed to the dominant politics, which, for instance, was very cautiously 'realistic' with respect to the question of reunification.⁵⁵ Lothar Baier recently attempted to explain the origin of this new interest in Germany as homeland, tracing it to the domestic crisis of 1977:

A strange little plant began to bloom in the shadow of the hideous German police state and its Stammheim Bastille. Above ground, life in this country was still running away from itself, while underneath it had already put down roots in the warm, damp semi-dark. A strange, shamefaced, embarrassed love of homeland had begun to grow, disguised as sorrow at the destruction of some idyll or another that had seemed worth keeping. Where could it have found nurturing soil in these stagnant times? I believe it was in the crack that opened between state and society [...] Something like a 'civil society' had divorced itself from the German state, a society that refused to follow the commands of the government machine, which continued to hiss and stamp [...] A new reality had emerged – the 'people' – that was not yet the entire country, but somehow we belonged to it. But no one said it aloud. The new love of homeland bloomed, like any illicit passion, in secret.⁵⁶

Baier's retrospective view of the 'German Autumn' appeared in 1984 in *Abschiedsbriefe aus Deutschland (Farewell Letters from Germany)*, a collection of essays whose theme is the ambivalence of the new patriotism. A changing relationship of West German leftists to their own land had already been seen in the early 1970s. Peter Schneider's Lenz, the eponymous hero of the 1973 story, is asked what he plans to do after having grown disillusioned with the student activists and after a sobering visit with some Italian socialists. He answers decisively: 'Stay here'.⁵⁷ This half-resigned, half-optimistic renunciation of leftist utopias in the early 1970s coincided with the end of economic prosperity and a growing scepticism about progress and growth. It freed the Left from its fixation on the future and led it to consider questions of origin and identity.

Another factor in the 1970s, was undoubtedly the intensified demands of the younger generation for emancipation from the American superego, the ersatz father who had by then assumed his own burden of guilt in the Vietnam War and who, the young Germans began to suspect, considered the Federal Republic primarily as a military outpost in the struggle against communism. And the widely publicised idea that Germany might well serve as the scene for a 'limited' atomic war between the two superpowers caused Germans in the late 1970s to reconsider questions that had been ignored for good reason since the founding of the Federal Republic: Questions about the 'real' political sovereignty of the nation, its national identity and its history.

A flood of books and articles, films, television programmes, speeches and public debates about Germany, its identity and its history, began to inundate the country in the late 1970s; it still continues.⁵⁸ Writers, film-makers, artists, journalists, social scientists and politicians discovered one common concern: their own country. Thinking about Germany became fashionable. Book titles proclaimed it to be a 'difficult fatherland', a 'two-headed child'; scholars spoke openly about the 'German neurosis'. In the weeklies, journalists speculated

about why it seemed a burden to be a German, why the Germans are as they are, and why Germany wants to be loved more than other nations.⁵⁹ During the filming of *DIE BLECHTROMMEL/THE TIN DRUM* (1979), Volker Schlöndorff claimed that, despite his francophilia, as a German he could only make German films.⁶⁰ Likewise, the failure of Wim Wenders in Hollywood – which he dramatised in his film *DER STAND DER DINGE/THE STATE OF THINGS* (1982) – seemed to echo the maxim, ‘stay here’. Literary authors were no less preoccupied with the subject of their own country.⁶¹ Germany has, after all, always been the place where intellectuals, in despair over the existing Germany, were obsessed with images of an imaginary Germany located either in the distant past or projected into the future. Kluge’s *THE PATRIOT* and the other films discussed in this book are part and parcel of this new (and, basically, old) debate about Germany and its identity. These films provide aesthetically complex and politically ambiguous answers to the unresolved question of a German identity.

Towards the end of *THE PATRIOT*, a cryptic sentence from Karl Kraus appears as an intertitle in white print: ‘The more closely you look at a word, the more distantly it looks back at you’. Underneath, in capital letters, the word ‘GERMANY’ is added (165). Kluge looks so closely at Germany that the viewer’s gaze becomes confused, and what has been familiar suddenly seems distant, strange, foreign. It is his project to dissolve any large and abstract conceptions of Germany and instead to emphasise concrete experiences. Like Edgar Reitz in *HEIMAT*, Kluge sees ‘Germany’ first of all in its real, geographic dimension. *THE PATRIOT* begins with traditional postcard motifs: Rural landscapes, mowed fields, green meadows, blossoming cherry trees, a view of a castle in ruins, of woods and pastures. The voice-over is spoken by the knee: ‘It’s said I’m interested in history. That’s true, of course. I can’t forget that I would still be part of a whole if Corporal Wieland, my former master, were still part of a whole, *part of our beautiful Germany*. And not in his bunker [...] As a German knee I am naturally interested, above all, in German history: The emperors, the peasants, blossoms, trees, farms, meadows, plants’ (60).

In the filmscript the expression ‘our beautiful Germany’ is set in italics, as if Kluge wanted it to be highlighted. Judging from the accompanying images, ‘our beautiful Germany’ extends only to nature, to the cherry blossoms, which are shown in an unusually lengthy close-up, and to the historical ruins, which are so overgrown that they have become part of nature again. In 1928, Kurt Tucholsky, the famous social satirist, ended *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*, his bitter diatribe against the Germany of the Weimar Republic, with a similar series of idyllic images of German landscapes. Tucholsky’s book, after castigating in word and image (mostly through photo-montages by John Heartfield) German militarism and submissiveness, philistinism and obsession with authority, asserts in its final sequence of landscape images his basic love of Germany,

which in the end transcends his contempt for its debased political culture.⁶² Kluge's landscape shots of various German regions, emptied of people, are no less nostalgic; but he abruptly cuts from the tranquil colour pictures of German scenery in spring to documentary footage of emaciated German soldiers awaiting their sure death in the winter of Stalingrad. As in Syberberg's Hitler film, a disparity arises, between Germany and Stalingrad, between home and far away, between peaceful nature and the hostile history 'that will kill us all' (58).

Kluge finds numerous pictorial and textual metaphors that link German history with ice and winter, coldness, freezing and death. After the 'German Autumn', a German winter. At the beginning of the film we see images of Gabi Teichert digging in the frozen ground, followed by a picture of someone trying to climb a glassy ice slope to a castle, a nightmare image. This is followed by pictures of German soldiers freezing to death in Stalingrad. Towards the end of the film a scientist reports that at minus 273 degrees centigrade, matter has finally come to its most perfect order, an order, however, where there is no more life. Then there is a cut to documentary shots of the Russian campaign in the winter of 1942, followed by an anonymous children's verse that summarises Kluge's idea of German history:⁶³

A little man who wasn't wise
 Built his house upon the ice.
 Said: O Lord, keep up the freeze
 Or else my little house I'll lose.
 But the little house sank down
 And the little man did drown. (160)

Immediately afterward we see 'Gabi Teichert in her car, driving through the city. She is crying' (160). The film's *Trauerarbeit* (work of mourning) surfaces mutely in the patriot's tears: Mourning for the many war victims and for the lost fatherland; mourning also for the cold rigidity that keeps the society together. 'Being a patriot with this history is something of a contradiction'.⁶⁴

Even in the earlier *GERMANY IN AUTUMN*, Kluge did not hesitate to use music to express his love for Germany. Several times in both films we hear the instrumental version of the Haydn melody that has become the German national anthem. In *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* we also hear an interpretation of a Schubert lied from the *Winterreise*. The most disparate juxtapositions of images are held together and united by music, mostly classical German pieces. The music indicates how deeply both *THE PATRIOT* and *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* are indebted to German Romanticism: In both films we find a tone that hovers between elegy and irony; a pleasure in fairy tales; a dissatisfaction with the present, which both films counter by dreaming their way out of it, either towards the distant past or into other imaginary worlds; a penchant for fragments and formal self-

reflexivity. All these attributes clearly point to the German Romantic tradition, from Brentano to Heinrich Heine's *Deutschland: Ein Wintermärchen* (*Germany: A Winter's Tale*, 1844). Even the word 'patriot' derives from the time of Romanticism; Prussian reformers adopted it from French in their battle against the usurper Napoleon Bonaparte. But Kluge also knows that 'for the past 150 years the word has been the private property of the political Right' (342).

What images of Germany does Kluge show? Along with pictures of the landscape, there are repeated documentary shots of doomed German soldiers at Stalingrad, images of battlefields, air-raid shelters and falling bombs, pictures of tanks moving across meadows, cannon frigates and bombers. Kluge also used Allied newsreel footage of the execution of young German Nazis by the occupation forces in the spring of 1945 and documentary shots of American planes attacking a German city. We see the bomber pilots standing awkwardly beside their planes, grinning and joking. Kluge makes a sarcastic comment in the voice-over: 'These bomber pilots have returned from their mission. They have not learned anything definite about Germany. They have just expertly shot up the country for eighteen hours. Now they are returning to their quarters to sleep' (172). In another sequence of the film we see documentary footage of bombs falling from an airplane, burning houses and clouds of smoke. Commenting on these images, the voice-over says: 'Let us not forget that sixty thousand people burned to death in Hamburg' (149).

Such statements reveal a highly ambivalent political agenda covertly at work in the film. Some of Kluge's comments, which in the late 1970s may have been intended to remind viewers about *German* suffering at a time when recent German history was equated with the Holocaust (or, more precisely, with *Holocaust*, the American television series), from today's perspective appear provocatively and even dangerously one-sided. Given the present danger of interested parties wanting to rewrite German history in order to relativise the crimes of the past, Kluge's film suddenly seems rather problematic.⁶⁵ The Germans are shown throughout the film as *victims* of crimes perpetrated against them; we see them endure war, bombardment, imprisonment, execution. It follows that, for Kluge, to be a patriot in Germany means to be mindful of all the many German victims. Thus Gabi Teichert, Kluge's protagonist, is introduced in the very first scene of the film with the following voice-over comment: 'Gabi Teichert, history teacher in Hessen, a patriot, *that is*, she takes an interest in all the dead of the Reich' (50; emphasis mine). This introduction is followed by underlit, grainy war-film footage that is difficult to localise: 'It is either the time of the Seven Years' War or during the Wars of Liberation, but now we see an anti-aircraft cannon of 1943', states the script, playfully alluding to the basic sameness of all wars (51).⁶⁶ The music that accompanies the scenes of fallen soldiers is by Hanns Eisler; he composed it for Alain Resnais's film *LA NUIT ET BROUILLARD/NIGHT AND FOG* of 1958,

which was not shown on West German television until twenty years later, in January 1978.

NIGHT AND FOG is a memorial to the victims of Auschwitz, a documentary that blends historical photographs of concentration-camp horrors with long, calm tracking shots that search the landscape for traces of the vanished barracks and gas chambers. Kluge uses the musical theme that functioned as a leitmotif for Resnais as an overture for his own film (but does not mention the source of the music, either in his published script or in the credits). This musical quotation may hint at a consciousness that does not want to exclude Auschwitz from the patriotic *Trauerarbeit*. But even those who can appreciate the subtle allusion to the leitmotif from NIGHT AND FOG are soon pulled back to the side of the *German* war victims because the music is combined with images of German soldiers at Stalingrad. The victims of the Germans at Auschwitz, Buchenwald, and many other concentration camps are not part of the picture.⁶⁷ Already the first images of THE PATRIOT show that the film is concerned with a Germany that is haunted by the memory of its wars and strewn with dead bodies. The Reich has been broken up into innumerable fragments, like Kluge's film itself, and the idea of Germany survives today only as a memory, a myth, a wishful fantasy, a dream – and a film.

Kluge was one of the first speakers in the lecture series 'Speaking about Our Country: Germany', held on Sunday mornings at the Munich Kammerspiel Theatre beginning in 1983. In his lecture, he tried to give a precise definition of his notion of Germany. He began by saying that Germany could not be identical with the national entity that perished in 1945, the German Reich. 'If what is called Germany could perish in 1945, then this Germany did not exist before that time [...] If one thinks of Germany just as a national entity, then from the time the empire was founded in 1870-71 it has been something imaginary'.⁶⁸ Germany is imaginary for Kluge not only in the sense of Cornelius Castoriadis, for whom national identity represents part of the social imagination,⁶⁹ but also in the literal sense that Germany cannot easily be defined in spatial terms. Even those boundaries that Hoffmann von Fallersleben named in the words to the national anthem, 'From the Maas to the Memel, from the Etsch to the Belt', have never been German boundaries. 'Germany never had fixed geographical boundaries. It must be understood in terms of its *lack* of boundaries. It is easier to understand that Germany was always absent, has never come into existence, and that therefore an unyielding desire for unity, for community crystallised around this word. Such longing, such expectations and desires indicate a temporal dimension: it is a *living being that is 2,000 years old*'.⁷⁰

Germany is a 'historical product' for which – according to Kluge's calculations – eighty-seven generations have worked themselves to the bone, and even died defending it. Germany can also be seen as a 'factory of collective experi-

ence', a 'concrete vessel of our memories'.⁷¹ In their theoretical treatise *Geschichte und Eigensinn (History and Obstinacy, 1981)* Kluge and Oskar Negt hold two contradictory notions of Germany: On the one hand, they consider Germany a 'gigantic kitchen'⁷² in which collective work has ceaselessly produced historical changes; on the other hand, they speak of Germany as an 'illusion':⁷³ 'Germany, always on the point of ruin, exists only as something imagined, as a collective prejudice with appended institutional structures'.⁷⁴ Kluge and Negt postulate the 'most bitter antagonism' between 'the result of history, *this* Germany as it exists now, and *that* Germany for which people have indefatigably worked without achieving it'.⁷⁵

All the hopes and desires produced over the centuries in this 'laboratory' called Germany were not bound by the actual reality of the existing nation. They always aimed far beyond it; they were 'romantic'. The collective wishes of German poets and thinkers for some 'other' Germany remain unfulfilled, something that has become especially clear today. For this reason, Kluge defines his concept of Germany paradoxically as the 'lack of Germany'. It is precisely the absence of the imagined 'other' Germany that determines our understanding of the existing Germany. Nonetheless, or perhaps for that reason, he ends his speech with a neo-patriotic appeal that is itself based on wishes and hopes:

What we need is a structure, a community, a vessel, a laboratory, a social factory, it doesn't matter what we call it, that unites sufficient intensities, time spans, forms of good will, and if necessary evil will, in such a way that it is possible to make peace in an emergency, to defend what is worth my life, and to invest our thoughts, our feelings, and our work in it, as illuminated by the proverb: 'If you don't give your life, you will never gain your life'. This quasi-negative concept, the lack of Germany, the lack of such a community is what [...] I understand by the concept of Germany – a challenge, something that would be worthwhile to reconstruct or to build.⁷⁶

Quite appropriately, *THE PATRIOT* ends on the last day of the year with a close-up of Gabi Teichert's face, 'looking hopefully into the winter storm' (178). Kluge's voice-over comments: 'Every year on New Year's Eve, Gabi Teichert sees 365 days before her. Thus the hope arises that she can improve the raw material for history classes in high schools this year' (178). The open structure of the film does not permit a dramatic closure; the new year will bring new stories, new experiences and new memories that will change Germany and its history. The march of time itself promises an exit from a fatal past and an entry into a possibly better present.

Notes

1. Alexander Kluge, 'The Political as Intensity of Everyday Feelings', *Cultural Critique* (no. 4 fall, 1986), p. 127. [Reprinted in this book, ed.] The translation has been slightly modified in accordance with the German original, 'Das Politische als Intensität alltäglicher Gefühle', in *Alexander Kluge*, ed. Thomas Böhm-Christl (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), p. 318.
2. At the premiere of the film at the Hamburg Film Festival in September 1979, a shortened version was shown. In December 1979, a two-hour version of THE PATRIOT premiered. On the comparison of the two versions, see Wolfram Schütte, 'Kälte- & Wärmestrom: Alexander Kluges "Ur-und Kino-Patriotin"', *Frankfurter Rundschau* (9 January 1981). My analysis is based on the second, final version.
3. Kluge's original plan to use the events of Autumn 1977 as the impetus for a six-hour film about German history proved unworkable. It did, however, create an 'excess of motivation' to pursue the project that eventually resulted in THE PATRIOT. See 'Alexander Kluge: Die Patriotin', *Filmkritik* (no. 11, 1979), pp. 503-504; 'Eine Baustelle ist vorteilhafter als ganze Häuser: Ein Gespräch mit Alexander Kluge', *Spuren* (no. 1, 1980), p. 16; Miriam Hansen, 'Alexander Kluge, Cinema, and the Public Sphere: The Construction Site of Counter-History', *Discourse* (no. 6, 1983), pp. 53-74. THE PATRIOT was originally planned as a collective production in the style of GERMANY IN AUTUMN. But only Margarethe von Trotta made a contribution, which was incorporated into the film: A fictional scene in which a television set is delivered to an army mess hall.
4. See the classic passage in Robert Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, trans. Eithne Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser, vol. 2 (New York: Coward-McCann, 1954), p. 436: 'What puts our minds at rest is the simple sequence, the overwhelming variegation of life now represented in, as a mathematician would say, an undimensional order: the stringing upon one thread of all that has happened in space and time, in short, that notorious "narrative thread" [...] In their basic relation to themselves most people are narrators [...] What they like is the orderly sequence of facts, because it has the look of a necessity, and by means of the impression that their life has a "course" they manage to feel somehow sheltered in the midst of chaos. And now Ulrich observed that he seemed to have lost this elementary narrative element to which private life still holds fast, although in public life everything has now become non-narrative, no longer following a "thread", but spreading out as an infinitely interwoven surface'. It is possible that Kluge's concept of the 'narrative surface' derives from this passage. See also Jean-François Lyotard, who speaks of the decline of the 'grand narratives' in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).
5. Characters such as chroniclers, archivists, and history professors frequently appear in historical novels. Gabi Teichert is reminiscent of the reporter and biographer in Bertolt Brecht's unfinished novel *Die Geschäfte des Herrn Julius Caesar* (*The Business Affairs of Mr. Julius Caesar*, 1937-39), who also searches for sources and interviews his contemporaries in a futile attempt to write a historically 'objective' account of Julius Caesar's life.

6. Kluge's character teaches history in the state of Hesse for good reasons. In 1977, the Hessian Cultural Ministry decreed that history should be abolished as a subject in high schools; history was to be merged with geography and social studies in the subject 'social science'. This made for a situation full of contradictions. On the one hand, a poll in 1977 had shown enormous deficits in students' historical knowledge; on the other hand, the Ministry of Culture seriously contemplated doing away with history as an independent discipline. From this perspective, Kluge's *THE PATRIOT* is not only an indirect and ironic reflection on how history can be mediated through the institution of the school; it is also an intervention in the debate about cultural policy in Hesse.
7. Alexander Kluge, 'On Film and the Public Sphere', *New German Critique* (no. 24/25, 1981/82), p. 206. [Reprinted in this book, ed.]
8. The chancellor of the Federal Republic, Helmut Kohl, was born in 1930 and hence also belongs to this generation. On a state visit to Israel in 1984, he claimed the 'blessing of having been born late' for himself and his generation. This expression has since become a proverbial cliché. Gert Heidenreich, for instance, titled his collection of stories after it: *Die Gnade der späten Geburt* (Munich/Zurich: Piper, 1986).
9. See Kluge's narrative montage, 'Der Luftangriff auf Halberstadt am 8. April 1945', in Alexander Kluge, *Neue Geschichten, No 1-18, 'Unheimlichkeit der Zeit'* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), pp. 33-107. See also the exhaustive analysis of that piece in David Roberts, 'Alexander Kluge und die deutsche Zeitgeschichte: Der Luftangriff auf Halberstadt am 8.4.1945', in *Alexander Kluge*, ed. Thomas Böhm-Christl (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), pp. 77-116. [See translation in this book, ed.]
10. On Kluge's *ABSCHIED VON GESTERN/YESTERDAY GIRL*, see Enno Patalas and Frieda Grafe, 'Tribüne des Jungen Deutschen Films. II. Alexander Kluge', *Filmkritik* (no. 9, 1966), p. 487-491. See also the extensive analysis by Miriam Hansen, 'Space of History, Language of Time: Kluge's *Yesterday Girl*', in *German Film and Literature: Adaptations and Transformations*, ed. Eric Rentschler (New York/London: Methuen, 1986), pp. 193-216.
11. The numbers in parentheses following quotations in this chapter refer to pages in Alexander Kluge's book *Die Patriotin* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1979), which contains the complete text of the film as well as many additional pictures and theoretical and documentary material.
12. In a conversation with the editors of the periodical *Filmkritik* (no. 11, 1979), Kluge characterised the relationship between 'ice' and 'history' as the 'core' of *YESTERDAY GIRL* and *THE PATRIOT*.
13. Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*, vol. 2 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), p. 1058.
14. See Hannes Böhringer, 'Die Ruine in der Posthistoire', *Merkur* (no. 406 April, 1982), pp. 367-375.
15. Kluge, 'Die Patriotin', p. 504.
16. See Hans V. Geppert, *Der 'andere' historische Roman: Theorie und Strukturen einer diskontinuierlichen Gattung* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1976). Geppert assumes a 'hiatus between fiction and history' (p. 34). While historical novels typically tend to cover up this hiatus, the 'other' historical novel accentuates it. 'It is not so much a matter of the fictional presentation of history as of the "fictions of history"' (p. 135).
17. Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*, p. 595.

18. Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), p. 255.
19. See 'Gespräch mit Alexander Kluge', *Filmkritik* (no. 11, 1979), p. 518. 'I developed the knee of Corporal Wieland from this Morgenstern poem. You never see it except in the gap between the shots [...] and that is the point: The main things in the film are between the shots'.
20. Alexander Kluge, 'Die Utopie Film', *Merkur* (18, 1964), p. 1142 (emphasis mine).
21. Quoted in Alexander Kluge, 'Gespräch über Film', in Klaus Eder and Alexander Kluge, *Ulmer Dramaturgien: Reibungsverluste* (Munich/Vienna: Hanser, 1980), p. 48.
22. 'Die Macht der Gefühle: Geschichte, Gespräche und Materialien von und über Alexander Kluge', *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* (no. 53/54 December, 1983), p. 184: 'As a film-maker I know that an uncanny number of images must be destroyed before some effect is achieved. I have to be able to produce the sun at midnight so that it can begin to shine again. I have to destroy a whole series of images so that something moves again in the human being'.
23. Bertolt Brecht, 'The Literarization of the Theatre (Notes to the *Threepenny Opera*)', in *Brecht on Theatre*, ed. and trans. John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang, 1966), pp. 43-44.
24. Feminist critics have noted that the female protagonist does not speak for herself but is portrayed and subtly satirised by the invisible male commentator. See Claudia Lenssen, 'Kein Dunkel hat seinesgleichen: Zu Alexander Kluges Film *Die Patriotin*', *Frauen und Film* (no. 23 April, 1980), pp. 6-8; B. Ruby Rich, 'She Says, He Says: The Power of the Narrator in Modernist Film Politics', *Discourse* (no. 6 autumn, 1983), pp. 31-47.
25. Alexander Kluge, 'On Film and the Public Sphere', pp. 218-219. On Kluge's use of montage see also Klaus Kreimeier, 'Film-Montage und Montage-Film', *Spuren* (no. 3, 1980), pp. 28-30; David Roberts, 'Die Formenwelt des Zusammenhangs: Zur Theorie und Funktion der Montage bei Alexander Kluge', *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* (no. 12, 1982), pp. 104-119.
26. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, trans. C. Lenhardt (London/New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), p. 222. (Translation modified)
27. Kluge, 'On Film and the Public Sphere', p. 206.
28. For an exposition of the emergence of traditional Hollywood film aesthetics, see David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).
29. See Christian Metz's elaboration of Emile Benveniste's distinction between *énoncé* and *énonciation* and between *histoire* and *discours* in *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 97. See also Miriam Hansen, 'The Stubborn Discourse: History and Story-Telling in the Films of Alexander Kluge', *Persistence of Vision* (no. 2 fall, 1985), pp. 19-29.
30. Ernst Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), p. 221. Also, compare the passage from Brecht that Kluge likes to quote: 'The situation is complicated by the fact that less than ever does a simple "reproduction of reality" tell us anything about reality. A photograph of the Krupp factory or of the AEG reveals practically nothing about these institutions. The genuine reality has slipped into the

- functional [...] Hence something has to be "constructed", something "artificial", something not given but "put together". Quoted in Kluge, 'On Film and the Public Sphere', p. 218 n. 4.
31. Kluge and Negt, *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, p. 154. See also Alexander Kluge ed., *Besandtsaufnahme: Utopie Film. Zwanzig Jahre neuer deutscher Film* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1983), p. 427: 'We need an enterprising, investigating type of collector, a kind of detective'.
 32. Alexander Kluge, 'Anmerkungen zu Jutta Brückner', *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* (no. 53/54, December, 1983), p. 233.
 33. Kluge, 'The Political as Intensity of Everyday Feelings', p. 123. (Translation modified).
 34. Alexander Kluge, 'Zu einer Stein-Konstruktion', in Udo Klückmann, Klaus Heinrich et al., *Foto-Assemblagen* (Berlin: Medusa, 1979), p. 29.
 35. See Kluge's afterword to his *Schlachtbeschreibung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1978), p. 368: 'All those in Stalingrad who saw something, wrote official documents, transmitted news, and created sources, had to rely on what they could see with their own two eyes. A disaster that strikes a mass of 300,000 men cannot be grasped by these means (quite apart from the fact that the disaster itself blurs the vision)'.
 36. The expression comes from Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 16 ff. See Kluge's reference in Kluge and Negt, *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, p. 222: 'In our book we use a procedure that treats living relations and conditions as if they were things, that places them side by side, takes them apart, gathers them, pursues them in their dispersion, tests them out. Lévi-Strauss called this way of working "bricolage"'.
 37. Viktor Shklovsky, 'Art as Technique', in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, trans. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), p. 7.
 38. Kluge, 'On Film and the Public Sphere', p. 206.
 39. See Alexander Kluge, 'Interview', in Rainer Lewandowski, *Die Filme von Alexander Kluge* (Hildesheim/New York: Olms, 1980), p. 39: 'Everyone is constantly producing a film, whether he is sitting in a movie house or not; that is the film of his experiences and it is basically associative. If I remember something [...] when I dream in German, then I am working on a film according to the same rules of montage, epiphany, third-person perception, polyvocality, countermovement, fantasy activity and so forth that the filmmaker uses, and it plays just like a film provided that the film does not dominate'.
 40. Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*, p. 272.
 41. *Ibid.*, p. 993.
 42. Kluge, 'Cinéma pure, cinéma impure', *Filmfaust* (no. 26, 1982), p. 64.
 43. *Ibid.*, p. 62. See also the close analysis of this scene in Gerhard Bechtold, 'Die Sinne entspannen: Zur Multimedialität in Alexander Kluges Texten', in *Alexander Kluge*, ed. Thomas Böhm-Christl (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), pp. 220-227.
 44. Kluge, *Die Macht der Gefühle*, p. 195.
 45. Kluge, 'Cinéma pure', p. 43.
 46. Alexander Kluge, 'Der Phantasie-Betrieb', in *Die Filmemacher: Zur neuen deutschen Produktion nach Oberhausen*, ed. Barbara Bronnen and Corinna Brocher (Munich: Bertelsmann, 1973), p. 235. On the function of fantasy see also Kluge and Oskar

- Negt, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung: Zur Organisationsanalyse von bürgerlicher und proletarischer Öffentlichkeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972), pp. 69 ff, where fantasy is interpreted as a kind of relay station between present, past, and future.
47. Kluge, 'On Film and the Public Sphere', p. 215.
 48. See Reiner Frey and Alexandra Kluge, "'Eine realistische Haltung müsste der Zuschauer haben, müsste ich haben, müsste der Film haben": Gespräch mit Alexander Kluge', *Filmfaust* (no. 20 November, 1980), p. 22. On the viewer in Kluge's film, see Gerhard Bechtold, *Sinnliche Wahrnehmung von sozialer Wirklichkeit: Die multimedialen Montage-Texte Alexander Kluges* (Tübingen: Narr, 1983); Michael Kötz and Petra Höhne, *Die Sinnlichkeit des Zusammenhangs: Zur Filmarbeit von Alexander Kluge* (Cologne: Prometh, 1981); Michael Kötz, *Der Traum, die Sehnsucht und das Kino: Film und Wirklichkeit des Imaginären* (Frankfurt am Main: Syndikat, 1986), especially pp. 51-57.
 49. Kluge, 'Eine Baustelle ist vorteilhafter als ganze Häuser', p. 17.
 50. *Ibid.*
 51. *Ibid.* See also Kluge, 'On Film and the Public Sphere', p. 211: 'Understanding a film completely is conceptual imperialism which colonizes its objects. If I have understood everything then something has been emptied out. We must make films that thoroughly oppose such imperialism of consciousness. I encounter something in film which still surprises me and which I can perceive without devouring it. I cannot understand a puddle on which the rain is falling – I can only see it; to say that I understand the puddle is meaningless. Relaxation means that I myself become alive for a moment, allowing my senses to run wild: for once not to be on guard with the police-like intention of letting nothing escape me'.
 52. Kluge, *Die Macht der Gefühle*, p. 195.
 53. Kluge, *Neue Geschichten*, p. 9.
 54. See *Briefe zur Verteidigung der Republik*, ed. Freimut Duve, Heinrich Böll, and Klaus Staack (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1977); Walter Laqueur, *The Age of Terrorism* (Boston: Little Brown, 1987); Stefan Aust, *The Baader-Meinhof Group: The Inside Story of a Phenomenon*, trans. Anthea Bell (London: Bodley Head, 1987).
 55. See, for instance, Martin Walser's essay, 'Händedruck mit Gespenstern', in *Stichworte zur geistigen Situation der Zeit*, ed. Jürgen Habermas, vol. 1, *Nation und Republik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979), pp. 39-50. No less 'patriotic' are the essays in the same volume by Horst Ehmke, 'Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland?', Dieter Wellershoff, 'Deutschland – ein Schwebezustand', and Iring Fetscher, 'Die Suche nach der nationalen Identität'. The chapter is entitled: 'The National Question, Reconsidered'. See also Willy Brandt, 'Deutscher Patriotismus', *Spiegel* (1 February 1982).
 56. Lothar Baier, 'Bewegte BRD', in *Gleichheitszeichen: Streitschriften über Abweichung und Identität* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1985), p. 37. Originally printed in *Abschiedsbriefe aus Deutschland*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Heinrichs (Frankfurt am Main/Paris: Qumran, 1984).
 57. Peter Schneider, *Lenz: Eine Erzählung* (Berlin: Rotbuch, 1973), p. 90.
 58. See, for example, Peter Brückner, *Versuch, uns und anderen die Bundesrepublik zu erklären* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1978); Martin Greiffenhagen and Silvia Greiffenhagen, *Ein schwieriges Vaterland: Zur politischen Kultur Deutschlands* (Munich: List, 1979); *Die deutsche Neurose: Über die beschädigte Identität der Deutschen*, ed. Armin Mohler (Frankfurt am Main/Berlin: Ullstein, 1980); *Die Identität der Deutschen*, ed. Werner

- Weidenfeld (Munich/Vienna: Hanser, 1983); *Reden über das eigene Land: Deutschland*, vols. 1 ff. (Munich: Bertelsmann, 1983). See also the coffee-table book by René Burri, *Die Deutschen: Mit Texten von Hans Magnus Enzensberger* (Munich: Schirmer/Mosel, 1986).
59. See Rudolf Walter Leonhardt, 'Von der Last, Deutscher zu sein: Die unbeantwortete Frage nach der nationalen Identität', *Die Zeit* (9 September 1983); Günther Kunert, 'Unsere Angst hat es uns gelehrt: Warum die Deutschen so sind wie sie sind', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (8 December 1979); François Bondy, 'Warum wollen die Deutschen geliebt werden? Mutmassungen über ein "schwieriges Vaterland"', *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (30 December 1979). On the other hand, writers like Lea Fleischmann have published books with titles like *Dies ist nicht mein Land: Eine Jüdin verlässt die Bundesrepublik* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1980). Lothar Baier had to make explicit that his move to Paris was not emigration ('Bewegte BRD', p. 35).
60. 'Gespräche mit Volker Schlöndorff: Was ist deutsch an meinen Filmen?', *Deutsche Zeitung/Christ und Welt* (28 September 1979). There we read, for instance: 'What is German about me? What is German identity to begin with? I looked for the answers in literature. Of course, I started out searching back in history. Because I couldn't identify with the most recent German past, the Nazi era, the barbarism; I didn't want to be that kind of German. Like all Germans I tried again and again to negate everything German, tried to speak a foreign language so perfectly that I would not be recognised as a German. Until I noticed: that's not getting me anywhere, I have to go back to Germany, have to try to find a place to begin'.
61. See (as a selection) the collections *Thema: Deutschland: Das Kind mit den zwei Köpfen*, ed. Hans Christoph Buch (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1978); *Vaterland, Muttersprache: Deutsche Schriftsteller und ihr staat seit 1945*, ed. Klaus Wagenbach et al. (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1979); *Vom deutschen Herbst zum bleichen deutschen Winter: Ein Lesebuch zum Modell Deutschland*, ed. Heinar Kipphardt (Königstein: Athenäum, 1981); *Lieben Sie Deutschland? Gefühle zur Lage der Nation*, ed. Marielouise Janssen-Jurreit (Munich: Piper, 1985).
62. See my article 'Tucholsky und die Deutschen: Anmerkungen zu "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles"', *Text + Kritik* (no. 29 June 1985), pp. 12-23.
63. See the conversation with Kluge about THE PATRIOT in *Filmkritik* (no. 11, 1979), p. 505, where he speaks about the relationship between 'ice' and 'history'. Regarding the poem quoted in the text, he says: 'That reminded me very strongly of what I associate with German history'.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 507.
65. See, above all, the revisionist positions of Ernst Nolte, Andreas Hillgruber, and Joachim Fest in the current 'Historikerstreit', the debate among West German historians about the origin and legacy of Auschwitz. Hillgruber's book *Zweierlei Untergang: Die Zerschlagung des Deutschen Reiches und das Ende des europäischen Judentums* (Berlin: Siedler, 1986) links in its title the fate of the Jews with the fate of the German army on the Eastern front in 1944-1945. Habermas called this interpretation symptomatic for the 'apologetic tendencies in contemporary German historiography'. See Jürgen Habermas, 'Eine Art Schadensabwicklung: Die apologetischen Tendenzen in der deutschen Zeitgeschichtsschreibung', *Die Zeit* (11 July 1986); reprinted in *Historikerstreit*, ed. Rudolf Augstein et al. (Munich/Zurich: Piper, 1987), pp. 62-76. Although Kluge has nothing in common with the revisionist goals of Hillgruber

and others, THE PATRIOT does share the discourse of New Patriotism. The film has a political subtext that resonates, in the light of this new discourse, in a different way than it would have a decade ago. None of the German critics, by the way, have pointed out that in THE PATRIOT Stalingrad is part of the tragic history of Germany, whereas Auschwitz is not.

66. Kluge is concerned with the *principle* of war. World War II is only one in a series of wars. World War III, the voice-over tells us towards the end of the film, will start in 'thirteen years and six weeks or two years and eleven months' (168).
67. Kluge focuses not on victims and wrongdoers, not on guilt and atonement; he is concerned with finding identity. This point was made explicit in a conversation with Bernhard Sinkel on the occasion of the premiere of Sinkel's television miniseries VÄTER UND SÖHNE/THE SINS OF THE FATHERS in 1986, published in Bernhard Sinkel, *Väter und Söhne: Eine deutsche Tragödie* (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1986), pp. 414-415:
Kluge: Why is it that American dramaturgy always asks about guilt and atonement while we tend increasingly to put those values aside as uninteresting and ask about something completely different: where do I come from, what can I know, what can I become?
Sinkel: I think that is because Americans only know the dramaturgy of good and evil. Their heroes are either good or evil, good guy or bad guy, and that is why they are necessarily in a moral straitjacket when the showdown comes.
Kluge: That is difficult to do in German history.
68. Alexander Kluge, 'Rede über das eigene Land: Deutschland', in Stefan Heym et al., *Reden über das eigene Land* (Munich: Bertelsmann, 1983), p. 80. And yet: '[...] something must have disappeared; that would explain the energy the Germans put into repressing all of German history after 1945, the failure to do *Trauerarbeit*, to mourn. Losses have occurred in terms of the emotions that were directed at an emphatic concept of Germany at least in the 1930s, also in terms of the vehement emotions that arose in opposition to the dictate of Versailles after 1918 (and that could not have been only a matter of persuasion from above), and in terms of the basic relationship to tradition for more than a thousand years' (ibid).
69. See Cornelius Castoriadis, 'Die imaginären gesellschaftlichen Bedeutungen', *Merkur* (no. 406 April, 1982), pp. 332-333: 'Everyone defines himself in relation to a "we" and is also so defined by others. But who is the "we", this group, this collective, this society, what is that? At first a symbol: the insignia with which each tribe, every city, and every people has always guaranteed its own existence. Primarily, of course, a name. But is this conventional and arbitrary name really so conventional and arbitrary? Such a signifier points to *two* signifieds, which it conflates inseparably: it refers to the collective, but not only in an extensional sense. The word also refers to the content of the collective as something with a quality or individual nature [...] We (or the others) call ourselves Germans, Franks, Teutons, Slavs. If this name were a symbol with merely rational functions, it would be a pure sign that simply referred to everyone belonging to a certain collective that is in turn characterised by clear external features [...] For the communities of the past, their name not only *denoted* but also *connoted* them, and these connotations refer to a signified that is neither real nor rational, nor can it be – it is imaginary, whatever the content and the peculiar

nature of the imagining [...] Two World Wars and continuing nationalism have [...] shown that this imaginary element of the nation is more enduring than any reality'.

70. Kluge, 'Rede über das eigene Land', p. 81.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 84. See also Kluge and Negt, *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, pp. 361-769, for an extensive discussion of the problem.
72. Kluge and Negt, *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, p. 390.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 393.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 391. Kluge and Negt find it worthwhile to mention that working with the 'Germany identity material' was like wading through a river of mud (pp. 389 ff).
75. *Ibid.*, p. 392.
76. Kluge, 'Rede über das eigene Land', p. 91. The final part of the talk is reprinted as 'Mangel an Deutschland', *Merkur* (no. 38 January, 1984), p. 423.

Alexander Kluge and German History: 'The Air Raid on Halberstadt on 8.4.1945'

David Roberts

Earlier people were closer to each other. They had no choice. Their weapons didn't reach far.

S.J. Lec

In a review of Kluge's volume of stories *Neue Geschichten* (1977) Hans Magnus Enzensberger wrote: 'Of Germany's recognised writers, Alexander Kluge is the least known'.¹ Perhaps the main reason for this neglect is that Kluge's whole work is a protest against the contemporary division of labour. He is equally active as a film-maker, writer and theorist. His multimedia-projects and his blurring of the boundary between art and theory have certainly complicated the reception of his work by critics and the public. It is therefore important to stress the underlying unity in this variety: The basic impulse of his work comes from his experience of German history since the Third Reich. In this respect Kluge, born 1932, is typical of his generation (Günter Grass, Martin Walser, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Uwe Johnson, Rolf Hochhuth, Siegfried Lenz), which had its breakthrough around 1960 through their engagement with the National Socialist past. Their defining experience is the Third Reich and the war. 'Coming to terms with the past' and 'the work of mourning' are the key terms for the historical consciousness of this generation, which was both close and distant enough from the Third Reich to be able to confront the whole question of German guilt. Kluge has remained faithful to his beginnings. Ever since the first collection of stories, *Lebensläufe* (1962), and the documentary montage on the battle for Stalingrad, *Schlachtbeschreibung* (1962), Kluge's work has been characterised by the struggle against the repression of the past, against the loss of experience and reality and by the task of historical analysis, whose culmination to date is the massive 1,300-page theoretical study, *Geschichte und Eigensinn* (1981), written together with the sociologist Oskar Negt, born 1934.²

Kluge and Negt undertake an analysis of German history from the 'abarcic point' of the caesura of 1945. The 'zero hour' of the Third Reich is that of Kluge himself. In the final days of the war his home town was destroyed by an air raid. The familiar world of home and small-town life was suddenly catastrophically cut off. The shock of this violent separation was for Kluge the direct experience of the abstract force of history in its most acute form as war. Kluge and Negt oppose this abstract force, effected by a military 'strategy from above',

which they grasp as the extreme expression of the processes of separation set in train by capitalist accumulation and its permanent revolutionising of social relations, the contrary path of a psychoanalysis of history.³

Kluge's reconstruction of the air raid on Halberstadt on 8 April 1945 in *Neue Geschichten* is therefore central to his work on German history. It combines in paradigmatic form the essential themes of his artistic and theoretical work. The point of departure for this reconstruction is the question: How is the abstraction, the incommensurability of a collective catastrophe such as an air raid to be reproduced? To take two well known examples: Hans Erich Nossack in his report on the destruction of Hamburg (*Der Untergang*, written in 1943) and Thomas Bernhard in his account of the bombing of Salzburg in the first volume of his autobiography (*Die Ursache*, 1975) both write from personal, existentially shattering experience. Kluge, however, excludes the personal and existential. As we shall see, this exclusion is tied up with the dynamic principle of his montage technique. The exclusion of the personal dimension of the events reflects the war between form and content in humans today. The abstraction of modern, anonymous warfare can be grasped only as an annihilation of the content of experience. Kluge's concern is the 'form of this event', which he believes can be tackled only through the change of perspective realised through montage. The relativity of observational standpoints helps to bring out what Kluge calls the formal connections (*die Formenwelt des Zusammenhangs*) of a reality that has become abstract, functionally imaginary. In this sense *Der Luftangriff auf Halberstadt* (The Air Raid on Halberstadt) constitutes a key text on the possibility of experience in the contemporary world. As with Brecht, the question of realism means for Kluge the question of making the invisible visible. The interplay between perspectives and dimensions (horizontal, vertical, functional, irrational, imaginary, revolutionary) lies at the heart of Kluge's conception of realism.

The destruction of Halberstadt – or Hamburg, Würzburg, Dresden, Nuremberg – remains as a repressed, covered trauma in the German present. Kluge insists on the presence of the past, on the *now-time* (*Jetztzeit*) of his reconstruction. The air raid on Halberstadt is an 'openly readable cipher',⁴ in which the historical relation between above and below, between dead and living labour, between the principles of abstraction and production is expressed, made public. 8 April is for him a crystallisation point of history: In a moment of traumatic shock the destruction of the town crystallises as historical monad, to be held up against the loss of memory. Kluge draws here on the central interest of Walter Benjamin's *Theses on Philosophy of History*: On the one hand the messianic longings of the diaspora and the search for a lost homeland, for a human counter-history, on the other hand the materialist core of the rescue of the past and the resurrection of the dead, that is, the re-appropriation of the dead weight of history that materialises again and again as historical catastrophe.

Der Luftangriff auf Halberstadt is thus to be read as the artistic exemplification of his theory of history. Not only in the sense that Kluge and Negt constantly return to this cipher of the war in *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, but above all because a destroyed Germany in 1945 constitutes the site of their analysis of German history and the place of critical theory:

The years immediately following 1945 are one of the most important crossroads in German history, not because of the motives for action that they contain but because of their cognitive interest. These years are an abaric point, that is, a moment in which contradictory forces cancel each other out, precisely because social action was not possible. In this respect this point allows us to look forward and back over German historical relations, unlike any other moment in German history. Strangely, this still applies to our whole country. In planetary terms it had hardly any impact, for thinking, however, this point is ideally placed.⁵

Perspectives and Connections

The account of the air raid on Kluge's hometown occupies the second of eighteen sections of the *Neue Geschichten*. 'In order to establish connections, I have to abandon "connections". That is why I have preserved the raw form of notebooks'.⁶ The renunciation of an overview in order to establish connections is tied up with the problem of the reconstruction of a collective catastrophe, which exceeds the individual experience of the victims. The reference to the raw form of notebooks is not meant to indicate the abandonment of form and meaning but rather that they no longer stand in any relation to the victims or the actors, no longer bear any relation to human measure. The connections that Kluge has in mind are no longer those of classical form. What is the form of the 'history' of the air raid on Halberstadt? Kluge's reconstruction is made up of multiple elements – pictures, photos of the bombing, town plans, flight paths of the attacking bombers, flight patterns with lateral, rear and frontal view (schematic presentation), diagrams and specifications of bomb types, first-hand and operational reports, situation reports, quotations from the relevant literature, footnotes, inserted texts, expert discussions, interviews, etc. In between are those affected below and the unaffected above – one can no longer speak of actors in the classical sense – who all 'participate' in the chain of events of 8 April 1945. Below are the inhabitants of Halberstadt – the cinema manager Mrs Schrader, the unknown photographer, the air-defence observer, the armaments worker and mother Gerda Baethe, the field doctor von Schroers, the boiler-maker Karl Lindau, the professional fire-brigade officer from Cologne, the staff

of the defence headquarters, Detering, regional chief, defence commissioner for the town and the Party's emergency commissioner, and so on; overhead, the pilots, veterans and specialists in day attacks, the planners, the commanders, B. Dampson, target marker, Brigadier Frederick L. Anderson, formerly of the 8th US Air Fleet, Brigadier General Robert B. Williams, and so on. In addition there are the experts and reporters: James N. Eastman, Jr. from the Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center, and the discussions and analyses of the system researchers and the military historians.

For all 'concerned', and that includes the planners and the experts, distant in time and space, the form and content of experience are at war with each other. For each person's experience, whether direct or indirect, from below or above, is no more than a partial perspective on a chaotic whole. The individual perspectives have thus lost the classical 'correspondence of form and content'.⁷ The connection that Kluge is seeking is only realisable through the form-world of montage. By treating the question of connection and coherence as one of perspective, Kluge aims to deconstruct the false alternative of documentation and fiction through his self-reflective method. This intention is programmatically expressed in the film *DIE PATRIOTIN/THE PATRIOT* in the contrast between sections 16 and 17 of the second sequence 'At the telescope':

16.

Documentary

In the far distance, at night, a man in a raincoat smoking a cigarette. Large focal length. Lighting only from the cigarette.

COMMENTARY:

Documentary! A man with a cigarette eight hundred meters away, night. I cannot know his history.

17.

Staging

Approaching bomber squadron. Some planes in the opposite direction. Bomb shelter, in which a woman and two children are sitting with a suitcase.

COMMENTARY:

'Staging!' These bombers are not authentic. I don't know if it was *this* bomber, which hit the target. But I do know: it is overhead. *Underneath*. A woman, two children, 1944.⁸

As the title 'At the telescope' indicates, section 16 is interested not in the abstract document but in the relation between distance and knowledge, the moment and history. Similarly, section 17 is interested not in authenticity versus staging, but in the relation between above and below, that materialises in the force of an exploding bomb. That is, Kluge is aiming neither at an objective documentation of the bombing of Halberstadt nor at a 'human', subjective impression or 'sta-

ging' of the events. His object rather is the extremely complicated dialectic of the concrete and the abstract, the visible and the invisible, the moment and history. At the end of the text a photo of the bombed town stands as the epitaph to 8 April 1945, but also to a thousand-year history. The commentary is provided by Marx: 'One can see how the history of *industry* and its material realisation is the *opened* book of the *forces of human consciousness*, the sensuously given human *psychology* [...].'⁹

Everything is a matter of vantage point. If every perspective forms a dimension of the whole, they are combined in a montage of discontinuous elements, which constantly poses the question of coherence. This is why Kluge wants to exemplify the whole spectrum of ways of perceiving and representing from the apparent sensuous immediacy of the photo to the apparent abstraction of diagrams and maps. The juxtaposition of six photos of the burning town, taken by the unknown photographer, and the *map* of his escape route, overlaid by a thick arrow, indicating the flight path of the bombers, is as typical an example as the many variations on the juxtaposition of word and image. The *contrast* between photograph and map accentuates the inadequacy of the map as means of representation but also the threatening two-dimensional view from above given by the map. The *complementarity* of photo and map or word and image is brought out by the montage method: Although photo and map form the two sides of the one event, they stand side by side as mutually exclusive perspectives. The question regarding form and content (both for the reader and the participants) is the following: How and what can be seen, what kind of picture of events can be formed? Does one observe bombed ruins or the opened book of the forces of human consciousness, does one see the snapshot or the depth dimension of historical accumulation? Or does one perceive the actual and the historical simultaneously?

Let me follow the guiding thread of perspective, in order to unravel the cognitive interest informing Kluge's reconstruction of the air raid on Halberstadt. The first episode thematises the tension between experience and perception, reality and artistic form.

Frau Schrader, who had been hurled into the corner, could now see where the balcony rail pushed against the ceiling a piece of smoke-filled sky, an explosive bomb had torn open the house and penetrated the cellar.

The devastation of the right side of the theatre stood in no meaningful or dramaturgical relation to the film being shown.¹⁰

When her eyes started to function again, she saw through the splintered window a chain of silver machines flying in the direction of the School for the Deaf.

The houses were burning 'like torches'. She searched for a better expression for what she could so clearly see.¹¹

What the unknown photographer sees is shown by his photos, which form a sequence of spatial-temporal points on his escape route through the town. The leader of the military patrol, who stops him on the edge of the town close to underground installations, sees in him the lucky capture of a spy. 'The unknown person states that he wanted to capture on film the burning town, the disaster of his home town from the distance'.¹² And in photo number six¹³ – the last position of the photographer – we see the burning town precisely 'from this distance'.

The two observers in the tower, Frau Arnold and Frau Zacke, 'are still occupied with sweeping the horizon through their binoculars when they see from the south two vertically layered formations'.¹⁴ Their task is to ignore their own situation and to pass on their observations as exactly as possible. Frau Zacke 'sees that the planes are flying out of the loop directly towards her from the direction Wehrstadt Bridge/Hindenburg Street, but does not immediately raise the alarm because she is counting, digesting the impression'.¹⁵ The loudspeakers in the Defence Centre announce the flight observations – 'Those *in charge of the town's defence* have leaped to their feet, they are standing around the map table'.¹⁶ Blind for their part, they are trying to form a picture of the air raid by means of the map. Frau Arnold sees the bomb coming down on the town hall before the wooden cladding of the tower catches fire beneath her.

Below in the cellar a 'buried group' sees nothing. 'No one wants to stay in the darkness. They want to see what is happening'.¹⁷

Gerda Baethe with her three children does not see the air raid but hears and feels it in the closest proximity:

She 'felt' it as an impact '5 metres away'. The garden house was shaken by the wave of air pressure, the following serial detonations: Woort, Kulkplatz, Paulsplan, the French Church, [...] etc. Gerda registered that as 'distant'. After all she couldn't enter it on any operational map or see it.¹⁸

In this dangerous situation there is nothing she can do to protect her children or herself. Just waiting, hoping and praying are of no help. 'There was no time. The main ideas of a "strategy from below", which Gerda sought to gather in her head in these seconds, could not be communicated. From here right at the bottom to the planes, invisible to Gerda, 3,000 metres above the town or much further to the departure bases of the bombers, where the higher planning staff were located'.¹⁹ And the machines above flying towards the smoke cloud of the town 'could neither see anything clearly of the town nor did they sense Baethe's carefully contained wishes at this moment'.²⁰

What is seen from the perspective from above? In general, the bomber crews are faced by the problem of 'inner foreign territory', that is, the problem of the occasional personal observation, which cancels in 'irrational' fashion the non-

connection between above and below, the familiar and the foreign: 'for example, the neatness of the fields below, confusion of rows of houses, squares, orderly town quarters with familiar impressions from home'.²¹ For a second the strategic map of the landscape is transformed into a personal image: Another dimension opens up, which momentarily dissolves the two-dimensional gaze from above. Objectivity and soul are at war with each other: The 'souls' of the crew fly as an appendix 'along with bomb load, machinery'. 'None of the veterans in the machines is therefore able to escape the tension, to turn the soul away to the fields below or to the Harz Mountains or to the deep blue of the sky'.²² Nevertheless, they fly blind. This blind view from above ironically appears most clearly in the 'personal' decision of the pilot Braddock:

In the leading plane of the first battle group Braddock sees, as he flies over the last two hill ranges, a long straight road, crossed by a rail line, before the town. Townspeople are hurrying along this road with household stuff, handcarts towards the forest hill. It is known from the air-raid preparations that cave shelters have been prepared in the forest. Braddock orders the following machines to drop one bomb each on this target, which offers itself. This is one of the few 'personal' decisions taken during the whole raid.²³

Braddock does not see what he sees, personally he does not see the fleeing townspeople, what he 'sees' strategically are the invisible cave shelters in the wooded hills, of which he knows from the air-raid documentation. He does not 'personally' bomb the people fleeing, he bombs a target. The change of perspective is thus a change in dimensions – a process of reification, whose concrete result is annihilation. The personal view is transformed into that of the strategic map. The town's 'soul' is to be eradicated but its 'soul' is not visible on the plan of attack.

In an interview on the margins of a conference of the Institute for Strategic Research between the reporter Kunzert from Halberstadt and Brigadier Frederick L. Anderson, one of the top personnel 'responsible' for the air raid on Halberstadt, there is a belated attempt to reconcile perspectives. Can the brigadier in any way imagine what the air raid, which he 'led', was like? No, he cannot. 'I could form a picture of the bomber stream from communications and from the map (assuming that everything went according to plan). I couldn't see them. My Mosquito, a fast wooden bomber, was flying far from the formation'.²⁴

Below they were also trying to 'see' the town:

Von Schroers' characteristic of possessing more curiosity than anxiety was not based on a failure of imagination. He can only see with his eyes this restaurant, a bit of the Wehrstadt Bridge, none of the destroyed railway lines, perhaps also a few houses, but he forms a picture of the whole town. He did not know that this was the last conscious image of the intact townscape. He might then have perceived more.²⁵

Colonel Kuhlake from Army headquarters has only the airspace reports and maps before him. He tries by telephone to put together a picture of the destruction: 'The telephonist in Klein-Quenstadt reports a "mushroom cloud over the town". He doesn't know the height and size of the mushroom. Should he hold up a ruler to the window?'²⁶ In the course of the afternoon the colonel enters his results, interrogations of refugees by phone on his 'operational map of the town in the ratio 1:200 000'. Only gradually do the telephone operators at the many telephone exchanges grasp that it involves the personal search of a colonel for friends or relatives.

The Fire Brigade officer from Cologne is professionally the last person to see the town's treasures. The 'valuable properties' are transformed by his gaze into valuations as he takes his farewell:

Nobody else takes any responsibility for an overview of property as the inhabitants are occupied with their own possessions. As it were in the name of the town mayor, the Party, the regional Air Command and inhabitants I say farewell to the still standing town before giving free rein to the fires, because I know that the means of combating them have not been concentrated.²⁷

As all the examples show, Kluge's concern is that of the interplay of multiple perspectives in his montage, which together form the outer 'connection' of the air raid on 8 April 1945. Its inner meaning and form must be traced along the lines of interference between the visible and the invisible in the direction of a 'picture' of the ungraspable and the unimaginable.

Strategy from Above: The Organisation of a Catastrophe

It may be that the bombers that are flying towards Halberstadt from the South West at 7,000 metres, have a 'traditional cavalry appearance', as if 'ordered to charge'.²⁸ This appearance, however, is the purely external result of calculating the optimal defence formation – calculations, which cannot be seen from below and which can only be made 'visible' in the schematic presentations of the handbooks of military tactics. The order of the battle groups is shown in three perspectives – lateral, rear and frontal – and then repeated four times in an expanded page-sized diagram, in order to schematically indicate in an appropriate, 'objective' manner the first, second, third etc. wave of bombers, the sequence of bomb drops and also the serial production of these flying industrial machines. The same applies to the *commodity* that the machines are carrying. A photograph of a General Purpose or High Explosive Bomb does not convey its 'content' or its function. The reproductions of the commodity – multi-purpose

bombs, splinter bombs, blockbusters, liquid incendiary bombs – along with their technical specifications²⁹ are not aimed at an objective, documentary effect but rather at the technological functionality, whose end result is the terror raid on Halberstadt (or Fürth, Darmstadt, Nuremberg, Würzburg, etc.). A photo or a technical reproduction gives no insight; on the contrary, in its objective abstraction it documents the blind logic of a self-sufficient specification. Inner connection or coherence can only be approached indirectly through the gaps in the montage: The pictures of bombs are accompanied by a photo of munitions workers, who make a thorough, solid, trustworthy impression, and by information on the use and purpose of the bombs:

'Every bomb type has a special purpose. Mines open up the flammable innards of houses'. Heavy explosive bombs tear up the streets and destroy the water mains, preventing the immediate extinction of fires. The lighter explosive bombs drive the firemen back into the cellars. [...] Followed up by incendiaries, in particular flame-throwing bombs.³⁰

All this amounts, according to Air Marshall Harris ('Bomber Harris'), to 'an ordered whole'. Kluge insists on this 'ordered whole' in order to bring home to the reader the systematic organisation of the catastrophe. In 'revoltingly "intelligent" (or "general") fashion', the crews bomb the town and its population as the executive organ of the plans of the strategists and air-force tacticians. They remain 'intelligently' or 'generally' distant from the effects of their work. The photos of the sympathetic young Americans³¹ capture the functionless personality and soul of the crews that bear no relation to their military work. In relation to the system, qualities like bravery and discipline are merely personal, limited and consequently progressively excluded in the course of the war as irrational:

It is not the individual combatant of Valmy, the armed citizen (proletarian, teacher, small businessman), who executes these air raids, but trained bureaucrats of the air war: analytic conceptuality, deductive rigor, causal explanations in the battle reports, specialised competence, etc.³²

The result of this professionalisation, which determines the tactics of the air raid and operatively excludes its meaning, is that the crews fall victim to conventionality – they experience the air raid as the 'day's business'³³ and to legalism: 'The air raid demands from the crews or the staff officers apart from general obedience no moral motives or attribution of meaning. It is not evil attitudes that are punished but actions deviating from the norm, for instance early return, careless or irregular release of bombs'.³⁴ The separation between work and responsibility cannot be undone individually; the crews are totally absorbed into the collective, anonymous machinery. Although Brigadier General Anderson as

commander of an execution squad can imagine letting a prisoner go, he cannot imagine *not* dropping his valuable bomb load on the town.³⁵ It is not simply a question of systemic compulsion that reveals a defining limit to the powers of imagination; the Brigadier is in fact capable of imagining a *concrete* situation and thus a *personal* responsibility. Neither applies, however, in an air raid.

This means that war as a 'relation of production' is to be read on a scale of increasing distance = abstraction. With each increase in distance the precision of the strategic gaze increases. To this scale corresponds the rising sequence of maps, from a segment of the front to the map of the General Staff. Each leap in the map ratios signifies a transmission point (*Schaltstelle*) in the chain of command, which forwards reports up and commands down the chain. The network of communications, which is simultaneously vertical and horizontal, continuous and discontinuous, represents the hierarchical structure of the events, which cannot be directly bypassed. There are no direct connections between top and bottom that cancel distance. Even if Halberstadt had surrendered to the approaching American troops and 'had raised a large white flag over the Martini Towers, easily seen',³⁶ the air raid could not have been stopped. The command chain between the American troops on the ground and the American bombers overhead would have prevented that. The laconic evidence for the complicated mechanism of the decisional pathways appears in the footnote on p. 68: 'Decision SACEUR of 4 April 1945 to cease carpet bombing did not reach the relevant bases until 8 April 1945'. What good is a large white flag, however visible?

ANDERSON: It's a gigantic attacking machine. Not a single leading plane. What is the large white sheet supposed to mean? A trick? Nothing at all? We might have talked about it. The following planes were hard on our heels.³⁷

There is no 'connection' between below and above and yet the connection is given by bombs.

Keyword: Formalism

The distance, the non-relation between executors and victims lays bare the catastrophic leap of strategic progress, which introduces a qualitatively new level of abstraction. The flying factories have left the earth behind, they are literally cut off from their historical roots, the strategic interest in booty. The evolutionary chain, which stretches from tree climbers hunting for nourishing dinosaur eggs as far as World War I, breaks off at this point. The bomber crews no longer come into contact with their targets for destruction, they carry nothing away 'to

suck dry, even in the most abstract sense'.³⁸ That they utilise the labour of the industrial workers on the home front, draw pay from their private accounts and realise profits for the war industry, does not provide a sufficient motivation for their deployment. 'At this moment they are not defending their houses or home. In this respect the raw material the strategists need is completely missing'.³⁹ As so often with Kluge, the conclusion is reserved for a footnote dedicated to the discussions of scholars at a 1976 conference in Stockholm, organised by the OECD with the SIPRI Yearbook. It concerns the 'evolutionary place' of the air war in the summer of 1944, discussed in the Working Group 7. Despite the supposed clarity of the actors and the action, it is nevertheless necessary to work back through the chain of generations in order to analyse the roots of the whole process:

Only an analysis of this kind would hit on the *raw material*, of which strategy is made, either, according to Clausewitz, 'patriotism', or a class-specific cause, etc. In this respect we can say that the scrap metal of distant class conflicts or feelings or labour power are organised in the *form* of these events. With that Fritzsche stirred up a wasp's nest. The theme of formalism takes hold of the round table.⁴⁰

Fritzsche provides the keyword: *Form*, the key concept in Kluge's reconstruction. The evolutionary leap in military strategy, as represented by aerial bombing, demonstrates the catastrophic nature of strategic progress. The transformation of industrial production into a new quality is realised in the form of the events. And this form is neither manifest nor meaningful; it is no longer accessible in terms of content, because form as understood by Kluge – the form of the relations of production – means precisely the annihilation of content:

In any case what these flights and bombings contain is the gradual purification from the hindrance of the real, such as personal motivation, moral condemnation of the bomb victims ('moral bombing'), through calculated know-how, automatisisation, replacement of vision by radar, etc. In short: *formalism*.⁴¹

Form, formalisation, formalism constitute a single conceptual complex, directed to the separation of above and below, that is, to the historical progress of the principle of abstraction. Kluge opposes to the work of abstraction the work of *analysis*, more exactly, figuratively speaking, the *psychoanalysis* of history, which seeks the historical reconnection of above and below through a return to the roots. We need to add to the synchronic cross-section of the events on 8 April 1945 the diachronic series by translating discontinuities back into the depth dimension of time. The 'raw materials' – class struggle, patriotism, etc. – have been used up by strategic progress and left behind as the scrap metal of the war industry:

The separation of subjective human labour from its material object, compared with work in an industrial concern, is 'purer', more radical in the abstract sense (where radical signifies its own antithesis: *opposed to the root of natural relations*). As regards the object of labour, war demonstrates the most alienated example of reification. [...] From the perspective of *strategy from above* the 'objective of labour' is transformed into toy-like quadrilaterals, illuminated at night by colourful cascades of flares (so called Christmas trees), as target markers. Not even this kind of sensuous perception is possible in rocket silos or nuclear submarines, whose task is to launch rockets against targets 5,000 kilometers away that they have never got to know. From a kind of technically equipped desk or technical workplace or from aircraft carriers equipped with cinemas and mess rooms an enemy is *fictioned*, whom I know only from entertainment and propaganda films.⁴²

The formalism of military strategy reveals the two sides of the reification that derives from separation. Reification signifies both abstract and real annihilation. The separation of experience and perception contains the germ of abstraction as a process of de-realisation, which intensifies the functional dimension into the imaginary⁴³ until the enemy needs to be fictionally created with the aid of films. At the same time each leap in distance involves a real *increase in power*, in the form of concentration and centralisation up to the completely abstract level of the *universality* of the highest war planning:

It is not soldiers or armies in competition, it is the different battle zones, the Asiatic, the 8th US Air Fleet, the advancing Soviet units, the tank columns, which reach the edge of the Harz Mountains on 8 April 1945, the Marines – they are all in competition, mediated through the instrumental system of the Departments for Public Relations in the homelands of the Allies.

The universal system of World War equates to the perspective given by the 'pure' paradox of universalistic specialisation. By definition nothing remains external to the system. From this perspective the earth lies far below as if seen 'from another star'. The miniaturisation of the objects of labour – so that Halberstadt is no more than a tiny point on the map of the world – together with the simultaneous broadening of the strategic gaze produce the coordinates of distancing and acceleration from the roots, from the 'narrowly personal' system. The transgression of the individual threshold brings at the same time the transgression of the individual threshold of inhibition: 'Reification leads towards absolute war'.⁴⁴ At the end stands pure power, pure nihilism.

The strategic interest of the American air force, more exactly, of 'that group of staff officers who later established the Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama',⁴⁵ to form a picture of the bombing and its effects, provides the sadly ironic epilogue to the catastrophe. Their in-

vestigations prove unsatisfactory as the psychological consequences 'of these unnecessary bombings'⁴⁶ are altogether unclear. How the strategic experiment is to be evaluated is not readily apparent. The psychologically trained questioner knows the answer in advance. 'He knew the turns of phrase: "On that frightful day, on which our beautiful town was razed to the ground", etc. The speculations about the meaning, the "stereotyped reports of experience", he had already heard these fabricated phrases in Fürth, Darmstadt, Nuremberg, Würzburg, Frankfurt, Wuppertal and so on'.⁴⁷ And he knows the counterquestion: 'So were you up there on 8 April? How did it look from above?'

The Epilogue has the title *Visitors from Another Star*. Kluge employs this familiar technique of satire in order to underline the estranging intention of this perspective. Even after the event there is only an unrelated juxtaposition of standpoints. Even more perplexing is the fact that those questioned are just as removed from their own experiences as the questioner – 'The situation was 100 years away'.⁴⁸ The fabricated phrases are the empty, meaningless counterpart to the 'flying factories' overhead carrying out a routine daytime raid. Brigadier Anderson can no more communicate to the reporter a concrete picture from his vantage point than the victims to the 'visitors from another star'. The abstractly concrete above and the concretely abstract below do not resolve into any meaningful correlation. That is to say, the content can only be comprehended *schematically*. This schematism or formalism is the result of the *separation* of those involved from their experiences, whether it be the traumatised townspeople or the activities of the air-raid specialists. The result is functional routine on the one side and traumatic-imaginary experience on the other, inhuman dimensions equally bereft of 'soul'.

This split, this gap – symbolised by the map ratio 1:200 000 – is that of montage. It is Kluge's response to the form of events, to the war between form and content. The dynamic principle of montage derives from the changes in perspective, which register the dissociation of perception and experience and the corresponding progressive dissolution of experience. In short, each gap between perception and experience signifies a work of translation, that is, a processing of the object that translates living labour into waste material. If this primacy of form over content gives the form of events, Kluge aims at the same time to come to grips with the form of this form through the meta-level of montage (for which documents function as raw material). The question of the form of form itself depends on a displacement of perspectives, which corresponds to the principle of abstraction at work in history. The jump from Halberstadt in 1945 to the discussion of formalism in Stockholm in 1976 signals the temporal distance needed to conceptualise the systemic character of the military events. The colder the gaze, however, the more distant the object. Just as the bomber

crews can only speculate on the assumed summer temperatures below, so summer in Stockholm 1976 bears no relation to war strategy in the summer of 1944:

The lake, without islands, lies 30 metres beneath the cliff terrace. Freddy Dohm, the energetic secretary, has assembled *system researchers*, a *remnant* of critical theory, *Hungary* from the circle around Agnes Heller, *military historians*, *physicists*. The participants are convinced of the incompatibility of their standpoints. They look down to the lake, would like to go swimming.⁴⁹

Apart from the fact that the different standpoints of the participants represent different perspectives in the formal world of science, the little snapshot captures the contrast between sensuous perception – what they can see at that moment – and the scientific object twenty years removed.

Strategy from Below: Learning Processes with Fatal Outcomes

Montage accounts for the war between form and content in a double fashion: first, through the annihilation of content by form, second, through the gap that draws attention objectively to the annihilated content and subjectively to the site of mute, absent protest. Objectively, content is only negatively present since the incommensurable content of experience cannot be recovered either by science in Stockholm or by questionnaires after the air raid. The consequences of the explosions cannot be undone from above. But the situation is no better below. For the townspeople the catastrophe lies a 100 years in the past – or a 100 years in the future. No *learning process* occurred. Survival demands repression, the catastrophe cannot be grasped. Kluge explores this radical question in another text of *Neue Geschichten*:

The peace researcher Bauer has real problems. He has raised money for an information campaign. But what he knows cannot be *emotionalised*. [...] The test subjects accepted the primal scene, they 'forgot', however, the carefully calculated objective follow-up scenes. And nothing remained hanging in the subconscious. He is desperate, Bauer said. It is not that they can't 'read' or 'decipher' the 'objective' past. They reject it as 'experience'.⁵⁰

The carefully calculated information strategy from above, like the carefully planned air raid of the 8th US Air Fleet, is incapable of producing 'experience'. But the emergency defence of mute repression is equally incapable of setting a learning process in motion. The gaps in the montage are faithful to the catastrophe and to the zero hour of 1945. Just as the Halberstadt inhabitants are

catastrophically separated from their past, so in the same way the German population as a whole is (subjectively) cut off from its catastrophic history: 1945 meant not liberation but collapse, trauma, paralysis.

'Learning' from the catastrophe is left to the Fire Brigade. Thus in another text in *Neue Geschichten* the Fire Chief W. Schönecke reflects:

If it's correct that fire fighting must be a mirror of the enemy's attack, then the training of firefighters must be radically altered. With our present capacities and resources we can't reach the right places. Professional fire fighting therefore requires the corresponding restructuring of the whole society, its building methods, people, starting with the six year olds, whose ABC is no help against bomber command.⁵¹

This utopia of a strategy from below from the standpoint of the professional firefighter, which sacrifices ends to the absolutised means, is an exact mirror image of the annihilation of content by the form. Its ridiculous but characteristic counterpart is the energetic rescue of two hundredweight of sausage skins by the Halberstadt business woman Tittmann. In this salvage operation and in the reflections of the Fire Chief nothing is left but the form – the sausage skin. The Fire Brigade officer from Cologne considers himself professionally equal to the task but he also knows that practically speaking his professional knowledge can only be successfully employed/applied after the 16th fire catastrophe, that is, 'if the population and administration learn the lessons'.⁵²

Learning processes are a question of organisation. No organisation *after* the catastrophe is of any use against a totally organised strategy from above. A belated learning process is precisely a learning process with a fatal outcome. In the Foreword to *Neue Geschichten* Kluge writes: 'It may appear that some of the stories concern not the present (*Jetztzeit*) but the past. They take place in the *present*'. In this sense the most important dimension of the chain of events on 8 April 1945 is the vertical, the historical dimension. Starting from 8 April 1945, Kluge builds up a picture of the systemic structure of the air raid that constitutes strategically an 'ordered whole'. This whole is, however, only an episode in the European War, which in turn gains its wider meaning only in the context of the World War. The monstrous complexity of this single chain of events shrinks at this distance to a local effect in the global force field. The 'totality' on the level of Halberstadt disappears into the total system of the War. The hierarchy of the total system, only graspable as organisational form, is in turn the precipitate of 800 years of strategy from above. If learning processes are a matter of organisation, organisation for its part is a matter of time.

The primary school teacher Gerda Baethe has *no time* on 8 April to develop a strategy from below:

Thus, during the moments of missing time, which, however, lasted from 11.32 in the morning, through the difficult night of 8 to 9 April, until late afternoon of the follow-

ing day, but in particular between the 3rd and 4th waves, in which she had a space of 10 minutes, Gerda swore that she would make a start in the future on this organisation.⁵³

In a supplement Kluge opens up a 'strategic perspective' that would like to undo history: in 1919, at the latest in 1928, the struggle against the coming war needed to be organised. Only through this time-reversal can the vertical, temporal dimension of the events of 8 April 1945 be made visible as a *historical relation*. This reversal involves of course a change in perspective, to which Negt and Kluge provide a commentary in *Geschichte und Eigensinn* under the title 'Above and below'. They want to clarify that above and below do not refer spatially to places but temporally to the place occupied in a historical relation.⁵⁴ The experiential gap between above and below expresses the disjunction between the possibility of organisation (1928) and consciousness (1945):

In matters of life and death, there is no appropriate position as observer, nevertheless the determination of above and below depends on the observational standpoint. In systems, which change their velocity relative to each other, the difference can be clearly observed. Within two systems that maintain their velocity, perception is excluded.

A school teacher at the end of the 1920s [...] can hardly recognise that the totality of these forces is driving towards National Socialism and World War II. [...] It's quite different in spring 1945 when a portion of the forces already potentially present in the 'lap on 1928' is approaching in the form of a British bombing mission and another part of this dialectic takes the form of a teacher in a cellar.⁵⁵

The condensation of the temporal chains of events on 8 April 1945 allows for no appropriate position as observer – does this change later? The prehistory of the catastrophe has now been replaced since 1945 by its post-history, which is in its turn a new prehistory: learning processes whether absent in 1928 or useless in 1945 or to be undertaken in 1960, 1980, etc. have their vanishing point in a present time, whose essential dimensions are the past and the future. This is the starting point for the film *DIE PATRIOTIN* (1979): the class of the history teacher Gabi Teichert is reading *Der Luftangriff auf Halberstadt* and precisely the section on Gerda Baethe. The class reading and discussion are inserted into a montage sequence in the film entitled 'Alpine Canals', which consists of snapshots from German history. We see a town from the perspective of attacking bombers; aerial combats; woman and soldier before a burning house; images from the 12th century – below peasants in a field, above a band of feudal knights; a workers' demonstration dispersed by the authorities; workers rebuilding a destroyed factory; workers of the Nazi Organisation Todt building alpine canals. In this film montage the total context of Halberstadt appears suggestively as a series of

snapshots from German history. Here, in a very condensed and rather perplexing form the basic themes of Kluge's conception of history are presented: 800 years of strategy from above as opposed to the missing organisation of the peasants or the workers in 1928, whose labour power, appropriated by the Organisation Todt after 1933, carried out crazy and fatal projects, only to be then harnessed after the war for reconstruction. The outcome is neither revenge nor learning processes but a *built over trauma*, a flight forward as the answer to the historical caesura of 1945. The energies appropriated by the Third Reich reorganise themselves after the catastrophe 'into the other extreme of total self-exploitation', that is, in the form of a catastrophic processing of traumatic historical experience.⁵⁶

Strategy from Below: The Depth Dimension

The last section of *Luftangriff auf Halberstadt* deals with the trauma of the bombing and a terrifying end that is not liberating but paralysing. The American researcher 'had expected to reap feelings of hatred, some kind of reaction, which made him one of the enemy. The inhabitants, whom he questioned, reacted neither against him nor against the air raid'.⁵⁷ His working hypothesis that the unnecessary bombing must necessarily provoke lasting thoughts of revenge is not borne out. He has to ask himself: 'Did we bomb them into friends of our country?'⁵⁸ Perhaps a silent protest is present behind the stereotyped answers, perhaps there is a buried layer, which he cannot reach.

