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OCTOBER

46

ALEXANDER KLUGE

Theoretical Writings, Stories, and an Interview

edited by Stuart Liebman

essays by Miriam Hansen, Andreas Huyssen, Fredric Jameson, Stuart Liebman, and Heide Schlüpmann

filmography, videography, and bibliography

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Why Kluge?

STUART LIEBMAN

At the beginning of the fifth section of Alexander Kluge's film *Artists under the Big Top: Perplexed* (1967), we see a troop of circus elephants rolling around in the mud, taking their morning bath. Their delightful play is cut short, however, by a gruesome story, "The Fire in the Elephant House in Chicago," announced and read in voice-over. As the elephants' horror and disbelief is recounted, shots from a familiar film—Eisenstein's *October*—appear on the screen, and a slow, scratchy recording of a tango is added to the sound track. The images are from several unrelated sections of the film: three shots of carefully composed rows of glassware in Kerenski's office; four of armed revolutionaries creeping down stairways in the Winter Palace; three almost abstract close-ups of the glittering chandeliers in the Tsarina's quarters; and finally, a low-angle shot of guns firing from a balcony, presumably from the "storming of the Winter Palace" section. Midway through the sequence, the music changes to a lilting violin melody and continues over a cut back to the elephants, which are now shown contentedly munching hay as they seem to sway in time to the rhythm. A female voice replaces that of the first narrator: "Freedom," she says, quoting one of the elephants, "means risking one's life, not because it means freedom from slavery, but because the essence of human freedom is defined by the reciprocal, negative relationship to another." A note in the published film script refers the reader to Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Mind*.[1]

This complex, overdetermined passage took shape during a period of looming crisis in the Federal Republic, in its film community, and in Kluge's cinematic career. Today, twenty years after the "events" leading up to 1968, the passage provides a kind of window onto these crises; then it served as an arena—perhaps, following Freud, one could call it a "playground"—in which the crises' multifaceted symptoms could be "worked through."[2] In its theme, structure, and

1. Alexander Kluge, *Die Artisten in der Zirkuskuppel: ratlos,* Munich, Piper, 1968, p. 15.
2. Sigmund Freud, "Further Recommendations in the Technique of Psychoanalysis: Recollection, Repetition and Working Through" (1914), in *Therapy and Technique,* ed. Philip Rieff, New York, Collier Books, 1963, pp. 157–166.

purpose, which I would argue centrally involves a radical questioning of Eisenstein's cinema and its theoretical rationale, lie crucial clues to the nature of Kluge's aspirations and the strategies through which they are realized.[3] Why during the ferment of the *Tendenzwende* of the mid-'60s Kluge should have selected Eisenstein as a subject, and how Kluge's practice may be regarded as a species of critique, will be the subject of this essay. I will return to it shortly. For now, it is enough to observe that this section of *Artists* is typical of Kluge's cinema: a montage (at best loosely tied to an episodic narrative) composed of images appropriated from other films (or paintings, or news photos, and so forth), set off by a title (here spoken, but more often written, as intertitles were in the silent film era), while the distinctive voice of a narrator (or perhaps, as here, more than one) speaks over strains of a forgotten piece of popular music or fragments from an opera, a text punctuated by some bit of aphoristic wisdom (lifted, as here, from a famous philosopher's treatise or, elsewhere, from the despairing cry of an anonymous charwoman). A range of possible implications hovers over the weave of images and sounds, but the point remains elusive, more felt than comprehended. Meanings proliferate and radiate out toward other sequences, producing, as the film's title itself acknowledges, as much perplexity as illumination. The films might be characterized as a string of digressions, woven into a picaresque plot—although the word *plot* implies causally related actions more emphatic than those normally encountered in Kluge's later work. In many of the films, the characters are allegorical ciphers, not "three-dimensional" figures; it is their (or rather Kluge's) projects, rather than any psychological motivation or causal logic, that provide the fragile, tentative links between incidents. In the most recent films, in fact, there are no central characters, no continuous narratives at all. The whole is a shifting and unstable assemblage of small, complexly interrelated units, each offering a different sort of attraction: a cinematic variety show, as it were.

This special issue of *October,* which serves as the catalogue of the retrospective exhibition of Kluge's films I have organized for Anthology Film Archives and Goethe House, New York, has been prepared with the conviction that Kluge's "cinematic variety show"—tied as it is to a much larger project encompassing his fiction, social theory, film theory, television programs, and political action on various cultural fronts—constitutes a unique venture in the annals of

3. The insertion of four other shots from *October* develops this critique further. In these shots, the placement of a close-up image of an officer next to an image of a statue of Napoleon creates a false point-of-view structure. In the interview published in this issue, Kluge comments on this kind of manipulation: "If you speak of the influence of Eisenstein, you must look at what he did in *Strike,* in *October.* You remember in *Artisten in der Zirkuskuppel: ratlos* the quotation from *October*? I used the sequence with Bonaparte. I wanted to indicate that I hate Bonapartism in film, in all art. There are two characters in art. One character you could compare with a *dompteur* who forces animals to change their attitudes. The other would be the *jardinière,* the *agricultura.* The second type is my ideal." Kluge's terms are different from but entirely consistent with the reading I offer in this essay.

postwar German culture. Kluge's is a radical *cinéma impur,* situated at the farthest possible remove from that conception of an autonomous, "pure" cinema which defines itself in opposition both to mass cultural film practices and to the terms and strategies of other modernist art forms developed since the 1920s.[4] The motives, themes, and *formal strategies* of Kluge's project raise questions in diverse areas of concern to us: about representation and gender, about history and memory, about theory in its relation to practice, about the ongoing vitality of modernism. Moreover, the work of Kluge is formulated—as one of his great precursors Walter Benjamin would have hoped—with an acute awareness of the most advanced "technical" means of production available as well as of the social circumstances in which production takes place in advanced industrial societies today.[5] The range of his concerns is visible both in the texts by Kluge published here and in the critical essays that follow.

Constructed in and through different disciplines, different discourses, these texts by Kluge are, we might say, "oriented toward the contemporary limits of the necessary," to borrow Foucault's reformulation of the aims of enlightenment.[6] Nevertheless, another overarching question or preoccupation, implied if not always directly stated, also animates Kluge's work, and it is one whose ongoing vitality the texts themselves—*pace* Foucault—demonstrate. Attentive (but critical) student of Marx and Adorno that he is, Kluge assumes the considerable burden of reflecting on the complex heritage of the Enlightenment, a period and a concept to which he often alludes in his writings and interviews. His work in all its forms reassesses the utopian promise immanent in reason's ambiguous legacy to the history of modernity as well as in the late eighteenth-century origins of both the Enlightenment and bourgeois capitalism in Germany. His (provisional) conclusion: enlightenment today depends on two crucial efforts. First, substantive reason must be reconstructed as a modality of sensory, imaginative experience; and second, a "public sphere" which could serve as a forum for individual imagination and unconstrained public debate must be created to respond to the contemporary threats of media concentration and the "industrialization of consciousness."[7] These are the larger goals toward which he works and

4. For an early and by no means isolated statement of these concerns, see Germaine Dulac, "Les Esthétiques. Les Entraves. La Cinégraphie Intégrale," *L'Art Cinématographique,* II (1927), trans. Stuart Liebman in *Framework,* 19 (1982), pp. 6–9. Although they explore and experiment with film form and technique, Kluge's films do not seek to articulate cinema's autonomy as an artistic medium, as the films of orthodox modernists such as Paul Sharits, Malcolm LeGrice, or Wilhelm and Birgit Hein do. The films of Kluge might be more usefully compared to Godard's *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (1967), or Makaveyev's *Innocence Unprotected* (1968) and *WR: Mysteries of the Organism* (1971)—which bear a closer resemblance to his own.

5. I refer, of course, to Benjamin's positions in "The Author as Producer" (1934), trans. Anna Bostock, in *Understanding Brecht,* London, New Left Books, 1973, pp. 85–104.

6. Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," in *Foucault Reader,* ed. Paul Rabinow, New York, Pantheon, 1984, p. 43.

7. Kluge and Oskar Negt borrow the term from Jürgen Habermas's *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit,* Neuwied, Luchterhand, 1962, but they interpret it very differently. See translator's note to the

the "red thread" woven through the themes and strategies of his artistic practice and his political initiatives. Although it was formulated in response to the specific historical and artistic conditions obtaining in West Germany, Kluge's project deserves our careful study, for our situation as intellectuals is different only in degree, not in kind, from that facing our counterparts in the Federal Republic. His efforts at resisting the seemingly relentless extension of private corporate control of our media should be of vital concern both to American filmmakers and to those attempting to understand the only apparently inchoate, uneasy pluralism that prevails today as "postmodernism."

> *Pessimism of the intelligence, optimism of the will.*
>
> —Antonio Gramsci

For those who came to maturity in Germany in the 1950s, the idea that the cinema might be a vehicle for artistic expression or social enlightenment would have seemed absurd. At the end of the war, the Allies, eager to reeducate their former foes, dismantled the centralized German film industry, while powerful American production and distribution companies, interested in securing a new market for their products, spurred them on. The Federal Republic's inadequate efforts during the '50s to stimulate the redevelopment of an indigenous film industry foundered again and again as a result of inadequate capitalization, ill-conceived subsidy statutes, and, by the end of the decade, the rapid diffusion of television into homes across Germany. A misguided policy of cultural insularity and economic autarky for the film industry, two dismal legacies of the Nazi period, dominated the thinking of German producers. The so-called *Heimat* film, sentimental and xenophobic depictions of bucolic regions of the country, became the most popular genre. Movie attendance dropped precipitously. The number of movie theaters began to plummet. The prospect of change seemed remote; by several accounts, more than half of all production personnel active in 1960 had been Nazi party members during the war.[8]

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selections from *The Public Sphere and Experience* presented in this issue. Also see Alexander Kluge, "Die Macht der Bewusstseinsindustrie und das Schicksal unserer Öffentlichkeit. Zum Unterschied von machbar und gewalttätig," in *Industrialisierung des Bewusstseins,* Munich, Piper, 1985, pp. 51–129.

8. General background on this period is found in Thomas Elsaesser, "The Postwar German Cinema," in *Fassbinder,* second edition, ed. Tony Rayns, London, BFI, 1980, pp. 1–16; Eric Rentschler, *West German Film in the Course of Time,* Bedford Hills, New York, Redgrave, 1984, pp. 31–63, 101–108; James Franklin, *New German Cinema,* Boston, Twayne, 1983, pp. 21–34; and John Sandford, *The New German Cinema,* New York, DaCapo, 1980, pp. 9–16. See also Rainer Lewandowski, *Die Oberhausener,* Diekholzen, Verlag für Bühne und Film, 1982.

To those who were closely involved with the work of the reborn Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, the idea of an enlightened cinema would have seemed doubly absurd. In their great, dark work, *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* which had been published in 1947 but was only beginning to make its intellectual impact a decade later, Adorno and Horkheimer had, with certain interesting exceptions,[9] singled out the cinema as the chief vehicle of the "culture industry," the mass-media bulwark of a late capitalist social order whose devastations should have been readily apparent to all. The culture industry in general and the cinema in particular, "derisively fulfilling the Wagnerian dream of the *Gesamtkunstwerk,*"[10] purveyed—could only purvey—forms of entertainment urging accommodation to the claims of instrumental reason at the expense of a more substantive reason that had long been in retreat. The implicit challenge that autonomous art—the music of Beethoven, for example—once offered to the social irrationality produced by instrumental reason had grown increasingly weaker. Art, Adorno insisted, now had to withdraw, become difficult of access, wrap itself in a veil of technical and intellectual complexity, in order to preserve what limited degree of human freedom it embodied.[11]

This was the intellectual milieu in Frankfurt which the twenty-four-year-old lawyer Alexander Kluge entered when he arrived in 1956 for an internship with the noted educational reformer Hellmut Becker. Becker's contacts with the Frankfurt Institute, headed by Horkheimer and Adorno, were particularly strong,[12] and Kluge was quickly introduced into its inner circle. He soon became one of its legal advisors, handling, among other matters, the personal reparations cases of both Adorno and Horkheimer. Given their devastating indictment of the cinema in the "culture industry" chapter of *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* Kluge's decision, after moving to Munich three years later, to take up filmmaking might appear to be a gesture of defiance, especially since Kluge later ruefully remarked that he had received little support or encouragement for his creative work from Adorno.[13] Yet the character of what Kluge began to produce suggests that his

9. See, for example, their remarks about a number of popular minor forms such as chase films, farces, and cartoons in *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* trans. John Cumming, New York, Continuum, 1972, pp. 120ff. For an excellent short assessment of Adorno's views on cinema, see Miriam Hansen, "Introduction to Adorno's 'Transparencies on Film,'" *New German Critique,* 25–26 (Fall/Winter 1981–1982), pp. 186–198.

10. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* p. 124.

11. Three representative Adorno texts available in English are: "Alienated Masterpiece: *Missa Solemnis,*" *Telos,* 28 (Summer 1976); *Prisms,* trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1981, pp. 149ff; *Minima Moralia,* trans. E. F. N. Jephcott, London, Verso, 1978, *passim.* For more about the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*'s analytic perspective on cinema, see Miriam Hansen, "Alexander Kluge: Crossings between Film, Literature, Critical Theory," in *Film und Literatur: Literarische Texte und der neue deutsche Film,* eds. Sigrid Bauschinger, Susan L. Cocalis and Henry A. Lea, Bern, Francke, 1984, pp. 169–196.

12. See, for example, the interviews Becker conducted with Adorno which were published as *Erziehung zur Mündigkeit,* ed. Gerd Kadelbach, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1971.

13. See the interview with Kluge in this issue. Nevertheless, Adorno did introduce him to Fritz

film project was, in fact, a way of extending and testing isolated hints he discovered in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* which suggested to him the possibility of an alternative cinematic practice. As Miriam Hansen has observed, an attentive reading of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* "against the grain" and, perhaps even more importantly, of *Composing for the Films,* a text Adorno wrote with the composer and Brecht collaborator Hanns Eisler, would have yielded many ideas for a cinematic practice opposed to that of the culture industry.[14] "In some revue films, and especially in the grotesques and the funnies, the possibility of this negation does glimmer for a few moments," Adorno and Horkheimer remark. "The culture industry does retain a trace of something better in those features which bring it close to the circus, in the self-justifying and nonsensical skill of riders, acrobats and clowns."[15] These grudging and rather oblique asides to the main thrust of their theoretical argument, added to the more practical proposals in *Composing for the Films,* could suggest — to a reader like Kluge — new possibilities for cinematic construction.

The central premise of Adorno's critique of cinema is that the film image reproduces reality and affirms the existence of things as they are. The film image thereby congeals the meaning of depicted objects into univocal ciphers for experience. Synchronized sound and calculated doses of "irrational" musical effects reinforce the notion that the world is given and unchangeable and allows passive consumption to proceed smoothly. Conventionally used, then, film, according to this view, can only serve the larger, destructive cause of instrumental reason.

Editing, however, could potentially introduce the moment of negativity needed to block this instrumentalizing of the image. And sound could help to subvert the reification of meaning by explicitly working at cross purposes to the image track. Not surprisingly, the film theory of Eisenstein was a crucial foil for

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Lang, who had returned to Germany in 1958 to shoot what would be two of his last films, *The Indian Tomb* and *The Tiger of Eschnapur.* Lang permitted Kluge to observe him filming on the set, but the experience of watching the producer Artur Brauner dominate the legendary director was so painful to Kluge that he spent most of his time in the studio canteen writing the stories later published as *Lebensläufe.* For Kluge's account, see "Tribüne des Jungen Deutschen Films: Alexander Kluge," in *Filmkritik,* 117 (September 1966), pp. 490–491. Those seeking more biographical material on Kluge should consult Theodore Fiedler, "Alexander Kluge: Mediating History and Consciousness," in *New German Filmmakers,* ed. Klaus Phillips, New York, Ungar, 1984, pp. 195–229; see also Rainer Lewandowski, *Alexander Kluge,* Munich, C.H. Beck, 1980.

14. Hanns Eisler, *Composing for the Films,* New York, Oxford University Press, 1947, pp. 65–79 and 152–157. Because of his concerns about political persecution during the McCarthy period, Adorno only took credit for the book when a German edition was published shortly before his death in 1969. Indeed, in the preface to this reedition, Adorno claimed most of the credit for it. See Hansen's "Crossings," pp. 172–175, and "Introduction to Adorno," pp. 194ff.

15. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* pp. 148–149, and *passim.* The passage from *Artists under the Big Top: Perplexed* with which I began, indeed the film's entire project, is profoundly indebted to remarks like this.

the articulation of Adorno and Eisler's views. Although the claims in his later writings concerning the synesthetic correspondence of sound and image were explicitly rejected, Eisenstein's more fundamental premise was accepted: editing individual shots together to produce conflictual effects countered the "reality effect" of the image. When extended to the domain of sound, the counterpoint between image, music, speech, and sound effects could serve as the basis for an alternative practice of cinema.[16] Amplified and refined by strategies proposed by Brecht—the use of quotations, shifts in the mode of representation, interruptions calculated to break routinized, passive responses, and so forth—montage could be used to produce a self-conscious construction, a kind of "writing" in images, music, and sounds which would be actively "read" by spectators. Such spectatorial engagement was essential if film was ever to constitute a *Kosmos,* an autonomous world of art not wholly isolated from social experience and potentially available to all.

The first films of Kluge—*The Eternity of Yesterday* (1960), *Teachers through Change* (1962–63), *Protocol of a Revolution* (1963)—are interesting to watch today for the way they bring together what have turned out to be persistent themes in his work with many of the ideas of Adorno and Eisler about strategy and structure. Because they are rarely shown and discussed even in Germany, a brief description of them may be useful. *The Eternity of Yesterday* is a meditation on the recent Nazi past. Fragments of now-ruined monumental buildings and stadia constructed or imagined by the Nazis are conveyed in soberly composed shots (in a mixture of representational modes: still photos, sketches, drawings, building plans) and through camera movements freed of all narrative motivation. Suspended over the mute stones, part of the rubble of history, is a disjunctive sound collage—piano music in a chromatic idiom, snatches of martial music, citations from Auschwitz Commandant Höss's diaries and Hitler's speeches, and so forth. The "friction"—one of Kluge's favorite metaphors—generated by these fragments of reified discourses deployed in different formal parameters produces a shock to the spectator's memory and facilitates a more comprehensive grasp of the grim history they point to.[17]

16. For a more comprehensive account of the book's argument, see Philip Rosen, "Adorno and Film Music: Theoretical Notes on *Composing for the Films,*" *Yale French Studies,* 60 (1980), pp. 157–182. In fairness to Eisenstein, it must be pointed out that Adorno and Eisler base their critique on arguments presented in *The Film Sense* and overlook earlier statements, presumably available to them, that are quite close to their own position. In many respects, the earlier views of Eisenstein on sound anticipate theirs. For his most concise statement of these views, see "A Statement"(1928), trans. Jay Leyda, *Film Form,* New York, Meridian, 1957, pp. 257–259. Incidentally, in his later essay, "Transparencies on Film" (*New German Critique,* 24–25 [Winter 1981–1982], p. 201), Adorno argues that the images presented on screen have a structural affinity with the stream of associations in the human mind. This conception is, of course, very close to Eisenstein's second version of "intellectual cinema." See "A Course in Treatment" (1932), in *Film Form,* pp.104–106.

17. Kluge derives the notion of friction (*Reibung*) from Clausewitz's writings on war. The notions of discontinuity, tension, and shock implicit in his practice are profoundly indebted to Benjamin,

Teachers through Change is a suite of four short portraits of teachers whose lives have been profoundly affected by historical events. Each laconic life story is told through a series of old photographs separated by titles. Some are progressive educators victimized by the Nazis; one is a vicious opportunist who benefited from the fascist takeover. Their lives are implicitly contrasted with those of ordinary, bureaucratized teachers today, whom we see in cinema-verité footage taken at a teachers' convention, school meetings, and so on. The interruptions in the biographies figure the larger interruptions history makes in the lives of human beings (this is also a theme of a book of stories, *Lebensläufe* [*Curricula Vitae*], Kluge published in 1962). The dispersed narrative focus and the formal discontinuities resist the homogenizing narrative strategies of the culture industry and presage the method of "antagonistic realism" Kluge later formulates in discursive terms.[18]

Kluge is only credited with the script for *Protocol of a Revolution,* but the completed film is clearly consistent with his effort to develop strategies counter to those of mainstream culture industry discourse. *Protocol* is a simulated television documentary on a revolution in a South American country. The parody narrative clearly mocks culture industry conventions. Prefaced by and concluding with a distancing tracking shot into and away from a television set, the film mimics TV journalism's common practice by moving from apparently objective shots of crowds at rallies, tanks in action, and so forth, to interviews, "behind the scenes" accounts of torture and the dictator's private life, much of which is illustrated with an exaggerated pictorial verve and luridly recounted by a reporter's off-screen voice. Since the documentary shots are often staged (although "authentic" footage from actual documentaries is also used) and the fictionalized sections often depict actual events, the culture industry's rigid categories begin to blur. The dissolution of the boundaries between fiction and documentary, reality and fantasy, public and private, mass culture and high art would figure significantly in Kluge's creative and theoretical agenda.

With *Protocol of a Revolution,* Kluge had entered the territory of the narrative film, the principal product of the culture industry. This move and the work

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particularly to his "Theses on the Philosophy of History": "Materialistic historiography . . . is based on a constructive principle. Thinking involves not only the flow of thoughts, but their arrest as well. Where thinking suddenly stops in a configuration pregnant with tensions, it gives that configuration a shock, by which it crystallizes into a monad" (*Illuminations,* trans. Harry Zohn, New York, Schocken, 1969, pp. 253–264). Kluge's most far-reaching implementation of these ideas can be found in *Die Patriotin* (*The Female Patriot*).

18. Kluge developed the notion of "antagonistic realism" in his treatise "Zur realistischen Methode," in *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin: Zur Realistischen Methode,* Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1975, pp. 187–250, trans. James Terry Acuff, Jr., as *Toward a Realistic Method: Commentaries on the Notion of Antagonistic Realism,* Austin, Texas, University of Texas, unpublished Master's thesis, 1980. Kluge's fascination with the short biography form is evident in his film portraits—*Proven Competence Portrayed, Fireman E. A. Winterstein, Frau Blackburn . . . , A Doctor from Halberstadt, A Woman of Means, Class of 1908*—as well as in the countless vignettes which appear in his features.

of preparing the script for *Yesterday Girl,* his first feature, impelled him to seek a more elaborate theoretical rationale for some of the things he had been doing in his short films. Thus, between the end of 1964 and the beginning of 1966, Kluge published two important articles, "Die Utopie Film" and "Wort und Film,"[19] and gave a number of interviews in which he discursively formulated his theoretical concerns for the first time. They warrant quotation at length. In "Die Utopie Film," Kluge writes,

> Film stands before a challenge, its material will always remain perceptions; montage allows us, however, to construct concepts. The smallest units of films, the parts called "shots," correspond to associations. In a film, the attempt by Joyce in *Finnegan's Wake* or by Hans G. Helms to decompose words into their associative components and recompose them anew, would not fail because of problems of comprehension; it [film] is in any case assigned the task of producing at every moment new units of meaning by the editing together of perceptions. . . . Film has methods similar to polyphony of organizing material relationships. Not only can it set movements of speech and image in opposition, film can also produce in the tense spaces between speech and image still another movement in the spectator's brain (not materialized in the film) which can furthermore stand in contrast to the film's movements, and so forth.

These remarks are amplified in an interview with Enno Patalas and Frieda Grafe shortly before the triumphant premiere of *Yesterday Girl* at Venice in September 1966.

> Very crudely put: the cuts, which are not contained in the film, are as important as the image. Adorno once said—mockingly—that the only thing that bothered him were the images. He meant that that which is always concretely perceptible, as long as it leaves no gaps in which fantasy can take root, kills rather than encourages fantasy. Film must provide a space for fantasy, yet despite this, must also convey something through the images. In silent films the titles always excited me. Since, from a literary point of view, the titles are mostly idiotic, hardly informative or well-placed, I asked myself why I like to look at them. I am glad to see them because at that moment my brain begins to work and has a moment to evolve independent fantasies. Then I am glad to see pictures again.[20]

19. "Die Utopie Film," *Merkur,* 201, (December 1964), pp. 1135–1146; "Wort und Film," coauthored with Edgar Reitz and Wilfried Reinke, *Sprache im technischen Zeitalter,* 13 (January-March 1965), pp. 1015–1030. The latter essay has been translated for this issue.
20. "Tribüne des Jungen Deutschen Films," in *Filmkritik,* September 1966, p. 490.

Although differences in emphasis and rhetorical formulation appear in the effort to theorize his practical experience, Kluge accepts most of Adorno and Eisler's premises. His theory also pivots around the break in the flow of images, the cut between shots, or the cut to a title. The cut subverts the illusory plenitude of the individual image as well as the destructive logic implicit in narrative forms. Linear narratives, which according to Kluge embody the quantifying abstract logic of instrumental reason, must thus be abandoned, though narrative elements, punctuated by leaps and reversals of time and circumscribed by reflection-inducing montage sequences, could still be retained.[21] Most importantly (and most distinctively for Kluge's theory), editing opens a space in which "distracted" spectators can invest their imagination, or, as Kluge puts it, their "fantasy." "I believe this is the essential point: the film is composed in the head of the spectator; it is not a work of art that exists on the screen by itself. Film must work with the associations which, to the extent they can be estimated, to the extent they can be imagined, the author can arouse in the spectator."[22] Together, the "polyphonic" movements of the images, of the pictures with respect to sounds, and of the "film in the spectator's head"[23] produce a friction that explodes the meanings fixed by instrumental reason. Each shot becomes a volatile manifold, "a rich totality of many determinations and relations" which invite the spectator to experience the "*Sinnlichkeit des Zusammenhangs,*" the sensuous relationships among widely diverse things and experiences.[24] Although the metaphor is implicit in his earlier practice, Kluge now begins to liken his films to "construction sites" at which a variety of discourses intersect and clash, engendering what Barthes termed "the very plural of meaning."[25]

21. "Das Publikum soll zufrieden sein. Gespräch mit dem Regisseur Alexander Kluge bei den Dreharbeiten zu 'Abschied von gestern,'" *Die Welt,* March 19, 1966. For a more extended discussion of logic as supportive of the "mechanism of domination" [*Herrschaftsmechanismus*], see Ulrich Gregor, "Interview," in *Herzog/Kluge/Straub,* ed. Peter W. Jansen and Wolfram Schütte, Munich, Hanser, 1976, p.176 and *passim.*

22. *Ibid.,* p. 489. Kluge adapts the notion of the "distracted viewer" from Benjamin. See "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations,* pp. 239ff.

23. The idea that film mimes subjective experience is baldly asserted in "Die Utopie Film" ("Film is capable of miming the movement of human thought," p. 1144) and anticipates Adorno's position in "Filmtransparente." In *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin,* Kluge writes: "One can look at it this way: for many tens of thousands of years a film has been playing in people's heads—a stream of associations, day dreams, experience, sensations, consciousness. The technical inventions of the cinema have merely added reproducible counterparts" (p. 208). In "Kluge, Cinema and the Public Sphere," Hansen observes the parallels with Bazin's views in "The Myth of Total Cinema" (1946). Kluge here also very closely approaches the rhetoric of Stan Brakhage in *Metaphors on Vision* (New York, Film Culture, 1963, n.p.). Brakhage consistently insists on the mimetic grounding of his films. The ambiguous oscillation between a constructivist and a mimetic rationale for the montage remains in Kluge's as well as Adorno's thinking.

24. Kluge borrows this formulation from Karl Marx, *Grundrisse,* trans. Martin Nicolaus, New York, Vintage, 1973, p. 100. Also see footnote 26.

25. Kluge, *Gelegenheitsarbeit,* p. 220. The passage from Barthes is worth quoting in full since it seems so aptly to describe Kluge's theory and practice. "The Text is plural. Which is not simply to say

Its "irreducible plurality" of meanings allows the film text to offer a number of entry points to a wide audience. In this respect, film, with the variety of its structure and appeal, and the necessary participation of its spectators, functions as a paradigm of operations in a radically open and democratic public sphere. Because films require imaginative engagement and debate, they become training grounds for enlightenment as well as assembly points for the broadly based, spontaneous coalitions which are the ideal vehicle of progress toward it.[26]

It was the strong challenge to this utopian conception of the relationship between a conspicuously difficult art and politics, as well as changes in the immediate political environment surrounding film production, that brought about the crises of 1967 I referred to earlier. The year 1966 had been an immensely gratifying one for Kluge. He had become the acknowledged leader of the movement then known as Young German Cinema. The Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film, a development bank for younger filmmakers for which Kluge had been fighting since the declaration of the "Oberhausen Manifesto" in 1962,[27] was finally established in 1965, and its awards committee granted a 100,000 DM subsidy for Kluge's first feature project, which was to be based on "Anita G.," one of the stories from his *Lebensläufe.* The film that emerged, *Yesterday Girl,* was the first major German film since the war to receive a significant international prize: it won the "Silver Lion" at the Venice Film Festival.

By early 1967, however, problems began to emerge. At the Berlin Film Festival, Kluge and his long-time associate Edgar Reitz were charged with "elitism" by radical students. The experience caused a temporary break in their relationship, and Kluge withdrew to the sanctuary of the Ulm Institute for Film

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that it has several meanings, but that it accomplishes the very plural of meaning: an *irreducible* (and not merely an acceptable) plural. The Text is not a coexistence of meanings but a passage, a traversal; thus it answers not to an interpretation, even a liberal one, but to an explosion, a dissemination. The plural of the Text depends, that is, not on the ambiguity of its contents, but on what might be called the *stereographic plurality* of its weave of signifiers (etymologically, the text is a tissue, a woven fabric) . . . the citations which go to make up a text are anonymous, untraceable, and yet *already read:* they are quotations without quotation marks. . . . The metaphor of the text is that of the *network;* if the Text extends itself, it is a result of a combinatory systematic. . . . Hence, no vital 'respect' is due to the Text: it can be *broken* . . . ; it can be read without the guarantee of its father, the restitution of the inter-text paradoxically abolishing any legacy" (Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," in *Image-Music-Text,* trans. Stephen Heath, New York, Hill & Wang, 1977, pp. 172–173). For Kluge's comments on the use of textual fragments, on works as part of a textual system, and on the idea of a "cinema of riddles" (*Rätselkino*), see the interview in this issue.

26. Marx is the theorist Kluge cites most often, but the political theorist whose practical interventions Kluge most admires is Rosa Luxemburg. A study of his use of their work as models for his films and film theory would be illuminating.

27. The Oberhausen Manifesto, signed by twenty-six filmmakers, cameramen, and actors, including Edgar Reitz and Kluge, was read on February 28, 1962, at the Oberhausen Short Film Festival. The manifesto proclaimed the complete collapse of the German film industry and the signatories' desire to create a new German feature film, free of industry conventions, commercial influences, and control by interest groups.

Construction.[28] In the next few months, it became increasingly apparent that the German federal government, unaccountably, wished to reverse its more enlightened film policies, which were only just beginning to produce results. In the Film Subsidies Bill passed later that year, the federal authorities did, in fact, again favor mainstream producers in the awarding of subsidies, reducing the amount of funding available to younger talent. Kluge found himself flanked on the Left by students whose conception of political films extended only to those thought to possess immediate political utility, and on the Right by a government that instinctively gravitated toward supporting the ailing and intellectually bankrupt representatives of the culture industry. Mysteriously, Germany seemed almost neurotically compelled to repeat the gross mistakes of its past cultural politics.

Artists under the Big Top is often described by critics as a disordered and despairing film, a product of Kluge's disorientation in the face of the full range of these historical events. There is little truth to this assessment, though the film was improvised without any preconceived plan or script.[29] In fact, *Artists under the Big Top* might be regarded as a kind of manifesto in which Kluge trenchantly, even defiantly, formulates his convictions. The difficulty of the plot is, in fact, a vital feature of his very conception of cinema. Leni Peickert, the allegorical heroine of the film, wishes to create a "reform circus" to exhibit animals "as they authentically are." This extravagant ambition is designed to topple the classic circus, which had always, since its birth during the French Revolution, celebrated the omnipotence of man. Leni's quest is presented as a gesture of both loyalty to and defiance of her dead father Manfred, a representative of the old circus, who dreamed of having elephants perform an aerial ballet at the very top of the big top. But despite her tireless efforts and a convenient surprise inheritance, Leni fails. This failure leads to an unmotivated, almost inexplicable decision to work in the mass media. She ends up studying television techniques (a denouement remarkably prophetic of the trajectory of Kluge's own career), the first uncertain step in a "long march through the institutions," toward the distant goal of becoming a secretary in the Foreign Office.

To summarize the plot in this way is to lend it a coherence and a linearity that the film itself refuses. Shots are informally, almost "amateurishly" composed, and nearly every standard connecting device (shot/reverse shot construction, point-of-view cutting, cutting on motion, and so on) is eschewed by the editing.

Even more than *Yesterday Girl,* whose narrative line was also interrupted by

28. For more on the Ulm Institute, see the interview with Kluge in this issue.
29. The script, along with materials not included in the final version, was published after the fact in *Die Artisten in der Zirkuskuppel: ratlos.* Many of these segments were later used in the television production *The Indomitable Leni Peickert.* For background information on the film, see Rainer Lewandowski, *Die Filme von Alexander Kluge,* Hildesheim, Olms Presse, 1980, p. 119.

digressions, but which still operated largely within the conventions of the 1960s international art cinema,[30] *Artists under the Big Top* contrives the breakdown of the standard language of cinema. *Artists'* highly self-conscious narration has an altogether different character than that of any of Kluge's earlier films. The fragile line of Leni Peickert's story is often erased by puzzling and at best tenuously related episodes—about her father and other now-dead circus artists, about a Frau Losemeyer, who flushes large sums of money down the toilet, about a Mr. Korti, a culture bureaucrat who eats a pig's ear, and so on. Interwoven with these episodes is a section using documentary footage of the 1939 Nazi "Day of German Art," short photographic montages of assorted circuses from the past, interviews with journalists and circus artistes, a visit to the last meeting of the "Gruppe 47," and the "Fire in the Elephant House in Chicago" sequence described earlier—to name some of the most memorable. Each is a self-contained unit which, like an act in a variety show—or a circus—defines its own space and is connected only obliquely to the others by associations that are not always apparent.

The film revolves around the themes of spectacle and domination, the products, according to the *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* of instrumental reason and the major threats to the dwindling legacy of rational enlightenment. The classic circus's fantasy of the domination of nature is only the most spectacular form of instrumental reason. Besides the circus, however, the film also models itself on a related format—the revue film—which, as I mentioned earlier, Horkheimer and Adorno had singled out as a potential source of resistance to the centralized narratives of the culture industry. Kluge uses the revue format to develop a counter-spectacle whose gaps and daring conceptual leaps open spaces in which imagination and substantive reason may be vitally engaged. A cinema based on these models offers no concessions to the demand for easy comprehensibility; instead, it demands an exertion of imagination by its spectators. Such a cinema also disavows any immediate political utility. No solutions are imposed; rather, questions are raised. The spectator must work through what is presented in sensory as well as rational terms, to make connections, discriminate differences, and establish new frameworks for speculation. Kluge's political commitment is most profoundly expressed in this call for imaginative engagement.[31]

30. The best description of art-cinema's narrational strategies can be found in David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film,* Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1985, pp. 205–233. For a detailed reading of *Yesterday Girl,* see Miriam Hansen, "Space of History, Language of Time: Kluge's *Yesterday Girl* (1966)," in *German Film and Literature: Adaptations and Transformations,* ed. Eric Rentschler, New York, Methuen, 1985, pp. 193–216.

31. Though the course of Leni's career might seem to suggest that traditional modernist hopes for renewal through revolutionary formal and conceptual innovation are utopian at best and quixotic at worst, the film's formal complexity belies this suggestion. The final decision to attempt to reform the media from within may be interestingly compared to positions later taken by Hans Magnus Enzensberger in "Constituents of a Theory of the Media" [1971], trans. Stuart Hood in Enzensberger's

The crucial point is this: in *Artists under the Big Top,* Kluge moves decisively toward a "cinema of ideas," or rather a "counter-cinema of ideas." We are now in a better position to understand why he inserts shots from *October* in his film, for Eisenstein—and his attempt to establish an "intellectual cinema"—must be seen as the great precursor of Kluge's cinema. Nevertheless, these quotations from *October* should not be read as an homage to an admired mentor, as quotations by Kluge's contemporaries in the French New Wave are read. The shots chosen for the "Fire in the Elephant House" sequence (and for two others in the film), their presentation, the resulting shifts in meaning, all suggest an unmistakable ambivalence, perhaps even an animus toward Eisenstein's work and theory.[32] If these quotations attest to Eisenstein's influence, it is the sort Harold Bloom describes: "a variety of melancholy or an anxiety-principle" which produces a significant swerve away from the achievement of a simultaneously feared and admired precursor.[33]

Even a cursory rereading of his texts and projects between 1924 and 1929, the gestation period for his first conceptualization of intellectual cinema,[34] makes it clear that Eisenstein approached his project from a perspective diametrically opposed to Kluge's. From the first texts he wrote, Eisenstein wished to instrumentalize the image, to make it part of a spectacle delivering a precisely defined impact on spectators. "Theater is linked to cinema by a common (identical) material—the *audience*—and by a common purpose—*influencing this audience*

Critical Essays, New York, Continuum, 1982, pp. 46–76. In his own cultural politics, however, Kluge has preferred to operate both inside and outside established governmental channels, temperamentally preferring the role of the critic.

32. It is unclear what Kluge knew of Eisenstein's theoretical writings at the time *Artists* was made. In some interviews, he implies that Eisenstein's montage theories were actively discussed at the Ulm Institute for Film Construction, while in others he claims not to have read any primary sources until 1973, when the controversy with the editors of *Frauen und Film* over his *Part-Time Work of a Female Slave* erupted. Concerning the discussions at Ulm, see Klaus Eder and Alexander Kluge, *Ulmer Dramaturgien,* Munich, Hanser, 1980, p. 38. Concerning Kluge's unfamiliarity with film theory, see the interview in this issue. For the controversy over *Part-Time Work,* see the interview in this issue, Kluge's *Toward a Realistic Method,* and articles by Kallweit, Sander, and Kemper listed in the bibliography.

33. Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence,* New York, Oxford University Press, 1973, pp. 7 and 14. Of the six "revisionary ratios" Bloom lists, two seem most appropriate: "*clinamen,* which is poetic misreading or misprision proper; . . . This appears as a corrective movement in his own poem, which implies that the precursor poem went accurately up to a certain point, but then should have swerved, precisely in the direction that the new poem moves," and "*kenosis,* which is a breaking-device similar to the defense mechanisms our psyches employ against repetition compulsions; *kenosis* then is a movement towards discontinuity with the precursor."

34. Eisenstein actually constructed two versions of his concept of intellectual cinema. The second version may roughly be dated 1928–1929, when Eisenstein began to read Joyce's *Ulysses* and conceived the project of miming the course of the thought process. This project is perhaps best described in "A Course in Treatment" (1932). I am, however, concerned here with the first version, which developed from the early "The Montage of Film Attractions" (1924) through "Perspectives" (1929) and "The Dialectic of Film Form" (1929). For an analysis of Eisenstein's ambitions, see Annette Michelson, "Reading Eisenstein Reading *Capital*," *October,* no. 2 (Summer 1976), pp. 27–38, and no. 3 (Spring 1977), pp. 82–89.

in the desired direction through a series of calculated pressures on its psyche," he observed in "The Montage of Film Attractions."

> The method of agitation through spectacle consists in the creation of a new chain of conditioned reflexes by associating selected phenomena with the unconditioned reflexes they produce. . . . It is then possible to envisage in both theory and practice a construction, with no linking plot logic, which provokes a chain of the necessary unconditioned reflexes that are, at the editor's will, associated with (compared with) predetermined phenomena and by this means to create the chain of new conditioned reflexes that these phenomena constitute. This signifies a realization of the orientation towards thematic effect, i.e. a fulfillment of the agitational purpose.[35]

Later, he likened the "For God and Country" sequence in *October,* perhaps his most completely realized draft of intellectual cinema, to a process of logical deduction.

> In this case, . . . a chain of images attempted to achieve a purely intellectual resolution, resulting from a conflict between a preconception and a *gradual discrediting of it in purposeful steps.*
>
> Step by step, by a process of comparing each new image with the common denotation, power is accumulated behind a process that can be formally identified with logical deduction. . . .
>
> The conventional *descriptive* form for film leads to the formal possibility of a kind of filmic reasoning. While the conventional film directs the *emotions,* this suggests an opportunity to encourage and direct the whole *thought process,* as well.[36]

Elsewhere he compared the hold such sequences have over the audience to a lecturer's "steely embrace," in which "the breathing of the entire electrified audience suddenly becomes rhythmic."[37] Finally, Eisenstein celebrated cinema's ability "to penetrate the mind of the great masses with new ideas and new perceptions. Such a cinema alone will dominate, by its form, the summit of modern industrial technique."[38]

35. Sergei Eisenstein, "The Montage of Film Attractions," in *Eisenstein Writings 1922–34,* trans. and ed. Richard Taylor, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1988, pp. 39ff. Emphasis in original.
36. Eisenstein, "A Dialectic Approach to Film Form" [1929], trans. Jay Leyda, in *Film Form,* p. 62. Emphasis in original. Noël Carroll has convincingly analyzed this passage as a species of logical argument. See "For God and Country," *Artforum,* January 1973, pp. 56–60.
37. Eisenstein, "Perspectives," in *Film Essays and a Lecture,* trans. and ed. Jay Leyda, New York, Praeger, 1970, p. 43.
38. "Perspectives," p. 45. Incidentally, these phrases are taken from the German language version of the essay Eisenstein himself prepared for publication in *Der Querschnitt* (January 1930).

Intellectual cinema as a process of "logical deduction" for "great masses" whose minds are held in a "steely embrace" by an "industrial technique"—here, in astonishingly concise form, is a left-wing variant of the dialectic of enlightenment. Underlying its conception is a fantasy of audience control which differs little from similar fantasies entertained by the capitalist culture industry. For Kluge, however powerful the results of such a practice, it is clearly antithetical to any genuine process of enlightenment.[39] The task of a counter-cinema, therefore, is effectively to contest the authority—imagistic, narrative, political—of the original construction by undoing its logic, thereby redeeming the vibrant power of its fragments for the spectator.