Kluge's whole oeuvre since *Lebensläufe* is focused on this mute protest, this buried layer, which conserves the trauma, cannot let it go. What Kluge expects of the reader of *Schlachtbeschreibung* applies equally to his reconstruction of the destruction of his home town:

This book about Stalingrad must be brushed against the grain in the service of a completely *impractical, inactual* but *tenacious* interest, turned away from the present of the Federal Republic, as anti-realistic as wishes and as the certainty that the realities that produce Stalingrad are evil fictions. That I insist on Stalingrad is due to my protest – the loss of memory is unreal.⁵⁹

In *DIE PATRIOTIN*, it is the knee of lance corporal Wieland, who fell on 29 January 1943 in Stalingrad: 'Let me clear away a fundamental misunderstanding, that we dead are in any way dead. We are filled with protest and energy. Who wants to die? We search and race through history. How can I escape from the history that will kill us all?'⁶⁰ The particular characteristic of the knee is that it connects and is itself nothing: 'I'm not the calf and I'm not the thigh, they got

killed, I am *the in-between*. Try to find an energy that can hit the in-between with certainty'.⁶¹ This suggests the connection to the buried layer of the Halberstadt inhabitants. Brigadier General Robert B. Williams and the London correspondent of the *Neue Züricher Zeitung* take part in the air raid on 8 April 1945 as observers:

NZZ: Is this moral bombing or are you bombing morale?

WILLIAMS: We are bombing morale. The resistance of the population must be removed through the destruction of the town.

NZZ: But hadn't this doctrine been abandoned in the meantime?

WILLIAMS: Certainly. That's why I am somewhat surprised. You can't hit morale with bombs. It's clear that morale doesn't sit in the heads or here (pointing to the solar plexus) but somewhere between the people or population of the different towns. We have investigated that and headquarters knows.⁶²

If no trace of resistance appears to be present in the population, it is because it has disappeared into the *gaps in history* – buried by bombs and built over by reconstruction, it is absent and yet present. Memory loss is unreal because the dead are not dead, their resurrection presupposes, however, as the knee knows, 'the most thorough knowledge of history'.⁶³ The reference to Benjamin's 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' is unmistakable; there he raises the claim of 'dead' history to resurrection. This claim is only negatively present in *Schlachtbeschreibung* and *Der Luftangriff auf Halberstadt*. The perspective that they unfold seems to be that of Benjamin's angel of history, who 'sees one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage'.

The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.

We might call this storm of progress the 'Organisation Todt' of history.⁶⁴ It is the accumulated sum of the dead labour of all preceding generations, a sum, which is fed by the energies set free by a 'permanent original accumulation' and is realised in the accelerating velocity of history. This massive excess of material force attains its most devastating realisation in war, above all in the *Blitz Krieg*, whose explosive extrapolation into the airless space of the imaginary Kluge pursues in his science fiction.⁶⁵ The bombs, which the flying factories (or conceptual systems) drop over Halberstadt, are the most concentrated matter of history, the most abbreviated formula for the principle of abstraction. This historical relation between above and below concerns the historical struggle between abstrac-

tion and production, capital and labour power, the greater concentration of historical labour against a less concentrated strategy from below.

History fights against history. In this respect the idea of a resurrection of the dead, that is, a re-appropriation of all dead labour, is a claim of history itself. In the book *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, on which I am at present working with Oskar Negt, we try to recover the category of original property in order to show how the separation from original property determines dead labour, which accumulates in a bomb of this kind and materialises as it were as the sum of all dead labour in the form of historical catastrophe.⁶⁶

'Elementary catastrophes occur but what led to them escapes our senses'. Concatenations of events have the tendency 'to march separately but strike together'.⁶⁷ The invisible dimensions of an event, its endless prehistory, reveal themselves on 8 April 1945 as catastrophe. The air raid crystallises into a historical monad, which freezes time into a traumatic present. If memory loss is unreal, it is matched by the irreality, the evil fiction of reality (Stalingrad, Halberstadt). What crystallises in the air raid is the history of the rulers, the history of strategy from above. The 'historical materialist' Kluge blasts this catastrophe out of the continuum of history in order to preserve in it the era and in the era the entire catastrophic course of history.

There is left as indestructible remainder the mute buried dimension that cannot be quantified from above. It is the unsaid in the fabricated responses, the realm of the in-between, which gives the key to Kluge's montage principle. It designates the place of real but dispersed human feelings, that is, everything that resists formulation and fixation, the countermovement that is the other side of the text. Montage for Kluge always implies this doubling of the text:

You have to leave gaps in the prose because what is expressed here, from below, can't be expressed in grammatical form. What takes place beneath the skin is always movement and not fixation. Writing as such means fixation and I want to write texts in a prose directed against fixation. It is right to read texts as it were according to the letter but there is also the countermovement. A text must always be read against itself. I must always distinguish between language and speech.⁶⁸

Strategy from above, the principle of historical abstraction, is fixed, crystallised as a negative historical monad. To bring this cipher of the historical relation between above and below, between dead and living labour into the open, to make it public – that is the task of the reader. Since the relationship between dead and living labour cannot be directly represented, it can be set in motion only indirectly through the motivation of the reader:

I provoke breaks, and between what I write and what I don't write, what I leave out, a connection is established between the living and the fixed. And if you read this gap

in the right fashion, that is, employ the montage principle in the right way, then these texts can be used for experience because it's you who fills the gaps.⁶⁹

Realism: The Dimensions of the Whole

Der Luftangriff auf Halberstadt contains in concentrated form a model of Kluge's theory of history that is fully developed in *Geschichte und Eigensinn*. In the text, war constitutes the most extreme and reified manifestation of the historical principle of abstraction, understood as the 'radical' separation from land and property, from roots. The storm of progress is to be grasped as the overwhelming power of the past, of accumulated labour over the present that exposes human beings to the uncanny acceleration of history. Only a Copernican turn can answer the 'uncanniness of time' through the gaze of cold knowledge equal to the coldness of social relations.⁷⁰ Kluge's montage technique in *Der Luftangriff auf Halberstadt* is thus radical in the double sense of a simultaneous movement away from and back towards the roots. On the one side the cold, isolated, strategic gaze: 'diabolical, corrosive curiosity', 'the pleasure in abstraction',⁷¹ the annihilation of content through the 'form of these events' and the techniques of estrangement; on the other side provocation and protest: 'If I want by means of an idea to provoke the reader to appropriate the complexity of this idea in terms of his own experience and feelings, then my inclination is to choose the *thinnest* possible formulation'.⁷² 'Expressive violence', as it really is, can only be represented in abbreviated form.⁷³

The dialectic of (intensified) abstraction and (intensified) concretion, which forms the basis of Kluge's conception of realism, is emblematically captured in the double-page image of the ruins of Halberstadt and the accompanying quotation from Marx. The history of *industry* as man's sensuously given human *psychology* constitutes the two, objective-subjective sides of the opened book of human consciousness held fast in the present of the image, which freezes history into 'dialectics at a standstill' (Benjamin). But where the emblem once served to present the God-given order of the world, hidden in things, Kluge's revelation is that of a negative theology: the opened book of history points not to the divine book of nature, but to a lost home and the reified logic of human consciousness. Where emblem and allegory exhibit the invisible order of things, Kluge can only show the catastrophic order of the world, the uncanny correspondence of inner abstraction and its outer materialisation as ruins. *This* ruined landscape of the human powers of consciousness is resistant to allegory or to *Trauerspiel*. The book of industry can be read only as montage, that is, as what Kluge has termed

'the form world of correlations'.⁷⁴ Discontinuity, jumps and switches of perspective refract an anonymous totality that can no longer be narrated from a unifying perspective capable of producing meaning and identity. Instead, as we have seen, Kluge takes the indirect path of formalism, abstraction. The whole is mapped abstractly according to its coordinates. This enables him to make the invisible, organisational structure of catastrophe visible as planning, strategies, system. In terms of system the breaks and gaps in the montage represent the *dis/connection* of the levels of hierarchy on a rising scale of distance, formalisation and concentration of power right up to the crossing of the 'system threshold to the universalistic system' of the World War. Although the air raid amounts to no more than the message 'mission accomplished' dispatched to a higher level, a statistic among statistics, cleansed of all trace of meaning and all personal responsibility, the author is called upon to work through the experience of the incommensurable *conceptually*:

The conceptual fragment 'I want to survive' about the occupants of a cellar during an air raid and the conceptual fragment 'Wiping out the town, doing the job properly' along with highly unequal forces form a *single* situation, a *single* content of experience.

This situation is at the same time the making public, the publicly readable cipher for the normally concealed relation of a whole society to human beings in everyday life or in so-called peace time. That is a *concept*.⁷⁵

The air raid as readable cipher, as open book, as historical monad: the catastrophic abbreviation at work in the historical gaze of an observer, 'who surveys 1,000 years in the same way the normal gaze regards an hour',⁷⁶ corresponds to the concentration of 800 years of strategy from above, capable of destroying the 1,200-year history of a town. 'ANDERSON: We observe the main connecting roads, the arterial roads. Where it burns best. In an old town you know where that is. We're not medievalists but we are aware that a town like that dates back to 800 AD'.⁷⁷ The telescoping of time into a strategic historical map, the use of slow motion, constantly changing camera speeds – they all play their part as estrangements, directed to foregrounding the temporal dimension of events.

This multidimensionality is central to Kluge's realism. The distancing of human relations applies not only to the economy but also to the senses. The little world of immediate relations and feelings and the great world of strategy have no common measure. Although above and below do not come into real contact, the air raid denotes the moment when the war industry intervenes in annihilating fashion in the pre-industrial world, exploding it into a multiplicity of subjective-objective fragments. Kluge and Negt extrapolate here Brecht's conception of realism:

Bert Brecht added to the familiar horizontal and vertical coordinates the category of the *functional* to historical relations: through the abstractions of capitalist processes of production and utilisation and political planning humans are caught up in the functional. These additional categories of extended abstraction can be extrapolated: horizontal, vertical, functional, irrational, imaginary, revolutionary.⁷⁸

We cannot follow the analytic decomposition of these levels of reality and their multiple constellations and dynamics unfolded in *Geschichte und Eigensinn*.⁷⁹ In relation to our text the fundamental categories are the horizontal and the vertical. By horizontal Kluge means 'the realm of the five senses',⁸⁰ the realm and the limits of human experience. The vertical signifies the dimension of orientation but also the whole of prehistory at work in the present. The functional arises through separations, it is the dimension of organisation and objectivity. The irrational by contrast is the protest of the feelings, which do not behave objectively. The imaginary can be thought of as the intensification of both the functional and the irrational. Precisely the radical separation of above and below in the air raid inverts the concepts of strategy and relations of production. In relation to below the flying factories have become unreal, imaginary, just as the work of the townspeople and the historical product of their labour – churches, houses, and so on – are rendered imaginary at the moment of the air raid. The imaginary is a radical de-realisation, the result, that is, of the irrationality of the functional and is thus to be understood as the coordinate of 'loss of reality, loss of history, loss of identity and in particular what is of special interest for our investigation: the loss of the national'.⁸¹ In the imaginary the feelings of protest retreat into themselves, into the buried layer of experience. But at the same time the air raid is to be grasped as a revolutionary event. The continuous, ever more drastic transformation of all social relations through the industrial revolution finds its most extreme expression in warfare. The devastation of the old world demonstrates the critical process of capitalist utilisation: progress leaves the historical world behind as rubble. Kluge sums up the interaction of the different dimensions in the following way:

It is imaginary that such an event – that a whole town was standing and then suddenly is burnt down – cannot be grasped by the feelings: that is highly imaginary. That the events are irrational doesn't need proving, they simply don't have any meaning. But that each particular is functional and the whole oriented to objectivity is equally clear. It is also revolutionary, I think, if a building was standing and a moment later has become a landscape of ruins; that is first of all potentially revolutionary, it is after all a radical change.⁸²

The *subjective-objective* nature of these dimensions (which are at the same time observer standpoints⁸³) appears most clearly in the emblematic juxtaposition of

the image of ruins and the Marx quotation. The open book of the human powers of consciousness clarifies the correspondence of inner and outer: 'In classical theory the *industrial landscape* and *inner communal being* form one object because they have the same history'.⁸⁴ If we relate the two aspects of the one object to the revolutionary dimension, we may say: the outer ruins correspond to the inner ruins. The revolutionary does not signify the apocalypse in Benjamin's sense since Halberstadt is a negative historical monad. Nevertheless, the catastrophe signifies the caesura of history:

As it is the history of the rulers that is made public, there will never be an apocalyptic point. And that also means: even though the town has burnt down, it is now ruins, the landscape of industry or of feelings has also become ruins, but on the level of feelings a ruin offers many ways out. That is, the possibilities have increased and the realities have decreased. It is a moment at which history enters.⁸⁵

This moment at the end of World War II is the abaric point of German history.

The Abaric Point

Above and below are not locations, they designate the relation of historical forces: 'At the meeting point of gravitational forces, the imagined *abaric point*, gravity ceases to work, there is "freedom" [...] Above and below are reversed'.⁸⁶ An example of this freedom is the last stage of the battle for Stalingrad:

After the participants had been led into this hopeless winter encirclement (together with their thousand year organisation), the leadership collapsed under the blows of the enemy: For a few days, weeks – that is, until their reorganisation as prisoners of war, death by freezing or other causes – they were *free*; if they had had a thousand year experience of freedom, they would never have arrived here or they would have known a way out.⁸⁷

Encirclement symbolises this freedom in unfreedom. It is the *in-between* time, the interregnum between two forms of organisation. The same applies to Germany's landscape of ruins, to the zero hour of 1945:

The zero hour cancels the reality principle of history for a moment. If you compare destroyed Berlin, Dresden, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Mainz, Munich, Darmstadt, Wuppertal, the Ruhr, etc. with the horizon, which was then built over, that gives you the difference between the historical pressure of reality, which weighs on perception, and a momentarily open relation to history. There is no time in 1945 to take advantage of the unexpected break in the systemic pressure, which bears down on experience; lives change, collective movements fall into the old patterns. But without this open win-

dow of the zero hour, open 'as such' but not 'for us', we cannot know German history.⁸⁸

From present perspectives zero hour appears not as an opening but as the repression of history: 'As if in shock German history seems to belong to the past, and it is very difficult in fact for the two German states to produce a sense of identity and at the same time even consider the history of the 1930s and 1940s. Both states introduced a zero hour on which they tried to construct a new history for each Germany'.⁸⁹ This loss of history simply covers up the unresolved past – a repression that is only to be grasped in terms of Germany's entire history: 'Things are complicated by the fact that the specific German form of original accumulation was particularly slow and incomplete. There never occurred a central and universal working through of irreversible processes of separation'.⁹⁰ The 'inability to mourn' means on the one hand that Hitler cannot be buried, on the other hand that Germany is not a belated but an unborn nation.⁹¹

That is why the destruction of Halberstadt, like the battle of Stalingrad, has remained an *unreceived* message: 'The power of the factual is powerful because facts march on regardless and continue to add up. For humans, by contrast, experience does not add up, there is memory loss [...]'.⁹² Stalingrad and Halberstadt remain non-experiences, negative myths in postwar German consciousness, a 'public sphere' that has come into being through its flight from the traumas of the past. Germany has cut itself off from its history since 1945. Against this separation, which blocks identity, integration and recognition of experience, Kluge sets the 'openly readable cipher' of his text. But to make this cipher public, it must be taken back to its roots, it presupposes the most thorough knowledge of history. This *psycho-analysis of history* is the goal of *Geschichte und Eigensinn*.⁹³ Only if the relation between dead and living labour is translated into experience – and this is the intention of *Der Luftangriff auf Halberstadt* – can one speak of a subject of history, a subject who speaks instead of retreating into mute protest. Under the overwhelming power of a strategic, collective war machine, however, it seems that the possibility of a subject-centred literature has been destroyed by bombs. This too is a catastrophic separation that Kluge must acknowledge in his montage method at the same time as he protests against it.

Abstraction and Concretion: The Work of Translation

The leap from real events to historical interpretation, from *Der Luftangriff auf Halberstadt* to *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, is the leap from literature to theory. It is not the case, however, that we can really draw this distinction: in the face of an

alienated, invisible reality, literature for Kluge necessarily entails theoretical analysis. Documentation and fiction, theoretical and literary approaches denote the two, subjective-objective aspects of the object. History is itself practical theory, the bomber formations overhead are a flying conceptual system that is thought *in reality* by the principle of abstraction at work in history. In other words, there is a structural parallel between the construction of a scientific theory and the organisation of a catastrophe. This parallelism motivates the dynamic and structure of Kluge's text. The textual dynamic starts from the broad variety of (horizontal) facts and climbs to ever higher regions of abstraction. At the tip of the pyramid is located, under the heading 'universality', the Supreme Command of the 'universalistic system' of the World War together with its theoretical analysis, set side by side in the inserted text.⁹⁴ And at the end a 'visitor from another star' descends from the heights of theoretical reality to the empirical world below. This movement from the empirical to the abstract and back (which signifies in reality the destruction of content by the form) is the movement of theory construction, a process that is one with the hierarchical organisation of the war machine, chains of command, battlefields and system levels, involving the concentration of power and strategic overview.

The short-circuit of above and below is effected in war by bombs, in theory through experiment. We should not forget that the 'moral bombing' of Halberstadt is an experiment. And what is an experiment but a report to a higher instance? Against this real power of abstraction the literary text aims, as we have seen, at undoing this reification from above, at translating it into the dialectical interplay of abstraction and concretion. Here, it is a question not only of the direct sphere of experience, of the direct *human* senses but of the indirect *social* senses of distance, the work on history:

Many are aware of Tel Zatar or Vietnam but no one can really feel it directly. A whole human capacity for work is missing on the concrete-sensuous level that could translate between situations. *The direct senses* (Nähesinne) *work*, *the indirect senses* (Fernsinne) *have never been worked on*. *They do not come together into a society*. *This is a political problem of the present and a distortion of the fundamental relation to history*. There exists no human relation to history if it is not worked on; an objective relation is no relation at all.⁹⁵

This is why theory and literature, analysis and experience, cannot be separated. Kluge's literary practice is necessarily also theoretical, because literary realism is only realised insofar as it is capable of both analysing the multidimensionality of reality and making it accessible to empathetic experience. *Der Luftangriff auf Halberstadt* contains, as Enzensberger says, a 'model for our historical experience'.⁹⁶ Literature for Alexander Kluge is this task of translation, which relies on the work of the reader.

Notes

1. Hans Magnus Enzensberger, 'Ein herzloser Schriftsteller', *Der Spiegel* (2 January 1978). Alexander Kluge, *Neue Geschichten* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981).
2. *Lebensläufe* has been translated by Leila Vennewitz, *Attendance List for a Funeral* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966); *Schachtbeschreibung* trans. by Leila Vennewitz, *The Battle* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967); Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1981) has not been translated. The title can perhaps be rendered as 'History and Intransigence': *Eigensinn* means stubbornness but also suggests resistance, self-assertion and meaning proper to the self.
3. Negt and Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, pp. 704-709.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 1122.
6. Kluge, *Neue Geschichten*, preface.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Alexander Kluge, *Die Patriotin: Texte/Bilder 1-6* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1979), p. 68.
9. Kluge, *Neue Geschichten*, p. 103.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 70, p. 71.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

37. Ibid., p. 79.
38. Ibid., p. 65.
39. Ibid., p. 65.
40. Ibid., p. 65.
41. Ibid., p. 65 ff.
42. Negt and Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, p. 810.
43. See *ibid.*, p. 411 ff.
44. Ibid., p. 811.
45. Kluge, *Neue Geschichten*, p. 104.
46. Ibid., p. 105.
47. Ibid., p. 104.
48. Ibid., p. 105.
49. Ibid., p. 64.
50. Ibid., p. 458.
51. Ibid., p. 611.
52. Ibid., p. 100.
53. Ibid., p. 62.
54. Negt and Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, p. 789.
55. Ibid., pp. 787-788.
56. Ibid., p. 647.
57. Kluge, *Neue Geschichten*, p. 104.
58. Ibid., p. 105.
59. Alexander Kluge, *Schlachtbeschreibung. Der organisatorische Aufbau eines Unglücks* (Munich: Goldmann, 1978), p. 7.
60. Kluge, *Die Patriotin*, p. 58.
61. Ibid., p. 171.
62. Kluge, *Neue Geschichten*, p. 83.
63. Kluge, *Die Patriotin*, p. 166.
64. See Negt and Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, p. 644 ff.
65. Alexander Kluge, *Lernprozesse mit todlichem Ausgang* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973).
66. 'Gespräch mit Alexander Kluge', *Anachronistische Hefte* (no. 1, 1980) p. 68.
67. Kluge, *Die Patriotin*, p. 315.
68. Conversation with Alexander Kluge (21 October 1981, Munich). On the theme writing and difference (Derrida) see Negt and Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, p. 1062 ff.
69. Conversation (21 October 1981).
70. Negt and Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, p. 154.
71. Kluge, *Neue Geschichten*, pp. 459-460.
72. Negt and Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, p. 142.
73. Ibid., p. 143.
74. Kluge, *Die Patriotin*, p. 41.
75. Negt and Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, p. 97.
76. Ibid., p. 719.
77. Kluge, *Neue Geschichten*, p. 77.
78. Negt and Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, p. 511.
79. Ibid., p. 511 ff. and p. 652 ff.
80. Ibid., p. 513.

81. Ibid., p. 511.
82. Conversation (21 October 1981).
83. See Negt and Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, p. 653.
84. Ibid., p. 927.
85. Conversation (21 October 1981).
86. Negt and Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, p. 790.
87. Kluge, *Schlachtbeschreibung*, p. 9.
88. Negt and Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, p. 379.
89. Ibid., p. 677.
90. Ibid., p. 681.
91. Ibid., pp. 682-683.
92. Kluge, *Die Patriotin*, p. 316.
93. Cf. Negt and Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, p. 704 ff.
94. Kluge, *Neue Geschichten*, p. 63, p. 64.
95. Negt and Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, p. 597.
96. *Der Spiegel* (2 January 1978).

Translated by David Roberts

The Air Raid on Halberstadt, 8 April 1945¹ (extract)

Alexander Kluge

Reporter: So you took off after breakfast?

Anderson: That's right. Ham and eggs, and coffee.

R: Well then, according to routine you started from combat airfields in the south of England?

A: The Podington 92nd, the Chelveston 305th, the Thurleigh 306th, the Polebrook 351st, the Deenethorpe 401st and the Glatton 457th.

R: Instead of just listing the squadrons, can you tell me what it was like?

Anderson could not give a clear picture of the squadrons' take-off. He stood behind one of the pilots, saw meadows and airport hangars go by and then was pressed against the back wall when the plane gathered speed. The teletype told him that the other squadrons took off at the same time. In each of the planes there are twelve to eighteen men, some of them just waiting, others carrying out specific technical jobs. The entire fleet meets over the coast where some of the squadrons go into a holding pattern.

R: Then a flight over the northern coast of France?

A: Of course. We acted as if we were flying towards Nürnberg or Schweinfurt.

R: Did you have a sense of pride when you looked over a bomber formation of 300 airplanes?

A: I couldn't see it. My Mosquito, a fast wooden bomber, flew a different route – over the Netherlands, Rhine, Weser, Northern Harz, etc.

R: Then German air surveillance had only to determine the direction of this pathfinder plane to see through the ruse of the bombers flying south easterly.

A: Sure. To the extent that they were still operative, they realised that.

R: South of Fulda a change in course?

A: Towards the north-east.

R: As planned?

A: Everything was planned.

R: The squadron commanders had no say in that?

A: The lead planes flew up front, but didn't determine the flight pattern.

R: What was the purpose of that?

A: I don't know. I can only describe the methods of attack. They were all pros. First of all they had to locate the city, to 'see' it. When we arrived in the Mosquitos, we saw the squadrons of bombers coming in from the south. To our right were the Harz Mountains; we could see the Brocken.² The planes flew over the southern portion of the city, dropping a few bombs as a prophylactic measure on exit roads where the inhabitants, responding to the air-raid alarm fled towards the mountains. The squadrons then regrouped at the north-eastern corner of the city, over the road leading to Magdeburg. They circled twice until all the squadrons had joined the formation so that they could fly the attack in close formation. The orders were for saturation bombing, i.e. a concentration of bombs on the southern or middle section of the city. We didn't know the city, only had a map to go by and our first visual impression. From this we knew that the main streets went through the middle from the west to the east, in the north small villages, to the south mountains. We didn't have time to dwell too much on the lay of the land since we still had the attack and flight back home ahead of us. We looked for the cardinal points of the city.

R: Or what seemed to you to be cardinal points?

A: We didn't know the purpose of the attack. Therefore we simply selected an efficient point to start.

R: What is that?

A: That the attack isn't blotchy.

R: What does that mean?

A: The bombing shouldn't be dispersed throughout the city. We looked for the main arteries and the exits. Also where it would really burn. You know yourself where that is in an old city. You don't have to be a medievalist to know that such cities were founded in 800 A.D. With that in mind the bombers concentrated on the corner houses so we could block the street. Ideally, a pile of rubble at the entrance and exit of every street. The trap was sprung after we opened up the houses on either side of the streets. Then followed the incendiary canisters and fire bombs etc. Then a third and fourth wave again to detonate the houses and burn them. This led to a criss-cross effect even though we always flew along the same path. Buildings that were still intact were hard to set afire. First the roofs had to be destroyed, openings made that go down to the second or ground floor where all the flammable material was. Otherwise we didn't get area fires or fire storms etc. My brother is an air-force doctor. It's the same as treating a skin wound. You can't heal a closed or scabbed wound. I'd compare this to a scabby old city. The wound had to be opened up so that the blood flowed from fresh veins before you applied the bandage.

R: After the first four waves you began again in parade formation with two more waves to 'clean up'. Why did you do that?

A: In parade formation because there was no anti-aircraft fire. When there is anti-aircraft fire the planes disperse and the bombing is not concentrated. That wasn't the case here.

R: I meant after the destruction what was the purpose of flying over two more times?

A: That was routine.

R: There were rumours. On that morning at 9.30 the city's defence headquarters received a call from Hildesheim from a high-ranking American officer via the civilian telephone system saying: Surrender, remove the tank blockades! The mayor wasn't there to receive the call. The next in command, Detering, who was commissioner of defence, rejected this offer. Consequently the air raid began. If the mayor had gotten up earlier and had accepted the offer, the city would have been spared the bombing. If by eleven o'clock a large white flag had been raised on the left tower of the Martini Church (left as seen from the south) the bomber squadrons would have turned around. A woman is sup-

posed to have tried to get a large cloth, six bed sheets sewn together, to the City Hall or to the Church.

A: That's nonsense. By this time the bomber fleet could never have been reached from a combat station in Hildesheim.

R: Is there any truth to the rumour?

A: Nothing at all. The officer would have had to telephone, via division headquarters, Army corps, the headquarters of the arm, then via the General Headquarters in Reims to London, from there get connected to the Strategic Air Command, back to the Eighth Air Division, then to various airports in the south of England (in order to determine which squadrons took off and in what direction, that was all secret information, otherwise any spy could have made the call) then an appropriate command would have had to be translated into code, etc. All this would have taken six to eight hours.

R: What would your lead planes have done, those which gave the smoke signals, for the route of the attack, if they had seen a large white flag made of six bed sheets flying from the tower of the Martini Church?

A: There was a huge formation in the air, no single leading aircraft. What was a big bed sheet supposed to mean? A trick? Nothing at all. It might have been the subject of a conversation. The planes behind were pressing on. Even if no smoke signals were given, one would have assumed that that was neglected and either made them or bombed according to what was visible.

R: But a large white flag is internationally recognised, as surrender.

A: To an airplane? Let's imagine that an airplane landed on the nearby airport – the landing strip would probably have been too short for a four engine plane – and occupied the city with its twelve to eighteen-man crew. How could they know, whether the person who raised the white flag hadn't been taken and shot by a firing squad for 'defeatism'.

R: That didn't give the city a fair chance. What should a city do to surrender?

A: What do you mean? Don't you understand how dangerous it is to fly back with a load of five or four tons of explosives and fire bombs?

R: They could have dropped the bombs somewhere else.

A: In a forest, etc., etc. Before the flight home. Let's assume the units were attacked on the way home. The airfield in Hanover still had planes. We were in fact waiting for them to come. Who would take responsibility for these heavily laden geese, simply because of a white cloth? The goods had to go down onto the city. They cost a lot of money. You couldn't just throw that away, in the mountains or open fields after it was produced at such expense. How could this, in your opinion, have been reported to the higher ups?

R: You could have at least dropped a portion in open fields or in a river.

A: These valuable bombs? You can't hush that up. In each plane twelve to eighteen men were witness to it 215 times. We didn't intend anything. We didn't know anyone down there. Why should any of us take part in some conspiracy for their sake. I could have given a command to a firing squad, everyone run for cover, airplane coming from the left, and then told the prisoner he should disappear, with the understanding that everyone would keep it quiet. But that could never happen.

R: In other words the city was destroyed as soon as the plans were made?

A: Let me put it this way: if a couple of our commanders of tank divisions had been in a particular hurry and had pushed forward in a brilliant manoeuvre over Goslar, Viennenburg, Wernigerode to reach Halberstadt by 11.30am, that would not have changed our plans.

R: They could have signalled their presence to you.

A: Enemy deception.

R: You would have calmly destroyed your own troops?

A: Not calmly, but with some doubts. There would have been some communications which could have compromised the saturation bombing. Thank God our tank squadrons weren't magicians.

R: Did you have an idea of the purpose of this attack?

A: As I said, not really.

R: You are a cynic.

A: But I'm not dishonest. What good would it do, if I offered my sympathy now?

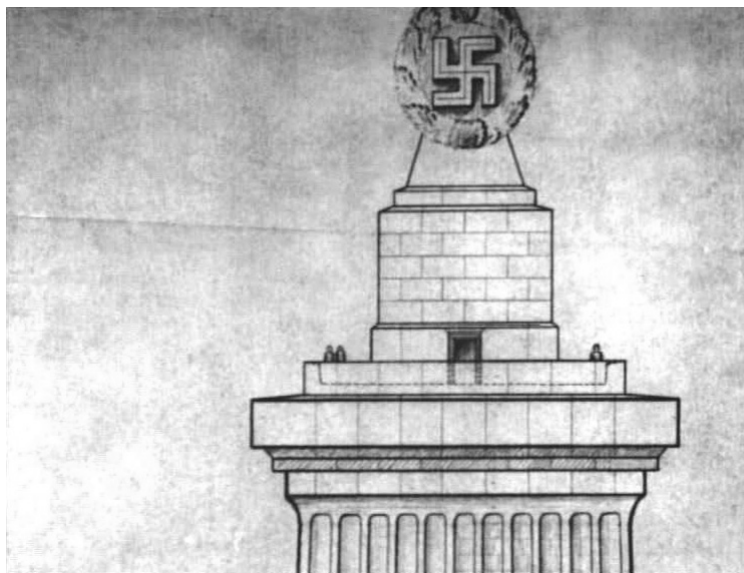
R: None.

The reporter refused a cup of coffee. Real hatred, here at the bar of the Strand was hard to fabricate.

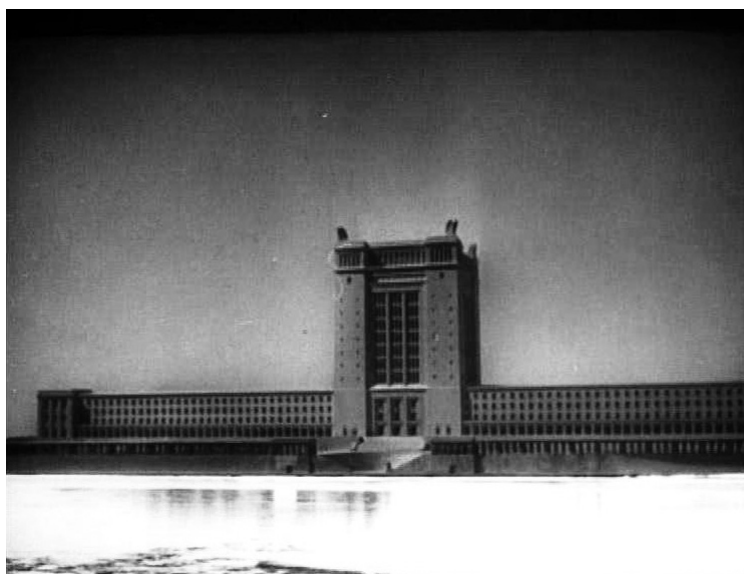
Notes

1. Kunzert, a reporter born in Halberstadt (a Prussian town, now part of East Germany), who moved to the West in June 1945 when the English troops evacuated Sachsen-Anhalt, contacted Brigadier General Frederick L. Anderson of the 8th Division, U.S. Air Force in 1952 in London during a conference of the Institute for Strategic Research. They are sitting in the bar in the Strand Hotel. Anderson was one of the commanders in the air raid on Halberstadt.
2. Highest peak of the Harz mountains.

Translated by Reinhard Mayer



1. BRUTALITY IN STONE (1961)



2. BRUTALITY IN STONE (1961)



3. YESTERDAY GIRL (1966)



4. YESTERDAY GIRL (1966)



5. FRAU BLACKBURN, BORN 5 JAN. 1872, IS FILMED (1967)



6. ARTISTS UNDER THE BIG TOP-PERPLEXED (1968)



7. ARTISTS UNDER THE BIG TOP-PERPLEXED (1968)



8. ARTISTS UNDER THE BIG TOP-PERPLEXED (1968)



9. A DOCTOR FROM HALBERSTADT (1970)



10. A WOMAN FROM THE PROPERTY-OWNING MIDDLE CLASS, BORN 1908
(1973)



11. PART-TIME WORK OF A FEMALE SLAVE (1973)



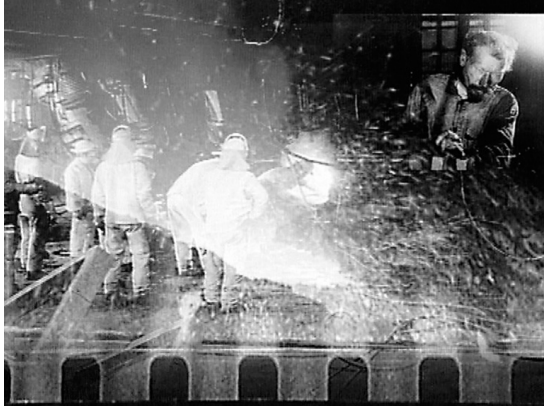
12. IN DANGER, AND DEEP DISTRESS, THE MIDDLEWAY SPELLS CERTAIN DEATH (1974)



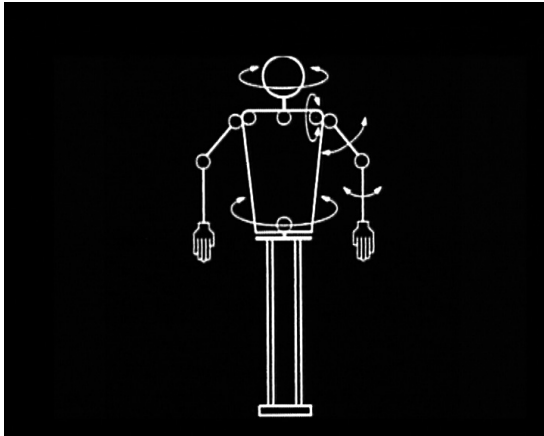
13. IN DANGER, AND DEEP DISTRESS, THE MIDDLEWAY SPELLS CERTAIN DEATH (1974)



14. 'Camp Money' (1995)



15. *'High on Work'* (1997)



16. *'High on Work'* (1997)



17. 'August 1914' (2000)



18. 'Attention-Total Loss!' (2001)



19. 'A Tear for Every Drop of Blood' (2004)



20. NEWS FROM IDEOLOGICAL ANTIQUITY-MARX, EISENSTEIN, CAPITAL (2008)

Realism as Protest

Construction Site Film: Kluge's Idea of Realism and His Short Films

Eike Friedrich Wenzel

If one wanted to summarise Alexander Kluge's film work in a catchphrase, it might well read: 'film-making out of foreign material'. Kluge himself compared his aesthetic programme with the cluttered and unfinished state of construction sites. Shimmering through such formulations is a notion of film that declares the brilliant, thoroughly composed, autonomous work of art to be ideological. For Kluge, art is not a Spanish wall that the individual artist draws between the audience and social reality. Art is perception, perception of reality. As such, it stays close to the experiences of the audience, their experiences of social reality. Kluge's construction-site artistry does not purport to explain reality. In his hands, contact with reality dissolves into a polyphonic dialogue of found materials. Contemporary images, written documents, film clips, footage from silent films, quotes from opera, wholly or partially fabricated biographies, the German fairy-tale tradition, fragments from children's books, visual representations of superstition – all these and more are thrown together in his films.

If one nonetheless were to encapsulate Kluge's oeuvre in a single theme, then this would have to be German history, and with it the historical nature of the present. History is here not to be understood as a compact, interpretable object placed before him by the author, *about* which he makes certain statements, but rather as a process of work on our perceptions of historical material, an incessant questioning of the images we make of history. For Kluge, historicity is both the irreducible horizon of his work and a social utopia. All his films are informed by an insistence on the significance of historicity, an insistence that viewers are invited to adopt as an attitude – towards themselves, towards the film, and towards their own social reality.

While working on German history in the medium of film, Kluge is simultaneously trying to open up the medium to a realistic relationship to the object of social reality. Kluge is not concerned with the 'redemption of external reality', but with building and maintaining channels of communication that make possible the production of social experience. I will attempt, in the first part of this chapter, to show by theoretical means how this idea of realism differs from the 'realism' of generic film, and to explain the signal importance it attaches to the figure of the author. In the second section, I will turn to Kluge's short films from the 1960s and early 1970s. My analyses will endeavour to demonstrate how

Kluge's idea of realism is concretised as an independent form of documentary observation, one that continuously reflects the cinematic material in the dimension of the historical while engaging viewers in this process as historians (of their own history).

I

How is it possible to describe the relationship between film, history and historiography? Film, history and historiography cannot be classified as fixed ontological quantities. Film and historiography are social discourses, that is, they model reality and imbue it with meaning. Film is not a neutral, purely technical means for recording things; nor can history be conceived as a clearly delimited field of investigation (the 'past'). In film, history is customarily dramatised in non-fictional images. When approaching Kluge's film work, it is important to recognise that films, like all other artistic semiotic systems, tackle history by setting up models. Films construct historical reality – the belief that they communicate a bygone reality without interference or distortion is an ideological fiction. In the twentieth century, film was the privileged social site for presenting history to a mass public. If it is to free itself from the illusion that history can be reduced to facts and events, a critical analysis must lay bare the hidden assumptions and motivations with which films (like other media constructions) represent history. Therefore, whenever history is brought to presence in film, this occurs from an interested observational standpoint that involves questions of power: 'Who is telling *his* or *her* history here and on the basis of which interests?' The relationship of film to history and reality is concretised in the opposition between the film (*Spielfilm*) and the documentary. With this division into films and documentaries, film history consecrated a basic opposition which, to this day, continues to structure our perception of reality.

From the very beginning, Kluge refused to accept that this opposition was an unbridgeable one. The aesthetic specific to Kluge, which consciously positions itself beyond this opposition, can only be appraised in its political and perceptual consequences if we first identify the most important characteristics of films and documentaries and designate the ideological mechanism by which the respective 'genres' operate. Only against this background is it possible to present Kluge's project as an aesthetic practice which conceives film (production *and* reception) as the configuration of a memory space.

Film industries all around the world are at one in maintaining a strict line of demarcation between films and documentaries. The documentary deals with the historical world, or rather with excerpts from that world, and seeks to ex-

plain it with the means of argumentative and journalistic description. The authors of this discourse refer to eyewitness reports from the scene. This is visually expressed in footage shot wherever the event took place. If a film takes past events for its subject matter, then the author draws on archival images. These images stand for an anonymous testimony, with which, however, the author generally identifies without feeling any need for reservations or caveats. The commentary – this is the ideological core of the generic documentary film – appears to derive necessarily from the images, regardless of whether a past or present event is being shown. Since the commentary takes the form of an authorial voice-over coming from off-screen, and hence is realised in the absence of a visible broadcaster, the impression arises in the viewer's mind that reality itself is speaking from the images. Nowadays, television tends to dominate the market for non-fictional films; only in exceptional cases are documentary films accorded cinema release.

On the other side of the line of demarcation, the film draws upon fictional dramaturgies. Films present the viewer with a coherent world that exists alongside the everyday world. What makes this world practically indistinguishable from the viewer's everyday world is the fact that it is populated with living individuals. And we, as viewers, can access their fictive lives just as self-evidently as we access our own quotidian reality. Like that reality, the film world seems to require no further explanation. No intellectual authority – and herein lies the ideological core of the film – seems to be responsible for the genesis of the film world. Fiction, Käte Hamburger writes, is the only place where 'the subjectivity of a third person can be presented as that of a third person'.¹ Every other discourse turns the third person into the object of a conversation, a journalistic article, and so on: we talk *about* someone, form an opinion *about* someone, but we cannot peer into him. Only in fiction do we have the impression of entering into the life-world of a third person and vicariously experiencing a life that is foreign to our own. The big film studios profit from this magical effect, which enables cinemagoers to live another life for a couple of hours while at the same time remaining nothing more than observers of that life.

Despite their obvious differences, both discourses coincide in a decisive point. Documentaries and films resemble each other insofar as they draw on diverse dramaturgical models to present their audiences with a world. In the documentary, what seems to articulate itself is *the* historical world as such, or an aspect of that world. In the film, we gain imaginary access to *a* world in which the lives of psychologically credible individuals take their course. In both cases, the world presents itself to us as a spontaneous phenomenon; no author, it would seem, no linguistic means are involved in its genesis. Documentaries and films, one might say, work with 're-presentations' of reality.² They produce re-presentations in a two-fold sense: both 'genres' operate with an aesthetic-linguistic ima-

gination of the world (reality as artistic projection). At the same time, they position us *against* a self-sufficient ensemble of images and sounds which signify the world and interpret it (reality as finished painting). In films and documentaries, we thus experience reality as a hermetically sealed 'picture'; reality appears as a re-presented world-picture. Alongside the factual distance in space that separates us from the 'world' on the screen, documentaries and films produce a second, symbolic separation by re-presenting reality to us in the form of a closed world-picture. In this way, they cut a trench between the experiences of the audience and the reality re-presented in the film. Through its re-presentation, reality appears as an experiential context that is always already self-contained, and thereby to a certain extent 'historicised'. The viewer, so it would appear, always arrives too late to be able to intervene in this re-presented reality. By the time the viewer has taken his seat, reality has always already become a world-picture and declared itself in its definitive meaning ('history', 'past').

I do not want to claim that every documentary and every film must necessarily fall into this 'historicisation trap'. What this – no doubt skewed – consideration allows us to see is the fact that both 'genres' tend to reproduce a particular model of reality, one that functions by excluding the audience's experiences of historical reality from the perceptual situation established in the cinema or in front of the television screen. It seems worth emphasising that 'realism' results from the semanticisation of the space or situation in which film is perceived. And when I speak here of 'space' or 'situation', I mean a complex of relations, cultural codifications and unconscious stereotypes that come into play whenever we sit in the cinema or in front of the television watching a film. Conventional films and documentaries set up this space in such a way that reality petrifies before our eyes into the timeless past of a 'picture'.

Accordingly, the functioning of this 'realistic' dispositive cannot be retraced on the level of thematic content. But it also cannot be derived as a mechanical effect from the material situation that determines how we perceive films in cinema and television, as has occurred in the psychoanalytical theory of apparatus.³ The 'realistic' dispositive of standard films and documentaries, into which the television schedule locks us for hours at a time each evening, is built up by means of representational routines. Historically, these rigid codifications have developed in the film (the characters as psychological individuals, plausibility of the plot) and in the documentary film (the camera's gaze as glimpse into the world). They should be described as stereotypes which, detached from any given theme or subject matter, facilitate the production of the film and make its reception an automatic, apparently natural process. As viewers, we constantly have the impression of looking out upon the world through these perceptual formulae. We grow irritated if a film fails to present us with characters whose actions we can imaginatively reconstruct, and a nightly news report from a cri-

sis zone without corresponding images drastically reduces the report's credibility.

II

Kluge recognised the dangers that arise whenever aesthetic procedures are converted into rules which can be mechanically downloaded, as it were (whether due to institutional time constraints or the populist desire not to shock viewers). Time and again, he reminds us that this form of 'realism' has the effect of excluding reality. What I have just sketched as a realistic dispositive resembles what Kluge calls 'middling realism' (*mittleren Realismus*).⁴ By this he means an aesthetic practice which has to ignore particular aspects of social reality, or declare them to be unreal, if it is to be 'realistic' in the conventional sense of the word – if, that is, it is to leave the audience undisturbed in its habitual attitudes. In one of his rare utterances on film theory, made in the heyday of French post-structuralism (Metz, Baudry), Kluge remarked that the realism question should not be limited to a discussion of style or of politically 'correct' content. In two articles, 'The Realistic Method and the So-called Filmic Character' and 'The Sharpest Ideology: That Reality Appeals to its Realistic Character',⁵ Kluge advocates an understanding of realism that reflects on how the audience is positioned in relation to film and television images. For Kluge, a film is realistic if it succeeds in taking the viewer seriously as a social being. A realistic film links up with viewers' experiences, their social reality. A realistic film, Kluge already proclaims in what (to my knowledge) was his inaugural programmatic statement, 'must [...] anticipate the critical attitude of the viewer, his claim to be treated as an enlightened human being'.⁶ While it is no doubt important – particularly so far as the documentary film is concerned – to ask whether the people and situations featured in a film are adequately 'conveyed', it is no less important to consider how viewers can make sense of the images and sounds with which they are presented, and how these images and sounds position them in relation to the reality that the film takes as its subject.

For Kluge, film-making means the production of social experience – and this obviously not in the sense that the author crafts a politically correct and completely thought-out product. On the contrary, social experience can only be produced in process form, through the dialogic negotiation of social meanings and world-pictures. And this emphatically presupposes that communication has been made possible. For Kluge, in the final instance, filmic viewing 'only' means the making possible of communication. On this presupposition, the labour of production and the film's reception meet on common ground. The filmic work

becomes the 'occasion' or 'pretext' to reflect on German history. Like the viewer, Kluge himself is a film-watcher and an individual in the history of the present. And it is this unspectacular fact of contemporaneity that makes Kluge a filmmaker. For all his aesthetic ambition, what lends his works their unmistakable profile is his ever-watchful and curious presence as an intellectual in the present.

How can we characterise the dramaturgical parameters of Kluge's film aesthetic, and what importance should we accord the dimension of the author in that aesthetic? By looking at Kluge's interventions in the realism debate, provoked by his film *THE PATRIOT/DIE PATRIOTIN* (1979) and the collective production *GERMANY IN AUTUMN/DEUTSCHLAND IM HERBST* (1977/1978), we can clarify what truth there may be to the claim that his films are without a subject. The mainstream documentary and film industries produce compact contents. Although both 'genres' remain within the close confines of their ruling conventions, this is not to say that they do no more than exploit certain themes and subjects. As we have seen, they additionally operate by promising viewers an imaginary stake in the world. At one point, Kluge characterises this version of 'realism' with an image that shows us a man in his relationship to reality. He calls this person 'a stroller through reality', someone who, in paying obeisance to reality, 'leaves things the way they are'.⁷ His capacity to experience reality with his own senses, and perhaps to be confronted with sources of opposition to his desires and needs, or even to discover that reality 'relates [to him] in an inhuman way'⁸ – all this has been blunted for the sake of his peace of mind. From this sad image of someone who rests within himself like a windowless monad, and from whom reality is always kept at bay, we can infer by inversion what filmic perception (production *and* reception) does mean for Kluge, and how film should approach the 'paper tiger' of reality.

Kluge's film-poetological programme only becomes plausible when it is regarded in its sociopolitical context. (In an interview with Gertrud Koch, Kluge has fundamentally called into question the use-value of an explicit film theory.)⁹ Kluge's idea of realism presumes an antagonistic reality. Reality is not whatever can be captured by the camera as a pre-filmic master copy. It cannot be reduced to the 'bare facts' conjured up by documentarism and a historiography fixated on events. Long before radical constructivism asked 'How real is reality?' and popularised talk of 'the uncertainty of our reality', 'the invented reality', and the media, social, or cognitive construction of reality,¹⁰ Kluge was reaching similar, although not identical, conclusions: 'It must be possible to represent reality as the historical fiction that it is'.¹¹ This calls for creative labour on the collective 'text' of reality. First appearances to the contrary, this formulation is far from denying the existence of social and material reality. In the construct we call 'reality', Kluge sees a historical movement at work, a labour of generations 'which

all the while really wanted and continue to want something quite different'.¹² This reality is antagonistic because so far, at least – Kluge draws this pessimistic conclusion from the catastrophic course of German history – it has always had a deleterious or destructive effect on the individual. For that reason, protest against the reality-text is for him the decisive motivating factor for realism. What comes to the fore is no longer the question of how reality is to be depicted, but how it can be represented and changed. In short, the question of realism becomes a question of the subject, a question of how the author can adopt a realistic attitude towards reality. For Kluge, adopting a realistic stance in film does not mean confirming reality by copying it. The realism of protest calls for the sensuous labour of interrogating and deconstructing the historical text of our reality.

In the 'realistic' dispositive that regulates films and documentaries, the personality of the author and his stance towards reality remain curiously indistinct, in contrast to the fictional space of illusion or the apparently self-explicating historical world. Even a critical documentation, if it proceeds with conventional filmic means, tends to replicate the illusion of throwing open a window to the world for the viewer. Kluge's counter-programme to re-presented world-pictures came under heavy fire in the 1970s. Klaus Wildenhahn used the occasion of the 1979 Duisburg film week to launch a polemic in which he charged Kluge with Romanticism, accusing him of creating films which dissolved 'bad reality' into 'art products'.¹³ Kluge responded to these criticisms in an interview with Klaus Eder.¹⁴ Without reciprocating Wildenhahn's polemical style, Kluge speaks there of the need to keep viewers aware of the author's own position in the filmic presentation, his labour on the material. Against Wildenhahn's declared allegiance to 'art's mimetic function'¹⁵ (directed against a 'method that dissects the world' and scorns 'the misery of the little man'¹⁶), Kluge maintains that the author's position, should it not be thematised in the film, will 'continue to exert itself, only in an uncontrolled, underhand, illicit way'.¹⁷ Kluge is by no means condemning Wildenhahn's films, which fail to comply with the director's own theoretically ordained mimetic purism – indeed, that is precisely what makes them worth watching. Kluge thinks it worth emphasising that the author's labour on images and sounds must be made visible, otherwise his position will unconsciously hold sway as a discourse of power ('reality', 'truth', 'objectivity').

With that, a strong authorial perspective is proposed as the precondition for a productive engagement with social reality. The viewer must be able to trace the author's labour on the collated material. Only then will it be possible to perceive the film-maker as an organising intellectual source of authority, and unnecessary hierarchies in filmic communication can be avoided. With that, we are back at our starting point. Kluge's idea of realism insists, as its indispensable

condition, that one 'risk' exposing oneself in one's own subjectivity, one's own being-in-the-world, one's own protest against reality, or however one wants to put it, whenever reality is presented with filmic means. Kluge's understanding of realism stipulates that the author must be identifiable in his confrontation with reality (a historical context (*Zusammenhang*) and a contradictory text written by generations). That is why he often identifies film with 'struggle, partisan engagement'.¹⁸ Such a guarantee of authenticity and honesty can be delivered neither by the technical apparatus of the camera (the dream of direct cinema), nor by allegiance to a school or movement. Even though Kluge's films are primarily indebted to documentary film-making techniques, they cannot be dispatched to the ghetto of documentarism, precisely because they insist on a relationship to reality that is subjective and formative.

According to Kluge, the filmic presentation of reality is thus unavoidably bound up with the author's subjectivity, his protest. And since reality does not become visible in a photograph, it is the author's task to set up 'experiments' with the means of film.¹⁹ Kluge also refers to 'objective situations'²⁰ in the same context: in his films, these are constructions produced through montage. Montage incorporates the process that allows film to open itself, in an emphatic sense, to the multitude of materials and signs from which historical reality is constituted. For film can only be loaded up with foreign material with the help of montage: texts, fairy-tale images, photos, newsreel footage – all kinds of signifying materials, already freighted with meaning from other contexts, are incorporated by Kluge into his films. In this model, the author's role in arranging the material cannot be overlooked, even as he simultaneously disappears into the textual montage, since he makes no attempt to homogenise the assembled signifying materials into a univocal discourse of truth.

This is the point at which Kluge's politics of authorship stands revealed as a dialectical conception. If the author can be discerned in the film and held accountable for his imposition of meaning on the material, in the manner demanded by Kluge, then he can equally now withdraw from the filmic production of meaning as an authoritarian source. What allows the collision of disparate materials in his films is thus the fact that the author avoids charging the film with his own world view. At the same time, in his function as a worker on texts, he becomes an approachable conversational partner for the viewer.

For Kluge's idea of realism, the static triad 'author-work-viewer' must therefore be reformulated as follows:

- The author does not stylise himself as the privileged and 'objective' organ of truth. In his films, Kluge frequently does nothing more than stage the collision of materials semiotised in other contexts. Kluge's compositional style as a film-maker is defined by the way he abandons himself to the foreign, to *objets trouvés*, to plunder from a semiotic production lasting over two thou-

sand years. These accumulated signs-of-the-times are not over-hastily integrated into his films, but made visible as contexts; hence the notion of film as a 'construction site'. Kluge evokes this abandonment to the foreign, to the context, in the following statement: 'The medium of expression is the difference, the fundamental disharmony between the individual product and reality, not some glibly produced harmony of the individual material with itself'.²¹

- A film by Kluge is thus simultaneously more and less than a film. It does not exclusively embody the personal idiosyncrasies of the author, whose world view one may find fascinating or repulsive, according to taste. Kluge's films often only configure a space into which there flows a reservoir of diverse images and sounds, without channelling these signs-of-the-times into fixed interpretations. In doing so, however, the individual film embodies nothing less than the germ of a (counter-) public sphere: 'The reproduction of the public sphere is at once the condition and the most important object worked on by the realistic method'.²²
- The viewer steps forward as the author's contemporary and dialogic partner. Since the author Kluge does not present himself in his films as an 'eyewitness to truth' and his filmic constructions (montages of objets trouvés) tend to take on a life of their own, since 'meaning crumbles and dissolves in the moment of its consolidation',²³ the viewer becomes a 'second producer'. Author and film do not claim to be any more intelligent than the viewer: '[...] a good film consists in the production of the viewer's autonomy'.²⁴

III

In turning now to a selection from Kluge's short films from the 1960s and early 1970s, it is not my intention to detect trace elements of a stringent poetics in these early works. Nor will I seek to draw out the particularities of Kluge's approach to the short-film genre. In my opinion, Kluge was never interested in taking such a conscious approach to the distinction between short and long films. Perhaps he made nothing other than short films. His television magazines from the 1990s, in which he generally spent half an hour discussing a theme in conversation with a guest, may confirm this. What interests me about his short films is the manner in which he elaborates a documentary form and tries to distance himself from the customary patterns of documentarism (which already exerted a certain influence in German television since its inception in 1950). The vanishing point of my investigation remains the question of how Kluge approaches his key themes of historicity, of Germany past and present. In my ana-

lysis, I will come back to two problem complexes outlined above. Firstly, I will investigate how Kluge practically deals with the opposition 'documentary versus fiction', and how he develops from this his own realistic discourse. Secondly, I would like to show how the author-personality situates itself within this discourse, and how Kluge succeeds in opening up his films to foreign, found material.

BRUTALITY IN STONE/BRUTALITÄT IN STEIN (1960), which since 1963 has also appeared (in slightly modified form) under the title THE ETERNITY OF YESTERDAY/DIE EWIGKEIT VON GESTERN, initially strikes the viewer as a conventional documentary about a historical theme. Right at the beginning, Schamoni and Kluge put forward a thesis. Split between two screens, we read the inscription:

Every building bequeathed us by history testifies to the spirit of its builders and of their time, even if it long ago stopped serving its original purpose. As witnesses preserved in stone, the surviving monuments of the National Socialist Party revive the memory of the epoch that culminated in the most terrible catastrophe in German history.

With that, the hermeneutic programme of the authors appears to be unmistakably set forth: in the tradition of ideology critique, the fascist character of Nazi architecture and its builders is to be read off the images themselves. Schamoni and Kluge proceed from the assumption that the sight of its buildings must reawaken in viewers the memory of National Socialism.

The following section sets off directly in search of traces. We see shots of the Nuremberg Party grounds. In short takes, details of the buildings – individual 'motifs', as the voice-over calls them – come into view. Schamoni and Kluge are seeking a site in the present which – as the authorial presupposition would have it – preserves signs of the catastrophe that befell Germany in the recent past. Contrary to the expectation formulated in the opening thesis, however, the authors fail to develop a discursive analysis. Not a word is devoted to characterising the buildings' architectural style, describing their construction, and so forth. The camera seems interested, above all, in the buildings' corners and edges and in their symmetrical uniformity. In quick succession, partly as a result of jerky camera movements, different parts of buildings loom into view. The recorded drum rhythm seems to command them to appear.

This footage, which we can assume to be present-day rather than archival, also remains uncommented in what follows. It thus by no means signals the presence of the authors *in situ*, as is generally the case in documentary films. And without this authorial foundation, the chronological classification of the images grows tenuous as well ('what was yesterday, what is today?'). The here-and-now of the recording (1960) does not elevate the film to a reliable narrative standpoint from which the viewer's gaze is directed back to the past and history

is 'processed' discursively. Although Schamoni and Kluge had indicated at the outset that Nazi architecture was to be decoded as the ideological formation or mirror of the fascist world view, this programme remains unredeemed over the course of the film. The authors do not explain; they arrange.

The temporal status of the camera image is additionally undermined through the soundtrack. Fragments from Nazi culture films and newsreels (original tone of a Hitler speech, fascist songs, etc.) embed the image in the context 'National Socialism 1933-1945'. What results in *BRUTALITY IN STONE*, however, is not a 'realistic' retrospective view of the past. To borrow Deleuze's paradoxical phrase, one could say that sound and sight stand in a 'relationship of non-correspondence' to each other;²⁵ they have been juxtaposed in the film, but a semantic gap yawns between them. The Party grounds in the 'now' of the 1960s are ominously depopulated; they have not been established as a plausible point of departure for the trip back in time. In their present-day desertion, however, they subtly correspond to the inhuman mobilisation of the masses brought to presence in the soundtrack. The film prompts us to ask: 'Where are the people who, not all that long ago, came here to acclaim their Führer? And where are those who didn't acclaim him?'

Doubtless there are argumentative structures in *BRUTALITY IN STONE* which refer to particular contexts (*Zusammenhänge*). Hitler's dictum ('only the pettiest of minds can see the life of a revolution in destruction alone. We saw it, on the contrary, in a gigantic effort of construction') is played once at the beginning to images of phallic tower blocks and later, once again, in connection with shots of Hitler's 'idea sketches'. The film's conclusion provides tacit commentary on what resulted from Hitler's 'gigantic effort of construction': a field of rubble. Newsreel fanfares are sarcastically superseded by the sounds of stone blocks crashing on top of each other. The message is unambiguous. (This passage shows, moreover, that *BRUTALITY IN STONE* conceives fascist architecture more as a metaphor for Nazi ideology than as its direct expression.)

What seems remarkable about this procedure by which sight and sound are associated and dissociated, however, is the fact that Schamoni and Kluge historicise their discourse in this manner. *BRUTALITY IN STONE* does not claim to know 'how it really was'. By means of the non-correspondence of sight and sound, the film produces temporal relationships. It allows the Nazi past to flash up acoustically. Yet this temporal association is not maintained on screen, since there we see present-day footage. Rather than offering a photographic argument on the aetiology and symptoms of National Socialism and, with the supposed documentary truth now safely in hand, obscuring the historical phenomenon they had set out to investigate, Schamoni and Kluge want to allow viewers to experience historical time for themselves. In this way, the madness and gigantism of fascist programmes to change the world (mass murder, the Germanisation of

Europe, the renaming of cities [...]) is not confined to the period 1933-1945. Traces of that time are preserved in images from the present. What exactly the relationship between the Nazi past and the West German present might be – here the film falls silent. It is up to the viewer to confront this question.

BRUTALITY IN STONE produces other montages of different times and realities. In the second half of the film, introduced by a painting of Hitler and a photograph showing him at his writing table, we see scenarios of a virtual fascism. Drawing on architectural sketches and miniature models, BRUTALITY IN STONE unveils what the National Socialists planned but were unable to realise: a fascist future in the conjunctive. Hitler's totalitarian concept of a 'reorganisation of German cities' (the film cites a 1943 statement on this topic) and the creative furore expressed in the models (a furore unleashed in altered form after 1945, as we know) create a harrowing impression: this could have been our present. Schamoni and Kluge's camera frequently moves within the models of buildings and cities. In a great square, fountains suddenly start gushing; tiny human figurines dot the streetscape. The camera documents the 'planned possibility' of a neo-classical civic aesthetic that never became reality. In the film, these virtual scenarios are juxtaposed with the sound of planes flying overhead, wailing sirens and falling bombs. From the Führer command of 20 August 1943, we hear: 'I need a million dwellings for victims of air raids [...] I'm even considering mud-brick huts or, at worst, holes in the ground'.

Schamoni and Kluge are not documenting 'facts'. The film confronts National Socialist visions of the future with the reality of the destruction of German cities. Here, too, the film does not restrict itself to depicting one level of reality. The materials (newsreel audio, quotes from the Führer command, original recordings of Hitler, architectural models [...]), do not cohere into an argument. The authors bring materials into contact with each other, but they remain 'foreign', i.e. unelaborated in the current context. In BRUTALITY IN STONE, a fundamental semantic difference prevails between image and sound, and this disjunction is what allows temporal relations and differing levels of reality to be articulated. Present and past, vision and reality are contrapuntally interwoven by Schamoni and Kluge. And the viewer recognises National Socialism as a phenomenon that juts into his own lived reality. Documentary integrity prevents one from saying in what way.

In BRUTALITY IN STONE, documentary-making entails the production of contexts (*Zusammenhängen*) excluded from hegemonic discourses. German fascism now no longer appears as a self-contained historical epoch, a narrative strategy that risks rationalising fascism as an easily explicable phenomenon and thereby consigning it to the museum. One searches in vain, in BRUTALITY IN STONE, for images from Nazi newsreels and culture films. And they are there only in fragments, as cited shreds of discourse, in the soundtrack. National Socialism is not

to be reduced to the status of an ahistorical tautology that can be summoned, at any time, by retrieving the same all-too-familiar propaganda images from the archives. As a reaction to the obligatory isolation of the twelve 'bad' years from the rest of history – a confinement respected even, or perhaps especially, by professional historians working in the post-war period – the film operates at an opening in the culturally imposed border zone between past and present. What is realistic about the experiments carried out in *BRUTALITY IN STONE* is the film's refusal to drape the historical phenomenon of fascism with rationalising (authorial) interpretations, its multifaceted presentation of Nazi ideology as a political and aesthetic imaginary whose material and conceptual traces carry through to the present day.

IV

BRUTALITY IN STONE is not only Kluge's first film; it remains his only film to deal exclusively with National Socialism. In *FRAU BLACKBURN, BORN 5 JAN. 1872, IS FILMED/FRAU BLACKBURN, GEB 5 JAN. 1872, WIRD GEFILMT* (1967), *A DOCTOR FROM HALBERSTADT/EIN ARZT AUS HALBERSTADT* (1969/1970) and *A WOMAN OF THE UPPER-MIDDLE CLASS, BORN 1908/BESITZBÜRGERIN, JAHRGANG 1908* (1973), Kluge portrayed his grandmother, father and mother, respectively. With that, an entirely different theme seems to have been broached. The titles of these short films create the impression of wanting to distance themselves, immediately and emphatically, from what they promise – that is, a biographical treatment of the author's own family. In the films themselves, it is never made clear that these are members of Kluge's family. Still, all three testify to an evident familiarity and an often tender intimacy with their subjects.

Kluge radically turns his interest to his own private connections. This should make clear that there can be no question here of claiming any kind of originality or special significance – whether sociohistorical or sociopsychological – for the individual portrait, considered as a personal biography. Whereas the producer of a television documentary typically approaches an unrelated person, documents this approach, reconstructs their life story with the help of interviews, and empathetically brings out the uniqueness and relevance of the narrated biography, for Kluge, a particular proximity to his subjects is guaranteed and inescapable right from the beginning. (Conversely, one can only imagine the kind of reception that might be accorded a television producer who wanted to turn the experiences he shared with his old grandmother, his mother's spring cleaning, or his father's visit from East Germany into a television documentary.) Kluge's 'family cinema' thus consciously dispenses with all forced claims to the gener-

alisability of its mode of access to reality (the individual as typical or extraordinary subject). The creative potential of this form, however, lies precisely in its having revoked the documentary's claim to originality. Relieved of the pressure to force the individual into a Procrustean bed of generic conventions (psychological coherence, narratability, clear storyline, etc.), we observe the 95 year-old Martha Blackburn climbing stairs, performing gymnastic exercises [...] She listens to the radio and complains that the regular programme schedule has been changed. Frau Blackburn expresses her wish to provide the film with contemplative and 'realistic' images. This prompts her to sit in the kitchen with her coffee grinder. When she notices that she has run out of coffee beans, she keeps grinding so that the scene can be salvaged. She suggests that the sound of the grinder running on empty can be replaced at a late stage.

To ask someone what they are still afraid of, and to get a useful response, you have to know someone extremely well as a conversational partner, unless that person happens to know you even better and longer. In such situations, the author Kluge is not just a film-maker, but also the old lady's grandchild. So as not to suffocate the film in the pure present of the portrait situation, Kluge on several occasions shifts his attention away from his chats with Frau Blackburn, without banishing them from the film entirely. To the strains of opera music, the camera moves around the old lady's apartment and glides past her rooms. 'Unfortunately I had rheumatism in my right hand as well [...]' – the preceding conversation centres on this topic. Frau Blackburn is talking as if she already found herself beyond all physical complaints. When the opera music starts playing immediately afterwards and the camera makes its tour of the apartment, there arises an intensive sense of the passing of time. The camera's searching movements create a panorama straddling different epochs, juxtaposing antique furniture, Gothic-print editions of Mayer's *Conversational Lexicon* and Goethe's works with the cheerless functionality of the bathroom (the apartment is located on the top floor of a high-rise). The everyday surrounds of Martha Blackburn are suddenly transformed into a historical space in which past and present are seen to collide.

In the interior spaces shown extensively in *FRAU BLACKBURN* [...] and *A WOMAN OF THE UPPER-MIDDLE CLASS* [...], no less than in the images of the Party grounds in *BRUTALITY IN STONE*, Kluge finds the present day inseparably connected with the familiar (and familial) past. In his mother's and grandmother's dwellings, he discovers a continuity of German-lived reality rather than a 'zero hour', an interlacing of yesterday and today, which at the time could be recognised only with difficulty in the reconstruction of bombed-out cities, and which, moreover, was denied by official politics. These private spaces (in *YESTERDAY GIRL/ABSCHIED VON GESTERN* [1966] it is the semi-public space of a Frankfurt hotel) become symbols for 'the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous' in the pre-

sent. The camera's attention is distracted, in these excursions, from the film's ostensible subject. Motifs from classical music and tango detach the pictures from their present, allowing a relatively autonomous space of historical reflection to emerge in the film.

Another way of transforming present-day conversations and observations into a memory space is to insert photographic material. In *FRAU BLACKBURN* [...], but even more obviously in *A WOMAN OF THE UPPER-MIDDLE CLASS* [...] and *A DOCTOR FROM HALBERSTADT*, and equally in *YESTERDAY GIRL*, Kluge uses series of photos which, likewise accompanied by classical music or tango, point back to a bygone era. Unlike in *YESTERDAY GIRL*, where Kluge inserts several family photos (among others, of his father Ernst) at the moment when a relationship with her boss beckons for Anita G. (played by Kluge's sister Alexandra), the photographic excursions in the short films are not psychologically or dramatically motivated. These are snaps of Kluge's parents taken in the 1930s and 1940s, yet continually interspersed with images from the present showing the house in which Kluge was raised, pictures from serial novels, scenes where (among other things) a tram conductor is threatened with a pistol (is it the tram in Kluge's home town of Halberstadt?), photos of self-consciously demonstrating suffragettes, and so on.

In *A WOMAN OF THE UPPER-MIDDLE CLASS* [...] and *A DOCTOR FROM HALBERSTADT*, these memory montages are not integrated into a biographical retrospective of the subject being filmed (by means of voiced-over reminiscences, for instance). Nor do the series of photos establish a contemporary framework that could be used to 'place' individual episodes in the subject's life. The photo series that enter into the film in this way are always also memorabilia of the author Kluge, recalling a common background, the life shared by Kluge with his family, the main characters in the films. The foreign materials – the 'documents' taken from other contexts – thus here come from the most private source imaginable: the family album. On the other hand, the photo series break with this context as well, since, as mentioned, they also contain materials which invoke such diverse contexts as the suffragette movement and everyday crime (the threatened tram conductor). The filmic memory process oscillates between two extremes: the familial or personal pole of the author and a collective pole, which occasionally veers into trivial fictions. What is important is that there is no firm subject of memory: neither the person reminiscing in front of the camera (portrait), nor the author (autobiography), nor a collective memory (history), which fails to emerge from the photo series in a coherent way.

Through this procedure, Kluge deliberately creates hazy outlines: the short films do not present an isolated subject of memory. Filmic memory is suspended between the subjects being portrayed, the author and the collective. In *FRAU BLACKBURN* [...] and *A WOMAN OF THE UPPER-MIDDLE CLASS* [...], docu-

mentary pathos ('a real life') is countered by fictional episodes as well as by the camera excurses and series of photos. Both Frau Blackburn and the upper-middle class woman meet a certain Herr Guhl, to whom they try to sell earrings (in the former case) and the family china (in the latter). Frau Blackburn is robbed by this gentleman, who is even given a fictional mini-biography: Kluge tells us from off-screen that he flew with the RAF. Having initially done her best to perform a 'normal life' for the camera, this invented story now gives her the chance 'to act properly', as a white caption slyly notes. In *A WOMAN OF THE UPPER-MIDDLE CLASS* [...], a journey that Kluge's mother Alice wants to undertake is the (fabricated or actual?) pretext for her conversation with Herr Guhl. She hopes to finance her trip with the money she will earn by selling him the family china. Otherwise the film observes the upper-middle class woman renovating her apartment, while in the voice-over she tells of the move to Berlin she really did undertake after the war with her children.

What gives rise to such haziness is the subversion of the documentary discourse's predictability. For us as viewers, any interpretation of the film in light of the opposition 'real vs. invented' has been rendered inoperative. This by no means causes the people in front of the camera to forfeit their credibility. By avoiding the compulsion to stick to his subject's life story, Kluge gains additional dramaturgical room for manoeuvre. He de-dramatises the people in front of the camera so that they become accessible to us in their relationship to the author, as everyday human beings rather than as manipulable objects of investigation. The question of who is remembering is deliberately kept open: the film urges *that* remembering occur. Film is here a productive construction site. Informed by a documentary ethos, which prescribes that film must deal with social reality without demanding that reality be 'explained' via the author's knowledge (or that the subjects featured in a film must themselves have mastered reality), the 'family portraits' present themselves to the viewer as objects for everyday use. As such, they are a part of our reality and do not pretend to comprehend the world from some ideal standpoint.

It would be wrong to assume that Kluge's practice of deconstructing the stereotypical habits of perception reinforced by the documentary film (through camera excurses, subject-less remembering, fictional play with personages, and so on) envisages a normative film-aesthetic programme. For him, there is no privileged path leading straight to reality. In Kluge's work, every stylistic element to have been trialled over the course of cinema history (talking heads and voice-over included) can be used to connect with viewers' experiences. *A DOCTOR FROM HALBERSTADT*, for example, operates without the fictionalising estrangement of the person being filmed. Kluge observes the visit paid him by his father, Dr Ernst Kluge. The circumstances of the trip are sketched in a few brief strokes (in West Berlin, we learn, it was too hot; apart from that, he isn't getting

along with his ex-wife who lives there). His visit to Munich is marked by the dilemma that the opera and theatres are closed for summer holidays in August. Kluge documents his father's aimlessness and growing boredom with great restraint. Some relief is provided by the visit of a cousin from Tübingen, who serves there as a local magistrate. He and Ernst Kluge swap memories. Kluge shows the two old men talking at length about their respective war experiences, experiences of murder trials (Kluge's father was sometimes called on to give expert testimony), and so on. Kluge's editorial restraint reveals the efforts made by his father to prevent boredom arising in the conversation and to enliven the film with entertaining stories; the cousin, by contrast, appears ill at ease. During regular siestas and strolls through the empty streets of Munich, Kluge comes very close to his father with his camera. But there are no father-son conversations.

A DOCTOR FROM HALBERSTADT confines itself to the temporal framework of the father's visit right up to the photo series at the end. The film merely touches on the possibility that Ernst Kluge is using the visit to stay in the West (Kluge off-screen: 'Too late he learns that he could have exchanged his passport without any formalities'). Kluge contents himself with observations that testify to the boredom and helplessness felt by a man in surroundings that are alien to him. A certain helplessness is thereby also manifested in Kluge's approach to his father. While the film does not exactly cast a frosty glance upon the old man, it does describe the absence of a relationship. The fact that A DOCTOR FROM HALBERSTADT makes no attempt to 'professionally' gloss over the awkwardness of their reunion, or the boredom of a visit in which nothing much happens, is what makes the film realistic.

BRUTALITY IN STONE and the three family portraits are committed to a realism that dares to seek the authentic moment, not in the illusion of an objective reality, but in the experience of a subject, the author Kluge. Subjectivity – whose antonym would not be objectivity, but a subjectivity that hides behind the claim to make reality visible, or that completely banishes social reality from the filmic presentation – becomes the necessary precondition for documentary discourse. In BRUTALITY IN STONE, as in the family portraits, Kluge turns his gaze to present-day phenomena and situations in order to transform them, in the next instant, into a historicising space. His film-making commits itself to an ethos of collecting and finding. As a historical thought-picture, the private sphere of German interior spaces is just as important as the Nazi Party grounds in Nuremberg. To argue that only the latter counts as a 'document' is no less ideological than wanting to deny the private sphere the dignity of the historical moment. The author Kluge appears and disappears amidst the disorder of his historical text-landscapes. He is a master of maieutics, a guardian of the polyphony of cultural memory.