Kluge's critique of the premises of Eisenstein's cinema begins by placing Eisenstein's striking, rigorously composed shots in the center of the screen and surrounding them with a black border. Reframed in this way, they lose their status as quasi-authentic documents of a momentous historical event. What is underscored is their identity *as pictures* that are being quoted, re-presented. Furthermore, as I noted at the beginning, the shots are taken from at least four unrelated sequences and shown out of their original order. Excerpted from their context, relations of cause and effect are severed, and the tension of Eisenstein's synthesizing logic is released. *October*'s epic, monological narrative of the Russian Revolution is simply halted and decomposed into so many autonomous, nonhierarchized "attractions"—the glassware, the glittering chandeliers, the columned rooms and staircases, the expressive slinking of the actors. As the "steely embrace" loosens, the spectator is enabled to admire the images for their physical beauty and to construct new configurations of meaning, new (hi)stories.

Such constructions are encouraged by the sound track. Many different kinds of sound, both music and voices, vie for attention. Like the grainy, slightly out-of-focus images, the two brief musical fragments are recorded from old, scratched records; music is eroded to sheer sound. Their age—the recordings probably date from the late '20s—engenders a nostalgia that is out of keeping with the depicted events. Yet, because these melodies seem to be contemporary with *October*'s creation, they suggest that the film is, like them, a charming

39. Miriam Hansen observes that Kluge would also reject the "representationalist and organicist implications of Eisenstein's theory. . . . Whatever relationship between author and spectator his films may project . . . Kluge would certainly not intend his audience to follow him as the 'creator' in the manner envisioned by Eisenstein" ("Crossings," p. 181). In fairness to Eisenstein, recent criticisms of his theory of representation in the image are almost always based on his later texts, and ignore alternative formulations in earlier writings. See, for example, Colin MacCabe, "Realism and the Cinema: Notes on Some Brechtian Theses," *Screen*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 7–27. Kluge figures the underlying similarity between Eisenstein and the culture industry when he films Leni Peickert watching fragments from three films: first, the machine gun slaughter from *October*, and finally, shots from a soft-porn film of the type stimulated by the 1967 Film Subsidies Bill. Wedged between the two are images from an unidentified *Autorenfilm*, the excluded third term in Germany's cinematic landscape.

antique.[40] Kluge also severely undercuts the voice-over narration's customary authority, and this helps to generate webs of meaning in which Eisenstein's imagery is caught. Each of the many narrating voices represents different characters and points of view. Several report the elephants' panic and despair at not having trusted the evidence of their senses when fire broke out; one speaks the part of the circus director, who falsely reassures them that there is no fire. Later in the sequence, the voice-over narration is splintered further as a group sings a Russian anti-Hitler song from World War II, another group expresses a profoundly ambivalent desire for revenge, while still others murmur that it is better to repress the painful memories. The allusions to Nazis and circus directors, elephants and Russian resistance fighters, victims and heros, revenge and repression, freedom and memory, allusions that will be amplified and further transformed during the rest of the film, here invoke new conceptual contexts through which Eisenstein's imagery can now circulate.

The spoken texts themselves thematize and reflexively legitimate the questioning and subversion of authority that runs through the sequence at all levels. Even the Marxist political perspective that authorizes the history *October* recounts is challenged. Eisenstein's emphatically clear political message that human liberation is essentially freedom from enslavement is dramatically undermined by Hegel's counter-claim, cited at the end of the passage, that freedom is an exercise in epistemological self-definition against unspecified others. The text should not be superficially read as condemning political action, or even revolutionary violence, as such; its crucial function is to put orthodox Leninist historiography into question and to provide a rationale for the act of self-definition Kluge includes as an essential moment of his critical project.

Leni Peickert wished to create a reform circus "worthy of a dead man." In order to do so, she had completely to reverse the conceptual terms of her father's enterprise. Similarly, Kluge's "reform" of the intellectual cinema of Eisenstein proceeds by "rewriting" his images as the basis for a more general critique of the premises underlying them. This process of rewriting may properly be considered allegorical. According to Craig Owens, "allegory occurs whenever one text is doubled by another . . . or read through another."[41]: this is precisely what Kluge's sequence does to Eisenstein's images. As in all allegories, the motivating impulse behind the "Fire in the Elephant House" sequence is a desire to redeem a distant past for the present. Kluge furthermore adopts the allegorist's method of appropriating fragments of the ruins he hopes to recover and piling them up in a synthetic, hybrid structure that "is the epitome of counter-narrative, for it

40. For the best general description of Kluge's use of such music see Rudolf Hohlweg, "Musik für Film—Film für Musik," in Peter W. Jansen and Wolfram Schütte, eds., *Herzog/Kluge/Straub*, Munich, Hanser, 1976, pp. 45–68, 52 ff.

41. Craig Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism," *October*, no. 12 (Spring 1980), pp. 67–86. The rest of this paragraph is indebted to his exegesis.

arrests narrative in place, substituting a principle of syntagmatic disjunction for one of diegetic combination." His aim is not to restore the image's original significance, but to add another meaning to it, to expand its field of meaning. This surplus of meaning is fundamentally different from—and opposed to—a completion of meaning. Kluge's redoubled allegorical text begins, like all allegorical texts, in a state of perplexity, and remains until the end radically, bewilderingly incomplete—perplexing. A space is thus opened up for the film's spectators, whose efforts to decipher its meanings, fueled as much by resistance as by assent to what Kluge has constructed, will result in their own revisionary constructions, the "films in their heads." These "films" are the necessary next stage of an allegorical process that is the crucial vehicle of critique and enlightenment.

On New German Cinema, Art, Enlightenment, and the Public Sphere: An Interview with Alexander Kluge

STUART LIEBMAN

The following interview condenses many hours of conversations in both English and German that were conducted in Munich on December 6 and 16, 1986, and July 26, 1987. Unless otherwise noted, all footnotes are mine.

Stuart Liebman: Two months from now, that is in February 1987, German filmmakers can celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Oberhausen Manifesto,[1] a mythical moment of birth for the New German Cinema. Yet any visitor to Munich today who is interested in German film must be struck by the fact that there are only two German films now playing in local cinemas. One is a popular comedy, *Männer* [*Men*], while the other is a curious "art film," *Paradies* [*Paradise*]; both are by a young woman filmmaker, Dorris Dörrie. Unfortunately, this absence of German films in German cinemas seems to be an all too common situation for contemporary German film. It raises inevitable questions about the uncertain success, perhaps even about the failure of the "New German Cinema" movement. What conclusions would you draw from this situation? Is this what the Oberhauseners hoped to see in twenty-five years when they issued their manifesto?

Alexander Kluge: Well, the second question first. I find Dörrie's production to be completely what the Oberhauseners worked for. The Oberhausen group had a mode of production in mind. The group is not to be identified with any kind of content. Ulrich Schamoni's film *Es* [1965] or the film *Zur Sache, Schätzchen* [by May Spils, 1967], or *Lina Braake* [1974–1975] by Bernd Sinkel, or now Dorris Dörrie's *Men* [1986] represent a way of making films, low budget films, that translate highly personal experiences. These can be trivial or sophisticated. The Oberhausen group is by no means characterized by my films or by Reitz's or

1. The Oberhausen Manifesto, signed by twenty-six German filmmakers, among them Kluge and Edgar Reitz, was issued on February 28, 1962, during the Oberhausen short-film festival. The best general study of the motives of the signers can be found in Rainer Lewandowski's *Die Oberhausener. Rekonstruktion einer Gruppe 1962–1982*, Diekholzen, Verlag für Bühne und Film, 1982.

Schlöndorff's. Rather, it is characterized by a mode of production that we pursue as if capitalism were beginning anew, as if one could use the methods of 1802 in the era of big business.

SL: You just mentioned the "highly personal experiences" that the Oberhauseners wanted to make the basis for a film, and this approach was summarized in the slogan of *Autorenfilm*, which is only misleadingly identified with the French slogan of *la politique des auteurs*. This has changed significantly over the years. But it is important to define exactly what this concept meant in Germany. As you also suggested, the financial and administrative responsibilities German filmmakers assumed were significantly greater than in France.

AK: We took the words and changed their meaning. With the *Politik der Autoren*, the financial as well as the artistic responsibility are one. Our concept is like that of the Prussian reformers after Jena and Auerstedt,[2] in the period 1807–1810. They founded the university in Berlin; they reorganized the army; they introduced self-government. They created *perestroika* in a Prussian sense: a revolution made by officials, from above to below. That is not the way the French revolution worked, but the only German revolution that succeeded was made by highly motivated, high-ranking officials between 1802 and 1815. The Viennese Congress put an end to it, and they all died or resigned. We very much like this dawn of the bourgeois mode of production in Europe. We transposed the ideas of Horkheimer and combined them with more practical concepts.

SL: Which of Horkheimer's ideas are you referring to?

AK: Those concerning the origins of bourgeois historical philosophy and of entrepreneurialism. In these origins lies hidden an aspect of enlightenment, of the freedom to choose an occupation, to develop ideas of morality, of engagement, of justice. This is the model of Frankfurt School Critical Theory.

SL: This period of early entrepreneurial capitalism became a kind of model for your filmmaking practice?

AK: We never understood socialism as anything other than the careful adaptation of early bourgeois ideals. That was the beginning. That is the big picture in which film is only a tiny part. In this small part we made the author strictly responsible, but we tried to transpose his "Robinsonism"[3] into Greater London.

2. Kluge is referring to one of the most famous battles of the Napoleonic Wars. In 1806, a Prussian army under Prince v. Hohenlohe was decisively beaten by Napoleon at Jena while the German reserves remained in Auerstedt.
3. Kluge is referring to the character Robinson Crusoe in Defoe's novel.

That is, we combined anti-Robinsonism, the utmost artistic efforts, freedom, and responsibility for the economics. When I was cutting *Abschied von Gestern* [1967] with Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus, in one morning we rented our equipment, adopted our concept, learned bookkeeping, and from then on became producers. At the beginning there was a requirement that one be enrolled in the register of businesses at the courthouse. You had to have one hundred thousand Marks. None of us had one hundred thousand Marks. All during the '60s, none of us had that, at least on his own. And therefore we said we have a philosophy that it is not necessary to be registered. If you put your name on a paper, that is a production. This is the *Kino der Autoren*: the Nagra tape recorder, an Arriflex, your own cutting table, a knowledge of bookkeeping, and the idea that this was a process of enlightenment. The producers of *Men* followed a similar process. If you look at the producers who produced *Men*, you find three women who have their own means of production and who have husbands who belonged to the Oberhausener movement. They produced one film after another, one flop after another, for their husbands. Afterwards they tried with a female director, Dorris Dörrie. They produced one after another of Dorris Dörrie's films until they got this hit.

SL: To return to my first question: there evidently is very little outlet for your films in the theaters.

AK: Well, the theaters have specialized; they only deal with youth audiences, audiences who are about twelve to twenty-three years old. They don't care for the films of the New German Cinema. It's difficult. Since 1944, we have become a colony of the major foreign companies that play their films here. In the '60s there was a brief period of coexistence. Today, with only a few exceptions, the exhibition market is entirely dominated by major companies from abroad. That is to say, cinema has been expropriated from us. Our productions, on the other hand, are *ours*. There are approximately 460 filmmakers in the Federal Republic, among them approximately 120 producers, all of whom have essentially the same economic structure, that of independent artisans. Here in my workshop you see that there is a 35mm camera, a second Arriflex, several other pieces of equipment. You see that we have half-inch and three-quarter-inch video units. We can make a film by ourselves at any time of day or night. This is what we are concerned with, and this is the idea we have of business. We are independent of the "big companies," and in Germany we have never created big companies. Even films like *The Boat*, *The Never-Ending Story*, *The Name of the Rose*, in the way and with the means Herr Eichinger—he's the director of Konstantin—coproduces them with big companies and the "Bavarian Giant"—that is our television—are also made the Oberhausen group's way. The man has the temperament of the Oberhauseners. He headed the production of my *Der starke Ferdinand* and worked very closely with us.

SL: On the basis of what I described earlier, isn't it fair to say, however, that the Oberhauseners' desire to transform the kinds of films seen in German theaters has not been realized? In the first decade and a half of the postwar period, mostly unwatchable or ideologically reactionary German films were shown, along with many from Hollywood. How is the situation different today?

AK: The Oberhausen group wanted to change the modes of production. We didn't care very much about exhibition. We did not establish new theaters. We did not continue the tradition of the twenties by building new theaters, by developing cinema architecture, in order to transform the cinema from a dark space into a public sphere in which discussions would be possible. There are cinemas that have a cafe or a restaurant next to them and that allow possibilities for discussion. But for the most part this was simply added on. This was a mistake. We must not only alter production, but also distribution.

SL: But wasn't there, already in the '60s, a realization that just changing the mode of production by making money available for films was not enough? An independent distributor, the Filmverlag der Autoren, was founded. There were other smaller ones, too. And because the largely American-controlled movie theater chains were not responsive, some alternative cinemas were founded. So there were some efforts to change the distribution as well as the production system.

AK: Yes, but these were inadequate. The chain cinemas still dominate, and no one knows how to produce for them. All of the films Edgar Reitz made for the cinema had no success. Schlöndorff didn't continue his work in cinema. He went to the US and made *Death of a Salesman* for television, and he continues this kind of work. I don't think Wenders is making a cinema picture at the moment. Herzog has tried to make a new film for the cinema, but he interrupted his production twice. It's not Herr Zimmermann who tried to establish the *Wende* in the cinema.[4] We could have beaten him. What we cannot beat is this extreme division of labor in which one either makes *Amadeus*, *Out of Africa,* or *Rambo*, or else *Carmen* or *Men*. There exists an interest only for so-called *Beziehungsfilme*, that is, triangle dramas, with no possibility for telling stories different from those that crudely deal with the power of fate in everyday relationships. This constant repetition of the same dramatization of relationships is directed at a certain escapism. I cannot really say that *Out of Africa* is not directed at escapism, and *Rambo* clearly has little to do with real experience. Rather it is a stylization of the

4. Friedrich Zimmermann is the C[hristian] D[emocratic] U[nion] Minister of the Interior. "Die Wende" is the German expression for the changeover from the S[ozialistische] P[artei] D[eutschlands] administration under Helmut Schmidt to a government dominated by Hemut Kohl's CDU party.

feelings of omnipotence of an eight-year-old. If I understand it correctly, *Rambo* has a relationship to the classical circus, which, like the Roman circus with its animals, also shows the omnipotence of men. That is, *Rambo* is a gruesome way of expressing fantasies of omnipotence. This is, so to speak, what the movies are. It is said that a medium must function at the average age of the majority of the population. That is the case for television, but the cinema has slid down into "kids' pictures." I say this not as a critic, but because one must understand this change. It is not only a political question, but a consequence of a persistent and total overburdening of people, which expresses itself ever farther from the sphere of their lives as producers. They suffer, they experience cognitive dissonance when they perceive how they live. If I feel myself as the producer of my life, then I am unhappy. So I would rather be a spectator of my life. I would rather change my life this way since I cannot change it in society. So at night I see films that are different from my experiences during the day. Thus there is a strict separation between experience and the cinema. That is the obstacle for our films. For we are people of the '60s, and we do not believe in the opposition between experience and fiction.

SL: The effort to break down the opposition has been a persistent concern of yours from the beginning. It has motivated the kinds of cinema you and some of your colleagues have produced. It has also motivated your production tactics and institutional politics. Perhaps you could talk briefly about the ideology of the "cooperative film," which became very important during the late 1970s and early 1980s, when, while making *Germany in Autumn* collectively with many other filmmakers, the limitations of an "author's cinema" became clear.

AK: Autorenpolitik had two infantile disorders. The first was isolation. At the very moment in which such films were successful they were also alone. They couldn't convey what their experience was. They were cut off from exchange with the rest of society. The second infantile disorder had to do with the conflict between the moral and aesthetic dimensions of our work.

SL: What do you mean by that?

AK: In 1977, the Left in Germany was in a process of self-destruction. We had to understand this. We had to understand, for example, the Baader-Meinhof group. We were not judges; we were not politicians; we were not responsible for the whole of society. But we felt responsible for drawing society's attention to things. Precisely because we are not powerful we must grasp everything. That is why we always come up against censorship—especially when we receive subsidies. That is why we resolved to make films that did not require subsidies. Also ones that *could not* receive any. At the beginning, each of us had the energy to make ten or twenty minutes. Any of us alone would be beaten by society. When united, we

could defeat all opponents. Together we could be strong against the censor. I could be relaxed and risk not always making a Kluge film when Fassbinder, Schlöndorff, Reitz, and Brustellin were with me. There is no contradiction, however, between the terms *Autorenfilm* and cooperative film, because the energy of a number of people is always combined, even by the film industry in Hollywood. All forms of manufacture, all concerns can add one unit of work to another. The individual concept of *Politik der Autoren*, in fact, can't compete in the long run if we do not understand how to cooperate.

SL: Were you surprised—I certainly was—that these films, *Germany in Autumn*, *The Candidate*, and *War and Peace*, actually made money? They earned back all their production costs, did they not? This would be an almost unthinkable situation in the United States.

AK: Yes. There was no subsidy, and they made back their production costs.

SL: Despite their success, however, doesn't the apparent lack of traditional outlets for most of the products of New German Cinema suggest that innovative German film has moved into a kind of cultural ghetto? Sad as it makes me to recognize it, this has been the fate of the New American Cinema.

AK: Not in television, but in the cinemas. Not in literature, but in cinemas; not concerning music, but in cinemas. Syberberg can show all his films in the opera house, but never in the cinemas. I could show all my films in a theater, not in a movie theater, but in a "real" theater. I could show mine in the cinemas, but they would not have an audience as long as people are so overpowered by real conditions. They have worries, they have the same reasons that they had in 1929 to flee from reality. They would move to greener pastures if they existed. The greener pastures, at that time financed by Privy Councillor Hugenberg,[5] still tried to respond to the entire population. Today, only a small segment tries to respond.

SL: Then why work for the movie theaters anymore, if you know that there is no audience?

AK: Because we do not believe the situation is permanent. I don't want to complain so much. We do not believe that these conditions will prevail for long. We are involving ourselves in the new private TV medium, and we will make cinema there. We are bringing film history into it. We now have the "Hour of

5. Alfred Hugenberg (1865–1951). In 1927, Hugenberg took control of the largest German film production company, UFA. An early collaborator with Hitler, he served for a short while as Economics Minister.

the Filmmakers," and we are making sixty hours a year,[6] which is a lot of film. We are making programs that offer film stories to a large majority of the population. We're influencing TV very powerfully, but we want eventually to reestablish the cinema. We will come through television to cinema again and won't leave 35mm. It's not necessary. It's the best material, because it provides the best information, even for television. But for the moment we can only get to a general audience through television. In cinema, we have an audience of people twelve to eighteen years old, which is not the social group who are the proprietors of *Lebenserfahrung* [life experience]. *Öffentlichkeit* [a public sphere] without *Erfahrung* [experience].[7] That is the cinema today.

SL: So your television projects are a kind of tactical move, a detour through a more private, domestic distribution system for cinema before, perhaps, ultimately regaining the cinema?

AK: Yes, we are realizing the concept of *Autorenfilm* in a different area. Some of the potential of the New German Cinema went to television. For example, Edgar Reitz made *Heimat*, which is a film simply for television. He made *Stunde Null* for television. If people do not leave their homes anymore, and they look through this so-called window which is television, then we have to go to the people and not just wait in the cinema. For if they have reasons not to go to the cinema, or if they have reasons to select the films that they do—they do and we must accept them—and we must find something to do to keep in touch with them. Afterward we will have to reestablish the cinema. For the moment, our audiences are tied to television.

SL: Could you give me some examples? Do you know precisely how large your audiences are for both media?

AK: For my films, for a single film in the theaters, I have approximately 90,000 spectators. On television I have approximately 800,000 spectators. One can precisely measure this. For his last cinema film, Reitz had approximately 100,000 spectators. He had more than twenty-one million viewers for *Heimat* in Germany and even more throughout the world. This difference shows that it is not that people are not interested, but they can no longer participate in the old classical public sphere with any feeling. There are many different reasons for this. Women will not go into the city alone at night; they're afraid of being raped. So they don't go to the cinema. Secondly, these films are too coarse. Why would they look at *Rambo* when they want their feelings to be treated gently? These are

6. As of January 1988, production of programs had dropped to roughly half this figure.
7. Kluge is here referring to the title of the book he coauthored with Oskar Negt, sections of which are translated in this issue.

films for young men, not for women at all. The identifications do not work this way. Older people don't go to the cinema because they feel uncomfortable in these surroundings. It is not so easy to combine seriousness and popularity, but that is what we are trying to do in television. The "politics of authorship" can survive only if we solve these problems.

SL: Your involvement with the politics of television dates back more than fifteen years. You were one of the principal political figures behind the 1974 German law, as well as of its revision in 1979, that established the basis for cooperation, including coproductions, between the state-owned television system and independent film producers. I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that a great deal of German film production, especially the most formally challenging and politically provocative works of the last fifteen years, would have been impossible without it. In the last few years you have also been very active in helping to shape a new law governing satellite and cable television in Germany. For what does it provide? What will it mean for independent filmmakers?

AK: There are, in Europe, two developmental directions for television. The first direction is the Italian one, in which a state TV system like the RAI becomes ever more narrow-minded, and, on the other hand, the Berlusconi concern[8] begins to offer American fast-food communication. Both are like islands in the Italian landscape. It's as if there were only McDonalds, and yet we know that in Italy there are other kinds of food and places where you can eat slowly and a lot. These penetrations into very old cultures—that is what we fear. We know from the situation in Great Britain that the situation can be entirely different. The BBC never had advertisements, and the "A" channel, which did accept advertising, never reached more than fifty percent of the people. So a balance came into being. Now there is Channel 4, a channel that accepts advertising but also develops programs for minorities. So a very balanced system has come into being, which pleases me as a European. In Germany we've had the new media, that is, the private media, for the past two years. Before this, television was a government monopoly, an arrangement which is rather unusual to Americans. Our concern is this: how can we, with all the power of the New German Cinema, in conjunction with the opera houses and book publishers, that is, with all the noncontemporary media, bring in independent productions for at least ten percent of all air time on the governmental and the private channels? That is, moreover, what we have always proposed. We would like to preserve the kind of freedom in which the directors of opera houses, such as Klaus Everding, or of the Schauspielhaus, such as Peter Zadek or Peter Stein, would make their own experiments. In the governmental TV system there are *Redakteurs*; it is con-

8. Silvio Berlusconi is an Italian television entrepreneur.

structed like a planned economy. In the private system, there are the chiefs of operations. They have never made a film. What we want is that the people who make decisions about programming will also make films themselves. This is very difficult to explain to Americans.

SL: How did this agreement come about?

AK: All the filmmakers, opera house directors, and book publishers went to the council of minister presidents of the various states. In the meantime, we broadcast examples of our work over the "Satellite 1" [SAT 1] channel and advertised them. Our strategy was to make the films at low cost, then buy the time on SAT 1.[9] That way we could defend ourselves from being thrown out later. It was necessary for us to keep this window in a very conservative surrounding. It is the same scheme, the same model we used in our film policy.

SL: A number of filmmakers I have spoken to have grave misgivings about cooperating with firms like Bertelsmann or Leo Kirch.[10] Some believe that the state broadcasting system must be reinforced. Is there a fair degree of support for your endeavors?

AK: Yes. Reitz and Schlöndorff do the same as I propose, but on a level that no one can follow. This forces them, however, to work either in America or with public television in Germany, and this means that they cannot change the products. They are tied to audiences that have been prepared by the public broadcasting systems. They can't alter the products even if the audience wants to have the new products of the 1990s. They are not free to reinvent experiences from film history, epic films like the Russians made, or short films, or one-minute films from the beginnings of cinema like Lumière's or Méliès's. The restrictions on them are a form of censorship. They have to obey, but the audience ultimately does not. Therefore I think it is more interesting to keep to the low-budget principle. In this respect, I have few followers among filmmakers, because they take high costs for granted. But you rarely have innovation from inside the cinema. Support always comes from outside. Fassbinder came from the theater; Schlöndorff came from France; Herzog is an amateur like me. I am a lawyer; he is a writer. He never learned the cinema. He makes his films with a very naive approach.

SL: Could you describe the agreement you are now trying to make concerning

9. SAT 1 was the first private German television satellite system. It began its broadcasts on January 1, 1985.
10. Bertelsmann is one of the leading publishers and media companies in Germany. Leo Kirch is a major German film distributor who has invested heavily in the new private television channels.

the use by independent filmmakers of the new satellite channels and how it came about? It has to do with a different satellite channel, correct?

AK: From SAT 1 we don't get any money. Now, for the new channel, RTL Plus, we have a contract with a big Japanese concern, Dentso, one of the largest advertising companies in Japan that does not now exist in Europe, which will establish a joint venture with Young and Rubicam, "DYR." We are the proprietors of the time and they are the sponsors. They are interested only in the advertising space and they have arranged sponsorships. They will subscribe in advance for the advertising for our programs in our ten percent of the airtime.

SL: Without any selection in advance? Like blind booking?

AK: Yes. That is the condition.

SL: You create the product first and then sell it?

AK: We don't sell it. We give the right to broadcast it once. They risk that the product doesn't fit. They pay first and see the product later. Therefore we have the political and the economic possibility to have our products stay in the mainstream. For example, they will sell three minutes of advertising time in one hour of prime time for 150,000 DM. Later they will sell the other three minutes for 150,000 DM, and that is their profit. We pay half of the costs and derive the rest from the advertising revenue. That means that we can spend 300,000 DM for each hour of new programming at prime time.

SL: If I am a young filmmaker and want to make a film, what do I do? Do I come to you? Do you have control over the monies coming in from Dentso?

AK: You could not really come alone. You would have to come with a couple of other professionals. Then I would give you 10,000 DM right away as an advance to make a program twenty-four minutes long. If we are disappointed, you with us and we with you, then we won't continue. Otherwise you would get more next time. You see, I have no funds. Dentso does not pay me directly. Dentso would pay you if you delivered your program.

SL: Would they pay on *your* recommendation, or some board's?

AK: We—Everding, Ernst Piper, and I—are proprietors of time. Look, we do not want to decide these things. It's dangerous and time-consuming, and we are not managers. Therefore, we do it in a very simple way. Next year, fifty-two hours will be divided: twenty-six hours will be for *Der Spiegel*, the most incisive news stories. If we cannot fill our program, we will give it to Dentso and they will

produce a program about the best of world sports. I only have to deal with twenty-six hours, and they will be devoted to the best narratives, that is, best opera, best film, and so on. Each should be so short that there will be several programs in twenty-four minutes, like a magazine format. More radical than the cooperative films, but to some extent it's similar. It's like a newspaper, and Balzac wrote for newspapers, as did Hemingway. In this way, you can make original products. It is very difficult to make a ninety-minute program that is very different from the format of television. But you can be very unschematic in a very short form. It is not that I am so happy about this situation. I would like only to make eighteen-hour films; I only write thick, thoroughgoing books like *Geschichte und Eigensinn* [*History and Obstinacy*]. I am no partisan of clips. But every author can actually make these small units of three minutes each. I cannot help every newcomer to make a film ninety minutes long. But I *can* make possible a great deal of trial and error.

SL: Who determines when and where these productions will be distributed? Are they shown all across the Federal Republic or only in individual states?

AK: Throughout the Federal Republic.

SL: At the same time?

AK: Yes. It has to do with the direct-sending satellite. It's called "EPS."

SL: Who is the one to decide what is to be broadcast and when it will be shown? Do you have a say when your program will go on?

AK: We have an average time, some prime time, some "B1," "B," and "C" time. We need a mixture of all, but half of it will be "A" time, that is, prime time. We will have difficulty, of course, in getting an audience, but *Heimat*, made by Reitz, *had* an audience. *Fathers and Sons* [1986] by Bernd Sinkel *had* an audience. It is not necessary that my films have a majority audience. Our ten percent means that we assemble all minorities on Saturdays against the majority program of someone else.

SL: Do you know how the public responds to your television programs?

AK: Of course. We have high ratings. We are accepted in all television broadcast systems, public and private. We do not have much time because we cannot produce very much. But the programs we produce are accepted. The second point is that we get new authors, from the radio, from journals, from opera houses, from book publishers. Not so many film directors follow this course,

though Reitz, Schlöndorff, Sinkel, and to a certain extent Wenders do, though at a very high level.

SL: Will Schlöndorff, for example, participate in your program?

AK: Of course. All of them will. And when the program gets full, and someone comes along and is disappointed at being left out, then I will get new terms for them, if I have confidence in them.

SL: This sounds very little like the "revolution from below" you have often used as a slogan.

AK: I don't believe in revolutions from above. That's one of the "infantile disorders" of the *Autorenfilm* as well. But I cannot begin to revolutionize society on the basis of film. Therefore, I must accept this contradiction. The strategy "from below" will first of all not work for the mass media. Not everybody is a cameraman, or a scriptwriter, or is talented, or has the time, or the airtime. It is nonsense to say that all of the people are the basis of a TV system. Professionalism is not within everyone's reach—not because of a lack of talent but because of a lack of time. In certain small areas of the media, however, the strategy from below does work. For example, a film scene will only be good if the coworkers fill it out. I must, so to speak, establish a framework dictatorially, so that freedom can prevail within this framework, within the "capillaries."

SL: This is perhaps a good moment to digress and speak briefly about one of the most important institutions, which was among the original demands of the Oberhauseners. You, Reitz, and Detlev Schleiermacher founded the Ulm Institut für Filmgestaltung in 1962, and it still survives. It would seem to be a model of the kind of institution your "revolution from above" can produce. What did it do and what does it do now?

AK: The institute is today as before the theoretical department of New German Cinema. Our Institute for Film Research is modeled after the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research. It has the same precepts. We accepted the form that Horkheimer developed there.

SL: Are there students?

AK: No students. Strictly research and development.

SL: But there were students at one time?

AK: Yes, in 1969. But during the student revolutions, which we also had, we were

thrown out. The students took the equipment and left. Only we and the institute remained.

SL: Would you like still to have students in the institute?

AK: No. We don't believe in university training for television or film. We believe, rather, in a kind of apprenticeship. This is the old system, but it is such a practical matter to make a film. Theory, which is what you learn at the university, is very important, but it does not have much to do with production.

SL: It is now almost an official state institution, isn't it? It is supported on an ongoing basis by the government.

AK: It is a quasi-state institute, but it's independent. It is a private association and has officers who sit on its council. It routinely gets the same grant every year, 200,000 Marks every year from the state of Baden-Würtemburg. And now we have a big cinema/TV studio that costs 2,500,000 DM together with the Z[weites] D[eutsches] F[ernsehen] and W[est] D[eutscher] R[undfunk].

SL: You have to submit a budget to the government every year?

AK: Yes.

SL: Is there any political pressure on the institute as a result?

AK: No. It is always a possibility, but for twenty-five years we have not had difficulties, and I don't think we will have, knock wood. There was always a delegation from Bavaria which came to Stuttgart and asked why do you give grants to this institute, to these leftist people? Then the minister presidents said they were not interested in intrigues of this sort. Only one such institute exists.

SL: Who can or who does make films for the institute other than yourself?

AK: Günther Hörmann, Maximiliane Mainka, Reinhard Kahn . . . approximately thirty different people.

SL: Do the filmmakers or theorists who belong develop their own projects? Are there thirty or so different teams? Or do you come together for seminars and theoretical discussions?

AK: No. It is nothing like a school. It is an institute for research and what we call in industry "development": developing new techniques, a new dramaturgy, pilot studies, and so on. We have several groups, practical working groups and theo-

retical working groups. They work independently, and at the end of the year I compile all this information and tell it to our board. In January, I give grants to the groups and they work for the next year.

SL: You alone determine the budgets?

AK: Well, I ask them.

SL: Ulm, even with its somewhat limited scope, would seem to constitute at least a small victory for New German Cinema. You have a permanent institution that is both a think tank and a home for creating independent cinema. We have nothing really comparable in the US, certainly not the American Film Institute.

AK: I would not want to speak about it as a victory, only about its continuity.

SL: Your reference to Max Horkheimer and to the Institute for Social Research highlights an important fact of your intellectual biography that has been crucial to your thinking and creative work. During the late 1950s, you had close ties with the newly reborn Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, did you not?

AK: I performed legal services for the Institute for Social Research. At first I was a lawyer and wrote stories. Only afterwards did I concern myself with film. Horkheimer and Adorno did not take me seriously as an author. They said, "He is a first-rate lawyer, we like him and are friendly with him, but he just should not make films, and in no event should he write any stories." After Marcel Proust, one can no longer write stories any more. That was Adorno's opinion. He sent me to Fritz Lang in order to protect me from something worse, so that I wouldn't get the idea to write any books. If I were turned away, then I would ultimately do something more valuable, which was to continue to be legal counsel to the Institute for Social Research. It was a mixture of friendship and technical activity on their behalf that tied me to them.

SL: What sort of legal work did you do for them?

AK: Oh, many different things. I handled their reparations claims, among other matters.

SL: Of the two, you were closer to Adorno, were you not? What sort of man was he?

AK: One day after the war of 1870–71, a captured Corsican General by the name of Adorno—the family came from Genoa, but was originally from Corsica—who had risen to the rank of General under Napoleon the Third,

marched as a captive through Bockenheim. A daughter of one of the citizens looked out the window, and they met. Those were Adorno's grandparents, and they had a daughter. This daughter became a coloratura soprano with an extremely high, special, bell-like voice, and she traveled back and forth between Paris and Riga and always sang the Forest Bird in *Siegfried* and the Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute*—extreme roles. She married a Jewish wine merchant who specialized in cheap wine. His name was Wiesengrund. This marriage was, within its limitations, a happy one, and there was a son, who was, of course, Adorno. He loved his mother like a goddess and had strong reservations about his strict father. In his childhood, he took shelter behind his mother. For his mother nothing was enough for him, and she protected him from his father's cheapness. Adorno became a very sensitive man who knew music but couldn't ride alone on a streetcar. He led the impractical life of a very protected child.

SL: Certainly there was another side to Adorno!

AK: When he was waiting for a streetcar, he changed into Franz Kafka and believed that it would never come. His wife always had to drive him around. It was, among other things, because he had to travel, first in England and then later in the United States, that he got married. He was also a bit like a medieval monk who turns in another direction and doesn't follow the church. He held fast to these gnostic positions, and these were by no means pessimistic. But, he was also incredibly critical. *Aisthanomai luein*. These two Greek words—*luein* means to untie [*lösen*] and *aisthanomai* means to understand[11]—summarize his approach. Its entire pathos results from combining these two methods. He did not wish to be shackled, like Odysseus. He wished to offer himself so completely to a thing that he could reproduce it, but at the same time remain analytical. I know no theory, no aesthetic, that is as clear-sighted, as relentless. Yet he was very generous. The *Aesthetic Theory* is generous, not skeptical, or rather, not *just* skeptical. He was a radical theoretician. In the United States he was only respected and admired, never accepted.

SL: Adorno also respected you a great deal. As Miriam Hansen has suggested, his principal essay on film may have been a response to your work.[12] Aside from introducing you to Fritz Lang, did he support your interest in filmmaking and film politics?

11. P. Adams Sitney has informed me that *aisthanomai* might more accurately be rendered as "to perceive."
12. See Miriam Hansen, "Introduction to Adorno's 'Transparencies on Film,'" *New German Critique*, nos. 24–25 (Fall/Winter 1981–1982), pp. 186–198. Adorno's essay was translated by Thomas Y. Levin as "Transparencies on Film" in the same issue of *New German Critique*, pp. 199-205. The essay appeared intitially in *Die Zeit* (November 18, 1966) and then was published in Theodor Adorno, *Ohne Leitbild*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1967.

AK: He found it exaggerated when one got mixed up with circumstances, as our group did. He argued with us in Mannheim. Out of friendship, he went out of his way to come. He had a curious quality when he did not believe in something at all. When he believed that it was utter nonsense, then he supported it, and play-acted with an exaggerated optimism, as if he were an actor in a political performance. He did not want to see us defeated. He thought it was unavoidable that we would immediately come to nought.

SL: So Adorno was not a fighter?

AK: Well, in *his* area he was. The sending of a message in a bottle, no matter when it returns, is also a kind of praxis. Words and music were his domain, and those are domains in which one can win. One could say that what he had to say will be true over the centuries. And one can't deny that he planted a tree that grows in Frankfurt am Main. To some extent, Adorno was like Cassandra, a prophet and not a fighter. He would laugh about me; he always laughed a little. He tolerated it because he liked me, but he found that I pushed too far, that I invested too much thought in real circumstances. But I don't believe in the existing circumstances; rather, I believe in the porosity of the existing situation, at least when I can make it out.

SL: This conviction in what you call the "porosity" of circumstances has led you again and again to take an activist role in film politics. Who today are your *compagnons de lutte* among the filmmakers?

AK: Concerning film, the same crew we always had, except Fassbinder. The other filmmakers would always fight if we were fighting with the Minister of the Interior about the renewal of the film subsidy law, or now in the mass media. There is absolute solidarity.

SL: Is that true of younger filmmakers too?

AK: Not all. We have a new Munich school. Dorris Dörrie is not among them. These are thoroughly qualified people, but I cannot conclude that they are all talented, though I would be happy if that were the case. They believe in Spielberg and so on, and not at all in politics. They believe completely in a professional fantasy: some day having a huge budget with three assistants. It's a strange idea, but very common. They think a real director must be recognized with a telephone call from Hollywood or somewhere, and he mustn't do anything political. They find politics boring. They believe that one shouldn't fight. They are the courtiers of Bavarian cultural politics. With its twelve million Marks the Bavarian Film Promotion naturally has a kind of magnetic field around it.

SL: This sounds like what you and others have feared from the beginning, namely that the government subsidy of film would lead to government control and the precensorship of projects.

AK: But look, we have the majority. These young people who do not share our views do not organize. They tried to organize a rebellion here at the Munich film festival for the last two years. It was encouraged by the director of the festival, who wanted the creation of a new anti-Oberhausen direction to be his festival's goal. It collapsed miserably because it was not interesting. They tried, but they were only malcontents, and it didn't fly.

SL: Your political activism, your conviction in the "porosity" of society and of the individuals who compose it significantly distinguish your work, as well as your joint projects with Oskar Negt, about which I hope we can speak later, from the passivity and the pessimistic stance of the older generation of Critical Theorists. In what sense do you believe you are carrying on their tradition?

AK: We believe that our work has to do with Critical Theory. We contend that it is orthodox. But it is a matter of dispute between us and Horkheimer and Adorno. Circumstances have changed. The great classes don't really exist anymore. The bourgeois class doesn't govern. There are nearly no proprietors anymore. Oh, some of them, but not as a class. The working class doesn't represent the part of society that produces the wealth. For the most part they have been corrupted. They are a workers' aristocracy, especially in those industries that are in decline, which the society doesn't need at all. In Silicon Valley, who is the proletarian and who is the bourgeois? Actually, the middle and petit-bourgeois classes have always made the principal developments. The *haute* bourgeoisie did not dominate and the working class never dominated. Rather, it was what might be called an in-between class, a merchant class, shop owners, an artisan class. In matters of culture they were the trendsetters. The top of the petite bourgeoisie, which rose into the middle classes, that was where the greatest motivation was. This class is now also blended with others. You can deduce things from Marx, but you really have to look into human beings. It is in *them* that the capitalist and the proletarian stand opposed to each other.

SL: This attempt to understand the working class "from the inside," as it were, was certainly a major part of Critical Theory's program from the beginning of the Horkheimer years at the Institute. How does your and Negt's project differ?

AK: Society is a text that we attempt to read. Adorno would say it is entirely legitimate, but we must be much more careful than when reading Proust. For Proust is a successful expression, but whether or not society is a successful

expression cannot be known. Adorno would simply express himself via a *pars pro toto* using music as an example. I am, however, completely indifferent to some of the questions that were important to him, whether the four last String Quartets by Beethoven are the whole world or not. I am not a critic, and it doesn't interest me. It would only be of concern to me if I needed them for a film. We must defend other areas than the older generation defended. We would say we are in such a dire situation because of how the enemy operates, how he impoverishes relationships, how he further confuses language. We therefore do not have the time, we cannot pose the question of whether we can explain music, whether we can discuss it in academic terms. We are more careful than Adorno and more like Brecht. We are in a situation like the one Bert Brecht describes: "If the house is burning, I run outside." But we do not want to have to emigrate, and therefore we must be better armed. It is old-fashioned to assume as they did in the 1930s that these struggles will be determined in the streets when there is a mass medium in every house that acts as a kind of window. Against such a power to convince millions through television, all conventional means are powerless. That means that I also have to produce for this window. I can only influence a mass medium through a counter-mass medium. An entire public sphere through a counter-public sphere. I cannot counter a society through a counter-society. That is war. One has, therefore, to seek a way out.

SL: And what stands in the way of the way out?

AK: Today in the '80s a massive task stands in front of Critical Theory. It's not a question of what has happened to the labor movement; you can't pose the problem of socialism, because in the meantime it has been done away with. Classical industry has become a matter of indifference. We don't need iron; you only incur losses from it. You can only shut down the steel industry. Now we are working at home again. Today, a massive industry tries in a redoubled way to accumulate intelligence in a primitive way, as Marx would say. That is, they wish to take hold of it and to make full use of it, just as they exploited artisanal work. To expropriate certain middle levels of cognition and to industrialize them, formerly private areas have been industrialized—through entertainment after work, on the one hand, and through the industrialization, the computerization of the new work at home, on the other. That means that commodities and industries now realize themselves in human beings. That is the battle line. A series of reversals are at work in the spectator's brain that are as powerful as the power of the fascist societies in the 1930s. It is no longer a question of whether or not we can still quickly build socialism against this trend. Rather, the threat of war, the industrialization of consciousness, and repression through consumption, through entertainment, are the means through which domination is expressed. That is no longer a specifically European phenomenon, especially not a uniquely West German phenomenon, because we are a provincial country with little geopolitical

significance. But I believe it is a common process, and Critical Theory will always pose these questions for itself.

SL: Questions of media dominance and repression through consumption are, of course, long-standing concerns of the Frankfurt School, going back to the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man*. "These questions" you mention refer to what sorts of social processes in particular?

AK: You know *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*? *Geschichte und Eigensinn* is a continuation of Negt's and my effort to determine what would make a counter-public alternative to the public life that we know. At the end of the twentieth century this question is so important because classical public life, the public life of the bourgeoisie, is in danger of being demolished by the new public spheres of the producers. Therefore we have to think over what the components are that produce experience on the one hand and public life or expressive means on the other hand. It is not only a question of art, but of its reception. The reception itself constitutes public life and experience.