Notes

1. Käte Hamburger, *Die Logik der Dichtung* (1957) (Munich: DTV, 1987), p. 125.
2. On the concept of 're-presentation', see Martin Heidegger, 'Die Zeit des Weltbildes', in *Holzwege, Gesamtausgabe* vol 5 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1977), p. 91 ff.
3. See the now classic texts of Jean-Louis Baudry, trans. Max Looser, 'Das Dispositiv: Metapsychologische Betrachtungen des Realitätseindrucks', in *Psyche* (vol. 48 no. 11, 1994) and Christian Metz, 'The Imaginary Signifier', in *Narrative – Apparatus – Ideology*, ed. Philip Rosen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).
4. Alexander Kluge, *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin. Zur realistischen Methode* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975), p. 209.
5. Both texts have appeared in Kluge, *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*. (See the translation of the latter in this book, ed.)
6. Alexander Kluge, 'Die Utopie Film', in *Merkur* (no. 12, 1964), p. 1142.
7. Kluge, *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, p. 216.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 216.
9. 'Die Funktion des Zerrwinkels in zertrümmender Absicht. Ein Gespräch zwischen Alexander Kluge und Gertrud Koch', in *Kritische Theorie und Kultur*, ed. Rainer Erd, Dietrich Hoss, Otto Jacobi, Peter Noller (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989), p. 116.
10. The phrases in quotation marks refer to titles of books by the constructivist psychologist Paul Watzlawick.
11. Alexander Kluge, 'Die schärfste Ideologie: daß die Realität sich auf ihren realistischen Charakter beruft', in *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, p. 215. [See translation in this book, ed.]
12. *Ibid.*, p. 215.
13. See Klaus Wildenhahn, "'Industriellandschaft mit Einzelhändlern": Nachtrag zu den Duisburger Debatten um den Dokumentarfilm', in *Filmfaust* (no. 20 November, 1980), p. 8.
14. See the extensive interviews that Klaus Eder conducted with Alexander Kluge and other colleagues and graduates of the Ulm Institute for Film, in Klaus Eder and Alexander Kluge, *Ulmer Dramaturgien: Reibungsverluste* (Munich/Vienna: Hanser, 1980). [See, for example, the interview with Eder translated in this section, ed.]
15. Wildenhahn, 'Industriellandschaft mit Einzelhändlern', p. 7.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
17. Eder and Kluge, *Ulmer Dramaturgien*, p. 140.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
19. Kluge, 'Die schärfste Ideologie', p. 218.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 218.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 219.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 219.
23. Renate Lachmann, 'Dialogizität und poetische Sprache', in *Dialogizität*, ed. Renate Lachmann (Munich: Fink, 1982), p. 57.
24. Eder and Kluge, *Ulmer Dramaturgien*, p. 84.
25. Gilles Deleuze, *Kino 2. Das Zeit-Bild* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991), p. 324.

Translated by Robert Savage

The Sharpest Ideology: That Reality Appeals to its Realistic Character

Alexander Kluge

It must be possible to present reality as the historical fiction that it is. Its impact on the individual is real, is fate. But it is not fate, but made by the labour of generations of men who the whole time actually wanted and want something completely different. In this sense it is in various respects simultaneously real and unreal. Real and unreal in every one of its individual aspects: collective wishes of men, labour power, relations of production, persecution of witches, history of wars, life histories of individuals. Each of these aspects themselves and all together have an antagonistic quality: *they are a crazy fiction and they have a real impact.*

This makes for rigidity. Frozen coldness. Men die as a result, are pulled apart, are subjected to bombing raids, are dead while alive, are placed in asylums as mad, etc. Reality is real in that it really oppresses men. It is unreal in that every oppression only displaces energies. They disappear from sight but they continue to work underground. The repressed is the source of all labour underneath the terror of the real.

A so-called love scene is for example such a real fiction. We are all accustomed to measure such a scene in a film – or in reality – by ‘realistic criteria’, which are supposedly contained in this scene itself. The love scene, however, is only realistic if for example the future abortion is also built into it. But also the history of all earlier abortions. The same applies to a love scene in reality whether or not the pair think of abortion, whether or not this is relevant for the concrete case. All previous experience, also that excluded by contraception, also that of parents and grandparents and of all other love scenes, is present in the concrete scene. The conflict between tenderness and the untender consequences, the excessive expectation and how much of it is fulfilled, precisely this is the real content. *All other perceptions are measured against the sharpness of this conflict.* Isolated, reduced to the ‘present’, the love scene becomes ideological. *The scene also becomes ideological if all the illusions are cast out.* It could not take place.

The history of whole generations and of all its consequences stamps the capacity or the incapacity for love, all forms of expression in the scene, all contact, all hesitation, the spontaneity. The foreshortened perception of the sexuality of the woman is real if it is thought that it applies to orgasm, *but also her real sexual history*, which goes on being narrated until the child is born, grows up, includ-

ing the history of children, who through contraception are not conceived, but who then negatively determine any particular moment. Whole novels are involved, without which the individual scene is not realistic.

An admirer of reality lets things be, takes a walk through reality, 'lives'. Apparently he has a congruous relation – no protest occurs. This is an error, however. How does it come about that the 'monstrous assembly of commodities' takes no notice of his human needs and that he doesn't notice this? 'In practice I can only relate humanly to things when things relate humanly to men'. Things do not, however, relate humanly to him. How does it happen that he doesn't perceive this? The distorters of consciousness have already had their effect on him. *He has to have destroyed all realism of the senses in order to attain and maintain his contentedness.* This highly ideological labour presupposes the protest, which must have occurred very early in this case, now the energy of protest has been worked off, transformed into 'harmony'. Social nature can produce no balanced relation to the real.

The motive for realism is never the confirmation of reality but protest. Protest expresses itself in various ways: through *radical imitation* (clowning, insistence, mimicry, surface coherence, absurdity, mimesis), through *escape from the pressure of reality* (dream, negation, exaggeration, invention, replacement of a problem by another, *salto mortale*, simple omission, utopia), or *attack* ('Destroy what is destroying you', aggressive montage, annihilation of the object, clichéing the opponent, self-doubt, representation taboos, destruction of the *métier*, guillotine). The distinction between escape (schematism of the pressure of reality) and attack (schematism of the self-defence of the subject) is outwardly gradual and mostly not recognisable in reality. A variant of the attack, the annihilating reaction, is the *violent righting of the inverted relation to things*. The reactions of the apparatus of consciousness (imitation, escape) are repressed in the interest of a 'rational', 'balanced attitude'.

In all these cases protest (moral feeling, rage, reason) finds direct expression. This direct response, however, distorts the capacity to differentiate within reality, the grid of attention. What is realistic in this response (the protest itself, the motive) and what is ideological (the result, the statement) cannot be separated from each other. This is least harmful in the case of *imitation*. Only the analytic interest, the clarity, of the statement is affected here. In the work forms of *escape* and *attack* the real determination can still be indirectly comprehended by translating back. In the case of *violent righting*, of *rationalising* on the other hand, the original relation to reality is almost impossible to reconstruct, it has disappeared in favour of the clarity of statement, of the precision of the battlefield.

Thus not only reality as object is antagonistic but also every human method of working on this reality, whether the effort operates within the real relations or whether it

places itself above the object. What is realistic here, the anti-realism of the motive (protest, resistance) produces the unrealistic.

The key lies in the work process itself. First of all it is a question of producing the *capacity of differentiation at any price*: not the radicalising of the results (they are not the root) but the *differentiation of the realism of the motive* (first step). The realism of the motive is determined by its confrontation with all the collective and individual, immediate (events) and mediated (reported knowledge) contents of experience. This takes place in the head and is real. It presupposes the method of association and an organised capacity of remembrance. The restructuring of sensuous interest to a sensuous-socialised, thoroughly analytic 'second instinct'.

Inseparable from the realism of the motive is the *realism of the method of operation of the human perceptual apparatus* (second step). It has its own laws of motion. An analytic method is hidden in them, which has to be translated back. These laws of motion of the apparatus of consciousness are the outcomes of the work of protest of the whole human species, its living work. In an unreal social context (of alienation) they express themselves through resistances, distortions, inhibitions, exaggeration, illusionary identification and subtraction, that is to say, in a completely unrealistic way. But it is precisely this resistance which provides their analytic, realistic key. 'For only what does not fit into this world is true' (Adorno). The recognition of the realism of protest and of the realism of the human brain with its reshaping reaction to reality, that is, the species given nature of protest, is the fundamental condition of realism.

This is the subjective side, to which corresponds the mediation of the objective side: the *actual situation* (third step). Nowadays it is almost never 'naturally' available to the senses. It has to be produced, constructively, reductively, even when it appears as though it has only been 'found'. *This finding already presupposes analytic and synthetic labour, otherwise nothing is found. This finding is active, because it is determined by the leaving out of everything else.* It is 'etched out'. What the individual camera shot does not include is shaped into a situation. Only in this way can the pre- – and after- – history, which is intrinsic to every situation, be made visible.

It is always the question of a constellation. An actual situation in itself, that is, the mere individual shot, does not contain the organising element which makes it concrete. Thus the discovery of concrete situations presupposes the production of the means of production, the *forms of authentic observation* (fourth step). This production process is not for instance identical with the application of film technique or of styles. The production of the forms of expression must rather be concrete, following the analytic method, and respond to the proceeding steps 1 to 3. *Strictly speaking, authentic laws of form would thus have to be newly developed for every film.* In every case the taking over of formal laws from the history of the

film has to be freshly tested for each new film. The classical ideal of the unity of form and content will thus reveal itself as schematic. The realisms of the motive, of human perception (distortion), the realism of the actual, that is, social situations and the realism of the filmic means of production – they are all formal laws of the social reality and not the substance of the individual film or of the individual artist's head. The alien formal laws of society in relation to the individual film material give the proportions of the resultant product. *The means of expression is the difference, the basic disharmony between the individual product and reality, not the easily fabricated harmony of the individual material with itself.*

Finally the production of the horizon of experience (fifth step). Without such a context of experience, which mediates *experience in the production* of experience, neither motive nor perception of constellation can exist or direct themselves, nor are there criteria for the authenticity of the means of production. Without it there would be no collectivity. This horizon of experience is the specific form of the public sphere, in which the whole cultural work of experience takes place. The reshaping of the public sphere is therefore the condition and at the same time that most important object which the realistic method works on and against. It is not a question of waiting for the reshaping of the horizon of experience, because for instance the separation of experiences through the compartmentalisation of the bourgeois public sphere hampers each of the steps named here, rather the uncompromising production of realistic products is itself the means of changing the horizon of experience by breaking through the limits of the public sphere. If it is a question for example of changing the cinematic horizon, then films are one of the means of expanding the horizon of experience. On the other hand reality itself produces a breaking through of the classical horizons of the public sphere. For instance: forms of perception, contents of reality penetrate the cinema, which did not originate in the cinema but arise from the permanently changing reproduction of society. The cutting out of the secondary in favour of the primary, for example the feet or the body in the interest of the close-up, is prepared through the social cutting into shape of labour power. Only if this is given in the experience of the audience can the film make film language out of it.

All this has the character of a construction site. It is fundamentally imperfect and it is therefore permissible to make an outline of the realistic method without taking into account that neither one's own films nor film history, neither the practice of today's author films nor the films of the proletcult movement, nor the work of groups of political film-makers can fill in this outline, because it is anyway only provisional. Cinema, author film, political film are a programme unrealised. For this reason it is not a contradiction when radical method and early capitalist forms of production of 1810 stand side by side in the practical work of author films. Another aspect: it is not a contradiction when one ex-

presses ruthless modernity, that is, *formal laws of the present*, in the most primitive possible *forms of the silent film*. I do not take up the silent film in my films for stylistic reasons, but because it is a question of 'radically' keeping open the elementary roots of the film as long as the total structure of the cinema is only a programme. *This is the source of the need for robustness*. Not because it is a question of robustness, but because it answers elementary interests of the audience, who have this robustness, the unfinished, the open character of a building site in themselves. Therefore method: yes, but antiprofessional, with all imperfections: 'cinema impure'.

Some additional comments: the method described above of violent righting (rationalistic procedure) has to be excluded. The direct interest in a realistic result, which is contained in it and is in itself correct, makes every one of the necessary steps impossible. It is not so much a stumbling as a damaging of the means of production, of the object of production, of the apparatus of consciousness and a chopping to pieces of the raw material of experience. It cannot be too strongly opposed.

Against this, the method of imitation together with the examination of all the escape movements of the human subjective apparatus offer outstanding new material. These movements contain the whole collective historical store of experience, admittedly fragmented into individual segments together with distortions, which result from the antagonisms of subjective and objective reality, that is to say, the complete raw material of historical experience – in a disguised form. Whoever does not have the confidence to engage with this material can forget about the realistic method.

The finding of situations is an extraordinarily comprehensive and radical labour of construction. One gets an idea of it if one observes how in his novel *Ulysses* James Joyce writes more than a thousand pages to concretise 24 hours of the average man Leopold Bloom. Proust: capacity for remembrance in seven volumes. The concreteness of the situation presupposes a radical complexity of the narration. All forms of expression of the bourgeois public sphere – the principle of actuality, the obviousness of the points, the grammar itself, the grid of the language of communication, the ways of organising narrative interests and types, including the epic, etc. – fragment the complexity of perception, which is in fact the basic form of the senses. My intention is to make clear what the production of sensuous concreteness, the production of filmable situations is. The reason why such a grasping and narration of situations does not exist in any medium lies in the fact that too little labour power is invested in this direction. *Reality does produce such complexes in natural form. It is simply that they remain unnarrated. Reduction and construction, both methods of production of 'scenes', are possible artistic forms of expression but they are also real forms, with which history cuts men into shape for its own novel of reality.* All aesthetic laws of form are in this

sense read off from reality and never 'artistic invention'. They are also always produced in the heads of the audience before they occur to an author. The author merely has the possibility of using them correctly or falsely.

What does apply is the following: either social history narrates its novel of reality without regard for men or men narrate their counter-history. They can only do this, however, on the level of the complexity of reality. This demands in the most literal sense the 'art object', an aggregate of art objects. Sensuousness as method is not a natural product of society.

Translated by David Roberts

Debate on the Documentary Film: Conversation with Klaus Eder, 1980

Alexander Kluge and Klaus Eder

On the Method of Depiction

Klaus Eder: Klaus Wildenhahn has set off a debate on the documentary film with a polemical essay¹ entitled 'Industrial Landscape with Petty Traders'.

Alexander Kluge: I see this essay as an invitation to start a debate on theories of the documentary film, on the concept of realism; but it also invites a stocktaking, a critique of all filmic products as such.

KE: For a start, one can take from this essay an understanding of documentarism, to which Klaus Wildenhahn himself feels committed. He talks about 'art's function of depiction', about the 'work principle of copying'. For instance, he emphasises in Zola and Dickens 'the precisely observed and experienced material of their social world, which is initially sketched and then subjected to a poetic condensation process'. Drawing on Kracauer, he refers to 'film's affinity to the physical detail'. You have to expose yourself to reality, subordinate yourself to it. – Does a depiction of reality describe reality adequately?

AK: I believe that Klaus Wildenhahn is right. If the category of context (*Zusammenhang*) and the category of radicality (which means going down to the roots) are included in this function of depiction, then stenography, the simple act of copying, is the fundamental form, the fundamental position [...]

KE: Günther Hörmann said in our conversation about the dramaturgies of Ulm that it's not reality that is depicted, but the film-maker's relationship to it.

AK: That amounts to the same thing, in effect, since I can't describe reality any other way than subjectively-objectively. There is no direct depiction. Depicting, copying, stenographing, applying authentic method: these labels are all synonymous, and what they signify is the element that film works with. One cannot go beyond this element subjectively and arbitrarily. This copying doesn't occur

in a direct and mechanical fashion, however; what the camera records isn't yet a copy. Something like a set-up for the experiment is needed in the first place. If a good film can be understood as an attempt, as a measurable result, then it is an attempt that takes place with living people. This requires caution, reserve, discipline, method. That is indisputable. On this point I happen to agree with Wildenhahn's attitude, his partisan attitude in film.

I am of the opinion, however, that this exact method of depiction must also extend to feelings, to the way people deal with their perceptions. These perceptions contain the potential for contradiction: the potential to contradict a reality against which the senses themselves exert a practical critique, by altering perception. In this labour power (perception is a labour power, as is depiction; what is depicted works itself), there is hidden a transformative element and an element that investigates something factual. No such thing as the merely factual exists. It initially emerges in the framed image of the camera, to be sure, but as soon as I, the film-maker, see and select this image and combine it with other images, and as soon as the viewer sees it too, it takes on a different meaning. Put differently, every communication adheres to the basic format of an Indian fire. A constant stream of smoke billows up: that is the means by which information is transported, but it only contains news if I interrupt the smoke with a blanket at certain intervals. News always consists of two things: a constant stream and a communication that moves upon it.

KE: Roland Barthes wrote in his essay 'Le message photographique' (1961) that two communications coexist in a photo: an uncoded communication (the depiction, the photographic analogue), and a coded communication (caused by the photographer) [...]

AK: [...] and at the interface of both pieces of information there arises a highly synthetic product to which I cannot refuse my assent: all the preceding, collective labour of perception overlaps here. This is the collectively and synthetically developed rail network upon which my concrete news item travels like a train.

KE: Would mere depiction, as described by Wildenhahn, not restrict or even suppress these other, additional meanings and pieces of information, which extend beyond the analogy to reality?

AK: I don't believe they would be cancelled in Wildenhahn's concrete work. All he is doing is arguing against a tendency. I do believe that the complications which arise here, and which do not lie in the realm of the object, cannot be resolved through caution alone; they demand a particular, subjective daring: they require that I deal with this highly synthetic rail network upon which the

news item is freighted, and with the news item itself, in a partisan way. For both have transformed each other. This is so even before we consider that something is also transformed by the fact that I, as the film-maker, am connected with every other working person through my labour, and that the transformation of reality and of facts as well as the perception, the fixation of facts are simultaneously contained in my labour power.

We have also not yet considered that some aspects of reality, some aspects of the objective and subjective context (*Zusammenhang*), are unfilmable. For the proportions in film, for the realistic relationship, it's a question of partisanship that I likewise bring in the unfilmable (that has slipped into the functional or slumbers as mere potential).

KE: A film would therefore be capable of abstraction?

AK: Because the abstraction is not made by the film. It lies, on the one hand, in what is depicted; on the other, it is the object of the form in which the people dealing with what is depicted interact with each other. Abstraction is something objective in front of the camera; and it's something objective in the heads of viewers.

KE: Bringing in the unfilmable would first mean expanding the realm of reality and experience reflected in West German film.

AK: In this regard, Wildenhahn points out that the experiential content sedimented in German films – feature films as well as documentaries – is esoteric, since they largely ignore industrial experience. And he is quite right to point that out. As the basis for a comprehensive discussion of the theory of documentary film, we need a kind of map of the white spaces that remain totally unexplored by film. What hasn't been filmed criticises what has. Only three per cent of those employed in industry visit the cinema; that results in a retroactive effect on production – these themes don't appear in the form of films. But because these themes don't appear in the form of films, no basis emerges from which they could be taken up by film-makers. That's a vicious circle; large segments of central social experience aren't being worked through in film. That's a legitimate criticism of an esoteric relationship, but it doesn't yet address the question of how it should be worked through.

KE: Back to film's function of depiction: would it suffice to describe, stenograph, publicise an industrial conflict?

AK: That would certainly be a first step. Yet such a blow-by-blow representation of a strike, for example, wouldn't cover whatever elements of pre-history, of the history of the labour movement, of subjective experience, form the basis for the behaviour manifested in the strike. Further films would thus be required, a series of films which would draw vertical cross-sections to the current strike.

To this must be added that all perception must be founded in an economy of drives. People – viewers as well as film-makers – are not objective beings; they aren't even naturally political beings. For them to perceive something, it must be accompanied by the feeling of pleasure. If they only perceive something unpleasant then this perception would be repudiated – that's at the bottom of our culture and our cinema. To a certain extent, my interest in not wanting the strike to break down stands in the way of my interest in depicting the strike. Why should I want to revisit the misery I experience in my own life? I would need a reward for that. I need to have emotional grounds for becoming objective. In itself, the prospect of knowledge isn't enough.

The Role of the Author

KE: What role does the author play in the documentary? When I read Klaus Wildenhahn's reflections, I get the impression that he's trying to smuggle himself as far outside of the film as possible. Anything else, according to Wildenhahn, would be 'arbitrary intervention' and 'authorial self-aggrandisement' – unwarranted subjectivism.

AK: The film-maker has a single connection to the working public – his own work. Labour power comes from separative energies: the incentive to work was at some stage the separation from the organism's own means of production, from what an organism needs. The motivation to work thus contains within it something that resists mere reality. That's why it would be better for the film-maker to publicise this subjective element that causes him to work; then the viewer can ascertain and control this element. Wildenhahn's proposal would give rise to a Rumpelstilzkin effect: subjectivity – perhaps not in Wildenhahn himself, but in his imitators – would persist solely in an uncontrolled, concealed, withdrawn way. Subjectivity cannot be avoided in the work process. The subject cannot avoid the protest that lies in perceptual energy and in the work process and which aims to transform reality. It can either consciously deal with this subjectivity or it will assert itself subconsciously.

KE: Can a socially critical attitude, limited to particular samples of reality, demonstrate the simultaneity of conformity to reality and protest against reality?

AK: There is no purely descriptive approach. In the positivist sciences, at universities, the attempt is continuously being made to establish pseudo-objective methods by extrapolating from samples. That's an academic principle.

The discussion provoked by Wildenhahn already took place in the 1920s in the area of literature. With an attack against Brecht and Piscator (who were characterised as formalistic, individualistic, petit bourgeois and subjectivist), launched in the journal *Die Linkskurve*, Georg Lukács put forward a mimetic conception of realism tied to the great realist novels of the nineteenth century. Lukács adopted a position in relation to the keyword *bourgeois* that, in our opinion, is best put to one side, since it leads to power plays and not to an argumentative discussion. Lukács mounted a non-bourgeois throne and from that eminence attacked the so-called bourgeois individualists like Brecht and Piscator. In reality, this non-bourgeois position is still the position of someone sitting in a machine, and it's the illusion of someone sitting in a machine and looking askance at outsiders that he has a non-bourgeois position. There is no such thing. Everyone who works in this society produces *necessarily false consciousness* (according to the strict ideological concept of Marx), that is to say, we are all mired in errors. It cannot be the case that someone boards a Noah's ark of correct knowledge and judges others from there – that position simply doesn't exist.

Wildenhahn could object that this discussion took place in the literary arena (and was about pitting the working-class novel against Brecht) and is irrelevant to the current discussion, if only because Brecht was not a documentary maker. That would be beside the point: Brecht may not have worked as a documentary maker, but his work contains numerous methods upon which the documentary maker could draw; whereas the documentary film is absolutely lacking in methods for representing contexts (*Zusammenhänge*).

Keyword: Romanticism

KE: In his essay, Wildenhahn mounts a fierce attack on Romanticism. Among other things, he writes that the German Romantic (whom he subsequently re-discovers in parts of today's Left intelligentsia, and particularly in the new German cinema) 'ignores the working principle of copying, the mimetic function of art. He ignores the material of the pitiful relationships all around him; he ignores the instrument of descriptive observation; lastly, he disdains the misery

of the so-called little man. For him, this is not perceptible material from which he can learn something. In Germany, Romanticism designates the split between hope and social relations. It finds clever images for a subjective healing process in artistic and artificial syntheses. These are metaphors and thought categories of a self-enclosed, mostly academic stratum that, itself homeless, wanted neither to side with the ever more philistine bourgeoisie (today one would say: the worker cum petit bourgeois), nor stoop to the aristocratic reaction (today: the corporatist bloc of big business and state enterprise)'.

AK: In his analysis of Romanticism, Wildenhahn combines a correct feeling with a very summary procedure. He can no more cite a formulation of Novalis to capture the essence of Romanticism and Enlightenment than he can transfer a quote from a press clipping on a Wim Wenders film to the entire new German cinema. Romanticism (to which such heterogeneous modes of writing as those of Hölderlin, Kleist and Büchner must be reckoned) has an anti-classical thrust. The pacifications and harmonisations constructed by Classicism are felt by the authors of Romanticism to be pedantic, a harmony that binds them to a reality against which they are fighting. Hölderlin, for example, could never accept that the French Revolution had failed – in opposition to his friends, the tenured professors Schelling and Hegel, who adopted a kind of pacifying position; he preferred to risk madness rather than accept the status quo.

KE: Klaus Wildenhahn contends that Romanticism arose as a countermovement to the French Enlightenment.

AK: That's untenable; Hölderlin and Kleist have more French Enlightenment in their diction than all the Classicists put together, or than the garden-variety German Enlighteners, leaving aside Lessing, Lichtenberg and Kant for a moment. The essential point is this: resistance at the cost of life and absolute risk as an expansion in horizon against a restrictive reality. In this context, one would also have to call Marx a Romantic when he says that the transformation of society is an objective force inherent in the nature of human history.

Since all that has no meaning, one could say that Wildenhahn is lacking in caution, he lacks discipline, he proceeds Romantically, that is, arbitrarily, disrespecting borders, etc.

Romanticism takes a one-sided approach, but it also develops the tendency of protest against the reality principle; just as, conversely, the celebration of the 'normative force of the factual' is the object of academic work in many scientific or sociological disciplines today. Through their one-sidedness, both tendencies overshoot what can be a realistic relationship to an object. That does not rule out that we can appropriate forms from Romanticism.

For example, it is both Romantic and Enlightened when Hegel says: 'The very fact that something has been set as a limit or barrier implies that it is already transcended'. That demonstrates a deep trust in human sensibility and intelligence, implying that the instituted character of reality will always be subject to change.

It must additionally be said that Romanticism and Enlightenment are purely conceptual categories used to characterise very diverse figures, from Lichtenberg to Lessing and Kant, from Kleist to Hölderlin, Büchner, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Heine. It's impossible to work practically with such 'formations'. The reality-transcending principle is no less present among the Enlighteners than it is among the Romantics; only the mode of production is clearly different. While all Enlighteners apply moral and morally couched rational categories, and derive social change from these categories, the Romantics tend to do this from the spontaneity of sensuous perception. I don't even believe that the Romantics are particularly concerned with feelings; they deal with feelings in a very subtle way. What they're interested in is sensuous perception, sensuous differentiation, in whatever spontaneously revolts in the *inner community of human beings*. 'In practice, the individual senses are like theorists' (Marx).

Just as there is a dialectic of Enlightenment (Horkheimer/Adorno), so a dialectic of Romantic thought would also have to be developed; Walter Benjamin made the first moves in this direction in his study 'On the Concept of Art Criticism in German Romanticism'.

KE: A number of critics and cineasts would favour a renewal of German Romanticism, Wildenhahn writes. He speaks in this context of Left pessimism and Left resignation, of artistic production 'as an asylum for the non-conformist middle class'.

AK: That's a ridiculous campaign of imputation – just as ridiculous as deciding along class lines who is allowed to think something or work on something. What he means – and his intuition is correct here – is that a kind of *jeunesse dorée* has established itself in the new German cinema. Immediately after Thermidor (the downfall of the French Revolution), there was a group of emotionally self-indulgent, elegant young people who developed a new esotericism, a new habitus. This tendency doubtless exists in the new German cinema – and what Wildenhahn says refers to it. His intuition is correct; but his analysis and his rejection of a self-conscious approach, the audacity to work counterfactually, are ridiculous.

Wildenhahn is basically saying: since they are all petty traders, the superstructure is determined by this mode of production and therefore pure ideology. These young ideologues either make do with conceptual imperialism (if they

engage in theoretical work), or, if they work practically, they develop an inflated sense of self-worth based on their personal originality. That is a summary judgment with which nothing concrete can be done. Wildenhahn creates order from above and uses a mechanism of ascription to do so; and in all discussions, this is always a means of exercising power and not a form of debate. Something first comes of it when we bring the discussion back to individuals; and then the warning he voices is respectable.

On the Concept of Realism: Selection and Context (Zusammenhang)

AK: Once again: we agree that the individual elements in the documentary film (and equally, I would claim, in the feature film) can rest on authentic observation and nothing else. There are two virtues for each film shoot: one is the category of context (that, in framing the shot, I cut out nothing relevant to the movement and authenticity of this single depiction), the other is that of selection – my decision that what I am recording is *one* process that I separate from all other processes. Selection and context are two categories that together form an ideal for the individual shot. This follows from the authentic method, i.e. I open myself radically to what is to be depicted; in today's idiom, one would say that I take an 'objective' stance. But this is precisely the core of a subjective piece of work. It contains the decision as to where I set the line of demarcation (otherwise the size of the wholes I create, or the intensity of the close-ups I shoot, would be at my whim): that looks like a subjective intervention, but the decision actually follows from an objective factor, the proportion. If I rip the context to shreds and mix things up so that I find many contexts in a single frame, then my craftsmanship is imprecise.

The juxtaposition of several shots represents a further stage in the work process, since the entire range of prefabricated meanings contained in every depiction, independently of what it depicts, now comes into play and I must again make a decision according to the categories of context and selection. The same thing repeats itself in interaction with the audience: I must presuppose in the audience a prefabricated stream of consciousness (which has its own history) – for the audience will read what I depict for it with these prefabricated systems of meaning. Hence: here too, in this third act, selection and context. A fourth key point is that what the author's work process has added or omitted must be recognisable and made visible to the public (selection and context). A film contains the code for how the audience is to read the film and a second code read

by the audience. What is needed, therefore, is agreement about a code and secondly a communication for which the code is only the means.

And then there is a further category: the decision regarding what all film-makers collectively put into the landscape of industry as a combined product, as series, as landscape of film. This question likewise contains the categories of context and selection. On the one hand, we must separate: the one film-maker focuses on something and thereby doesn't fulfil all the ideals I demand of film; at the same time, we must provide the context: an isolated product, unsupplemented by other products that generate the context, is a false product.

KE: Can you imagine a film simply called 'Federal Republic of Germany, 1980?'

AK: That would have to be an enterprise in which film-makers, who in fact associate and express themselves collectively on the politics of film, worked together. That would be needed for such a film to be made, for no single temperament and no individual contribution would be up to the task.

We picked up from television that we can make free films outside of the studio using mobile equipment. We've somewhat perfected that in auteur cinema. We then achieved the shift with the 1974 film/television outline agreement. So we've learned from television. Now you could imagine that groups within television that maintain an informal relationship with the institutional machine could team up for such landscape portraits with groups from outside television, which have greater freedom of movement yet more meager financial means. Then two realms of experience could be made accessible: 'The landscape of industry as the open book of human psychology' (Marx) – that is, subjectivity in the form of an industrialised society. Subjectivity in the form of square windows, built-up spaces, partially quite derelict. That's dead labour that has piled up over the centuries. The partner of this landscape of industry is the *inner community*, which is no less complex than the community outside. Whatever takes place there day to day corresponds with that external landscape, passing right through the self-consciousness of the so-called egos. That would be the realism concept par excellence. It would be the objective and subjective centres; whereas the whole imagined world of the ego stands between them like a partition.

KE: Hence: amalgamation of the petty traders into a cooperative?

AK: That's the minimum we need to achieve if we want to work realistically. That means we have now posed the question of realism at five different levels: at the level of the individual elements in the film, which cannot be shown in isolation; at the level of the relationship of meaning to the individual pattern (the image I record is transformed, by being shown as a film, into a pattern,

and this pattern is read as meaning – through the addition of prefabricated, collective labour, which is contributed by the viewer at the very least, and in the material as well when I combine different shots); and so on, all the way up to the landscape of film.

Suggestion: Irreconcilability of the Positions

KE: I would now reproach you with harmonising your own position with Wildenhahn's by entering into the realism debate. You are building a house called 'German cinema' on the terrain of realism, and you want to live in this house together with Wildenhahn (and others). That is, you talk away the difference between – let us say – a dialectician and a moralist.

AK: You have quite rightly unmasked my intention to seek cooperation. And in essence, I am in complete agreement with Wildenhahn's critique,² which is why it leads me to think: for the audience, film really only exists as a usable product in the form of series, contexts (*Zusammenhängen*), production sections, in a public sphere to which it has access; and this presupposes cooperation. I further assume that, although Wildenhahn makes summary judgments and pursues dubious argumentative strategies, although he tries to direct the discussion by exercising power, although he delivers apodictic verdicts and generates unproductive formations, nonetheless the last thing that we can do with in Germany is different schools feuding with each other.

Incidentally, film-making has a double character. The film-maker must subordinate himself to reality while he is shooting; at the same time, he needs also to depict whatever stands within reality while being opposed to it, whatever is anti-realistic. The film-maker who indulges in flights of fancy, exercising his so-called free will, makes a professional mistake: in his partisanship, he commits an error when he puts his self-consciousness and his willpower between himself and the audience. The passivity demanded by Wildenhahn is part of the film-maker's work, but it brings out all the more exactly the resistance that is there in reality, in what is depicted, the more I switch off my ego. There's a line in Horkeimer, alluding to Descartes' proud *I think, therefore I am*, which reads: *I think because I can disregard that I am I*. That means, subjectless labour is only the flip side of the demand that the subject has to risk something, and that it delivers itself in its risks to audience control by making public what is subjective in its work.

Keyword: Petty Traders

KE: Do you agree with Wildenhahn's characterisation of German film-makers as petty traders?

AK: That's Wildenhahn's point of departure: his essay is called 'Industrial Landscape with Petty Traders'. Again, he shows here a sound intuition. The point of departure for our politics seventeen years ago was, quite consciously, that film-makers are small-time producers. They have always had difficulties with retail, with selling their wares, the contradictions accumulate there. Now, what would be the counter-pole to the petty trader? It would be the department store. Television corporations are in fact like big department stores, like a mail-order business with boutiques and shoe-repair shops attached to them. We proceed from the assumption that there is an imbalance towards distribution in the television corporations, that is, editorial work, administration, pluralistic control outweigh the meager concessions to production. The reverse holds true of petty traders. They have a lot of trouble getting their wares broadcast and suffer from an imbalance towards production. We are not of the opinion that these small producers, the film-makers, are working independently as entrepreneurs; they are a cross between wage-dependent workers and free agents working under tight restrictions. In reality, they are so dependent on institutions – television corporations and boards – that there is only the illusion of freedom. It is enough for a centralisation of production.

That's been the course of film politics up to now, and it has come at some cost. One such cost is an overemphasis on subjectivism – not subjectivity, but personal originality becomes the benchmark for success, much like the amount of money invested in a lavish Hollywood drama; it becomes the main event. That's a stigma of contemporary production and makes it vulnerable to the charge of esotericism, of ideological production. So much for Wildenhahn's thesis; and to a certain extent it's correct. You could say that film-makers in the Federal Republic don't actually have a social status: an entrepreneurial model of 1810 in a mass-media industrial landscape of 1980, in which an early capitalist business model of this kind has no place. That's behind the whole magic of recent German film, its successes and its failures. But a critique can't simply say: let's go back to the sectors that use late capitalist production methods anyway, hence back to the corporations, in which a real transformation of production horizons certainly won't take place (and empirically hasn't taken place in any meaningful way), at least not to the extent that society has a need for a public sphere.

Reduits or refuges of this kind are decisively threatened by the private media concerns. In a 1969 essay on *Media Jungles*, we, i.e. my colleagues and I, had

already made our entire film politics dependent on this danger now looming before us in the 1980s, about which the head of Radio Luxemburg has said: 'What is technically possible cannot be politically prevented'.

We cannot respond to this confrontation with a conglomerate of private media concerns (an ecological problem: the pollution of our brains is at stake) through ideas and refuges, but through production, through counter-production against the production of the concerns. Only products beat products; ideas beat ideas. We are of the opinion that the highly flexible connection of financial and artistic responsibility in a single hand (as brought about by the auteur film, although yet to be realised in the area of documentary film) can expand production horizons – in however imaginary a way and at whatever cost. We need to compensate for any excessive costs this places on us, namely, the subjectivism and distortion with regard to the content of social experience. Hence our interest in a general stocktaking, in a discussion of documentary film theory and a theory of the feature film. A basis for cooperative associations can be laid here that transforms the overly subjective praxis of auteur cinema. In this we will no doubt try to utilise and publicise what Wildenhahn denounced as overly Romantic; for we don't want to renounce any transformative tendencies.

A critique that does not argue from the field of the film-maker's interests, hence immanently, but is opposed to it, one that engages in absolute critique from a television viewpoint – such a position doesn't exist. That's the difference between Wildenhahn's standpoint and my own – and I don't believe this difference will last forever.

Notes

1. Klaus Wildenhahn, 'Industriellandschaft mit Einzelhändlern. Nachtrag zu den Duisburger Debatten um den Dokumentarfilm', *Filmfaust* (no. 20, 1980). Reprinted in the programme booklet to the 1980 Duisburg Film Week. Klaus Wildenhahn refers to Klaus Kreimeier's critique of the 1979 Duisburg Film Week, which appeared in the *Frankfurter Rundschau* of 16 November 1979: 'I was then approached and as it so happens, I registered my protest together with an excursus. This turns out to be longer than Kreimeier's article. It seems that something had been building up for a long time'.
2. Klaus Wildenhahn: 'Our claims and production methods disallow any isolation. Really. They are directed to series, to fieldwork with adjacent sections for investigation and production. Supplementary work is not only collegially correct, it is necessary'.

Translated by Robert Savage

Opera as a 'Power Plant of Emotion'

Undoing Act 5: History, Bodies and Operatic Remains in *THE POWER OF EMOTION*

Caryl Flinn

In every opera that deals with redemption, a woman is sacrificed in act 5.
THE POWER OF EMOTION

For years I have been attempting through literary and filmic means to change opera stories: to disarm the fifth act [...]. We must work to develop an imaginary opera, to bring forward an alternative opera world.

Alexander Kluge

The Power Plant of Tragedy

Many films of the New German Cinema engaged strategies of traumatic and allegorical representation in order to disable standard forms of history, remembrance, and narrative. Alexander Kluge uses music and opera to precisely the same ends. His extraordinary *THE POWER OF EMOTION/DIE MACHT DER GEFÜHLE* blasts open nineteenth-century opera, scattering it as so many interrupted arias, unidentified rehearsals, performance fragments, manipulated film footage, through stereoscopic mattes, time-lapse set changes, ironic voice-overs, fictional interviews. These musical ‘pieces’, along with other European art music, provide the raw material out of which his 1983 film is made.

Why opera? Because opera generates and then trades in fantasy, spectacle and emotion and typically exploits music’s longstanding affiliation with human feeling. This conception of music was particularly central to Romantic aesthetic ideology which dominated nineteenth-century German music and which continues to influence Western concepts of musical production and function. That perception not only obliged music to serve as a diversion from material realities, but, in order to do so, gave it ostensibly universalising attributes, something that speaks to, and for, all. Kluge’s work rarely allows music either escape or transcendence. If Gabi’s Beethoven sing-along in *THE PATRIOT* divests the Ninth Symphony chorale of any grand, transcendent lustre, *THE POWER OF EMOTION*’s deconstruction goes even further, tackling music’s institutionalisation rather than music per se. For instance, even though Kluge banks on the Romantic as-

sociation of music with human emotions, he makes it clear that social and economic forces function to keep that association in place.

Kluge de-idealises that relationship in no uncertain terms. For instance, we see selected scenes of an early silent-film version of Verdi's *Aida* and hear musical quotations from *Aida* scattered throughout the film. But audiences cannot get immersed in the music or caught up in its passionate story. For not only do we hear Kluge's ironic commentary over *Aida's* presentation, but we never see a full performance of it – just fragments, rehearsals, bits of music going by, not unlike what Godard did in *ONE PLUS ONE* (1969). *THE POWER OF EMOTION* refuses to reproduce *Aida* and other operatic works whole, or, importantly, even to identify most of them – the film credits do not list sources, although opening credits acknowledge the labourers who produced the live music taken from the Frankfurt Municipal Theatre and Opera – stressing the work behind the work, if you will. Kluge's book that accompanied the film's release identifies many of its musical and cinematic quotations, yet even there, dozens of references remain unlisted, e.g. neither the Prelude from Parsifal that opens the film nor the rehearsal of the opera's Communion scene taken from Syberberg's film of the same name is mentioned.¹ What is more, the opera-fragments we get are presented in highly asynchronised ways: we hear pieces from *Aida* that come from another point in the opera than those depicted in the silent film version we're watching (a text that modifies Verdi's story line to begin with). Sixty-five minutes into *EMOTION*, we hear orchestral music from the Prelude to *Aida*, yet the vocal material that follows comes from an earlier point in the opera's story line than the film would lead us to believe: Aida is reluctantly tricking Radames into revealing an Egyptian military secret and is overheard by her Ethiopian father. That, in turn, is overheard by the Egyptian princess Amneris, who screams at Radames, 'Traitor!' After the sound fades out for several seconds, Kluge resumes Verdi's music at a point that precedes where he left off and carries it through into the next sequence. Kluge's voice-over also missummarises some of the opera storylines: Radames and Aida, for instance, are never freed from the tomb. In short, we have neither a reliable narrator nor narrational agent. Could this be mimicking the unreliable, fantastic nature of opera's stories? By withholding information and parcelling it out in 'incorrect' doses as he does, Kluge chips away at their fetish-value, treating them as so much cultural clutter. In doing this, he divests operas like *Aida* of their auratic lure and instead presents them as having a lot of blood on their hands.

In a key passage, Kluge calls the opera house a 'power plant (*Kraftwerk*) of emotion' that processes valuable raw material into consumable goods. Rather than accepting the goods wholesale, however, he turns to the production of those goods, focusing on the material behind the fantasies and underneath the spectacle, blasting them out in so many directions. By taking the bulk of his

examples from the mid- to late nineteenth century, when tragic opera prevailed, Kluge demonstrates that its melancholic emotions have little to do with the way that people generally experience life, and nothing whatsoever to do with any potential social, personal, or historical change. For in these stories Kluge finds only the endless 'dramaturgy of inescapable tragedy' of needless suffering, violence, sacrifice, depicted through resigned, disempowered characters unable to control their destinies. By extrapolation, and following the lead of THE PATRIOT, THE POWER OF EMOTION indicts conventional history, which, like opera and other story-telling forms, rarely questions its deadly outcomes, or how and by whom its narratives are produced and consumed.

Also like THE PATRIOT, THE POWER OF EMOTION both solicits and frustrates interpretation. How to unpack such already deconstructive, critical artifacts? THE POWER OF EMOTION is even more collagistic and less narratively cohesive than THE PATRIOT. Though fewer in number, the film's story fragments are more diverse in scope, and there are no central figures like Gabi or the Knee to offer much in the way of continuity. THE POWER OF EMOTION therefore relies on film style rather than on character, diegetic situation, or theme to tackle historical and historiographic matters. And whereas THE PATRIOT stressed the importance of forgotten objects to these histories, THE POWER OF EMOTION concerns itself with the 'matter' of human feelings. Kluge presents feelings as harbouring potentially explosive, disruptive forces because their needs, he shows, are simply not being met: avenues for their expression or release are inadequate. Like the unacknowledged feminine labour force Kluge postulated in his written work, human feelings lie fallow, ready to rise up to redress the injustices done to them.

If we accept the connections between emotions and Kluge's abbreviated, multiple story lines, scraps of film footage, photographs, paintings, old popular songs, and glimpsed opera performances, then EMOTION demonstrates their power by dint of sheer presentational force. These materials, especially those connected to opera, suggest something more than can actually be presented. The film's collagistic style creates fissures that are not simply indicative of absences, although they can do that, but are signs of what the Real cannot accommodate – as might have been the case with the Shoah in THE PATRIOT. At the least, THE POWER OF EMOTION's 'ragpicker' style (the term is Miriam Hansen's), along with the huge volume of materials it presents, dramatises the real challenge of *Zusammenhänge*. The point is explicitly made in a fictional interview during 'The Opera House Fire' section. Ostensibly discussing Janáček's *The Makropulos Affair*, in which a woman drinks a potion that enables her to live three hundred years, an official at the opera house makes what in effect is a comment on THE POWER OF EMOTION: 'There are really so many connections you could make, it is impossible to get them all'.

Kluge's multidirectional critique of nineteenth-century opera constructs his subject variously as narrative form, historical phenomenon, cinematic precursor and a trader in unhappy feelings. For him, it is an industry that capitalises on human misery, glorifies defeat, and disguises the material aspects of its production. Especially crucial is how tragic opera encourages audiences to buy into its fatalistic worldview, and Kluge aggressively directs his line of fire in that direction. He acknowledges the force of such large-scale emotional manipulation, as well as the untapped power of the stubborn, illogical, abandoned smaller emotions that do not fit into the predetermined scenarios permitted by institutions like opera, film, the legal system, romantic love, history-making and war. Most of the operas' stories Kluge examines boil down to a struggle for survival, and the question of who survives, and how, is crucially important, as the Knee of THE PATRIOT chattily reminded us. Why, for instance, as this chapter's opening quote states, does a woman have to be sacrificed in act 5?

All this deadly business presses upon the need for alternatives, whatever form they might take. THE POWER OF EMOTION is a rather unusual text in Kluge's oeuvre for openly taking up that challenge. Specifically, although it deeply condemns the predetermination, inevitability and fatalism of tragic operatic narrative, it goes beyond deconstructive critique, offering more than ironic depictions of hapless characters struggling to change their personal circumstances and outcomes. By extension I believe EMOTION offers more to those of us outside of it. As Gertrud Koch describes it: 'Opera thus becomes for him a pile of ruins left by the fatalistic course of the story, which he sets out to rearrange. Once exploded into atomised details – ruins – the power of fate dissipates, as does the efficacy of any narrative closure. He [Koch speaks of Kluge, but we might infer cinemagoers] can now hunt for ways out and give recommendations'.²

It seems to me that these 'recommendations' are much more possible than they were in THE PATRIOT. For THE POWER OF EMOTION contains a story fragment that literally undoes the deadliness Kluge associates with the last acts of tragic operas, giving a rare, if not altogether unironic, glimpse of optimism. In its final and longest sequence, THE POWER OF EMOTION follows what by any reasonable measure would be the murder of a character and his subsequent resuscitation by the couple that finds him. Due to Kluge's emphasis on the material aspects of human bodies – whether as historical ruin, operatic performer, carrier of emotion, or narrative victim – that resuscitation is particularly significant. (Small wonder that EMOTION repeatedly refers to Wagner's *Parsifal*, an operatic tale of redemption.) Like THE PATRIOT, which bestowed redemption upon certain characters but withheld it from others, THE POWER OF EMOTION also differentiates bodies problematically when dealing with their survival, sacrifice, death and resurrection, even though a better ending is left in sight.

The Tale of Inevitable Tragedy: Spectacle, War and Commodity

Ironically, *THE POWER OF EMOTION* contains so many stories that one would be hard-pressed to call it a narrative film. It is just as difficult to describe. It opens with a time-lapse segment of the Frankfurt skyline at dawn and proceeds to a series of corpses, a birth, a funeral, silent-film segments, stereopticon images, documentary footage, photographs, drawings, opera scenes, rehearsals, set changes, character interviews, parts of the opera house, and opera itself. The pieces are interspersed among brief stories in which, for example, a woman goes on trial for having shot her husband (introduced, like most sections in the film, with an intertitle, 'The Shot') or a man is tried for having raped a comatose woman while 'saving' her from a suicide attempt.

To establish the mid- to late-nineteenth-century European setting of the opera house, Kluge turns to a narrational form usually unconcerned with historical precision, the fairy tale. In fact, he sets up that period as if it were a lost fairy tale, which in a sense it is, particularly within the history of capital. 'Once upon a time,' his familiar voice intones, as if reading Walter Benjamin's *Passagenwerk* as a bedtime story, 'in the middle of the nineteenth century, all the valuable commodities of the world were assembled in London'. Built for the World's Fair, the Crystal Palace was an official showcase for objects to entice, enthrall and encourage consumers, a place of phantasmagoric display that was the progenitor of both the movie theatre and the shopping mall. This point in history marked the growing availability of commodities as well as the consolidation of their auratic lure. *EMOTION* presents us with sketches of the Palace's artifacts, from domestic wares to the Krupps cannon, of the building's architectural plans, and gives a snapshot of the labourers who built it. Finally, we are informed of its destruction by flames in 1937, 'just four years after the Reichstag. At that point, objects no longer had any parliament'. Playing under this sequence is a piano; the music is unextraordinary, but oddly gentle: Brahms's 'Ballade in G Minor'³ – for Kluge, uncharacteristically rooted in the historical period being depicted.

Not all nineteenth-century hopes were dashed when the Crystal Palace burned to the ground. As Kluge's voice-over tells us, 'Another project begun in the nineteenth century was the power plant of emotion, the opera house'. The reference becomes the film's strongest single shorthand to demonstrate that industry, capital and cultural forms are able to control something so nominally private and 'uncontrollable' as human feeling. It is no accident that an extreme high angle is used here to introduce the state opera house in Frankfurt, a paragon of measured architectural classicism and an example of Althusser's Ideolo-

gical State Apparatus. Moreover, as power plant, opera's similarity to the 'fantasy factory' of Hollywood is quickly established and in fact, Kluge presents both as management centres of human emotions that control audience identifications, hopes and expectations. In the context of late nineteenth-century Europe, the opera house marketed its own particular illusions of grandeur and wholeness – among other things, the culmination of Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* theorised slightly earlier. As industrialised plant, however, the production of opera was anything but all-unifying, coming into being through an array of compartments and compartmentalisation, its workers coming into contact with but one small aspect of the final product.

In that regard it is hardly coincidental that the opera flourished alongside rising industrialisation, rationalised labour and a middle class with expanding leisure needs. This is cleverly underscored by presenting the opera house and its productions piecemeal, in extremely brief sections like 'Lighting' and 'Facade'. Kluge is careful to separate even the blueprints of the Crystal Palace from the construction workers who executed them, using cinematic form to establish the fragmented, Fordist nature of the opera house's production as well as the heterogeneity it needs to sustain that very illusion of wholeness and plentitude of its product. *EMOTION* further demonstrates that profits from the power plant are guaranteed not just from that product, opera, but from the consumption patterns it also produces and sustains. Almost completely unconcerned with opera as aesthetic or personal expression, *THE POWER OF EMOTION* thus tackles it as an effect of ideological, historical and material forces, relieving it of any claim to aesthetic transcendence or to the creative genius of an individual composer.

But the power lines of the opera house, as Kluge whispers to us, 'were flawed from the start' – the building was never sufficiently equipped for its task. By processing emotion into something too bombastic for human use, the power plant, according to Kluge's logic, was an institution grounded in ruination, an extension of the machinery of war, industry and capital. Opera is what it just happens to spit out, just a singing ruin. And before we (or others) can rework the ruin, we must actively 'undo' it, as he puts it, giving a positive spin to what Catherine Clément had written in her *Opéra, ou la défaite des femmes/Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, published just before the release of his film.

By focusing on tragic opera, Kluge reveals the extent to which 'deadly outcomes' are rendered not just inevitable but desirable. They seal a contract with the public that he finds extremely deleterious, and the film draws equivalencies between what Kluge calls the 'drama of inescapable tragedy' and the idea of history as an unchangeable narrative, equally marked by suffering, unhappiness and mortal endings. According to *THE POWER OF EMOTION*, operas, the main product of the 'power plant', are, like most cranked-out goods, by and

large undifferentiated, a fact Kluge finds manifested in the relentless, repetitive nature of their denouements.

In a humorous mock interview, a woman asks a well-known opera singer⁴ how he can reveal 'a spark of hope on [his] face' in act 1 knowing how badly things end in act 5:

He replies: But I don't know that in act 1.

She: Yet you have played this role eighty-four times.

He: Yes, it is a very successful piece.

She: Then you really ought to know the awful ending by now.

He: I do, but not in act 1.

She: But you're not dumb.

He: I most certainly am not.

She: Then at 8:10 in act 1 you know from previous performances what is going to happen at 10:30 in act 5.

He: So?

She: Then why do you have a 'spark of hope on your face'?

He: Because I don't know act 5 in act 1.

She: Do you think that the opera could end differently?

He: Of course.

She: But it doesn't, eighty-four times in a row.

He: Yes, it's a very successful piece.

She: That explains the eighty-four performances. But it still doesn't have a happy ending.

He: Do you have something against success?

The illogical, circular question-and-answer format is a staple in Kluge's repertoire, typically occurring in scenes with judges, politicians, or other agents of official institutions. Kluge himself appropriated these tactics in a famous exchange with Jutta Brückner, who had compared *THE POWER OF EMOTION* unfavourably to the pro-female sensuality she found in Carlos Saura's *Carmen*, released the same year. Kluge declared that, for his part, he found little in the way of emotions in Bizet's story, and called for a Brechtian means of dealing with it. When 'Don Jose is about to stab Carmen', he states, the proceedings should be 'interrupted' in order to 'discuss the situation'. It must be said that Kluge's reference to the opera's dearth of emotions jars with his comment that 'I have seen the opera *Carmen* 48 times, my sister has seen it seventeen times, my father 108, and my grandmother fourteen. I can thus rule out the possibility that this beautiful opera suggests any way out of its dilemma, or that it depicts any actual experience'.⁵

Kluge's obsessive counting and providing figures shows the limits of quantitative data and rationality in explaining historical outcomes, as in *THE PATRIOT*,

which gives the number of labourers it would have taken to save Gerta Baethe or the fatally useless ciphers and ledgers in Kluge's book, *The Battle*. The figures also reveal the director's fascination with historical and temporal manipulation, and with time more generally (Kluge's production company was called Kairos, after the Greek word for the kind of time that arrives in unexpected, ephemeral, productive flashes, in contrast to *chronos*, the constant, developmental, logical aspect of time that clocks keep). *THE POWER OF EMOTION*, for its part, places feelings on their own timelines, stressing their endurance as well as their capacity for 'sudden and brutal explosion'. Particularly important here are what the director calls, in a typically somatic metaphor, 'subcutaneous' emotions, just as he had approached Germany's 'buried' history in *THE PATRIOT*. A brief scene in *THE POWER OF EMOTION* shows a bomb being carefully dragged out of a forest, where it had been lying for 'thirty-eight years, its fuse intact'. Emotions become embodied and are able to move (or remain inert) across time. Likewise cinema's own ability to protract, condense, and manipulate time is put into evidence, especially in the opening scene, in which time-lapse photography takes us quickly from late night to early morning. Elsewhere, film time and movement are speeded up when an extreme high-angle shot reveals an extremely rapid change of opera sets.

Much like the plot of *The Makropulos Affair*, the various references, techniques and materials in *THE POWER OF EMOTION* cut across a wide path of history. Clips of silent films, like Lang's *KRIEMHILDS RACHE/KRIEMHILD'S REVENGE* (1924), and the use of mattes, iris, tinting and stereoscopic views invoke the early years of cinema history. We have sequences from Nazi cinema, as well as documentary footage of a contemporary high-rise fire; there are illustrations of the Tower of Babel and of Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden. The protracted life of the king's daughter in Janáček's 1926 opera becomes especially significant within this historical procession. Because she has lived three hundred years, Kluge calculates, she has 'lived through twenty-eight wars'. Thus Kluge will not let the connection of temporal manipulation to historical and historiographic processes go unremarked, and is quick to observe the violence involved therein. Accompanying one time-lapse opera sequence, he states: 'There is an important change in *Tannhäuser* between acts 1 and 2. A Christian castle is built in a pagan landscape in less than twenty minutes. [Pause] Because of the abruptness of the historical process, there is no happy ending'. Kluge's twist on historical causality here recalls his intimation that the excessive accumulation of commodities led directly to the 1937 immolation of the Crystal Palace. His interest in causal effects and endings are equally evident in the voice-over that accompanies images of *KRIEMHILD'S REVENGE*: 'This child', he announces, 'does not have much time to live'. To 'give away' a story's end, as the phrase implies, is to cheapen its

worth and presumably lessen its impact. And that is what THE POWER OF EMOTION wants to do: preempt fate.

Kluge brings to light other murderous demands of narratives and histories governed by inexorability and fate. THE POWER OF EMOTION is especially concerned with the *Zusammenhänge* among opera, emotions and war. It reflects war's connection to passion by situating a number of love stories in wartime (as did THE PATRIOT) and selecting operas set in periods of military or political conflict, like *Aida* and *Tosca*. Such tales of love and war are constantly interrupting and interweaving with each other. EMOTION asks us to draw equivalencies between the narratives of conventional romance, war and opera; their tales are the products of the same power plant, the same deadly culture industry: 'It begins with being in love and ends in a divorce. It begins in 1933 and ends in ruins. The great operas begin with the promise of intensified feeling and in act 5 we count the dead'. The grimness of this recipe for musical and political stories has been noted by Miriam Hansen, who writes of Kluge's work in the late 1970s that 'romantic love itself appears complicit with the catastrophes of German history, because it nourishes fictions of fate that prevent any alternative course of action and usually lead to murder, suicide, mass psychosis and war'.⁶

A Symphony of Ruins

An example of this complicity appears in the opening segment. Extreme long shots depict the skyline of Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany's financial centre, from the dark of night to just after sunrise. Buildings shimmer like so many gold monuments as they reflect the early morning sun; the sky's mutating clouds and colours are stunning; the camera tracks a plane and a bird flying overhead in the distance. At this point, any reverie evoked by this serene segment is quickly punctured, for it is impossible not to be reminded of the opening of Leni Riefenstahl's TRIUMPH OF THE WILL (1935) as Hitler's plane soared over the adoring crowds, a god ready to land.

Further overdetermining the reference, Kluge uses Wagner to underscore the sequence in its entirety. Curiously, he selects the Prelude to act 1 from *Parsifal*, and not passages from *Das Rheingold*, the more obvious choice given the shimmering buildings along the river that contain so much lucre of their own. But the selection is perfectly logical.⁷ The quest for the grail (the redemption money might buy) is already bankrupt; the music, already damaged goods. Profit and power are displayed across the scene: the presence of *Parsifal* connects it to the lucrative nineteenth-century 'power plant of emotions'; visually one sees the 'banks' along the Main, and then, with *un coup de pousse* from Riefenstahl, we

get the Third Reich. In this way, a small piece of music, stripped of its transcendence and holy grails, can forge historical connections all the way from Wagner's Romantic nineteenth century on through to the twelve-year 'thousand-year Reich' and on to Germany's 'economic miracle', the post-war capitalist 'recovery'.⁸ Music is not going to be innocent here.

Parsifal's importance to *THE POWER OF EMOTION* is immense, in no small measure because of its investment in innocence, redemption and faith. Wagner's last opera (1892), *Parsifal* combines these elements in a heady, transcendent mix that works along and outside of the tragic parameters outlined in Kluge's cinematic study. Based on the story of the Fisher King and on early grail legends, the opera opens in the castle of Monsalvat, where the Holy Grail containing Jesus' blood from the cross is kept. The Knights of the Holy Grail are distraught because King Amfortas refuses to conduct Communion: Amfortas suffers from a wound in the thigh that will not heal. The King's wound is fraught with sexual and religious overtones, having been inflicted by the spear that pierced Christ's side on the cross (in Wagner's version). Stolen by the evil magician Klingsor from the knights' realm, the spear was then used upon Amfortas when he was seduced by Klingsor's enslaved sorceress, Kundry, an act that betrayed the sanctity of the grail. (Klingsor, it should be added, castrated himself earlier when he had succumbed to Kundry's charms.) Only the touch of the tip of that same sword, when retrieved by a *reiner Tor* (an innocent fool) can heal Amfortas, and such a fool appears in the form of young Parsifal, brought before the court for having killed a sacred swan in Monsalvat. Parsifal witnesses the ritual of the grail performed by the suffering king, but fails to understand its meaning. Chased away, he encounters Kundry in Klingsor's magic kingdom and rejects her sexual advances beyond a kiss. At this moment Parsifal is able to empathise with – and thus understand the significance of – Amfortas's suffering. The same act establishes Parsifal as being of sufficient innocence to deflect and regain the spear (the moment Parsifal makes a sign of the cross with it, Klingsor's kingdom falls to dust, just like Dracula). After wandering for years, Parsifal returns to Monsalvat, where he sees Amfortas begging his own knights to kill him. It is Good Friday. Parsifal is made king and then heals Amfortas with the sword. Kundry receives absolution for her sins and is granted rest from her wandering through death.

Wagner's text is so central to *THE POWER OF EMOTION* that Kluge uncharacteristically respects its sequence by having the Prelude to the opera's first act open the film. Arguably, our attention is attracted all the more since *Parsifal* would not have been the Wagner we would expect to accompany the glistening images. Yet *Parsifal's* presence is not surprising in light of Kluge's interest in the story lines of operas – indeed, it is its plot and themes that seal the connection to the film. Its concern with redemption, 'holy relics' and wounds, for instance,

easily recall the kinds of resurrections and wounds introduced in THE PATRIOT. We can see that the Knee's fate to 'wander the earth' is shared not only by Parsifal but by Kundry, condemned to that destiny for having mocked the agonies of Jesus on the cross. Unlike her already 'holy' military counterpart from THE PATRIOT, however, Kundry wanders in search of redemption, which she finally receives in the form of death.

THE POWER OF EMOTION also draws from Verdi's *Aida* and identifies it through explicit references. We see an early film adaptation of *Aida* as Kluge's voice-over gives details, and we hear its familiar music. Its tale also ends badly (indeed fatally, for its lovers), but Kluge's interest in it is not its redemption, but its physical suffering. Of the many operas quoted, *Aida* is the most rigorously submitted to material and materialist readings, a point to which I will return. Another work central to THE POWER OF EMOTION's concerns and that recurs throughout is the lesser-known *Lemmikainen Legends/Four Legends from the Kalevala* by Sibelius. Like Wagner's *Ring Cycle*, it takes its stories from early legend. Lemmikainen is a sort of Finnish Siegfried who travels across the seas, visiting maidens on the island of Saari (a segment of which is heard in the film), and ends up being torn apart in Tuonela, Finnish hell, in yet another fatal consequence for a wandering figure.

In addition to immediately establishing the centrality of *Parsifal* to the film, the opening scene introduces the importance of natural elements: water (rivers, streams, grottos), air (conveyed through the time-lapse photography of the sky and through the sounds of howling wind), and, especially, fire. If ice and the lifeless rigidity associated with it dominated THE PATRIOT, THE POWER OF EMOTION is deeply suffused with heat, flames and fire. Given the preoccupations of the film, this is hardly surprising: 'One speaks of burning passions', the voice-over states, 'never cold ones'. In addition to the glistening skyscrapers of downtown Frankfurt, we see footage of an actual high-rise on fire. (Significantly, this appears just after Kluge explains the fate of the Tower of Babel, whose inhabitants were 'destroyed for building high-rises' and for their 'confusion of tongues', like his wild lesson in historical causality on the fate of the Crystal Palace.) Red filters and tints appear with regularity throughout the film; the prostitute Betty sets fire to bills she has just earned working for a pimp; another character tries to unearth the fate of a woman who had tried to surrender during the war while her village was in flames.

One story, 'The Opera House Fire', which also occurs during an air raid, features a firefighter impelled to enter the prop room in order to find Parsifal's grail. It seems that, like the film itself, he cannot keep away from that opera or its artifacts. Once there, the camera tracks over various props, like John's outrageously artificial head on a bloody platter. What a surprise for the firefighter when he finally reaches the grail to find it empty! The hollow container, with its

chintzy promise of redemption, dramatises how opera's tragic stories and unhappy conclusions rely on fake, worn-out, empty cores. Even at the time of *Parsifal*'s initial production, the grail was obviously a dated fantasy object, a throw-back to earlier legends. At the same time, to think along the lines of Benjamin, the vessel's emptiness might enable it to be refilled with new meanings, ones that might go beyond the illusions it used to house. In this regard, it's significant that Kluge would remark to interviewers that cinema's productivity was found 'in the gaps' between shots, where 'nothing' actually happens.

Another central project of *THE POWER OF EMOTION*'s opening segment is to interrupt musical reverie, fantasies of transcendence and glorified sorrow. Following the shots of Frankfurt is a completely silent presentation of what looks like World War I footage. All that is clear is its overwhelming sense of death and chaotic carnage. After this, we cut to a quick, equally bloody sequence of the birth of a child. The next sequence returns our attention to death, but the depiction now is quite different. Here it is sanitised, sanctified and cast in utterly noncorporeal terms. Kluge documents an actual state funeral in which an audience of high-ranking officials and bureaucrats is seated in excruciatingly neat rows, almost identically dressed.⁹ A small group of musicians performs Bach's 'Air on the G String' at an appropriately slow, respectful tempo. Yet should listeners be inclined to lose themselves to the beauty of the piece, the camera humorously reveals Helmut Schmidt dozing off and spoiling the neat seating arrangement. In this near-textbook example of dialectical montage, Kluge's initial sequence establishes his concern with excavation, burial and the dead, moving from the highly material facts of suffering, birth and death to their sanitised treatment in official West German ceremonial culture of the time.

Pieces of Opera/Opera in Pieces

According to Kluge's voice-over, our emotions always want a happy end, yet the outcomes that operas crank out (just like war) do not provide it. Otherwise put, there is no correlation of supply and demand. As power plant or factory, the opera house overproduces emotions so that they become too bombastic – or overcooked, to borrow the film's leitmotif of fire. Conversely, though, the section announced by the intertitle 'The Power Plant of Emotion' is laughably brief. 'Something went wrong in the initial stages', we learn. Then the next title, 'The Power Lines', immediately appears, after which a tracking shot of fraying cable reveals the power lines of the opera house 'in a catastrophic state'.

This particular sequencing of shots, like the one contrasting images of bodies in birth and in death, is deliberate in its effects. Kluge submits the opera house

to the same formal fragmentation as the operas themselves. Even the use of intertitled 'sequences' divests operatic production of any awe-inspiring authority or seriousness, given the almost comic brevity of these sequences. Moreover, as noted earlier, Kluge's fragmented presentational style parallels the disconnected labour tasks, tools and production modalities within the opera house. Combined, of course, they produce a unified 'product' that rarely acknowledges its constructedness and emphatic lack of unity. Opera, like film, tries to divert our attention from the disparity of art forms, genres and techniques it requires (costumes, libretti, actors, singers, lighting, power lines) in favour of the melting pot Wagner advocated with the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Kluge, for his part, ignores and attacks that unity at every possible level. After the shot of the 'catastrophic' power lines, we cut to a quasi- cameo of Gabi Teichert (Hannelore Hoger again, who plays other roles here too),¹⁰ digging around outside, looking down into a pit through which a big pipe runs – a patriot's work is never done. Following this literal 'grounding' of opera, the next shot, taken from inside the power plant, presents a side view of a rehearsal in which we see only the top half of a female singer, the rest of her hidden by the stage floor near the orchestra pit. Recalling the metaphors of 'unearthing better material' in *THE PATRIOT*, Kluge clearly wants to explore what is underneath the image, spectacle and history, and the method here recalls a remark by Brecht that Kluge is fond of quoting: 'Less than ever does a simple "reproduction of reality" tell us anything about reality. A photograph of the Krupp factory or of the AEG yields practically nothing about these institutions [...]. Hence something has to be "constructed", something "artificial", something not given but "put together"'.¹¹

Kluge makes the point repeatedly by using unusual camera positions and angles to present opera rehearsals and productions. Ours is not a typical seat at the opera house: the camera refrains from giving us the perspective of an audience member facing the stage, but rather occupies a position behind or on the side of the stage, where Kluge intimates the real work is involved. His 1976 film character, Ferdinand Reiche, the watchman of *STRONGMAN FERDINAND*, had been oblivious to precisely that fact. Ferdinand failed to be vigilant in parts of the opera house where he could have checked for acoustics, for ways to change orchestral sound, or, Kluge argues, for hidden items that had previously escaped him.¹² It was precisely in letting his guard down that the guardsman became involved in what proved to be a calamitous confusion of reality and opera, even drawing his gun ('ever the policeman', Kluge quips)¹³ while watching Tosca kill Scarpia during a performance of the opera. In *EMOTION*, Kluge's atypical camera placements preclude the lethal identification Reiche experienced; our view is constantly being obstructed by ropes, wires, workers wandering in front of the camera, making undisturbed viewing, in a word, impossible. Through these viewing positions – literally getting behind the operatic

facade – Kluge enjoins his audience to find the economic and power relations that may have ‘previously escaped us’; his emphasis on process, as Peter Lutze notes, ‘is a modernist alternative to the classical attempt to absorb the spectator into the diegetic world’.¹⁴

In this way, Kluge’s film style presents Benjamin’s concept of allegorical readings and Kluge’s own belief in the forces that conventional public spheres leave untapped. Quirks and omissions are everywhere. In addition to providing us with unusual seats at the opera, Kluge insures that we arrive late or at the wrong time, further denying us a stable position from which we might immerse ourselves in the proceedings. The same strategy orchestrates the soundtrack’s frequent refusal to match opera recordings to their accompanying images (when the fire marshal seeks Parsifal’s grail in *THE POWER OF EMOTION*, for instance, we hear not Wagner, but Sibelius’s *Four Legends*).

To further discourage audience members from fetishising tragedy or romanticising its deadly outcomes, Kluge’s voice-over continually, almost happily, spoils the plot of well-known operas. When he tells us that ‘this child has just hours to live’, he adheres to his own prescription to interrupt Carmen just as Don Jose is about to stab her, and demand ‘an immediate discussion’.¹⁵ Kluge’s dry, laconic summaries cast off any auratic lustre the operas might have, particularly in the section of *THE POWER OF EMOTION* labelled ‘The Plot’. Here, in the wings of a performance of *Rigoletto*, a cast member whispers the tragic events that have befallen the dwarf, as if this were newly acquired, shocking gossip from a neighbourhood acquaintance. Kluge’s use of reductive plot summaries boils operas completely down to their pseudotragic, violent cores: ‘*Aida* presents the story of two great peoples, the Ethiopians and the Egyptians, at war with one another for one hundred years. [Pause] Opera cannot report these bloody events directly. The catastrophe must be transformed into an almost-could-have-had a happy ending. So, the war between two nations is turned into a story of three people [...]. [But] because the opera is, in reality, about war, there can be no happy ending for the lovers in act 5’.

After a brief intervention in which the character of Frau Bärlaam, a marriage broker, is introduced, *THE POWER OF EMOTION* returns to *Aida* and the fate of Aida and Radames. About this opera that is ‘really about war’, his voice exclaims, ‘Oh, what opera conceals!’ The tinted film version continues, and due to its depiction through iris mattes, we get a visual pun on the imprisonment occurring in the narrative; mattes similarly disguise what Kluge intimates are the real goings-on behind the story’s events. Interestingly, the silent film used here alters the ending of Verdi’s original opera by having the community free Aida and Radames from the tomb – a brief cinematic reprieve from opera’s fatal conclusions – yet then proceeds to stone them to death for the selfishness they display as lovers: ‘People don’t stand for lovers being buried alive, and so they

were freed at the last moment. But when it became clear that the lovers were only interested in themselves, the people were disappointed'. Film intertitles of 'Stone them!' appear, with added sounds of howling winds, which appear throughout THE POWER OF EMOTION. 'And so, despite the intervention of the masses, act 5 has no happy end [...]. Operas are cruel by popular demand'. That an alternative existed in this brief example – one enabled by collective effort, no less – only to be dashed immediately, shows the stranglehold that cruelty has on opera and, as Kluge believes, upon its listeners as well.

In addition to being a story of war and of cruel mobs, *Aida* is a tale of ethnically and nationally proscribed sexual passion. That proscription exceeded the diegetic hostilities between Ethiopians and Egyptians; indeed it would seem that in highlighting the tragic fate of Radames and Aida's affair, Verdi had thrown out a colonialist bone to racial tolerance in his opera, which premiered in 1871. This was a time when European musical culture was fully taken with Orientalism, projecting onto it middle- and upper-class fantasies of, among other things, unfettered nature, sensuality, primitivism, exoticism, mystery, threat and savagery, various 'otherings' to help reproduce and maintain the fantasmatic status quo of white colonial Europe. This was during Europe's 'race to colonise' Africa and the Middle East; when colonialist expansionism was buoyed by the expansion of industrial capital, driven to perpetuate itself through added markets, workers and consumers.

Walter Benjamin once quipped that operetta provided 'the ironic utopia of a lasting domination by Capital'.¹⁶ Indeed *Aida* and operas like *Samson and Delilah* certainly nourished Europe's Orientalist fantasies while they also 'served to distract attention from the realities of Western exploitation of, and geopolitical scramble over, the Middle East,' as Ralph Locke has argued.¹⁷ *Aida's* own history, entwined with nationalist and colonialist imperatives, is instructive in this regard. A pre-Christian story set to music by an Italian Catholic composer, the opera premiered in Cairo, Egypt on, of all days, Christmas Eve. (The Egyptian government would even adopt 'Gloria all'Egitto' as a national hymn.) Not surprisingly, Verdi was at pains to exoticise his music, most notably via the unseen priestess of Phthà, through the interval of the lowered second and broken chords performed by harps, gridding exoticism with clichéd care even onto an invisible female body. Moreover, Verdi instructed his librettist, Antonio Ghislanzoni, not to render Aida's decision to die with Radames as a death wish and to mute any references to their physical anguish in order to enhance the elegiac, ethereal music he composed for the opera's end, 'O terra, addio'. THE POWER OF EMOTION, by contrast, elects to exacerbate the physically violent nature of their death (rocks, more rocks, entombment), mocking the transcendence with which the tale was produced and, presumably, consumed.

The Value of Emotion

Operas are not only 'cruel by popular demand', but, according to Kluge, are oblivious to simpler, less dramatic and less tragic feelings. We are told that 'our emotions always want a happy ending', yet in the marketplace of emotion, 'feelings in unhappy stories weigh more' – the trick then is to combine unhappy stories with uplifting endings. Rather than dealing with the grandiose emotions of opera, Kluge opts to activate the small, illogical, unprocessed feelings that are usually inaccessible to social institutions, or sometimes even to people themselves. This is exemplified by the film's rape victim who said she felt more victimised by the boyfriend who'd left her than by her rapist because, during the rape, still unconscious from an attempted suicide, she had not felt anything.

In addition to dramatically materialising the experiences of the human body (Radames and Aida should be screaming in pain, not singing to one another), *THE POWER OF EMOTION* materialises the feelings these bodies house. Among the many, usually dry, examples is the courtroom scene mentioned earlier, 'Das Schuss/The Shot', in which a woman is questioned for shooting her husband. The men assume that because she had just caught her husband and daughter having sex, she must have 'blown a fuse', to which she responds, 'My fuses were fine'. Her questioners are baffled by the emotional impropriety of her responses; they are equally, irrationally intrigued by the gun she fired, inspecting the device like fascinated young schoolboys.

EMOTION grants feelings objectified form, whether through bodies ('my fuses were fine') or through their exchange value ('stories with sad endings are worth more'). Moreover, in spite of the director's frequent use of puns, Kluge is not engaging in ironic postmodern wordplay with this and, in fact, elsewhere expressed disinterest in postmodernism for what he considers its 'disrespect' for 'materials'.¹⁸ Instead, he asks us to question why physical bodies and human emotions should not be considered forces in materialist conceptions of history, social analysis and change. Even when these feelings arise from individualised people or story lines, Kluge is always at pains to expose their links to larger structures (and contradictions) of power.