SL: Since you have just used a term—*Öffentlichkeit*—that informs so much of your work, could you define it? You gave "public life" as its English translation. Miriam Hansen has translated the word as "public sphere."[13] What does it mean?

AK: You could translate the concept of public sphere as *Glasnost*. *Öffentlichkeit* designates a public sphere filled with experience, a substantive public sphere that is moral, that has a conscience. That is what we mean. *Öffentlichkeit* as a phenomenon is the opposite of private. All that is not private is *öffentlich*, or public. This distinction between public and private has existed since the founding of Rome and the formation of Europe after the Roman model of the *res publica*. The public sphere is a kind of market for values, for what I can say and what I could never say because I am too ashamed. It is therefore a sign of self-confidence. If I believe that I can make myself understood in a collective, then this is public. If I do not think that I can make what I feel or my experiences understandable to others, then it is intimate. That is the tyranny of intimacy: that I cannot express myself publicly. The public sphere is only as free as the intimate sphere is free and developed. Therefore, you have to examine paths within the sphere of intimacy, family politics, for example, to understand what public life means.

SL: The notion of *Öffentlichkeit* was, I believe, introduced by Habermas in his book *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*.[14] Your and Negt's notion of *Öffentlichkeit*, however, is opposed to, or at least significantly different from Habermas's.

13. See, however, the translator's note about the term in the selections from *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung* in this issue.
14. Neuwied, Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1962.

AK: It is not really opposed. It is a response as part of a process of discussion. We quite agree with him about the necessity of the process of enlightenment, of the need for a new encyclopedia. Habermas, however, is a bit more cautious than we are, and he does not express himself in an inductive way. He would only work in a discursive way. Negt's and my notion of *Öffentlichkeit* proceeds from the sphere of production. I will interpret it via an example drawn from jurisprudence. We say there is a law of production. When a worker works on something, it belongs to him. It is unjust to take away something somebody has worked on. We find this kind of law in fairy tales; this is the law that people really can understand. We, however, have Roman law, which is based on distributive principles: who does it *belong* to, not who *made* it. Habermas's *Öffentlichkeit* is a distributive *Öffentlichkeit*, while the one we speak of is a productive *Öffentlichkeit*. And it is this productive sphere as it functions in the most intimate spheres of private life that must be studied, because in it are the origins of the collapse in 1933. Our point of departure always remains the public sphere of 1933 that could be conquered by the National Socialists. This must be fortified in different ways so that it cannot be conquered. If the public sphere, that is, the container for the political, was inadequate and therefore conquered by the Nazis, then it is useless to study the achievements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and to repeat and defend the old conception of the public sphere, as Habermas does, for no moral resistance was objectively possible within it. That means that we must look into the production sphere, where the potential for resistance is hidden.

SL: You object to the historical focus of Habermas's study?

AK: No, we have no objections, but we have a different field of employment. If one *had* an army, one could march like Habermas does. We believe we have to maneuver; we must proceed like partisans. If he would work in our field, I am convinced he would have the same results. Adorno had the same problem; he had no knowledge of the production sphere. He did not deal with it. He was interested in what Marcel Proust did, with what music did. He never really saw a factory, and that is why he sees society as a factory. That is why I never believed Adorno's theories of film. He only knew Hollywood films. He went with Fritz Lang, Brecht, and Eisler together as friends to Hollywood. They offered scripts nobody wanted. Fritz Lang made *Hangmen Also Die*. He did not need Adorno for such a film. Adorno believed that Hollywood could be the proprietor of this factory, and we do not. We understand the maneuvers of Hollywood: step on the gas and then on the brakes, more gas and then brake again. Negative pick-up system and produce by yourself, and so on and so forth.

You notice that Habermas in his latest books comes back to the concept of expression, which plays an extraordinarily important role. It is the core of his communications theory, at least recently. "Knowledge" and "interests" were still, so to speak, understood mechanically. It is an abstract specification, for

there are no interests independent from knowledge and emotion. There are always interests and imagination. It is false for the effort of enlightenment to attempt to separate them. It creates something lifeless. Knowledge is not only always correlated with interests, but also with an incredible number of other things, for example, love of one's parents, laziness, curiosity, feelings of security, self-confidence, an opportunity, an auspicious moment—all of these constitute knowledge.

SL: Does the "classical" bourgeois public sphere that Habermas describes still exist? Did it really ever exist or is it just an idealized historical fantasy?

AK: It exists, but it is itself only a counter-public sphere. It is still very potent, it has a budget of some billions of Marks, but it is only a detail. It is not the whole. It can pretend to be public life in the classical sense, but it could never be.

SL: Would you expand on the concept you just used, namely that of a "*Gegen-Öffentlichkeit*," or "counter-public sphere"?

AK: Gegen-Öffentlichkeit is a twentieth-century phenomenon. Only now is it really possible to develop counter-public spheres. For example, in Florence during the Renaissance we do not need the concept of a *Gegen-Öffentlichkeit*. The public sphere was, for the times, sufficient. There was no genuine counter-public sphere. The counter-public sphere of the monks or of Savonarola was a perverse public sphere. It is not an alternative to the Medici's public sphere. A proletariat did not exist at all. It would be doctrinaire to say it existed. During the nineteenth century, several competing counter-public spheres emerged. One of these, one among many, is that of the working classes. Up till then it had not developed its own, either because its expressive potential fell immediately under the control of the party or the unions, or because it was taken over by the bourgeois public sphere. It remained in an embryonic state, very much alive, but it could not be extended over the immediate area in which people lived and struggled. To this extent one can say that the public sphere is one of the means of production that have been taken away from the working class. In the meantime, industry has stagnated or changed to such an extent that a proletariat in the classical sense does not exist anymore. It is probably not at all possible anymore to develop a proletarian public sphere.

SL: But don't the changes in industry and in many spheres of production create new bases for a counter-public sphere, or rather, *spheres*? Wouldn't the women's movement be one product of such changes and the basis of a new counter-public sphere?

AK: Yes. All counter-public spheres naturally have the tendency of becoming a

public sphere. The public sphere of the Jacobins in the French Revolution, for example, or that of the Gironde, or of the Quartier Saint Antoine, wants to become the whole of the public sphere, and toward this end tends to suppress the others. In our disintegrating society, the public sphere and the sphere of intimacy atrophy at the same time. By the latter I mean the family, in which intimacy becomes more impoverished and which impoverishes the public sphere to the same degree. These processes produce a pluralism of public spheres, so that we don't really have any public sphere at all, but loudly competing public spheres that do not understand each other: one for science, one for industry, one for politicians, one for culture, and so on. We have Babylon. We have, so to speak, a universal provincialism. On the other hand, this phenomenon produces the possibility of building a public sphere anew. One is not obstructed by a self-conscious bourgeois or aristocratic class. One is faced instead with partial forces that can enter into coalitions different from the traditional ones. No one said that the CDU [Christian Democratic Union] and the Greens can't unite. And this possibility exists in other areas as well: culture and industry, producers and book publishers, in "nonsynchronicities" of all kinds. That is why the struggle during the "Babylonian" phase is particularly acute.

SL: A number of your recent essays, particularly "The Power of the Consciousness Industry and the Fate of Our Public Sphere,"[15] suggest that what you can the "private production spheres" may block the realignments among the various counter-public spheres. To what does this term refer?

AK: Siemens is a production public sphere with its own traditions. Its mass of jobs is a reality of its own sort. For example, the government could never shut down Siemens. You would have to change the government or the society, but not Siemens. There are others as well: Springer, Bertelsmann, Volkswagen . . . The Nazis lived off this kind of production sphere and catapulted into the government from it. Nazism was not only a mass movement; it was an industrial movement that brought with it a society based on forced exchange [*Zwangstauschgesellschaft*]. That was also the discovery of Critical Theory.

SL: Could you define what you mean by *Zwangstauschgesellschaft*?

AK: This is an expression of Horkheimer's to describe National Socialism. The expression for a market society is *Tauschgesellschaft*. In it everything can be exchanged for everything else. If this principle became compulsory, if you *had* to buy, if you *had* to work, if you *could not* sell to a Jew but only to Aryans, then you have a *Zwangstauschgesellschaft*. At the end of the twentieth century these fascist

15. "Die Macht der Bewusstseinsindustrie und das Schicksal unserer Öffentlichkeit," in Klaus von Bismarck et al., *Industrialisierung des Bewusstseins*, Munich, Piper, 1985, pp. 51–129.

forms will be very different than those of the '30s. They will not be directed against Jews, but they will always need a minority to torture or kill or exclude.

SL: Is it your and Negt's belief that contemporary society is tending toward such a social form?

AK: You can conceptualize such a society as a whole, as Horkheimer did, or you can divide it into smaller parts in which a *Zwangstauschgesellschaft* dominates and others in which it does not.

SL: Then it is not an inevitable trend?

AK: No, I would never make such a claim. On the one hand, there is an inevitable movement toward a *Zwangstauschgesellschaft*, but on the other hand, early forms of capitalism are being reestablished at the base of society. The theory which Negt and I are trying to find has to do with the problem of 1933. Since 1933 we have been waging a war that has not stopped. It is always the same theme—the noncorrelation of intimacy and public life—and the same question: how can I communicate strong emotions in order to build a common life? It is never necessary to have National Socialism. We now feel confident of being able to predict such movements much earlier, and we know how to organize counterbalances. National Socialism is the problem, the problem of our youth, that Critical Theory worked on.

SL: Yet, it seems to me that in order to develop your theory, you and Negt extend Adorno's and Horkheimer's critique of enlightenment thinking in a way that they, even at their most extreme and despairing moments, would never have done. I am thinking of the stress you place on feelings and unconscious behavior as modes of resistance.

AK: I am not completely sure. They would have been more cautious. Then again, Adorno would have accepted all emotions, the ardor of all feelings, as Hegel would say, if they had the form of art. On the other hand, I think that feelings are much more dangerous than Adorno sometimes thinks. Feelings often don't follow the reason that is inherent in them. What we need is an infinitely refined differentiating capacity, not the veins and arteries, but the capillaries of the capacity to make differences [*Unterscheidungsvermögen*]. This view is based in classical German philosophy, in Marx. In practice, the individual senses are like theorists, Marx says. He doesn't say that the mind is a theorist, but that the single senses, because of their long history, because they are different from all others, are the beginning of theory. If there is a massive production of differences, then there is a chance for autonomy. If the individual himself has differentiated what he is as an animal and human being, if the orchestra of all senses is reconstructed,

every sense will be respected as an autonomous being. This is not completely new. I am convinced that Socrates would understand what I am saying. We must, so to speak, swim in the sea of these differences and not withdraw into a Noah's ark of reason.

From this point of view, there are two parties. The first is the party of the enlightenment, which believes in the growth of knowledge, the growth of moral behavior, and attempts to dominate these critically. I have respect for this party, but I believe it to be a complete dead end. They are like the man who loads all the animals into the ark without knowing whether or not it will float and without knowing what a flood is. The other way is to develop massive capacities to differentiate in a fundamental way. The ears are an independent person; the eyes are a further person, much more synthetic than the ears. The nose is a repressed and undeveloped person. The tongue is a cautious man. The lips that preside over the passage from inner to outer—these are only concrete cases of the capacity to differentiate. When anyone says something is a whole, we don't trust him; if he says this is a particular thing, then we trust him. Our party is the party of differentiation. Throughout history our party has never had the majority. That doesn't preclude the possibility that it suddenly may have.

SL: In what way, however, does the discrimination of individual senses express resistance?

AK: In reality, every human being is a concerto of different capacities or elements. The same man or woman who behaves in an aggressive manner or who sits in front of the television simply as a consumer simultaneously has very different, very tender overtones. Our image of human beings is not that they are something finished and complete. Human beings are composed of fragments; they are fragments of ruins. This is nothing new; all poets would say this. Like the Brothers Grimm, who sought out fairy tales, we seek after these capacities that hide exemplary human activities when you analyze them. Each experience, the experience of resisting as well as the experience of a defeat, constructs little personalities that coexist. Nothing will be gained if theory attempts to amalgamate them. Even a man's defeat, his subjective powerlessness, does not mean that he does not add new personalities. But the demand simultaneously exists to be a person. People are told to go to a psychologist and let him give you a personality. Stay with the majority, then you will be a person. Go to the military, and they will make you into a person. These personalities coexist with the fact that I do not want to be such a person.

SL: Your representation of the consumer and spectator as fragmented and thereby resistant to social demands of various kinds sounds quite different from the culture industry spectator in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Perhaps because of their historical experience, their early loss of faith in the resistance powers of

workers, both in the Soviet Union and Germany, and, of course, their loss of faith in Germans, Adorno and Horkheimer would find it difficult to accept the image you present.

AK: That's exactly right. But, I believe that is based on a different orientation to praxis. Most of us in the New German Cinema—Wenders, Schlöndorff, and I—are sons of doctors. And a doctor has a different relationship to praxis. I know simply as a practical person who makes films, or as one who is politically active, how porous the real situation—and other people too—is. I'll give you an example. I am sitting with the director of a big radio station. Below us lies Cologne—his office is up very high. An incredible display of moving clouds, which I often like to show in my films. And now I say to him that in thirty years we will certainly be dead. He is older than I am. I say how important it is for him to make a program together with me in which good journalism and images would come together, just as we have done in our collective films. And then this man gets a strong yearning. He would also like to have led another life. The younger side of him can understand that tomorrow everything could go away. The older, wiser man in him—after he has resigned he will be wiser—also tells him, however, that what I do is stupid. Meanwhile, he lives as if on a train traveling from station to station. As the *intendant*, he leads an incoherent life. He opens a studio here, congratulates someone there, sits and waits, listens and doesn't listen. He has a daily schedule that is similar to a chancellor's. And at the same time, for a moment, there are other tones. What I want to insist on is the many-sidedness of these structures in people. I want to develop a massive quantity of differentiating capacities, to differentiate the subcutaneous from the dominant aspects. That is what Adorno also found good.

SL: This is perhaps a good time to turn from your more general social theory to a consideration of your theoretical reflections about film, which have been a central preoccupation of yours for many years. Your concerns seem quite different from the several highly technical, semiotic-based theories that are arguably dominant in the United States today. One aspect of your writing on cinema, however, immediately strikes me as a contradiction to what you have just said about the need to isolate more intimate, "subcutaneous" structures: you do not offer a detailed examination of films, even of your own films, at all in your writing. Why?

AK: Look, my filmmaking and the coincidental fact that, because I am used to Critical Theory, I work in theory have nothing to do with each other. I do have the theoretical discipline that makes it a habit for me to develop in theoretical terms whatever I am working on. But these are two separate things. I will give you an example. My colleague who cuts nearly all my films, Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus, knows everything about the shots, about the microstructure of a

film. In the fifteenth minute she knows if she cuts something this way it will have consequences in the sixty-fourth minute. She has an absolute feel for timing, just as a composer has an absolute sense of hearing. If you ask a composer why he went from A major to B minor, then he'll tell you: my ear tells me to do it. My ear is infallible. I cannot explain it or prove it scientifically. If you were to ask Beate Mainka what were the theoretical grounds for her having done something, she couldn't answer you. Her decisions are, however, correct. I can depend on her. She is as precise as one of Adorno's analyses. He was also a composer, but he never took examples from his own work when he described musical distinctions. Why should I take cover in the microstructure of the films and rummage around in them? There is no need for that.

How, moreover, can one defend the work's microstructure against the immense, overwhelming forces that come from the macrostructures of social relationships pressing in on a film, that try to drive everything into a ghetto? *These* require a theoretical answer. Critical theory does not concern itself with film, but rather with the possible expressive means and with the real circumstances.

SL: This indifference, if I can put it that way, to the "microstructure" of a film contrasts dramatically with the great "classical" film theorists—Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Vertov, to name only three—who devoted many pages to close analyses of their films and who confidently discussed precisely what in them moved their audiences. The same holds true for many contemporary theorists, such as Christian Metz and Raymond Bellour, although they, of course, use different terms.

AK: I am part of a very old tradition. Socrates says I know that I don't know. It is the core of the entire critical method. That's where the word *criticism* comes from. When you talk about art, then you must realize that there are highly defined expressive capabilities that you cannot possess verbally. It would disturb you if you could possess them. You can't understand Hölderlin's poems. If you try, you are an idiot. An artist exercises an incredibly refined control over his materials, and it is almost impossible to repeat them verbally. According to a pupil of Aristotle's, there were always two geographers who followed the route of Alexander the Great's army. They always had a rope that they carried along so as to measure the meters behind them. Starting from Athens, when they arrived at the Indus, they had experienced the world. They had walked over everything with two, or rather four, feet. So everything had been deciphered, yet only fifty meters away from the road on which they had traveled there was a riddle. It is necessary to be very cautious when it comes to aesthetic products.

SL: I am puzzled by your metaphorical illustration. I think you mean to suggest that no matter how much the road is measured and analyzed, there will always be a mystery beyond. OK, but the road that has been experienced and measured is

not a mystery. I would think your metaphor would argue for the necessity of a close discursive engagement with texts. Yet you insist on an idea you mentioned the other day, namely, that of a *Rätselkino*, an enigmatic cinema of riddles. Why?

AK: The Jews had a custom on the Sabbath. For every Egyptian who drowned in the Red Sea a drop of wine should be spilled. You cannot say precisely whether it signifies triumph or sadness; is it a ritual or something meant seriously? The relation is a riddle because it is rich. It escapes the mastery, the occupation by speech. In the same way God is very powerful because he is invisible. In Arnold Schoenberg's opera *Moses and Aaron*, there is a point during which the opera house must be dark. The chorus of Israel sings at this point over the Red Sea. This is played in our opera houses in the light. This is wrong. It must be absolutely dark, and the chorus sings from the upper balconies. That's what it says in the score. In Jean-Marie Straub's film, everything could also be seen. This is a mistake. The eyes have become the masters, so to speak. They are spiritual imperialists.

What I call a riddle in art is not really a riddle. It is a hidden reality. There is no single overriding aspect in a work of art. Something that is hidden for the moment should be respected. If I look at something and say I understand what it is, then I should distrust this impression and look further. I will see something I did not see. If I were to see this thing again in five years, it will have a different appearance. This appearance was a riddle within what I saw before. It sounds more complicated than it is. Let's take *Arsenal* by Dovzhenko as an example. The beginning of *Arsenal* for me is the philosophy of film. Long, slow shots. Extreme montage, but very calm, slow. A peasant can be seen, a tree branch, a field, a bird. Observation, the epic principle. You can never be entirely sure what they mean. You cannot replace them with words. This is the greatest strength of *Arsenal*: it is a riddle that is nevertheless comprehensible. At the end the film becomes a little bit like an agitprop film. You can understand it completely, nothing of the mystery remains. I do not like agitprop, even if I accept the purpose. I think the project of enlightenment has more differentiated methods to convince people. You *can* interpret something in a nonverbal way. It's what enlightenment needs to deal with human life. It is a second code, and you should respect it. Enlightenment should not be built into the film. It must always be active in the minds of people. This is the reason I would criticize Eisenstein for his intentionalist pathos, which goes so far as to arrange a death orgy when the knights drown in the lake as an entertainment effect in *Alexander Nevsky*. This is a very diminished kind of art, which lacks a riddle.

SL: You said you were against Eisenstein's "intentionalist pathos." What do you mean by that?

AK: Well if you read Adorno, it is quite simple. He says that the intentions of the

poet, of the artist, do not exist in the product. He might have good intentions or bad intentions, but what can be read in the text is something objective, although it *was* subjective. Some artists give an additional push to the meaning of the text; this is what I mean by intentionalist pathos. There is another point. The author has intentions, of course, but during the moment he works he must postpone the intention. Example: if Galileo Galilei does an experiment about the law of gravity, he must never give a push with his finger, or else he will measure the force of his finger and not that of gravity. Therefore in a test situation you must leave out manipulation. Those who favor the intentional way are alchemists. They want to make gold. Sometimes, though the intention is useless, the alchemist invents something else. That is possible. But if he does not care for anything else but his intention, he will not notice that he has invented something else in spite of himself. Subjectivity is greater than someone's intention. The intention is a government, and the complete human being who is the author is richer than these intentions.

SL: Then there is no sense in which you wish your films to demonstrate any of your theoretical claims?

AK: No.

SL: You are probably aware that over the last fifteen years or so there has been an explosion of theoretical writing about cinema. Do you follow contemporary film theory at all? For example, the work of Christian Metz or Raymond Bellour? Is their work of interest to you or your colleagues here in Germany?

AK: No, we don't know it. We should know it.

SL: When you began to work in the cinema, how familiar were you with "classical" film theory, that is, Eisenstein or Pudovkin, among others?

AK: You must understand that in the beginning it had nothing to do with theory. It had to do with a retrospective of films. In 1958 or 1959, there was a retrospective of silent films in the eastern part of Berlin. I was an assistant at the CCC studios and was watching Fritz Lang work. In the evening I would go to the eastern part of the city for this retrospective, which took place in the film museum. I saw nearly all the silent movies of the Soviet tradition, some of the German tradition, very few from the American tradition. This was the first time at all that I encountered noncommercial films from film history. The first picture I was enthusiastic about was *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc.*[16] That was the *sign* of the

16. Kluge is referring to the film by Carl Theodor Dreyer, made in France between 1926 and 1928 and released in April 1928.

movement we were to follow later on. I also saw *Arsenal*. The second point was in Cannes in the early 1960s, when we saw the early films of Godard. He had a sympathetic approach to film history.

SL: But surely many of the "classical" film theoretical texts—Balázs, Pudovkin, Arnheim—existed in German?

AK: The book by Hans Richter, *Der Kampf um den Film* [*The Struggle for Film*], I read in 1959. That made me enthusiastic, but this enthusiasm had nothing to do with details. We loved it. We didn't understand it, but we loved it. And then there were some journalists, such as Wilhelm Roth and Ulrich Gregor, who gave us some theoretical impressions of film history. Gregor and Enno Patalas wrote a book on film history. We were only the dogs around the table of the big historians. We grabbed a little bit here and there.

SL: So you knew most of this material only second-hand?

AK: Yes. One quotation here, one interesting sentence there, one Godard idea there. Bert Brecht wrote two volumes of film scripts. We studied them and liked them very much. The interest in Brecht was very intensive in the early '60s. Now people talk about him as if he were a classic poet, out of date. I don't believe that. But his rationalism, this one part of his mind, was then very popular. Not any more.

SL: What provoked you to read intensively in film theory?

AK: The only time I was involved with film theory is the period of *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*. In three articles there was an attack against this film, especially against the way that we showed the female worker. I do not believe it is necessary to show heroes and exceptions in film, although I am glad if I find them in reality. So I paid a visit to Helke Sander, who was the editor in chief of *Frauen und Film* at the time, and Gesine Strempel. We had long talks. Then I tried to write a book on realistic method [*Zur realistischen Methode*], and to prepare it, I read nearly everything on film I could get ahold of. If I am concerned with some problem, then I thoroughly read all the literature.

SL: I do not find your response to the film theoretical tradition to be very evident in that book. It is very much *your* book and not a commentary on others' work.

AK: I could not discuss the problems of Eisenstein and of the Soviet film. I had to discuss the problems of the '68 movement, which had not penetrated deeply enough into film. But I first tried to study and find explanations based on the Russian authors. If you speak of the influence of Eisenstein, you must look at

what he did in *Strike*, in *October*. This practical relationship to Eisenstein's films provided the first real entry into his work. You remember in *Artists Under the Big Top: Perplexed* the quotation from *October*? I used the sequence with Bonaparte. I wanted to indicate that I hate Bonapartism in film, in all art. There are two characters in art. One character you could compare with a *dompteur*, who forces animals to change their attitudes. The other would be the *jardinière*, the *agricultura*. The second type is my ideal. You can't have an unprofessional cameraman or editor, but the director—it really isn't a profession. It's stupid to say that the director does anything. He's a coordinator. But he ought to be like Bach, who could lead the orchestra while playing an instrument. That's the way to combine professionalism with antiprofessionalism. This approach is related to Bogdanov's Proletkult movement. This movement is the root of all of Vertov, of Eisenstein, and so on.

SL: This process of "cultivation," of letting things "germinate" and "grow," seems to be crucial to your working method and to your films.

AK: "The gradual construction of thoughts through speaking"—that is the title of a text by Kleist that I like very much.

SL: Dialogue, then, is an essential part of your close work with others. You said earlier that you have absolute confidence in Mainka-Jellinghaus, that you allow her to determine the placement and timing of the shots in your films. Is she also involved at an earlier stage in the planning for the film?

AK: No. Sometimes I tell her what is in the script. She does not listen. She does not accept any written materials, only verbal instructions. Since a film always departs from the script, the script has no influence on her. Her influence begins when the materials are already there. She sometimes tells me I have to go back and shoot some more, she accepts some of the reels and rejects others she dislikes. For instance, she invented the idea of the knee in *Die Patriotin*. She said you need a metaphor of something that has to do with the body and with Stalingrad. It has to be of a human being. You want to show that the German Reich is destroyed and can no longer have an identity. Therefore the individual you describe—the narrator—mustn't be a complete human being. Then I thought of the Christian Morgenstern poem "Ein Knie geht einsam um die Welt," and we tried to see that same afternoon how we might make a montage of it. She forced me to sit down and write down the text. And for this text she tried to find pictures. Then I gave her a number of pictures; some were possible and some were not. That is how she does her job.

SL: Of course, you were involved in choosing the pictures?

AK: Of course. It goes back and forth. It is very strengthening. It is the principle of dialogue and cooperation, just as I work with Oskar Negt. But with Oskar Negt, verbally; with her, by doing, by experiment.

SL: Your relationship has obviously been very close for a long time. She has cut nearly all of your films.

AK: Where film is concerned, I am married to her.

SL: But she did not cut *Der Angriff der Gegenwart auf die übrige Zeit?*

AK: She *did* make my last film [*Vermischte Nachrichten*], but the film before was cut by Jane Seitz. Jane Seitz is the editor of *The Name of the Rose*, *The Never-Ending Story*, and *The Boat*. A very commercial editor.

SL: Was the relationship substantially different or was the same process . . .

AK: Quite different. I like Jane Seitz very much. It's not as intimate as with Mainka-Jellinghaus. I use less music. I am very cautious. But I agree with her very much. She is a very professional editor.

SL: I would imagine that of all your coworkers on a film, your editor would be the most important, since many of your films, and certainly those that are your best, depend on editing. A careful selection of images, their forms and associative interrelationships, are often as important as the narratives. A complex and shifting balance between image and story is characteristic.

AK: There are two positions in the mass media. The first says that if something works, it is correct. The high point of this philosophy is Hitchcock. For him, there is nothing particular in the world. This idea is the enemy of our concept. On the other hand, you have a principle of authenticity. Enlightened narration accepts authenticity. I do not continually try to make general concepts that control the individual; rather I let something retain its own genuineness. Kant says each situation, each human being, has a value. It is inhuman and unnatural if I take life away from objects or other men. The principle of authenticity: that is the basic thought behind my work. There follows from this a number of organizational principles.

SL: In the structuring of a particular work?

AK: In the structuring of a particular work, that is, in aesthetic method. When do I cut. When should I not cut? There are a series of consequences. If I have two

images, two shots, the ties between them should not be what Pudovkin says. Two lovers, one in Washington and one in Moscow—you know this example—this is basically a speculation on the mistake spectators necessarily make. This easily made mistake becomes unified as a technique and becomes the narrative principle of *Gone with the Wind*. The opposite pole would be if I said that a first and a second image have nothing at all to do with each other. Each has its own value, its own life. The entire information resides in the cut. I did not make the images. The world made the images, or prehistory, or the dear Lord, or the performers who have a right to their own faces. But I freely acknowledge that I've cut them together. One doesn't see the cut, but my signature resides in it. That's my means of expression.

SL: This independence of the images that you stress, the notion that the work is not unified by some overarching narrative but is instead a sum of parts, of fragments, is something that comes up time and again in your writings and the writings of others about your work. Yet stories, in particular short stories, are very much present.

AK: You need an anchor. There is no difference between the ideas and the stories. They are a comprehensible abstraction, a useful abstraction, as Marx said, and on the other hand, they concretize.

SL: It's as if each shot is a kind of manifold which, together with others, weaves a kind of web . . .

AK: Yes, exactly. The principle is that each has its own life. Every shot is one film. This is the way film history began. Lumière's first film—*Repas de bébé*—is a breakfast scene with his child and wife. Behind, the branches are moving. There is a balance between the branches and the little story in the foreground. The balance between them is what is good. It is very exciting. The film industry always tries to destroy this balance. So we are interested very much in short films, one-minute pictures. Each has a separate life that is easy to observe. Only the convention of making extended linear narratives obscures this separate life. If you take the plot out of a conventional film the individual images become nonsense. If you take the narrative from my films, or from the films of Dovzhenko and many others, however, there will always be a beautiful garden of images. And just as in a beautiful garden, the images do not have to form a concept. You do not have to understand it; you only need to walk through it. The garden is not there to be encompassed. Narrated differences, that is our work.

SL: That is a neat formulation of your practice, but it perhaps understates the

extent to which the images have multiple and complex relationships to each other.

AK: The threads in my films are not apparent to everybody. These films are made for certain situations. Everybody in these situations knows the context. For instance in *Germany in Autumn*, the son of Rommel, who is seen when Rommel is buried, is now the mayor of Stuttgart. He is the one who allowed the Stammheim prisoners to be buried at the Dornhalden cemetery even though the minister president and the police wanted to forbid it. This situation is shown in a satirical way with the scenes from *Antigone,* which is quoted at the end. Perhaps somebody who does not live in the circumstances for which the film was made, who does not know them, will find the threads very weak, too thin. These contexts are, however, always rather calculated, and this fact creates the conditions that favor chance. Our team was shooting outside the church where the requiem for Schleyer was taking place, and we happened to find the Turk with the gun who was captured by the police. That worked well as a satire on terrorism. No terrorist act occurred, but it looks like it did. And it was completely by chance that we got it. We were taken there as if we had radar. This radar also took us to the kitchen.

SL: These thematic motifs that you have been describing definitely echo back and forth in *Germany in Autumn*. There are also visual motifs and musical motifs.

AK: The difficulty for an audience might be that we handle all materials as theoretical equals. We are not the god over the materials. We do not provide a red thread to lead them through the film the way straightforward narratives do.

SL: The film is a kind of force field?

AK: Yes. It requires another way of being involved. It's as if you are walking down the street and are looking in the windows. You don't know which is the most important; you are required to think and make distinctions.

SL: The thinking you require of the spectator creates the "film in the spectator's head" you often speak about?

AK: To bring the thoughts of others into the world spontaneously, that is Socrates' method. This is what I like, too.

SL: This spontaneity with materials, the need freely to associate widely divergent images and stories is very characteristic of your work in all media. That is a general point I would like to return to shortly. Certainly, it seems characteristic

of the three cooperative films you made with other filmmakers between 1977 and 1982. I think it is true to say that most informed viewers perceive *Germany in Autumn* as well as the two others, *Der Kandidat* [1980] and *Krieg und Frieden* [1982], as primarily the work of Alexander Kluge. To what extent is this perception correct?

AK: This is very complicated. You cannot say that it has to do only with me because I would not have made these films. Mr. Hinz[17] had the idea and the slogan. He would never make the film, of course. He is a distributor. But he had the idea and had more time to talk to directors than was usual. Second, to some extent, I can make concepts, but this has nothing to do with production. Therefore, you need someone like Hinz, who is generous. It thereby became easier for Fassbinder to believe that it was all right to combine his work with Schlöndorff's — they did not like each other, you see. It was not just me, you see, but Hinz too. It was like Eisenhower and Bradley. I was the midwife. But like a catalyst, I disappear from the process.

SL: You and Mainka-Jellinghaus were responsible for the final cut of the film, however. Who decided on this?

AK: That's very simple. We were the only ones there after six o'clock in the evening. Mainka understands how to edit, and the others would simply give their pieces to her.

SL: There were no arguments about the final form?

AK: Oh, yes, of course, but everything was resolved.

SL: Your practice of making group films is very different from the one that prevailed in France and Italy during the 1960s in which several directors simply combined a number of separate short films about a general theme. Did all of you conceive of your work as synthetic from the beginning?

AK: Well, first, everyone did what he liked. You can't, after all, command Fassbinder to do something. You *can* see what he does, and then combine it with Schlöndorff's ideas about Baader-Meinhof, about Schleyer's death. These are realities. Combined with Mr. Hinz and some spontaneity they made a film. Mainka and I understand such situations. But this is not so unusual. All television programs are made by many people, and the work is always synthetic.

17. Hinz was the head of the important film distribution company Filmverlag der Autoren at the time, a post he has since left and returned to.

SL: That word—*synthetic*—is a good general word to describe your work, whether in film, literature, or theory. You routinely synthesize an astonishing variety of fictional and documentary materials—photographs, maps, reproductions of paintings, clips from old films, snatches of popular songs, as well as live footage—to articulate your texts. What is the rationale for this?

AK: After literature has developed and tested all the possibilities to express human experiences, after music has had such a huge, rich development from Bach and Schütz through the late romantics, Schoenberg and the Vienna School, you can't establish a new music. There is no avant-garde when the avant-garde has done everything. If a culture is highly developed, the avant-garde must bring its materials together in a dialogue, into a new context. It is as if Rome were already built and you have the Coliseum and other buildings, but the Imperium is no longer at its peak. Now, in the ruins, new buildings, new houses must come into being, and you need the materials of the old to make the new.

SL: This is consistent with your espousal of a *cinéma impur*, that is, a cinema that does *not* seek increasingly to purify its means in order to find its essence as an art, but instead one that revels in heterogeneity. What you are saying echoes a debate Americans have had for the last decade or so about the end of the modernist avant-garde and the emergence of postmodernism. Your practice seems closer to what we call postmodernism than to that highly refined purism that we have come to call—unfortunately and certainly incorrectly—modernism.

AK: Let me say right away that I am not at all sure that my ideas or my practice are inconsistent with modernism. Adorno's main enemy in Frankfurt was a purist organ player—Gustav Leonhardt—who wanted to play pure Bach. He was extremely angry with Jean-Marie Straub for using Leonhardt in *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach*. I do not agree with Adorno in this case. But he hated this film, its puritan attitude. And remember, Adorno would have said that the purity of a single sentence, let alone that of a whole book, is not possible.

SL: You reject the postmodernist label?

AK: We are not postmodernists. I believe in the avant-garde. But that is not where the distinction lies. There are two different approaches: dominating the materials and respecting the materials. The first would take materials to realize intentions. The opposed attitude would be to accept the autonomy of these materials, which are living. It doesn't matter whether it's done by film, by music, or by painting.

SL: Which is the one you are identifying as postmodern?

AK: Dominating: to build something and then put some columns in front of it. It's still the same concrete, functionalist architecture, but you put some special ornament on it. We do not believe in ornamenting at all. Ornaments are always signs of power, symbols of domination.

SL: This is very much the view of orthodox modernism, going back to Adolf Loos.

AK: Exactly. The basis is the Viennese school. What they said about music I believe is true for thought and poetry and novels and filmmaking.

SL: You accept modernism as an ongoing project, but you reject the progressive historical model underlying it?

AK: Yes. If we have to lead something, we lead it both as the avant-garde and the *arrière-garde*. The avant-garde is a concept valid for the early bourgeois period, but not for the end of the bourgeoisie. At this time, it may be necessary to be behind and to bring everything forward.

SL: That you see the history of modernist art as a kind of shifting front composed at any moment of many nonsynchronous elements helps to explain your use of many different sorts of texts that we mentioned earlier. There is another important feature of your work that I would like you to discuss. You produce in several different areas: not just film, but also literature; not just stories, but also theory and political praxis. It is interesting to me that you recycle texts. By that I mean that you retell the same story in different media, sometimes reshaping it considerably, sometimes merely placing the story, photograph, film, or television sequence in a new context. Examples that come readily to my mind are the story "Anita G." from *Lebensläufe*[18] and the film *Abschied von Gestern*, the story "Ein Bolschewist des Kapitals"[19] and *Der starke Ferdinand*, or one of the episodes in *Vermischte Nachrichten* and the story on which it is based from the new edition of *Schlachtbeschreibung*.[20] I have also seen enough of your television programs to know that you often recycle parts of your films in them. What is the purpose behind this strategy?

AK: It is something quite natural. In the popular scene there are networks. You make a picture; the clothes are worn by other people, real people; you see the

18. Translated by Leila Vennewitz as "Anita G." in Alexander Kluge, *Attendance List for a Funeral*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1966, pp. 15–34.
19. Translated in part by Skip Acuff as "Big Business Bolshevik," in *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2 (Spring 1980), pp. 193–204.
20. Translated by Leila Vennewitz as *The Battle*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1967.

film on television; then there is often a book made after the film. At the end you have something of a network of products. Only in this network does the real appearance of a modern product appear. You can't sell an isolated product. If you come from the country and bring one cabbage or one potato to the train station in Frankfurt, you couldn't sell it. People would think it was poisoned. You must have a store, a combination, a context of products to sell it. That is a simple explanation. There is another reason. You would never use only one light to make a good picture. It would always look flat. You need a key light, a back light, a fill light. This could be posed as a general requirement. You can now throw on the same subject, the same human experience, the literary "light" by writing a novel, a cinematic "light" by making a film, or a discursive "light" by writing an essay. Each of the three approaches yields a different impression, different perspectives on the same subject. Any single one is poor. This creates a multiple perspective the Italians call *intertextualitá*, intertextuality.

SL: Does the "intertextual" practice you just described isolate some truth or . . . ?

AK: Rather I would say that the differences narrated in the different forms provoke the spectator to work toward a truth. This is the main question of enlightenment. We believe in the new encyclopedia, which would, however, be decentralized, which would not be one row of volumes, which would not only be written, but written, told, acted. That is the program we live for, which I would summarize by quoting the introduction from the second part of Kant's transcendental philosophy concerning the architecture of reason. Adorno read it to me one evening, this one page. That program is neither modern, nor postmodern, but classical. Even if everything has been said, it has not yet been realized.

The Public Sphere and Experience: Selections*

OSKAR NEGT and ALEXANDER KLUGE

translated by PETER LABANYI

Foreword

Federal elections, Olympic ceremonies, the actions of a unit of sharpshooters, a theater premiere—all count as public events. Other events of overwhelming public significance, such as child-rearing, factory work, and watching television within one's own four walls, are considered private. The real social experiences of human beings, produced in everyday life and work cut across such divisions.

We originally intended to write a book about the public sphere[1] and the mass media. This would have examined the most advanced structural changes within these two spheres, in particular the media cartel. The loss of publicity within the various sectors of the Left, together with the restricted access of workers in their existing organization to channels of communication, soon led us to ask if there can be any effective forms of counter-publicity against the bourgeois public sphere. This is how we arrived at the concept of proletarian publicity, which embodies an experiential interest that is quite distinct. The dialectic of bourgeois and proletarian publicity is the subject of our book.

* The following selections are taken from the Suhrkamp edition of *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*, Frankfurt, 1972, pp. 7–25, 35–44, 66–74, and 106–108. The complete English translation is forthcoming from the University of Minnesota Press. Unless otherwise indicated, all notes are by the authors. — Ed.

1. The key category—*Öffentlichkeit*—of Negt and Kluge's book is used by them in (at least) three senses: (1) as a spatial concept denoting the social sites or levels where meanings are manufactured, distributed, and exchanged; (2) as the ideational substance that is processed and produced within these sites; and (3) as "a general horizon of social experience" (see below). The difficulty in providing a translation is compounded by the fact that Negt and Kluge often use the term dialectically, in more than one of these senses simultaneously. This, according to them, reflects real elisions and conflations in social practice. Whereas "public sphere," which has become the established translation of *Öffentlichkeit*, adequately, if inelegantly renders sense (1), it cannot grasp (2) and (3). For these latter senses of *Öffentlichkeit* not as a "sphere" but as substance and as criterion, I have taken the risk of trying to rehabilitate the term *publicity* in the hope that such an attempt to reconquer terrain colonized by capital interests is in the spirit of Negt and Kluge's project of producing not just analyses and critiques but "counter-publicity." Drawing attention to the etymological relation between *public sphere* and *publicity* only serves to highlight the gap between the latter concept's emancipatory promise and its reality as the tool of fundamentally private interests. — Tr.

Rifts in the movement of history—crises, war, capitulation, revolution, counterrevolution—denote concrete constellations of social forces within which proletarian publicity develops. Since the latter has no existence as a ruling public sphere, it has to be reconstructed from such rifts, marginal cases, isolated initiatives. **To study substantive attempts at proletarian publicity is, however, only one aim of our argument: the other is to examine the contradictions emerging within advanced capitalist societies for their potential for counter-publicity.** We are aware of the danger of concepts like "proletarian experience" and "proletarian publicity" being reduced to idealist platitudes. In this connection Jürgen Habermas speaks, far more cautiously, of a "variant of a plebian public sphere that has, as it were, been suppressed within the historical process."[2] During the past fifty years the concept "bourgeois" has been repeatedly devalued; but it is not possible to do away with it so long as the **facade of legitimation** created by the revolutionary bourgeoisie continues to determine the decaying postbourgeois forms of the public sphere. We use the word *bourgeois* as an invitation to the reader critically to reflect on the social origins of the ruling concept of the public sphere. Only in this way can the fetishistic character of the latter be grasped and a materialist concept developed.