Kluge never questions the ability of emotions to present themselves concretely in films like *POWER OF EMOTION*. Moving punningly between materiality and materialism, his depiction of emotions this way helps demonstrate just how much they in fact circulate within social systems of exchange governed by use value, labour value and the vagaries of historical trends and demands. But, with equal persistence, Kluge also shows how they are simultaneously governed by subjective human desires and needs, whether actual or manufactured, experienced or suppressed. *THE POWER OF EMOTION* makes clear that one of the

great ironies of late capitalism is that it ignores human desires at the same time as it fully manipulates them.

In this vein, the power plant takes on another connotative layer. Unlike factories, which produce goods, power plants process natural elements such as coal, water and sun, into energy forms needed to sustain human life. In this regard it is not incidental that *THE POWER OF EMOTION* draws our attention to natural energy sources, like wind, sun and fire so frequently. In one of the film's few identified citations, Adam Smith is quoted: "'Water is vital to all aspects of life. One cannot exist without it. Yet rarely can one use it for purposes of trade. A diamond, by contrast, has no intrinsic value but can be used in trade for all sorts of other commodities'", Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*'. Unlike actual economists, though, Kluge includes human emotions into the mix. Officially unvalued, feelings, like water, are nonetheless essential for life. Updating his argument, one notes that despite their ongoing 'inherent' worthlessness, the value of emotions has mushroomed since the release of *EMOTION*, with pharmaceutical companies – newer power plants of emotions – cashing in on 'unhappy feelings' with lucrative antidepressants and other psychotropics.

Kluge positioned feelings in the power plant of opera pretty much the same way, i.e. as both raw material and byproduct. And whatever authenticity he may implicitly give these 'raw materials', he is simultaneously de-idealising by materialising them, and the bodies that accommodate them. Pushing that de-idealisation even further, Kluge links the social and economic life of emotions to destruction, tragedy, death and even war, and to be sure, most of the operas whose plot lines he dryly recounts do not end happily. Thus, for as much as *THE POWER OF EMOTION* examines and even champions the raw 'power of emotions' ('suddenly and brutally, they explode'), it also demonstrates how their institutionalisation and 'overprocessing' reduces them to a single tragic group whose power comes from being wielded over us, not derived from us.

Curiously, for all of its interest in emotion, critics attacked *THE POWER OF EMOTION* for its absence of passion and feeling. The charge, I believe, is really an observation about the absence of sentimentalism in the film, something abundantly evident in Kluge's acerbic treatment of romantic love. For what films like *POWER OF EMOTION* stress is the absolute and ridiculous inadequacy of conventional narrative formats to actual human emotions. Heterosexual romance cannot end wars, nor even suspend them, and non-heterosexual romances are off the map entirely. Kluge might be disinterested in passion per se, but he is concerned with how obdurate human emotions can be when pitted against structures that do or will not account for them, and there is an unquestionable passion in this. Kluge shows how feelings are able – or not – to operate outside of predetermined forms, and the ones to which he turns are necessarily

not those that find themselves readily sung, marketed, or narrativised, and so in that regard may be difficult to locate or identify in the film.

In other words, outside of opera's institutional context, emotions work differently. They do not occur one at a time, for instance, as marriage broker Frau Bärlaam explains. As 'someone who establishes bonds, a knot-maker', Kluge's voice-over tells us, 'Frau Bärlaam believes that everyone has emotions. If everyone had just one, the knots would hold better'. Betty, the prostitute, illustrates the simultaneous, contradictory nature of emotional experience. Again, Kluge, practically whispering: 'Betty's professional secrets: 1) tenderness; 2) know-how; 3) no special feeling. A lot of feeling is required to combine all three'. Human emotions need constant management, and managing them is profitable for the opera house, for Betty, and also for the marriage broker. It is worth mentioning that, as director and intrusive narrator, Alexander Kluge is also 'managing' our approach to emotions, in addition to those of his characters.

The characters of *THE POWER OF EMOTION* are constantly illuminating how extensively love, sex and feelings are bound up with all sorts of contracts. Just as emotions are often commodified and obliged to take their proper place within particular generic contracts (film, history, opera), love and sex function within rigid contracts and prearranged desires, as with the prenuptial agreement popular among wealthy couples today (another contract that banks on an 'unhappy outcome'). In a very Fassbinderian detail, an intertitle towards the end of *THE POWER OF EMOTION* asks, 'What is stronger than a marriage? A murder, when both know what the other has done'.

Kluge humorously depicts the quantifiable nature of love in a two shot of a couple talking (later they will be revealed as the murderers mentioned above):

He: Are you saying you don't love me?

She: How much should I love you?

He: Exactly as much as I love you [...].

She: Not a little more?

He: No more, no less.

She: What if I loved you a little less?

He: Then you would owe me change.

Immediately after this exchange, the film cuts to the marriage broker, who comments that 'No one ever has the right change'. Betty is introduced with the line 'Love for sale', and when she is bought by the pimp Schleich, Kluge tells us she is pleased for 'having been purchased for her own sake' for the first time, literalising the exchange value of emotions in yet another pun. What might be called here the 'measurement of emotions' upholds the director's penchant for lists and absurd enumerations, such as the number of times an opera is performed with the same ending or the number of wars experienced in a three-hundred-

year-old life. To show the arbitrary, even aleatory nature of these figures, Kluge scatters glimpses of fortunetellers, pimps and gamblers over the course of the film.

The Difference of Emotion

'Objects are the opposite of emotions', we are told in a scene that closes on an extreme close-up of a wound near a young woman's eye, clearly the result of abuse. Kluge's voice-over says, 'Pain is personal property. Too much suffering turns you into an object'. The facial injury of this unnamed woman offers the most direct visual representation of a wound in *THE POWER OF EMOTION*. And in contrast to Corporal Wieland's in *THE PATRIOT*, this bearer remains conspicuously silent.

Elsewhere in the film, however, the section 'The Confusion of Emotions' features extensive discussions on wounds and injury. The most significant takes place between an official and a Teichert-like character, played by Kluge's sister Alexandra Kluge, who wants to learn the fate of a German woman who had tied sheets together as a flag of surrender during a bomb raid in the war. Her effort, like Gerta's, proved fruitless. After a short, insensitive discourse on how to 'get a good fire going' that will 'tear out the guts of a building', the official quotes his brother, an air-force doctor, who says the aftermath of a fire is like 'treating an extensive wound. You can't get at it by treating the scab. A historically scabbed city works the same way – the wound must be reopened and cleaned before it can heal properly'. In these words – and in typical contradictory fashion – Kluge voices what in the 1970s and early 1980s would have been a sympathetic attitude towards German historical experience through a highly unsympathetic character. Yet the woman persists with her questions about the woman with the sheets, a story that clearly does not interest this man, and when he asks her directly if his condolences would help, she answers in the negative. Stylistic choices enhance and literalise the man's highly military view of things. Inserted footage from a U-boat film provides the view from a periscope, the deadliness of which is acknowledged in the next text fragment. Ever concerned with time and the false assurance of statistics, the voice-over tells us: 'It is 4 a.m. Most people die at this hour'. Then, as if reprising Wieland's Knee, 'But the dead are not resting in peace. They are restless, uncertain whether things will proceed justly when they arise from their graves'. In a surprisingly poignant image (through a green tint and iris matte) we see the face of a woman with a look of extraordinary affection. Is she a lover? A writer? Quickly, we enter the icy grotto of an unidentified opera, then to footage of fires blasting open what

appear to be coffins. After returning to the Frankfurt skyline, replete with Wagner, the dialogue returns: 'If those who suffered the worst wounds because of this showed up too late at the last judgement, only to find the worst injustice, that the proceedings are over, then such final injustice would be reason enough for graves to open now'. The choice of music here is crucial: Mahler's *Symphony No. 2*, the Resurrection Symphony. Kluge gives powerful illustration to the fact that for him, the wounded, the buried, and the forgotten constitute the literal 'force' for change, much as he had argued in his theoretical work written with Oskar Negt.

The Undoing of Act 5

We might as well let ourselves have some fun with [this limited opera house repertoire]. If we can't replace it overnight – and don't necessarily want to part from part of it – we can play with it by giving the canonical works various new contexts.

Ralph Locke

The film's final and lengthiest segment, 'The Undoing of a Crime through Mutual Cooperation', overturns the fatal undoings of so many operatic final acts, and does so with enough irony and artifice as to also mock what Douglas Sirk called the 'emergency exits' of Hollywood's happy endings. A Yugoslav hotel manager, Ante Allewisch, comes to West Germany to exchange some diamonds for money so that he can purchase a washing machine in Brussels. Four locals are involved, all of them from unofficial economic counterspheres: Schleich, a 'burglary specialist' with an expertise in furs; Betty, the prostitute he has purchased; Manfred Schmidt, a man who 'lives off of his secretary', Mäxchen Bärbel, with whom he is romantically, or at least sexually, involved. Schmidt and Mäxchen go to their arranged rendezvous with Allewisch, where Schmidt suddenly and brutally hits him on the head with a heavy tool. Though shocked, Mäxchen flees to Barcelona with him, leaving the foreigner for dead. Unable to escape or 'undo' their crime, they are last shown scrapping in the small, dingy room that is their hideout as Kluge ironically tells us that 'Mäxchen's dreams have come true – she and Manfred are living together, in inescapable confines of four square meters'.

The real happy ending of Kluge's alternative 'drama of inescapable tragedy' pertains to what he labels 'the undoing of a crime through mutual cooperation'. It begins the moment when Betty and Schleich discover that the man their colleagues left for dead has not in fact died. Here Kluge begins to swerve away from the near-certain fatality of opera's denouements – a fatality caused by a

romantic heterosexual couple. Stressing the vital importance of that undoing, the sequence offers tips and suggestions as it goes along: 'Never believe in a murder', we are told. As if heeding that advice, the two characters use primitive means to check for signs of life in the bleeding body – a lit candle to check his eyes; a pocket mirror for breath. The wounded man is bundled up and brought to a remote shack in the woods where the two nurse him back to consciousness by reading to him from poetry, stock reports, anything, sometimes several things at once, in order 'to keep his damaged brain alive'. The loud chirping of birds adds to the Rousseauian quality of the sequence, and appropriately, the character faces outdoors when his eyes first open, as if nature itself had inspired his rebirth.

Allewisch's murder has thus been undone through what the film calls 'six weeks of hard work, unpaid'. Here is Kluge's clearest cinematic elaboration of the 'feminine' labour force that he and Negt had advocated in their social theory and that had been explored, problematically and without 'pay off', in *THE PATRIOT*. By contrast, it is evident that *THE POWER OF EMOTION* esteems this clandestine, nurturing labour.¹⁹ Physically set off from the city in an ill-defined, nonindustrial setting, the couple's work bypasses the profit-seeking circuitry of typical economic contracts. In fact, their labour produces its own surplus value, giving the couple more emotional intimacy. As the voice-over tells us at the end of the film, those two are 'closer now', a tentatively happy conclusion stylistically enforced when the film cuts from a deliberately tacky full moon to a shot of the couple embracing in a car. Afterward, they stare with a puzzled look through the windshield directly into the camera in a relatively long take. Their look seems directed at the director, as if to ask, what now? Kluge's closing words describe not only their future, but what might be our potential as critical viewers, listeners, thinkers: 'Their technique', he says, 'will improve over time'.

This final sequence offers a way to make an 'undead man', as the voice-over refers to Allewisch at one point. Being transported in a coffin-like trunk – recalling the coffins that had defiantly blazed open earlier in the film – intensifies the vampiristic aspects of his 'half-death'. Allewisch's return to life, however, is appreciably less flamboyant than that. Kluge uses the modest tale of a marginalised man in order to demonstrate that opera's grandiose, tragic endings are neither inevitable nor inescapable; by extrapolation, change is possible through small acts beyond the purview of commercial opera, film and their stock characters. Do not content yourself with historical 'outcomes', their explanations, their logic, or their goals. Do not believe in fate; you can change act 5.

Given the director's observation that 'in all operas that deal with redemption, a woman is sacrificed in act 5', Kluge's decision to resurrect a male black market dealer from Yugoslavia is intriguing. Yet the choice is more complex than at first blush, for the terms by which he proceeds are as motivated by national,

economic and ethnic differences as by well as gendered ones. Allewisch ventures into Germany with diamonds, arriving, as Adam Smith reminds us, with intrinsically worthless goods, whose value is established only by circulating within a specific economy. The figure thus enters into that 'specific economy' from the 'outside' as a Yugoslav going into the West German black market – capitalism's shadow, another kind of counter-economy. Like Parsifal, who stumbles upon Monsalvat unaware of the significance either of his killing a swan or of the grail, Allewisch might be another, more modern 'innocent fool'. But here, the hotel manager from the East enters the golden kingdom (recall the gilded buildings of Frankfurt) highly aware of the worth of his goods and of the system into which he is moving. Wagner's knights had been unable to save their king precisely for being within the same economy and sharing the same understanding of the value of the grail; thus only an outsider could redeem Amfortas, someone who through recognition and empathy, enters their system – showing the importance of emotion to that economy, just as compassion intrudes happily into the economy Kluge depicts.²⁰ Other similarities between Wagner's and Kluge's texts include the fact that male characters in both, in a sense, come to. As King, Parsifal is now aware of the weight of his office and the significance of the grail and its economy;²¹ Kluge's character comes to in a more literal sense, regaining consciousness and starting to learn all over again like a child. He will need to learn differently this time, a difference that might be inflected with the alternative political, economic, social, epistemological and emotional spheres Kluge has theoretically elaborated over so much of his career.

Given the historical context in which *THE POWER OF EMOTION* was made, a figure entering capitalist West Germany from Yugoslavia would certainly have functioned as someone from a different economic system. And given Kluge's theoretical perspective at the time, he would probably feminise that economy along with Allewisch's status in the West. For these reasons I find it impossible to conceptualise this redeemed figure as simply or unambiguously male, a criticism that someone like Clément might make. Even when we compare Allewisch to figures in Wagner's opera, his affinities are surprisingly mobile. He is at once Parsifal, the innocent fool (himself ambiguously gendered), and the wounded Amfortas, who is healed, not by the sword (or black marketer) that struck him, but by the hands of collaborators – suggesting an empathetic recovery partially from within. Allewisch also functions like Kundry, the ethnic other (Wagner's libretto contains several references to her Arab background) condemned to wander the earth. Indeed, since the nineteenth-century premiere of *Parsifal*, critics have noted that Kundry is a flagrant representation of the wandering Jew (a racist depiction abetted by the Wagnerian economy behind it): dark and homeless, she is both castrated and castrating, a woman who lures productive, Christian men from their responsibilities and their proper symbolic roles.²²

Parsifal distributes a variety of problematic tropes of 'Jewishness' onto a wide and interesting array of figures. In a sense, circumcision becomes castration and becomes carved onto the wounded thigh of King Amfortas, who refuses his office out of guilt but also, as Linda and Michael Hutcheon argued, due to the disabling physical pain of syphilis – a disease stereotypically perceived as afflicting sexual 'wanderers' and what the Nazis would come to identify as the *Judenpest*. Clichéd tropes of Semitism also inscribe the body of Klingsor, who castrated himself after his encounter with Kundry. Associated with Jewishness by dint of anatomical castration as well as sexual contamination, these figures demonstrate how otherness, and the undesirable features projected onto it, are readily located on the very same body-egos that would cast it out. The terms of Kundry's death are not incidental in this regard. Feminine, sexual and tainted, she, along with Klingsor, is conspicuously non-Christian, wandering beyond the kingdom of the grail, which accepts her only when she has ceased to exist. (It is difficult not to be reminded here of the Nazi plans for establishing a 'Jewish museum' in Prague after having exterminated all Jewish people.)

Wagner's of course is not the only *Parsifal* at work in THE POWER OF EMOTION. Kluge's film includes a clip from a rehearsal of Syberberg's filmed version of the opera of 1982. Appearing in a section entitled 'The State', it dramatises the collusion of musical, religious and political institutions; the guards here are rehearsing the Communion scene. Kluge gives an appreciative wink to his colleague's work here, whose interest in fragmentation he shares. Syberberg estranged and disunified bodies in explicit, dramatic ways: he had removed Amfortas's wound from its male German body and displayed it, in all its vulvular glory, elsewhere in the room on a pillow-shrine; he had non-singing actors lip-synch to prerecorded music; he cast a young man to portray Parsifal until the transformative kiss with Kundry, after which a woman depicts him (at that point, as Syberberg makes clear, much more than sexual renunciation and gender are at stake: 'Wagner', he noted, 'assimilates the problem of woman as a figure of guilt and hostility with that of the Wandering Jew, treating them as stages in a process of seductive temptation and eternal malediction').²³

Yet despite Syberberg's interest in splintering and fragmentation, he performs Wagner's opera in its entirety and in sequence. His disruptions are therefore not musical but thematic and visual, as in the film's cluttered opening set, the disembodied wound, the sex change, and so on. Without such details, the uninterrupted music might have assumed the same transcendent reverence in this film that Syberberg had bestowed on Beethoven in OUR HITLER. Yet finally, given how extensively his adaptation focuses on Christianity's renunciations and draws our attention to Parsifal's anti-Semitism and to its skittish depiction of heterosexuality, it would be difficult to sustain such an interpretation. If Ger-

man music were that sacred in Syberberg's film, its stagy and otherwise fractured 'performance' would not be so much in evidence.

As a tutor-text to *EMOTION*, *Parsifal* functions both within and beyond the transcendent, tragic economy Kluge's film openly challenges. The director clearly appropriates the opera's thematics of faith, conveying them musically through the Prelude and Communion scene; he borrows its structure, opening with its Prelude and concluding with the redemptive story at the end. But again, he withholds the dematerialising transcendence from *Parsifal* to expose capital's quest for the hollow, glittering grail, and the artifice and allure of happy or 'redemptive' endings. '[Wagner's] opera', Nietzsche had caustically summarised, 'is the opera of redemption'.²⁴ Kluge himself does not redeem Wagner's Easter tale so much as show how operas like these can be 'processed' differently and put to new uses (through unanticipated media and genres) and deployed to critical, alternative ends.

I also believe that Kluge selected *Parsifal* for another reason: for being a source of beautiful and tainted pleasures. A few ominous details and a moment of exquisite beauty haunt the end of *THE POWER OF EMOTION*. Before the attack on Allewisch, we see a couple of men peacefully painting a building in an unextraordinary sequence of shots. It is springtime; there are buds on trees, birds singing – an indisputable gentleness marks this narratively insignificant moment. The nondiegetic music is not meant to jar; indeed, it is played beautifully. But it is Haydn's 'Emperor's Hymn', the piece that tracks Kluge's work like a dog. However quietly or beautifully performed, the work still connotes militarism, war, German nationalism and Nazism. It also reappears when Allewisch is deemed sufficiently recovered to be transported, and Betty and her partner place the brain-damaged man in the car trunk, cover him with furs, and drive 'across three borders'. Border officials stop them at one point, where a guard is oddly fascinated by Betty's tube of blood-coloured lipstick – a visual detail in keeping with the fiery emotions and bloody stories that saturate the film. In light of the previous appearance of the Haydn – in which Hitler may be indirectly mocked through the housepainters, banal descendants of the Reich's *artiste manqué* – the 'Kaiserhymn' assumes extra political reference at this later point. Given that an entire World War has been lodged onto this musical piece, it is hard not to recall the nationalist assassination in Sarajevo that helped trigger World War I while the 'Kaiserhymn' accompanies the Yugoslav here across various borders around Germany. As was clear with the stunning beauty of the Frankfurt skyline scored with *Parsifal* at the film's outset, the musical beauty of *EMOTION* here also coexists with unsettling critique. All told, Kluge is not one to make beautiful or happy endings naive – in fact they are only beginnings, and beginnings, as the music tells us, can go bad.

Postlude: Kluge's Act of Kindness

Had it not been for interventions like Kluge's in the 1970s and early 1980s, critical music studies of opera would not be where they are today.²⁵ At the time, cultural critics had begun to challenge opera's deadly grip on female characters. Feminist studies like Clément's *Opera, or the Undoing of Women* and Sally Potter's *THRILLER*, a cinematic inquiry into Mimi's death in *La Bohème*, were both released in 1979, four years before *THE POWER OF EMOTION*. *THE POWER OF EMOTION* practically cites Clément's own inquiry, which states that women in opera 'perpetually sing their eternal undoing'.²⁶ Clément's witheringly dry plot synopses – like Kluge's – also appear in Potter's *THRILLER*, whose narrator streamlines *La Bohème*'s first act over a series of still images and musical passages from the opera: 'Four male artists [...] are in an attic studio, fighting the cold, fooling around. Three of them go out to a café, leaving Rodolfo alone. There is a knock at the door. It is Mimi, a seamstress and flower-maker whose candle has gone out on the way up to her room. She comes in. They fall in love [...]'. At the end, when an ailing Mimi is brought to the attic of the men, the narrator notes that 'they do what they can for her, but she dies'. After relating the plot she asks, 'Can these be the facts? Is that what really happened?'

These three critical exposés of opera's deadly deeds focus almost entirely on plot. Like her colleagues, Clément reduced the story lines of any number of operas to their barest narrative structures in order to highlight the repetitiveness of the formula. Nonetheless, when it was released, her book drew charges for that exclusive focus on libretti, much as Jutta Brückner had criticised *THE POWER OF EMOTION* for failing to consider opera's sensually affirming, non-narrative elements. To be sure, the entirety of Kluge's film acknowledges the power of music and non-narrative spectacle, but it does so in displaced and highly critical, i.e. non-affirming, ways. As Peter Lutze argues, it demonstrates the force of music through its very structure. With its fragmented, elliptical but consistent appearances, music is what arguably ties the splintered stories of *THE POWER OF EMOTION* together.

One could also question Kluge's selection of operatic texts. By choosing those with 'deadly outcomes' and examining only the deleterious aspects of our responses to them, Kluge stacks the deck considerably. That preoccupation obliges him to find deadliness and inescapable fates everywhere, and so he boils down the range of operatic repertoire and listening experiences into one monolithic phenomenon. It is small wonder, then, that he feels impelled to articulate his 'disbelief in the tragic and the melancholic with which our culture today seems infatuated'.²⁷ To be sure, there were polemical reasons for him to make the choices he did. To present opera as a mass-produced product of the 'power

plant of emotions', it would be unreasonable to expect much in the way of product differentiation, just as Clément's synopses aimed to expose opera's repetitive misogynist patterns.

Like *THE POWER OF EMOTION*, recent critical opera studies devoted considerable energy to the material components of opera, especially the bodies that sing and listen. It was not an unwarranted emphasis. With the intense physicality of its vocal production, along with the emotions and identifications it elicits physically and affectively from listeners, operatic music has strong connections to human bodies. Indeed, that relationship is often played out onstage as we observe bodies performing what texts 'impose' upon them: pulmonary diseases (*La Bohème*), punishment for intercaste relationships or other sexual 'transgressions' (*Aida*, *Carmen*, and others). Not incidentally, the early 21st century's focus on bodies comes from music scholars interested in postcolonial, race and ethnicity studies and in lesbian, gay and queer scholarship – areas concerned with how various bodies are differentiated through historically contingent power relations.

It could be argued that a two-sided relationship exists between Kluge and contemporary lesbian, gay and queer theorists. Both sides are aware of the physical and cultural stakes in operatic representation, yet contemporary queer scholarship presents more alternatives to explore and consider. And whereas Kluge materialised opera in order to de-idealise it and extinguish its auratic pull over us, lesbian and gay theorists argue that opera's 'pull' lies precisely in its physicality, its fantastic style, its diva cults and its extravagant vocal performance. Queer theorists stress how opera can stage socially discouraged desires, thereby providing a focal point for the construction of queer identities. For Wayne Koestenbaum, what he calls the 'unnatural' character of the trained operatic voice finds further equivalencies in proscribed gay male desire; for Samuel Abel, 'I came to opera because I found there a different kind of sexuality, a public performance that offered to me the same attractions that I would later find in person-to-person sexual relations'.²⁸ Lesbian musicologists have observed that divas provide sites of extravagant identifications – as bodies in excess, capable of intense vocal expression and passion, and as social outcasts – as well as objects of desire for women.²⁹

Opera unquestionably complicates how late twentieth-century cinema scholars theorised identification. Its characters are saddled with unendurably intense emotions, and these feelings are depicted in ways that suggest their direct presentation, rather than a credible representation. As a result, these powerful emotions seem only incidentally tied to character psyches and thus easily give rise to more generalised/generic senses of longing, heartbreak, regret, or joy, one I believe listeners can access or adapt, depending on the historical, cultural, social, and other circumstances of their reception. This kind of work is far different

from the 'management of emotions' Kluge assigns to opera. Because listeners can be gripped with passions that far exceed individual sources, opera allows them/us to appreciate feelings and desires as they operate in shifting social and interpretative contexts – recall Kluge's summary of *Aida* as a love story that 'in reality, is about war'. In short, opera frustrates the simple emotional attachments often associated with character-dominated narrative forms and one-to-one identifications. Of course, opera has historically been aligned with socio-economically and ethnically privileged audiences, but even that fact can heighten the furtive pleasures certain social groups might derive from it, especially now, when it enjoys less cultural hegemony than when the 'power plant of emotions', according to Kluge, governed feelings in the West.

Peter Lutze comments on Kluge's particular passion for tragic operas, noting that while they trouble the director, they enrapture him nonetheless. What else explains the multiple viewings of *Carmen*? That rapture is precisely what opera scholars have been mining since the release of THE POWER OF EMOTION, and their work in this regard is not dissimilar to the process Susan Buck-Morss described in relation to Benjamin's *Passagenwerk*. 'For the proletariat, the discarded material of nineteenth-century culture [e.g. opera] symbolized a life that was still unattainable; for the bourgeois intellectual, it represented the loss of what once was'.³⁰ If for Benjamin and Kluge, opera symbolised a colonialist, capitalist culture enthralled with its own power, to many of us today, it might reveal the frayed addiction of that culture to heterosexual or colonialist mores, or, by contrast, the release of normally suppressed emotions and memories, or something else altogether. Even Weill and Brecht did not discount the power of emotion, despite what film scholars wrote about the concept of *Verfremdungseffekt* in the 1970s and 1980s. Their epic theatre operas like *Mahogonny* or *Happy End* were designed precisely to mobilise the emotions of auditors to anger, to thought, to action, and to sympathise with figures whose familiar plights were as perceptibly unjust as their remedies unwise.

At once emotional and intellectual, identification in opera is an untidy phenomenon. It can be engaged either by figures, situations, or the 'not-yet-heards' of missing scenarios past and present, it is at once intense but incomplete. The stories of opera are often based on mistaken identity across class, caste and gendered lines. Until relatively recently, men performed female roles and women performed male ones, especially as boys. How can stable gender functions be ascribed to these fictional figures, or to performers like the castrati or counter-tenors? Such a tradition of blurred performance and vocal categories further complicates facile one-to-one correspondences of listener and character. What forms might counter- or dis-identifications take, then, particularly in tragic opera? Despite the openness of the question, it seems clear that identification is less fixed and fatal than Kluge would have us believe in THE POWER OF EMO-

TION, a text which somehow assumes that audiences buy into the greater worth of sadness over happiness, the belief that selfish lovers must be punished, and so forth. STRONGMAN FERDINAND showed an even more perfunctory response when Strongman Reiche identified so forcefully with *Tosca's* Scarpia. Reiche was one of Kluge's most exaggerated tragic-comic figures, and audience members are not likely to forge identifications with him. Was Kluge taking for granted this kind of identification, even as he mocked them? Do all men always identify with *Carmen's* Don Jose? Why would everyone share his murderous/amorous impulses towards Carmen?

In an essay that recounts how she and Kluge became friends after the publication of her critique of *THE OCCASIONAL WORK OF A FEMALE SLAVE*, Helke Sander referred to Kluge's 'anti-drama' as a 'form of kindness'. She openly admits being taken in by his 'charm, his intelligence [...] his wit [...] his ability to correlate unusual facts [...] and by his generosity'.³¹ This did not cause Sander to amend her basic opposition to what she called Kluge's 'patriarchal viewpoint' and she argued that his view was so different from her own, that the two ended up like a pair of his characters in one of his circular question-and-answer scenes, two irreconcilable systems of logic placed face to face.

I find myself in a similar position, without the benefit of having met Kluge, the personality. In my view, Kluge's texts boast the features Sander attributes to Kluge personally – openness, originality, generosity and wit. They constitute a form of 'kindness', an intelligent open-heartedness that encourages viewers and listeners to form thoughts, feelings and conclusions independent of the director's. As the couple in the last sequence of *THE POWER OF EMOTION* shows, murderous endings can be defused; alterity is not so hard to embrace. Their life-saving act points to a lambent psychic and emotional economy in which compassion and empathy have the power to change the course of events, or their historical telling. Their goofy, empty stares into the camera at the end, asking 'what now?' also challenge us to begin the kind of work that they began, a form of critical introjection unavailable in *THE PATRIOT*, a far more hermetic text.

Thus what we might initially read as problems, blind spots, or openly provocative contradictions in Kluge's choices might be considered the 'gifts' Sander describes, left for us to rework. For instance, without declaring it overtly, *THE POWER OF EMOTION* shows that no matter how manipulated they are, emotions – like music – are a source of great pleasure, and that pleasure need not be divorced from insight or critique. *EMOTION's* porousness creates the potential for listeners to take up the project of alternatives and of change, even if it does not dictate their forms. If tragic opera once theatricalised the internalised *Zusammenhänge* Western viewers brought to texts, *THE POWER OF EMOTION* shows how readily they can be blasted open. The modest 'imaginary [unsung] opera'³² that concludes *THE POWER OF EMOTION* offers one such reblasting. As Susan

Leonardi and Rebecca Pope suggested in a feminist context, '[T]he ending that kills the Other, though powerfully privileged and overdetermined, is not the only place of identification [...]. [I]t cannot shut down the possibility of fantasized alternatives'.³³ The power of fantasy, like the power of emotion, is as important to our lived experiences as to the alternatives towards which we work.

Notes

1. Alexander Kluge, *Der Macht der Gefühle* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1984), pp. 170-178.
2. Gertrud Koch, 'Alexander Kluge's Phantom of the Opera', *New German Critique* (no. 49 winter, 1990), pp. 84-85. [Reprinted in this book, ed.]
3. Op 118, no. 3, 1892-1893, one of the composer's last works.
4. Edgar Boehlke, a German television actor, portrays the singer.
5. Alexander Kluge, 'On Opera, Form, and Feelings', *New German Critique* (no. 49 winter, 1990), p. 108.
6. Miriam Hansen, 'Introduction', *New German Critique* (no. 49 winter, 1990), p. 9.
7. See Slavoj Žižek, "'The Wound Is Healed Only by the Spear That Smote You": The Operatic Subject and Its Vicissitudes', in *Opera Through Other Eyes*, ed. David J. Levin (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 177-214.
8. The German 'miracle' benefits from the term's loose connotations of divine benediction, whereas 'recovery' suggests a restorative process, perhaps one that reproduces the fantasy of prelapsarian wholeness – with the help of banks, public policy and culture.
9. Kluge's footage is taken from the state funeral for former Hessian minister Heinz Herbert Karry.
10. Hoger also appears as the matchmaker, as well as the woman on trial for shooting her husband.
11. Alexander Kluge, 'On Film and the Public Sphere', *New German Critique* (no. 24/25, 1981/1982), p. 218, n. 5. [Reprinted in this book, ed.]
12. See his interview with Rainer Lewandowski, *Die Filme von Alexander Kluge* (Hildesheim: Olms Presses, 1980), esp. pp. 30-31.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
14. Peter Lutze, *Alexander Kluge: The Last Modernist* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), p. 86.
15. Kluge, 'On Opera, Form, and Feelings', p. 105.
16. Quoted in Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Boston: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1989), p. 283.
17. Ralph P. Locke, 'Cutthroats and Casbah Dancers, Muezzins and Timeless Sands: Musical Images of the Middle East', in *The Exotic in Western Music*, ed. Jonathan Bellman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), p. 119.
18. Stuart Liebman, 'Interview with Alexander Kluge', *October* (no. 46, 1988), p. 57.
19. The couple that provides this labour takes on some of *Parsifal's* role of redeemer, bringing an ailing older man – Allewisch/Amfortas – back to life. Still, it remains

- curious (especially given Kluge's cynicism about heterosexual romance) that the saviour figure is a heterosexual couple. Moreover, this couple is situated in a Western capitalist framework, even if it is connected to it via an 'alternative within', the black market economy.
20. See Žižek, 'The Wound Is Healed', for a fuller elaboration of this point. Some of my observations are indebted to his analysis of *Parsifal* and other operas.
 21. Kluge, by contrast, reveals its bankruptcy via the empty chalice exposed in the opera house fire.
 22. For a discussion of anti-Semitism in *Parsifal* when the opera was initially performed, see Paul Lindau, 'Parsifal von Richard Wagner', *Kölnische Zeitung* (nos. 208, 210, 212, 29 and 31 July and 2 August 1882), reprinted in vol. 2 of S. Grossmann-Vendrey, ed. *Bayreuth in der deutschen Presse: Dokumentenband* (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse, 1997), pp. 30-40. Referenced in Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Wagner Androgyne: A Study in Interpretation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 346. For more recent discussions, see Jeremy Tambling, *Opera, Ideology, and Film* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987); and Linda and Michael Hutcheon, *Opera: Desire, Disease, Death* (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 1996); in addition to Nattiez.
 23. Syberberg, *Parsifal: Ein Filmessay* (Munich: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1982), pp. 11, 56, and 161. Quoted in Nattiez, *Wagner and Androgyne*, p. 168.
 24. Frederich Nietzsche, 'The Case of Wagner', in *The Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner*, ed. Walter Kaufman (New York: Vintage, 1967), p. 160.
 25. THE POWER OF EMOTION is also a significant progenitor to subsequent work of cultural scholars in affect theory.
 26. Catherine Clément, *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), p. 5.
 27. Kluge, *Der Macht der Gefühle*, p. 176.
 28. Samuel Abel, *Opera in the Flesh: Sexuality in Operatic Performance* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), p. 10.
 29. Some excellent discussions include Susan J. Leonardo and Rebecca Pope, *The Diva's Mouth: Body, Voice, Prima Donna Politics* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996); and Terry Castle, 'In Praise of Brigitte Fassbaender: Reflections on Diva-Worship', in *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera*, ed. Corinne Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 20-58.
 30. Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*, p. 285.
 31. Helke Sander, "'You Can't Always Get What You Want": The Films of Alexander Kluge', *New German Critique* (no. 49, 1990), p. 62.
 32. Kluge created a variety of what he called, after Adorno's proposal in 1964, 'imaginary operas' and 'imaginary opera guides'.
 33. Leonardi and Pope, *The Diva's Mouth*, p. 16.

‘Feelings Can Move Mountains ...’: An Interview with Alexander Kluge on the Film THE POWER OF FEELINGS

Florian Hopf

Florian Hopf: Which feelings are you talking about in the film?

Alexander Kluge: All of them. For example, the film begins with a man screwing in a screw. He says you can only do that with a lot of feeling. If it's screwed in too tight then it will take too much strain, but if it's left too loose then it will fall out and the nut will come off. That's something quite simple: without understanding a word of each other's language, a German mechanic and a Chinese mechanic can agree on whether the screw is screwed in properly or not. How much finesse that calls for is a very important distinction, it requires a faculty for distinguishing things, so to speak; here, the feelings are producers. Now, you can think of plenty of parallel situations: if you use your intellect to try to dance or make sense of music, you won't get very far. When you transfer this screwdriver image to the erotic domain, quite a few men and women could say: I would like the parts of my body to be handled with at least as much care as a screw, I don't want to be handled roughly or with a lack of skill. And so this distinction also applies to the simple feelings: right time, right firmness, right suppleness. You could actually then forget about all the remaining muddle of jealousy, passion, death and murder and reduce everything to these simple questions of labour. That's the stance taken in the film.

FH: A particular scientific line of thought would claim that what you call 'feeling' is basically a genetic predisposition [...].

AK: Let's just say that we have inherited a lot. We've even been endowed with instinctive functions that rumble away under the surface, in the so-called reptilian brain. So we can always operate with the midbrain too and simply lash out. The only thing that sets feelings apart from our whole biological prehistory, from everything that cold-blooded creatures can do better than us anyway, is that they can put things off, they can defer them. As an 81 year-old, I can still revive a feeling I had when I was nine years old. I don't have to act on it at once, I can nurse a hatred without doing anything about it for 31 years. I can never completely shut down my feelings, however, they can't be indefinitely post-

poned, but they can be deferred, they can move internal mountains, so to speak, they can make a big space small or a small space big. A child who feels like a tiger and as tall as the ceiling compared with these objectively bigger grown-ups already does that through his feelings. Feelings are thus tremendous equalising movements that can achieve the impossible.

FH: I was taught to believe that feelings are reflexes, whereas you claim that they are active potentials, an assemblage of tools. Why was I led to believe this?

AK: Feelings are a human dimension that's there to help us get along with each other. For a woman to be sold to a foreign tribe (and for me to get back another woman from the foreign tribe later on, when my own boys need her, since women could only be traded one to one in prehistoric times: they are the earliest commodity), the tribal elders must be able to guarantee this exchange over generations. And these elders must also somehow intervene in the feelings of these women. Feelings thus emerged along with the first commodity society, with sacrifice and the exchange and abduction of women; feelings and sacrifice are built into each other. And this quite subtle faculty for distinguishing things, which animals already possess, is further refined in a particular direction. With every sacrifice, there arises on the side a feeling for how it can be avoided, for how cunning can be exercised, for which exit strategies and subterfuges could be devised, and for how valuable whatever I was sacrificed for must be. Take Agamemnon, who comes to such a terrible end, murdered in the bath by his wife, a crime that must then be avenged by his children: the first sacrifice he makes is Iphigenia, just to get a favourable breeze and to gain an advantage in the battle for Troy. How much subtlety of feeling is connected to this myth of Iphigenia! What was so good about this man that he was prepared to sacrifice his own daughter? You see, it's a truly monstrous exchange, an inversion of all values, a banking and production enterprise that's at work in producing these feelings, which will later give rise to whole societies of feelings. If it weren't for these prehistoric rites of sacrifice, no one today would be prepared to give up their childhood, this pleasant time when I'm allowed to play and pursue my own desires, in exchange for going to school and getting down to serious work. All the blood spilled on the ground of the big, serious feelings – and without them, there would be no pleasure – demands that they not lie, that they be spontaneous, and for them to be spontaneous means, in turn, that they can't be worked on. Do you see the mechanism of repression here? We could work on our feelings the same way we work on everything else, on intellectual matters for instance. You don't become a physicist through sheer resolve and spontaneity; you become one by learning something. A school for feelings could be set up. There are journeys for the cultivation of feelings described in the classics. A

book by Flaubert is called *éducation sentimentale*. After all, we need feelings, this tremendous faculty we have for moving mountains inside ourselves and for bridging different periods of time. I can only imagine a politics that would be strong enough to prevent wars, to nip fascism in the bud rather than defeating it once it has already done its worst, if such a politics had all the feelings at its disposal. If it lacked only one, that would be its Achilles' heel. We must therefore release feelings from their Babylonian captivity. Driven from their homeland, feelings have become traitors. They wander around aimlessly and have acquired a certain blindness which they didn't originally have.

FH: Where does that come from?

AK: Feelings can make distinctions. It is constitutive of human beings and our species that we can distinguish between hot and cold, between what attracts me and what repels me, between what we will gladly watch and what we cannot bear to see, between a shimmering glow and the first face of my parents that I register inside me, between internal and external images – in short, between a thousand things and one. These feelings drive a mass production of faculties for distinguishing things, and such a faculty for telling things apart would never lead to Stalingrad, it would make splitting up no uglier than the onset of infatuation, etc. In practical terms, however, precisely the opposite occurs. Feelings never exercise their faculty for distinguishing things at the right time. Whereas individual feelings never err, all the feelings combined pursue a destructive course of action, as if struck by blindness: a one-sided course that incessantly propels us forwards, in the sense that things always begin wonderfully in act 1 and end woefully in the last act, that 90 per cent of the population is suffering under an illusion in January 1933 and that disappointment, in the form of cities lying in rubble, is likewise experienced at levels of 90 to 100 per cent in 1945. This sequence is quite typical. Something starts beautifully and ends horrifically. That's the way things are likely to go, so to speak, and conforms to our experience. The opposite would be that something begins with hardship before being transformed through labour and steered to a happy ending; that would be the way paradises are built. The fact that we have relatively little experience of this is the core theme that moves me, and we can only gain more experience if the feelings deploy their mass capacity for distinguishing things in such a direction. But instead they are used as the driving force for keeping what exists in place.

I learn from love, so to speak. Those who brought me up, the parents who showed me affection, I show them affection in turn, and now it no longer matters what's hot and what's cold. And how many betrayals were already there in their heads, haunting them as emotional ghosts, and what deficits did my par-

ents' parents have that I could trace all the way down to me! In this way, feelings are predisposed to high-rise construction, as it were: things like patriotism, industrial discipline, but also 'skill', professional ability, are built upon them. I renounce every last trace of childishness in me and become a grown-up. All these high-rise buildings, the kind you see in Frankfurt, are renunciations of paradise. So I have experience in one thing, in high-rise building, and on the other side, as far as I can see, there's simply been less experience invested there. When I use feelings to push myself, whereas they actually contain the faculty for distinguishing things, they're brushed against the grain, they're used as dealers, they're the lubricant, the putty that holds everything together, whereas in reality they could be analysts.

FH: And nowadays it's hard enough for me to distinguish between what I'm feeling and what comes from the head.

AK: I have the impression that, at some stage in the twelfth century, the feelings were massively suppressed in our country, banished with witch trials and terror into an intimate sphere where they're just not talked about. It may be the case that, historically speaking, this happened at a different time; at any rate, the feelings were *disempowered*. It's almost as if a decree went out that, while women and children may have feelings, the important men's business is to be dealt with realistically, through the intellect, or rather, through the false application of the intellect. And what in fact results from this after many centuries is that, in a power plant, an emotional approach is really no longer possible: I can't suddenly operate the tools of a cockpit or a power plant in a playful or libidinous or erotic way.

FH: What's the relationship between our morality and our feelings?

AK: Morality is collective, it's a deep-rooted collective feeling, replete with errors. It belongs to the necessary production of false consciousness: false feelings and correct feelings built together into a high-rise. With morality, I can only ever produce five acts. I have to make use of the cunning of chance and lethargy. Bert Brecht tells a fine story that prompts me to make my next film about feelings. There was a fighter pilot in World War I who had loaded up a cargo of bombs and was meant to drop them over a city. But he had the feeling: it's a beautiful morning and I'm lazy. From sheer lethargy, he dropped the bombs so carelessly and prematurely that they fell on open fields and the inhabitants of the city were spared. 'In Praise of Laziness', the story's called. And this laziness – in reality, he would have to call it lethargy – is a feeling. And I praise this feeling because it hasn't yet been explored. You can't produce a pile of smouldering

corpses through lethargy, but you can create a whole chain of happy endings [...] everyone was lethargic and they got to know each other better.

FH: Are you advocating a new irrationalism?

AK: No. I think that I, as a West German, know a lot about the ruses of our prehistory. At least, I claim to. That's why I'm making these films. When our Celtic predecessors – mine in Halberstadt, for example – came to terms with each other, they only did so via feelings. It was said of one of them: he became angry, and the blood shot out of his head to the height of a mast. Today, we know that blood can't spray out of the head like a fountain and then fall back inside. But I can hear stories about it and show such images in a film. To that extent, there can be no feelings without this form of exaggeration, which rubs up against the intellect. Now, the intellect could always concern itself with these questions. The intellect was contained in paradise as well, and there's no angel standing there to prevent us from entering paradise. Ever since the confusion of languages, which is ongoing, ever since the expulsion from paradise, which is likewise ongoing, each one of us has carried a little piece of paradise inside him, in his mental baggage, that is, a part of him has stayed Celtic, a part of him has remained as indifferent to 'progress' and as geared to emotion as we were in 7000 B.C.

FH: And why doesn't the intellect want to discover the feelings?

AK: Because the intellect has concluded a pact with dietetics. How you feed yourself, how you earn a living, how you adapt to power, out of self-defence. The intellect has learned the art of self-defence. No one thinks except out of necessity.

FH: Would that mean that feelings could be the point of departure for real enlightenment?

AK: Absolutely. But for that to occur, the feelings must learn to be useful for enlightenment. Enlightenment must learn to be useful for the feelings. Feelings, as they are employed at present, defend the false high-rise building, so to speak, that was imposed upon them. They accordingly defend their motives, namely, the fact that feelings are used as motives (driving forces), and against our better knowledge at that: 'I'm feeling uneasy about this, but you just have to keep going, don't you?' Feelings can be compared with proletarians who find themselves confronted with the choice between unemployment and accepting nuclear power plants and the whole mess that helps to produce their unemployment.

Now they are even standing up for rationalisation and denouncing trouble-makers. And this is the status feelings have, they're proletarians inside us, mighty proletarians.

Translated by Robert Savage

Alexander Kluge's Phantom of the Opera

Gertrud Koch

Alexander Kluge attaches much greater importance to music as an autonomous aesthetic element in the overall montage construction than do other directors who work predominantly with the possibilities afforded by montage. Operatic motifs played through many of Kluge's films well before opera itself became a motif. Verdi, Bizet and Wagner, dismantled into minimalised parts, run like a thread of sound fragments through his films, as do popular hits, male choirs, humming, warbling, tangos, marches and other musical material. The musical motifs suffer the same fate at Kluge's hands as do the images and the script: they are a collector's spoils, often stripped down so as to bear the burden of the visual and verbal material. In his printed work, musical motifs tend to crop up in the form of sheet music, scraps of larger scores. Thus, the stories in the *Learning Processes with a Deadly Ending* finish with a Schubert lied printed white on black.¹ It contains the message that researchers have burned into the forests of a distant planet with chemical weapons and can now decipher with a telescope: *l'Aurore*, the first flush of dawn, the hymn of the planet of the same name. For Kluge, musical motifs are not illustrative conveyors of atmosphere; rather, like words and images, they are signs of a social experience that has congealed in the subject.

Spitzname: Carmen

This is the title of a short story in Kluge's book, *The Power of Emotion*. The story concerns Friedrich Karmecke, chief editor of the politics desk of a West German radio station, who finds that he is to be subjected to a security check that will include his private life:

On various separate occasions, Karmecke had in his younger years repeatedly and in different locations engaged in extramarital sexual congress, which this morning he could remember only sleepily. All these experiences together amount to his *Carmen*. It is his experience of *venturing beyond the limits*; the rest is office.²

Carmen as shorthand for exogamy. In his famous essay on Bizet's *Carmen*, Adorno offers an interpretation of what in Kluge's work functions to condense the concrete experience of a definite, if ideal-typical case. Adorno views it as the

universal lapse of sexuality into a natural state, in the course of which sexuality gains its freedom by refusing to conform to societal norms: 'The fate that holds sway there and that holds up nothing human is sexuality itself, in its ante-diluvian and pre-intellectual form'.³ Where Adorno follows in Nietzsche's tracks, Kluge clearly injects practical meaning. The opera, above all its music, which for Adorno still contained something of the history of human beings as natural beings (as he sees being performed in *Carmen*) is translated back in Kluge's short prose piece into the opposition between 'venturing beyond the limits' (*Grenzüberschreitung*) and 'office' (*Amt*). Sexuality becomes 'extramarital intercourse', and the exogamy of the nineteenth century opera world is transformed into an imperial transgression, a 'venturing beyond the limits'.

'*Carmen* is also one of those operas about exogamy, a series which extends from *The Jewess* and *L'Africaine* via *Aida*, *Lamké* and *Madame Butterfly* to Berg's *Lulu* – eulogies to an escape from civilisation'.⁴ Kluge refers to this passage by Adorno in one of his television broadcasts which focuses on presenting the history of opera as a sort of social history of human emotions. In these brief thirty-minute montage films produced for the private networks, Kluge proposes a different way of reading opera history and the stories that operas tell. While 'Spitzname: *Carmen*' summarises the referential presence of opera mythology in the everyday interpretations of its recipients, his opera clips move along a variety of paths to approach the main goal: the disarming of the fifth act, in which the dramaturgy of traditional opera was wont to have the heroine die.

One of these television experiments bears the title *L'Africaine; or, Love with a Fatal Ending*. In it Kluge has Sabine Trooger, the announcer, say the following:

A famous film director, returning from work on location abroad, and at a moment when his life's work seemed threatened, decided to father 110 children in the Third World in order to, as it were, have a life after death. At the low cost levels of those nations. The attempt failed.

This corresponds to a key notion underlying numerous operas of the nineteenth century. Western men become infatuated with exotic foreign women, as the analyst Theodor W. Adorno puts it, seduce them and then return home. The exotic women die of such love. The operas insist on this fatal conclusion. Adorno mentions Halévy's *The Jewess*, Giacomo Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine*, Giacomo Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, Richard Wagner's Kundry [from *Parsifal*], the exotic *Carmen*, the Inca son in *The Power of Fate*, the earth spirit *Lulu*. We would add: the slave Helen in *Quo vadis*, *Gone with the Wind*, *The Ice-cold Angel*, etc., etc.⁵

This sequence, which follows on the heels of the passage from Adorno already cited, moves smoothly from the nineteenth-century opera into twentieth-century film history, specifically from mammoth spectacles via the melodrama to

the French film noir of the 1960s. One of the well-known theses in Adorno and Horkheimer's chapter on the 'Culture Industry' in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* is that Wagner's notion of a *Gesamtkunstwerk* was at once consummated and destroyed by film – and it is this thesis that Kluge invokes here.

Apart from this trajectory, however, Kluge believes that opera and film correspond to different needs: whereas opera invokes the Feeling for irreparable tragedy, the majority of films imagine themselves obliged to offer a happy ending. In both cases, love gets left somewhere on the wayside. Kluge by no means accepts the compulsion to closure which links opera with narrative film in dramaturgical terms. As in his stories and films, Kluge approaches opera by means of a consistent policy of minimalisation and atomisation. He selects details from the plot or the music and attempts to radicalise their intrinsic logic to such a point that they ultimately explode the overall architecture of the closed artwork.

He thus takes stock of *Madame Butterfly*, a colonialist drama, by means of images of waiting, images that culminate for Madame Butterfly in her death. Using black-and-white footage – with details from Japanese gardens which he projects onto a stage in an empty theatre – he stresses precisely the mythologised signs of an essentialised, Western 'Japan': the bamboo cane, the graphic lines of twigs, Mount Fuji, etc. Yet at the same time, this limited quality of the signs implies the death of the person: exoticism as a fantasy which is carefully sheltered from real life – a life of appearances.

Kluge sums up the items in his 'imaginary guide to the opera' in a manner reminiscent of ideology critique, though he gives them a different direction: rather than unmasking mythologies as delusions, he assumes the attitude of a quasi-naïve observer. The latter poses tough questions as to the probability of that which opera's illusionary space evokes. Thus Kluge allows his imagination free rein with respect to the protagonists' motivations: Why does all action at a particular juncture in an opera appear to be connected to a powerfully effective destiny? Or what are the blindspots in the actors' minds and motives which result in their becoming unpredictable sexual offenders at the height of enlightened civil society?

A ten-page text in *The Power of Emotion* entitled 'The Police Chief is Dead...' is undoubtedly the most bizarre of Kluge's supplemented opera plots. In this text, he narrates Scarpia's murder by Tosca from a wide variety of perspectives which, on the one hand, trace the inevitability of his death with painstaking attention to detail and, on the other, create an altogether unusual picture of Police Chief Scarpia. Kluge's interpretation takes as its leitmotif the musical motif that Puccini had assigned to the police chief's appearance:

Three thunderous harmonies from the orchestra (in B-major, A-major and E-major, loud, almost brutal) form the leitmotif for the blackguard Scarpia, somewhat pre-

emptying the violent action to follow. (The conductor Ferenc Fricsay believed he could recognise in them the 'blinding glare of the midday sun in Rome'.)⁶

Kluge's passage on 'Scarpia as male body' seems to me significant with respect to the qualities and idiosyncrasies of Kluge's oeuvre. He may admittedly share the opinion that opera concerns itself with emotive states and worlds that have been suppressed by civilisation and which simultaneously create and express 'discontent in culture'; yet in the strictest sense he would reject the antipodal division of nature and history, of drives and culture. Allow me to quote at somewhat greater length from this passage, on which I shall later elaborate. The text begins with a description of Scarpia's physical condition before getting up in the morning, namely that he sullenly and unwillingly finds himself faced by the fact that on this particular morning his erect penis confronts him as if it were something foreign and troublesome, 'but he cannot cut it off in the same way that he can close one of his security departments or give or forget orders to subordinates'.⁷ In order to extricate himself from the predicament he thinks of blackmailing Tosca, clearly not with any pornographic intent but so as to reestablish the harmony between himself and his own social context by thinking of the social degradation of this divine singer. 'The next day', Kluge's text returns to the passage in the opera:

The next day, however, what he with good reason had denied himself gets in his way once he has Tosca locked in his official chambers and talks to her insistently, which brings him in physical proximity to her. She kneels before him so that he, circling around her in this divine posture, ends up behind her back [...]. He shoves her slightly so that she falls forward into a position the spies had occasionally embroidered upon in their reports and which he, had his trousers been unbuttoned in the meanwhile and had she remained still, could have exploited in a primordial manner as if he were a goat or a hare, or a French soldier during a lull in the fighting and so forth. Instead, the penis stuck in his trousers becomes smeared at the tip with a fluid – not sperm and not urine, rather a lubricant; but it fails to make anything glide through the silk trousers, which are difficult to open, so that Scarpia, annoyed with this brazen autonomy, no longer feels the diva's magic and loses his desire as if it miscarried. As a consequence, he proceeds with the blackmail, this deceitful seduction – not because he hopes to gain some erotic advantage over the diva, but rather in order to get his mind to prevail, which, since the early morning, had been at odds with his penis.⁸

What is remarkable in this fantasy which supplements the established plot of the opera is the way the description is almost scientific, drawing its comic effect from the familiar device of the failure of mechanical processes. With an eye trained in experimentation in the natural sciences, the painstaking method of the empirical description of physical-material processes in the case of this 'male

body' corresponds to a certain deictic tendency in Kluge's writings, an inclination to use exemplary demonstration which is depicted and/or surfaces in his films as the commentator's voice, as intertitles, as statements by experts and other devices. The assertion implicit in the opera, that it is concerned with passions and all its various forms, that Scarpia desires Tosca, the divine singer, and that the opera in turn claims that she is desirable – it is this precondition which allows opera dramaturgy to switch on 'a power plant of emotions' that Kluge subjects to a dialectical critique. He takes the assertion that opera has to do with passions seriously in order to then, in a second step, define that passion in terms of its sexual core, quite in keeping with Adorno's intentions. Where he does so, however, he also shows – not without a mocking undertone – that the passion opera demands is always one that has been deprived of precisely this sexual core. Scarpia's desire for Tosca is the sheer will to power: the chief of police blackmails the divine diva; sexuality only disturbed him in the act. At the moment, however, when the passion is robbed of its sexual core, it collapses by itself. Hence Kluge summarises:

This is how he died, without having the original reason at his disposal that outside observers would have ascribed to his actions. Even without Tosca's knife, he would not have reached his objective in the affair. In fact, it was never actually *his* objective, rather there were *objectives* in the *affair* that disintegrated into different situations as soon as they neared practical realisation. He had already felt the catastrophe coming that morning. If he hadn't died in this adventure, he would have disgraced himself with impotence.⁹

Yet Kluge does not limit himself to reconstructing and supplementing the internal mechanisms of external, theatrical events from the perspective of an omniscient observer and demiurge: he also invents unrealised possibilities for the characters involved in the action. Opera thus becomes for him a pile of ruins left by the fatalistic course of the story, which he sets out to rearrange. Once exploded into atomised details – ruins – the power of fate dissipates, as does the efficacy of any narrative closure. He can now hunt for ways-out and give recommendations. Like the *deus ex machina*, whose function in Baroque opera was to ensure with pleasing regularity that the prescribed good and harmonic end was after all achieved, so Kluge too descends upon the smashed remnants of the opera in order to expose as misdirected determinism the now openly visible mechanism as it runs on empty.

It is above all the short form of the television operas that is best suited to such atomised portrayal, and Kluge groups these miniatures ironically under the heading of an 'imaginary guide to the opera':

According to [this guide], a modern opera now, at the end of the twentieth century, would not consist of an imitation of the great opera repertoires. The search for the

needle in *The Marriage of Figaro* – and the desperation at not finding it – suffices as a sketch for opera material. The sum of such material could fill many evenings: yet each single sketch could be as short as the *moments musicaux*. It is enough for such a moment to ‘flare up’. There is no need for a temporal build-up.¹⁰

The explosive elements which Kluge extricates from the operas are clearly not those of an unbound sexus, of natural images of a utopia of reconciliation: the cover of *The Power of Emotion* shows a single photograph of an air-force squadron flying in combat formation, and it is no coincidence that the volume not only contains the script of an opera film of the same title but a wealth of critical military writings as well. In his brief preface, the writer and film-maker sketches his project:

The power of fate: the name of an opera which would fit almost all operas. But it remains doubtful whether there really is such a thing as fate. Perhaps there are only a hundred thousand different causes which are *called* fate after the event [...].

My last film was entitled THE POWER OF EMOTION. There *really* is such a power, and there are also *real* emotions.

War poses the greatest challenge to emotions. And incidentally it comprises the greatest challenge facing all power-based projects for such a time as it can prove that no power can hold it in check; and historically hitherto no power has been able to arrest it. I *wish* to tell stories of why emotions are not powerless.¹¹

Kluge thus posits emotions as diametrically opposed to war, yet at the same time, this initial comment on the power of emotion is so clearly embedded in the political discourse of West Germany that the abstract opposition is mediated through particular associations. ‘Fate’: the name used in the public or semi-public consciousness above all to describe war – instead of investigating the *causes* for war, one preferred to invoke the power of fate that manifested itself in war. When Kluge deploys the formula of the necessary ‘disarmament of the fifth act’, this only makes sense against the background of such a covert cross-connection which forges a link between the poles of emotion and war, despite their abstract juxtaposition. Opera is highly suspect in Kluge’s eyes because it touches on the fact that the greatest passions – which can become that fate which decides life and death – can, in the form of a mass psychosis, also become the basis for crusades of annihilation, just as in the shape of an individual psychosis they can link sexual murder with death out of love. The clinical descriptions Kluge gives of the sexual processes that comprise the explosive core of emotions are not just a means of ironic distantiation, a travesty of language, but also the ex-

pression of a deep-seated fear, an overwhelming distrust of the power of seduction, a power that must be disarmed.

Construing fate as ineluctable, as metaphysically preordained, denies the possibility of freely determined action. Interestingly enough, at this juncture Kluge swerves away from Adorno towards Nietzsche. To return once more to the name of Carmen: with regard to Bizet's opera, Adorno saw the very degeneration to a natural state as the redemption of sexuality, and Carmen is compelled to follow that sexuality as if it were a categorical imperative, thus passing into the realm of freedom: 'Her song', Adorno writes, 'is no song of fate, but the subject's answer to fate [...]'.¹²

Kluge by no means shares the figure of redemptive critique which Adorno develops in his analysis of Bizet's *Carmen*. Rather, he seems to be indebted to that remark of Nietzsche's which Adorno cites critically when averring that its author remained 'entrenched' in 'fatalism': 'Love, whose methods are those of war and which is founded upon the deadly hatred between the sexes!'¹³ For Kluge, this is what opera is about; and it is at this that he levels his critique. The intertwining of emotions and war becomes the decisive metaphor on whose wings a whole spectrum of associations is borne into battle. Kluge's critique of opera is at heart a critique of Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*, including his mystification of death dressed up as metaphysics.

For Kluge, combatting the power of fate means above all exposing the causes that hide behind its mighty, flowing flag. Of what did Scarpia really die? Fate for Kluge is nothing but the jamming together of motives that remain opaque, that mutually paralyse each other and hence explode in a fatal ending. Thus, in opera the deaths are both utterly determined and well-founded and yet completely unfounded, for the characters do not see through their own paradoxes. What they lack is a practical sense, a shot of pragmatism with which they could find a way out. It would be wrong, however, to suggest that Kluge's opera performances could be summed up in the simplistic terms of ideology critique. The drafts, with their multiperspectival solutions, their theatrical-scenic rehearsal of action (which sometimes takes the form of court proceedings) implicitly contain a stubborn, idiosyncratic utopian core: the wish to reverse the course of action, to give in to the child's impulse to save Punch from being arrested by shouting out a warning to him. Kluge's film aesthetics reveal with exceptional clarity a certain compulsion to repeat; there is hardly a motif that does not crop up again in some other situation, that is not tried out, rehearsed once more, rearranged and illuminated anew by different contexts. If one takes this aesthetic, formal moment seriously, one can interpret it as the exact counter-programme to *opera seria* – the serial opera which disperses its motifs in a wealth of situational possibilities.

At first sight, such an antipathetic agenda would appear to be completely contrary to the nature of opera. For it is no coincidence that opera – which, if it is robbed of its pathos by irony, immediately flips over into the comical – has become the favourite object of all travesties and impersonators. What is the reason for Kluge's vehement attack on opera's blind belief, its alliance with death? I have already briefly outlined that Kluge's rejection of the pathos of fate and passion stems from social experiences that cannot be seen in isolation from German history. Kluge is the representative of an interim generation who had their childhood under National Socialism and their intellectual socialisation in the Federal Republic. For this generation, the experience of chains of events – in which culpable action was both lived through and whitewashed – as fateful involvement would seem to be a crucial issue. The wish to redress acts of injustice must have been as overpowering as the diffuse experiences of omnipotence and impotence in the war. The endless chain of attempts to bring the dead of opera dramatics back to life (the film, *THE POWER OF EMOTION*, also devotes its last section to the effort to resuscitate a murder victim) contains a factual utopian core: namely, the non-acceptance of death.

Kluge's compulsion to represent the really major emotions as precisely those which border on deceit takes on a burlesque form in his television opera *The First 140 Bars of the 'Valkyrie'*. In an interview, Kluge doggedly questions conductor Michael Gielen on the above 140 bars of the 'Valkyrie'. In the course of his musicological analysis, and at Kluge's request, Gielen also goes into the practice of Wagner performances and the enormous technical difficulties the musicians have playing this part of the score. By dint of his intransigent questioning, Kluge finally finds out that some parts are so difficult that the musicians resort to a practical aid – they simply and quite systematically leave some of the passages out, reducing the Wagnerian opulence to a humanly manageable measure. While already in the 1950s, Wieland Wagner's productions in Bayreuth undertook an immanent deconstruction of Wagner's mythology by concentrating the material and reducing it to the transparency of the musical structures, Kluge in his minimalistic Wagner critique goes one step further: he attempts to show places in the score itself that oppose human practice.

Kluge's small encyclopedia of opera, his imaginary guide to the opera, offers a critique of the consequences the nineteenth century has for the twentieth, undertaken in the spirit of the eighteenth century: enlightenment as the utopian conception of forms of life and relationships in which emotions do not have a fatal ending, but are rather acted out and commented on in playful scenarios. This *éducation sentimentale*, however, is conceivable in the Federal Republic only as a kind of re-education. The question as to how life will continue cannot be contemplated without at the same time asking how life could be organised differently: life as interconnected action itself becomes a utopia. This form of

thought incorporates an affirmative trait inherent in any affirmation of life as a programme. Yet Kluge's pragmatic utopianism is relativised vis-à-vis such apologetic trends by the historical foil against which it is written – the mass murder of millions in the twentieth century. Against this backdrop, the yearning for death in great opera appears hardly less apologetic than the yearning for a liveable life. In view of the paradoxes of reality, Kluge becomes a utopian gambler with the irreversibility of time: from 'once upon a time' to 'if only I had [...]!'

Notes

1. Alexander Kluge, *Lernprozesse mit tödlichem Ausgang* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973), last page (n.p.).
2. Alexander Kluge, *Die Macht der Gefühle* (Frankfurt: Zweitausendeins, 1984), p. 346.
3. Theodor W. Adorno, 'Fantasia sopra *Carmen*', *Gesammelte Schriften* vol. 16 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1978), p. 305.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 299.
5. Alexander Kluge, 'Ein imaginärer Opernführer', *Jahrbuch der Hamburgischen Staatsoper 1984-1988* (Hamburg: Intendanz der Hamburgischen Staatsoper, 1988), p. 15.
6. Kluge, *Die Macht der Gefühle*, p. 446.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 450.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 451.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 451 ff.
10. Kluge, 'Ein imaginärer Opernführer', p. 20.
11. Kluge, *Die Macht der Gefühle*, preface (n.p.).
12. Adorno, 'Fantasia sopra *Carmen*', p. 303.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 305.

Translated by Jeremy Gaines



21. GERMANY IN AUTUMN (1978)



22. GERMANY IN AUTUMN (1978)



23. THE PATRIOT (1979)



24. THE PATRIOT (1979)



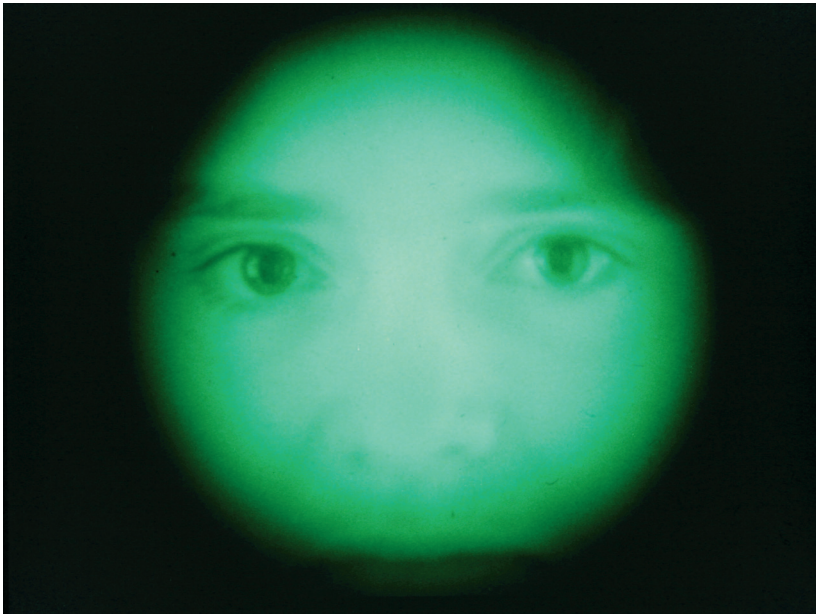
25. THE CANDIDATE (1980)



26. WAR AND PEACE (1982)



27. THE POWER OF EMOTION (1983)



28. THE POWER OF EMOTION (1983)



29. THE ASSAULT OF THE PRESENT ON THE REST OF TIME (1985)



30. THE ASSAULT OF THE PRESENT ON THE REST OF TIME (1985)



31. *'The African Woman or Love with a Deadly Finale'* (1988)



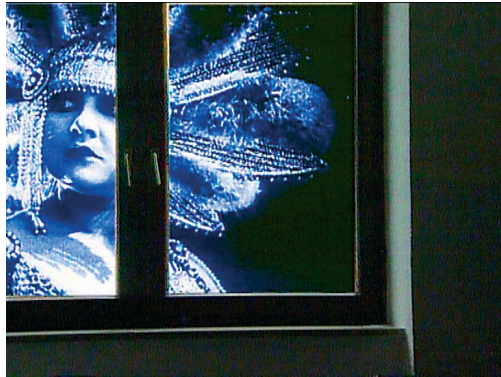
32. *'The Revenge of the Betrayed Bride'* (1994)



33. *'The Revenge of the Betrayed Bride'* (1994)



34. 'Queen of Hearts on Judgement Day' (1995)



35. 'The Belshazzar Project' (1995)



36. 'Stop, Stranger, and Read' (1996)



37. *'High on Work'* (1997)



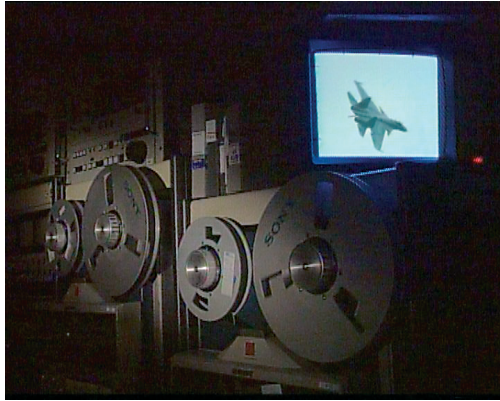
38. *'Happy Easter'* (1998)



39. *'The Mute Girl of Portici'* (1998)



40. 'The Sahara Became Swampland' (2000)



41. 'Attention-Total Loss!' (2001)



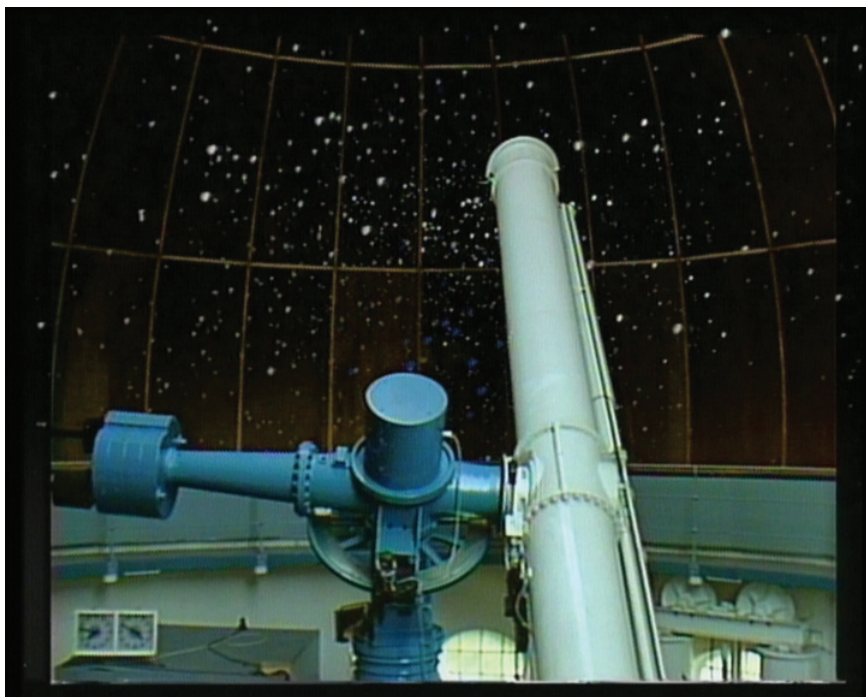
42. 'What is War?'(2002)



43. 'Love Makes You Perceptive!' (2007)



44. 'The Magical World of Evolution' (2007)



45. NEWS FROM IDEOLOGICAL ANTIQUITY-MARX, EISENSTEIN, CAPITAL (2008)

Storytelling and Politics

An Analytic Storyteller in the Course of Time

Andreas Huyssen

All real beauty is analytic.

Edgar Allan Poe

We do not have too much reason and too little soul; we rather have too little reason in matters of the soul.

Robert Musil

In a *Spiegel* review of Kluge's 1977 *Neue Geschichten* (*New Stories*), his most voluminous and ambitious collection of stories to date, Hans Magnus Enzensberger said something that ten years later still has the ring of truth: 'Among well-known German authors Kluge is the least well-known'.¹ Least well-known in this case means well-known, but not widely read. It seems that Kluge's unique versatility as film-maker and film politician, social theorist and storyteller has hampered rather than enhanced the reception of his literary works. Many people will have seen one or the other of Kluge's many films, and there is a lively and growing debate about formal and political aspects of his film-making. For the past fifteen years, his theoretical works, coauthored with Oskar Negt, have played an important role in the German discourse of social and cultural theory. But comparatively little serious work has been done on his storytelling.² Many of the early reviews of his stories betrayed, more than anything else, the perplexity and helplessness of the critical establishment, and there seems to be a shared assumption that Kluge's 'primary' medium is cinema. Surely, the resistance to Kluge's literary texts has something to do with the ways in which these texts consistently and programmatically disappoint readers' expectations. But it also reflects the simple fact that even people interested in contemporary cultural production are more likely to submit themselves to the demands of a ninety-minute Kluge film than to spend several days working through hundreds of pages of seemingly unconnected, discontinuous stories which systematically prevent reader identification and frustrate the pleasures of literariness. Despite the studied simplicity of style, the demands Kluge's stories make on the reader are no less intense than those his films make on their spectator. It is not only that Kluge's filmic or literary texts resemble construction sites, as has often been said. The very structure of his writing is designed to transform the reader's

head into a construction site. Occasional resistance to such a demand is understandable and cannot be blamed only on the insidious impact of consumer culture and its ready-made commodities.

The basic paradox and difficulty of these texts by Kluge is that they rely on knowledges, abilities and desires which, according to his own theoretical analyses of contemporary mass media culture, are on the wane because of the pervasive growth during the period of late capitalism of what he and Negt describe in *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung* (*The Public Sphere and Experience*) as the public spheres of production. But even if the reader's ability to produce new social experience is not blocked, even if the reader brings along enough basic knowledge of political economy, social theory and psychoanalysis to decipher Kluge's stenographic, dialectical constructions of aesthetic image and theoretical concept, the first reaction to the labyrinths of Kluge's story collections, particularly those published during the 1970s, is likely to be frustration and irritation. All traditional notions of narration – such as plot, character, action – are suspended, and one has great difficulty orienting oneself. The stories move in a very fast, shorthand style, and the figures are often just as much in a hurry, heading into either dead ends or disaster. Since authorial commentary is absent and endings often remain inconclusive, the reader never knows whether or with what to identify, which is, of course, exactly what Kluge intends. Many stories focus on events and situations in the lives of individuals, but instead of traditional heroes or modernist anti-heroes, Kluge offers what looks at first sight like narrative chaos, a series of unrelated accounts of events as one might find them on the local news page of the daily paper.

Finally, the fact that Kluge is both acknowledged as a major contemporary writer and ignored results from the density and consistency of his literary project, which was never out of touch with German social and cultural reality, yet never in tune with major literary developments in post-war Germany. His stubborn consistency and independence from the mood swings of the literary scene cost him readers even as it established his reputation as a writer. Still, it is understandable that Kluge was primarily thought of as a film-maker, rather than a writer. While many of his films were prizewinners from early on, his literary reputation was officially acknowledged only relatively late, with the Fontane prize in 1979 and, more importantly, the Kleist prize in 1985.

Reading Kluge's stories produces strange effects. Given their sheer number and the shortness of many of them, it is inevitable that the reader will forget many very fast. But eventually one feels the cumulative impact of his kind of storytelling, which operates on a paradigmatic rather than a syntagmatic level. And then there emerge those stories that begin to work in one's head. The gaps and fissures left by Kluge's minimalist narrative strategy beg to be filled in. The reader is hooked.

Even if not all of the stories are successful as stories, they nevertheless provide an immense reservoir of aesthetic, political and theoretical insight that has yet to be fully tapped. In film circles, especially in Germany, Kluge is and has always been a mythical figure. Perhaps now that the celebrated New German Cinema appears to be moribund (if not already dead), and German literature has lapsed into the privatism of such prophetic or apocalyptic ruminations as characterise the later works of Handke and Bernhard, the time has come to reassess the work of Kluge as a whole and to make it effective for contemporary cultural discourse. The unique mix of film, literature and theory, image, trope and concept certainly makes Kluge's overall project one of the most interesting around: Kluge as owl of Minerva for a post-Hegelian, post-avant-gardist dusk in which the classical divisions between philosophy and art, theory and aesthetic practice, film and literature have been, at least tentatively, abandoned, but in which the media-specific differences between film, literature and theory are not elided to produce that proverbial night in which all cows are gray.

One way of approaching Kluge's literary oeuvre is to position it in relation to some of the major literary trends in post-war Germany, especially the documentarism of the 1960s and the literature of the so-called new subjectivity of the 1970s. West German literature was still under the sway of absurdism and still relished timeless parables of totalitarianism (Dürrenmatt, Frisch, Walser, et al.) when Kluge made his literary debut in 1962 with a collection of stories which, because of their concrete imagination and the merciless precision of their apparently documentary detail, puzzled most of their readers. These *Lebensläufe* (*Curricula Vitae*), life stories of mainly middle- and upper-class Germans during and after the Third Reich (victimisers, fellow travellers, victims), read like a series of short-circuited and condensed anti-*Bildungsromane*. If the *Bildungsroman* – whose invariable focus was the spiritual or educational trajectory of its hero's life – functioned in German literature as a textual machine in which and through which bourgeois subjectivity constituted itself in history, then Kluge's stories matter-of-factly demonstrate how that subjectivity has been stunted and mutilated under the impact of modernisation in general, and fascism in particular. From the very beginning of his literary experiments, Kluge rethinks the parameters and functions of subjectivity rather than abandoning it altogether. He writes stories in which the subjective dimension has been overlaid by anonymous structures, structures of discourse as much as of social behaviour.

Already in this first volume of stories, the impact of Frankfurt School theory on Kluge makes its aesthetic and political mark. Kluge takes Adorno's observations about the waning of subjectivity since the liberal age and translates them into new literary form. But he does it differently from classical modernists such as Thomas Mann, Kafka, Rilke, or Benn, who expressed the loss of subjectivity, alienation and reification in a highly individualised and therefore always recog-

nisable, 'personal' style. There is no trace of lament or mourning, no decrying of self-alienation in Kluge, as there is in so many modernist narratives. Nor does Kluge bear comparison with Samuel Beckett, who, in Adorno's aesthetic thought, had become a gauge for measuring the objective decay of subjectivity in a post-Auschwitz age. Kluge does not have a style *qua* individual, authorial language. Rather, he mimics the frozen languages of factual reportage and bureaucracy, of the protocol, the document, the official letter, the legal deposition, the chronicle, and so forth, and modifies them for his purposes, often through methods of logical extrapolation, ironic distance, satire, or humour. His purpose is always to engage the reader in the project of a new kind of enlightenment, one that has worked through the catastrophic failures of its own tradition and that is concerned not only with the fate of human rationality, but also with the historical determinations of the senses, perceptions and emotions. Kluge's whole project, whether in film, theory, or literature, questions the classical oppositions between the rational and the irrational, the analytic and the emotional, the real and the unreal, and it attempts to unravel their dialectical reversals and mutual, often opaque, implications.

From a literary point of view, a number of questions pose themselves to Kluge, who is not only steeped in Adorno's modernist aesthetic, but also attempts to draw conclusions from Benjamin's reflections on storytelling, memory and experience. What can the storyteller do once reality evades representation and most representations of reality are no more than simulacra? How do the modern media affect memory? How does the author construct the text/reader relationship in an age of atrophied experience? How does one narrate when reality has become functional, as Brecht already pointed out when he suggested that a simple representation of reality, say a photograph of the Krupp works, no longer grasps that reality? Indeed, Kluge's method of storytelling is very Brechtian. With Brecht he shares the technique of the estranging glance, the method of historicisation and the notion of the social *gest* as it manifests itself in language, attitudes and behaviour. One of Kluge's basic narrative strategies, in an age in which traditional narration is no longer adequate to capture the increasingly complex and abstract structures of contemporary reality, is to render the various language games that constitute social and political reality recognisable as such, to unfold their implications for domination and repression, and to explore their potential for protest and resistance. His is a mode of writing in which these languages seem to swallow up the subjectivity of the individuals whose lives are being narrated by an author who is present not as voice, but in bricolage, in a method of constructing layers of discourse, of slipping in and out of the discursive mind sets of the figures described.

It is as if modernisation speaks itself as a machinery of discourses in whose grids individual subjectivities are simultaneously constituted and imprisoned,

even stunted and mutilated. All of the discourses Kluge cites have their own history, their traditions, their genealogy, and many of them are related to the history of German bureaucracy and the Prussian State: the police, the judiciary, the educational system. In Foucault's terms, it is the German archive, its structures and its histories, which Kluge draws on and activates in his storytelling. But if in Foucault subjects are entirely produced by the archive, a process which actually tends to erase subjectivity altogether, Kluge's stories spin themselves out of the residues of subjectivity, distorted subjectivity, stunted subjectivity, subjectivities which can never be separated from the objective determinations of the archive, but which are nevertheless not identical to them. Taken together, Kluge said,³ his *Lebensläufe* pose the question of tradition and make up a sad story (*eine traurige Geschichte*). *Story* here should be taken in the double sense of tale and history, the history of a people whose language and culture is German, and who share a tradition which, according to Kluge, has always excelled in producing catastrophes: from the mythic tragedy of the Nibelungen via the peasant wars of the early sixteenth century to the winter battle of Stalingrad, arguably the decisive turning point of World War II and certainly one of its most stubborn myths. Where Foucault, as historian and scientist, isolates the structures of the various discourses that make up the archive, Kluge, as storyteller in a structuralist age, translates the archive back into individual life stories or, rather, shows how the archive permeates individual modes of speech, behaviour and action. Thus *Lebensläufe* provides a paradigm for his storytelling which will later be expanded and elaborated, but never fundamentally changed or abandoned.

One of the stories from *Lebensläufe*, the story of Anita G., served as the basis for Kluge's first full-length feature film, *YESTERDAY GIRL*. When this film premiered in 1966, West Germany was in the throes of a fascination with the documentary, which *Lebensläufe* and Kluge's subsequent painstaking documentary reconstruction of the battle of Stalingrad – entitled *Schlachtbeschreibung* (*The Battle*, first version 1964) – had anticipated some years earlier. But the reception of Kluge's work did not benefit from this literary new wave, represented primarily by the theatre (Hochhuth, Kipphardt, Peter Weiss) and by various attempts to rekindle the Weimar tradition of a working-class literature. More importantly, perhaps, Kluge was already beyond certain aesthetic and political propositions on which much of the documentary wave was based. For instance, he did not make a categorical distinction between fiction and document, as so many of the documentarists did. He did not believe in the myth of the real, the myth of authenticity, which the document suggested to many at that time. He was sceptical of the claim that the document was closer to reality than to fiction, that only real documents could serve as the basis for a new realism, for a reinvigorated effectiveness of literature in the public sphere. Already in his first text he

had liberally mixed documentation and invention, stating laconically in the foreword that his *Lebensläufe* were partly invented, partly not. The notion of an invented document is no contradiction in terms for an author who is interested in the structure and paradigms of documentary discourses rather than in their claims to empirical truth or factual accuracy. Thus many of Kluge's stories read like documentary texts, even if they are totally fictional: see, for example, his viciously satirical science fiction tales in *Lernprozesse mit tödlichem Ausgang* (*Learning Processes with Deadly Consequences*, 1973), in which capitalism races through space in a state of permanent civil war, leaping from one galactic system to the next, always in search of raw materials, labour power and the maximisation of profit.

In retrospect, I would claim that with very few exceptions – Peter Weiss's *Investigation* among them – Kluge's best documentary writing has more to offer aesthetically and politically than most of the documentarism of the 1960s. The reason for this is quite simple. Much of 1960s documentarism treated literature and the stage as moral institutions designed to provide enlightenment. The Schillerian dramaturgy of Rolf Hochhuth's plays (e.g. *The Deputy*) may serve as the most obvious example of this trend, which, at least implicitly, took the structures of a traditional bourgeois public sphere for granted. Kluge's writing in turn operated on a level of aesthetic reflection and analytic savvy that had learned its lessons from the experiments of the Weimar avant-garde, especially Brecht and the montage tradition. His project was also deeply influenced by the thought of both Benjamin and Adorno.⁴ It took several more books and a number of films to reveal that, among contemporary German writers and artists, Kluge is perhaps the most important and creative heir to those still vibrant traditions. If one examines Kluge's literary and theoretical positions, one sees how the well-known dichotomies – Brecht vs. Adorno, Adorno vs. Benjamin, or political writing vs. high modernism, mass culture as tool of domination vs. media as agents of emancipation – are taken apart in his writing practice and give way to methods of remixing, constructing and collaging that set those well-known positions productively back into motion. Of course, what I am here claiming for Kluge's storytelling is equally true for his film-making and his theoretical analyses of the public sphere, experience and the history of labour power, the project of his and Oskar Negt's last gigantic cooperative venture, *Geschichte und Eigensinn* (*History and Obstinacy*).

To return to the German literary context of Kluge's writing: it is no surprise that the 1968 radical student attack on all forms of art and literature as 'bourgeois culture' put Kluge and other *Autorenfilmer* on the defensive. He was not willing simply to dump his project of developing and nurturing a New German Cinema both as film-maker and film politician, nor was he willing to embrace the abstract choice between literature and politics, to abandon literature for pol-

itics as the radical rhetoric of the times demanded. His response to the student movement's challenge to art, literature and film was articulated in the film *ARTISTS UNDER THE BIG TOP: PERPLEXED*, a complex reflection on the crisis of art as institution in a historical pressure cooker. For a while, then, Kluge withdrew into his work at the Institut für Filmgestaltung in Ulm, where he began to develop a project of science-fiction films, a kind of 'flight from reality', as he himself described it later on. But it was also in those years that he deepened his understanding of social theory and political economy in the first cooperative work with Negt, published in 1972 as *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*. One year later he published his second major collection of stories, *Lernprozesse mit tödlichem Ausgang* (1973), which reflects his modified theoretical outlook. If the Stalingrad book was primarily concerned with the question of the organisation of a disaster, *Lernprozesse* picks up on the model of *Lebensläufe*, except that it now presents life histories in their relation to the sphere of capitalist production. The principles of industrial production, as analysed by Marxism, are shown to determine not just the sphere of production in the narrow sense, but also the social production of emotional experience, social cooperation, love and death, crime and justice, morality and personal relations. Kluge writes stories about learning processes that result in death, with the obvious hope that a different type of learning can be realised by the reader. He tells of events and situations whose meaning is somehow not accessible to the participants. The learning processes described take place in various areas of social life: industrial labour, leisure time, organised crime, personal relations and, finally, the extrapolated development of imperialism after the nuclear holocaust – a science-fiction story as only Kluge could have written it. All of these learning processes end badly because they invariably consist of fragmentary or partial actions which cannot be meaningfully connected; they are based on false exclusions, abstract divisions, forced separations; their protagonists are intensely in search of an overarching meaning of life, which is always missed and perhaps forever elusive. What Kluge calls 'hunger for meaning' (*Hunger nach Sinn*) is the unifying element in all of these stories, but the social situation in the twentieth century and beyond is characterised by *Sinnentzug*, a withdrawal of meaning.⁵ In the foreword, Kluge writes: 'Withdrawal of meaning. A social situation in which the collective life programme of human beings falls apart faster than new life programmes can be produced'.⁶

When Kluge published these stories in 1973, German literature had just recovered from the 1968 assault on its legitimacy and begun its ambivalent journey into what came to be called 'the new subjectivity' or 'new inwardness' (*neue Innerlichkeit*). Again Kluge was and was not part of this literary direction. Since he had never bought into the latent objectivism of the documentary and political waves, he did not need to rediscover the problem of subjectivity, which from

early on had been central to his literary and aesthetic investigations. The promises of immediacy and authenticity – whether in the form of the document or the personal, the emotional, the subjective – had no appeal for him. From Kluge's perspective, the enthusiasm with which the new subjectivity was embraced had to be read as yet another expression of the indomitable desire for meaning. And the learning processes initiated by this literary reaction against the objectivism of the previous years were all too often based on the same sorts of exclusions and oppositions his own writing was designed to question. Ironically, while some critics had taken *Lebensläufe* to task for not being documentary enough, for focusing on individual lives and bourgeois individuals, in the 1970s Kluge was criticised for not being subjective enough, for hiding in his texts, for not coping adequately with the problem of subjectivity, either his own or that of his figures.

I suspect that either these specific critiques or the general cultural climate that nurtured subjective expression and reflections on subjectivity led Kluge to insert his own authorial self more forcefully into his later texts. Certainly there are signs of this in Kluge's trilogy from the late 1970s. Kluge's own obsessions – the obsession with Stalingrad and military strategy, the obsession with his own experience of aerial bombardment, the obsession with the functional and the technocratic and the obsession with the dead of history – come more to the fore than ever in his most recent collection of stories, the *Neue Geschichten, Hefte 1-18: 'Unheimlichkeit der Zeit'* (1977), as well as in one of his most important and most widely discussed films of those years, *DIE PATRIOTIN/THE FEMALE PATRIOT*. The theoretical centrepiece of the trilogy is *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, written with Negt over the space of three years and published in 1981.

It would be futile to try to describe, in toto, the *Neue Geschichten*. They are too diverse, too heterogeneous to be captured in a coherent description. There are 149 stories, some shorter, some longer, sometimes narrated in organised sequences, sometimes not. Some of the eighteen notebooks have titles ('Images from My Home Town', 'Inside the Brain of the Metropolis'), most do not. Illustrations are liberally interspersed: photos, including family snapshots, graphics, drawings, sketches, maps, musical scores, paintings, and so forth, but their relation to the text often remains opaque.⁷ The stories focus on administered human life during the Third Reich and the war, in the Federal Republic, in the German Democratic Republic. They are always precise and obsessed with quantifiable detail, but they also remain fragmentary and strangely decentred. In opposition to the homogenising stories fabricated in the public media, Kluge focuses on the particular without immediately making it representative of something other than itself. But he does this in such a way that the particular, the non-identical is not paralysed in isolation, not cut off from the larger context in which it is embedded. On the contrary, the glance of radical particularisation opens up

questions of mediation, coherence, *Sinn*. The multiplicity of stories, voices and events prevents any individual event or life story from becoming representative. It is precisely the precision with which each particular is presented that points to the non-representability of the social whole.

And yet the *Neue Geschichten* offer something of an encyclopedia – incomplete to be sure – of contemporary German life from the Third Reich to the present. Critics have isolated thematic clusters: cuts from various work places, the state apparatuses, the private sphere; individual life stories or fragments thereof; the military-industrial complex and the academy; 1968, the student movement, the work of the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, and so on. Time and again Kluge focuses on the energy and *Eigensinn* with which individuals pursue their goals. Many stories revolve around the destiny of the senses, memory, childhood, revenge, happiness. Kluge is especially successful in capturing the functionalist mindset of the compulsively neurotic technocrat and the stories present a variety of them: bomber pilots and administrators, technical planners and academic researchers.

The ostensible lack of unity intends, of course, to approximate the lack of coherence both in reality and in the experience of it. Even to say, as some critics have, that the subtitle *Unheimlichkeit der Zeit* provides a unifying element is not exactly to say much, since the subtitle is itself quite ambiguous. It can be translated with equal justification as ‘the uncanniness of time’ or as ‘uncanny times’, and the latter may refer to the present or to the past. Both translations, of course, apply. Kluge himself calls *Neue Geschichten* stories without an overarching concept and claims not always to understand their overall connections. But in this volume as in earlier ones, the basic aesthetic *gestus* of Kluge’s mode of writing is still ‘antifictional’, as some critics have called it.⁸ *Mise-en-scène* and the counterfeiting of documentary materials results in an antifictionalisation of narration which, as Stefanie Carp says in her superb study, is directed ‘against the cultural fictions that mythicise or deny the abstraction of human life’⁹ in contemporary culture. Kluge himself says much the same when he describes his project as writing realistic counter-(hi)stories against the reality-fiction of history (*gegen den Real-Roman der Geschichte*¹⁰); these stories are aesthetically and structurally adequate to contemporary reality’s high degree of complexity and at the same time make available, in the form of art, those possibilities of experience and consciousness which are blocked by the reality-fiction of history. I cannot develop here Kluge’s complex aesthetic of realism, which permeates all of his texts, stories, films, theory and essays.¹¹ Clearly, his stubbornness in holding onto one of the most prostituted terms in the vocabulary of modern aesthetics has to do with his affinity with Brecht as well as with his desire to deconstruct what Adorno called the ‘universal context of delusion’ produced by late capitalism. ‘The motive for realism’, he writes in his essay on reality’s ideologi-

cal claims to be realistic, 'is not affirmation of reality, but protest'.¹² The protest of Kluge's realism is not so much directed against the literary realism of the nineteenth century – one of the main targets of modernist fiction and theory; rather, it is directed against the homogenised realism (*Einheitsrealismus*) propagated by the mass media. In this sense Kluge's project is not narrowly aesthetic, but informed by a desire to open up spaces for the production of what he and Negt called counter-public spheres.

And yet, the realism, or, depending on the position from which one speaks, antirealism of Kluge's stories is emphatically an *aesthetics* of resistance, constructed to resist homogenisation, centralisation, administration from above. But rather than privileging heterogeneity as romanticised other, it shows in concrete terms how heterogeneity and difference are themselves internally split: on the one hand, the heterogeneity of resistance, which Kluge captures with the notion of *Eigensinn* and self-regulation, on the other hand, the heterogeneity and difference produced by the homogenising system itself, the heterogeneity which results from the processes of specialisation, division, separation that make up the modern world.

The difference between *Neue Geschichten*, on the one hand, and *DIE PATRIOTIN* and *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, on the other, is perhaps that the stories, particularly in their powerful reconstruction of the aerial bombardment of his home town in April 1945, focus more on what Kluge describes as the 'strategy from above'.¹³ The aerial bombardment which Kluge experienced as a child becomes a spatial and structural metaphor for the terror of reality, the power of oppression, the deadly dialectic of production and destruction which is modern capitalism. On the other hand, the film and the theoretical text focus on the potential for resisting strategies from above by means of strategies from below. In these latter works, particularly in their notions of history, labour power and *Eigensinn*, a number of romantic motifs and tropes appear which bring Kluge the analytic storyteller into conflict with Kluge the theoretician who remains tempted by the ultimately aesthetic notions of redemption, reconciliation, even a resurrection of the dead – notions which the aesthetic and analytic structures of his literary texts ultimately deny. The extent to which this apparent turn in Kluge's work has to do with the politics of national identity and German traditions as they have emerged since the early 1980s in the public discourse remains to be analysed.

In one of his more recent essays, the speech he gave when receiving the Kleist prize in 1985, Kluge had harsh words for those who remain enamoured of the repetition compulsions of tragic theatre experiences; against the fake romanticism of nineteenth-century opera he posited once again the ideal of analytic writing. One may wonder, however, if the continuing fascination of the theoretician with the utopian promise of aesthetic reconciliation and redemption in

and of history is not part of that very same culture that produced opera as the 'power plant of emotions'. Certainly the notion of an aesthetic redemption of history, no matter how tempting and intriguing it must be for a writer in the tradition of Benjamin and Adorno, does not mesh well with the methods of analytic writing.

Whether and how Kluge's romantic projections will manifest themselves in his storytelling remains to be seen. A sequel to *Neue Geschichten* has been announced and is long awaited. That Kluge has not, however, abandoned his analytic bent is clearly indicated in the Kleist speech of 1985. Poe, Musil and Kleist are acknowledged as precursors in the project of analytic writing. In this speech, Kluge is not overly optimistic about the possibilities for opposition and resistance, let alone redemption, through literature. He returns to a pessimistic Adornean trope in which he describes his literary project as a kind of writing in bottles. He ends his Kleist speech by saying:

In the age of the new media, I do not fear what they can do; I rather fear their inability, the destructive power of which fills our heads. In this age we writers of texts are the guardians of the last residues of grammar, the grammar of time, i.e. the difference between present, future, and past, guardians of difference.¹⁴

But even the *Flaschenpost*, the message in the bottle written by the guardian of difference, assumes it will find its reader, and Kluge's struggle with and against the media continues, if not in his storytelling, then certainly in his most recent intense engagement with private television. But that is another episode of the Kluge story.

Notes

1. Hans Magnus Enzensberger, 'Ein herzloser Schriftsteller', *Der Spiegel* (no. 1, 2 January 1978), pp. 81-83.
2. Serious critical studies of Kluge's literary texts have only begun to appear since the early 1980s. I only mention the following monographs: Rainer Lewandowski, *Alexander Kluge* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1980), Rainer Lewandowski, *Die Filme von Alexander Kluge* (Hildesheim/New York: Olms, 1980), Gerhard Bechtold, *Sinnliche Wahrnehmung von sozialer Wirklichkeit* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1983) and Stefanie Carp, *Kriegsgeschichten: Zum Werk Alexander Kluges* (Munich: Wm. Fink, 1987), as well as the essay collections published by Suhrkamp Materialien and *Text + Kritik*. See bibliography in *October* (no. 46 fall, 1988), p. 213 ff.
3. Alexander Kluge, *Lebensläufe* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1964), p. 5.
4. On the relationship between Kluge and Adorno, see especially Miriam Hansen, 'Introduction to Adorno: "Transparencies on Film"', *New German Critique* (no. 24/25

- fall/winter, 1981/1982), pp. 186-198. Also see the already mentioned book by Stefanie Carp.
5. In German, the word *Sinn* is ambivalent. It can be translated as 'meaning', but it also refers to 'sense', as in 'senses', 'sensual', 'sensuality'. When Kluge talks of *Sinnentzug*, then, he also refers to an atrophy of the human senses brought about by the processes of modernisation.
 6. Alexander Kluge, *Lernprozesse mit tödlichem Ausgang* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973), p. 5.
 7. On Kluge's technique of mixing text and illustrations, see Gerhard Bechtold, *Sinnliche Wahrnehmung von sozialer Wirklichkeit: Die multi-medialen Montage-Texte Alexander Kluges* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1983). See also Bechtold's essay in *Alexander Kluge: Materialien*, ed. Thomas Böhm-Christl (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), pp. 212-232.
 8. Dietmar Kamper, 'Phantastische Produktivität', in *Alexander Kluge: Materialien*, ed. Thomas Böhm-Christl (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), p. 287.
 9. Stefanie Carp, *Kriegsgeschichten: Zum Werk Alexander Kluges* (Munich: Fink, 1987), p. 110.
 10. Alexander Kluge, 'Die schärfste Ideologie: daß die Realität sich auf ihren realistischen Charakter beruht', in *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin: Zur realistischen Methode* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975), p. 222. [See translation in this book, ed.]
 11. For an account of this aspect of Kluge's work, see Rainer Stollmann, 'Alexander Kluge als Realist', in *Alexander Kluge: Materialien*, ed. Thomas Böhm-Christl (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), pp. 245-278.
 12. Kluge, 'Die schärfste Ideologie', p. 216.
 13. For an excellent analysis of the pivotal place of this story in Kluge's oeuvre, see David Roberts, 'Kluge und die deutsche Zeitgeschichte: *Der Luftangriff auf Halberstadt am 8.4.1945*', in *Alexander Kluge: Materialien*, ed. Thomas Böhm-Christl (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), pp. 77-116. [See translation in this book, ed.]
 14. Alexander Kluge, 'Die Differenz', in Kluge, *Theodor Fontane, Heinrich von Kleist, Anna Wilde* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1987), p. 89.

The Political as Intensity of Everyday Feelings¹

Alexander Kluge

It's a convention, so I've been told, that whoever gets the Fontane Prize for literature says something about Fontane. And it should be in the form of an address that should be in some way festive. I have in consequence ventured upon the title: 'What Fontane says to us for example'. In doing so I wanted to stick to the 'for example'.

The consequence of this for me was that I first had to read Fontane thoroughly. It would certainly be easier for me if I were allowed to speak about Hölderlin, Kleist, Kafka, Döblin, Joyce, Arno Schmidt, or about Marx. Marx, for example, in literary and linguistic terms would be a great practitioner of the montage work of art. His apparently esoteric theory contains a startling number of narratives and stories. If you resolved the theory into the experiences and the stories it contains, you would very quickly notice, as soon as you told it in the form of stories and narratives, that the theory has nothing to do with orthodoxy.

Back to Fontane. What occurs to me is that Fontane is often quoted but that these quotations do *not* fully grasp him. He shows a notable indirectness in everything that he writes; that is the *conversational tone*. And for that reason I don't want to try today to present you with a collection of quotations; instead, I want to argue roughly with the *attitude (Haltung)* taken by this realist who is so rare in Germany. Everything he writes corresponds to a certain attitude.

This fact has to do with celebratory hours like the present one, with the celebratory as such, and with all forms of address. Fontane would say: 'That situation will never turn into a dialogue'. It's unnatural. My mother, who is also sitting in this hall and who always argues very practically, says: 'Help yourself by keeping it short'. Fontane, it must be said, would have been indifferently sarcastic. He was, by the way, secretary for three months of the then Academy of Arts – that was still the Royal one. A biographical note states, 'Once again his friends found a civil-service post for him: at the age of fifty-six he became secretary of the Academy of Arts. The work was boring but not exacting'. Fontane himself says: 'I'm longing for the moment when I again will be out of this pretentious nothingness which is clothed in ceremony'. We don't honour Fontane if we consider him to be polite. He is calm, but he is sharp.

I grew up in Berlin in the time immediately after the war, so I went to school from Easter 1946 onwards. There we learned a lot about Brecht, Kafka, Kla-

bund, Rilke, almost nothing about Fontane. We knew that Fontane wrote one of the absolute masterpieces of literature, of world literature, *Effi Briest*, that is as valued as Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*. He wrote, by the way, a series of other novels with equal mastery, e.g. *Schach von Wuthenow*, *Stine*, *Irrungen und Wirrun-gen*, and above all *Der Stechlin*. What we didn't know is that he wrote 4,500 pages of war reportage: that is, he described very exactly the wars in 1864, 1866, 1870-1871. In doing so, moreover, he risked his life, for he wandered around, out of curiosity, between the fronts of France. He was taken prisoner, condemned as a spy, was to be executed; eventually, because of Bismark's intervention, his captors only succeeded in having him banished to and confined in a fortress on the island of Oléron.

This is an attitude of his that I have a great respect for: his curiosity about the fronts, his crossing of lines, which is the natural form of dialogue. In this respect, it doesn't matter whether it's a question of nations fighting a war or whether it's a question of class barriers or other divisions. Curiosity drives him into the other camp in order to report in his camp, and this is exactly what he means by dialogue. It's not just talking. Georg Lukacs classifies Fontane among the great realists of the nineteenth century. I don't want to explain any further *how* he does it and according to which criteria he carries out his divisions. Realism is definitely not something simple. The problem of Realism is still today the key problem in dealing with language and literature. Bertolt Brecht says of it: 'The situation becomes so complicated because now less than ever does a simple "representation of reality" say something about reality. A photograph of the Krupp-Works or AEG yields almost nothing about these institutions. Reality has slipped into the functions. The reification of human relationships, the factory for example, no longer releases those relationships'.

Realism consists, for this reason, of two quite different attitudes. One attitude consists of exactitude in the representation of real experiences. This is what is called a *realistic attitude*. But this attitude does not exist as a natural form. As a natural form there is ideology, i.e. the *contrast* between the wishes of people and a reality which does not answer these wishes and which does not satisfy them. Thus a disparity arises, and it is very unlikely that Realism will result in a plausible and direct solution.

The root of a realistic attitude, its motivation, is *opposition* to the misery present in real circumstances; it is, therefore, an anti-Realism of motivation, a denial of the pure reality-principle, an *anti-realistic attitude*, which alone enables one to look realistically and attentively. This is the dialectic of Realism: its practical side, though, is considerably more difficult, for our senses are very narrow windows. They are – as a natural form in society, therefore, in second nature – developed first of all as *senses for that which is near* (*Nähesinne*). A child grows up in a family and encounters original objects (*Urobjekte*), and it seems to it, for a

long time, as if the world were regulated by concrete individuals. All the happiness or misery it experiences is measured by this sense for that which is near – that is a childhood wish. Sigmund Freud says that happiness is the fulfilment of a childhood wish and that such wishes demand they be continually fulfilled. This is a major factor in artistic production. It is, though, also a major factor in the experience flying round the heads of people who do not try to produce works of art professionally. These wishes make them see everything as being a result of what is able to be experienced near at hand. The real developments, though, the ones that can assault people, take place in the movement of history, i.e. the form of societal events about which our direct senses tell us little.

I want to make this clear with an example. There is a famous Hölderlin poem called 'The Autumn'. In it Hölderlin describes a foot of earth, about a square metre, upon which the Duke of Württemberg, Ulrich, is supposed once to have trod. Hölderlin describes this piece of forest ground in a very beautiful poem. And now pick up a biology book and see how a piece of forest ground is described there: 16x10 to the 57th lice, so-and-so many insects, so-and-so many spiders; and then it also says 10 to the minus 7 foxes and twice 10 to the minus six deer. You notice they are two quite different languages. One is the language of statistics: we deal with our surroundings in an *unsensuous* way, exactly as we do with the real relations in history. And we deal with lyric poetry in a *sensuous* way with our direct sense for what is near. The two fall apart. The big decisions in history are not made in the realm of what we can experience close at hand. The really big disasters take place in the distance which we cannot experience, for which we don't have the appropriate telescopes (or microscopes) in our senses. The two don't come together. In this sense man is not a social, not a political being. And experience shows that when he rebels he generally even smashes the few sensuous tools which link him to the social whole.

What is a love story against the liability for military service? Imagine a couple in love in August 1939. They have just gotten to know each other. And a love story begins in the way that Fontane would describe the beginnings of love stories. And now comes 1 September 1939, and the man has to go to his regiment. And he gets perhaps three periods of leave, if he is lucky. Once he even gets four days. That is too little time in which to love each other and too much to get on with each other. Now he comes back in 1953 from being a prisoner of war in Russia, and the couple is supposed dutifully to carry on the love story of August 1939 which 'was briefly interrupted for a few years'. That is an example of the relationship of history to the stories of relationships of human beings, and we only have natural experience in the latter.

Fontane understood, without ever using the word dialectic, a lot about this ambiguity and radicalism of Realism. In great novels and novellas the concrete life stories of people are dictated by social conditions – and people die of these

conditions. That's what we don't have telescopes for, what we lack the perceptual tools for. You've got to try and imagine these tools of perception concretely. Look, there's the hammer and sickle, for example. But I suspect that they are tools which you can't do much with, either for the relation between people or for social experiences. Neither can you saw or drill holes in history. A microscope for every natural scientist or a telescope for the astronomer only exists, as far as the experience of society is concerned, in the form of the human head's capacity for abstraction, which simply isn't as sensuous as an embrace.

Fontane tells precise stories about social conditions which we hardly have the tools to describe. But he doesn't narrate from the partisan side of the conditions, so to speak, in a dogmatic fashion. Instead, the details have *particular life* in the novels: the flower beds, for instance, the sundial in *Effi Briest*, a bush, i.e. the things with which people have established relationships. And to some extent these things or the relationships of the people to these things look critically on that which happens inevitably in the novel, that which leads to someone dying, and they protest against these constraints. *Effi Briest*, for example, is sold off like a commodity. Schach von Wuthenow is trapped in the claws of the pre-1806 concept of honour, as if in a prison. Fontane is in no way on the side of inevitable tragedy. He delineates these constraints very exactly, but from the opposite point of view to that of mourning (*Trauerarbeit*), in a cheerful spirit of opposition to destiny. He says, 'Nothing can ever be won by despondency'.

Fontane is for this reason also the discoverer of the *Novel of Diversity* (*Vielfältigkeitsroman*), that is, of a literary form that in some novels doesn't bother about plot (of which, of course, there is plenty in other, earlier novels by him); instead, the connections between many different plots are made, or reflection upon the events is extended. *Der Stechlin*, for example, is five hundred pages long. But what happens in it is that an old man dies and two young men get engaged. *Fontane is never in love with the terror of real circumstances; instead, he always looks for ways out*, and one reason for montage technique, for novels of diversity in Fontane's sense, is precisely this search for ways out. In limited individual circumstances, these ways out do not exist; instead, they can only exist, if they are to exist at all, cooperatively, i.e. in connections (*Zusammenhänge*), and in the connection there is always a way out.

Let's just try, for example, to imagine what Fontane would say here to our Berlin, what he would mock, what his attitude would be if he observed the circumstances in Berlin which are clearly different from those of the Federal Republic – and from those of the GDR, of course. He would be curious enough, and his way would be to move between the fronts. First of all, he would come across the election results, the 'Hedgehogs';² he would come across what Peter Glotz calls the majority culture, which decides the elections, and the minority culture, which sets itself up in an alternative manner in a kind of parallel so-

ciety. They've all, he would say, replaced dialogue with the communiqué. That's a sentence that I sometimes borrow from my teacher Helmut Becker: '*Nous avons remplacé le dialogue par le communiqué*'. He would say, 'But they're not talking to each other; you ought to give this speech twice: once in the style of the majority culture, another time in the style of the minority culture'.

Then he would carry on counting. He would compare the political labour power invested in the Federal Republic and in West Berlin for the purposes of building bridges in society with the teams who are concerned with pulling down bridges and possibilities of agreement. He would continue: there is, in all parties (and that has little to do with left or right), a grouping which is united in one thing, namely that it is against wars of religion and does not believe in the automatic nature of divisions; one could gather these people under the name of the *Unbelievers* (*Ungläubiger*). And for this party, which really does exist among us, and to which I reckon a great number of my friends belong, Fontane would be one of the best helpers I know. I say that after having carefully read the substantial oeuvre he wrote for precisely this point. I am still speaking about the concept of the realistic, for the removal (*Aufhebung*) of divisions belongs to the realistic. A realist drills. In that respect, he is unpleasant. He tends, for example, to set some things at naught. In Fontane's case we can observe that this is also a source of cheerfulness and of a certain wit.

Let's stay with politics – I am quite convinced that today and here Fontane would not speak about literature but about politics; that's where the sources are which would most surprise him. After all it was he who said: 'In parliamentary elections there is a battery of soldiers behind every voter' and 'What's the point of elections if there isn't any power for the people?' Such words are not at all unusual at the end of the nineteenth century. He called himself a 'doubtful passenger'.

In relation to politics he would, I presume, investigate first where the strangely rarified air comes from, which always appears when political matters are being dealt with. He would investigate whether real experience appears in the political field of language. And then he would probably investigate the working days of politicians to see if anywhere during such a full working day there is time, even if it's only ten minutes, to reflect calmly on politics. And he would ask where the actual possibilities for action are, if politicians, to a very great extent, have to be present at celebrations, have to make their own speeches or listen to speeches. According to the rules of time and motion surveys, then, there's not much there that can be politically active.

He would then calculate further. He would say: where is there, then, anything left for politics of German efficiency, of thoroughness, of the massive German capacity for work? He would, therefore, calculate as follows: just as there are national aggregate calculations in commodity production, so there can be ag-

gregate calculations for the labour power of the people who produce these goods. He would thus find out that a large part of labour takes place in industry, in the world of work. A further large part takes place in the area of socialisation: in families, in love affairs, in education, etc. And now in order to be able to face life in industry, at work, and in these relationships and not run away, one needs a further quantum of labour, which one would call *balance-labour* (*Balancearbeit*), labour for the dubious balance that must be maintained; and this labour is just as great as the labour that goes into the work place and into relationships or families. We overlook this balance-economy because it is unpaid. But it is the reason why the highly active internal organisation of motivation (*Innenausstattung en den Motiven*) in people looks from the outside like passivity, so that minorities can be active in politics, repressively active, whilst the others look on patiently. But this passivity is inauthentic. The form of the appropriation of left-wing qualities by the right in the Fascism of the 1930s was activist: it marched on the streets and invaded foreign countries. Today this appropriation takes the form of the *mass-mobilisation of passivity*. We can only investigate this form of mobilisation if we study this balance-economy.

If you now take these three large main groups of human labour power – the stabilising internal organisation of motivation, where the main labour takes place; labour in industry and careers; and labour in relationships – and just calculate roughly how much this is, then about 1.5 per cent of human social labour power is left for politics (*das Politische*). And this now divides itself again into left, right, and centre; it is administered in the form of mistakes, of imperfect political production (*Politischer Halbproduktion*); it is divided again into extraparlimentary politics, the executives, parliaments, and the Law, which supposedly has nothing to do with politics. Besides, Fontane would now say: 'This is all based on the false conception that politics is a specialised area'. But in fact it is *a particular degree of intensity of everything and everybody*, of everyday feeling, of every praxis. Fontane would conclude from this, for the use of language and therefore for literature, that it is time to change thoroughly these disproportions, that writers do not become political by sticking to a particular political praxis but by helping to recuperate (in the form of stories [*Geschichten*]) what is considered unpolitical as a political matter. This disproportion is present in all countries. But in Germany it is specific and is the cause of a whole series of catastrophes. You see, it is thoroughly unpractical if the emotional shock of German families, which would have meant something important for the victims of Auschwitz in 1942, is made up for in 1979; for today it is an essentially useless, that is, timeless form of shock. The fact that we in our country are always shocked at the wrong moments and are not shocked at the right ones – and I am now talking about something very bad – is a consequence of our consider-

ing politics as a specialised area which others look after for us and not as a degree of intensity of our own feelings.

Fontane was politically never left-wing. He was a conservative, but he was never a reactionary. As clearly as Fontane characterises what is reactionary, on the one hand, he also says just as clearly, on the other hand, 'If I met someone who had character and was reliable, for that's what matters to me, then he was a conservative'. And when in *Der Stechlin* the son of Stechlin says, 'Off towards the New', Pastor Lorenzen, who conveys Fontane's main opinion in this book and is really the educator of the whole village, says: 'No, hang onto the old, and only when it really has to be, move towards the New'.

And this is the point that really matters. If it *has* to come about, accept the New. But we have in our country a tradition, a whole chain of traditions that the New is made when it ought not to be. And vice versa, if it has to be, it isn't made at all but is violently suppressed. You can imagine that in two thousand years rather a lot is stored up. And it doesn't, as my mother would say, just hang on the clothes (*das bleibt [...] nicht in den Kleidern hängen*). It is not a question of continually making new starts and breaking them off again. This principle of historical discontinuity is a specifically German recipe for devastating catastrophes. Rather it is a question of having a calm relationship to the history of one's country, i.e. to admit history. *One has to be conservative if one is progressive*. We have got to start working on the history of our country. By that I mean something very concrete; one might start by telling stories in turn about it. Ernst Bloch says: 'History does not repeat itself. But if it has not become history, if it is a failure, then it certainly repeats itself'.

I should like slowly to come to the conclusion. The problem is that one thing separates us from Fontane, along with the many things that don't separate us from him, and that is a *radicalisation of all temporal relations*. Fontane, for example, didn't know the bombing raids that many Berliners can still feel in their bones. In that situation, if one puts it graphically, there are always two strategies – a strategy from above and a strategy from below. Clausewitz wrote a certain amount about *strategy from above*, which is the strategy the bomber command has, and the bomber command has got the means for it as well. Strategy from below would be what a woman with two children down in a cellar could do to oppose the bombing. We must make it clear to ourselves that, if this relationship of person/bomb in the emergency is the model of how our modern world intends to deal with people and if we don't want to deceive ourselves in times of peace or apparent peace about the fact that this is precisely the point of the emergency, then we must ask ourselves whether there are any reasons which make us satisfied with the meagre means of a strategy from below in the emergency. The problem is that the woman in the bomb-cellar in 1944, for example, has no means at all to defend herself at that moment. She might perhaps have

had means in 1928 if she had organised with others *before* the development which then moves towards Papen, Schleicher and Hitler. So the question of organisation is located in 1928, and the requisite consciousness is located in 1944. That's a very serious point, which is not answered with the old saying that one comes home cleverer from the town hall: one doesn't even get out of the cellar – that thought basically stops one from sheltering oneself either in an idyll or in a utopia.

Fontane would put all this in a much more easy-going way. We can't be easy-going in quite the same way: we can only be so in the perception of such relations. Marx always talks about the relation of production, and the capitalists make this relation of production. But I don't believe that a capitalist, an entrepreneur alone, has enough fantasy, so to speak, to think up Verdun or Stalingrad, or bombing raids, or Vietnam, or Chile. That's not an object of capital, it's a relation of production of the relations of production, and one can call that a historical relation (*ein Produktionsverhältnis der Produktionsverhältnisse, und das kann man ein Geschichtsverhältnis nennen*). And in Germany this historical relation is really particularly dense, a thicket like in the fairy tale (*Märchen*) *Sleeping Beauty*. Fontane worked precisely on this root. I consider it as one task of language, and thus of literature, to work on it and to clarify it.

Notes

1. Speech on the occasion of the award of the Fontane Prize for literature. The text is a transcript of a partly improvised speech. The translator, while trying to retain as much of the quirky tone of the speech as possible, has occasionally resorted to paraphrase at points where the meaning of the improvised statements might otherwise be too obscure.
2. Part of the 'Green movement', trans.

Translated by Andrew Bowie

At the 2003 International Security Conference

Alexander Kluge

Die Lücke, die der Teufel läßt is a 900-page volume of stories, many of them grounded in historical fact, some pure fiction, and all but a few under five pages long. Kluge pieces together fragments of history and human experience, both real and imagined, to form a composite image out of what is seen and what is implied. Subjects range from witchcraft to warfare, Carthage to Chernobyl, Aristotle to astronomy, organised under chapter headings that pose questions such as 'Can a body politic say I?' and 'Is there a dividing line between eras?' The stories printed here appear in the chapter 'What is power/Whom can we trust?' Trans.

Curiosity is My Profession: A Scientific Manager¹

In the rooms of the five-star hotel in Munich, where the conference halls are still adorned with the rounded arches and bulky curtains familiar from German films of the early 1960s, with Spanish trellises breaking up the view, a swell of voices reveals a wealth of languages and lively, acute intelligence at work. There is no mental labour in the absence of pressure. The pressure here comes from the fact that in just a few hours, the lobbyists will have to impart new ideas into the cooperative minds of the decision makers in attendance, new in view of the situation, the change in all matters of US strategy that has come about with President Bush's new administration. This is the primary reason for the electrified buzz of conversation which fills the room all the way up to the chandeliers, fuelled by coffee.

On the median strip in front of the hotel: a small group of freezing people. They hold signs protesting the National Missile Defence (NMD) project and cautioning against a new arms race. One of the activists, Berthold G., has managed to make his way into the hotel; he is dressed as a waiter, and blends in with the others who are serving small cups of coffee to the security-conference delegates. A triumph over the security forces. Exploiting the fact that the hotel is so large that individual employees do not necessarily know one another. Berthold G. could set out flyers or start a critical dialogue with someone. But with whom? Starting such a conversation would blow his cover. Who among the thinkers here would listen to him, the critical intellectual?

Time is valuable. A retired vice admiral of the German Federal Armed Forces – a defence company lobbyist, former chief planner and well-known military

author – had a bit of free time because he had gotten his most important conversations out of the way the previous evening. What could convince him to engage in a critical discussion? What does critique even mean to him, as someone who does not waste words or thoughts? It would be a critical act to tell a decision maker something that later failed to come true. Not only critical, but also malicious to say something false, and thus to destroy the assumption of reliability, of relationships founded on trust. Each bears the other's burden, and so every step that strengthens relationships of mutual trust represents progress in this context.

What does Berthold G. understand of this economy of mental labour? Now, during a break in the proceedings, the Supreme Commander of the Macedonian army has taken up residence in one corner of the dining room, where he holds court. It is suspected that his adjutant, a woman, is also his lover. He wears the uniform of the Macedonian armed forces. His connections to NATO secure his position within his own country, something which the country's internal political arrangements cannot guarantee. He commands a conventional army. This afternoon he will deliver a speech exactly fourteen minutes long, i.e. just as long as that of his counterpart, the Bulgarian Defence Minister. His primary concern is to avoid saying anything that might disturb any of those in attendance. To achieve this requires the employment of a high degree of intelligence, by Western standards.

I myself, who describe all of this, practice the trade, as I have said, of scientific management. My employer, an automotive company, has lent my services to the foundation that organised this conference. I find myself constitutionally incapable of slipping out of my role. My character, as unique as a fingerprint, compels me to act as a productivity expert.

If it weren't for that, I would never have discovered that schemer, Berthold G. I merely asked three of the waiters circulating through the crowd with coffee whether they knew that young man, and I had found him. I questioned him. The young man was confused.

- Could I have another cup of coffee?
- Certainly.
- You don't belong here, do you? What are you doing here?
- (*silent/blushes*)
- Are you with the people outside? Are you a spy?
- What's to spy on? Everyone knows what's being discussed here.
- True, it's in the papers.
- We have to have a chance to make our critique heard.
- Of what?

- Of the arms race in outer space. The spy satellites that are scheduled for launch in 2006 represent an even more dangerous provocation than the missile defence shield (NMD).
- And whom do you intend to tell?
- Critique can't be told. It has to be performed.
- And on whom would you perform such a thing here? Do you want to alert the Chinese delegates?
- It has to be made public.
- Then I'd suggest that you go into the press room and tell the journalists, as an expert. But you'd have to be dressed like an expert, not like a waiter.
- How are experts dressed?
- There's no specific costume. But I'd recommend a uniform, since you need some sort of disguise.
- And where would I get that?
- Your plan for disseminating information is too complicated. If you'd rented a uniform from a costume shop, then you'd have to figure out how to smuggle it in, the way you smuggled yourself in. And if you stood up there in front of the journalists in a uniform, they'd stop believing your costume the second you started speaking critically. They'd all take you for a fool.
- (*silent*)
- Sorry.
- Well, what would you suggest?
- Write an article.
- That wouldn't help anything.
- What you're doing here won't help anything either.
- But at least I'm doing something. It's not *useless* to be here, just 50 cm from all these decision makers. I've gotten as close as 20, or even 10 cm away when the decision makers take sugar.
- So I've seen. Bravo! That's quite an achievement.
- What more do you want? You have to start somewhere.
- I'm on your side.
- And what good does that do me?
- I'm a good observer.
- And what good is that?
- Maybe I'll have a tip sometime.
- What do you do, anyway? You're not one of the decision makers or lobbyists, are you?
- I'm a scientific manager.

The conversation could have gone on longer, because Becker found the young man remarkably unusual. But the coffee servers had disappeared into the kitch-

en. The dining/break room had emptied and was being aired out with fans. Becker had neglected his job as a researcher of mental labour, but his duties were too vague for this neglect to have any consequences. He moved on to the meeting room, where a calm conference atmosphere prevailed; the monotonous voice in the microphone drifted through the room. The speaker used up the time allotted to him, as had the speaker before him, a man of equal rank.

The twelve representatives of the People's Republic of China sat glowering in their box seats. What could they say in response to the cavalier rhetoric of the American side? They couldn't wave flags in protest here. There was nothing that even required thought, because all of the US's ambitions were so *manifestly* directed against Chinese interests. They saw themselves, and their entire populous nation, as the chosen target of American arms planning. It required no great feat of intellect to understand that at the same time that George W. Bush was elected president, according to the documents available, a merger of Northrop Grumman Corp., L.A., and Litton Industries, Woodland Hills, CA, had taken place. Arms in outer space, and for the breakaway Republic of Taiwan. And so China had to play the enemy. The Chinese prepared to present the texts approved by their superiors when the time came, and to defend themselves against opposition or misunderstanding from the audience. They were concerned that tricks could be played on them in the translation process. They expected the conference organisers to sabotage their presentation. '27 per cent of the assumptions made by our delegation,' the delegation leader explained to Becker later, 'rest on errors, but how can we know in any concrete case which 27 per cent it is?' On the whole, the majority of their mental labour was performed in advance of the conference, or would be performed afterward. But there is no greater cause for discomfort than a pause in the exercise of intelligence at a historically important moment. They remained uncomfortable. The behaviour of the Chinese delegation, Becker observed, could hardly be described as 'sitting'.

Ivanov, the Russian president's security advisor, arrived from Moscow. Surrounded by escorts. His aide, positioned nearest to him, in accordance with standard procedures, was a stocky man with a broad brow and a shaven head, typical for Russian delegations today. Do the Soviet and Russian committees that recruit intelligent young people for top positions have a particular image in mind, certain indicators of potential intelligence?² Ivanov himself looks like a Roman boy emperor. His face is perfectly suited for profile shots. He turns his head quickly in various directions, he cuts a lively figure. All the more oppressive for him to be forced to sit politely in the front row at the conference until the next morning, as one speaker after another reads texts that fly in the face of Russian interests. He must listen with a stony countenance (press photographers are fixated on his face), wasting all this precious time; an eloquent politi-

cian who could add his own two cents to every clause that crosses the speaker's lips. But he has to keep silent.

Alois Becker surveys the rows of conference participants like an attentive for-ester surveying rows of trees. They are arranged in columns and rows between the aisles, all facing towards the speaker, like cadets lined up for a parade. It would not be false, Becker thinks, judging by the level of interest betrayed by the participants' expressions (no one dares to sleep), to say that for 40 minutes they hardly manage to listen at all, waiting instead for the moment of lobbying, conversation and interaction that will come afterward during the tea break, and then again at lunchtime (with separate rooms for dignitaries and common people). What goes on here is a concrete form of mental labour, one specialising in access, networking and consensus, where the traditional process of critique (powers of discernment, self-certainty, control) does not play a role.

What, Becker asks, would Berthold G.'s small, freezing group have to do in order to exert some influence on this conference which, in the course of 24 hours, will chart a new course, even if no 'decision' emerges? It must be considered, Becker admits, that these 'friends of critique' are not interested in influence, but rather in the 'creation of an intellectual space in which thought processes are lateralised (placed on equal footing) and thus brought into contact with the subjective input of concrete individuals, so that they interact with human experience'. Becker is familiar with problems like this from the development of highly specialised motors. But, Becker says, this sort of networking remains a utopian vision in a gathering of lobbyists and decision makers that lasts only one and a half days.

'When Push Comes to Shove We Need the Impossible'

I. The Safest Place

Deep beneath the five-star hotel are cellars that survived the destruction of the building in the air raids of 1944 (they are used for storing margarine). Now covered by new cellars, these deep cellars would presumably be the safest place for guests to take refuge in case the building above were bombed. However, the escape routes that security personnel have planned for a terrorist attack do not lead into these depths. They lead outside. Outside can be dangerous, because at the moment of a catastrophe it may be inaccessible, or threatened by a second terrorist attack.

In this single secure location, in the historic depths, a few of the *Bayerischer Hof* hotel's young cleaning ladies have set up a sort of provisional break room.

Coffee and cake are served. In the company of a few gentlemen (also hotel employees). For twenty minutes they enjoy a feeling of absolute security against their supervisors.

2. External Security

If it is performed it is art /

If not, it's no art

John Cage

AN OUTER BARRICADE maintains a healthy distance between the conference site and the city. The INNER BARRICADE grants admittance only to those bearing identification cards recognised by electronic sensors. Three people are posted at this second security checkpoint: a police officer who gives signals with his baton; a policewoman who holds her machine pistol at chest height, ready to fire; and an older civil employee who checks ID cards. If an attacker were to run at these three with utter disregard for his own safety, they would easily be laid low.

However, several vehicles, their motors already running, are prepared to respond immediately to any such situation by blocking off access to the checkpoint. Groups of security personnel are posted at the entrances to the office buildings and the *Bayerischer Hof* to form instant human barricades. Hundreds of additional forces wait in the cellars inside the inner checkpoint, ready to act at any moment.

This response planning is based on experience and has been augmented in recent years, but some of its most basic elements date back to the Schwabing riots. For instance, two water cannons are positioned in the middle of the security zone, flanked by four more on either side. The force of the water would physically push back any intruders until support could arrive.

The next lines of defence in this plan are the checkpoint at the entrance to the hotel itself and the security forces stationed inside the conference rooms; the American guests have brought their own security personnel.

3. A Lucky Devil

Luck is on his side. As he leaves customs upon arriving from Rome, surrounded by his detail, he looks up towards the sky and his face breaks into a smile, just as the photographer from the *International Herald Tribune* snaps the shutter. The photographer chose this view from above, positioned in the rafters (first he had to convince the security personnel that he was not an attacker), because it seemed impossible to capture a well-composed, full-face shot of the US Secretary of Defence from floor level, surrounded by a crowd of bodyguards and

other photographers. Shooting from above, there was a risk that the photo would show only thinning hair and encroaching baldness, and not the decision maker's countenance. But as chance would have it, the lucky devil of a Secretary turned his face upwards, and the 'encounter' was made. The photo went around the world.

4. Proper Distance

After his speech, US Secretary Rumsfeld took questions from the participants. For twenty minutes. In the closing minutes, the German Foreign Minister entered the gallery and stood behind the speaker he was to follow. When his turn came to speak, he sought to make a joint appearance with the US Secretary, indicating his desire through gestures, then by blocking the Secretary's path and grabbing him by the arm. The US Secretary of Defence pulled resolutely away from this menace. He sat on a bench along the side near a group of German participants, scowling.

'We scientific managers,' said Becker, 'are interested in the interaction of bodies at political events. Proximity and distance, the failure to share space, these things tell us more than the words that are spoken, which have been ground down through weeks of preparation by the participants until they are as fine as grains of sand on the seashore.' The failure of his plan to share the stage with his counterpart bothered the German Foreign Minister so severely that he was unable to control the register of his voice. The tone of his presentation ranged from 'pleading' to 'demanding' to 'incredulous', all of which, says the scientific manager, are well suited to confrontations in an intimate setting, but inappropriate when the counterpart remains impervious to such PERSONAL DEMONSTRATIONS. The US Secretary, seated on his bench to the side, betrayed no emotion. What the audience saw was this: an agitated, apparently powerless attacker, and an indifferent opponent who finds it unnecessary to even take note of the attack.

5. Revenge for 1956

If acute understanding could be detected, as enemy radar is detected and targeted with intelligent weapons, then Admiral Jacques L., long-time French Chief of Staff, would be just such a target. A narrow, older face. Thin hair, secured in place with water each morning; he could easily be underestimated, mistaken for a bureaucrat who grew up in office air. But anyone encountering him as an opponent would quickly recognise the error in that. He is content with the stance of his country's political administration. He makes this clear in long, grammatically varied sentences. 'In 1956,' he says, 'I was a young officer.

We had destroyed the Egyptian air force in a preventative strike, Port Said and the Suez were under our control. France and England were prepared to settle once and for all the many questions of the Near East that still plague us to this day. But we were robbed of that victory by the veto of that superpower, the USA. I will never forget that, nor do I wish to. Today we are showing that superpower what it means to say no to a preventative war.

‘We do so as people of experience, who look back on a greater stretch of history than do the neophytes across the Atlantic. We learn from every mistake. West Pointers only have seven to learn from (if you count the founding mistakes), we have ninety-two. That is a superiority, not of weapons, but of knowledge’.

6. Death Makes an Appearance

The man lay in a hall leading towards one of the hotel’s rear exits. He lay there like a beggar, his face pale. Two waiters and a security guard ‘concerned’ themselves with him, i.e. they attempted to lay the man, who was having difficulty breathing, in a more comfortable position. He had come to this unfortunate place from a hall where a group of Eastern European participants had dined; now they had all disappeared to their rooms. A short time later, the site where this high-ranking man had collapsed was sealed off by assistants. Keep it moving, please! A hotel doctor arrived. It was difficult to get a city ambulance in through the police barricades. No provisions had been made for on-site treatment; nor were there plans for evacuating the injured in case of a catastrophe. A gap in the security planning? The police chief in charge of operations explained: ‘In the case of an attack on the conference, or an accident, help is to be brought in from outside. We can’t have them standing by during the conference.’ ‘Why not?’ asked one of the journalists crowded around him. ‘Because it would make a bad impression to take conspicuous precautions against a catastrophe, when we don’t even know if one will occur.’

The collapsed man, pale, no longer breathing. A stroke or a heart attack, no suggestion of foul play. The medics, when they finally arrived, attempted to revive him. After forty minutes, the rescue team had the impression that the cerebrum could not be preserved intact; but considering the patient’s high rank, they continued their resuscitation efforts.

One single death, unsettling for those who witnessed it. In the conference they spoke of 500,000 or 1.3 million dead, masses of refugees on the move. But this was all abstract, glossed over in speeches or in conversations the very tones of which precluded the possibility that such a thing could ever really occur.

7. Reality as a Means of Dominance/Reality as a Weapon or Commodity

- 9/11 represents a tear in the image of reality. Mankind is constantly labouring to create an image of reality. That is the cocoon in which it lives.
- No one can understand how the towers, rivers of iron and concrete, could collapse after about an hour?
- Yes, and the President flies to his bunkers in Nebraska.
- ‘The curtain in the temple is torn in two’, that is the only reaction to Christ’s death. A tear nonetheless.
- Every tear in the horizon of reality must be taken very seriously. Power is founded on the resource of reality. Only when I can guarantee reality am I able to rule.³
- What is the problem?
- The state must be able to restore reality at any moment. But how is that possible after an unreal event like the terrorist attack?
- Didn’t the US Administration do anything at all?
- They protected their own leaders. They kept watch on the roof of the White House in case of further attacks. They tended to the burning Pentagon. They called up the fleet that has been stationed at Pearl Harbour since 1941, brought it through the Panama Canal to the coast of New York. Two days later, aircraft carriers and battleships were lined up there. What is real about that?
- What are you suggesting?
- The US Administration has to find something, no matter the cost, a handle that gives it some hold on reality. They have to find an enemy to suit the weapons.
- So you think there was never a LOGIC OF WAR, but rather a LOGIC OF FINDING REALITY?
- Something like that.
- When there is no reality, we have to invent it?
- Otherwise we would be left exposed, so to speak.

Becker, the scientific manager, counted this dialogue as part of the 0.8 per cent of the conference that could be described as CRITIQUE, as opposed to the 99.2 per cent consisting of INTELLIGENCE USED IN THE PERFORMANCE OF ROUTINE DUTIES. However, he allowed a margin of error of 0.9 per cent, because he included effort devoted to FORMALITIES under the heading of mental labour, although strictly speaking it represents a different kind of labour.

8. Prolegomena to the Necessity of the Impossible⁴

In the administrations of Presidents Nixon and Reagan, but above all under the last four Democratic presidents of the US, Bismarck’s doctrine went unquestioned: POLITICS IS THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE.

But the roughly 7,000 neoconservatives who have migrated into the administration from think tanks see things differently.

- Are you a realist?
- Of course. Politics has to be based on real foundations.
- So you would restrict the political actions of the USA, including military activity, to the realm of the possible?
- Hold on a minute! We can't allow ourselves to be locked in by what is real or possible.
- You see reality as a prison?
- For a superpower, it is dangerous to view the possible as an absolute value or limit. What if the real isn't the real? What if the possible isn't the possible?
- So in extreme circumstances you need the help of the impossible to realise the interests of your great land?
- When push comes to shove, we need the impossible.

Translated by Kurt Beals

Notes

1. I refer to myself using the old term 'scientific manager.' In fact, economists today function primarily as consultants who analyse the overall productivity of companies, not, as before, the individual tasks. We play the role of economic detectives, so to speak.
The classical field of scientific management (or ergometry) was focused on production: how much time and effort is expended in what process to create what product. So, for instance, at this conference I am interested in the following distinction: how much brainpower goes into carrying out routine duties and moderation (sales discussions, lobbying, greeting, maintaining hierarchical relationships), and how much consists of critique. My conclusion: 92 per cent is used in routine duties and moderation!
2. Careers in Russian think tanks (unlike those in the USA) follow a particular pattern, according to conflict specialist Daniel S. Friedman. Russian economic planners clearly consider the nervousness that often accompanies intelligence to be a disadvantage. When searching for new blood, they favour large-boned figures, usually South Russians 'with nerves of steel, solidly built decision makers'. But, Friedman argues, since potential intelligence among non-hysterical (and hence less nervous) people tends to fall closer to the statistical average (unless pain or unusual twists of fate tip the scales in favour of mental labour), these SOUGHT-AFTER BIG-BONED BLOCKHEADS never advance beyond subordinate positions. They project the image that the Russian leadership has of 'intelligence rooted in nerves of steel, mental

power in a sturdy housing', but in practice they are 'bureaucratic intelligence'. On this problem, see David F. Kropotkin in *Abgründe der Intelligenzzüchtung*.

3. It is in this spirit that the pharaohs built the pyramids to hold up the firmament. They guaranteed that the catastrophes of the past, when the heavens came crashing down, would not be repeated.
4. Title of the dissertation of Kurt Riezler, confidant and personal advisor to Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg from 1914 to 1917.

Television and Counter-Public Spheres

Raw Materials for the Imagination: Kluge's Work for Television

Tara Forrest

As Christian Schröder has argued in his review of Alexander Kluge's television programmes, tuning in to watch Kluge's work on late-night German television is akin to the experience of stumbling upon a literary bookshop in the middle of a red-light district.¹ Wedged between the pornographic films, crime thrillers and live competition and shopping programmes that constitute the regular evening fare on the commercial stations, Kluge's *10 vor 11 (10 to 11)*, *News and Stories*, *Mitternachtsmagazin (Midnight Magazine)*, and *Primetime Spätausgabe (Prime Time Late Edition)* certainly strike the viewer as strange anomalies. Constructed, in a similar vein to his films, out of a highly diverse collection of raw materials (including photographs, drawings, diagrams, clips from films and documentary footage), Kluge's programmes are – in both their form and content – certainly unlike anything else on German television.

Organised predominantly around interviews with writers, artists, musicians, film-makers, academics and directors from theatre and opera,² the aim of the programmes is to provide what Kluge describes as 'cultural windows' for the 'old media' within the comparatively 'new' medium of television. These interviews (which provide the backbone for the majority of Kluge's programmes) are, however, unlike those conducted on other cultural magazine programmes – a format which has become increasingly popular on German television.³ Although the basic structure of Kluge's work for television resembles the interview format characteristic of these programmes, the interviewer (a role regularly performed by Kluge himself) remains predominantly off-screen – his presence marked only by the highly enthusiastic voice guiding and animating the discussions. Although these conversations are organised around the discussion of a particular theme, topic, or event (such as a documentary about techno, Werner Schroeter's staging of an opera by Bellini, the unfinished film projects of Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Siegfried Kracauer's writings on film and mass culture, or the ideas of Deleuze and Foucault⁴) the discussions frequently shoot off in directions that would not appear to be related to the topic in question. Although prompted in large part by Kluge's highly imaginative and, at times, somewhat abstruse mode of questioning, these digressions are also fuelled by the quotes and intertitles that intersperse the shots of the interviewees in conversation – the comments of whom are further complicated, not only by the

questions and statements that scroll across the bottom of the screen, but by the manner in which Kluge fragments, duplicates and rotates the many photographs, diagrams and other images that flash up throughout the course of the discussion.

Even more surprising, however, than the form and content of the programmes themselves is the fact that they have, following the establishment of Kluge's DCTP (Development Company for Television Programmes) in 1988, been variously broadcast on Sat1, RTL and VOX – three of the major commercial channels on German television.⁵ The roots of this strange alliance can be traced back to 1984 to the establishment of a 'dual broadcasting' system in West Germany which saw the introduction of private (commercial) stations alongside ARD and ZDF – the two existing public-service channels that had been established in 1953 and 1961 under the aegis of a 'commitment to truth, impartiality and balance and diversity of opinion'.⁶ In an attempt to preserve (at least, in part) these public-service ideals in the face of what it viewed as the onslaught of commercial television, in 1997 the Social Democratic government of Nordrhein Westfalen instituted a new broadcasting law which stated that commercial stations seeking to gain a broadcasting licence for the state would have to provide programming slots or 'window programmes' (*Fensterprogramme*) for independent cultural producers.

Benefitting from this law (and, indeed, from Kluge's profile in Germany as a highly regarded film-maker and author), in 1988, DCTP was – together with Sat1 and RTL (then RTL plus) – granted joint broadcasting licences that provided DCTP with weekly programme slots within the broader context of the commercial channels; the strict independence of which was, and continues to be, safeguarded by the licensing contract. The result has been that, with the exception of his *Mitternachtsmagazin* (which screens on VOX), Kluge's programmes enjoy the extremely rare privilege of occupying regular spaces on the commercial channels that are completely free of commercials.

Needless to say, this carving out of a space within the commercial channels for the creation of what Kluge has described as '*Autoren-Fernsehen*' ('author's television'), has caused a stir with the directors of the commercial host-stations, including the former head of RTL Helmut Thoma, who has described Kluge as a 'ratings killer' who makes 'stone-age television'.⁷ In critical reviews of Kluge's programmes, the so-called 'prehistoric' character of his work is often invoked, not only to describe the simple, hand-made quality of the programmes (which are produced on a small budget by Kluge and a working team of three or four people) but to question whether the programmes are of a suitable calibre to be shown on television at all. Mark Siemons, for example, has argued that Kluge's programmes 'appear to have absolutely nothing to do with television'. 'The sound quality', he writes,

is bad, the questions don't get to the point, things are spoken so quickly that one can hardly follow, and once images appear with which one can draw connections with previously seen material, they are then alienated through doublings, prismatic refractions or incomprehensible blocks of text. 'That is loveless cobbled-together stuff', say RTL-co-workers.⁸

Anyone, however, who is familiar with the many years of lobbying and negotiations that have enabled Kluge to cleave open a space for his own work (and, indeed, the work of countless others) on German television would know that his programmes are not 'loveless', 'cobbled-together' constructions, but rather the fruit of a longstanding commitment to the creation of alternative forms of communication within the sphere of commercial television.⁹ The significance of Kluge's programmes (the form and content of which, far from being arbitrary, is intimately bound with his alternative conception of the possibilities of the medium) can, however, only be fully appreciated when viewed in the light of his longstanding criticism of the monodimensional, information-heavy content of programmes which, he argues, have dominated (and continue to dominate) the perceived role and function of the medium.

Information, Storytelling and Experience

In *Public Sphere and Experience* (a book which Kluge wrote together with Oskar Negt in the early 1970s¹⁰) the authors draw implicitly on Walter Benjamin's criticism of the information-driven content of modern forms of communication in their criticism of the manner in which television programmes such as news broadcasts both address, and communicate with, their audience.¹¹ Central to Benjamin's analysis of the rise of information as a means of communication is the decline in both the art of storytelling and the communicability of experience, with which he argues this rise is intimately associated. For both Benjamin and Kluge, what is significant about storytelling as a mode of communication is the extent to which the storyteller is able to recount a tale in such a way that its meaning is not communicated to the listener directly. In a fashion reminiscent of Kluge's delineation of the task of a radical cinema, Benjamin argues that 'it is half the art of storytelling to keep a story free from explanation as one reproduces it'.¹² 'The most extraordinary things, marvellous things', he writes, 'are related with the greatest accuracy, but the psychological connection of the events is not forced on the reader'.¹³ Rather, the tale is recounted in a manner that prompts the listener to draw on his or her own experience and imagination in an attempt to fill out the contours of the story.

In stark contrast, Benjamin argues that the 'prime requirement' of information 'is that it appear "understandable in itself"' – a quality which, in 'lay[ing] claim to prompt verifiability', is clearly at odds with 'the spirit of storytelling'.¹⁴ Taking the form and content of daily newspapers as his prime example, Benjamin argues that the 'replacement of the older narration by information [...] reflects the increasing atrophy of experience'.¹⁵ 'Every morning', he writes,

brings us the news of the globe, and yet we are poor in noteworthy stories. This is because no event any longer comes to us without already being shot through with explanation. In other words, by now almost nothing that happens benefits storytelling; almost everything benefits information.¹⁶

In keeping with his analysis, in 'Some Motifs in Baudelaire', of the modern decline in the capacity 'to assimilate data of the world [...] by way of [one's] experience',¹⁷ Benjamin argues that '[i]f it were the intention of the press to have the reader assimilate the information it supplies as part of his own experience, it would not achieve its purpose'.¹⁸ 'But its intention', he claims, 'is just the opposite, and it is achieved':

to isolate what happens from the realm in which it could affect the experience of the reader. The principles of journalistic information (freshness of the news, brevity, comprehensibility, and, above all, lack of connection between the individual news items) contribute as much to this as does the make-up of the pages and the paper's style.¹⁹

In a similar vein to Benjamin, Negt and Kluge argue in *Public Sphere and Experience* that the emphasis on brevity and the cultivation of immediate comprehension characteristic of television news broadcasts impacts negatively, not only on the viewer's capacity to assimilate news items by way of his or her own experience, but on the viewer's ability to conceive of the meaning of a particular situation or event outside of the terms within which it has been framed by the programme. 'A sensational news item', they argue,

is broadcast; but it is not accompanied by programmes that might meaningfully interpret this news in the light of social contradictions or develop it in relation to the viewer's own experience. It is only on such a broadened basis that grief, sympathy, incorporation into a historical context, or an autonomous reaction by the viewer become possible. [...] Insofar as experiences do manage to penetrate the items on the evening news, they are, in the commentaries, translated into an esoteric language that promotes the rapid consumption of events.²⁰

The alternative conception of the possibilities of the medium outlined in *Public Sphere and Experience* takes as its starting point the need to replace the 'monologue'²¹ format of information-heavy programmes such as news broadcasts with programme formats that are genuinely organised around mobilising the partici-

pation of the viewer. Drawing on Bertolt Brecht's 1932 analysis of the extent to which radio could be 'transformed from an apparatus of distribution into one of communication',²² Negt and Kluge argue that 'the foundation of a possible emancipatory development of television' must be organised around the creation of the 'self-determination of [its] viewers'.²³ 'Radio', Brecht argues,

would be the greatest conceivable communication apparatus of public life, an enormous system of channels, that is, it would be this if it were to understand how to not only transmit, but also receive, in other words, how to make the listener not only hear but also speak, and how to bring him into the relationship instead of isolating him.²⁴

In a similar vein to his delineation of the collaborative nature of the spectatorial relationship cultivated by *Autorenfilm*, Kluge (following Brecht) argues that the greater the degree of 'reciprocity' between the viewer and the programme on screen, the more effective the programme is in generating a public sphere within which viewers are encouraged to participate in the meaning-making process surrounding issues, events and ideas that impact on their own concerns, experiences and interests.²⁵

For Negt and Kluge, one of the greatest obstacles to the cultivation of such a public sphere is what they describe as the 'problem of *television realism*'.²⁶ In keeping with Kluge's analysis of the degree to which our capacity to conceive of the possibilities of both the past and the future is foreclosed by historical narratives that describe particular outcomes and occurrences as 'necessary' and/or 'realistic', Negt and Kluge argue that the tightly organised, unambiguous manner in which news items are packaged on television news broadcasts naturalises the occurrences being represented – providing the viewer with the impression that it is not possible to do anything to change the current situation.

A staunch critic of the manner in which such packaging prohibits us from conceiving of the extent to which things could, in fact, be very different, Kluge argues that an emancipatory television practice would channel its energies towards stimulating the imagination of the audience into reconceiving the possibilities of the present. In the realm of the imagination, he argues,

[t]he obstacles of reality cease to exist. If the imagination has good reasons to disregard these real obstacles – as a compensation for the reality principle – then the question is how can one, for the sake of whatever cause, encourage the imagination to develop such perspectives on it (i.e. perspectives different from those inherent in things as they are). In documentary film this could only be realised via a mixing of forms – the only method which permits radical changes in perspective.²⁷

In keeping with Kluge's analysis of the active spectatorial relationship cultivated by the loosely woven, mixed form characteristic of his films, Negt and Kluge argue that 'the artisanal production of individual items'²⁸ is more effec-

tive in cultivating the imagination and participation of the television audience. For Benjamin, too, it is the simple, handspun quality of the storyteller's tales that is essential to their capacity to engage an audience. 'In fact', Benjamin writes, 'one can go on and ask oneself whether the relationship of the storyteller to his material, human life, is not in itself a craftsman's relationship, whether it is not his very task to fashion the raw material of experience, his own and that of others, in a solid, useful and unique way'.²⁹

In the light of these comments, one can begin to get a sense of the extent to which some of the key criticisms that have been levelled at certain characteristics of Kluge's television programmes (such as the loose, handcrafted quality of the work and the perceived inability of the programmes to 'get to the point') are actually characteristics that are central to Negt and Kluge's alternative conception of the possibilities of television as a medium: a medium which – instead of bombarding the viewer with preprocessed units of information – would actively encourage the audience to draw on their own imagination and experience in an attempt to engage with the materials on screen.

Raw Materials for the Imagination

In a 1996 episode of the aptly titled *News and Stories* (a forty-five minute programme broadcast on Sat1 on Monday evenings) Kluge evokes an image of television that is in keeping with the delineation of the shortcomings of the medium outlined in *Public Sphere and Experience*. The episode in question is entitled 'Detonation Deutschland/Sprengbilder einer Nation von Julian Rosefeldt und Piero Steinle' ('Detonation Germany/Explosive images of a nation by Julian Rosefeldt and Piero Steinle'),³⁰ and revolves around a discussion between Kluge and two German artists – the recent work of whom includes 'Detonation Deutschland': an installation of video footage depicting the state-sanctioned demolition of a number of historically and/or architecturally significant buildings in Germany.

Towards the end of the programme (and over an intertitle announcing 'Detonation Deutschland' as the third project of Rosefeldt and Steinle) Kluge asks the latter (who subsequently appears in medium close-up) whether the remains of a demolition typically consist of 'raw material' ('*Rohstoff*'), or whether it is 'scrap metal and rubbish' ('*Schrott und Schutt*') that remain after such an explosion. After listening to Steinle (who confirms that, 'as a matter of principle', it is scrap metal and rubbish that constitute the remains of a demolition) Kluge enthusiastically suggests that television, too, could be likened to such an explosion.³¹

Although located off-screen, Kluge's highly enthusiastic presence is reflected in the somewhat bewildered, politely smiling face of Steinle, who pauses uncomfortably before seeking to respond to Kluge's observation. Although cryptic within the immediate context of the programme, viewers familiar with Kluge's conception of the task of a radical cinema would have already drawn a connection between his observations about the installation and his frequent likening of his own films to 'construction sites' or buildings in process³² – the unfinished, open structure of which encourages the spectator to engage creatively with the raw materials out of which films such as *THE PATRIOT* and *THE POWER OF EMOTION* are constructed.