We are starting from the assumption that the concept **proletarian** is no less ambiguous than **bourgeois**. Nonetheless, the former does refer to a strategic position that is substantively enmeshed within the history of the emancipation of the working class. The other reason we have chosen to retain this concept is because it is not at present susceptible to absorption into the ruling discourse; it

2. Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, Neuwied and Berlin, 1969, p. 8. In favor of the concept of "plebian" publicity chosen by Habermas is the fact that throughout its history the proletariat never attempted to constitute a public sphere on its own, without bourgeois or lumpen-proletarian ingredients. It was the heterogeneous urban lower classes, who can be described as "plebian," who attempted during the French Revolution or the class struggles in nineteenth-century France to fashion a public sphere appropriate to them. Moreover, the imprecision of the concept, which makes it serviceable for historical analysis (it has to be able to embrace wholly heterogeneous individual historical moments), is indicated by the term *plebian* rather than by *proletarian*, which appears to have a more exact analytical significance. Despite this, we have opted for *proletarian* because in our view we are dealing not with a variant of the bourgeois public sphere but with an entirely distinct conception of the overall social context present in history but not grasped by the latter term. Thus a plant where there is a strike or an occupied factory is to be understood not as a variant of the plebian public sphere but as the nucleus of a *conception of publicity that is rooted in the production process*. Furthermore, the same difficulty would arise when one speaks of the people (a concept that Habermas places in quotation marks), since in the latter the nature of workers as engaged in production fails to find expression. For the method of analysis pursued here and in what follows, the dialectic between a historical and a systematic approach is of central significance. The systematic approach looks for precise concepts and terms that are analytically articulate and capable of distinguishing phenomena. The historical approach must, if it is to capture the real movement of history, again and again sublate the apparent precision of systematic concepts, in particular their tendency to exclude. For this reason, the adoption of the concept of a proletarian public sphere can be understood only in this dialectical context; it lays no claim to being more precise than, for instance, the term *plebian public sphere*, although our different choice of words indicates that our analysis is heading in a different direction.

resists categorization as part of the symbolic spectrum of the bourgeois public sphere which so readily accommodates the concept of "critical" publicity. There are objective reasons for this. Fifty years of counterrevolution and restoration have exhausted the labor movement's linguistic resources. The word *proletarian* has, in the Federal Republic, taken on an attenuated, indeed an anachronistic sense. Yet the real conditions it denotes belong to the present, and there is no other word for them. We believe it is wrong to allow words to become obsolete before there is a change in the objects they denote.[3]

Whereas it is self-evident that the bourgeois public sphere is not a reference point for bourgeois interests alone, it is not generally assumed that proletarian experience and its organization are equally a crystallizing factor —for a public sphere which represents the interests and experiences of the overwhelming majority of the population, insofar as these experiences and interests are real.[4] Proletarian life does not form a cohesive whole, but is

3. It is not our intention as individuals to replace historically evolved key concepts that denote unsublated real circumstances and do not have a purely definitional character. The fashioning of new concepts is a matter of collective effort. If historical situations really change, then new words come about too.

4. The concept of the proletarian public sphere is not our invention. It is used in various ways in the history of the labor movement, but in an often quite unspecific manner. So far as the period after the First World War is concerned, one feature, especially with reference to the communist parties, can be discerned that is significant for the way in which this concept is used. Proletarian publicity is not identical with the party. Someone who appeals to the proletarian public sphere also has the party in mind, but above all the masses. It is striking that the concept of public sphere employed in this context always depicts the mobilization of the masses or the party members for specific decisions that are either controversial or cannot be executed within the organizational apparatus. Thus there is talk of actions "that are calculated seriously to lower the estimation of party in the eyes of the proletarian public sphere" (Hermann Weber, *Die Stalinisierung der KPD in der Weimarer Republik*, documentary appendix, Rote Texte, Reihe Arbeiterbewegung, n.d., p. 416). There is an appeal to the proletarian public sphere when the aim is either to implement the decision and analysis of a specific sector within the party leadership or to criticize it as something that is irreconcilable with the interests of the proletariat as a whole. This instrumentalizing appeal to the masses and their acclamation corresponds, however, precisely to one of the principles of the bourgeois public sphere. Proletarian publicity does not operate in this way. The concept has here a sporadic, ad hoc quality, which is ascribed to the masses from outside. This situation is signalled by the fact that the party organization and the masses are no longer united in a common framework of experience. A still more graphic example of the way in which the concept of proletarian publicity is used is provided by the parallel action organized by Trotsky and his supporters alongside the official October demonstration during a phase in the development of Soviet society in which there was in practice only a small chance that Trotsky's Left Opposition could assert itself. Lenin, too, refers in various ways to appealing to the party so as to carry through certain decisions against the majority in the party leadership. In all these cases the proletariat is seen as a totality, as the material carrier of a specific publicity. With Marx, the concept proletarian incorporates a sense that is not contained in sociological and political-economic definitions of the working class, even though it is their material foundation. The practical negation of the existing world is subsumed within the proletariat, a negation that needs only to be conceptualized for it to become part of the history of the political emancipation of the ruling class. In his *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* Marx says that all the demands of the working class are forms of expression of the mode of existence of this class itself. "By proclaiming the *dissolution of the hitherto existing world order* the proletariat merely states the *secret of its own existence*, for it *is in fact* the dissolution of that world order. By demanding the *negation of private property*, the proletariat merely raises to the rank of

characterized by a blocking of any genuine coherence. That horizon of social experience which does *not* do away with, but rather reinforces this blocking, is the bourgeois public sphere.

What is striking about the prevailing interpretations of the concept of the public sphere is that they attempt to bring together a multitude of phenomena and yet exclude the two most important areas of life: **the entire industrial apparatus of businesses and family socialization. According to these interpretations, the public sphere derives its substance from an intermediate realm which does not specifically express any particular social life-context, even though this public sphere allegedly represents the totality of society.**

The characteristic weakness of virtually all forms of the bourgeois public sphere derives from this contradiction: namely that the bourgeois public sphere excludes substantial life-interests and nevertheless claims to represent society as a whole. To enable it to fulfill its own claims, it must be treated like the laurel tree in Brecht's *Stories from the Calendar*, about which Mr. K. says: it is trimmed to make it even more perfect and even more round until there is nothing left. Since the bourgeois public sphere is not sufficiently grounded in substantive life-interests, it is compelled to ally itself with the more tangible interests of capitalist production. For the bourgeois public sphere, proletarian life remains a "thing-in-itself": exerting an influence on the former, but without being understood.

Today the consciousness industry, advertising, the publicity campaigns of businesses, and administrative apparatuses—together with the advanced production process, itself a pseudo-public sphere—overlay, *as new production public spheres*, the classical bourgeois public sphere. Their roots are not public: they work the raw material of everyday life, which, in contrast to the traditional forms of publicity, derive their penetrative force directly from capitalist production. By circumventing the intermediate realm of the traditional public sphere (the seasonal public sphere of elections, public opinion), they seek direct access to the private sphere of the individual. It is essential that proletarian counter-publicity confront these public spheres permeated by the interests of capital, and does not merely regard itself as the antithesis of the classical bourgeois public sphere.

Practical political experience is the crux. The working class must know how to deal with the bourgeois public sphere, the threats the latter poses, without allowing its own experiences to be defined by the latter's narrow horizons. The bourgeois public sphere is of no use as a medium for the crystallization of the experience of the working class—it is not even the real enemy. Since it came into being, the labor movement's motive has been to express proletarian interests in its own forms. Parallel to this ran the attempt to contest the ruling class's

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a *principle of society* what society has made the principle of the *proletariat*, what, without its own cooperation, is already incorporated in *it* as the negative result of society" (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 3, London, 1975, p. 187).

enlistment of the state. Marx recognizes this when he describes the theft of wood as analogous to the propertied class's theft of the public sphere by appropriating the executive power of the latter without paying for it, but rather by engaging thousands of gendarmes, foresters, and soldiers for its own interests. **If the masses try to fight a ruling class reinforced by the power of the public sphere, their fight is hopeless; they are always simultaneously fighting against themselves, for it is by them that the public sphere is constituted.**

It is so difficult to grasp this because the idea of the bourgeois public sphere—as the "bold fiction of a binding of all politically significant decision-making processes to the right guaranteed by law, of citizens to shape their own opinions"[5]—has, since its inception, been ambivalent. The revolutionary bourgeoisie attempted, via the emphatic concept of public opinion, to fuse the whole of society into a unity. This remained merely a goal. In reality, although this was not expressed in political terms, it was the value founded by commodity exchange and private property that forced society together. In this way, the idea of the bourgeois public sphere created, in the masses organized by it, an awareness of possible reforms and alternatives. This illusion repeats itself in every attempt at political stock-taking and mass mobilization that occurs within the categories of the bourgeois public sphere.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, after centuries of preparing public opinion, bourgeois society constituted the public sphere as a crystallization of its experiences and ideologies. The "dictatorship of the bourgeoisie" articulates itself in the compartmentalizations, the *forms* of this public sphere. Whereas the bourgeois revolution initially makes a thoroughgoing attempt to overcome the limits of the capitalist mode of production, the forms—for instance the separation of powers, the division between public and private, between politics and production, between everyday language and authentic social expression, between education, science, and art on the one hand and the interests and experiences of the masses on the other—prevent even the mention of social criticism, of counter-publicity, and of the emancipation of the majority of the population. There is no chance that the experiences and interests of the proletariat, in the broadest sense, will be able to organize themselves amid this splitting of all the interrelated qualitative elements of experience and social practice.

We do not claim to be able to say what the content of proletarian experience is. But our political motive in this book is to uncouple the investigation of the public sphere and the mass media from its naturalized context, where all it yields is a vast number of publications that merely execute variations on the compartmentalizations of the bourgeois public sphere. What we understand by "naturalized" is evidenced by the ambivalence—in almost every case

5. Jürgen Habermas, Introduction to *Theorie und Praxis*, Frankfurt, 1971, p. 32.

unrecognized—of the most important concepts associated with the key phrase *public sphere*: public opinion, public authority, freedom of information, the production of publicity, mass media, etc. All these concepts have specific historical origins and express specific interests. The contradictory development of society is sedimented in the contradictory nature of these concepts. The knowledge of whence they derive and who employs them tells us more about their content than can any excursions into philology or the history of ideas.

The bourgeois public sphere is anchored in the formal characteristics of communication; it can be described as a continuous historical progression, insofar as one focuses on the ideas that are concretized within it. **But if, by contrast, one takes its real substance as one's point of departure, it cannot be considered to be unified at all, but rather the aggregate of individual spheres that are only abstractly related.** Television, the press, interest groups and political parties, parliament, army, public education, public chairs in the universities, the legal system, the industry of churches are only apparently fused into a general concept of the public sphere. In reality, this general, overriding public sphere runs parallel to these fields as a mere idea, and is exploited by the interests contained within each sphere, especially by the organized interests of the productive sector. What are overriding are those spheres that derive from the productive sector, which is constituted as nonpublic, as well as the collective doubt—a by-product of the capitalist mode of production—about the capacity of the latter to legitimate itself. Both these tendencies come together and combine with the manifestations of the classical public sphere, as these are united in the state and in parliament. For this reason, the decaying classical public sphere is no mere specter, behind which one could come into direct contact with capitalist interests. This last notion is just as false as the contrary assumption that within this aggregated public sphere the politicians could take a decision that ran counter to the interests of capital.

To simplify our account, concrete examples have been restricted to two relatively recent mass media: the media cartel and television. We have not examined in detail other spheres such as the press, parliament, interest groups and political parties, trade unions, or science and research. Individual aspects of proletarian publicity are discussed in a series of commentaries.

Our political motive in this book is to provide a framework for discussion which will direct the analytical concepts of political economy downward, toward the real experiences of human beings. Such discussion cannot itself be conducted in the forms provided by the bourgeois or the traditional academic public sphere alone. One needs to have recourse to investigative work which brings together existing and newly acquired social experience. It is plausible that such investigative work would concern itself, above all, with the material bases of its own production, the structures of the public sphere and of the mass media.

The Public Sphere as the Organization of Collective Experience

At the heart of our investigation lies the question of the use value of the public sphere. To what extent can the working class utilize the public sphere? Which interests do ruling classes pursue via the public sphere? Each of the latter's forms will be examined according to these interests. Because it is historically a concept of extraordinary fluidity, it is difficult to define the use value of the public sphere. "*Public* and *public sphere* reveal a diversity of competing meanings which derive from different historical phases and, when simultaneously applied to bourgeois society in the epoch of industrial advance and the welfare state, amount to an opaque combination."[6]

To begin with, underlying usage, there is a restriction: the concept "public sphere" is understood as the "epochally defining category" (Habermas) of the bourgeois public sphere. This sense is, however, derived from the **distributional context** of the public sphere. The latter thus appears as something invariable; its phenomenal forms conceal the actual **structure of production** and, above all, the genesis of its individual institutions.

Amid these restrictions, the category's frame of reference fluctuates confusingly. The public sphere denotes specific institutions and practices (e.g., public authority, the press, public opinion, the public, publicity work, streets, and public places); it is, however, also a general horizon of social experience, the summation of everything that is, in reality or allegedly, relevant for all members of society. In this sense publicity is, on the one hand, a matter for a handful of professionals (e.g., politicians, editors, officials), on the other, something that concerns everyone and realizes itself only in people's minds, a dimension of their consciousness.[7] In its fusion with the constellation of material interests in our "postbourgeois" society, the public sphere fluctuates between being a facade of legitimation capable of being deployed in diverse ways and being a mechanism for controlling the perception of what is relevant for society. In both its guises, the bourgeois public sphere shows itself to be illusory, but it cannot be equated with this illusion. **So long as the contradiction between the growing socialization of human beings and the attenuated forms of their private life persists, the public sphere is simultaneously a genuine articulation of a fundamental social need.** It is the only form of expression that links the members of society, who are

6. Habermas, *Strukturwandel*, p. 11. The reading of this book is prerequisite for the following, in particular with reference to the genesis of the bourgeois public sphere.
7. In social practice these two uses of the concept are repeatedly confused. Something that is purely private is regarded as public simply because it belongs within the ambit of a public institution or is provided with the stamp of public authority. Something that counts as private, such as the rearing of young children, is in reality of the greatest public interest.

merely "privately" aggregated via the production process, by combining their unfolded social characteristics with one another.[8]

This ambiguity cannot be eliminated by definitions alone. The latter would not result in the actual "utilization of the public sphere" by the masses organized within it. **The ambiguity has its roots in the structure and historical function of this public sphere.**[9] It is, however, possible to exclude at the outset *one* incorrect use of the concept: the shifting back and forth between an interpretation of the intellectual substance of and real need for public, social organization and the reality of the bourgeois public sphere. The decaying forms of the bourgeois public sphere can neither be redeemed nor interpreted by alluding to the emphatic concept of a public sphere as decided by the early bourgeoisie. The need of the masses to orient themselves within a public horizon of experience does nothing to ameliorate the fact that the public sphere acts as a mere system of norms whenever this need is not genuinely articulated within the latter. The alternation between an idealizing and a critical view of the public sphere leads not to a dialectical, but to an ambivalent outcome: at one moment the public sphere appears as something that can be utilized, at the next, as something that cannot. What needs to be done, rather, is to investigate the ideal history of the public sphere together with the history of its decay, so as to bring out their identical mechanisms.

8. In "On the Jewish Question," Marx analyzes the nineteenth-century state. According to Marx, the "political annulment of private property not only fails to abolish private property but even presupposes it" (*Collected Works*, p. 153). By the very fact that the state declares that distinctions of birth, class, and education are unpolitical, it does not sublate them as such but confirms them as materially existing elements on which it itself is based. The problem is not that it sublates these differences but that it takes up a negative stance toward them: this is the manner of its recognition. What takes place here is a kind of duplication of society into, as Marx says, "a heavenly and an earthly life: life in a political community in which he [man] considers himself a communal being, and life in civil society, in which he acts as a private individual. The relation of the political state to civil society is just as spiritual as the relation of heaven to earth" (*ibid.*, p. 154). For the nineteenth-century state, the public sphere corresponds to this celestial realm of ideas. This concept of the public sphere is ambivalent. On the one hand, it tends to hold fast to this parallelism of state and civil society, it draws its validity from state authority; on the other hand, it has the tendency to distinguish itself from the state as a kind of "control and conscience mechanism." In this capacity it is capable of assembling, at a synthetic level, people's socialized characteristics accumulated within the private sphere and within the alienated labor process. Publicity in this sense is distinct from both the socialized labor process as well as from private existence and from the state. The ambivalence of the concept makes it impossible objectively to define what is in reality of public interest; what we are dealing with is not a material but a constructed level.

9. Compare the more precise determination of the essential mechanisms of bourgeois publicity in later sections of this book: "The Repression and Occlusion of the Bourgeois Public Sphere by the Organized, Non-Public Production Public Spheres of Modern Big Industry" and "The Most Progressive Appearances of the Consciousness Industry." [Omitted here—Ed.]

The Concept of Experience and the Public Sphere

The public sphere possesses use value when social experience organizes itself within it.[10] In the practices of the bourgeois life and production, experience and organization stand in no specific relation to the totality of society. These concepts are primarily used *technically*. The most important decisions about forms of organization and the constitution of experience *antedate* the establishment of the bourgeois mode of production. "What we call private is so, only insofar as it is public. It has been public and must remain public precisely in order that it can be, whether for a moment or for several thousand years, private."[11] "In order to be able to isolate capital as something private, one must be able to control wealth as something public, since raw materials and tools, money and workers belong, in fact, to the public sphere. One can, as an individual, act in the market, buy it up, for example, precisely because it is a social phenomenon."[12]

The fact that whatever is private is dependent on the public sphere also applies to the way in which language, modes of social intercourse, and the public context itself come into being. Precisely because the important decisions about the horizon and organization of experience have been taken in advance, it is possible to exert control in a purely technical manner.[13] Added to this—so far as

10. This concept is here initially used in a generalized sense; it will be more precisely defined in due course. The organization of social experience can be employed either on behalf of a specific ruling interest or in an emancipatory fashion. For instance, scientists can be interested in the exchange and hence the organization, particularized and autonomous, of their scientific experience, whose object is the domination of nature on a world scale in the forms of the scientific public sphere; such experience, which is collective to only a restricted degree, will not as a rule tend to solidify into a political general will that embraces the whole of society. Another example is the interest of the ruling classes to bind the real social and collective experience of the majority of the population to the illusion of a public sphere and an alleged political general will and thereby to organize this experience as static. Whereas in the case of many industrial products such as chairs, bicycles, the use value elements are the same for almost every person, determining the use value of publicity is fundamentally dependent on class interest, on the specific relationship between particular interests that are bound up with a particular public sphere and with the whole of society.

11. Ferruccio Rossi-Landi, "Kapital und Privateigentum in der Sprache," *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, no. 7 (1972), p. 44.

12. *Ibid*.

13. The real interplay between experience, its organization, and the horizon of publicity is, for bourgeois relations of production as well, dialectical and does *not* operate in a technical manner. This is not visible to everyday consciousness because the historical production of experience, organization, and publicity disappears into its product, the public sphere that defines the present. What can be perceived is the distributional apparatus of this public sphere, from which, again, experience is derived. This distributive public sphere is, however, as before, in reality defined by its *production structure* as the overdetermining factor; this structure is based not only on previous production, but repeatedly reproduces itself from out of the everyday experience of human beings who are subsumed under it. If one grasps the essential connections, then production is that which overdetermines the public sphere. The latter, however, appears not only to be separated from this context of production but also as something specific, as a realm of its own. In reality, however, the material nexus is that the production of publicity preceded commodity production, just as the production of the circulation and distribution sphere in the framework of commodity production is also the prerequisite of production, but the *production of this separation* is no longer visible in this separation.

bourgeois society's awareness of its own experience and its organization is concerned—is an almost constant analogy with the existing practice of universal commodity production.

The abstraction of value that underlies the latter and has the entire world in its grip—in other words, the separation of concrete and abstract labor—provides the model and can be recognized in the generalization of the activities of the state and the public sphere: in the law. Although the anarchy of commodity production is motivated by private interest, in other words, by the opposite of the collective will of society, it develops models of general relevance. **These models are mistaken for and interpreted as products of the collective will, as if the actual status quo, which has only been recognized retrospectively, rested on the latter.**

The structures of this bourgeois tradition also determine the way of life and production practices of the present, in which classes and individuals are themselves no longer citizens in the sense implied by that tradition. Today's middle classes, the sectors of the working class influenced by the bourgeois way of life, students, the technical intelligentsia are all successors of the narrow propertied and educated bourgeois stratum of the nineteenth century and recapitulate under late capitalist conditions individual components of its patterns of experience and organization. The purely technical application of the latter in the contexts of the domination of nature and of social function is, however, no more natural than it was in the bourgeois epoch itself. Perhaps the possibility of purely technical functioning rests on a high level of learning processes, of the socialization required by these learning processes, and of the social, public preconditions that are subjectively experienced as second nature. **The fact that all these preconditions are in fact dialectical emerges only if one goes back to this prehistory.**

In the classical theory of the bourgeoisie, this many-layered quality is reflected in the opposition between the concept of experience derived from the Humean tradition[14] and the critique of that tradition in the philosophy of Hegel.

14. The concepts of empirical experience, of receptivity, the recognition of that which is given, "merely contemplative materialism," attempt to bracket out the subject as a distorting factor. This concept of experience thereby appears to satisfy the requirement of increased objectivity. To be distinguished from this is a second level of the concept of experience within bourgeois philosophy that is grasped in terms of production. For Kant, only that which is the product of the subject is the object of experience; this subject itself produces the rules and laws of the structure of the phenomenal world. It experiences only that which it has itself previously produced. For only thereby is it possible to create a framework of experience that is distinct from mere imagination. This framework of experience is the functioning of the subject, which can, however, function only when it has a counterpart, a block (Adorno), a thing in itself against which it can work and which cannot be dissolved in this mechanism of experience produced by the subject. One can put it as follows: the material of the subject's experiential production can never be wholly appropriated. Everything that is real experience, which can also be verified and repeated by other reasoning subjects, is the expression of a process of production that is based not on isolated individuals but denotes the activity of a collective societal subject into which all the activities of engagement with external and internal nature

"This dialectical movement which consciousness performs on itself—both on its knowledge and on its object, insofar as the new true object emerges for consciousness from this movement itself—is, in fact, what is known as experience."[15] This describes the real workings of bourgeois society and any other society, whether or not the empirical subjects of this society are aware of the dialectic. In what follows, the concept of organized social experience derives from Hegel's definitions, which also underlie the work of Marx. This is not to deny that the concepts of experience and organized experience (the dialectical social mediation of experience) play only a subsidiary role in Marxist orthodoxy.