In the context of the programme, Kluge's likening of television to an explosion that produces scrap metal and rubbish (rather than the raw materials favoured by Kluge) could be said to echo his and Negt's negative delineation of the closed-off, monodimensional content of information-heavy programmes elaborated in *Public Sphere and Experience*. Indeed, in stark contrast to these programmes, Kluge's work for television does not provide the audience with pre-processed units of information which – like the scrap metal and rubbish left behind after a demolition – cannot easily be incorporated into new constructions (nor the structures of meaning generated in the spectator's head that are frequently discussed by Kluge³³). Rather, in keeping with both Kluge's delineation of the task of a radical cinema, and the call – in *Public Sphere and Experience* – for programme formats that are genuinely organised around mobilising the participation of the audience, Kluge's television programmes are constructed out of a diverse collection of raw materials – the unfinished, open structure of which encourages the viewer to draw upon his/her own experience and imagination in an attempt to fill out the contours of the programme.

The central device employed by Kluge for generating these raw materials is the interview format around which the majority of his programmes are constructed.³⁴ What is unique about these interviews (which typically take place in busy public spaces such as bars, cafes, theatres, museums or, alternatively, in the storeroom of Kluge's Munich office) is the dynamic way in which Kluge as interviewer seeks to engage the interviewee in a conversation which ricochets imaginatively between a broad range of topics while seeking to address the complexity of the issue in question. In the majority of these interviews, it is Kluge's highly enthusiastic mode of questioning which sets the tone of the conversation and which ensures that the topic is addressed from multiple perspectives. Although this is sometimes achieved through the presentation of interviews with a range of different subjects,³⁵ these multiple perspectives are more regularly generated by Kluge himself who demonstrates, what Christian Schulte has described as, the 'extraordinary capacity, through unexpected

changes in perspective, to [both] stimulate [...] the imagination of his dialogue partner', and to 'set his capacity for memory into action'.³⁶

As Schulte's analysis of a conversation between Kluge and Heiner Müller makes clear,³⁷ Kluge does not conceive of the interview format as a forum within which the interviewee is simply required to rehearse his or her fully formed ideas about a particular topic for the benefit of an attentive television audience.³⁸ Indeed, the interviews conducted on Kluge's programmes do not (save those moments in which Kluge himself dominates the conversation³⁹) seek to close down meaning by instructing or persuading the audience of the benefits of a certain interpretation of events, or a particular line of thinking. Rather, in keeping with the call for interactivity outlined in *Public Sphere and Experience*, the interviews conducted by Kluge are both dynamic and porous in their structure – prompting both the interviewee *and* the audience to establish their own connections with the raw materials generated by the discussions.

This emphasis on interactivity (which is absolutely crucial for an understanding of the significance of Kluge's television, film and literary work) is also evident in the highly eclectic 'mixed form' of the programmes themselves, which (in a manner reminiscent of Kluge's films) are constructed out of a diverse collection of raw materials. Also reminiscent of films such as *THE PATRIOT* and *THE POWER OF EMOTION* is the manner in which Kluge employs devices and techniques redolent of early cinema in his attempt to create programme formats that are organised around cultivating the active participation of the television audience.⁴⁰ In Kluge's programmes, these devices (which include a frequent use of intertitles, iris masks to frame the image, the shooting of landscapes from moving vehicles⁴¹ and a liberal use of colour tinting) are supplemented by a plethora of possibilities opened up by digital video (including the layering of image and text through superimposition, the production of complex collage effects created by montage within the frame, the generation and animation of digital images, the employment of scrolling text messages to pose questions and display quotes and the fragmentation, duplication, magnification and rotation of the image).⁴²

In the opening sequence of 'Geisterstunde mit Bildern' ('Ghost hour with Images'),⁴³ for example, a black and white intertitle announcing the themes of the programme (which include 'What is real?', 'Plato's Cave Parable in *The Republic*', 'The 100th anniversary of the death of Karl Marx', and 'The Philosopher in front of the electrical monitor') is followed by an elaborately crafted collage of both still and moving images. The screen is divided into two parts: the right hand section features a monitor which is stacked with yellow tinted books, and which displays a montage of black and white footage of crowd scenes and the public display of Lenin's body, while the left hand section consists of a full-screen montage of black and white footage of planes in bomber formation

which is overlaid with iris-framed, red and blue colour-tinted footage of what appears to be army personnel. In the sequence that follows (which is briefly preceded by a montage of still images of iris-framed maps and a photograph of a bust of Socrates) Oskar Negt is shown seated in a dark room in front of two monitors – both of which display black-and-white documentary footage of war scenes, including images of burning buildings and bomber pilots in action.

In a similar vein to the active television viewer envisioned by Negt and Kluge in *Public Sphere and Experience*, Negt uses the raw materials that appear before him on the monitors as springboards for the formation of his own associations, connections and ideas. These associations (which provide a form of voice-over narration reminiscent of Kluge's films) prompt him to question both the goal of warfare, and the image of reality projected by such images – a train of thought that leads him to a consideration of Plato's cave allegory (in which prisoners mistake the shadows projected on the wall of the cave in which they are imprisoned for reality itself).⁴⁴ Pointing to the images of warfare on the monitors, Negt states in a critical tone that, according to Plato, such images are shadows of ideas, and that it is ideas (and not the source of the shadows) that constitute reality – a point which Negt then correlates with Hegel's analysis of the spirit of progress driving world history, stating critically (as he gestures towards the monitors) that it is not the progress of history, nor the progress of consciousness, which is unfolding before us in this footage.

Apart from providing the audience with a model of a highly imaginative, dynamic mode of spectatorship, what is interesting about this sequence is the way in which Negt's observations and associations speak (albeit in an opaque, condensed fashion) to Kluge's analysis of how the highly circumscribed image of events presented by the mainstream media actively shapes our understanding of what is appropriate and/or acceptable behaviour, and impacts negatively on our capacity to conceive of the extent to which an event, or series of events, could in fact have turned out very differently.

In keeping with his criticism of both films and television programmes that seek to pedagogically impress their ideas upon the viewing audience, Kluge's work for television does not provide alternative 'readings' of topical issues or events, nor do his programmes endeavour to channel the observations and associations of viewers into conceiving of the benefits of a particular idea or outcome. Rather, in cleaving open a series of 'cultural windows' within the commercial channels for the so-called 'old media', Kluge has endeavoured to not only rejuvenate our conception of the possibilities of television as a medium, but to actively encourage the viewing audience to draw on their own imagination and experience in the aid of the creation of different cultural and historical imaginaries.

Notes

1. Christian Schröder, 'Das etwas andere Autoren-Fernsehen', *Der Tagesspiegel* (1 November 1991).
2. Over the years, these figures have included (to name just a few) Volker Schlöndorff, Christa Wolf, Jean-Luc Godard, Pierre Boulez, Konzaburo Oe, Sophie Rois, Helke Sander, Theo Angelopolous, Jörg Immendorf, Miriam Hansen, Hannelore Hoger, Romuald Karmaker, Wong Kar-Wai, Claude Chabrol, and Werner Herzog, as well as regulars such as Heiner Müller, Oskar Negt, Christoph Schlingensiefel, Manfred Osten, Joseph Vogl, Joachim Kersten, Ulrike Sprenger, Peter Berling and Dirk Baeker.
3. For an analysis of Kluge's programmes within the broader context of the history of magazine programmes in Germany, see Knut Hackett, 'Von anderen Erfahrungen in der Fernsehöffentlichkeit: Alexander Kluges Kulturmagazine und die Fernsehgeschichte', in *Kluges Fernsehen: Alexander Kluges Kulturmagazine*, ed. Christian Schulte and Winfried Siebers (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002), pp. 195-219.
4. '196 bpm – Romuald Karmaker filmt Tekknokönig DJ Hell', *Primetime Spätausgabe* (RTL, 14 September 2003), 'Die Tochter des Miraculix – Vincenzo Bellinis geniale Oper "Norma"', *News and Stories* (Sat1, 7 September 2003), 'Fassbinders Gesammelte Hinterlassenschaften', *News and Stories* (Sat1, 16 September 2001), 'Organisiertes Glück', *News and Stories* (Sat1, 19 September 1994), 'Baustellen der Macht – die französischen Philosophen Foucault und Deleuze über die "Rhizome der Gewalt"', *10 vor 11* (RTL, 10 November 2003).
5. As Matthias Uecker has outlined in his study of Kluge's television programmes, DCTP (which is owned jointly by Kluge [50%], Spiegel-Verlag [12.5%], and the Japanese advertising agency Dentsu [37.5%]) developed out of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kabel- und Satellitenprogramme, an organisation established by Kluge (together with book publishers, film directors, and theatre executives) in an attempt to create a 'niche' for the so-called 'old media' within the sphere of commercial television. The programme *Die Stunde der Filmemacher* (The Hour of the Filmmakers), which first screened on Sat1 in 1985, developed out of this alliance, and showcased programmes produced by German film-makers which were overseen by Kluge, who served as executive producer. For a detailed account of the events which led to the establishment of these companies, see 'Prinzip Gegenproduktion: Alexander Kluges "Development Company for Television Programs (DCTP)"', in Matthias Uecker, *Anti-Fernsehen? Alexander Kluges Fernsehproduktionen* (Marburg: Schüren, 2000), pp. 48-63. For an overview in English, see Peter C. Lutze, *Alexander Kluge: The Last Modernist* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), pp. 180-184.
6. Peter J. Humphreys, *Media and Media Policy in Germany: The Press and Broadcasting since 1945* 2nd ed. (Oxford/Providence: Berg, 1994), p. 165. For a detailed account of the public service ideals of ARD and ZDF, see pp. 148-152 and 164-168 respectively.
7. Quoted in Christian Schulte and Winfried Siebers, 'Vorwort', in *Kluges Fernsehen: Alexander Kluges Kulturmagazine*, ed. Christian Schulte and Winfried Siebers (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002), p. 8. Despite Thoma's claim, Kluge argues that his programmes often attract over one million viewers. See Astrid Deuber-Mankowsky and Giaco Schiesser, 'In der Echtzeit der Gefühle: Gespräch mit Alexander Kluge',

- in *Die Schrift an der Wand. Alexander Kluge: Rohstoffe und Materialien*, ed. Christian Schulte (Osnabrück: Universitätsverlag Rasch, 2000), p. 365. [See translation in this book, ed.] For a detailed breakdown of the ratings figures for Kluge's programmes in the first quarter of 1994, see Uecker, *Anti-Fernsehen?*, p. 62.
8. Mark Siemons, 'Zwölfertonmusik im Zirkus: Das Fernsehen Alexander Kluges', in *Fernsehen. Medien, Macht und Märkte*, ed. Helmut Monkenbusch (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch, 1994), p. 108.
 9. For an account of Kluge's efforts in this regard, see Gertrud Koch and Heide Schlüppmann, "'Nur Trümmern traue ich [...]': Ein Gespräch mit Alexander Kluge', in *Kanalarbeit: Medienstrategien im Kulturwandel*, ed. Hans Ulrich Reck (Basel/Frankfurt am Main: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1998).
 10. Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere* (London/Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).
 11. Walter Benjamin, 'The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov', in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (London: Fontana Press, 1992), pp. 83-107.
 12. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
 13. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
 14. *Ibid.*, p. 88. 'The value of information', he writes, 'does not survive the moment in which it was new. It lives only at that moment; it has to surrender to it completely and explain itself to it without losing any time. A story is different. It does not expend itself. It preserves and concentrates its strength and is capable of releasing it even after a long time'. *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.
 15. Walter Benjamin, 'Some Motifs in Baudelaire', in Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (London/New York: Verso, 1997), p. 113.
 16. Benjamin, 'The Storyteller', p. 89. See also Benjamin's short piece 'The Handkerchief' (1932) which anticipates his criticism of newspapers in 'The Storyteller' by way of a story about his discussion with a sea captain: "You can learn nothing from the papers", he said. "They always want to explain everything to you." And in fact isn't it half the art of journalism to keep the news free of explanations? And didn't the ancients set an example for us by presenting events, as it were, dry, draining them entirely of psychological explanations and opinions of every sort? Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings* vol. 2, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland and Gary Smith (Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 659-660.
 17. Benjamin, 'Some Motifs in Baudelaire', p. 112.
 18. *Ibid.*, p.112.
 19. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
 20. Negt and Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience*, p. 108. Like Benjamin, Negt and Kluge argue that the inability to assimilate information presented by news broadcasts by way of one's experience is further enhanced by the 'hodgepodge selection of news items: A train crash, a strike in Italy, the death of a philosopher, the abduction of a young girl, a controversy about the Deutsche mark (appearing in the form of a point-counterpoint between two politicians), a weather report, and so on – all of these items contain, in and of themselves, genuine information, but this information is cut off from its real social roots'. p. 119.

21. Negt and Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience*, p. 114.
22. Brecht quoted in *ibid.*, note 9, p. 103, and Brecht, 'The Radio as a Communicative Apparatus', in *Bertolt Brecht on Film and Radio*, ed. Marc Silberman (London: Methuen, 2001), pp. 41-46.
23. Negt and Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience*, p. 103.
24. Brecht quoted in *ibid.*, note 9, pp. 103-104, and Brecht, 'The Radio as a Communications Apparatus', p. 42. See also Hans Magnus Enzensberger, 'Constituents of a Theory of the Media', *New Left Review* (no. 64 November/December, 1970) in which Brecht's analysis of the possibilities of radio is employed to make a similar argument about the possibilities of television. See also Walter Benjamin's short piece 'Reflections on the Radio' which opens with the statement: 'The crucial failing of this institution [the radio] has been to perpetuate the fundamental separation between practitioners and the public, a separation which is at odds with its technological basis'. Benjamin, *Selected Writings* vol. 2, p. 543.
25. See Miriam Hansen's discussion of this 'reciprocity' in 'Reinventing the Nickelodeon: Notes on Kluge and Early Cinema', in *October* (no. 46 fall, 1988), p. 185. [Reprinted in this book, ed.] See also Deuber-Mankowsky and Schiesser, 'In der Echtzeit der Gefühle: Gespräch mit Alexander Kluge', p. 361.
26. Negt and Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience*, p. 128.
27. Alexander Kluge, 'On Film and the Public Sphere', *New German Critique* (no. 24/25 fall/winter, 1981/1982), p. 215. Translation modified. [Reprinted in this book, ed.] See 'Die Rolle der Phantasie', in Klaus Eder and Alexander Kluge, *Ulmer Dramaturgien. Reibungsverluste* (München/Wien: Carl Hanser, 1980), pp. 62-63.
28. Negt and Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience*, p. 114.
29. Benjamin, 'The Storyteller', p. 107.
30. *News and Stories* (Sat1, 8 July 1996).
31. See also Uecker's analysis of this discussion in *Anti-Fernsehen?*, p. 100.
32. See, for example, Jürgen Bevers et al., "'Eine Baustelle ist vorteilhafter als ganze Häuser": Ein Gespräch mit Alexander Kluge', *Spuren: Zeitschrift für Kunst und Gesellschaft* (no.1 February/March, 1980), p. 17.
33. See, for example, Alexander Kluge, 'Pact with a Dead Man', in *West German Filmmakers on Film: Visions and Voices*, ed. Eric Rentschler (New York/London: Holmes and Meier, 1988), p. 236, and Edgar Reitz, Alexander Kluge, and Wilfried Reinke, 'Word and Film', *October* (no. 46 fall, 1988), p. 87.
34. Although the interview serves as an anchor for the majority of Kluge's programmes, a significant number of the programmes do not feature interviews, but are constructed out of a diverse montage of materials (such as photographs, diagrams, clips from films, quotes, and electronically generated images) which address a particular theme or topic. See, for example, 'Das Xmas Project', *10 vor 11* (RTL, 12 December 1993), 'Darwins Waltzer', *Primetime Spätausgabe* (RTL, 26 August 1990), and 'Jahresüberblick', *News and Stories* (Sat1, 3 January 1994).
35. See, for example, 'Ein Straßenbahnfahrt durch eine Stadt in den neuen Bundesländern' ('A tram ride through a city in the new federal states'), *10 vor 11* (RTL, 9 March 1992). In this programme (which provides a portrait of the history of tram travel in Halberstadt) these multiple perspectives are generated through discussions with a range of interviewees, including a tram driver, transport superintendent, mechanic, passenger, and town chronicler.

36. Christian Schulte, 'Fernsehen und Eigensinn', in *Kluges Fernsehen: Alexander Kluges Kulturmagazine*, ed. Christian Schulte and Winfried Siebers (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002), p. 78. [See translation in this book, ed.]
37. [See Alexander Kluge and Heiner Müller, 'Character Armour and Mobile Warfare' in this book, ed].
38. See, for example, Rainer Lewandowski's interview with Kluge, and Kluge's annoyance at Lewandowski's frequent attempts to draw the conversation back into the direction that he had anticipated when forming his questions. In response to Lewandowski's claim that Kluge's response did not address the point he had wanted to make, Kluge states that he should focus on participating in the discussion, rather than seeking to 'pedagogically' draw out a certain opinion. Rainer Lewandowski, *Die Filme von Alexander Kluge* (Hildesheim/New York: Olms Press, 1980), p. 47.
39. Uecker, for example, argues that Kluge's 'way of steering the conversation in the direction of his own interests can at times appear aggressive, even violent, rather than just persistent'. See Matthias Uecker, "'Für Kultur ist es nie zu spät!" – Alexander Kluge's Television Productions', in *'Whose Story?': Continuities in Contemporary German-Language Literature*, ed. Arthur Williams, K. Stuart Parkes and Julian Preece (Bern: Peter Lang, 1998), p. 345. See also Uecker's discussion of this topic in *Anti-Fernsehen?*, p. 109.
40. For Kluge's comments on his attempts to 'reclaim film history for television', see Deuber-Mankowsky and Schiesser, 'In der Echtzeit der Gefühle: Gespräch mit Alexander Kluge', p. 363, and Koch and Schlüpmann, "'Nur Trümmern traue ich [...]': Ein Gespräch mit Alexander Kluge', p. 21.
41. See, for example, 'Ein Straßenbahnfahrt durch eine Stadt in den neuen Bundesländern', *10 vor 11* (RTL, 9 March 1992).
42. As Uecker has pointed out, it is this manipulation of the image that enables Kluge to incorporate a broad range of materials into his programmes without having to seek copyright permission. See Uecker, "'Für Kultur ist es nie zu spät!" – Alexander Kluge's Television Productions', p. 347. See also Arno Makowsky's comments in this regard, to which Uecker also refers, 'Der Pate als Quotenkiller', *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (no. 240 16-17 October 1993), p. 10.
43. *10 vor 11* (RTL, 27 August 1990).
44. See 'The Simile of the Cave', in Plato, *The Republic* (London: Penguin Books, 1987), pp. 316-325.

Television and Obstnacy¹

Christian Schulte

They are incompatible with the notions about genre that exist in television. The 'culture journals' of Alexander Kluge define themselves deliberately as *counter-productions*, as draft projects aimed against the dumbing-down tendencies of the medium and the attention deficits that go with it. Instead of reporting on grand cultural events in the same old standardised forms, as is usual in other journals, Kluge opts for variety and interconnectivity (*Zusammenhang*). In a programmatic statement, he says that the point is '[to] develop forms that can survive inside this impossible situation which destroys expression. These will probably be short forms, but ones that produce so many sequences among themselves and rely so much on the technique of variation – which is also a technique of difference – that in this way very simple and extensive things can be retold'.²

What Kluge is describing here is nothing less than a far-reaching experimental disposition to which, with each programme, a further building block, a further perspective, can be added. To describe, without wanting to pin it down, this spinning out of threads – in principle an unfinished process – this rampant flowering that is rhizoid and undirected, one could speak of an *audiovisual essay*, particularly since the style of the essay has long ceased to be identical with a genre of its own, but is rather articulated ubiquitously in all sorts of other forms and media.³ Of course, this concept would only apply to Kluge's films (beginning perhaps with *DEUTSCHLAND IM HERBST/GERMANY IN AUTUMN*) and television journals, although the theoretical works written jointly with Oskar Negt (I am thinking, for example, of the monumental montage *Geschichte und Eigensinn*) are also *essays* on the 'political economy of the labour force'.⁴ And Kluge's narrative prose works, now collected in *Chronik der Gefühle*,⁵ also display numerous essayistic features, above all the repeated overlapping of narration and reflection (and clear references to Montaigne, Musil, Benjamin and Adorno). So we are talking about parts of an overall project that is rooted in the identity of the author. And it is precisely this notion of the author with which Kluge laconically characterises his own praxis: an author is someone who does something autonomous.

There are doubtless authors who use their status as writers or film-makers to mark a separation from their readers and viewers. But for Kluge authorship is a collective quantity, a simple condition of entering into a dialogue. To be an author is for him to behave and to express oneself authentically according to one's relationship to reality and to circulate publicly the testimony of this living

experience. Authorship in this understanding of it is dependent on response and participation, on cooperation. For this reason all aesthetic procedures in his programmes are directed against the medium's conventions, against the illusion of completeness, of the finished, the perfect. Like his films, his television work has the 'character of a construction site',⁶ whose fragmentary forms do not permit a passive reception. The viewer is absolutely challenged to behave autonomously and – like the author – to appropriate the coarse-meshed offerings as the raw material of his own experience. It is a basic part of Kluge's authorial strategy to put pressure on the viewer's 'muscles of the imagination',⁷ in order to make possible a more complex understanding and an increased self-awareness.

In these programmes vertical and horizontal cuts are made, in overlapping 'mixed forms',⁸ through present and past; the most disparate and apparently insignificant details from film, theatre and music history and from current affairs, brain research, sociology, philosophy, anthropology, and from such *exotic* disciplines as physiognomy are brought together in ever-changing connections – open constellations whose individual elements have not congealed into ahistorical information, as they are in other programmes where they are presented as consumable culture. The design of the programmes could not be more varied: alongside the conversations are montages or collages of visual, musical and textual fragments, which not only reference the most disparate cultural traditions but also present parts of his own film and literary oeuvre in ever-changing contexts. The images are electronically treated in manifold ways: diverse split-screen techniques divide the screen into separate fields in which a number of images can be seen simultaneously or the same motif is shown from different perspectives; fade-in windows repeat – changing between positive and negative – the full picture in miniature; interpolated titles and circular fades reactivate the feeling of the silent film; images are reproduced in time-lapse, layered in the manner of a palimpsest, turned like pages, mirrored, coloured and overlaid by grids – Kluge leaves no stone unturned to deprive the images of their immediacy, to direct attention to their media origin and to engrave on them in a sense – against all squaring – their own *Beyond*.

This fundamental scepticism regarding the image becomes most evident when – occasionally throughout a whole programme – only letters are to be seen on the screen, whose graphic arrangement indicates a last ironic flicker of iconicity, in actuality stating that not only texts but also images demand to be *read*. For in this Kluge is at one with the avant-gardists Brecht, Benjamin and Adorno: the reality of the twentieth century can no longer be perceived in the image alone, the reproduction can never be one of relationships, but only ever a view, an external view. He likes to quote Brecht's saying about reality having slid into the functional, and discovers alongside the functional a half dozen other physical states in which one can encounter reality.⁹ Two photographs of

skyscrapers that Kluge (in the 1983 essay 'Die Utopie Film'¹⁰) provided with captions are like a late echo of the emblematics of the *War Primer*. One caption reads: 'A media firm. One cannot see it. The typical thing about it is that there is nothing typical that depicts it'. The other says: 'The Paramount Palace on Broadway. That what happens in this building is not simple, is visible'. For Kluge it is not a question of bringing out the *rational core* of the two giant enterprises: rather, his captions foreground the paradoxical nature of the depictions themselves, which purport to show something which cannot be shown, because the symbolic representations of these institutions are just as abstract as the economic processes that are carried out inside them. Kluge is interested in such 'skyscrapers'¹¹ of abstraction because they say something about the state of society and about the intensity with which life and the multifariousness of its expression are banished from public view. His aesthetic operations all come from the insight that reality presents an ensemble of variable relationships that must be read in different directions simultaneously, like texts written on top of each other.

Ellipse and Puzzle

If one screens one of these programs today, what strikes one at first is that every kind of moderating, every direct address to the public, is abandoned. That was not always the case. In the early days of *10 vor 11* Sabina Trooger occasionally appeared as the announcer or moderator, although she acknowledged this as a specific media type with an ironic sideways glance. An example is the programme 'Aus der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts/Das Fliegerlied, Schlager von 1932' ('From the First Half of the Twentieth Century/The Airman's Song, the Hit of 1932'),¹² a fine example of Kluge's 'dramaturgy of brevity'¹³ that he tries to put into practice in the form of vaudeville or circus-like performances. After a short film clip and the fading in of the song 'Flieger, grüß mir die Sonne' ('Airman, say hello to the sun for me'), Sabina Trooger is seen up close; drily she announces 'number 3', only to continue – after a dense montage sequence on the theme of 'Reichsrohrbahn' – with numbers 7 to 10. Number 11 is also missed out, and with number 12 – a montage on Schönberg's opera *Moses and Aaron* with pictures of New Year's Eve 1932, clouds in time-lapse and another clip from a film already quoted in the first sequence – the programme finally comes to an end. As a viewer one is at first confused and has the feeling that one has missed something. One knows from experience that one will be reliably guided through the programme by the TV moderator, but now one must learn that this rule does not apply here, indeed that the incomplete programme announce-

ments are part of the programme's dramaturgy. One must think again, and then one might learn that the normal programme structure with moderator is by no means compulsory. The structure with announcer and moderator, the norm in programme design, turns out, in Kluge's work, to be *faulty*, incomplete. The omissions make it clear that the genres of television are *constructed*, and therefore are *alterable*, and its performances, aimed at effectiveness and a sense of completion, do not have any substance, but are based from the beginning on partitions, on exclusions (e.g. of spontaneity). Just as there is no essentially filmic narrative mode, so there is no form of programme presentation that is genuinely native to the medium of television. That the real world is more complex than a schematised form of representation can depict is a truism, but there is a difference between whether this distinction is itself a component of the media presentation or not.

The site of this self-reflection is for Kluge the staged empty space, the 'in-between'.¹⁴ It directs the attention of the viewer to the diversity that lies beyond the screen and to one's own relation to reality. Kluge uses certain representational forms of television, but he alienates them in such a manner that their supposedly stabilised semiotic is taken away. The direct address to the audience was soon replaced by a technique that has since given the journals a high degree of recognisability: a line of print moving from left to right on the screen with short-hand indications of the programme's topic and a tableau – with various graphic foregroundings – that present the title. These elements provide, in the manner of a film's opening and closing credits, the framework for each programme.

First example: in the *Prime Time* programme "'Im Zeichen des Mars"/Charakterpanzer und Bewegungskrieg' ('Under the sign of Mars/Character Armour and Mobile Warfare'),¹⁵ dedicated to Heiner Müller on the occasion of his 65th birthday, we see a black screen into whose centre – in a kind of *vanitas* symbol – a strikingly colourful picture is faded in. At the same time there is a booming, monotonous, hectic music that henceforth – in various degrees of intensity – accompanies almost all of the visual montages. The static puzzle-image – like the *pictura* in Baroque emblematics – is completed by subtitles (*subscription*) that bring movement to the screen. The moving text appears, is briefly legible and disappears again. In white and red letters the following appears:

To armour = 'to make oneself insensitive to something'/Tank = 'battle vehicle with armour-plating and caterpillar tread'/Music Journal with *Heiner Müller* and the death and grind groups ABHORRENCE, ACROSTICHON, TOXAEMIA and DISGRACE.

All expectations created by these keywords come to nothing; as parts of a quasi-emblematic ensemble of images, music and texts, they yield instead a 'hybrid structure'¹⁶ with overlapping and contradictory meanings. A programme on

the topic of war as a music journal? A music journal with Heiner Müller? And last but not least: with *this* music? If the definition of terms that lead in leitmotif fashion into the programme, taken by themselves, at first accommodate the viewer's need for clarity, for decidable meaning, the result of these words is all the more irritating as they confront him with the possibility that the human reaction of armouring oneself has something to do with those steel battle vehicles, that he himself is just such a steel battle vehicle, a tank. The montage that follows, with multi-perspective cut-up images of war, of various types of tank, allegorical pictures in miniature about the ego and the id, and brief dialogue snippets with Heiner Müller, supported by the intensity of the music, raises the bewildering question of whether perhaps war is perpetually raging, within and without, whether our inherited character-armour is not itself a warlike gesture that is only waiting for a chance to express itself.

Second example: The irritating but at the same time stimulating episode of *News & Stories* with the sociologist Niklas Luhmann¹⁷ also begins with such a puzzle, with the sketch of a mirrored historical motif that can be read as an allegorical cipher for the dispositive structure of the dialogues. Beneath a dividing red diagonal bar the following moving text appears:

Niklas Luhmann is, with Jürgen Habermas, one of the great theoreticians of now-time/He is concerned with minima moralia of our ability to make distinctions/For example with 'parallel poetry', 'love', 'society', 'justice', Talcott Parsons, the devil, etc./Encounter with a public thinker in an intimate setting –

Then the title appears:

'Careful about understanding too quickly'/Talk Show with Niklas Luhmann on the *ability to make distinctions*

If one looks more closely at these running captions, one can recognise some other interventions characteristic of Kluge: the pragmatists Luhmann, Habermas and Parsons are mentioned by name; but interspersed are terms that, like bookmarks, evoke another – one could say oppositional – group of writers: the phrase 'now-time' is associated with the name and specifically the philosophy of history put forward by Walter Benjamin,¹⁸ 'minima moralia' is the title of the famous collection of aphorisms by the philosopher Theodor W. Adorno, and by twice using the phrase 'ability to make distinctions', Kluge smuggles into the systems theorist's luggage a category that is central to his *own* thinking¹⁹, one that means something like *critical competence*,²⁰ the ability to differentiate. This does not so much define a position – which could be the case, since Kluge numbers Benjamin and Adorno among his 'super-rabbis'²¹ – as outline a complex of starting points for ideas. But once again this happens in a gesture that raises

questions in the viewer's mind – insofar as he picks up the associations – questions such as: Are Luhmann and Habermas theoreticians of 'now-time', a term Benjamin uses in the sense of a messianic moment, that 'now of recognisability'²² in which the present of a corresponding past recognises itself as intended? Is Luhmann concerned here with 'minima moralia' in Adorno's sense? With the 'ability to make distinctions in Kluge's sense? As outlined above, no fronts are being formed here; different directions are merely being indicated in which thought might go, possibilities of thinking, in other words. What use might be made of these is not postulated; that is left to the viewer.

One can read Kluge's putting together of diverse starting points for thought as a tentative disposition, a suggestion to the interested viewer to make his own mind up in the jungle of theory, for example read Luhmann in the light of Adorno, etc. Here, too, it is a matter of the lively manipulation of apparently irreconcilable schools of thought, whose frozen identities can perhaps, at some points, be thawed. One merely needs to work with them in an experimental way. The practical value of such an attitude would be precisely that 'capacity to make distinctions', that 'diacritical attentiveness'²³ that is Kluge's central concern. The constellation described above would be a model for this. Obviously not everyone will be able to work associatively with these hints or pointers, but that is another matter.

Encounters in Private Mode

What we see and hear between the frame segments such as logo, text ribbon and title tableau is also not directed in an immediate way at the viewer; it is never designed to ingratiate itself. Rather, the viewer is witness to a process that has always already begun and has not come to a close at the end of the programme. It does not matter whether Kluge is conducting *pure* conversations or is arranging disparate fragments from the most diverse film, musical and textual traditions in a *wild* montage, or is producing hybrid crosses of both – what happens on the screen is for the most part independent of the reader's attention and thus enables him to behave autonomously as well, and to phase himself in and out. Kluge leaves it to the viewer to place his trust in a form of production which refrains utterly from the usual promises of practical usefulness and instead makes an offer that is purely product-oriented, an offer that either has a practical use or not.

The last keyword in the running captions in the Luhmann programme, 'Begegnung mit einem öffentlich denkenden Mann in privater Umgangsform' ('Encounter with a Public Thinker in Private Mode'), is programmatic for the kind of

conversation that takes place in Kluge's programmes. 'Private mode' stands for a nuanced, authentic way of speaking in the midst of the sterile sameness of the media – without the discount of a tailor-made unambiguousness aimed at consumability. The warning 'careful of understanding too quickly' (like the puzzling sketch) announces that the viewer should not expect a talk show of the kind that his experience has prepared him for. Kluge is convinced that the senses' need for interconnectivity (*Zusammenhang*), interest and curiosity is itself stimulated as long as there is no longer a guiding thread, no purported organic structure. Kluge himself, in his role as interviewer, is mostly present only through his voice from off-screen. His interlocutors are as a rule experts in a specific area or, as Frieda Grafe once characterised them, 'persons who have a specificity or an image':²⁴ film-makers like Peter Schamoni, Romuald Karmakar, Tom Tykwer and Christoph Schlingensiefel, actors like Corinna Harfouch, Katharina Thalbach or Sophie Rois, the writer Hans Magnus Enzensberger, the criminologist Joachim Kersten, the literature specialist Joseph Vogl, the composers Pierre Boulez and Wolfgang Rihm, the conductor Michael Gielen, such diverse philosophers as Peter Sloterdijk and Kluge's co-author Oskar Negt, the techno-DJs Paul Johnson and Jeff Mills, the congenial translator and Proust specialist Ulrike Sprenger and Peter Berling who slipped into the most varied roles. Kluge developed with Berling the improvised *fake-talk* programme to the point where it became a genre in itself.²⁵ There are, in addition, countless conversations with politicians, diplomats and military men, with historians, scientists and managers – they are all introduced as authors who passionately pursue an interest. Some of Kluge's long-time guests are no longer alive: August Everding, Hans-Friedrich von Homeyer (alias Erich Komorowski) and the dramatist Heiner Müller, with whom Kluge conducted perhaps the most enduring conversations, conversations that show what living communication can be.

Unlike Günter Gaus, whose programme *Zur Person* can be seen regularly on *News & Stories*, Kluge lets conversations run on; his associative technique, circling round a topic, makes up in a sense the *micrological* model of an aesthetic that is free from the fetishism of meaning, designed to enter into a dialogue with everything that has an individual face; or, in Kluge's words, 'nothing that has a material substance is to be institutionalised'.²⁶ In this way an encyclopedia of a special kind has come into being over the years; one will not find in it entries on *top performances*, cultural fetishes that are important to know; instead one gains insights into the processes of cultural production, into their motifs and contexts. Kluge's questions take detours via the apparently incidental and unspectacular, in order to set up atmospheric spaces, and again and again they remove thematic focal points into far horizons, in which his interlocutor's imagination can find room to move. These conversations follow the maxims: 'Each person concentrates on the other'²⁷ and 'The fact that the running-time is not cut short is

more important than any content'.²⁸ Under these conditions there quite often emerge spontaneous, self-regulated forms of speaking that bring to consciousness the most distant fragments of experience. The following dialogue with Heiner Müller demonstrates this in an exemplary way:

Kluge: Maybe if you describe for me what the moon is. It's of course the satellite of a planet. How would you characterise something like that, just try to enter into the planetary system.

Müller: The first thing would be that the moon is something that you shouldn't set foot on. First all the other planets, then the moon. The moon is something that one shouldn't colonise, that one shouldn't touch; you should just leave it the way it is, or let it go the way it goes. I'm speaking now in an associative way [...]

Kluge: But how would you begin to talk about the moon, would you begin with the sun, would you begin with the planets, would you begin with the stars? You've just begun by saying one should not set foot on it. I think that's very consistent, but just try to describe, say for a stranger, what it is.

Müller: The moon is something you need to go to sleep. It's something you have to have in order to know when it's time to sleep.

By directing Heiner Müller's attention to the topic of the moon, asking him to talk about the planetary system and suggesting various approaches and narrative perspectives, Kluge opens up the aperture of his questioning so wide that the dramatist begins, in a quite 'unconcerned' way,²⁹ to build associations that in their turn evoke one memory after another: an early poem about the moon that is actually about an execution, a short text by Werner Riegel ('The moon over Poland is lovely/For the duration of a shot to the head'), the fact that his mother 'was moonstruck for a while', and finally the memory of his 'first experience of politics or history' in 1934, when

the bells were ringing because Hindenburg had died. And that was really strange, that was actually my first experience of politics or history. I was aware that there was something that meant a hiatus for the grown-ups. Something had finished, a kind of protection or [...]

Kluge: A sense of security [...]

Müller: [...] a sense of security had gone, and there was an unease, a fear, and everybody was standing by the fence listening to the bells.

Kluge: And what does this have to do with the moon?

Müller: For me it has something to do with the moon. I don't know why, I can't give a reason for it. The moon was something upsetting, but also something safe.³⁰

This passage strikingly demonstrates Kluge's 'midwife's art',³¹ an astonishing ability to stimulate the imagination of his interlocutor through unexpected changes of perspective – in this case through a motif that is semantically loaded. It is the ability to set in motion the work of memory, to retrieve long-forgotten experiences. What Kluge is interested in is the documentation of this 'living work',³² which is no longer to be seen in the finished product, whether it is a film, a book or an opera performance. He seeks the removal of the separation between the public form of expression and the emotions, motifs and libidinous attachments of a life, which are richer than the historically conditioned compartmentalisations of public life, the workplace and the consciousness industry would have us believe.

Sense of the Possible

This richness, encapsulated in human life stories, finds its way, according to Kluge, into feelings, desires, the imagination. Towards the normative power of the factual these human capacities behave obstinately, which means for Kluge anti-realistically. There lives within them a 'delight in the improbable',³³ a belief in the 'sense of the possible'³⁴ that refuses to recognise a predestined course. He would like to help this potential for protest to find expression, and for this reason he confronts so-called reality again and again with imaginary perspectives, he suspends momentarily the persuasiveness of facts, the illusion of inevitability. To do this he consistently brushes history against the grain, by inviting his interlocutors to look for analogies from history, e.g. taking as a starting point the question: 'What is a tank?'

Kluge: If you go back to Rome or Shakespeare, where do you find something of that sort?

Müller: Coriolanus has armour-plating.³⁵

Or from nature:

Kluge: How does something like that look, visually, a human tide that disappears into the distance and swallows up the buildings?

Müller: It's not a meadow, no, it's an animal, something that sort of has a few undulations and arm movements.

Kluge: Is it a male animal?³⁶

Or by confronting the status quo of historical processes with their promising origins, e.g. the stereotypical mainstream cinema of special effects with the 'primitive diversity'³⁷ of early film from pre-Hollywood times.

In this scanning of possibilities Kluge's approach is like that of the singer in the film *DIE MACHT DER GEFÜHLE/THE POWER OF FEELINGS* who, when asked why he always acts with a spark of hope in his expression, even though he knows that things will not turn out well, answers drily: 'They could, though'.³⁸ This utopian horizon of hope manifests itself in continual trials, experiments that take on a new colour with every dialogue. How something like this can look is shown in a short dialogue extract from a programme with the independent American director Richard Linklater:³⁹

Linklater: But what I like is the idea that everything one can imaginatively conjure up actually exists, it all could exist. [Cut] I love the early cinema, Griffith is one of my favourite directors, Chaplin, Keaton, the whole silent film really.

Kluge (off): Cecil B. DeMille [...]

Linklater: I don't like DeMille so much, they don't interest me as much, Sternberg or King Vidor [...]

Kluge: You would actually develop cinema again from the beginning if there were a few of you. If you were a hundred people you would invent the art-form film all over again [...] start again from the beginning [...]

Linklater (laughing in astonishment): From the beginning, to begin again from the beginning [...]

Kluge: Yes, yes [...]

Linklater: Can one do that?

Kluge: Yes, of course, of course, yes.

Linklater's emphasis on the imaginary is directed doubtless at the narrative possibilities of film, with his declaration for the early American cinema he is expressing a nostalgic preference. A second invention of film never occurs to him. Kluge appropriates both statements, connecting them by means of a very visible slow cut, and translates them into the context of his own film utopia, the renewal of film out of its origins (for Kluge the two germ-cells are Lumière and Mé-

liès). That Kluge presents the renewal of film as a real possibility in such a matter-of-fact way at first disconcerts Linklater. He repeats the idea and then asks sceptically whether Kluge is in earnest. This short sequence demonstrates the contrast between Kluge's matter-of-fact support for the obviously impossible and the realism of probability espoused by the film-maker, who would doubtless use the representational potential of film in an imaginative way but who would hardly hit upon the idea of questioning the history of film itself. Kluge's trumping of the probable, from his insight into the deficient forms of cinema as culture industry and out of the wish for a different, richer film history, creates a free space which enables both his interlocutor and the viewer to imaginatively change perspective and look at the actual history of film in its historical relativity, i.e. as just one of many possible histories. With regard to film Kluge's utopia is: 'What has not been filmed criticises what *has* been filmed'.⁴⁰ Applied to history, this means in essence: 'What has not eventuated criticises what *has* eventuated, what has been rounded off as a finished product'; 'living work' criticises finished, dead work, the process criticises the result.

Kluge has often been censured for showing his less successful programmes. But this criticism is without substance, since it sets as the sole measure of quality the production ideals of the medium, these being solely oriented towards ratings. This merely reflects an obsession with numbers. The specific characteristic of these programmes is, under these circumstances, quickly lost sight of, namely the attempt to replace the representative modes of speech used in the public sphere with intimate, authentic registers and a temporal economy that is not worried about getting to the point quickly. This means building up the model (of course utopian, but for that very reason necessary) of a public interaction that is founded on the experiences of people cooperating through their senses: 'I believe that it is not the content, which in my programmes tends to be complicated, but the authenticity of the language used, that is judged by the viewers. That these are real people who are talking there. And that is what stays in the memory'.⁴¹

Notes

1. Parts of this essay are taken from the article 'Die Rennstrecke der Hoffnung: Alexander Kluges Kulturmagazine', in *Medienwissenschaft* (no. 1, 1999), pp. 8-21.
2. Florian Rötzer, 'Kino und Grabkammer: Gespräch mit Alexander Kluge', in *Die Schrift an der Wand. Alexander Kluge: Rohstoffe und Materialien*, ed. Christian Schulte (Osnabrück: Rasch, 2000), pp. 31-43, here: p. 42.
3. Cf. Wolfgang Müller-Funk, *Erfahrung und Experiment: Studien zu Theorie und Geschichte des Essayismus* (Berlin: Akademie, 1995), p. 281.

4. Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1993), p. 83 ff.
5. Alexander Kluge, *Chronik der Gefühle* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000).
6. Alexander Kluge, *In Gefahr und größter Not bringt der Mittelweg den Tod: Texte zu Kino, Film, Politik*, ed. Christian Schulte (Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 1999), p. 132.
7. "'Ich liebe das Lakonische': Alexander Kluge im Gespräch", *Der Spiegel* (no. 45, 6 November 2000), pp. 336-340, here: p. 337.
8. Kluge, *In Gefahr und größter Not bringt der Mittelweg den Tod*, p. 58.
9. Thus 'the horizontal', 'the vertical', 'the imaginary' and 'the revolutionary'. Negt and Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, pp. 510-514.
10. In Kluge, *In Gefahr und größter Not bringt der Mittelweg den Tod*, pp. 73-112, here: p. 100 ff.
11. Alexander Kluge, *Die Macht der Gefühle* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1984), p. 184.
12. *10 vor 11* (RTL, 17 October 1988).
13. Kluge, *In Gefahr und größter Not bringt der Mittelweg den Tod*, p. 57.
14. Alexander Kluge, *Die Patriotin: Texte/Bilder 1-6* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1979), p. 250.
15. *Prime Time* (RTL, 23 January 1994).
16. Christa Blümlinger, 'Zwischen den Bildern/Lesen', in *Schreiben Bilder Sprechen: Texte zum essayistischen Film*, ed. Christa Blümlinger and Constantin Wulff (Vienna: Sonderzahl, 1992), pp. 11-31, here: p. 23.
17. *News & Stories* (Sat1, 4 July 1994).
18. Cf. Walter Benjamin, 'Über den Begriff der Geschichte', in Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. I (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), pp. 701, 703.
19. This had already been indicated by the subtitle of the third book written with Oskar Negt: *Maßverhältnisse des Politischen. 15 Vorschläge zum Unterscheidungsvermögen* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1992).
20. Cf. Rainer Stollmann, *Alexander Kluge zur Einführung* (Hamburg: Junius, 1998), p. 131.
21. Kluge, *Die Macht der Gefühle*, p. 178.
22. Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*, in Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. V (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1982), p. 578.
23. Rudolf Kersting, *Wie dies Sinne auf Montage gehen: Zur ästhetischen Theorie des Kinos/Films* (Frankfurt am Main: Stroemfeld, 1989), p. 108.
24. Frieda Grafe, 'New Look: 13 filmische Momente', in *Geschichte des deutschen Films*, Wolfgang Jacobsen, Anton Kaes and Hans Helmut Prinzler eds. (Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler, 1993), pp. 365-390, here: p. 390.
25. Cf. Alexander Kluge, *Facts and Fakes: Fernseh-Nachschriften*, ed. Christian Schulte and Reinald Gußmann (no. 1 'Verbrechen', Berlin, 2000; no. 2/3 'Herzblut trifft Kunstblut/Erster imaginärer Opernführer', Berlin, 2001).
26. Alexander Kluge, *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin: Zur realistischen Methode* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975), p. 196.
27. Alexander Kluge and Heiner Müller, *Ich bin ein Landvermesser. Gespräche. Neue Folge* (Hamburg: Rotbuch, 1996), p. 7.
28. Kluge, *In Gefahr und größter Not bringt der Mittelweg den Tod*, p. 186.

29. Klaus Theweleit, 'Artisten im Fernsehstudio: unbekümmert', *Die Zeit* (18 August 1995).
30. Alexander Kluge and Heiner Müller, *Ich schulde der Welt einen Toten: Gespräche*, (Hamburg: Rotbuch, 1995), pp. 88-91.
31. Negt and Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, p. 1011.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 94-98.
33. Kluge, *Die Macht der Gefühle*, p. 227.
34. The category of the 'sense of the possible' is developed by Robert Musil in chapter 4 of his novel *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (Reinbek/Hamburg, 1978), pp. 16-18. Kluge explains his affinity with Musil in Alexander Kluge, *Verdeckte Ermittlung. Ein Gespräch mit Christian Schulte und Rainer Stollmann* (Berlin: Merve, 2001), pp. 9-24. On Kluge's reception of Musil cf. also Guntram Vogt, 'Zum Zusammenhang von Ästhetik und Ethik im Essayismus Alexander Kluges', in *Augen-Blick* ('Versuche über den Essay-Film' no. 10 June, 1991), pp. 83-106, here: pp. 97-99.
35. Kluge and Müller, *Ich schulde der Welt einen Toten*, p. 87.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
37. Cf. 'Dynamic Cinema/100 Jahre Kino/Wer ist wer im frühen Film?', *Prime Time* (RTL, 25 September 1994).
38. Kluge, *Die Macht der Gefühle*, pp. 77-79.
39. 'Durchbruch eines Außenseiters/Der Südstaaten-Regisseur Richard Linklater und sein Erfolgsfilm "Before Sunrise"', *Prime Time* (RTL, 11 June 1995).
40. Kluge, *In Gefahr und größter Not bringt der Mittelweg den Tod*, p. 60.
41. Astrid Deuber-Mankowsky and Giaco Schiesser, 'In der Echtzeit der Gefühle: Gespräch mit Alexander Kluge', in *Die Schrift an der Wand. Alexander Kluge: Rohstoffe und Materialien*, ed. Christian Schulte (Osnabrück: Rasch, 2000), pp. 361-369, here: p. 364. [See translation in this book, ed.]

Translated by Philip Thomson

Reframing Islam in Television: Alexander Kluge's Interviews on Islam and Terrorism since 9/11

Tim Grünewald

After 11 September 2001, a discourse that propagated a link between Islam and contemporary terrorism became dominant. One ideological foundation of this discourse is the assumption that the relationship between Islamic and Christian societies is inherently antagonistic. Perhaps the most prominent elaborations of this thesis can be found in Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* and Bernhard Lewis's *The Roots of Muslim Rage*. While the discourse of antagonism between 'East' and 'West' in the mass media has certainly taken on a trivialised form, it seems only all the more persistent. The question arises how one could challenge what has become a prevalent view on the issue, creating counterstories and counterhistories in the face of a dominant and omnipresent media discourse. Author, film-maker and broadcaster Alexander Kluge has conducted television interviews with Mohammed Arkoun, Dr. Manfred Osten and Tariq Ali that attempt to circulate an alternative image of Islam within the mass media. Differences from the conventional discourse result partly from the statements of the interviewees. However, Kluge's programmes suggest that a simple counterstatement is not sufficient to create subversive discourse. Instead, the presentation of the ideas itself needs to resist mainstream aesthetic television conventions.

Kluge has produced three interviews on Islam in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.¹ The interviews critique the discourse on Islam that has dominated the mainstream news media. However, Kluge moves beyond the mere critique of Western Orientalism by providing an alternative discourse on 'Islam' and the 'Orient' in commercial television. The following investigation will analyse the three interviews to show how Kluge reframes Islam. It will concentrate on the interview with Arkoun, since it is Kluge's most comprehensive attempt, foreshadowing the other two interviews both thematically and stylistically. As will emerge, Kluge achieves an utmost level of control over the finished text by means of selective processes (casting, editing) and active processes (verbal intervention, verbal and visual montage, additional visual and textual elements). Kluge emphasises instances of authorship during his interviews², violating mainstream television practice, which generally hides authorship behind aesthetic genre conventions. Kluge's insistence on authorship in news-media gen-

res, such as interviews and documentary-style magazines, is one of the most fundamental and important lessons to be learned from his television. Before evaluating the concrete example of Kluge's attempt to reframe the image of Islam, this article will briefly discuss the debate on Orientalism in general and the image of Islam in the mainstream media in particular, against which Kluge's alternative image is posited.

Islam had been constructed as a primary Other in Western discourses long before 9/11. In 1978, Edward Said identified the image of Islam in the West as an essential part of the broader discursive practice that he called Orientalism.³ Since then, Said continued to publish extensively on past and contemporary representations of Islam. While he became reluctant to use generalising labels such as the 'West' (in response to criticism of *Orientalism*), he confirmed and expanded his original claims about the nature of Western representations of Islam. As early as 1980, he deplored the mass media's caricature of Islam as representing 'the threat of a resurgent atavism, which suggests not only the menace of a return to the Middle Ages but the destruction of [...] the democratic order in the Western world' ('Western Eyes'), a thesis that he elaborated with much evidence one year later in *Covering Islam* and reconfirmed in a new afterword to *Orientalism* in the 1994 edition.⁴

Media scholars have produced much research on this topic. Twenty-two years after *Orientalism* appeared, Karim H. Karim attributed a deterioration of the civil rights situation of Muslims 'to the continually negative media references to Islam, [which] has led to a creation of a general impression that the religion promotes extremism and that a practicing Muslim anywhere in the world can be none other than an "Islamic extremist"'.⁵ Media scholars of the image of Islam in the German media also found a consistent stereotyping of Islam in the mass media: 'There is a strong tendency in Western mass media to characterize Islam as a fanatic and violent religion, cutting off hands, repressing women, and representing a clear antagonism towards Western ideas of freedom, human rights and democracy'.⁶ In a quantitative study, Hafez examined nearly 12,000 German newspaper articles from 1946 to 1994 and found a 'conflict-focused perspective of journalism that encourages a negative image of the Middle East, the Arabs, and Islam in the West'.⁷ Qualitative analyses of individual television programmes have painted an even bleaker picture. For example, numerous studies accused Peter Scholl-Latour – who is an award-winning journalist, former director of the WDR and author of bestselling books and documentary miniseries such as *Das Schwert des Islam* – of bias, distortion, manipulation and racism.⁸ Hafez concluded that the image of Islam in the media is characterised by the virtual absence of positive aspects and by excessive reporting of negative issues in Islamic societies.⁹ As a remedy he suggested: 'The first element of reform could be the creation of critical media environments'.¹⁰

Kluge's interviews on Islam are not just examples of such a 'critical media environment'. They present a discursive practice that provides an alternative to the discourses that Said set out to critique, both in the narrower sense of the representation of Islam and with regard to the broader phenomenon of Orientalism. However, Kluge's response to Said also reflects some of the major criticisms to which *Orientalism* itself has been subjected. Said's critics accuse him of the very essentialism that he set out to condemn. Agijaz Ahmad, for example, asserts that Said denounces the 'whole of Western civilisation' without prejudice, ignoring issues of class, gender and instances of resistance and human liberation.¹¹ In the German context, Fuchs-Sumiyoshi deplors Said's blanket accusation of Western racism and points to the example of Goethe.¹² Staath also criticises Said's generalisation of the European tradition: 'He has no regard for subtly reversed forms of insight into the foreign and equates German Islam studies, which grew out of Idealism, with the schemata of Western Colonialism'.¹³ In the 1994 afterword to *Orientalism*, Said rejects these accusations and denies explicitly any correspondence between terms such as 'Orient' or 'Occident' and a 'stable reality that exists as natural fact'.¹⁴ Yet, reading the original text, it is difficult to avoid the impression of a simplified and essentialising representation of the European tradition. Finally, Dennis Porter early on indicated that Said does not provide insight into how alternatives to Orientalist discourse might look and concluded: '[...] if one attempts to discover whether alternatives to Orientalism are possible, whether a knowledge as opposed to an ideology of the Orient can exist, Said is of no help in spite of the acknowledgement that such alternatives are a pressing need'.¹⁵

Kluge's television presentations on Islam address the concerns of Said and those of his critics. On the one hand, his fragmented and non-linear television aesthetics is inherently antiessentialist in itself, not only by avoiding simplifying labels for complex social or cultural phenomena, but also by disrupting the process of television realism. Matthias Uecker describes Kluge's antirealist television aesthetics as follows: 'In contrast, Kluge's processes of presentation and treatment are ostentatiously artificial and point constantly at the technical processing and at the mediated communication of what can be seen. Hence the latter can only regain authenticity and can only reconnect with nonmediated reality through the viewer's cognitive processes of association – that is through their subjectivity'.¹⁶ Instead of presenting ready-made representations, the programmes depend on the viewer to create links between the screen and nonmediated realities. Secondly, Kluge avoids dichotomies between geographical or cultural regions such as Orient and Occident and emphasises instead their historical and cultural interconnectedness, thus circumventing both 'Orientalist' and 'Occidental' pitfalls. While this strategy can be observed in all three inter-

views, it is especially valid for 'Mahomets Gesang', in which Goethe is cast as a connecting link between the cultures.

Critics frequently use Kluge's own concept of 'counter-production' (*Gegenproduktion*) to describe his aesthetic strategy.¹⁷ The term refers back to a discussion in *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*, which Kluge co-authored with his regular collaborator on philosophical and sociological publications, Oskar Negt. Here the authors argue that a critique of television in a bourgeois industrial context cannot succeed through literary or verbal means alone, but requires access to the mass medium itself:

Commodities can only be refuted effectively through counter-commodities. Television criticism has to take into consideration the material historicity of television, that is, television as a workshop. As a basis for the emancipation of television, the self-determination of the viewer has to consider the production process which is not evident in individual broadcast moments.¹⁸

Consequently, a successful 'counter-production' in the medium of television relies on three prerequisites. It needs to take into account the historical development of television's material components, it has to reveal the underlying production processes, and it requires the collaboration of the viewer to be effective. Kluge and Negt are particularly concerned with television's appearance of unmediated and complete representation: 'No other medium communicates equally clear with the appearance of immediacy and the appearance of completeness and no other medium is equally able to substitute the viewers' awareness of the actual production processes with the mere result on screen'.¹⁹ Accordingly, the supposed realism and authenticity of television is nothing but imaginary. Therefore a cultural critique, such as reframing Islam's image in the mass media, also requires a critical assessment of how that image has been produced.

The three programmes that this article examines are 'counter-products' of a single television genre: the expert interview. This genre often employs a wealth of visual and verbal markers to endow a person with authority over a specific area. After the aura of expertise has been established, the interviewee is then invited to explain, elaborate, or comment on specific issues or problems from his or her area of knowledge. For its effect on the viewer, this genre relies on its stylistic conventions to create an impression of unmediated expertise regardless of the authenticity of the actual claims. The example of 'ABC des Islam' demonstrates Kluge's attempt to expose, by means of stylistic subversion, the authenticity gap that is inherent to the genre.

Only months after the 9/11 attacks, Kluge produced a conversation with the Islam scholar Mohammed Arkoun about Islam and terrorism. Arkoun is an internationally renowned Islam scholar, professor at Sorbonne II, and author of the recently published monograph *The Unthought in Contemporary Islamic*

*Thought.*²⁰ At the beginning of the programme a scrolling subtitle introduces Arkoun as 'the internationally most important Islam scholar'. This hyperbolic expert label comments ironically on the framing of experts in conventional interviews by making explicit the claim that usually remains unspoken and hidden beneath the conventional markers of authority. However, for those who do not know the interviewee already, Arkoun's detailed answers demonstrate his broad expertise on the history of Islamic and Christian thought. Thus Kluge introduces a degree of ambiguity and in this way undermines the stability of expert labels in general. As the interview progresses, it becomes increasingly obvious that Arkoun's voice is cast as contrasting to that of commentators such as Huntington or Scholl-Latour. Thus Arkoun's hyperbolic introduction turns into an ironic response to the framing of Western 'experts' on the Middle East in the media.

Kluge further constructs this interview as a counter-product by opening the conversation with several significant violations of the conventions of the interview genre. First, the programme begins with an experimental image sequence and a horizontally scrolling subtitle instead of some form of verbal introduction of the interviewee and an establishing shot. Second, Kluge deviates from the conventions of continuity and shot/reverse-shot editing. Third, the interview itself begins with an extensive answer by the interviewee instead of with a question. The image sequence consists of a map of the Middle East, a time-lapse sequence of a pyramid with moving clouds, air raids and artillery, as well as a circular digital insert that shows the negative print of a cavalry army that appears to consist of crusaders. The scrolling subtitle reads:

Mohammed Arkoun claims in his definitive book DER ISLAM that historically the DISEMPOWERMENT of the RELIGIONS failed/It is insufficient to counter the religions with Voltaire and the stock exchange/Arkoun says WESTERN CIVILISATION behaves itself like a RELIGION when it begins to lead JUST WARS/

With this opening Kluge denies the viewers a position of passive consumption and requires their collaboration. In hindsight, the enigmatic images in combination with the text present an audio-visual summary of the programme's main argument. But since this segment precedes the interview, Kluge invites and demands from his audience intellectual creativity in order to produce meaning. Thus the most radical break with genre conventions occurs on the visual level.

A second significant violation of the visual genre conventions is the framing of the interview itself. Traditional interviews adhere to the continuity system of classical Hollywood cinema, in which the editing is subservient to the dialogue. Generally speaking, we see whoever is talking at a given moment. The perspective is close to a point-of-view shot for the listener, creating the illusion of participation in a naturally occurring conversation. This technique covers up the ar-

tificiality of the interview and creates the illusion that one is listening to the 'expert' directly as if in direct communication with him.²¹ The visual presentation of Kluge's conversation is in direct contrast to that strategy. One of the most unconventional choices in nearly all his television interviews is to exclude the interviewer (himself) from the frame. Paradoxically this strategy is also used to conceal the artificiality of filmed interviews or of documentaries, since identification with the camera is not disturbed and the viewer entirely takes over the position of the interviewer as, for example, in *cinéma vérité*. However, in Kluge's interviews the effect is counterintuitive. First, Kluge appears, in contrast to *cinéma vérité*, omnipresent through his voice, which constantly asks, comments, summarises, intervenes and contributes to the conversation. Thus Kluge's visual absence ironically adds to the impression that he is in control of the conversation or at least has an equally powerful position as the interviewee.²² This is further underlined by the occasional use of fades or, even more so, by the periodical structuring of the conversation through intertitles, which is outdated and recalls the practice of the silent film era. Thus the overt break with the convention of continuity editing sets Kluge's interviews visually apart from the endless stream of talk shows and points to his authorship.

In addition, Kluge uses a subtle mobile frame in contrast to the conventions of shot/reverse-shot editing. The frame is in nearly constant motion mostly by means of a slow, almost imperceptible zoom or pan and signifies choice and selection beyond the control of the viewer. As the image is almost constantly reframed, the attention is drawn back to the image and to the existence of the frame itself, which indicates visual representation as opposed to unmediated reality. Hence, the mobile framing increases the viewer's awareness of the interview as a constructed text. A second function of the mobile frame is to include sporadically the interpreter Dr. Ulrike Sprenger. Whereas the interpreter is conventionally banned from the frame and offers the interpretation magically from the off, Kluge chooses to include her. He thus adds another layer of mediation between the ideas of the interviewee and the audience and thereby disrupts the illusion of 'immediacy'.²³ The editing patterns together with the framing thus increase the urgency of active interpretation as opposed to passive acceptance of the interview's claims and concepts.

Finally, the dialogue opens with a violation of the genre's conventions. Instead of beginning with an introduction and a question by the interviewer, Kluge starts the conversation with a lengthy answer of the interviewee *in medias res*. This serves several purposes. First, it indicates Arkoun's position as an authentic and independent voice as he appears to speak without the interviewer's invitation. Secondly, Kluge contrasts Arkoun's historical account of Western aggression with the programme's title. While the title, which links Is-

lam and terrorism, is still presented on-screen, Arkoun's voice is already beginning to describe the example of the Christian Crusades.

To summarise, 'ABC des Islam' succeeds in quite literally reframing the image by avoiding the production mechanisms underlying conventional news and information television. Since the visual style is essentially consistent throughout all three interviews, this claim also applies to 'Saladin' and 'Mahomets Gesang'. The three programmes live up to the standard that Kluge and Negt had formulated almost thirty years earlier: 'Production that is dependent to a degree as is found in television can only be critiqued by means of different forms of production'.²⁴

In addition to these basic stylistic parameters, Kluge's discursive strategies also play a role in reframing the image of Islam. Again, one of the major components especially in 'ABC des Islam' is visual. The interview contains two montage sequences as well as a number of illustrative images. Both in classical cinematic narratives and, even more so, in television interviews, images are usually subservient to the dialogue during filmed conversations (especially their syntagmatic structure). For Kluge, however, visual images and especially montage sequences are an important tool for shaping the meaning of the soundtrack. A central aim of his montage theory is to restore a sense of authenticity that has been lost in the global media village of CNN and Al Jazeera. What began with live images of the nightly bombings of Baghdad during the first Gulf War culminated in the perpetual imagery of 9/11 and stretches all the way to the live feeds of the embedded journalists during the second Iraq War. The purported realism of news images has been extensively analysed and critiqued by media scholars and cultural critics.²⁵ Kluge proposes a different concept of realism:

If I understand realism as an awareness of relations, then I have to compose a code for what cannot be shown on film and for what the camera cannot record. This code is called: Contrast between two shots [...]. Since a relation is generated between two images, the cut contains the information that is not found in the recording of the shot itself.²⁶

While this is not an innovative idea in cinematic terms – in fact, Kluge often quotes Sergei Eisenstein and refers to the montage of early film history²⁷ – experimental montage sequences in the late-night time slot of a mainstream commercial television channel certainly still are. Anton Kaes described the function of montage in Kluge's cinema: 'Montage becomes for Kluge the means for an examination of reality, which no longer produces any truths by merely being filmed [...]. The principle of montage is thus a form of protest, which deconstructs old meanings and creates new ones'.²⁸ This definition applies also to Kluge's television montage sequences, which provide an important alternative

model of visual authenticity in the context of mainstream news television. The truth value of images that are in part taken from news photography is undermined through the means of montage. The montage sequences are typical for Kluge's interviews and central to his strategy. Therefore, they merit a closer look, particularly the second and longer of the two sequences in 'ABC des Islam'.

Located roughly in the middle of the interview, the montage sequence starts out with two opposing images that function as thesis and antithesis. First, we see an army and then men who appear to be praying. Kluge thus picks up the Western notion of an original connection between Islam and military force.²⁹ However, Kluge complicates the stereotype with the ensuing image – that of a learned society identified by the title: 'Averroes' Soiree'. In combination with the preceding images, the thesis thus emerges that a highly civilised culture results from the combination of religion and an efficient military apparatus. Since the significance of Averroes for Western civilisation has been established previously in the conversation and since the opening sequence has already alluded to the Christian Crusades, this claim is made for both Islamic and Western societies. Then follows a second image sequence with the title 'Seafaring and Trade'. Again Kluge combines two seemingly contradictory images. First, a sailing ship appears. Then, we see a man wearing a turban and holding an automatic rifle. Again, accomplishments of civilisation such as trade and seafaring, emphasised by the subtitle, are presented next to technologies of military force. Once more, Kluge complicates a facile interpretation with a third image: a group of guerilla fighters who stand triumphantly atop a crashed helicopter. While the second image locates aggressive violence within the Islamic soldier, the third reveals him as a reaction to a much greater, presumably Western, military force, since the image is reminiscent of the images of American helicopters that were shot down in Mogadishu in 1992. Kluge then shows another group of young men with the title 'Atta as an Adolescent'. In combination with the preceding images, Kluge thus invites the association that the presumed leader of the 9/11 attacks is part of a larger reaction to a force that originates in the West. After the image of the prototypical Islamic terrorist Atta, Kluge includes an image of M. Anwar al-Saddat. Here, Kluge adds another, usually disregarded phenomenon that complicates a one-dimensional interpretation of Islamic terrorism. The image disturbs the opposition between Islamic terrorism and the West, since Saddat's assassination is an example of Islamic terrorism that is not directed against a Western target, but against a target within the Islamic world itself. The sequence ends with a series of newspaper clippings detailing Saddat's assassination and a final medium long-shot of one of the assassins. Thus the point is reinforced that Islamic terrorism is not unilaterally directed against the

West, but instead is a radical movement that attacks moderate or liberal forces regardless of their national or cultural identity.

To be sure, the preceding interpretation of the montage sequence is only one possibility of many. The meanings of the images, with the exception of those with subtitles, are not fixed, and in particular their dialectical implications are subjective. Thus the previous analysis is also an example of what Kluge demands from his audience. Considering the speed of the images and the fact that this analysis had the benefit of replay and pause, this is an almost insurmountable task and a frequent point of attack for critics: 'Even more important is the objection that the deceleration of reception required for an analytic reading is contrary to the medial form of the television magazine. In addition, Kluge's pre-determined way of reception does not allow for replaying events and emphasises acceleration during montage sequences'.³⁰ A comprehensive reading of the montage sequences would be an unrealistic demand on the viewer. However, it can be assumed that certain iconic images – for example, the one of the young Islamic militarist – will be recognised and that the viewer will realise that the images have been taken out of their usual contexts and placed in new, contrasting ones. Kluge plays with the connotative meaning of the image. Although the denotative meaning of a montage sequence may remain unclear, 'the viewer may construct relations and correlations by activating parallel and superordinate meanings on different connotative levels'.³¹ The least a viewer can be expected to take away is an awareness of how the connotative meanings of televisual images are manipulated by their verbal and visual contexts.

In addition to the visual idiosyncrasies of a Kluge interview, the programmes display a number of other important discursive strategies, one of which is his use of history to reframe the present reality of the imagination of Islam in the mass media. The notion of 'counter-history' can be traced through Kluge's literary and cinematic texts³² and is also central to his work in television. The three programmes on Islam attempt to provide a 'counter-history' of Islam's dialectical relationship with the West and thus call into question the authenticity of prevailing messages about the interconnection between Islam and terrorism. Kaes has defined Kluge's notion of history in the context of film as follows:

Perceiving, collecting, assembling: the constructivist principle serves the construction of a critical counter-history, which displays an alternative organisation (formation) of reality. For Kluge there is always the possibility of an alternative construction and changeability of reality, which contradicts the notion that circumstances are inevitable.³³

In fabricating his own version of history, Kluge searches for omissions and gaps in official historiography in order to find 'a space for historical practice, raising the question of a historically changeable relationship of individuals to their own

history'.³⁴ As Kluge seeks to demonstrate how different versions of history create different versions of reality, the notion of a stable reality is undermined. In all forms of his creative production Kluge attempts to develop 'models of an (anti-) realist attitude'.³⁵ Kluge's practice of counter-history shows that the concept of a linear and continuous historical development that leads to a unified and rational reality is imaginary. In the context of television this notion is highly subversive, since a rational reality and a strict separation of fact and fiction are a discursive foundation of television in general and of news and information items in contemporary mass media in particular. In Kluge's television as in his earlier films the dichotomy 'between fictions of linearity and the actual discontinuity, non-synchronicity, arbitrariness of historical processes' collapses.³⁶ The following will examine how history is used to provide an alternative image of Islam.

The opening montage sequence of 'ABC des Islam' can be read as a chronicle of the history of Western aggression in the Middle East, and it suggests a continuous pattern from the Crusades to the Gulf War. A scrolling text displayed on top of the images further adds to this claim by declaring the Enlightenment in the West a failure and by calling alleged 'just' wars of the West 'religious wars'. This thesis contrasts with the intertitle that follows the opening image sequence. This intertitle, which is also the title of the programme, suggests a link between Islam and terrorism. At the very least since 9/11 the association between Islam and terrorism is widespread in the mass media.³⁷ Thus the title confirms the audience's expectations and assumptions. However, since the title does not open the programme, it has already been put into perspective by the historical connotations of the preceding visual sequence. While the title suggests a connection between Islam, terrorism, and the imaginary, the opening images and text have situated the West's notion of a 'just war' in the realm of the imaginary as well. Thus the opening of the programme is not only a summary of its agenda as a whole, but also a collection and montage of unusual heterogeneous and non-linear signifiers. It undermines both a narrow view of terrorism as simply an Islamic project, as well as a simple linear trajectory from the Crusades to the Gulf War.

Kluge's use of history continues to destabilise preconceived notions about terrorism and Islam with the beginning of the dialogue. Here the term 'imaginary' becomes crucial. The title seems to promise a story about the imaginary within Islam. This expectation is disappointed. Instead we hear a monologue by the interpreter Dr. Ulrike Sprenger, in which she translates Arkoun's historical accounts of how Christians have imagined Islam. Arkoun's argument begins with the Crusades: 'We can begin with the crusades of the 11th century. At the time Christians had an imaginary notion of Islam [...]'. He then continues to discuss colonial wars as historical incidents that shaped Muslims' imaginary of the

West as a 'dominating power'. First, it is worth noting that the spoken text begins with two historical instances in which the West represents the aggressor, as crusader and colonialist, and the victims are Muslims. Since the programme was produced shortly after 9/11, this is an unconventional choice in itself. More significantly, however, Kluge collapses the opposition between Islam and Christianity by insisting that the imaginary is operating on both sides and that it has been shaped through historical processes.

One of Kluge's preferred methods for challenging dominant historiography is to replace it with personal stories.³⁸ Christian Bechthold describes the relationship between individual experiences and the underlying historical processes:

Concrete historical experiences from individuals' life stories on the surface level are connected through 'stems' and 'fibers' with the subjacent level of collective history. When Kluge thus traces in his texts singular concrete historical conjectures of persons, he also illuminates the collective historical context, in which the individual life stories of human beings are embedded.³⁹

Throughout 'ABC des Islam', Kluge emphasises a number of historical and contemporary stories that are related to the programme's larger inquiries about the development of today's conflict between Islam and the West. This list of stories is as eclectic and historically varied as one could imagine, ranging from the medieval philosopher Averroes to the 9/11 terrorist Atta, the assassinated Egyptian president M. Anwar-al Saddat and the French revolutionary architect Jean-Jacques Lequeu. Together these personal stories function as scaffolding for Arkoun's larger historical claims and interpretations. This process can be illustrated by an examination of the most important story that contributes to the authenticity of the discourse, which is the personal life story of Arkoun himself. In this context, Kluge emphasises the ethnic label 'Berber'. After Kluge asks about Arkoun's own biographical background, Arkoun introduces the term 'Berber' as part of a description of the Maghreb, his home region:

Berbers are the oldest inhabitants of North Africa. They have lost their name. Their name is Amasir. Berber is a name, which was given to this people by the Romans, who derived this name from Barbarian, which means people who stammer, people who speak an unintelligible language. And this name remained.

The label 'Berber' is thus revealed to be an example of a collective derogatory imagination. After Arkoun has explained the connection between the Roman origin of the name 'Berber' for the peoples of North Africa and the Greek usage of 'barbaros' for people who speak a strange or foreign language, he later moves on to discuss the term 'Dschihad':

Arkoun: One should translate it into 'just war', 'right war'. One could also say 'holy war'. That means one should be very careful here and understand exactly: the theolo-

gical concept was developed by Augustine, who was Algerian as am I. He came from where I am from.

Kluge: You are Berber?

Arkoun: Yes. That is to say it is a theological term, which means: 'God has given us the truth'.

Kluge's question, seemingly unimportant and out of context, collapses the Orientalist opposition between Islam and the West, between irrationality and rationality, as Orientalist scholars and the mainstream media have imagined it. First, since linguistic marginalisation has been revealed as the origin of the term 'Berber', the marginalised are being transposed and become central in the figure of Mohammed Arkoun himself, who is simultaneously subject and object of the conversation and literally occupies the centre of the television frame. Second, Kluge shows the absurdity of cultural marginalisation by linking Augustine to the label 'Berber' via Arkoun. With this link Kluge underscores once more the interconnectedness of cultural spheres that are commonly imagined as separate. After all, Augustine is a central figure of the Christian church as the most influential theologian until the Reformation, and he had significant impact both on the history of the church and on the history of Western thought in general.

Finally, towards the end of the conversation, Kluge narrows the broader historical discourse to the level of personal experience.

Arkoun: The phenomenon of religion. What is that?

Kluge: An olive tree is religion.

Arkoun: To begin with religion [...] When I went to school in Kabylie, I learned Latin. I translated Virgil, the great poet. I translated the Latin verses into French under an olive tree, which was exactly the olive tree from the south of Italy that was known to Virgil. And Virgil's metaphors and poetry spoke to me from every angle.

Kluge encourages Arkoun to turn the olive tree, which has previously been established as a geographical marker of the Mediterranean, into a symbol of culture and religion. At the same time the surprising botanical reference presents Arkoun with the opportunity to illustrate common cultural origins of East and West by means of a personal story about the significance of the olive tree – a story of which Kluge was well aware, as a previous remark suggests. The multitude of personal stories is gradually woven into a fabric through which overarching themes emerge, such as the role of the Mediterranean as a symbolic cultural realm that unifies the cultural histories of Islam and Christianity. This

produces another image that contrasts with the dominant images of Islam that have circulated since 9/11.

A final discursive strategy relevant to an understanding of the present interviews is Kluge's introduction of preconceived theory modules into the conversation. Werner Barg has identified this practice in Kluge's cinema and has called it an attempt to convey 'the author's theoretical building blocks'.⁴⁰ Sometimes this practice leads to the impression that Kluge uses his interviewees to present his own preconception of a given subject, as Barg contends: 'The questions of the interviewer rarely indicate curiosity for the interviewee and his topic. They rather aim to turn the interviewee into a provider of cues, so that Kluge as the interviewer can provide his interpretations of the topic from off-screen'.⁴¹ Looking at the present examples, it is more accurate to say that Kluge brings a certain preconception of the subject matter to the dialogue, which he then *negotiates* with his interviewee. In all three interviews discussed here, Kluge's understanding of the subject is informed by an intimate knowledge of the interviewee's writings as well as by Kluge's own notions and theoretical concepts.

An example of such a theory module that Kluge introduces into the conversation with Arkoun is 'Babylon', which he introduces in his very first speech act: 'What you are actually describing is the Babylonian confusion of languages'. Kluge comments on Arkoun's expository monologue about the tradition of mutual imaginary conceptions between Muslims and Christians with the symbolic reference to Babylon. With this Kluge refers not only to the multilingual and multicultural society of Babylon, but also to a metaphor that Kluge has used to describe contemporary phenomena of postmodern polyphony such as the multiplication of television channels in Germany during the 1980s: 'I think, I would call it Babylonisation, confusion of languages. But this contains a principle of understanding. Babylon is the greatest school that we have and we have to accept it. Our world is Babylon'.⁴² Babylon is thus a symbol not merely for a heterogeneous society, but also for the opportunity of embracing diversity through mutual understanding. The combination of Sumeric and Semitic cultures and languages is the foundation of the empire's long-lasting success. Hence, cultural difference between Islam and Christianity, which has been interpreted as a source of conflict, is turned into an opportunity.

Another important term in Kluge's conceptual repertoire informing the interview is the link. The term enters the conversation literally as well as in the form of the interviewer's discursive strategy. 'Link' ('*Verknüpfung*') and 'Interconnectedness' ('*Vernetzung*') are privileged terms in Kluge's vocabulary: 'Interconnectedness is exactly what I am interested in. When a link is surprising it is good'.⁴³ In his conversation with Arkoun, Kluge introduces a surprising link through the neologism 'life profits'.

Kluge: That means that in a world of monetary profits, of profits of legitimation, the most important world, the world of life profits has to be included in accounting and balance sheets.

Arkoun: Yes, one has to express them. One has to connect them. One has to create the links.

Kluge: The links are created at the base level.

Arkoun: One has to create joints between those worlds.

From the beginning of the programme the opposition between capitalism and Enlightenment on the one hand and religion on the other hand is seen as the foundation of the present conflict as it is expressed in the opening subtitle: 'It is insufficient to counter the religions with Voltaire and the stock exchange'. Kluge links the realm of financial balance sheets with the area of metaphysical validation through the neologism 'life profits'. The surprise element lies in the metaphorical association of 'life' with 'profit' and enables the conceptual connection of two normally disparate realms. Those links operate like joints as they translate movement or development of one element into change in the jointed element. In addition to the explicit use of the term 'link' the interview contains several other instances in which Kluge practices discursive 'link'. One example would be the aforementioned olive tree, which serves as a metonymic link between East and West, or Augustine, who links Eastern and Western histories of ideas.

Kluge's interview with Mohammed Arkoun is the longest, most fundamental, and comprehensive interview on the relationship between Islam, the West, and terrorism since 9/11. He produced two closely related interviews with the Pakistani-born author Tariq Ali and with the secretary general of the Humboldt Foundation, Dr. Manfred Osten. Both interviews approach the question of the image of Islam from new perspectives, but reiterate and reinforce important themes of the Arkoun interview such as the cultural and historical interconnection between Islam and Christianity. Since they follow essentially the aesthetic and stylistic pattern of 'ABC des Islam', this discussion will address only a few selected themes.

Manfred Osten is marked as an authority when his academic title and his function as head of the Humboldt Foundation are emphasised in the opening scrolling subtitle. As he appears in the frame, Kluge displays yet another title: 'Dr. Manfred Osten, Goethe researcher'. As is the case with Arkoun and most other Kluge interviews, there is a moment of uncertainty about the sincerity of the 'expert status'.⁴⁴ However, the regular Kluge viewer knows Osten, who ap-

pears frequently in Kluge's interviews. In a certain way, Kluge casts Goethe himself as the expert, while Osten acts as a sort of mediator in this interview entitled 'Why was Goethe interested in Islam?' This type of casting choice seems like an ironic gesture to an audience that might not be familiar with Mohammed Arkoun or Tariq Ali but that will hardly question Goethe's authority considering his status as the icon of German culture and intellectual history. The interview begins with a reference to Goethe's methodological approach. As Osten is about to start quoting from Goethe's poem 'Mahomets Gesang', Kluge interrupts:

Osten: Perhaps I should read some verses to provide an impression of the hymnlike enthusiasm with which an individual here in Europe [...]

Kluge: (interrupts) applauds what is distant.

Osten: [...] applauds in a way [...]

Kluge: (interrupts again) [...] and says: 'I cannot understand it, but I *empfühle* it'.⁴⁵

Osten: Yes, it is a pure reason of sentiment [...] He attempts to attain knowledge through sympathy. Goethe was certain that sympathy is the best means to attain knowledge, not criticism.

What appears to be a minor diversion is a central critique of the dominant epistemological paradigm with regard to the media discourse on Islam and terrorism. Kluge emphasises here an approach that contrasts with the (pseudo)rational discourse that dominates the talk and news genres in television. Osten is able to follow this tangent with the paradox 'reason of sentiment' and argues that Goethe privileged a more empathetic approach to Islam instead of rational critique.

A second fundamental critique of the European discourse on the Other that emerges from the conversation concerns the concept of tolerance. Emphasising Goethe's reverence for Spinoza, who has previously been established as an intellectual successor to the Islamic philosopher Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Osten elaborates:

'His [Spinoza's] god is deeper and purer than mine'. That means he provides an acknowledgement here that he subsequently phrased: acquiescence or tolerance should only be a temporary disposition. It should give way to acknowledgement. To acquiesce means to insult. For Goethe this is the precondition for dialogue that we acknowledge what is positive.

Kluge: [...] take it seriously.

Osten juxtaposes Goethe's admiration of Spinoza (who in turn is indebted to the Islamic philosophical legacy) to mere tolerance, which Osten assumes to be today's moral maxim for the social relation to Islam. Judging from the predominantly negative representation of Islam in the German mass media,⁴⁶ tolerance is also the best one can hope for in contemporary Germany although the Muslim population represents by far the largest minority and is a significant social group with about five million citizens and legal residents. While tolerance is granted from a position of power and should be practiced in relation to all, recognition and appreciation must be earned. Thus Goethe is again used to call for an entirely different discourse on Islam. The general demand for greater awareness and interest in other cultural traditions is backed up with specific examples of achievements of Islamic societies. As in all three expert interviews on Islam, Kluge emphasises the function of Ibn Rushd (Averroes) as a central link between Islamic and Western culture: 'The West receives Aristotle's texts through the Arabic philosopher Averroes. We never received them directly from Greece'. Ibn Rushd lived in the twelfth century in Córdoba and was educated in Islamic law, theology, philosophy, mathematics and medicine. He is regarded as one of the most important thinkers of the Middle Ages and is best known for his extensive Aristotle commentaries, which, translated into Latin and Hebrew, had a profound impact on Christian scholasticism, Jewish thought and European philosophy. In this way Greek philosophical thought, the mythic origin of Western civilisation, is revealed as mediated through the Islamic humanistic tradition. Goethe's admiration for this tradition is used to validate this thesis and provide it with authority.

Finally, the interview reiterates the critique of the Enlightenment as a failed project. Osten elaborates and quotes Goethe: 'A world [the West], that in his eyes is not at all enlightened in the West. That is the fantastical thing. That he says himself: "He calls it reason, yet uses it to be more beastlike than any beast."' As in the Arkoun interview, the programme critiques the imaginary opposition of an 'enlightened' West and 'backward' Islamic societies by calling into question the very notion of Enlightenment itself. This critique of Enlightenment goes hand in hand with the critique of rationality that is inherent in the non-linear aesthetics of the programme discussed above.

The third and final interview features Tariq Ali. The programme's title already suggests the interview's agenda: 'Saladin defeats the crusaders/Tariq Ali's novel about Islam's greatest triumph'.⁴⁷ The conversation explores Ali's novel *The Book of Saladin*, which tells the story of the Kurdish Sultan Saladin, who unified the Arabic forces, defeated the crusaders and liberated Jerusalem. The specific function of this interview in the larger context of reframing the image of Islam is to counter the media stereotype of the West's superiority over Islam.⁴⁸ To this end, Kluge and Ali discuss the story of Saladin ad-Din Jusuf ibn

Ajub (1138-1193), who fought from age fourteen against the Christian crusaders and took on the title of sultan in 1174. After taking control of Aleppo and Mosul, he freed Jerusalem, which then remained under Islamic rule until 1914.

Kluge opens the conversation by suggesting a surprising link: 'Saladin was born in the same city as Saddam Hussein'. He uses this seemingly unimportant coincidence to refer to the one-sided representation of the Islamic world in the Western media at the time. Since the interview was conducted during the debate about a preemptive invasion of Iraq, the media in the West cast Saddam Hussein as an enemy of civilisation. Thus Kluge alludes with the link to the underlying purpose to provide alternative stories and images of Islam to those dominating the mainstream media.

Kluge and Ali proceed to present a condensed account of Saladin's life. The story of Saladin's conquest of Jerusalem is set up as a mirror image of the contemporary War on Terrorism since 9/11. In another variation on the name 'Berber', Ali points out that the Islamic societies of the twelfth century experienced the crusaders as 'barbarians', while they saw themselves as the advanced civilisation threatened by brutal attackers. Consequently, Ali insists on calling Saladin's takeover of Jerusalem a 'liberation', the same term that the Western allied forces used before and during the invasion of Kabul and Baghdad in 2001 and 2003, respectively. Thus the interview demonstrates the historical relativity and malleability of labels such as 'barbarian' or 'liberation', which in the contemporaneous media discourse on international politics and terrorism appear to be fixed and stable. Furthermore, Ali backs up his claim by underscoring that Saladin opened Jerusalem to all religions and it remained so through the centuries until the British occupation in 1917. Thus Kluge achieves a shift of perspective for the audience. The stereotypical image of intolerant Islamic fundamentalism is replaced with a contrasting image using the symbolically charged space of Jerusalem.

Kluge's interviews on Islam demonstrate that he has signed on to the larger project for which Arkoun has called: a critical rethinking of the concept of Islam in the West. The three television programmes discussed above provide the opportunity to reframe images of Islam. In his interviews Kluge moves beyond critiquing the portrayal of Islam or the Orient in Western discourse and creates an alternative discourse on Islam using a combination of stylistic and discursive means. Kluge emphasises the break with dominant television discourse through his subversive use of framing and editing. Highlighting the interviews' artificiality, he emphasises their subjectivity and disrupts the illusion of 'immediacy'. As the audience is made aware of the various levels of mediation, it is invited to partake in the process of creating meaning. Kluge's discursive strategies offer various points of departure for the viewers to generate their own imaginations of Islam. The visual montage sequences are one example; they literally take ico-

nic images of terrorism out of their usual contexts and disrupt simplified linear relationships. The reframing of the images in new environments invites the viewers to rethink their meanings. A second example is Kluge's 'counter-history' of the relationship between Islam and Christianity. This occurs through visual montage and through replacing collective history with individual stories. It is then left to the audience to draw more general conclusions. Especially the account of personal experiences such as the memories of Arkoun add a degree of authenticity that is absent in most conventional expert statements.

The eclectic montage of these diverse stories defies any notion of a linear historical development that could, for example, provide facile explanations for the existence of Islamic extremism. Instead the stories suggest, if anything, that the cultural history of Islam and Christianity is inextricably interwoven, for example, through the nodal figure of Ibn Rushd/Averroes, without whom the Renaissance would not have been possible. However, to create meanings like these, Kluge depends on the viewer. Uecker has criticised Kluge's television project for failing to produce the effects that his social theory demands.⁴⁹ It is certainly true that Kluge's programmes have neither influenced the general television aesthetics in Germany nor produced an open forum of communication that could replace the classical public sphere that Kluge sees threatened by mainstream television. Both of these are unrealistic expectations. Public and private stations depend on ratings for their existence. Kluge's television aesthetics, however, requires by definition independence from the pressure to produce high ratings. Kluge's relatively small audience follows from his experimental aesthetics. A participatory mass audience is not viable in a media environment that teaches the viewer to expect a prefabricated product. Yet, if individual viewers accept the invitation, their collaboration creates meaning that transcends the imaginary realism of the endless live feeds and expert commentaries in dominant news television discourse – as the examples of Kluge's three interviews on Islam vividly demonstrate.

Notes

1. The three interviews, which were all first broadcast in 2002, are: 1) 'ABC des Islam/ Mohamed Arkoun Über Islam, Terror und das unbezähmbare religiöse Imaginäre'; 2) 'Saladin besiegt die Kreuzritter: Tariq Ali's Roman Über den größten Triumph des Islam'; and 3) 'Mahomets Gesang: Was reizte Goethe am Islam?' All subsequent references to these programmes will be given in parentheses in the text.
2. Matthias Uecker, *Anti-Fernsehen? Alexander Kluges Fernsehproduktionen* (Marburg: Schüren, 2000), pp. 167 ff.
3. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage-Random, 1994), p. 272.

4. Ibid., p. 331. See also Edward W. Said, 'The Clash of Ignorance', *Nation* (22 October 2001).
5. Karim H. Karim, *Islamic Peril: Media and Global Violence* (New York: Black Rose, 2000), p. ix.
6. Kai Hafez, *The West and Islam in the Mass Media* (Bonn: Zentrum für Europäische Integrationsforschung, 2000), p. 5.
7. Kai Hafez, 'Imbalances of Middle East Coverage: A Quantitative Analysis of the German Press', in *Islam and the West in the Mass Media: Fragmented Images in a Globalizing World*, ed. Kai Hafez (Cresskill: Hampton Press, 2000), pp. 181-197 (196).
8. Verena Klemm and Karin Hörner, *Das Schwert des Experten* (Cologne: Palmyra, 1993). See also Kai Hafez, Karin Hörner and Verena Klemm, 'The "Rise and Decline" of Opinion Leaders: The Changing Image of the Middle East and Islam in German Mass Media', in *Islam and the West in the Mass Media: Fragmented Images in a Globalizing World*, ed. Kai Hafez (Cresskill: Hampton Press, 2000), pp. 273-87, and Medienprojekt Tübinger Religionswissenschaften ed., *Der Islam in den Medien. Studien zum Verstehen fremder Religionen 7* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1994).
9. Hafez, *The West and Islam in the Mass Media*, p. 5.
10. Ibid., p. 16.
11. Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1992), p. 165.
12. Andrea Fuchs-Sumiyoshi, *Orientalismus in der deutschen Literatur* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1984), pp. 13-14. See also Berman's discussion of Lessing, Goethe, Wieland, Mozart, and Novalis, in Nina Berman, *Orientalismus, Kolonialismus und Moderne: Zum Bild des Orients in der deutschsprachigen Kultur 1900* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1996).
13. Georg Stauth, *Islam und westlicher Rationalismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1993), p. 10.
14. Said, *Orientalism*, p. 331.
15. Dennis Porter, 'Orientalism and its Problems', in *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory. A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), pp. 150-61 (151).
16. Uecker, *Anti-Fernsehen?*, p. 165.
17. Christian Schulte, 'Fernsehen und Eigensinn', in *Kluges Fernsehen: Alexander Kluges Kulturmagazine*, ed. Christian Schulte and Winfried Siebers (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002), pp. 65-81 (65) [See translation in this book, ed.]; Uecker, *Anti-Fernsehen?*, p. 48 ff.
18. Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, 'Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung: Zur Organisationsanalyse von bürgerlicher und proletarischer Öffentlichkeit', in Oskar Negt und Alexander Kluge, *Der unterschätzte Mensch. Gemeinsame Philosophie in zwei Bänden Vol. 1* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 2001), pp. 328-674 (462-463).
19. Ibid., p. 462.
20. Mohammed Arkoun, *The Unthought in Contemporary Islamic Thought* (London: Islamic Publications, 2002).
21. See the introductory chapter of David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson and Janet Staiger in *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style & Mode of Production to 1960* (New York: Columbia, 1985).
22. Knut Hickethier, 'Von anderen Erfahrungen in der Fernsehöffentlichkeit: Alexander Kluges Kulturmagazine und die Fernsehgeschichte', in *Kluges Fernsehen: Alexander*

- Kluges Kulturmagazine*, ed. Christian Schulte and Winfried Siebers (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002), pp. 195-219 (214).
23. Negt and Kluge, 'Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung', p. 462.
 24. *Ibid.*, p. 491.
 25. Cf. Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. (New York: Pantheon, 2002); Elizabeth Poole, *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002).
 26. Alexander Kluge, *In Gefahr und größter Not bringt der Mittelweg den Tod: Texte zu Kino, Film, Politik*, ed. Christian Schulte (Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 1999), p. 248.
 27. Alexander Kluge, 'Ein Hauptansatz des Ulmer Instituts', in *Ulmer Dramaturgien: Reibungsverluste*, ed. Alexander Kluge and Klaus Eder (Munich: Hanser, 1980), p. 14.
 28. Anton Kaes, 'Über den nomadischen Umgang mit Geschichte: Aspekte zu Alexander Kluges Film *Die Patriotin*', *Text + Kritik* (no. 85/86 January, 1985), pp. 132-144 (138).
 29. Compare Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), p. 337.
 30. Uecker, *Anti-Fernsehen?*, p. 153.
 31. Christian Bechthold, *Sinnliche Wahrnehmung von sozialer Wirklichkeit* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1983), p. 129.
 32. *Ibid.*, p. 244; Miriam Hansen, 'The Stubborn Discourse: History and Story-Telling in the Films of Alexander Kluge', in *Die Schrift an der Wand: Alexander Kluge: Rohstoffe und Materialien*, ed. Christian Schulte (Osnabrück: Universitätsverlag Rasch, 2000), pp. 119-131 (127); Kaes, 'Über den nomadischen Umgang mit Geschichte', p. 138.
 33. Kaes, 'Über den nomadischen Umgang mit Geschichte', p. 138.
 34. Hansen, 'The Stubborn Discourse', p. 123.
 35. Christian Schulte, 'Konstruktion des Zusammenhangs', in *Die Schrift an der Wand: Alexander Kluge: Rohstoffe und Materialien*, ed. Christian Schulte (Osnabrück: Universitätsverlag Rasch, 2000), pp. 45-67 (45).
 36. Hansen, 'The Stubborn Discourse', pp. 122-123.
 37. Cf. Sut Jhally, 'Media Coverage of the Middle East', *Alternative Radio* (National Public Radio, KUOW, Seattle. 1 May 2002). See also Jack G. Shaheen, *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* (New York: Olive Branch Press, 2001), p. 10 ff.
 38. Kaes, 'Über den nomadischen Umgang mit Geschichte', pp. 132 ff.
 39. Bechthold, *Sinnliche Wahrnehmung von sozialer Wirklichkeit*, p. 244.
 40. Werner Barg, 'Ein Dokumentarist des Protestes', in *Perspektiven des Dokumentarfilms*, ed. Manfred Hattendorf (Munich: Diskurs Film Verlag, 1995), p. 113.
 41. *Ibid.*, p. 126. See also Uecker, *Anti-Fernsehen?*, p. 111.
 42. Georg Stanitzek, 'Autorität im Hypertext: "Der Kommentar ist die Grundform der Texte" (Alexander Kluge)', *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* (vol. 23 no. 2, 1998), pp. 1-46 (42). See also Alexander Kluge, 'Das Lesen des Textes wirklicher Verhältnisse', in *Der Kopf in der Schlinge*, ed. Hans Dieter Müller (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985), pp. 177-211 (202).
 43. Alexander Busche, *Fernsehen als Hypertext: Alexander Kluge über den neuen Sender XXP* (4 June 2001) <http://www.heise.de/tp/deutsch/inhalt/co/7803/1.html>, paragraph 6. [Last accessed 20 February 2011]
 44. Michael Rutschky, 'Notversorgung im Offnen Kanal: Über einige Kunstgriffe in Alexander Kluges Fernseharbeiten', in *Kluges Fernsehen: Alexander Kluges Kulturma-*

- gazine*, ed. Christian Schulte and Winfried Siebers (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002), pp. 260-64 (262).
45. 'Empfinden' connotes both intuitive knowledge as well as affection for its object.
 46. See Medienprojekt Tübinger Religionswissenschaften ed., *Der Islam in den Medien*.
 47. Alexander Kluge, 'Saladin besiegt die Kreuzritter: Tariq Alis Roman über den größten Triumph des Islam' (RTL, 21 January 2002).
 48. Astrid Czerny, Armin Kappel and Silvia Kuske, 'Das Orientbild des Westens: Die Botschaft hinter den Bildern', in *Der Islam in den Medien. Studien zum Verstehen fremder Religionen 7*, ed. Medienprojekt Tübinger Religionswissenschaften (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1994), pp. 17-30 (21 ff.).
 49. Uecker, *Anti-Fernsehen?*, pp. 167 ff.

In the Real Time of Feelings: Interview with Alexander Kluge¹

Astrid Deuber-Mankowsky and Giaco Schiesser

AD-M/GS: Since 1988 you have been broadcasting your own arts magazine, *Ten to Eleven* and *Prime Time*, on the private channels RTL and Sat1. What do you hope to achieve with these programmes?

AK: In 1972, Oskar Negt and I wrote a book on 'The Public Sphere and Experience' in which we tried to analyse the forms of the public sphere. The independent public sphere – as opposed to the direct public sphere of monarchies – is a landmark achievement of the last three hundred years. Negt and I tried to anchor the concept of 'public sphere' in human experience, in life stories. We proceeded from the assumption that a public sphere will be all the richer the more human experiences, the kind of experiences we deal with every day, enter into this public sphere. The political is an intensity of real feelings. That remains my fundamental position.

Today, the big abstract media form organisations that can only be maintained by corporations capable of producing and paying for at least nine thousand hours of programming each year. The television public sphere thus belongs to an oligarchy of big concerns, and this transforms the public sphere into a bureaucratic organisation. That's the opposite of a truly vital public sphere, however. We told ourselves that to criticise this by writing texts would be totally futile. This massive production must be criticised in a different way. That's why I decided, together with friends from musical theatre, publishing and film-making, to create a forum. At first with RTL and Sat1. We broadcast there in direct sound, in very short segments of fifteen or twenty-four minutes each, and we draw from the areas of music, theatre, literature and film – film always understood as the hundred years or so of film history, not the cinema releases of a given year. We don't report on the arts at all. The term 'arts magazine' is misleading to the extent that, by using direct sound, we are drawing attention to a kind of public sphere that has a significant impact, namely, the expressive form of these three media. We want to strain the muscles that are already there in people's perception.

AD-M/GS: Have you achieved what you set out to achieve in the six years since you began broadcasting?

AK: We have achieved perhaps ten per cent of what we envisaged ten years ago. On the other hand, you could say that independent journalistic enterprises like *Der Spiegel* or our other partners can't be gagged and are therefore independent. So we've gained a foothold in this public sphere, and hence a degree of independence. The fact that we could only realise a small part of what we set out to achieve must be accepted by anyone who sees things realistically. After all, what we've achieved this way isn't nothing. Experience tells us that innovation is produced in small doses rather than through majorities.

AD-M/GS: We will soon be able to tune in to more than forty stations on cable TV. What advice would you give to us as viewers? How should we respond?

AK: I'm not a very typical TV viewer. I also don't believe in television. It's just I respect that TV is the dominant medium in our society. And I can't exactly convince everyone else to stop watching. I can make sure that my children don't watch TV all the time, but even there my power is very limited. What I can do, as an author, is to behave just as self-consciously in relation to television as I do in relation to everything else in life. That's my contribution. And if viewers behave just as self-consciously as in their immediate public sphere, whether in their family or their city, their parish or their state, then they will have acted correctly. In that event, they should also be able to find out what speaks to them in a programme of forty channels.

AD-M/GS: The family as public sphere, isn't that an unconventional idea of 'public sphere', which has generally otherwise been defined in opposition to the private sphere?

AK: Now let's not exaggerate. I'm only referring to domains of life experience. They're everywhere. And when parents say something to their children, they exert a relatively big influence. We parents are engaged with television in a constant struggle for our children. And when they've been watching Disney on a Sunday and they come away from the television set, they're whiny, slightly mentally disturbed kids. That's the area where we have the greatest influence. The next area is the village or city where we live. There, we already have noticeably less say and we have to get along with everyone else as well. So we can see that politics, the parliament or the Supreme Court have nowhere near as much say as all the television stations put together. Whether we're dealing with forty companies or with three or four powerful oligarchies is a relatively trivial matter. The only thing that can be done against this dominant medium is to trust in what we can do ourselves. You shouldn't place all your hopes in our heavenly father. Our main task is to make a difference with the professional means at our

disposal, which in our case means developing an alternative to bureaucratised television. Just look at what the Paper Tiger TV group has done in New York. Even though, unlike the DCTP, it isn't connected with any of the big newspapers and is quite weak in financial terms, it has stimulated an intellectual awakening in the entire country, an unleashing of imaginative potential, which is really quite enormous. Arte, the Franco-German culture channel, is likewise an innovation, at least from the French side.

AD-M/GS: Let's talk in more detail about your programmes. How do you go about realising one of your main ambitions, that of bringing together the 'near senses' and the 'remote senses' in television?

AK: I trust in the tone. Our shows aren't characterised by their content but by their tone, which viewers can always check for themselves. I take the tone from operas, books and the history of film. And for the following reason: there's a certain patience stored up in books; the letters can wait. The experiences of forty thousand years ago inscribed by Homer can always be brought to the reader's attention anew. That's what I most revere in books, and it's also why I insist on being an author myself. What I don't like so much about books is that they can't take music on board. And even though music scores are books too, you don't experience music by reading it. It's not normal for people to lie down on the sofa and simply read scores, like Adorno did. The first element that I import into my films is the rigour and emotionality of books, the time stored up in them, their longevity. The second element is music. And we apply it to contemporary history, to the news, in our programmes, especially in *Ten to Eleven*. It's not our intention to fall in love again with *Madame Butterfly*, we don't want to connect fiction with music the way they do in opera. Instead, we dare the translation to TV with the intention of reviving music from the spirit of the news. That's because today, the real novels are written via contemporary history, via reality, and not by creative writers. The third element is the history of film. We want to cultivate film history for television. Actually, we're making auteur cinema in the form of auteur television.

AD-M/GS: How are we to understand this translation of cinema to TV in concrete terms?

AK: We put classic lenses on electronic cameras, for example. And the experience of four hundred, three hundred or two hundred years is deposited in these lenses, depending on whether they come from the Netherlands or from England or from Zeiss. So we don't work with rubber lenses, which always entail a compromise, but with these precise lenses. We have engineers who help us apply

these precise lenses to the video cameras, and that allows us to import into television a standard of quality that has been collectively attained throughout the history of film.

AD-M/GS: How do viewers benefit from this procedure?

AK: You will notice, when you see our electronic footage, that it looks like cinema images rather than television images. We make normal television as well, such as when we're doing interviews. Just as we create juxtapositions by bringing together music and film, for example, so we alter the realism of the images by supplementing it with the anti-realism of the feelings. In other words, we alter images so the result isn't an unequivocal picture of reality. If the feelings are opposed to the image, for instance, then we want to express that, or at least attempt to express that. We might use the Debrise camera of 1923 and teach our computers the rules that were once fed into this Debrise camera by cameramen who died long ago. We thus retrieve a piece of dead labour from cinema history and programme it into the show. We don't do that in an off-putting way, but in homeopathic doses which make it just about possible for viewers to accept it. They don't constantly want to see time-lapse footage. When we do a show like 'Wir machen mit', for example, a show about the election of the Social Democratic Party Chairman in Düsseldorf, we don't broadcast it with audio from the party convention, which everyone's already heard in the news and current affairs shows anyway. Instead, we combine the footage with a piece of modern pop music, 'Last Judgement'. And we show the images speeded up. Time-lapse creates a totality that simultaneously changes the light we see things in, creating a new perspective on the televisually mediated event.

Or to take another example: we present themes in which documentation and fiction alternate. We recently had a big success – 2.4 million viewers, who can't exactly be made to switch on their sets – on *Prime Time* with the programme 'In the Garden of the Reich Chancellery'. A Stasi official, whose face has been distorted, talks about his research in Moscow archives to find out which of the two putative Hitler corpses is authentic. In the programme, this is reported in the language of the Stasi, hence in an original tone. I don't believe that viewers would bother checking the content of my programmes, which tends to be rather complicated, but they do care about the authenticity of the language: they care that these are real human beings who are reporting to them. And that's what sticks in the mind. Viewers can recognise this murmuring from the immediate experience of being told fairy tales or being spoken to by their parents or relatives. That's the medium in which I operate and in which others operate in their programmes. It's something quite different from what's ordinarily done in documentary films, which also contain an artificial language, after all.

Another programme, which drew an audience of some 1.8 million viewers, was called 'Tents on the Outskirts of Stalingrad'. What really captivated me about this programme, historically speaking, is that, in the very same spot where the German troops were camping in the snow back in 1942, now the Soviet army, the 62nd army, having defended Stalingrad at the time and then, after 1989, been transferred there from the German territories, was camping in the snow as well. 1.8 million viewers found that interesting. That's the population of a big city and matches the highest ratings of Gottschalk and his show. This shows that, precisely when we don't proceed bombastically, when we simply show documentary footage which is, however, unique in historical terms, people will want to tune in and watch.

AD-M/GS: What kind of public watches your programmes?

AK: I only know that a below-average number of academics watch them, and a disproportionately high number of retired people and life-long learners, the kind of people who enrol in language courses, for example. That means, people who still want to learn something and extend themselves are over-represented in these programmes. Whoever already knows how television works and has finished studying tends to say, 'that's just not television'. I don't have much success with senior high school teachers, for example.

AD-M/GS: The strip of text running from right to left is almost a trademark of your programmes.

AK: We use running titles so we don't have to hear a voice-over babbling on all the time. We reject the off-screen voice. Whenever we can, we also include the translator in the scene. They can be seen when they are speaking.

AD-M/GS: According to the rule: you have to see the head that's doing the talking?

AK: Quite so. We take the content of the words, what the words express, just as seriously as the facial expressions.

AD-M/GS: And this word has a different effect when it's written than when it's spoken by an off-screen voice?

AK: Yes, the voice-over is simply degrading, as if radio were inferior to television. I don't share this view. I continue to believe that radio is superior to the whole business of television. It invented the radio play, after all, whereas televi-

sion has yet to spawn a single new genre. Television reports on events, otherwise it's not television. That's why I have to track down the actual events.

AD-M/GS: Isn't it the case, though, that the programmes which draw the biggest audiences don't report on events but tell stories, like the 'telenovelas' from Brazil?

AK: That's what I call administration, recycling something that's already been chewed up. You can say that all the big consciousness industries invent a kind of Esperanto of healthy common sense and mean (*mittleren*) human interest. This Esperanto turns all experiences into indirect ones. They become unverifiable, and we become detached from them as a consequence. The kind of authenticity I believe in can't be made into a system. It can't be centrally organised.

AD-M/GS: For us there's a rupture, to put it lightly, whenever your programmes are broadcast by the big consciousness industries, as you have characterised RTL and Sat1. Both channels seem to see that themselves. On RTL, for instance, you're introduced with the slogan: 'Exclusive to RTL: Alexander Kluge's programme. Smarten up with Kluge (*Werden Sie klüger mit Kluge*)'.

AK: The channel does that because nothing else occurs to it, and the slogan hides an aggressive intention as well.

AD-M/GS: An introduction like that carries the message: Here's someone who's not one of us, feel free to go and have a beer.

AK: That's unfortunately the case. But when we nonetheless have 2.4 million viewers and twelve programmes in a row have over a million, this shows that there are people out there who want an alternative. At the moment we have a time slot on Vox, where I normally don't make any programmes, from ten to midnight on Saturday night. Saturday TV is normally a wasteland, you can't see anything apart from mainstream TV. And now, with the help of *Der Spiegel* and *Zeit-TV* and some programmes I make myself, there's an alternative – and we already have ratings of five per cent. That's up there among the highest-rating programmes on Vox. Clearly, there is thus a coherent minority in the Federal Republic which either doesn't want to see TV on a Saturday night or wants to see something decent, something they can use in their lives as well.

AD-M/GS: Something that's coming our way is interactive television. Do you see any emancipatory possibilities there?

AK: That depends on the balance. In the television landscape, which is developing and expanding all the time, I can imagine something like that happening. Interaction is too abstract in the super-regional television that extends over the whole continent. For the interaction not to be abstract, there always has to be an immediate public sphere there as well. Somewhere or other, people have to be speaking and speaking spontaneously, they must be in their own domain, and they must also understand something about their domain and be able to influence the decisions that are made there. After all, that's what 'immediate public sphere' means. Once that's given, you can always find a way out and start developing an alternative television. I don't want to work in television permanently, though. I'm holding open a place that will be occupied by others at some time in the foreseeable future. What remains is independence.

AD-M/GS: Is independence your first priority?

AK: I can guarantee that. Our independence is further assured by the fact that we're not just on RTL, we're also on Sat1 at the same time. DCTP isn't a satellite of RTL, nor is it a satellite of the Kirch group. We're appearing simultaneously on the same competing channels. That's how we can express our independence in the language of the medium.

AD-M/GS: DCTP Ltd., in which you're one of two managing directors with equal rights, recently obtained a licence from the private channel Vox. Now DCTP has signed over part of its time slot to different publishing concerns such as the *NZZ* (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*) and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. How does that work?

AK: The partners, who are already named in the licence application, plan this time slot in editorial independence. They receive all the advertising revenue from the slot to cover their production costs. DCTP, for its part, levies a management fee of five per cent. With that income, we make new programmes and defend the platform.

AD-M/GS: DCTP was awarded the licence from Vox also, and in the first place, owing to the quality of your arts programmes.

AK: Yes, but only in a very indirect way. All the channels broadcast by transmitter masts in Germany have to offer complete programmes. If they were special-interest broadcasters, they wouldn't have this privilege. And a complete programme – that's dictated by the law – has to cover culture, education, sport, entertainment, news, etc. What RTL didn't have back in 1988 was investigative

journalism and culture. We could provide that, and that's why they signed contracts with us.

AD-M/GS: That's why you are almost unsackable?

AK: Yes, because we applied for a licence together. They could have set it up themselves, then they wouldn't have needed us. As things stand, they will lose *their* licence if they ignore us.

AD-M/GS: How did you come across the *NZZ* as a partner?

AK: The *NZZ* is a newspaper based in a neutral country that has been investigating the world through its network of correspondents for some two hundred years. It may not be seen that way from within Switzerland, but the *NZZ* has a panoramic view that we can well use in our German public sphere. Precisely in the wake of our overhasty neo-pan-Germanic turn in 1989, I think it's invaluable that the *NZZ*, and later also the *International Herald Tribune*, have made their voices heard here.

What's more, our partners have to bear the entire deficit for the first years. To produce an arts programme of this kind, they have to invest almost twice as much as they can recoup in advertising revenue. And that's why we didn't have all that much choice. Needless to say, we wanted to get *Libération* on board as well. But they said it would be too expensive for them. In Germany, we also flirted with the *Tageszeitung* and with the *Woche**post*. But it's simply too expensive, and we have to be able to finance the lean years at the beginning.

AD-M/GS: And then the *WoZ* (*Woche**zeitung*) would have a chance as well?

AK: You would have a chance too. And I would do what I could to help. But I'm not all-powerful. I have to pay all my deficits, too, and that places certain limits on me. What you could do without further ado is to begin once a year with a really good programme. You could afford that, and it would provide good publicity for your paper as well, because it would act like a shop window. And if you were currently connected with two other independent newspapers, you could make three such shows. That's the method for remaining a small unit – like my firm, you'd be amazed at how small it is, I don't have a single employee. The little ones have to join forces to form a coral reef.

AD-M/GS: How do you do that?

AK: Through alliances. By continually talking to other people. And by spending more money than I make.

AD-M/GS: Do you make all of the culture programmes on your own?

AK: I take sole responsibility. And I apply the finishing touches myself. But I take a lot of programmes from elsewhere. Either parts or the whole.

AD-M/GS: That is to say, you are constantly producing public spheres on lots of different levels.

AK: On quite different levels, and the outcome is relatively inconspicuous. It consists in bringing together levels that wouldn't naturally join up with each other, and then everyone says that it's really quite natural.

The music of Bellini here obviously fits with Bert Brecht and Gorbachev, who's just visited the Berliner Ensemble. That's a programme that will be screening in January: Gorbachev in the Berliner Ensemble. A president at the place where Brecht staged all his productions. And now Wim Wenders, Heiner Müller and Peter Palitzsch get together here, and we reflect on what's dramatic in the idea of Brecht and what's dramatic in the idea of Gorbachev, who is a lawyer too, after all, and for whom the line from Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle* holds true: 'He brought his people to the shore on the wreck of the law'. I think that's a fine expression, that the law is a wreck. And this is all backed up with music and with vision from a young cameraman, Walter Lenertz, who's one of the up-and-coming film-makers. That's how I combine it all and bring different domains together.

AD-M/GS: Stalingrad is a theme that has preoccupied you now for thirty years. It's generally evident that your work – in writing, in film and in theory – continually circles around the same topics.

AK: It's always the writing on the wall left behind for us by our century. Take the outbreak of war in 1914. That's never been properly worked through. Neither in 1918, nor in 1945. And you will notice that these childhood illnesses are once again breaking out in our increasingly nationalistic Europe. In another form, to be sure, but the ball bearings are rolling together again.

That's why it's so important that topics like Auschwitz, or 1914, or the aerial bombardment of the civilian population, where capitulation has become impossible – it's always possible for animals in nature to capitulate – are continually discussed. That's the writing on the wall around which many other experiences can crystallise. And then it's important to establish the connection and show

that real people have risked something and led other real people into an organisational disaster, and then those who bear the responsibility have vanished, they're not around anymore and can't be brought to account.

The half-life of the radioactive zone in Chernobyl amounts to 40,000 years, whereas the institutional responsibility – the authorities – couldn't hold out for another seven years, and now this tiny republic of White Russia, which has a budget equivalent to that of a Swiss canton, has inherited all of Moscow's responsibility. We have to work through this as a structure of proportion. What else does the public sphere entail other than that we, in our community, can agree to recognise proportions?

That's my work, the work of an accountant, if you like, who must apply these artistic means because the faculty of imagination can't be expressed in numbers. I call that a metaphor: an experience that passes by too quickly for our system of perception must be slowed down so that it can be represented and imagined.

AD-M/GS: So you're trying to make clear what's happening through a kind of translation? Making sure that the film which is running too quickly is slowed down to 'real time'?

AK: Precisely, and the real time of feelings at that. Feelings function differently, you know. When you break up with someone you love, you have to do that in seven stages, according to Sigmund Freud, and then you can do it. It's an art of mourning.

We have plenty of game shows and comedies which don't mourn. Now people can't mourn all the time; the counter-pole is that, after a certain time, they cheer up amidst their mourning, all together at once – we know that from funerals. They are the true elements of the feelings, and they are also the elements artists work with. If you really want to resuscitate this aspect of humans, you need music, or you have to leave something standing there for a long time as so many dead letters until it suddenly bursts into the brain. Sometimes, you have to follow the principle of the Dadaists, basically the only movement that proved equal to the experience of World War I. They said: 'Tramp through the Harz mountains with a street map of Greater London'. That was their aesthetic axiom. You automatically stumble upon abysses. Precisely because the map doesn't fit, you stumble upon them, and you thereby become aware of where you're at and what's there.

There are really five ideals that should be taken into account: one is thoroughness; the second is emotionality – that's the subjective side; the third is that it must be surprising; the fourth is that it must be authentic, the audio must contain the original sound; and the fifth is context (*Zusammenhang*). They are the broad categories with which we make television, films and books.

Note

1. The interview appeared in *Die Wochenzeitung*, 1 February 1994.

Translated by Robert Savage

Television Interviews

Character Armour and Mobile Warfare

Alexander Kluge and Heiner Müller

AK: On the one hand you have a tractor as an invention, a caterpillar tread and machinery for hauling, it can travel cross-country and level out ditches and it can do things with the earth in a specific fashion, and secondly, you have a firing platform, an artillery emplacement that can move around, and thirdly a tank. If you take the components of a tank, what interests you there?

HM: Why I'm so fascinated by that is a question I ask myself. Why am I fascinated by the word armour, armour-plating?

AK: And also the workers that make it.

HM: It must have something to do with a need for armour, a subjective need for armour-plating. That's also why it's a dream image, the tank.

AK: The dream image is getting heavier. The first tanks are light.

HM: The other important factor is speed, though these days it's no longer that, of course. But in World War II it was still an image of speed.

AK: Sixty, eighty kilometres an hour they could travel.

HM: I myself didn't actually have anything to do with them directly. I did military training, but the war was nearing its end and we only once had contact with the enemy. That was with Soviet tanks. Actually it started when we were already on the way into American activity. Our officers, understandably, preferred to be captured by the Americans rather than the Russians, so we were marching from Wismar in the direction of Schwerin. We had anti-tank grenade launchers and relatively old rifles, they were Norwegian front-loaders.

AK: Could you fire an anti-tank grenade?

HM: I was taught to do that, yes.

AK: What is an anti-tank grenade-launcher?

HM: If only I knew now. I've repressed it so much, that's the strange thing. I was given the complete 'werewolf' training, and we practised with anti-tank grenade launchers. They were relatively easy to handle, but I can't describe it for you.

AK: Did you fire them?

HM: Only practice shots.

[...]

AK: What does a tank mean? Speed? A racing car is speedy.

HM: There are perhaps three things: speed, protection and imprisonment. You probably know what the soldiers say about tanks. From the beginning they were human canned food in there, always with the prospect of being fried. There were three things: speed, protection, but at the same time imprisonment.

AK: If you go back to Rome or Shakespeare, where do you find something of that sort?

HM: Coriolanus has armour-plating.

AK: As a man? Or do you mean the general and his personal bodyguards? The 'tortoise', where the shields are combined together, also makes a kind of tank.

HM: But the strange thing about Coriolanus is something else. Brecht couldn't get a handle on it in his adaptation, because he was aiming at something else in his play. Brecht actually wanted to write a Stalin play, in other words a play about the necessity and superfluousness of the hero, the protagonist. That was the picture Brecht had of Stalin, along the lines of that lovely definition of him: 'the meritorious murderer of the people'.

AK: Did he write that?

HM: He didn't write it, but he said it. But there is, I think, a note in the archive. It was meant very ambivalently.

AK: 'Meritorious' was not meant ironically?

HM: He didn't mean it at all ironically. 'Murderer' was meant quite seriously too. With Coriolanus the remarkable point, which he couldn't grasp, is that this tank Coriolanus is knocked off by a speech of his mother. There's something in that. A woman couldn't have invented a tank. That's a thoroughly male defensive move, armour-plating. Women don't need armour-plating.

[...]

AK: Maybe if you describe for me what the moon is. It's of course the satellite of a planet. How would you characterise something like that, just try to enter into the planetary system.

HM: The first thing would be that the moon is something that you shouldn't set foot on. First all the other planets, then the moon. The moon is something that one shouldn't colonise, that one shouldn't touch, you should just leave it the way it is, or let it go the way it goes. I'm speaking now in an associative way [...]

AK: But how would you begin to talk about the moon, would you begin with the sun, would you begin with the planets, would you begin with the stars? You've just begun by saying one should not set foot on it. I think that's very consistent, but just try to describe, say for a stranger, what it is.

HM: The moon is something you need in order to go to sleep. It's something you have to have when it's time to sleep.

AK: Have you ever actually written about the moon?

HM: Yes I have, yes.

AK: Where?

HM: There's an early poem that was never published, because I didn't think it was any good. I'll try to recollect. Let me think for a moment. 'The moon had not yet risen', it's a very early poem and probably bad, but I'll say it just for that reason.

The moon had not yet risen
Three were not to see it again
(It's about an execution)
When their bodies swung from the branches
The moon was lovely over the mountains.

That's one view of the moon. I was later completely taken aback when I read a text by Werner Riegel. He was a friend of Ruehmkorf, long since forgotten. But I've never forgotten these two lines, because I thought they were just fantastic.

The moon over Poland is lovely
For the duration of a shot in the head.

The second thing is that my mother was 'moonstruck' for a while, that is she used to walk in her sleep, even over rooftops. And then there is another connection, which might be completely abstruse. My first idea about the world was – that was a while back, of course – that somewhere there's a paling fence and the world ends there. That was connected with my first experience of politics, which was quite child-like. In 1934, I think, Hindenburg died, and I remember that there was this house up a bit of a slope. There was a fence, and the loos were outside, I remember that very fondly. There were three houses for plop-loos, and in one of them there were two. One for adults, one for children, so you could crap next to your uncle or next to your mother or whatever. That is, next to your mother never happened, at best it was your uncle. But if the need arose you sat together, it was just taken for granted. And then there was the fence behind the loos. And I remember, in 1934, it was towards evening, the bells were ringing in this village, and all the grown-ups were standing by this fence. Opposite, a fair way off, there was a similar house. They were standing by the fence too, and the bells were ringing because Hindenburg had died. And that was really strange, that was actually my first experience of politics or history. I was aware that there was something that meant a hiatus for the grown-ups. Something had finished, a kind of protection or [...]

AK: A sense of security [...]

HM: [...] a sense of security had gone, and there was an unease, a fear, and everybody was standing by the fence and listening to the bells.

AK: And what has this to do with the moon?

HM: For me it has something to do with the moon. I don't know why, I can't give a reason for it. The moon was something upsetting, but also something safe.

Translated by Philip Thomson

Jeff Mills: Godfather of Techno

Alexander Kluge and Jeff Mills

Numbers and vibrations will be the way humanity communicates in the future, says Jeff Mills. With UNDERGROUND RESISTANCE, he created in Detroit, New York, Berlin and Chicago one of the most experimental techno arsenals: AXIS SPIDERFORM/ But what's best in the world of techno emerges, Jeff Mills says, during a set and is unrepeatable.

AK: You said once that no new note is ever new in humanity's melody, there are only ever new sequences.

JM: You can't really say that something is totally new and has never existed before. That means that something new only goes as far back as I can remember.

AK: If you hadn't been a musician, you once said you would have been a lawyer or an architect.

JM: Probably. My father was an engineer, and there was this pressure to follow in his footsteps.

AK: There's a piece, X 102, that has to do with the rings of Saturn.

JM: We tried to describe in music what every single ring expresses, what it's made of. And as you approach Saturn on a journey, you pass through the individual rings and learn how each of them sounds.

AK: The same way a musical instrument is constructed?

JM: We analysed the structure of the most important rings. Some consist mostly of gas, others of ice or other particles, and we put these structures in relation to sounds and made an equation between the sounds and this material. So that means that on the path through the rings, which corresponds to the needle's path over the record, you hear from track to track how each ring could sound. That's all hypothetical, of course, because each track would have to be hundreds of thousands of miles wide if you make the analogy with the rings of Saturn.

AK: In another interview you talk about flying to Mars and say that you're inspired in these compositions by gravity, by acceleration, by everything you need to make it to Mars.

JM: With the progress of technology you would really have to be put in the position of feeling what it means to travel so far, feeling all kinds of impressions that we can't feel yet. I mean, I'm using music as a kind of vehicle to get to particular buildings and particular times, to travel through time and space.

AK: So you're curious about the planets?

JM: Yes, very.

AK: You once said it's a question of taming material and accelerating it at the same time, giving drive to the past, tearing down everything streamlined, always being one dimension ahead, bringing something further and simultaneously operating at a timeless level.

JM: Yeah, I think that's what is needed to create something today that you don't already expect or predict. There's a kind of formula I work with before I start experimenting: wipe everything from the blackboard so that I've got an empty page, an empty board. Beginning with nothing, starting out from nothing is very, very difficult.

AK: You've been doing that for seventeen years?

JM: For seven years. During the first ten years I just learned the craft, learned how to use the equipment. It's like life, you experience the first twenty years so you can live the years between twenty and thirty.

AK: You were born in 1964?

JM: 1963.

AK: You often use the term 'abstract'. Can you describe what you mean by that?

JM: At the moment it means for me an action without intent, without a clear goal. It can be something very deep, very broad, very diverse. If I had to nominate something then I'd have to say that jazz is very abstract, where each player takes his own path but they all come together in the end.

AK: Intensive, authentic, they would be different terms for abstract.

JM: Yes. When I'm at the turntable I use a drum machine as equipment, and I don't have anything already programmed into it, I write the programme, I make it just seconds before it's heard. And that's a very physical kind of abstraction. You can hear it only once, it's not being recorded.

AK: Without ballast? Without an anchor?

JM: Yes, exactly. It's something that exists only for as long as it's heard.

AK: How did you come up with the name AXIS? What does it mean?

JM: At first I wanted to set up a whole group of labels and companies, and I wanted to have four different groups within these labels, which means that every point represents a label. If you look at this label it has an invisible centre, an invisible middle, and when you look straight into the logo's centre you see an invisible circle, a circle that's not actually drawn in there. That's the symbol of the label, and the four segments rotate on this invisible axis.

AK: Just like a star has an axis?

JM: That's right.

AK: How long have you had this label?

JM: Six years.

AK: There's a term 'physics of techno', what does that mean?

JM: I've never heard it before. I imagine it refers to a method. Maybe a method by which a particular group of people work together. For example, we had no experience starting up and running a company, a record company, so that was a completely new experience for us. We created a structure and we did it exactly how we wanted, so if someone didn't like it they just stayed out. The more experience we had, and the more comfortable we felt doing what we were doing, the quicker we became, because we'd gone in the right direction and we all knew what it was about now. In other words, when you know the direction you're going in and you can work more quickly, you can change direction and manipulate it.

AK: In music, particularly in techno, there's this tremendous impatience; there has to be something new happening all the time, even though that's a bit like a language you can't invent from scratch. Does it annoy you that in those seven-teen years, you're expected to be a different person from year to year?

JM: No, the quotes and magazine articles are wrong there. You know my path, and I know that I have to continue and that I should continue. I don't know why; that's the light at the end of the tunnel. As long as I know that and as long as I have the drive for it, the drive and the gas in the tank, I'll be happy.

AK: Does the drive build up while you're working? It's not in the body, not in the mind, it's in the work, between the instruments and your hands?

JM: There has to be a reason for doing something for so long. You don't have to know the reason, but there must be a reason, a motive, a bit like in religion. That's still the most important thing. I think that many artists lose their drive or their vision and they stray from their original path, or things get in their way. But if you can keep up your concentration and your perspective and maintain your drive, if you can work and stay inside yourself, you can go on as long as you want.

AK: Is it the case that the hands do something the mind doesn't know about yet, that the instruments do something that surprises the mind? Or that the mind does something that surprises the instruments?

JM: I don't think that's quite how it works. Your mind has an idea, a thought, and if you're lucky then your hands can reinvent what your mind originally came up with. Most of this information gets lost because you're not able to translate it, or because you can't manipulate the instruments so that they really express what your mind is thinking. And I believe that the technology still hasn't come far enough to get around the hands. And I think the path therefore goes in a certain direction, from the mind through the hands to the keyboard and back.

AK: But there's something in me that knows?

JM: If you're a painter, for example, you take red instead of white because you're looking for something particular. Or I take this machine instead of that one, I don't know exactly what I'm looking for but I know I'm looking for something. So you don't work completely blind.

I made a record called CYCLE 30, and the basic idea behind it was that people and their creativity develop in a thirty-year cycle, all humanity develops in these thirty-year cycles, and I think there are therefore similarities between the past and what we're doing today. Maybe the standard is a bit different today, we now have semi-tones and different scales that maybe didn't go down so well back then.

AK: In thirty years or in three hundred years?

JM: Approximately thirty years. The connection to now would be in the years 1967-1968 and again in the 1930s, and after all, they're moments when interesting processes were taking place as far as creativity and change are concerned.

AK: SOLARIZED is the title of another of your pieces. Is that a name or what does Solarized mean?

JM: I'm a big fan of Man Ray and the way he did photography at the time. One of his photos led me to this title.

AK: And what does SLEEPING GIANTS mean?

JM: That refers to the DJ we created. The figure of this DJ is a giant in certain respects, at any rate in the way we set him up at the big music events, placed up high and very far away.

AK: What do you mean by giant? It's a fairy-tale character. There are stars that are giants [...]

JM: Here it refers to distance, to looking up to something from a short way off.

AK: And TIME OUT OF MIND, what does that mean? Time that's made from mind?

JM: Actually, it was originally called MIND OUT OF TIME. I stole the title from Steely Dan and turned it round. That explains itself when you listen to the track, it's not very concrete. It's like the memory or the trace of an idea, you hear only a part of the idea. That was in a really important phase of my music when I had become dissatisfied with the sound of music, with the sound of the studios. So I restructured everything, bought new equipment to wipe out everything that was there before and created a really unique sound, a clear, pure tone that would really last. And at that time I also moved from New York to Chicago,

and my whole life changed, I grew up in an instant. I had the plan to construct my studio in the form of a spider.

AK: A spider's web?

JM: No, the music was meant to be the web, that's the thread I'm spinning. But the mixing console in the centre of the room, the heart of the studio, was going to be in the middle and every element, the percussion machine and another part of the equipment were going to be placed around it in order of importance. And the whole thing had the form of a spider.

AK: MAN FROM TOMORROW.

JM: That's a track from this 30-year cycle idea in which I try to place myself in the world of tomorrow, so I can create what I understand by tomorrow, what I think tomorrow will be. That's just another way of saying that the producer of electronic music is a man of tomorrow. That could be anyone who's concerned with technology, anyone who's working to make our life better in the future.

AK: And when you take a poetic idea, a title like that, and you're working abstractly, hence in complete freedom, a structure arises that has nothing to do with the title, right? For example, Medusa.

JM: That relates to the image of growing, of growth, and my ideas about relationships. I proceed by trying to limit and narrow it down, I'm trying to limit the information that I give out. So that, at the end, you can draw your own conclusions about what it all means. Before you asked me what Gamma-Player means, you had an idea about it in your head, and that idea was correct. And when you asked me about it, I told you about my idea. So it's not important whether there is a true or false answer, what matters is that you asked, that's the most important thing.

AK: You could make an entire opera out of misunderstandings alone. That would be a really good opera.

JM: Right.

AK: You write here, 'everything is or is becoming minimalist. The future will bring ever less superstructure. Less matter, more mind. Through techno, we want to focus the ear on abstract contexts. Throw away the old ballast interfering with the rhythms'.

JM: If I wanted to set up a kind of equation for what the future will bring, I'd say that it will look very human and friendly on the surface but will be extremely complex on the inside, extremely complex. For example, the cars we drive now will drive us, they will control us, steer us, but they'll look like normal cars on the surface. And computers won't be limited any more to what we now see as computers, but the phone, for instance, will be controlled by a computer we can't even see. That is, we're still clinging to what we remember, we still have a visible presence of things we remember, but a very complicated technology will be hidden on the inside. When Robert and I developed the idea of minimalism, we investigated how to apply it and what you can do with it, how a DJ can work with it. That he can use three or four record players, for example, and create a very abstract field over the top of them. Minimalism works in a quite specific way: it works with less, but it uses this less as more. And when we began to do research in the art of the 1960s, we came across minimalist art and found that we were moving, ironically, in the same direction with our music.

AK: You spoke about a trip to the sun. When I imagine that, that's our mother star and there are physicists who say that it's an intelligent being. It may not speak with us or in our tongue, but the sun at least makes music, it has rhythm.

JM: Yes, that's clear. We can see evidence of it.

AK: And the Pacific Ocean, could that be an organism too?

JM: The ocean in general. But I think it's more likely that the sun is an organism.

AK: And the galaxy, our Milky Way?

JM: I'm no scientist or astronomer, but maybe the galaxy and the universe don't work the way we imagine. Most of us think that an animal is something that has four legs and a tail. We don't come very far with this kind of thinking, we can't think very far beyond it. We can't bring most elements under our control, water for example. That is, we're standing just at the beginning of a human lifeline, a human development. We can probably do things we could do once already and then forgot about, like using electricity or flying, or rising in the air, but at school we only learn English. Today, for example, whether or not you can use a computer is crucial for your life. If you can't find your way around a computer then you inevitably get the feeling that you've been left behind, that you're not up to date. And the more quickly time passes, the more you get the feeling that you're being left behind, and some people maybe can't keep on living because

they feel they can't keep up. Wherever there's change there will be anxiety too. And I think that we are heading for difficult times.

AK: Your father was an engineer.

JM: A civil engineer.

AK: What's a civil engineer, does he make cars or bridges?

JM: Construction, streets, bridges.

AK: And you have a child?

JM: Yes, a daughter.

AK: How old was your father when you were born?

JM: About thirty-five years old. But I don't count that. My father was working all the time, and my mother brought me up and she was thirty when she had me, and I had my daughter when I was thirty.

AK: Could you tell me what this strange quality is we humans have that we call music. What does it consist of?

JM: So far as we know, it's another form of communication, a language. It's still in an original, primitive condition. I always think that by this point in time I really should be in a position to say what you're thinking before you even open your mouth, that at some point language should no longer be needed. For example, if communications are made ever easier and quicker through the internet and other forms, then we'll also discover that it's very difficult to communicate with someone who doesn't speak the same language as we do. Maybe we'll come to the conclusion that it's simpler to give up speaking altogether, or give up words and only communicate with numbers.

AK: That means I first have to create an atmosphere and then I can speak?

JM: In the German language there are things you can't explain in English because we don't have the words, that means it gets lost. And that's a nuisance. And I'm just starting to discover that, now that I'm selling my records all over the world and I realise what a nuisance language really is. And ways will be

found to get around that, using pictures without words; that takes us a lot further.

AK: Pictures without words, and that comes close to music?

JM: Pictures in a sequence without words, yes. Almost like reading a picture book for children, one without words, only pictures.

Translated by Robert Savage

Tsunami of Emotion: On Puccini's *Tosca*

Alexander Kluge and Joseph Vogl

GIACOMO PUCCINI'S *TOSCA* IS ONE OF THE MOST COMPACT OPERAS/
THE PLOT TAKES PLACE ON A SINGLE DAY IN ROME IN 1800/ALL THE
PROTAGONISTS – THE BEAUTIFUL *TOSCA*, HER LOVER *CAVARADOSSI*
AND THE POLICE CHIEF *SCARPIA* – DIE/ESSAY ON THE DIVISION OF
LABOUR IN MELODRAMA

JV: *Tosca* is introduced through her *fama*, the reputation and fame of her voice [...]

AK: The most beautiful singer in Rome.

JV: The most beautiful singer in Rome, the embodiment of what might be called a violence of song, a centre of excitation spanning the gamut of all emotional registers, from tenderness and devotion through to passionate outburst, in jealousy for example. And with that she also shows off a spectrum of political noises, prompting the question: What does a voice do? How does it intervene in the business of politics, in the drama of political intrigues and machinations?

AK: She's a force to be reckoned with. If she appealed to the Queen in Naples, she would be cleared. She therefore embodies a spiritual power, whereas the police chief *Scarpia* has real power, he has his *sbirri*.

JV: And that also makes her a peculiar object of desire. She stands at the crossroads of politics and desire, and makes clear that the institution, the operation of wish machines is at stake in politics, too.

AK: But politics is lacking something there, the glamour of music. Politics is unmusical.

JV: Maybe politics isn't really unmusical, it has its own tonal register, but in opera, at least, politics is understood in such a way that it's translated into acoustic irritations and dissonances. There's a famous example where politics and dissonance actually coincide, the scream released under torture by the male lead, the painter, *Tosca's* lover, where musicality is confronted with its end, with cacophony or noise.

AK: While outside a magnificent cantata is being sung, here there's this scream.

JV: And that's why I would say that politics doesn't appear as something genuinely unmusical, but offers problematic acoustic situations and introduces frictions, jarring chromaticisms, dissonances, cascades of noise and so on into music, including this somewhat lascivious operatic music. And politics encounters in *Tosca* a representative of harmonic power, an attraction that mobilises all the forces of desire.

AK: *Tosca* doesn't understand a thing about the Republicans, who represent the Party of Freedom and are murdered at the police chief's command, but neither is she directly tied to the police chief and his interests.

JV: Yes, and she is struck with an almost innocent blindness.

AK: As if night-blind.

JV: *Tosca* makes a larger than life entrance and misunderstands the political intrigue at decisive points. For instance, by becoming jealous at the wrong moment.

AK: She betrays her lover to the police chief. He sees right away: if she's jealous then something fishy must be going on at his house. And it's not a woman he's hiding there, it's the leader.

JV: So she acts as bait. She is used as [...]

AK: [...] as a plaything of power.

JV: As a plaything of power, as a fascinating object of power. Gaining control over this pleasure object is a political challenge as well. Scarpia, who wants to force *Tosca* to submission through an intrigue, knows very well that when it comes to subduing this vocal violence, this libidinous force, his own power is equally on the line.

AK: What makes him think that the woman will give herself to him? He means for her to offer herself in exchange for the ticket of safe conduct for her lover. But he wants to have this amazing voice.

JV: Yes and no. For *Tosca* offers two things. On the one hand a figure of excess, of symbolic overestimation, symbolic overvaluation – all this is definitely con-

nected with Tosca and the love she inspires. On the other hand, though, it calls forth a manifest interest in material, physical processes that are concerned not with love but with sexual intercourse and consummation.

AK: Eating – Scarpia sits down to a meal, he dines during the cantata.

JV: Yes, he's a man who gets his hands dirty, a man who invests himself physically and physiologically in everything he does. That results in two extremes in this opera. On the one hand there stands a materialist, a machinator of power; on the other, incorporated in the figure of the artist Cavaradossi, someone who presents himself as a specialist in the symbolic, the imaginary, the veiled. And between these two domains we have the figure of Tosca, endowed with a fragile body and an immortal voice.

AK: What is the meaning of melodrama?

JV: I think that melodrama unfolds in the field of tension between the political sphere and the private sphere. More is at stake here than just the question of how political the private sphere really is. Distortions of scale are involved: private dramas are projected on to the map of grand politics, where the terrain is occupied by affairs of freedom, revolution, tyranny, etc. Private affective economies assume exaggerated proportions, they become inflated to a global scale. That's one of the essential elements in melodrama. The other – and here melodrama plays a significant role in politics – is the question: how can actions be replaced by emotions? That leaves its mark on the solutions offered by melodrama. Wherever the republic could very nearly have been saved, wherever the hero could very nearly have been saved, the impotence of this hero, this republic, or whatever it might be, is translated into a great outpouring of emotion. This outpouring supplants the capacity to take action. The substitution of the rescue mission by a violent emotion is a central object of melodrama, which is why things generally end badly. There's a revolutionary play by Puccini's librettist Victorien Sardou, for example. It's called *Thermidor* and tells the story of a young woman, a nun, who is denounced during the French Revolution, right at the end of the Reign of Terror; Robespierre has already fallen, a happy ending and rescue seem within reach, and it's only through a series of complicated circumstances and coincidences that this woman is executed with the very last strokes of the guillotine. A completely meaningless victim.

AK: She almost wouldn't have been executed, if news of Robespierre's arrest had arrived just ten minutes earlier.

JV: And this meaningless victim, doomed by a caprice of fate [...]

AK: [...] unleashes the most emotions, everything very nearly turned out for the best [...]

JV: [...] unleashes the most emotions, it is to a certain extent required by the storm of affect. And it seems to me that this exchange – thwarted rescue for strong feeling – is of quite critical importance for melodrama.

AK: And it elicits sympathy.

JV: It elicits sympathy and produces a milieu in which a particular operational calculus is in play: the lost action, the botched deed, the failed deed, the whole doomed rescue effort are not really lost, they are instead ennobled and live on in the outpouring of emotion.

AK: What is felt to be tragic?

JV: If you take a quite widespread and ‘un-ancient’ view of the tragic, you could probably start by saying: the botched deeds and sacrificed heroes I feel to be tragic all tell me it was good that things turned out the way they did.

AK: It was good in the sense that everyone is vindicated in their own lights.

JV: That everyone is vindicated in their own lights and that an inner elevation results from it, an affect-homunculus is produced which, in the face of all the dashed hopes and unhappy endings, applauds its own survival as spectator. The fatal concatenation of events makes spectatorship a way out. That’s one aspect. The other aspect is epic in nature and raises the question of cunning: through which trick, through which clever idea could it all have been prevented? And that’s something unknown to melodrama. The marriage broker, the right strategic move might not only have foiled the fatality of the plot, they might have thwarted the eminent emotional yield as well.

AK: So that three people wouldn’t have to die. But then, the entire opera in its effect on the audience and the necessity for such dramatic music would be pointless if after the Battle of Marengo, so to speak, the three of them were to live on. Cavaradossi would leave Tosca at some point for a younger woman, while the police chief would be pensioned off and dismissed to a miserable old age.

JV: A retrenched villain.

AK: Stripped of his power, a boring man, Tosca wouldn't pay any attention to him. Her voice would at some point begin to lose its lustre, and in fact her successor is already threatening her, a young shepherdess, discovered near Rome, with an even more ravishing soprano voice. They understand that the mundane, everyday solution with carefully weighed moves would actually make for boring drama.

JV: Not necessarily, perhaps, since the cunning of history or the cunning of the poetic form has already conjured up opera's shadow: the operetta. These figures, loosened from their exalted positions and hence also detached from their grand musical forms, could feature in *Orpheus in the Underworld* by Jacques Offenbach.

AK: Raimund or Nestroy.

JV: Or even Lehár.

AK: The duped police president, that would be the variant.

'Theatre in the Theatre'

JV: Puccini's opera demonstrates that through a little trick, since it's not by chance that a woman who is herself an opera singer sings on Puccini's operatic stage, and so is placed in a certain airy distance to her own role.

AK: She plays a comedy with her lover.

JV: She plays a comedy, and then there is this dramatic twist at the end, where the piece once again works at its own abolition, as it were, where Cavaradossi is shot under the drumroll of the execution command. Tosca is told it's a fake execution, but in reality the firing squad is using live rounds.

AK: She calls for him to 'fall well'.

JV: Exactly, she tells him to 'die as well as I do on stage'. And he actually dies an even better death, she praises him for that and is forced to admit that the finer death is also the more authentic one. At this point the opera formulates its own

little way out and an interesting confusion arises: that the best death on the operatic stage is the death in which the fake death has become the object of the operatic death.

AK: Just like in Walter Benjamin, who says of the film that, if you want to show the actor's terror in close-up, you have to [...]

JV: [...] fire a bullet.

There is Nothing More Convincing than Reality

AK: [...] take a revolver and fire a bullet. So there is nothing more convincing than reality. You really couldn't imagine a more compact opera, a more effective opera than *Tosca*.

JV: If you take the opera seriously in its demonstration that disharmony lurks in all harmony, secularity in all pious display, and the question of passion's viability in every great outpouring of emotion.

AK: There are two elements. First, a starry night sky connecting the lovers before their death. And then a sunrise over the Tiber in Rome. Every spectator knows that this will be the last one for them both. The last sunrise. And to witness that is deeply moving.

The Lovers on the Last Day of their Lives

JV: It's deeply moving because the mix-up is maintained all the way through to the colour, the timbre.

AK: The last bar of life as it approaches.

JV: But there are two things. It's important, first of all, how – and this is likewise essential to melodrama – our knowledge that things are drawing to a close can be deceived by the slow sunrise, basically through the use of lighting effects. We know that this is the end but we see the sunrise and feel moved; the music, too, makes a beautiful morning sky light up over Rome. Knowledge and emotional certainty contradict each other and are placed in a productive tension. Perhaps

there is a further point to be made here. The melodramatic constellation ultimately consists in the fact that mental, acoustic and visual processes unfold with relative autonomy and are then driven to the point of their synthesis, their union, where they accentuate each other to the greatest possible extent: all hope is lost, the beloved is dead. This tension of knowledge, sight and sound draws attention to the force of an emotion that can flood everything in its path. That's what melodrama is: a test of the flooding capacity of the emotions.

AK: And the audience plays its part in the deluge because it wants Tosca, who's already been brave enough to kill the police president, and her lover to get away. And they've already made it to dawn. Now all they have to do is take a coach to Civitavecchia and they could flee to America from there.

JV: That's one possibility. There's also the other possibility, of course, and it's a reaction that shouldn't be underestimated, I think. The spectator says to himself: this love affair, this political situation, these emotions are all too much for me. It's good to have seen them for a change, but I can leave this opera with a clear conscience. I don't have to experience it all for myself. And this little ruse on the part of the spectator should not be underestimated; melodramas are made for that as well.

AK: So that lies in the function of the theatre – if theatre, if opera, then [...] It's not exactly a didactic institution, but it can cleanse the emotions.

Emotion and Difference

JV: It can cleanse the emotions, but it can also be a differential analysis of emotions. What are emotions in the home and what are they when staged? Theatre or the stage make this differential analysis possible. They produce mix-ups in order to practise distinctions. Political passion and amorous passion, with the intrigue on top, these must all be sorted out at the end with a rationalism of emotions that insists on a division of labour. One emotion for the private sphere and one for the political. One emotion for the wife, one for the lover. This division of labour among the emotions is what's at stake in melodrama.

AK: People are onlookers to their own feelings, so to speak. They stroll through a zoo, through a panopticon of feelings. That's surely the real form of melodrama, not that we go away having learned something.

Tosca as Police Chief of her Emotions

Tosca, as police chief of her emotions, had remedies at her disposal as well. Irritated by a false breath that could have torn open her tight-fitting empire dress in the heat of the moment, she could have held back another three-quarters of a minute, by which time her hero would have fainted and the Roman judge, in eye contact with the powerful diva standing outside this office chamber, would have called off the torture at that moment, in accordance with the secret edicts – then the Roman police would never have learned the whereabouts of Angelotti's hiding place. Days later the French cuirassiers entered the city, the drama would never have occurred. Here, too, Tosca and Mario did not avoid the tragic outcome, since any other plot could only have led to the singer's ageing, to an irresolvable domestic quarrel, or to mutual indifference. The opera plot cannot be continued if the dress tears.

Alexander Kluge, *Chronik der Gefühle. Vol. 1, Basisgeschichten* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000), pp. 847-848.

JV: We learn, perhaps, to examine modalities of ascription.

AK: I see a darkened soul and gaze upon my own darkened soul.

JV: The reference to the zoo or zoology is quite apposite: every emotion, every affect has a particular reservation, and its denizens are inspected, so to speak.

AK: But an inclination for the strange creature we call the soul [...]

JV: [...] and whose defining characteristic – and this is why it is such a strange creature – is that it doesn't have a single form but is a protean animal, now canine, now feline, now proud as an eagle, now courageous as a lion, etc.

AK: Sometimes invisible, sometimes a spirit.

JV: And perhaps sometimes it isn't there at all but has been petrified. An emotionally inaccessible soul is the object of an interesting affective operation.

AK: And that's something different from a water cure, something different from a pub crawl, something different from a sauna, and it's not even healthy, yet it's still a human need to see ourselves like that.

JV: To see ourselves, but also to see how impersonal these spiritual capacities, these affective capacities really are, extractable from their ego-containers.

AK: Like reagents in an alchemist's kitchen.

JV: Reactive processes, transplantation processes. Emotions rush into the world, suffusing it with light and colour. Affects stream back into the ego, setting off vibrations. If all that – theatre, melodrama, opera – is to make sense, then it lies in demonstrating this separative capacity of affective units. They circulate rather than belonging to me, they can settle here and there. And anyone who believes that these are my feelings or only my feelings would be deceiving themselves. No, they are moveable goods, containers, affective containers that can be unloaded.

AK: And that's a critique of the alienation ductus that arises later, which for Brecht is the main part of theatre, but it's also a confirmation of it at the same time. Identification theatre of this sort should really be performed one after the other, empathy and then alienation.

JV: I think that's a very important point. The theatre of alienation blinded itself to the productivity of affects, which are linked precisely with concepts of empathy. Put differently: how can a theatre be created that doesn't stifle the affects [...]

AK: [...] doesn't cause anxiety [...]

JV: [...] but depersonalises them, so to speak, puts them into circulation? How is a theatre of affects possible?

Translated by Robert Savage

Early Cinema/Recent Work

Reinventing the Nickelodeon: Notes on Kluge and Early Cinema

Miriam Hansen

Images from Griffith's *INTOLERANCE*, the French story, the rape of Brown Eyes, tinted blue, projected in cinemascope onto the background of an opera stage, under a ceiling painted with purple sky and palm trees; on the soundtrack, Giacomo Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*; all this on a television screen. Uptown music video, nostalgic modernism, or postmodern collage? Kluge's recent work for television continues the eclectic juxtaposition of found materials familiar from his films – montage clusters combining old footage, still photographs, magic lantern slides, popular illustrations, written titles, second-hand music, and occasional voice-over. While these nondiegetic clusters suspend the flow of the narrative (to which they usually relate in more or less oblique ways), they are often what persist in the viewer's memory: the fire in the elephant house in *ARTISTS UNDER THE BIG TOP: PERPLEXED* (1967); the suicide montage in *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* (1978); images of Babylon, *Paradise Lost*, the London World Exposition of 1851, and the opera sequences in *THE POWER OF EMOTION* (1983).

As in Kluge's films, some of the found material assembled in the television miniatures has been manipulated in some way, even prior to its placement in the montage. What has changed, however, is both method and context. In the films, the materiality of old footage might have been emphasised by primitive devices like fast motion, rephotographing images off the editing table, angling the camera, tinting, masking, not to mention the deliberately dilettante trick photography of his science-fiction films. Now similar effects are achieved through computer graphics, for instance, by matting (an anachronistic expression) one set of images onto a different – and at times varying – background, such as the screen of a 1920s picture palace or urban shop windows. Even more surprising than his sudden leap into the electronic age is the context of exhibition for which Kluge is producing this work – a culture show called *10 vor 11* (*10 to 11*), which is allotted about thirty minutes of air time per week. The format of this show, so far largely under Kluge's editorial control, seems to be guided by principles of brevity and variety. Thus, at the beginning of one programme, a female announcer promises the viewer that no item will last more than five minutes; in the same spirit, composer Luigi Nono has supplied the series with forty two-minute operas for adaptation. These miniatures will alternate with presentations of writers (such as Christa Wolf reading from the *Iliad*), conversa-

tions with the editor (Marcel Peragine), portraits of actors (such as Alfred Edel), or just a series of outtakes (such as Burt Lancaster's indefinitely repeated attempt, in outtakes from Sinkel's *Fathers and Sons*, to crack open a soft-boiled egg). *10 vor 11* is coupled with a programme of news analysis produced by the magazine *Der Spiegel*.

What is most puzzling about this enterprise is its channel of distribution. One would not be surprised to find such a show on one of the regional channels (the so-called third programmes) of the ARD, the federation of public television stations, or on the late-night film corner of the ZDF (Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen). After all, Kluge, spokesman and lobbyist for a commercially independent German cinema since Oberhausen, had been instrumental in bringing about legislation regulating film funding and television coproductions (1974, 1979). But at this point *10 to 11* is being broadcast by RTL-plus, one of the private television channels which have mushroomed since the new Christian Democratic administration modified the constitutional prohibition against private ownership of broadcasting stations. How could a film-maker who had been fighting the so-called New Media for years lend his name and work to the enemy, even worse, to a channel (partly owned by the media giant Bertelsmann) that airs considerably more entertainment programmes (80%) than the other satellite and cable channels – as well as depoliticised, 'soft' news programmes?¹

The rationale Kluge offers for this strategy is consistent with his long-standing critique of public television. As early as 1972, when the *Medienverbund* (the vertical integration of the private media) was no more than a plan peddled by powerful interest groups, Kluge – in collaboration with Oskar Negt – had analysed the structural weakness of television from a theoretical perspective in *The Public Sphere and Experience*.² The institution of broadcasting, Kluge argues, was established (in Germany at least) in relative isolation from large areas of the public sphere, in both its classical-bourgeois and industrial-commercial forms, and was guided instead by a bureaucratic 'will to programme'. Thus, public television inherited the worst of both worlds: the tendency towards abstraction and exclusion attendant upon the bourgeois public sphere and the institutionalised time pressure of the consciousness industry. 'Of the autonomy of the images', Kluge adds in 1985, 'or the gravitational laws of the medium, its "inherent music", nothing remains but nooks and crannies (*Nischen*)'.³

West German public television, therefore, is structurally inferior to the privately owned media, even less capable of 'developing the possibility of communicative interrelations', of addressing vital needs and conflicts in the lives of mass audiences.⁴ New German Cinema, for that matter, has all but disappeared from the theatres in an era of blockbusters and youth audiences. Though the New Media seriously threaten the ecology of human consciousness, Kluge reasons, they are also in need of raw material or substance, especially in their cur-

rent founding phase, and, given their entrepreneurial interests, might prove more flexible, open, and promiscuous than the public stations. Between the nooks of public television and the instability of the New Media, and with the backing of an alliance of publishers and stage and writers' organisations, Kluge hopes to create 'windows' for independent products, so as to preserve – and reinforce – the structures of the public sphere.⁵

It is too early to assess the political implications of this strategy, let alone its success with television audiences. What I find interesting in this regrouping of forces, however, is the analogy Kluge draws between the founding phase of the New Media and the historical development of the public sphere, particularly since the invention of cinema.

In short: the challenge of the New Media, their ecological threat to the structures of human consciousness, requires nothing less than a recourse to the *beginnings* of all publicity (*Öffentlichkeit*). Taking our cue from 1802 (or earlier), we have to update and reanimate this chapter (*Teilkapitel*); we have to mobilise it, as it were, for the first time. As for the moving images of cinema, the journey takes us back *only* to Lumière and Méliès, that is, once again to the beginnings. In each of these beginnings, we will find cousins and other relatives of what actually developed, which could be translated in interesting ways into inventions for the New Media.⁶

The recourse to early cinema is doubly qualified. For one thing, it requires a work of translation, taking into account both the historical distance and material differences between the media of film and television. Moreover, the recourse is not to official film history, but to the 'cousins' neglected by tradition – to the sidetracks, detours, and ostensible dead ends of mainstream cinema. In that sense, the reference to Lumière and Méliès should not be taken too literally, just as Kluge's invocation, throughout his writings, of slapstick comedy and 'the' silent film of the 1920s is more significant for its general direction than for what it says about any particular film.

Such a perspective on film history is a familiar one among European avant-garde artists and intellectuals from the 1920s on: an enthusiasm for the cinema's anarchic beginnings, its aesthetic *and* political possibilities; a critique of its actual institutional development. Thus, the Dadaists and surrealists celebrated trick films, slapstick comedy, and Chaplin, while lampooning sentimental and literary tendencies in cinema. Kracauer and Benjamin endorsed the 'distraction' (*Zerstreuung*) afforded by early cinema over the cultural pretensions of the picture palace. And Horkheimer and Adorno contrasted the culture industry of the 1940s with early cinema's affinity with the circus, the burlesque, the roadshow, the 'pure nonsense' of popular amusement; likewise, they discerned a dialectical tension between image, writing, and music which distinguished the medium of silent film from that of synchronised-sound film. Kluge, an intellectual descen-

dent of the Frankfurt School, clearly participates in this discourse, and may well be the most important film-maker to have put its theoretical stance into practice.⁷

In the following, I will approach the relation of Kluge and early cinema from two directions. I begin by outlining ways in which his concept of the public sphere helps elucidate the paradigmatic difference between early cinema and its classical successor (in the American context); conversely, this outline will suggest more specific reasons for Kluge's recourse to early cinema as a model. To conclude, I will discuss elements of 'primitive' style in Kluge's films and relate them to his efforts to make the cinema a vital structure of the public sphere, albeit under changed – and rapidly changing – conditions.

In what sets out as a critique of Habermas, Negt and Kluge question the scope of a concept of the public sphere (*Öffentlichkeit*) that developed in the eighteenth century and was based on bourgeois ideals of representation and communication, as well as on literary forms of subjectivity.⁸ Not only is this concept inscribed with the hegemony of a particular class, the bourgeoisie, and thus with particular mechanisms of abstraction and the exclusion of large parts of social reality; it is also limited in its capacity to deal with the historical decline of that type of public sphere since the mid-nineteenth century and the concomitant emergence of industrial-commercial public spheres such as the mass media. The new 'public spheres of production' (*Produktionsöffentlichkeiten*), according to Negt and Kluge, no longer pretend, like the bourgeois model, to a separate sphere above the marketplace (culture, law), although they graft themselves onto the remnants of the former model, borrowing a semblance of coherence and legitimacy. As an immediate branch of production and circulation, the industrial-commercial public spheres tend to include, as their 'raw material', areas of human life previously considered private; hence they relate more directly – and more comprehensively – to human needs and qualities, if only to appropriate and desubstantialise them.⁹ Even in the capitalist reproduction of such needs, Negt and Kluge argue, a substantially different function of *Öffentlichkeit* comes into view: that of a 'social horizon of experience', an intersubjective structure which enables the production and reflection of experience. The political question, then, is whether and to what extent this public sphere is organised from above – by the exclusive standards of high culture or the stereotypes of commodity culture – or by the experiencing subjects themselves (not necessarily the same as the self-identical bourgeois subject), on the basis of their context of living (*Lebenszusammenhang*).

As a counter-concept to that of the bourgeois public sphere, Negt and Kluge call this type of autonomous public sphere 'proletarian', a term that epitomises the historical subject of alienated labour and experience. Empirically, they assert, rudimentary and ephemeral instances of a 'proletarian' public sphere already emerged – in the fissures, overlaps, and interstices of non-linear historical processes.¹⁰ As a discursive construction, they insist, it could be derived from its negation, i.e. from hegemonic efforts to suppress, destroy, isolate, split, or assimilate any public formation that suggests an alternative organisation of experience. It is important to note that this concept of experience (*Erfahrung*) is explicitly opposed to an empiricist notion of subject-object relations (perception, cognition) and its instrumental use in science and technology. Rather, Negt and Kluge assume a dialectical conception of experience in the tradition of Adorno and Benjamin: experience as that which mediates individual perception with social contingency and collectivity, conscious with unconscious processes; experience as the capacity to see connections and relations (*Zusammenhang*); experience as the matrix of conflicting temporalities, of memory and hope, including the historical loss of these dimensions.¹¹

In his subsequent writings on film and the media, Kluge seems to have abandoned the epithet *proletarian*, or even *oppositional*, in favour of an emphatic notion of *Öffentlichkeit*, defined by such principles as *open*-ness (the etymological root of *öffentlich*), freedom of access, multiplicity of relations, communicative interaction and self-reflection. For the most part, these principles were developed in the context of what Kluge now calls the 'classical' public sphere, a term that absorbs the ideals of the bourgeois public sphere, but rejects their foundation in representation and privilege. This move may well be read as a rapprochement with Habermas, but it appears, more acutely, to be motivated by an awareness that the cinema, as a public institution, is vanishing fast, and with it the unfulfilled promises of film history. In an interesting revision of Benjamin's 'Work of Art' essay, Kluge suggests that the historically significant watershed is not between cinema and the 'classical arts', but, rather, between cinema and television or, more definitely, between cinema and the privately owned electronic media. In light of recent developments, he concludes that 'the cinema belongs to the classical public sphere'.¹²

Benjamin's statement that film precipitated the disintegration of the 'aura' is, as Kluge observes, hyperbolic. While aspects of the classical aura did indeed disappear with cinema, new forms of auratic experience have entered the movie theatre as a result of the particular relationship between film and its audiences. This relationship is due to the structural affinity between the film on the screen and the 'inner film', the 'film in the spectator's head'.¹³ The invocation of Benjamin's notion of auratic experience entails, specifically, an emphasis on reciprocity ('to invest a phenomenon with the capability of returning the gaze'), on

intersubjectivity, and on temporal disjunction. For Kluge, the reciprocity between the film on the screen and the spectator's stream of associations becomes the measure of a particular film's use value for an alternative public sphere: either a film exploits the viewer's needs, perceptions, and wishes, or it encourages their autonomous movement, fine-tuning, and self-reliance. This reciprocity, however, crucially requires a third term – the other viewer, the audience as collective, the theatre as public space. This third term oscillates between an abstract notion of 'the spectator' (the textually inscribed subject, the consumer targeted by the industry) and the concrete experience of empirical viewers; it always includes a moment of unpredictability. It is the unexpected, almost aleatory, component of collective reception which makes the spectating 'public' (*Publikum*) a public sphere (*Öffentlichkeit*) in the emphatic sense.¹⁴

Since the viewer already carries the structures of the public sphere – in both the repressive and enabling sense – within him- or herself, this moment of unpredictability also plays a part in the psychic processes initiated by the film, especially unconscious wishes, blockages, ephemeral details.

These particular traces (*Einzelspuren*), situated far below the ego and its controls, correspond to traces of the particular (*Einzelheiten*) in a film [...]. The subliminal complicity of the particular in human beings and the particular in films presents at once a danger and a sensational opportunity for all Utopian horizons.¹⁵

Such an observation has more to do with Benjamin's 'optical unconscious' than with, for instance, Lacanian-Althusserian film theories, for which the unconscious processes mobilised by the cinematic apparatus are the very mechanisms for the reproduction of ideology. Even though Kluge might concur with the latter analysis to a certain extent, he is ultimately more interested in the pragmatics of redemption – gradations, distinctions, aesthetic valences of film that disappear with television, lost and new possibilities, strategies of hibernation, feasibility – especially at the present historical juncture.

Moreover, while poststructuralist approaches in film theory tend to rely on spatial models, Kluge defines the cinema as a site of temporality, a 'time-place' (*Zeitort*). The technical reality of projection – the fact that the screen is actually dark for half the time – becomes a theoretical metaphor for the temporal possibilities of film: 'The eye looks outward for one forty-eighth of a second and inward for one forty-eighth of a second'.¹⁶ This metaphor translates into an aesthetics of montage, of gaps and pauses in which the spectator's 'inner film' swerves from the film; it enables the representation of 'invisible images', which Kluge calls the 'high ideal' of film history (e.g. Dreyer, Godard, Tarkowski). By the same token, film can become the medium of 'real' time and memory (Bergson's *durée*, Proust's *temps perdu*): '[Lumière's] ARRIVAL OF A TRAIN AT LA CIOTAT describes time as it disappears, thus encouraging our attempts to maintain that,

at least internally, the flow of time can be reversed'.¹⁷ This range of temporality is not available to television, both for technical reasons (the uninterrupted electronic signal) and because of the economy of programming. Hence Kluge's recycling of film history, of scraps and outtakes, in the format of a television show can be seen as, among other things, an attempt to endow that medium with a different temporal dimension – through a strategic overlapping of institutions.

No one will accuse Kluge of a lack of utopian inspiration. But this utopian stance is defined by a concrete political interest – the organisation of a social horizon of experience with and against the media – and, furthermore, offers precise heuristic perspectives on the emergence of such horizons in the past. Thus, early cinema could be discussed as an alternative public sphere from two angles: 1) as a rudimentary phenomenon resulting from the overlap of various institutions of commercial entertainment, in the fissures of uneven developments in modes of production, exhibition and representation; and 2) as a mode of film practice which was systematically eliminated or transformed with the rise of the classical Hollywood paradigm (established, roughly, between 1907 and 1917).

Partisans and scholars of pre-1907 cinema, such as Noël Burch and Tom Gunning, have argued that it constitutes a paradigm in its own right, a cinema different in kind from the classical – different in its articulation of space and time, its mode of narration, its notions of genre; different, above all, in its conception of the relations between film and spectator.¹⁸ One of the aims of classical narration is to absorb the viewer into the fictional world on screen, the diegesis, by offering him or her an ideal – invisible – vantage point from which to witness a scene; this effect requires an absolute segregation of the diegesis from the space/time of the theatre, a configuration of absence and presence essential to cinematic representation (Christian Metz). Early cinema, by contrast, solicits its viewer in a more direct, presentational manner, whether by showing off the possibilities of the new medium or the objects envisioned; it is, to use Gunning's term, a 'cinema of attractions'. Likewise, the spectator is often acknowledged as addressee, as in the recurring look of actors or bystanders at the camera (a practice that became taboo around 1910). Moreover, many of the stylistic conventions of early films *require* the viewer to collaborate in a different, less mediated way than does classical diegesis: the theatrical tableau, with its long-shot distance, frontal perspective, and often static, overloaded, or acentric composition; spatio-temporal discontinuity between shots; narratives that offer a series of episodic highlights (rather than a coherent, self-evident plot), illustrating stories the audience would have been familiar with (like biblical and fairy tales, literary classics, historical and current news events). In terms of its stylistic traits, early cinema could indeed be theorised as a public sphere in Kluge's sense, a formal

structure which enables an interaction both between film and viewer and *among* viewers of specific social and cultural backgrounds.

Formalist claims for early cinema as an alternative film practice become problematic when they are hitched, as in the case of Burch, to political claims about the proletarian nature of early audiences. For one thing, the 'primitive' paradigm was elaborated, by and large, during a period when the majority of films were shown, in urban areas at least, as part of vaudeville programmes, that is, to a predominantly middle-class audience. Not until the cinema found an exhibition outlet of its own in the legendary nickelodeon (1905 and after) did it acquire a distinct class profile – that of an urban working-class of largely immigrant families, who temporarily became the mainstay of the motion picture industry. But this courtship was short-lived. As revisionist historians such as Russell Merritt and Robert Allen have shown, efforts to gentrify exhibition began as early as 1908, converging with progressive censorship campaigns. By 1910, the nickelodeons had lost their status as primary exhibition outlets, and the most advanced forces in the industry were focusing on the picture palace, the features, and the stars, designed to attract a middle-class, ostensibly classless American(ised) consumer.¹⁹ The working-class profile of early audiences, however, became one of the most powerful founding myths of Hollywood, a persistent cliché in the legitimization of film as 'democratic' art and 'popular' culture.

Critics of Burch, in particular David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson and Janet Staiger, come close to reversing the traditional account, arguing that the emergence of the classical paradigm around 1907 might actually have been prompted by the shift from a homogeneous middle-class audience watching films in vaudeville theatres to the much larger, ethnically diverse clientele of the nickelodeons, i.e. by the industrial objective to create an integrated mass-cultural subject.²⁰ This hypothesis certainly explains the comprehensive efforts to standardise and precalculate empirical acts of reception – in particular, through a mode of narration that did not require audience foreknowledge, that produced self-explanatory and self-contained narratives. But the reference to vaudeville audiences prematurely forecloses the question of class, reducing it to economic status (whoever can afford the price of a vaudeville ticket must be middle-class) and neglecting the uneven dynamics of social and cultural identity, not to mention gender and sexuality.²¹ Moreover, the revisionist emphasis on industrial intentions misses aspects of *film culture* that are no longer – or not yet – the dominant focus of the industry's attention; nickelodeons, for instance, continued to exist side by side with the picture palaces, as did exhibition practices that potentially undermined a classical mode of reception.

In view of these issues, Kluge's concept of the public sphere offers several advantages. For one thing, it is concerned (to some extent like Burch) with the

formal conditions of reception, with the possibility of articulating and organising experience in a communicative form, rather than with empirical factors of economic status or class consciousness. This possibility, in turn, was no doubt more significant for particular social groups – such as immigrants or the recently urbanised working class – whose horizon of experience was fragmented, alienated, or repressed in specific ways, and who brought their own displaced traditions, different senses of time, concrete needs and anxieties, common fantasies and memories to the motion-picture shows. The cinema's function *for* such groups – especially with regard to conflicts between traditional cultures and the pressures of modern life – might well have outlived *their* economic and statistical relevance for the institution.

In a similar vein, Kluge's concept of the public sphere preserves a critical tension in relation to the development of the institution, the forces of standardisation, the normative side of film history. Thus, the cognitive interest is directed towards the overlap of unequal, nonsynchronous modes of organisation, the seams (*Nahtstellen*) between different types of public sphere, composite forms, and accidental effects. An example of such overlap would be the Veriscope 'illustration' of *THE CORBETT-FITZSIMMONS FIGHT* (1897), which, to the amazement of reviewers everywhere, attracted large female audiences across class boundaries: since they were traditionally excluded from live prize fights and their 'homosocial' clientele, the cinematic mediation of the event afforded women the forbidden sight of well-trained male bodies in seminudity, engaged in intimate physical action.²² From the perspective of an institutional history (such as the one constructed by Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson), this incident may be insignificant. Yet it does suggest how the overlap of different types of public sphere – on the one hand, the world of late-nineteenth-century popular entertainments, segregated along lines of class, gender, race and ethnicity; on the other, the maximally inclusive, spectacularised world of consumerist mass culture – might have opened up possibilities of experience not available in either public sphere by itself. From this perspective, the incident speaks of the tension between utopian and ideological moments within consumerism, especially when compared to Hollywood's systematic targeting of female audiences in the 1920s (e.g. the Valentino cult).

But there are more specific aspects in which early cinema could be described as an alternative public sphere in Kluge's sense – and which, conversely, supplement his particular recourse to film history. I will briefly touch on three: variety format, nonfilmic activities and genre crossing.

The variety format, like other aspects of early cinema, derived from the commercial entertainments in whose context films were first exhibited: vaudeville and variety shows, dime museums and penny arcades, summer parks, fairgrounds, circuses, and travelling shows. Whatever the number and status of

films within a given programme – initially, perhaps up to eight short films filling a twenty-minute slot – their sequence was arranged in the most random manner possible, emulating the overall structure of the programme in its emphasis on diversity, its rapidly shifting genres, moods and styles of representation. The incessant stimulation of the viewer's attention through a discontinuous, shock-like series of attractions encouraged a particular mode of reception – which Kracauer and Benjamin theorised under the term *distraction*. Kluge, even before he began to use the variety format for his television show, had analysed the dramaturgy of the circus (*Nummern-Dramaturgie*) as a way to maximise both contact within and friction between numbers – ‘the unity of predictability and surprise’. The comparison which valorises this ‘preclassical’ temporality for Kluge (as for Kracauer and Benjamin) is the two-hour cabal of classical drama, opera, or feature film with its hypostatising of individual psychology – although, he insists, the ideology that individuals decide history also contains a utopian element.²³ Likewise, ‘distraction’ does not necessarily mean a Brechtian form of distantiating, but a mode of reception that contains the possibility of abandoning one's waking self to a dreamlike sequence of sense impressions and associations.

As an entrepreneurial and aesthetic principle, the variety format persisted well into the nickelodeon period, at least until the rise of the feature film (around 1912-1913), which mandated a different standard of reception, i.e. prolonged concentration and absorption. Along with the variety principle, another convention of early exhibition was adopted by the nickelodeon: the mediation of the image on the screen by exhibitors or personnel present in the theatre.²⁴ Thus, film programmes tended to include a number of activities relating to the moving image, such as lectures accompanying films, music and sound effects, as well as non-filmic acts like illustrated songs, vaudeville turns, and, occasionally, magic lantern shows. To be sure, these activities were optional rather than typical (except for musical accompaniment and illustrated songs), and they varied in currency, status and combination. As available and popular practices, however, they suggest a different organisation of relations of reception from what became the norm. In contrast to the separation required by classical diegesis, the presence of live accompaniment relating to the projected image maintained a sense of continuity between the space/time of the theatre and the illusionist world on the screen, if not a priority of ‘the feeling of being seated in a theatre in front of a screen’ over ‘the feeling of being carried away by an imaginary time-flow’.²⁵

More importantly, such non-filmic activities belonged to the context of a particular presentation – rather than to the film as a finished product and mass-cultural commodity. Thus, the show to some extent still claimed the singularity of a live performance, even though the films themselves were circulated on a

national and international scale. As Richard Koszarski has shown, the discrepancy between film as product and the actual theatre experience remained considerable well into the 1920s, at the latest, until the advent of synchronised sound and a standardised speed of projection.²⁶ Exhibitions, varying from time to time and place to place, not only allowed for locally and culturally specific acts of reception, but also opened up a margin of unpredictability, in Kluge's sense, a space for interpretation and reappropriation.

It would be a mistake, however, to idealise this margin in a nostalgic essentialism or utopian purism. Neither a mere multiplication of standardised products nor a primeval paradise of viewer participation, the public sphere of the nickelodeon, for instance, could be described as a side effect of temporarily overlapping paradigms of exhibition, one indebted to a plebeian variety principle, the other pointing forward to the homogenising imperative of mass-cultural consumption. Whatever alternative organisation of experience may have resided in that overlap is the result of the very mechanisms – the instability and voracity of the commercial-industrial public spheres – which appropriate and desubstantialise that experience. To a large extent, therefore, this alternative type of public sphere remains a theoretical construct, all the more so since, for obvious reasons, it is not as widely documented as the style of reception aspired to by the industry and recommended to exhibitors in the trade press. Yet this alternative public sphere can be inferred from the force of its negation – from exhibition practices that were denounced or became the object of conflicts between individual exhibitors and producers; from the subordination of non-filmic acts and activities (music and sound effects) or, respectively, their integration into the film as product (intertitles, editing, camera narration); in short, from the elimination of conditions around which local, ethnic, class, and gender-related experience might crystallise.

On the level of film style, this process of negation involved strategies of narration aimed at suppressing awareness of the theatre space and absorbing the spectator in the illusionist space on screen: closer framing, centred composition, and directional lighting; continuity editing, which created a coherent diegetic space; and the gradual increase of film length, culminating in the feature film. At the same time, it involved a reduction of the diversity of genres which early cinema had inherited from vernacular iconography and commercial amusements, and the hegemonic rise of the narrative film, especially melodrama (over comedy and trick films.)

Fictional narratives had gained in popularity as early as 1901 and by 1907 had displaced actualities and scenics as the dominant product of American companies. Between 1901 and 1907, however, we get a glimpse of a narrative cinema which is just as exhibitionist and polymorphously perverse as other types of early film, as well as diegetically incomplete and dependent upon audience

foreknowledge or a presentation by a lecturer. Even the more advanced, longer narratives convey a sense of diegetic openness and intertextual dependency, especially if their length is the result of a combination of different genres (e.g. *THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY* [Edison, 1903], *THE HOLD-UP OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN EXPRESS* [Biograph, 1906] or *COHEN'S FIRE SALE* [Edison, 1907]). Such films tend to preserve the stylistic heterogeneity of the genres they draw on and thereby invoke a larger field of intertextual bricolage, of which the individual film is only a segment, as is the particular programme. One of the most sophisticated instances of this practice is Porter's *THE 'TEDDY' BEARS* (Edison, 1907), which combines an adaptation of Goldilocks with a chase comedy (the bears pursue the girl through the snow) and a political satire on Theodore Roosevelt's much publicised humanitarian act towards a bear cub (a grown-up hunter appears, shoots the parent bears, and captures baby bear).²⁷ By intersecting the nursery story with the referential framework of newsreels and political cartoons, Porter not only mobilises associations across genre boundaries, but, more specifically, confronts domestic ideology with an adult world of imperialism, nativism and racism, thus linking particular configurations of private and public.

Such genre crossing is one of the more striking similarities between Kluge's film practice and early cinema, whether he is aware of it or not. On a theoretical level, this convergence is linked to his long-standing critique of the classical concept of genre, especially the division of labour – and hierarchy – between fiction and documentary.²⁸ Following Richter and Godard, Kluge analyses fictional and documentary modes for their ideologies (family romance as a model of social and historical processes; and, respectively, denial of the role of the subject in the construction of documentary reality), as well as for their radical possibilities. These possibilities can be realised only in a discourse of intersecting fictional and documentary elements, taking into account the texture of the spectator's experience, which also tends to mix news with memory and fantasy, factuality with desire, linear causality with associational leaps and gaps. Radical genre crossing, as Kluge's own films suggest, not only opens up new constellations between narrative and history, but urges the viewer to call into question traditional delineations of private and public.

Kluge's most comprehensive homage to an early 'cinema of attractions' may well be his second feature film, *ARTISTS UNDER THE BIG TOP: PERPLEXED/DIE ARTISTEN IN DER ZIRKUSKUPPEL: RATLOS* (1968). In this complex allegory of the situation of artistic practice between the Third Reich and the student movement, the circus figures as a nodal point for contacts with other institutions of culture: opera (mostly *Il Trovatore*), silent film (a screening of *OCTOBER*), literature (the last meeting of the Gruppe 47) and television. The quandaries of launching a 'reform circus', the immobilisation of avant-garde aesthetics between utopian

project and capitalist context of realisation, take director Leni Peickert (Hannelore Hoger) on an itinerary which in retrospect, two decades later, seems prophetic of Kluge's own – she ends up studying television technology and working for a television station. Indeed, the programme of the reform circus (which is discussed, though never really performed) would fit the variety bill of Kluge's television show.

For the most part, the recourse to early cinema is not as allegorically oblique as in *ARTISTS*, but takes a more specific shape with particular stylistic devices such as the ones described in the beginning of this essay. Besides direct quotations from silent films, Kluge borrows techniques and conventions like fast-motion and time-lapse photography, which visualise the passage of time; tinting, iris masks, and dream balloons; long takes and travelling shots that are relatively independent of narrative motivation; written titles which assume an (often mock) expository function, offer commentary, or quote from diegetically unrelated sources. As for the soundtrack, Kluge's films are extremely low on dialogue, though not on speech. Verbal language enters predominantly in the form of voice-over (often – but not always – the film-maker's own, reminiscent of a primitive lecturer or explainer) or through monologues by the characters, frequently off-screen or non-synchronised. Music in Kluge's films mimics the repertoire of silent film accompaniment insofar as it emphasises previous usage, by recycling tango numbers, outdated popular hits, arias, historical recordings – 'second-hand' music that claims a discursive status of its own in relation to the image.

To be sure, such borrowings are not literal adaptations of early film style. In *THE POWER OF EMOTION/DIE MACHT DER GEFÜHLE* (1983), for instance, a film that abounds with 'primitive' devices, they often convey ambivalence towards the film's own fascination with a particular tradition of spectacle – as in the time-lapse panorama of the Frankfurt skyline from dawn to sunrise; or the double iris cinemascope rendition of Lang's *NIBELUNGEN*; or the fast-motion overhead shot of the set change before the last act of Wagner's *Tannhäuser* (with a voice-over comment to the effect that the accelerated transformation of a pagan into a Christian landscape could only lead to disastrous results). Moreover, unlike the latter example, voice-over comment in Kluge's films often 'explains' less than its reassuring tone suggests; it tends to complicate the discursive situation rather than to add continuity and closure.²⁹ A similar tendency can be observed in the use of intertitles and music.

Most importantly, Kluge's recourse to early cinema translates into an anti-theatrical conception of cinematic materials, a refusal to blend them into the fictive homogeneity of classical diegesis.³⁰ Held together only by rudimentary narratives and, more consistently, by particular themes and motifs, the films seem to organise their materials on the principle of friction: friction between moving

image and writing, between image, voice and music, between different types of footage, between an epic sense of time and the temporality of numbers, scenarios and miniatures. This heterogeneity makes for a relatively weak, porous diegesis by classical standards; it inhibits the viewer's absorption into the diegetic flow and, by the same token, requires a more autonomous activity on his or her part than predetermined cognitive operations.

The material heterogeneity and diegetic openness of Kluge's films can also be described in terms of their systematic crossing of documentary and fictional genres. On the basis of many of their formal traits, these films could qualify as documentaries – a relative lack of continuity editing (especially a paucity of point-of-view shots), frequent instances of characters ('experts') addressing the camera directly, voice-over, written titles, but also aleatory and montage structures reminiscent – in different ways – of Vertov, Wiseman, Marker and Makaveyev. At the same time, Kluge's films are not really film essays, but tend to centre on fictional characters and on fictional scenes. These scenes, however, are choreographed against a documentary background or, more precisely, make that background an essential part of their *mise-en-scène*.

The insertion of a fictional character into a documentary situation is a pervasive device in Kluge's films, beginning with *YESTERDAY GIRL/ABSCHIED VON GESTERN* (1966) where Anita G. (Alexandra Kluge) interacts with a 'real' furrier and a 'real' dog trainer, attends scheduled lectures at the university and fails to interest the late attorney general, Dr. Bauer, in her case. In *THE FEMALE PATRIOT/DIE PATRIOTIN* (1979), history teacher Gabi Teichert (Hannelore Hoger) appears at a historically significant convention of the Social Democratic Party, asking real politicians to change German history so as to provide her with better teaching material. Her deadpan insistence not only enforces a sense of involuntary self-parody in the politicians' performance for Kluge's camera, but also asserts the legitimacy of a cognitive interest which transcends the boundaries of public spaces and discourses.

While in most of Kluge's films this type of genre crossing can be expected as a sideshow, it functions as the organising principle of *IN DANGER AND DIRE DISTRESS THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD LEADS TO DEATH/IN GEFAHR UND GRÖSSTER NOT BRINGT DER MITTELWEG DEN TOD*, codirected by Edgar Reitz (1974). A film in the tradition of the city symphonies of the 1920s and 1930s, *IN DANGER* juxtaposes the demolition of an occupied building and subsequent street battles in the city of Frankfurt with, among other things, the rituals of organised carnival, preparations for a theatre strike, a public speaking course for young entrepreneurs, and a conference of astrophysicists. These mixed events are loosely connected by the movements of two fictional protagonists: Rita Müller-Eisert, an East German agent intent on spying out the 'social reality' of the Federal Republic, and Inge Maier, a prostitute who steals from her clients to compensate her-

self for the unequal exchange. Both characters function as narrator figures (with their own voice-over) and spectator surrogates. Rita is shown at work with binoculars and camera and at home watching old UFA films on television (though, in each case, without reverse shot). Inge opens the film by reading a graffiti version of the film's title, immediately followed by an authorial intertitle: 'Inge Maier, who was looking on, repeatedly felt that she was winding up in the wrong movie'. The 'wrong movie' unfolds primarily with what a later title calls the 'discourse' or 'diction of public events', but it also calls attention to the film's own transgression of generic boundaries. (Besides, the figure of Inge Maier, mostly on the run with her suitcases, also recalls the 'other' movie, *YESTERDAY GIRL*, and another fugitive from a libidinal double bind, played by Kluge's sister.)

Given the preponderance of documentary material in the Frankfurt film, the protagonists remain allegorical constructions to an even greater extent than do most of Kluge's female characters and rarely interact with other characters (all male). They do, however, provide a minimum of subjective focus on the disjunctive events, a cognitive thread that highlights at once the simultaneity of compartmentalised public spheres and the artificiality of their official order and division. This thread enables the viewer to make connections that range from the ominous to the absurd – like the parallel between the quaint uniform/costume show at the policemen's carnival and the neo-medieval riot gear the police wear in the battle against the protesters. The connections also extend into a diachronic dimension, suggesting the historical outcome of such artificial divisions through images of catastrophe: Rita, sitting in on the meeting of astrophysicists, is given an imaginary shot of the explosion of stars, which is then graphically matched to a bird's-eye view of an air raid on Cologne; Inge watches the sinking of the Titanic in a movie theatre.³¹ Finally, the very appearance of a fictional character in a documentary situation – especially one as volatile as eviction, demolition, and street battle – disorients the viewer's genre expectations, confounds the respective spatial and temporal registers. On the one hand, it alerts us to the presence of the film-makers, who must have timed this 'coincidence' and, in a way, participated in the staging of a political event as spectacle. On the other, even the minimum of character-relayed identification undermines our habitual defences against documentary reality. By drawing us further into the documentary 'diegesis' than we are used to while denying us the fetishistic immunity of a classical narrative, the film recovers for the events re-presented an experiential 'here and now', a sense of danger, irreversibility, and historicity not unrelated to the fears that moved the legendary spectators of the first films.

When *IN DANGER* was first released, it struck me as the film sequel to *The Public Sphere and Experience*. Like Negt and Kluge's first book, the film's genesis and reception were crucially entwined with the alternative movements of the

1970s; screenings were accompanied by discussions and controversies, especially with the group who had organised the occupation of the buildings. In response to charges of a lack of political involvement, Kluge and Reitz insisted that the function of the film was to establish connections, to create the conditions for a public sphere: it 'produces *proportions* rather than statements; an *object* with which one can argue', which the viewers 'can use to test their own notions of what is public and what is realistic'.³² Looking at the film fourteen years later is a bit like rereading *The Public Sphere and Experience* – partly historical document, partly a site filled with images and ideas, rubble waiting to be recycled and developed. For over a decade, the lots of the demolished buildings remained vacant, spaces recalling past struggles and defeats. Now, new buildings (of an international development bank) occupy this space, in the current Frankfurt post-, or rather anti-, modern, neo-monumental style – as if they had always been there – studded with electronic security, isolated from the city as living context. Yet, to quote the epigraph to *YESTERDAY GIRL*: 'We are separated from yesterday not by an abyss, but by the changed situation'. Kluge, for one, is trying to respond to this changed situation by taking his utopia of cinema to a different construction site.

Notes

1. Klaus von Bismarck, Günter Gaus, Alexander Kluge, Ferdinand Sieger, introduction by Ernst Reinhard Piper, *Industrialisierung des Bewusstseins: Eine Kritische Auseinandersetzung mit den 'Neuen Medien'* (Munich/Zurich: Piper, 1985), pp. 9-29. Also see Kraft Wetzell ed., *Neue Medien contra Filmkultur?* (Berlin: Volker Spiess, 1987). For a more recent description of *10 vor 11*, see Andreas Kilb, 'Der lange Abschied des Herrn K', *Die Zeit* (1 July 1988), pp. 15-16.
2. Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung: Zur Organisationsanalyse von bürgerlicher und proletarischer Öffentlichkeit* (Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1972), pp. 169-266; trans. forthcoming, University of Minnesota Press. For a summarising review, see Eberhard Knödler-Bunte, 'The Proletarian Public Sphere and Political Organization', *New German Critique* (no. 4 winter, 1975), pp. 51-75.
3. Alexander Kluge, 'Die Macht der Bewusstseinsindustrie und das Schicksal unserer Öffentlichkeit', in Kluge et al., *Industrialisierung*, p. 61. For a related notion of an unrealised aesthetics of television, see Theodor W. Adorno, 'Prolog zum Fernsehen' (1953), in *Eingriffe* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1963).
4. Kluge and Negt, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*, p. 176. The demand for communicative reciprocity is a topos in German leftist media theory, often based on the assumption of a democratic potential inherent in reproduction technology; see Brecht's radio theory, with its insistence on the reversibility of the apparatus (i.e. that receivers can be turned into transmitters); Walter Benjamin, 'The Author as

- Producer' (1934); Hans Magnus Enzensberger, 'Constituents of a Theory of the Media' (1970), in *Critical Essays*, trans. Stuart Hood (New York: Continuum, 1982).
5. Kluge et al., *Industrialisierung*, p. 65. Crucial to this strategy are terms like *Nahstellen* (seams, surfaces of friction between competing institutions), pp. 121 ff., *Gegengift* (antidote), and *Gegenproduktion* (counter-production), pp. 125 ff. Kluge analyses the relationships among cinema, television, video and the public sphere at length in *Bestandsaufnahme: Utopie Film* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1983), which partly overlaps with his contribution in *Industrialisierung*. Also see Gertrud Koch and Heide Schlüpmann, "'Nur Trümmern traue ich [...]': Gespräch mit Alexander Kluge', *Frauen und Film* (no. 42, 1987), pp. 83-92.
 6. Kluge et al., *Industrialisierung*, p. 64. For a slightly different version, see *Neue Medien contra Filmkultur*, p. 241. Also see the interview in *Frauen und Film*, pp. 88-89, 91.
 7. On Kluge's relationship to Adorno, see my 'Introduction to Adorno, "Transparencies on Film"' (1960), *New German Critique*, (no. 24/25 fall/winter, 1981/1982), pp. 186-198.
 8. Kluge and Negt, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*, pp. 8, 17-34, and passim. Negt and Kluge specifically respond to Habermas, in his *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1962), but also, in their emphasis on alternative possibilities and strategies, to Adorno and Horkheimer's critique of the culture industry in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947); the book is dedicated to Adorno.
 9. On 'public spheres of production', see Kluge and Negt, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*, pp. 12, 35 ff., 225-248, and especially chapter 5, 'Lebenszusammenhang als Produktionsgegenstand des Medienverbunds'.
 10. About one-third of the book consists of commentary on particular instances of an alternative organisation of the public sphere, ranging from the development of the English working class (1792-1848) to Lenin's concept of the 'Self-expression of the masses', Italian maximalism of 1919, parts of the student movement, and the relationship of children to the public sphere (*Kinderöffentlichkeit*). In substance, Negt and Kluge's notion of a proletarian public sphere converges with English and American directions in radical history, the tradition of history from the bottom up (E. P. Thompson, Herbert Gutman).
 11. On Benjamin's theory of experience, see Marleen Stoessel, *Aura, das vergessene Menschliche: Zu Sprache und Erfahrung bei Walter Benjamin* (Munich: Hanser, 1983). On the implications of this concept of experience for film theory, see my 'Benjamin, Cinema and Experience: "The Blue Flower in the Land of Technology"', *New German Critique* (no. 40 winter, 1987), pp. 179-224.
 12. Kluge et al., *Industrialisierung*, pp. 72-73; Kluge, *Bestandsaufnahme*, pp. 49-50. Kluge's shift towards this position is already noticeable in Klaus Eder and Alexander Kluge, *Ulmer Dramaturgien: Reibungsverluste* (Munich: Hanser, 1980), pp. 57-61; excerpts trans. in *New German Critique* (no. 24/25 fall/winter, 1981/1982), pp. 211-214.
 13. Here Kluge again follows Habermas – and Benjamin scholars like Marleen Stoessel – who recognise the concept of aura as the core of Benjamin's theory of experience and, therefore, caution against a literal reading of Benjamin's celebration of the decline of the aura in his 'Work of Art' essay; see Habermas, 'Consciousness-Raising or Redemptive Criticism' (1972), *New German Critique* (no. 17 spring, 1979), pp. 30-59; also see Hansen, 'Benjamin', pp. 191 ff. and 212 ff. Kluge's notion of the 'film in the spectator's head' is pervasive in all his writings, most recently in *Bestandsauf-*

- nahme, p. 45 ff., Kluge et al., *Industrialisierung*, pp. 73 and 107. It is crucial to his utopian conception of cinema as merely a technical response to the thousand-year-old cinema of the human stream of associations: 'the medium is the spectator; all media can only borrow from this substance. In that sense we are right to say: the media are standing on their head' (Kluge, *Bestandsaufnahme*, p. 101). Also see, *Die Patriotin* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1979), pp. 294-295; trans. in *New German Critique*, no. 24/25 fall/winter, 1981/1982), p. 209. In the context of English and American film theory, Kluge's notion of the 'inner film' could be compared to the psycho-linguistic concept of 'inner speech' as developed in the Bakhtin circle and resumed in recent debates by, among others, Stephen Heath, Paul Willemsen and Philip Rosen.
14. Kluge, *Bestandsaufnahme*, pp. 94-95.
 15. *Ibid.*, p. 95. Kluge's insistence on the moment of unpredictability in cinematic reception also illuminates his affinity with the early Kracauer; see Thomas Elsaesser, 'Cinema – The Irresponsible Signifier or "The Gamble with History"', *New German Critique* (no. 40 winter, 1987), pp. 65-89; and Heide Schlüppmann, 'Phenomenology of Film: On Siegfried Kracauer's Writings of the 1920s', *ibid.*, pp. 97-114.
 16. Kluge et al., *Industrialisierung*, p. 105. The historical significance – and imminent loss – of the cinema as a site of different temporalities is one of the themes in Kluge's 1985 film, *THE PRESENT'S ASSAULT ON THE REST OF TIME/DER ANGRIFF DER GEGENWART AUF DEN REST DER ZEIT*, shown at the New York film festival under the title *THE BLIND DIRECTOR*; screenplay and commentary, Frankfurt, Syndikat, 1985. The theoretical metaphor of the role of the shutter begs comparison with Thierry Kuntzel's notion of *défilement*, which also operates by means of an analogy between psychic processes and the technical mechanisms of projection. Likewise, it would be interesting to compare Kluge's conception of the cinema as *Zeitort* with Foucault's discussion of the cinema as a spatial configuration, as 'heterotopia' ('Of Other Spaces', *Diacritics* [vol. 16 no. 1 spring, 1986], pp. 22-27).
 17. Kluge et al., *Industrialisierung*, pp. 106-107.
 18. It is important to note that both Burch and Gunning discuss the alterity of early cinema in relation to contemporary avant-garde film. Among many other titles, see Noël Burch, 'Porter, or Ambivalence', *Screen* (vol. 19 no. 4 winter 1978/1979), pp. 91-105; 'Narrative/Diegesis – Thresholds, Limits', *Screen* (vol. 23 no. 2 July/August, 1982), pp. 16-34; and 'Primitivism and the Avant-Gardes: A Dialectical Approach', in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology*, ed. Philip Rosen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 483-506; and Tom Gunning, 'The Non-Continuous Style of Early Film (1900-1906)', in *Cinema 1900/1906*, ed. Roger Holman (Brussels: Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film, 1982), pp. 219-229; 'An Unseen Energy Swallows Space: The Space of Early Film and Its Relation to American Avant-Garde Film', in *Film Before Griffith*, ed. John L. Fell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 335-366; and 'The Cinema of Attraction[s]: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde', *Wide Angle* (vol. 8 no. 3/4, 1986), pp. 63-70. Also see Kristin Thompson, 'The Formulation of the Classical Style, 1909-1928', in David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985). The following issues are discussed in greater detail in my forthcoming book, *Babel and Babylon*:

- Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press).
19. Russell Merritt, 'Nickelodeon Theaters, 1905-1914: Building an Audience for the Movies', in *The American Film Industry*, ed. Tino Balio (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976), pp. 59-70; Robert Allen, *Vaudeville and Film, 1895-1915: A Study in Media Interaction* (New York: Arno Press, 1980); and 'Motion Picture Exhibition in Manhattan, 1906-1912: Beyond the Nickelodeon', reprinted in Fell, *Film*, pp. 162-175; Douglas Gomery, 'Movie Audiences, Urban Geography, and the History of the American Film', *The Velvet Light Trap* (no. 19, 1982), pp. 23-29; and Robert Allen and Douglas Gomery, *Film History: Theory and Practice* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), p. 202 ff. For an account which, to some extent, revises the revisionists, see Eileen Bowser's forthcoming *History of American Film, 1907-1915*, outline presented at the Columbia University Seminar on Cinema and Interdisciplinary Interpretation, April 1987. Also see Robert Sklar, 'Oh! Althusser!: Historiography and the Rise of Cinema Studies', *Radical History Review* (no. 4, 1988), pp. 11-35.
 20. Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell, 'Linearity, Materialism and the Study of Early American Cinema', *Wide Angle* (vol. 5 no. 3, 1983), pp. 4-15; Janet Staiger, 'Rethinking "Primitive" Cinema: Intertextuality, the Middle-Class Audience, and Reception Studies', paper delivered at the Society for Cinema Studies convention, (New Orleans April, 1986).
 21. Besides the fact that there were a number of exhibition outlets other – and cheaper – than vaudeville (e.g. dime museums), even in urban areas, the analysis of vaudeville audiences as simply 'middle-class' (as in Allen, *Vaudeville and Film*) ignores the extent to which they were a 'new' middle class as well as the particular ideology of upward mobility promoted by the vaudeville shows. See Albert F. McLean, Jr., *American Vaudeville as Ritual* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), pp. 41 ff. and 82. On the role of gender and sexuality and the significance of moviegoing for women, see Judith Mayne, 'Immigrants and Spectators', *Wide Angle* (vol. 5 no. 2, 1982), pp. 32-41; Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), chapter 6; and Elizabeth Ewen, *Immigrant Women in the Land of Dollars: Life and Culture on the Lower East Side, 1890-1925* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1985). See also Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), chapter 8.
 22. Charles Musser, *The Emergence of Cinema: The American Screen to 1907*, forthcoming, New York, Scribner's.
 23. Kluge, *Bestandsaufnahme*, p. 105 ff. The comparison, however, is not an abstract opposition, since both variety format and classical dramaturgy are today overlaid by what Kluge calls 'destroyed time' (*zerstörte Zeit*), industrially fragmented and depersonalised time (e.g. military video games). This analysis touches on Burch's somewhat less dialectical observation that the 'strategies of disengagement' built into American television as a medium in many ways seem like a 'return to the days of the nickelodeon' (Burch, 'Narrative/Diegesis [...]', pp. 31-33). On 'distraction', see Siegfried Kracauer, 'Cult of Distraction: On Berlin's Picture Palaces' (1926), trans. Tom Levin, *New German Critique* (no. 40 winter, 1987); Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (1935-1936) and 'On Some Motifs in Baudelaire' (1939), trans. Harry Zohn, *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken, 1969).

24. Charles Musser, 'The Eden Musée in 1898: The Exhibitor as Creator', *Film and History* (December, 1981), pp. 73-83; 'Toward a History of Screen Practice', *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* (vol. 9 no. 1 winter, 1984), pp. 58-69.
25. Burch, 'Primitivism and the Avant-Gardes', p. 489; 'Porter', p. 104.
26. Koszarski, 'Going to the Movies', chapter from his forthcoming *History of American Film, 1915-1927*, presented at the Columbia University Seminar on Cinema and Interdisciplinary Interpretation, November 1986.
27. On the promotional context of THE 'TEDDY' BEARS, see Charles Musser, 'The Nickelodeon Era Begins: Establishing the Framework for Hollywood's Mode of Representation', *Framework* (no. 22/23 autumn, 1983), pp. 4-11; on composite genres, see Charles Musser, 'The Travel Genre in 1903-04: Moving Toward Fictional Narrative', *Iris* (vol. 2 no. 1, 1984), pp. 47-59. On the slippage between documentary and fictional modes in early cinema, see David Levy, 'Re-Constituted Newsreels, Re-Enactments and the American Narrative Film', ed. Roger Holman *Cinema 1900/1906* vol. 1 (Brussels: FIAF, 1982), pp. 243-258.
28. Alexander Kluge, *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin: Zur realistischen Methode* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975), pp. 202 ff., 215 ff., trans. excerpts by Skip Acuff and H. B. Moeller, *Wide Angle* (vol. 3 no. 4, 1980), pp. 26-33; and Kluge, *Bestandsaufnahme*, pp. 161-166.
29. For a more detailed analysis of Kluge's use of (his own) voice-over in relation to female protagonists, see my, 'Alexander Kluge, Cinema and the Public Sphere: The Construction Site of Counter-History', *Discourse* (no. 6, 1983), pp. 66-68.
30. This emphasis on the material heterogeneity of cinematic materials is, no doubt, indebted to Horkheimer and Adorno's critique of the systematic amalgamation of materials on the part of the culture industry in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. J. Cummings (New York: Seabury, 1972), and in an earlier draft of that critique, 'Das Schema der Massenkultur' (1942), in Theodor W. Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), pp. 229-335. This critique is also elaborated in Adorno and Hanns Eisler, *Composing for the Films* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), which Adorno published in his own, reconstituted German version in 1969, with a preface expressing his hope of continuing this work on film music in collaboration with Kluge.
31. Images of flooding also appear in a conversation between politician Bieringer (Alfred Edel) and a 'catastrophe expert', while a biographical portrait of Chancellor Schmidt is showing on television with references to the latter's managing of the Hamburg flood emergency. Close to the end of the film, an imaginary sequence loosely attributed to Inge Maier shows drawings of a room being submerged in water (from a children's book by Dr. Hoffmann), while Kluge's voice-over reads the verse that explains the strange arrangement, including its somewhat sadistic details.
32. Eder and Kluge, *Ulmer Dramaturgien*, pp. 57-58; Alexander Kluge and Edgar Reitz, 'In Gefahr und grösster Not bringt der Mittelweg den Tod', *Kursbuch* (no. 41 September, 1975), pp. 42-43.

‘All Things Are Enchanted Human Beings’: Remarks on Alexander Kluge’s NEWS FROM IDEOLOGICAL ANTIQUITY

Christian Schulte

[...] these petrified relations must be forced to dance by singing their own tune to them!¹

On 12 October 1927, Sergei Eisenstein notes: ‘The decision has been made to film “Capital” based on the scenario of Karl Marx – that is the only possible formal way out’.² The intention is as clear as the addition is enigmatic. Eisenstein’s notes give little sense of how this titanic enterprise might have been realised. All he left us are keywords. A day later, he writes: ‘Here, we encounter completely new filmic perspectives, and the dawning light of possibilities that will be fulfilled in my new work – in “Capital”, based on the libretto by Karl Marx. In a film treatise’.³ Eisenstein, who had just finished shooting *OCTOBER*, also mentions the ‘principle of de-anecdotalisation’. This principle had already been ‘fundamental’ for the finished film, but it also represents, ‘in essence, part of the “coming day”, i.e. the precondition for our next enterprise: C[apital]’.⁴ James Joyce’s novel *Ulysses*⁵ served as a formal model for Eisenstein, primarily because it offered a model for narrating world history in the abbreviated time-scale of a single day. ‘In the external plot, it was to have followed a single day in the life of two people, from noon until night, much as *Ulysses* describes the day of Leopold Bloom [...], while chains of association and subtexts were to evoke the history of mankind since Troy’.⁶ Joyce’s novel, particularly the question-and-answer chapter, seems also to have inspired his willingness to further radicalise his own formal language and bid farewell to linear storytelling: ‘In Joyce’s *Ulysses* there is [...] a wonderful chapter written in the style of a scholastic catechism. Questions are posed and answers given. Questions on how to light a kerosene lamp. Answers from the realm of metaphysics. (Read this chapter. It could be methodologically useful.)’⁷ On 8 April 1928, alongside the remark that the *Capital* film will be officially dedicated to the Second International, we read the lapidary sentence: ‘The formal side will be dedicated to Joyce’.⁸

‘81 years later,’ as we read in the blurb to *NACHRICHTEN AUS DER IDEOLOGISCHEN ANTIKE/NEWS FROM IDEOLOGICAL ANTIQUITY*, another film director created ‘a memorial’ to this unfinished project. The director was Alexander Kluge, one of the leading lights of the New German Cinema and, along with

Jürgen Habermas and Oskar Negt, one of the best-known exponents of Critical Theory. The books and television interviews he made with Oskar Negt, in particular, stand in the tradition of an undogmatic neo-Marxism associated with names like Korsch, Benjamin, Adorno and Horkheimer, all of whose works are extensively cited in *NEWS*. What Marxist orthodoxy had largely ignored, the question of the subjective factor, assumes central importance in Negt and Kluge's investigations: the political economy of labour power. The question of the aggregate states in which 'living labour' lives on under conditions of capitalist production, the question of how dead labour, congealed into commodified products, can be translated back into living labour – this question not only dominates the conversations with Oskar Negt, it also forms the gravitational centre of the entire 570-minute, 3-DVD opus. To call *NEWS* a 'work', however, would be misleading. It seems to me that the concept of an experimental set-up is more apt, a concept that can be used to characterise each of the individual sequences as well as the cycle as a whole. The latter is not subjected to anything like a stringent dramaturgy. Here, as in Kluge's films for the cinema, there is no red thread guiding how the film is to be received. Viewers can and should pursue their own interests, and may turn at any time to the accompanying CD-ROM, where the director has deposited – alongside other 'extras' – his 'stories for those interested in Marx'.

Anyone expecting a new feature film from Alexander Kluge will initially be disappointed. We see a gallery of talking heads, all of whom (apart from the writer Dietmar Dath) will already be familiar to viewers of Kluge's arts programmes: the Eisenstein biographer Oksana Bulgakova, the actresses Hannelore Hoger and Sophie Rois, the writers Hans Magnus Enzensberger and Durs Grünbein, the cultural commentators Joseph Vogl and Rainer Stollman, the neo-Dadaist Helge Schneider, and several others who have popped up over the last twenty years or so in Kluge's TV forums, in *News & Stories*, *Primetime/Late Edition* or *10 to 11*. These formats, all varying in length and intensity, have long since evolved from a Trojan horse to become an apparently immovable fixture of today's media landscape. They make up a living archive, a permanently self-composing audio-visual text that is transformed anew each time someone sits in front of the camera. Ensuring that the individual components of his works are robust enough to be redeployed in ever-shifting constellations; grasping individual scenic, visual, written and sonic materials solely as raw materials which, far from being fused together by the director into a synthetic total impression, should be capable of entering into flexible relations – from the very beginning, this idea of the relative autonomy of all the parameters of perception in relation to each other underpins Kluge's montage of associations. What applies to his filmic and literary methods holds no less true of the combinatory potential of individual broadcasts under thematic points of view. Over long stretches,

Kluge's *NEWS* offers a compilation of older and more recent broadcasts, each of which pursues in its own way questions of commodity fetishism, human labour power, alienation, and the living appropriation of history.⁹ In the expansive context of *NEWS*, the former broadcasts are arranged into sequences interspersed with interludes of differing lengths. Here, too, Kluge revives design features which recall the 'antiquity' of his own film and television work from the late 1980s and 1990s, when experimental montage essays coexisted with the more conventional interview programmes: computer-animated graphics, citations from film, and on-screen captions of the relevant references (often using a naive-looking design). Time-lapse photography – or, in the terms of Kluge's film theory, the 'temporal whole' – also makes a reappearance, as when assembly work in an automobile factory or views of an industrial plant with cloud formations skidding overhead can be seen. Also included are excerpts from the film of a former colleague, the documentary-maker Günther Hörmann. These excerpts, appearing under the title 'Original Sound of a Labour Dispute (1965)', give insight into the build-up to a strike and its eventual failure. Such retrievals from the filmic archive are complemented by sequences produced especially for *NEWS*, such as that shot by Kluge's daughter, Sophie, at Karl Marx's grave in London. We encounter her frequently in the interludes, reading Marx texts either with her father or with an actor colleague and functioning as an interlocutor in different roles, for example, as Commissar Diana Leibowitz in 1939. Here, she is visibly interpolated into historical photographs. In a dialogue on original accumulation whispered between her and the director, we suddenly hear: 'A poetic metaphor is the highest form of insight'. Such sentences always have a self-reflexive function in Kluge's cosmos. The author is concerned less with epistemic processes in the medium of concept formation or with rigorous argument than with finding different approaches to the topic at hand, with circling around a question, with exploring horizons of meaning in an associative way that does not shirk from metaphorical formulations, with producing differences and proportions – all preliminary, experimental measures aimed at expanding the social imaginary.

The Abaric Point

The fault lines and fissures at which these differences become evident are also, at the same time, points of connection for the imaginative activity of viewers, whom Kluge addresses as co-authors. Here, the function which Kluge ascribes to metaphor again comes into play: that of slowing down humanly intolerable relations so that they can be worked through by the viewer. Convinced that

historical relations can only be worked through if they are fitted to the dimensions of the individual's imagination, Negt and Kluge take up, in a dialogue on devaluation tempi in the so-called 'risk society', the progress-critical reinterpretation of the Marxist concept of revolution proposed by Walter Benjamin in his theses 'On the Concept of History'. Revolution is here no longer the locomotive of history, but the act by which those travelling in the train apply the emergency brake.¹⁰ The image of the emergency brake becomes a cipher for an active intervention which disables the violent continuities of the historical process in order to posit a caesura, or, as Negt and Kluge have discussed elsewhere, an *abaric point*. The abaric point, however, is not a position (*Setzung*) but rather an exposition (*Aus-Setzung*): 'at the interface of gravitational fields, the *abaric point*, gravitational forces are neutralised and "freedom" reigns'.¹¹ The abaric point marks the suspension of historical causal chains and repetition compulsions, a hiatus that allows human subjectivity to organise itself anew and interrogate its own past. In this sense, revolution would, in Negt's words, mean 'work[ing] through the problems of history that have lain fallow'. Kluge's multi-media montage texts configure an aesthetic-reflexive model for such a process. Its flexible and spacious combinatorics, intended to exclude nothing 'that has a material substance', provides viewers and readers with a multitude of opportunities to recognise their own experiences, on the one hand, and with an equivalent multitude of options for imaginatively transcending the experiences they have gained in their own local settings and for grasping these experiences in broader historical contexts (*geschichtlichen Zusammenhängen*), on the other. The ability to retrieve what lies far away in time and to augment one's own local milieu with dimensions of distance – in this staging of flexible relations of proximity and distance lies a central function of montage. Montage is thus a procedure that sets out to produce contexts by opening up imaginative horizons. In a conversation with the cultural commentator, Joseph Vogl, the question is raised: 'What is a revolutionary?' Although both interlocutors keep their attention fixed on Mirabeau and the French Revolution, it seems almost as if Vogl were describing the montage practice of his conversational partner. A revolutionary, he says, 'is a montage artist, since he can juxtapose and stitch together different times. He assembles history. He is a vessel for temporal states. He collects potentials for action'. What would be revolutionary, in this sense, is the cut between the images insofar as this cut remains perceptible, a lacuna at whose edges idiosyncratic, subjective potentials can crystallise. Potentials for action, however, are equally the unredeemed possibilities of history. Montage is able to evoke a heightened attention to what is living in produced things. That roughly corresponds to Oskar Negt's definition of socialism as a 'quicken[ing] of the dead'. This entails the human reappropriation of our predecessors' labour, their cultural production. Kluge, already acquainted with the notion of apocatastasis from

Walter Benjamin, speaks at this point of the 'resurrection of the dead' – a theological speculation that Negt cannot condone.

The Human in Things

The fact that we can only grasp the objects surrounding us in our everyday lives by understanding them as products of human labour is brought home in the contribution of Tom Tykwer, perhaps the most surprising of the entire project. Under the title 'The Human in the Thing', Tykwer undertakes a precise analysis of an excerpt from reality fixed in the picture frame. The most inconspicuous items of daily use, such as clothing, an intercom, locks or chewing gum, as well as functional accessories from our life-world like a house number, an iron grating, cobblestones, stainless-steel pipe brackets or street art in the form of graffiti, are all zoomed in on and interrogated in relation to their historicity. Brushed against the grain in this way, things suddenly stop seeming natural to us. Reflected in the perspective of their becoming, they are transformed into congealed history. They appear as the result of the work processes that have flowed into them to give them their form. Tykwer's voice-over liquefies the inert formality of things so that we become aware of them as the expression of social productive forces. The thing loses its fetish character once the labour force invested in it has been made visible.

'Commodified things are not thingly; they are crystallised human characteristics, metamorphosed human beings', Kluge contends in a conversation with Peter Sloterdijk. With that, he gives the cue for the cautiously voiced claim that *Capital* would have to be read alongside Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. As if this constellation were anything but unorthodox, Kluge experimentally projects the image of the Roman poet into an illustration of the classics of dialectical materialism: Marx, Engels and Lenin. Shortly afterwards, Kluge adds a contemporary poet to this constellation, and we see Osip Mandelstam take Ovid's place. The correspondences are clear: not only did the Russian poet likewise compose *Tristitia*; like Ovid before him by Augustus, he too was sent into exile by another ruler, Stalin. The conversation with Sloterdijk abounds in such attempts at venturing correspondences and analogies: between *Ulysses* and *Capital*, between Molière and Balzac, and between Marx and fairy-tale theory. Kluge's conversations are stamped by the same combinatorics as his montage procedures, which arrange and rearrange the most disparate things in ever-new configurations. Two people are here engaged in a dialogue whose associative course is decided, not least, by their mutual attentiveness and openness to influence. The topics discussed are divorced from their familiar semantic fields: the commodity is

attested the character of an amulet; the capitalist is described as a 'thoroughly eroticised person whose daemon tells him: greed is good'. And, in responding to a question about commodity fetishism, Sloterdijk pursues an African lead, referring to cultic practices which involve studding statues with nails which represent curses or wishes. Commodity production and magical practice suddenly appear as two sides of the same coin. In both cases, things are invested with subjective qualities: with force. Kluge cites Marx: 'The landscape of industry is the open book of human psychology'. And Sloterdijk emphasises alchemy's apotropaic power to transform a curse into an antidote. Inside/outside, psychology/society: these dialectically conceived subject-object relations (and that is always to say, historical processes and contexts) are no less vehemently denied by the apparition of commodity fetishism than is the famous theological dwarf in the image of the chess-playing automaton named historical materialism. Whereas the latter, in Benjamin's first thesis in 'On the Concept of History', fetishistically defends the idea of a teleological course of history,¹² the image of the commodity insists on its ahistorical naturalness. 'Money orders matter into the changing room and decides which costumes it should try on'. While Sloterdijk encapsulates the constitution of the commodity fetish in the image of a disguise or masquerade, for Kluge and his various interlocutors, critical praxis no longer consists solely in the unmasking of a *rational core* of commodity production, but equally in working through those apparitional forms which constitute not just the commodity fetish, but all forms of fetish formation or fetishistic iconography. Just as 'the memory of the commodity' goes missing in the commodity fetish, so the depiction of a thing (as Brecht already knew) betrays nothing of its history and its real relations. If the image is to be grasped as a 'crystalised moment' in which different times are condensed, it must be set at a distance to itself – not so much through a contextualisation that seeks to fix its meaning, as through the montage-like addition of disparate elements. What results is a flexible, paratactic construct: 'Images would have to be arranged serially and variants placed side by side', Kluge remarks in conversation with Negt. On the micro-level of *NEWS*, the director is here characterising his own procedure of spreading out his material across a range of different perspectives. On the macro-level of film history, his opinion that different directors could have continued Eisenstein's unrealised project may be understood as a suggestion that, in future, we should read Kluge's *NEWS*, alongside Marx's *Capital* and Eisenstein's *Notes*, as a call for further debate, an incitement to further variations.

The iconocritical interventions, conversations and montages of Alexander Kluge aim to restore their history to objects, and hence to the human experiences and human labour stored up in those objects. They seek to understand traditional contexts (*Traditionszusammenhänge*) as temporally dispersed forms of collective labour, and to train the human subjective qualities, the human imagi-

nation. They configure the model of a communicating public sphere which – at least on the speculative level of make-believe staged by the film-maker – knows how to call up the experiential horizons of past ages and weave them into dialogic fictions. Montage as *free associations*.

Notes

1. Karl Marx, 'Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie', in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, vol. I (Berlin: Dietz, 1959), p. 381.
2. Sergei Eisenstein, 'Notate zur Verfilmung des Marxschen "Kapital"', in Sergei Eisenstein, *Schriften 3*, ed. Hans Joachim Schlegel (Munich: Hanser, 1975), p. 289.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 290.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 291.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 293.
6. Alexander Kluge, *Nachrichten aus der ideologischen Antike. Marx – Eisenstein – Das Kapital* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2008), p. 12.
7. Eisenstein, 'Notate zur Verfilmung des Marxschen "Kapital"', p. 293.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 307.
9. Thematically oriented compilations had already featured in Kluge's TV windows in the 1990s, appearing under titles like '100 minutes of diversity' and 'Night of the Animals'.
10. See Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. I.3 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991), p. 1232.
11. Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1981), p. 790.
12. Walter Benjamin, 'Über den Begriff der Geschichte', in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. I.2 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991), p. 693. 'The image as crystallised moment,' one of the captions reads.

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Notes on Contributors

Astrid Deuber-Mankowsky is currently Professor of Media Studies at the Ruhr-University Bochum. She has published extensively on topics in feminist theory, representation and mediality, media theory and philosophy as well as religion and modernism. Her book *Der frühe Walter Benjamin und Hermann Cohen. Jüdische Werte, Kritische Philosophie, vergangliche Erfahrung* (Verlag Vorwerk 8: Berlin, 2000) was awarded the Humboldt University prize for best dissertation. English translations of her writings include *Lara Croft: Cyber Heroine* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis London, 2005. Translated by Dominic Bonfiglio. Foreword by Sue-Ellen Case). Her recent book is entitled *Praktiken der Illusion. Kant, Nietzsche, Cohen, Benjamin bis Donna J. Haraway* and was published in 2007 (Verlag Vorwerk 8: Berlin).

Klaus Eder. Born 1939 in the German city of Augsburg. Studied German literature at Stuttgart University. Worked as film critic from the middle of the 1960s for the national public radio ("Bayerischer Rundfunk") and for German-language film magazines. Books among others on Andrzej Wajda, Luis Buñuel, Nikita Mikhalkov and Andrei Konchalovski, Arturo Ripstein, Im Kwon-taek, Nagisa Oshima; two books together with Alexander Kluge. Programmer of the Munich International Film Festival between 1986-2007. Advisor for a variety of festivals. General Secretary of the International Federation of Film Critics (FIPRESCI) from 1987. Lives and works in Munich, Germany.

Thomas Elsaesser is Professor Emeritus of Film and Television Studies at the University of Amsterdam and since 2006 Visiting Professor at Yale University. Among his recent books as author are: *Weimar Cinema and After* (2000); *Metropolis* (2000); *Studying Contemporary American Film* (2002, with Warren Buckland); *Filmgeschichte und Frühes Kino* (2002); *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood* (2005); *Terror und Trauma* (2007); *Hollywood Heute* (2009); *Film Theory: An Introduction Through the Senses* (2010, with Malte Hagener).

Caryl Flinn is the author of *New German Cinema: Music, History, and the Matter of Style* (California, 2003); *Strains of Utopia: Nostalgia, Gender and Hollywood Film Music* (Princeton, 1992); *Brass Diva: The Life and Legends of Ethel Merman* (California, 2009); and co-editor of *Music and Cinema* (Wesleyan, 2000). She has been teaching at the University of Arizona since 2000, where she currently is Profes-

sor and Head of Gender and Women's Studies and an affiliate in Media Arts and the LGBT Institute.

Tara Forrest is Senior Lecturer in Screen and Cultural Studies at the University of Technology, Sydney. She is the author of *The Politics of Imagination: Benjamin, Kracauer, Kluge* (2007) and co-editor of *Christoph Schlingensief: Art Without Borders* (2010).

Tim Gruenewald (Ph.D. University of Washington) has been teaching film and cultural studies courses in the School of Modern Languages and Cultures at Hong Kong University since 1999 and was a Visiting Lecturer of German at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign from 1997-1999. His current research examines constructions of race and the national imaginary in post-war German cinema and television. He is a contributor to the forthcoming volume *The Thirties in America* (Salem Press) and has published articles on David Mamet, Alexander Kluge and Urs Widmer.

Miriam Hansen was Ferdinand Schevill Distinguished Service Professor in the Humanities at the University of Chicago, where she also taught in the Department of English and the Committee on Cinema and Media Studies. In addition to numerous articles on the work of Alexander Kluge and a wide range of other topics – including German, Russian, Chinese and Japanese cinemas, and issues in film and media theory – her publications include a book on Ezra Pound's early poetics (1979), *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (1991) and *Cinema and Experience: Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno* (2011).

Florian Hopf was a film critic and co-author (with Alexander Kluge and Michael Dost) of *Filmwirtschaft in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und in Europa. Götterdämmerung in Raten* (1973).

Andreas Huyssen is the Villard Professor of German and Comparative Literature at Columbia University. Founding director of Columbia's Institute for Comparative Literature and Society (1998-2003) and editor of *New German Critique* (since 1974), the leading journal of German studies in the US. His books include *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (1986), *Postmoderne – Zeichen eines kulturellen Wandels*, co-ed. with Klaus Scherpe (1986), *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (1995), and *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (2003). Editor, most recently, of *Other Cities, Other Worlds: Urban Imaginaries in a Globalizing Age* (2008). His work has been translated into many languages worldwide.

Anton Kaes is Class of 1939 Professor of German and Film & Media at the University of California, Berkeley. The recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and the Humboldt Prize, he was a Visiting Professor at the Australian National University, Harvard University and Tel Aviv University. He is the author of *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film* (1989), *M* (2001), and *Shell Shock Cinema: Weimar Culture and the Wounds of War* (2009). He also co-edited *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (1994) and *Germany in Transit: Nation and Migration, 1955-2005* (2007).

Alexander Kluge is a German film-maker, political activist and theorist. Trained in law, he turned to film in the late 1950s at the suggestion of his friend Theodor Adorno, co-directing with Peter Schamoni *BRUTALITY IN STONE* (1960), a reflection on the Nazi atrocities. In 1962, Kluge signed the Oberhausen Manifesto, which declared a new freedom for cinema from convention and commercial concerns, and soon after, co-founded Germany's first film school in Ulm. Kluge was awarded the 'Golden Lion' for lifetime achievement at the Venice Film Festival in 1982. As a fiction writer and member of the legendary post-war literary circle *Gruppe 47*, he won Germany's highest literary award, the 'Georg-Büchner-Preis', in 2003 and was awarded the 'Theodor-Adorno-Preis' in 2009.

Gertrud Koch teaches cinema studies at the Free University in Berlin. She was visiting professor and scholar at Columbia University, NYU, Washington University, UIC, UPenn, the Getty Research Center in Los Angeles and the Sorbonne III in Paris and many others. Her many books and articles deal with aesthetic theory and feminist film theory as well as with questions of historical representation. Books on Herbert Marcuse and Siegfried Kracauer, the latter came out in English 2005 with Princeton UP, on *Feminist Film Theory* and on the representation of Jewish history. Editor of volumes on Holocaust representation, perception and interaction, art and film theory. Co-editor and board member of numerous German and international journals including *Babylon*, *Frauen und Film*, *October*, *Constellations*, *Philosophy & Social Criticism*. She is currently working on a book about the aesthetics of illusion in film and the other arts.

Jeff Mills is an American DJ, music producer, and co-founder of the Detroit techno collective Underground Resistance.

Heiner Müller was one of Germany's most significant playwrights, as well as a theatre director, writer and poet. His numerous interviews with Alexander Kluge have been published as *'Ich schulde der Welt einen Toten': Gespräche* (1995) and *'Ich bin ein Landvermesser': Gespräche mit Heiner Müller, neue Folge* (1996).

David Roberts, Emeritis Professor in German Studies, Monash University, Melbourne and Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. Besides numerous articles and book chapters in the fields of German literature, aesthetics, social and cultural theory, publications include *Art and Enlightenment* (1992), with Peter Murphy *Dialectic of Romanticism* (2004), with Johann Arnason *Canetti's Counter-Image of Society* (2004) and *The Total Work of Art in European Modernism* (2011). Co-editor of the journal *Thesis Eleven* since 1985.

Giacco Schiesser is Professor for Culture and Media theory with a focus on Media Cultures, director of the Department 'Art and Media', University of the Arts, Zurich (Zürcher Hochschule der Künste, ZHdK), and Vice-President of ZHdK. He has worked as a lecturer/guest professor at various universities in Switzerland, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Japan and the US. His work focuses on cultural theory, media theory and the construction of the subject, aesthetics, art and literature, democracy, public spheres and everyday life.

Heide Schlüpmann studied philosophy in the 1960s in Frankfurt am Main, ardent cinemagoer since 1970. Teaching appointments in film since 1977. Studied early cinema in the 1980s. 1991-2008 Professor of Film Studies at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt am Main. Co-editor of the journal *Frauen und Film*, co-founder of the Kinothek Asta Nielsen e.V. Author of numerous articles, in particular on film and the cinema. Books include: *Friedrich Nietzsches ästhetische Opposition* (1977), *Unheimlichkeit des Blicks. Das Drama des Frühen deutschen Kinos* (1990), *Ein Detektiv des Kinos. Siegfried Kracauers Filmtheorie* (1998); *Abendröthe der Subjektphilosophie. Eine Ästhetik des Kinos* (1998), *Öffentliche Intimität. Die Theorie im Kino* (2003), *Ungeheure Einbildungskraft. Die dunkle Moralität des Kinos* (2007); with Karola Gramann, Eric de Kuyper, Sabine Nessel and Michael Wedel: *Asta Nielsen, Bnd 1: Unmögliche Liebe. Asta Nielsen, ihr Kino; Bnd 2: Nachtfalter. Asta Nielsen, ihre Filme* (2010).

Christian Schulte is a Professor at the Institute for Theatre, Film and Media Studies at the University of Vienna. He has taught at the universities of Osnabrück, Bremen, Berlin (FU) and Potsdam, has worked as a freelance journalist for the press and radio, as an editor at DCTP/Development Company for Television Programmes, and as a media scholar at the Centre for Art and Media (ZKM) in Karlsruhe. He has also published books on Walter Benjamin, Alexander Kluge, Vlado Kristl and Heiner Müller.

Joseph Vogl is Professor of German Literature, Cultural and Media Studies at the Humboldt University in Berlin. He is the author of over one hundred articles and book chapters on German literature, literary and media theory, on the

history of knowledge and political thought. He is also permanent visiting professor at Princeton University. Publications: *Ort der Gewalt. Kafkas literarische Ethik*, München 1990 (re-ed.: 2010); *Kalkül und Leidenschaft. Poetik des ökonomischen Menschen*, München 2002 (3rd ed.: 2008); *Über das Zaudern*, Berlin/Zürich: 2007 (2nd ed.: 2008); *Soll und Haben. Fernsehgespräche*, Berlin/Zürich 2009 (co-author: Alexander Kluge); *Das Gespenst des Kapitals*, Berlin/Zürich 2010 (3rd ed.: 2011).

Eike Friedrich Wenzel is a writer, journalist and author of numerous books including *Gedächtnisraum Film: Die Arbeit an der deutschen Geschichte in Filmen seit den sechziger Jahren* (2000).

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