An individual worker—irrespective of which section of the working class he belongs to and of how far his concrete labor differs from that of other sections—makes "his experiences."[16] The horizon of these experiences is the unity of the proletarian life-context.[17] This context embraces both the various levels on which this worker's commodity and use value are produced (socialization, the psychic structure of the individual, school, the acquisition of professional knowledge, leisure, mass media) and—what is inseparable from the latter—his enlistment in the production process. It is via this unified context, which he "experiences" publicly and privately, that he absorbs "society as a whole," the totality of the context of mystification.[18] He would have to be a philosopher to understand how his experience—which is both preorganized and unorganized, which both molds and merely accompanies his empirical life—is produced. He is prevented from understanding what is taking place through him because the media through which experience is constituted, that is, language, psychic organization, the forms of social intercourse, and the public sphere, all participate in the mystificatory context of commodity fetishism. But even if he did understand, he would still have no experience. Not even philosophers could produce social experience on an individual basis. Before the worker registers this lack, he encounters a concept of experience derived from the natural sciences which has a real function and a suggestive power in that narrow sector of social practice whose object is the domination of nature. He will take this scientific body of experience, which is not socially but technically programmed, as the very form in which experience is secured. This will lead him to "understand" that there is

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are drawn. Experience is in a strict sense simultaneously a production process and the reception of societal agreements about the manifestation or rule-boundedness of objects.

15. G. W. F. Hegel, Introduction to *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, vol. 2, Glockner, ed., Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt, 1964, p. 78. Further see Theodor W. Adorno, "Erfahrungsgehalt," in *Drei Studien zu Hegel. Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, Frankfurt, 1971, pp. 295–325.

16. On the differentiation of industrial work see Horst Kern and Michael Schumann, *Industriearbeit und Arbeiterbewusstsein*, Part 1, Frankfurt, 1970, along with the bibliographical references given there.

17. Reimut Rieche, *Proletarischer Lebenszusammenhang*, typescript, Frankfurt, 1971, and *Die proletarische Familie*, Frankfurt, 1971.

18. On the concept of the context of mystification, see Adorno, *Drei Studien zu Hegel*.

nothing he can do with "experience," that he cannot alter his fate with its help. It is a matter for his superiors in the workplace and for specialists.

The Processing of Social Experience by the New Production Public Spheres

The traditional public sphere, whose characteristic weakness rests on the mechanism of exclusion between public and private, is today overlaid by *industrialized production public spheres*, which tend to incorporate private realms, in particular the production process and the life-context.[19] These new forms *seem* to

19. On the concept of the industrialized production public sphere (one can employ the singular insofar as one is clear that this overdetermining "public sphere" is an accumulation of numerous individual public spheres, which are as diverse and as distinct from one another as the elements of the capitalist productions process itself):

(i) *The production public sphere has its nucleus in the sensual presence of publicity that takes as its point of departure the objective process of production—society as it exists*. This includes the organizational structure of production as a whole as well as "industry as the open book of human psychology" (Marx), in other words, both what has been internalized in human beings and the outside world: the spatial existence of bank and insurance company palaces, city centers, and industrial zones, along with the work, learning, and life-processes within and alongside factories. Because the overwhelming objectivity of this production nexus becomes its own ideology, the doubling of society into a "heavenly and earthly life," its division into a political community and the private, disappears: the earthly residue itself counts as a celestial realm of ideas. It is only within this public/nonpublic whole that the contradictions give rise to new doublings and mechanisms of exclusion.

(ii) *The consciousness industry, together with the nexus of consumption and advertising*, in other words, the production and distribution that are attached to the sphere of secondary exploitation, overlay and ally themselves with the primary production public sphere.

(iii) *The publicity work of firms and that of societal institutions* (interest groups, parties, the state) constitute an abstract form of the individual production public spheres and enter into the aggregate of the latter as an additional overlay.

In this *aggregate* of industrial production public spheres, traditional labor organizations or industrial relations law—even elements of the student movement—constitute from an emancipatory perspective an incorporated ornament, *even if from the perspective of nonemancipation they are real and effective partial forces*. One can get an idea of how the production public sphere overdetermines the political public sphere in the classical sense (seasonal elections, professional politics) if one bears in mind how natural it seems that the threat of the collapse of large economic units, Krupp or the Ruhr coal industry, which are after all private enterprises, becomes a public matter and compels intervention by the state. It would, for instance, be conceivable that a dismantling and building up of entire industrial regions, for instance in the wake of the European Economic Community (E.E.C.) development, could take place on account of real shifts in the production public sphere. Since there is an interplay between all elements of this organic whole, in atypical cases it can come about that political decisions too have a dominant impact; as a rule, however, this dominance is initiated here too by real infrastructural forces—for instance by the mass doubt that is a by-product of the production sphere (cf. the referendum vote against the E.E.C. entry in Norway).

The prototype of the production public sphere in early capitalism is the linking of housing and social amenities with the factory complex as in the case of Krupp. Nowadays there develops alongside the plants of individual concerns a plant in the wider sense which embraces the totality of social production. The social contract, which could only be counterfeited by the revolutionary bourgeoisie, is in the industrial production public spheres positively produced as an internalization of the objective impact of the social order. This totalization of the public sphere has two effects: the social totality is

people to be no less public than the traditional bourgeois public sphere. **Here, and in what follows, we understand that which is public as an aggregate of phenomena that have quite different characteristics and origins. What is public does not have a homogeneous substance at all.** It always consists of numerous elements, which give the impression of belonging together but are in reality only externally joined. In this light, the classical public sphere is originally rooted in the bourgeois life-context, yet separates itself from this context and from the production process. By contrast, the new production public spheres are **a direct expression of the domain of production.**

1. The classical public sphere of newspapers, chancellories, parliaments, clubs, parties, associations rests on a quasi-artisanal mode of production.[20] By comparison, the industrialized public sphere of a computer, the mass media, the media cartel, the combined public relations and legal departments of conglomerates and interest groups, and, finally, reality itself as a public sphere transformed by production, represent a superior and more highly organized level of production.[21]

2. The ideological output of the production public spheres, which permeates the classical public sphere and the social horizon of experience, embraces not only the unadulterated interests of capital—as articulated via the large interest groups of industry—but also the interests of the workers in the production process insofar as these are absorbed by the structure of capital. This represents a complex conjuncture of production interests, life interests, and legitimation needs. The production public sphere is—since it is not just an expression of overdetermining production apparatuses, but also the vehicle of life interests that have entered in it—no longer obliged then to resolve its contradictions as a mere reflex of the dictates of capital. **Instead of excluding the classical public sphere, the production public sphere—as it is intermeshed with the classical public sphere—oscillates between exclusion and intensified incorporation: actual situations that cannot be legitimated become the victims of deliberately manufactured nonpublicity; power relations in the production process that are not in themselves capable of legitimation are charged with legitimated interests of the whole and thereby presented in a context of legitimation. The differentiation between public and private is replaced by the contradiction between the pressure of production interests and the need for legitimation.** The structure

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rendered public and, as a counter-tendency, extreme efforts are undertaken, in the interest of maintaining private property, to prevent this from occurring.

20. Kurt Tucholsky manages to capture this fundamental situation when he itemizes what is necessary to found a political party in the Weimar Republic: one chairman, one telephone, one typewriter.

21. The encounter between these different levels of public sphere, for example, takes the following form: a public prosecutor and a secretary will come up against thirty lawyers and sixty public relations specialists of a chemical firm if they try to bring to light an instance of environmental pollution.

of capital is as a result enriched, becomes capable of expansion; the spectrum of possible capitalist solutions to contradictions is, simultaneously, narrowed. The result is a type of transformation society, which is dominated by the capital relationship.[22] In relation to the classical public sphere, the production public sphere thus seems to possess no mechanism of exclusion that would dislodge it from its foundation of interests and weaken it. **In relation to the social horizon of experience, however, identical mechanisms are reiterated in the aggregated and intermeshed classical and production public spheres.**

3. If the demands of the classical public sphere collide with those of the production public sphere, the former, as a rule, give way. **The ideality of the bourgeois public sphere is here confronted with the compact materiality of the new production public spheres.** Even within the latter, those interests that regularly assert themselves are either those with the most direct connection to the profit interest or those that are capable of amassing more life-context [*Lebenszusammenhang*] within themselves. The intersections between the various production public spheres are characterized by fissures and a wealth of contradictions. These include the intersections between private consciousness industry and public service television; between mass media and the press, on the one hand, and the publicity work of conglomerates, on the other; between state publicity and monopolies of opinion; between the publicity of trade unions and that of employers' organizations, and so forth. Papering over these fissures is the task of a special branch of publicity work. This is necessary because there is no equilibrium among the production public spheres but, rather, a struggle to subsume one beneath the others.[23]

4. It is the function of this cumulative public sphere to bring about agreement, order, and legitimation. This public sphere is, however, subordinated to the primacy of the power relations that determine the domain of production. **For this reason, the work of legitimation within this public sphere can be carried**

22. The *culs de sac* [*Aporien*] that derive from this are in part new and in part extensions of those of the classical bourgeois public sphere at a higher level of organization. The claim of every public sphere to sovereignty resides in its capacity to legitimate itself: the legally established order. An authentic history of the bourgeois public sphere would, however, have to admit that its history is the history of force, just as this force continually reproduces itself within the production process. If the public sphere accumulates legitimation, it becomes stronger as a public sphere but must separate itself from production interests that cannot be legitimated—it becomes increasingly untenable as a production public sphere. If, on the other hand, it introduces more interests into its framework, it again becomes stronger, "obligatory" for the more powerful elements of society—but in doing so it renders its real existence, namely the contradictory structure of the production process, public and thereby tends to sublate its own foundation and endangers the validity of private property.

23. In this connection, the public service structure of a production public sphere such as television says nothing about its ability to assert itself. On the one hand, a higher degree of public service, "ideational," statutory elements will result in a separation from the characteristic profit interest that governs society. This separation weakens. On the other hand, public service television also indirectly binds profit interests of its suppliers and itself obeys a value abstraction of a special kind: it is making "legitimation profits."

out and overseen only distributively, and it can itself be changed only superficially, since its real history is taking place nonpublicly in the domain of production. As in the classical bourgeois public sphere, but for different reasons, the productive structure of publicity, and the nonpublic experience linked with it, separates itself from its mere manifestation in the apparatus of distribution—publicity as a finished product that is publicly experienced.

5. This is in no way altered by the fact that the state, as a summation of the classical public sphere, itself influences a significant part of the private sector by its interventions. On the contrary, the same rules apply to the state's contribution to the production public sphere.

6. Any change in this structure, any movement within the public sphere's system of legitimation, opens the possibility for a formal subsumption of sections of society under the control of other sections. The fact that this is how the public sphere operates in reality—its utilization by private interests, which have, of course, enriched themselves with the interests of those engaged in the domain of production and have thereby become incontestable—makes it difficult coherently to incorporate critical experience into the public sphere.

7. If the function of the public sphere were wholly transparent, if it corresponded to the early bourgeois ideal of publicity, then it could not continue to operate in this form. **This is why all the control stations of this public sphere are organized as arcane realms.** The key word *confidential* prevents the transfer of social experience from one domain to another. The mechanism of exclusion is admittedly more subtle than that of the classical bourgeoisie, but no less effective.

8. The bourgeois public sphere's network of norms is under occupation by massive production interests to such a degree that it becomes an arsenal that can be deployed by private elements.[24]

24. One can speak of a network of norms in the sense that norms are dislodged from their original historical context. In this substanceless formal shape they are taken up by the strongest capital interests and often turned precisely against demands that hold fast to the original historical content of these norms. Thus, for instance, the basic right of *press freedom*, which is intended to defend a press that is independent, critical, and rests on a diversity of opinions against the absolutist state, is interpreted by the Springer concern in such a way that it protects the latter's production interests, which destroy this very diversity of opinion. The exploitation of the historically evolved framework of public norms described here can already be found in the classical public sphere, but it is exacerbated in the era of the production public sphere. In both situations the system of publicly sanctioned norms appears to the profit interest as a second nature awaiting its exploitation. The norms cast off products for exploitation as trees do fruit. The more abstract the level, the more fruitful and opaque. At the level of the *global economy*, the norms of the world currency system are in the foreground. The most powerful capital interest, that of the United States, enjoys so-called special rights of withdrawal from the world currency fund, while the same norms are not accessible to the developing countries. Every ruling of the E.E.C. similarly contains norms that harmonize the structures of whole branches of industry in the interests of large production apparatuses. At a *national level*, safety, control, censorship, and quality regulations, originally intended to protect a general interest, are reinterpreted, however, in alliance with private interests into mechanisms to exclude competition. There-

9. Reiterated in the amalgamation of classical public sphere and the new production public sphere is **the rejection of the proletarian life-context as it stands.** Life-context is acknowledged insofar as it fits in with the realization of capital's interest in exploitation [*Verwertungsinteresse*]. In the process, capital's form of expression modifies itself; it accommodates itself to real needs, but must, however, simultaneously model all real needs so that it can slot them into its abstract system. To everyday experience this yields a confusing picture, wherein the life-context is simultaneously integrated into production and the public sphere, and yet is at the same time excluded because in its concrete totality it is not recognized as an autonomous whole.

10. Marx says that, for the nineteenth-century proletariat, the abstraction of everything human, even of the semblance of the human, has in practice been achieved. The old and new public spheres of bourgeois society can respond only with palliatives; **they provide, without any real change in the class situation, the semblance of humanity as a separate product.** This is the foundation of the culture industry's pauperism [*Pauperismus*], which destroys experience.[25] In the consciousness industry, but also in the public practice of aggrandizement and the ideological manufacture of the other production public spheres, **the consciousness of the worker** becomes the raw material and the site where these processes realize themselves. This does not alter the overall context of class struggles, but augments them with a higher, more opaque level. The position is

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fore it was possible after 1975, for example, to drive Volkswagen competition from American markets with the aid of safety regulations for automobile production. The most consistent exploitation of public norms is the so-called syndicate structure, which during the Third Reich represented the typical form of economic organization. Within this system the structuring of branches of industry adequate to the interests of the concern is accomplished by setting up statutory semistate institutions via which redistributions of economic wealth and attenuations of production and distribution take place. Organized on a private basis, such syndicates would come up against the ban on cartels—in statutory form they are perfectly feasible. An example of this is provided by the first piece of Federal legislation in the field of media policy, the so-called Film Subvention Law. In this case the legislative division of competence between federal and provincial levels was exploited by particular interests in the commercial cinema in such a way that the medium, which comprises cultural and economic dimensions, was to be subsidized in an abstract economic fashion, since federal legislation has competence only for the economic side of film. The result of this is the so-called "schmaltz-cartel" [*Schnulzen-Kartell*], a law which favors only certain films financed by concerns while bracketing out independent productions as merely "cultural." In the Film Subvention Bureau set up in the wake of the Film Subvention Law, representatives of parliament, the churches, and television work together with certain sectors of the film industry so that there arises a mixture of public and private power that is completely inscrutable. What is characteristic of this is the confusion of areas of responsibility: Bundestag deputies become, as presidents of this bureau, representatives of economic interests, thereby being subject to the legal monitoring of ministries which they themselves, as parliamentary deputies, control. Such constitutional nonsense would not have been possible in the classical public sphere; in supranational organizations above all, it becomes the norm.

25. See Jürgen Habermas, "Die Dialektik der Rationalisierung. Vom Pauperismus in Produktion und Konsum," in *Merkur*, vol. VIII (1954), pp. 701ff. Reprinted in *Arbeit, Erkenntnis, Fortschritt*, Amsterdam, 1970, pp. 7ff.

thus altered insofar as those parts of the life-context that had not hitherto been directly valorized by the interests of capital are now likewise preorganized by society. So the proletarian life-context is split into two halves. One is reabsorbed into the new production public spheres and participates in the process of industrialization; the other is disqualified in accordance with the systems of production and the production public sphere by which society is determined. The proletarian life-context does not as such lose its experiential value; but the experience bound up in it is rendered "incomprehensible" in terms of social communication: it ultimately becomes private. As a result, those domains that relate to human activities that are not directly necessary for the production process and the substructure of legitimation are subjected to an organized impoverishment. At the same time, publicity work, the production of ideology, and the "management" of everyday life—the latter in particular via pluralistically balanced leisure and consciousness programs—appropriate as raw material human desires for a meaningful life and aspects of consciousness in order to erect an industrialized facade of legitimation. Real experience is torn into two parts that are, in class terms, opposed to one another.

The Workings of Fantasy as the Form in which Authentic Experience Is Produced

In all previous history, living labor has, along with the surplus value extracted from it, produced something else—fantasy. The latter has many layers and develops as a necessary compensation for the experiences of the alienated labor process. The intolerability of his real situation creates in the worker a defense mechanism that protects the ego from the distresses an alienated reality imposes.[26] Since living, dialectical experience would not be able to tolerate this reality, the latter's oppressive dimension is taken up into fantasy, where the nightmare quality of reality is absented. To transform the experience bound up in fantasy into collective practical emancipation, it is not sufficient simply to use the fantasy product; rather one must theoretically grasp the relation of dependency between fantasy and the experience of an alienated reality. **In its unsublated form, as a merely libidinal counterweight to unbearable alienation, fantasy is itself merely an expression of the latter. Its content is therefore inverted consciousness. Yet by virtue of its mode of production, fantasy represents an unconscious practical criticism of alienation.**[27]

26. E.g. Anna Freud, *Das Ich und die Abwehrmechanismen,* Munich, 1971, p. 137: "The development of reactions serves as a safety device against the return of the repressed from within, fantasy conversely to deny distress from the outside world."

27. In this context one can interpret the following passage by Marx in a more literal sense than is customary (see letters from Marx to Ruge in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, vol. 1, pp. 345ff.).

> In that case we do not confront the world in a doctrinaire way with a new principle: Here is the truth, kneel down before it! We develop new principles for the world out of

Without a doubt these workings of fantasy, for which exploitation supposedly has no use, have hitherto been suppressed on a vast scale: human beings are expected to be realistic. But at the very sites of this suppression, it was not possible for bourgeois society entirely to assimilate proletarian consciousness and imagination or simply subsume them under the valorization interest [*Verwertungsinteresse*]. The suppression of fantasy is the condition of its freer existence in contemporary society. One can outlaw as unrealistic the spinning of a web around reality, but if one does this it becomes difficult to influence the direction and mode of fantasy production. The existence of the subliminal activity of human consciousness—which, owing to its neglect hitherto by bourgeois interests and the public sphere, represents a partly autonomous mode of experience by the working class—is today threatened because it is precisely the workings of fantasy that constitute the raw material and the medium for the expansion of the consciousness industry.

The capacity of fantasy to organize one's own experiences is concealed by the structures of consciousness, attention spans, and stereotypes molded by the culture industry, as well as by the apparent substantiality of everyday experience in its bourgeois definition. The quantifying time of the production process—composed of nothing but linear units of time, functionally linked with one another—is generally hostile to fantasy. But it is precisely the former that is helpless before the specific time scale, the "time-brand" (Freud) of fantasy.

The workings of fantasy are in an oblique relation to valorized time [*zur verwerteten Zeit*]. The specific movement of fantasy, as described by Freud, fuses

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the world's own principles. We do not say to the world: Cease your struggles, they are foolish; we will give you the true slogan of struggle. We merely show the world what it is really fighting for, and consciousness is something that it *has* to acquire, even if it does not want to.

The reform of consciousness consists *only* in making the world aware of its own consciousness, in awakening it out of its dream about itself, in *explaining* to it the meaning of its own actions. Our whole object can only be—as is also the case in Feuerbach's criticism of religion—to give religious and philosophical questions the form corresponding to man who has become conscious of himself.

Hence, our motto must be: the reform of consciousness not through dogmas, but by analyzing the mystical consciousness that is unintelligible to itself, whether it manifests itself in a religious or a political form. It will then become evident that the world has long dreamed of possessing something of which it has only to be conscious in order to possess it in reality. It will become evident that it is not a question of drawing a great mental dividing line between past and future, but of *realizing* the thoughts of the past. Lastly, it will become evident that mankind is not beginning a *new* work, but is consciously carrying into effect its old work.

This is by no means, as it were, a passage that has not yet been permeated by the materialist method, and which employs *dream* only as an image. On the contrary, this represents a movement that is materializing itself within individual consciousness but does not as yet have the *form* of consciousness. This is expressed empirically not only in the stream of association that accompanies the lifelong labor process but also in the historical sedimentations of this stream of consciousness in the shape of cultural products and modes of life.

within each moment immediate present impressions, past wishes, and future wish-fulfillment.[28] Beneath the opposition between the pleasure principle and the reality principle, fantasy will display in all people the same mechanism, which attempts to associate present, past, and future. This mechanism is itself not class-specific. But, the fantasy material that is converted by means of these associations—and in particular the degree of distortion of the former under the pressure of the reality principle of society and the influence of the fragmentation of personal time—is entirely dependent on one's position within the production process. The same applies with respect to whether this fantasy material is expressed in a stunted or fully developed form.

It is important to recognize that fantasy relates to a concrete situation in a threefold sense: **to the situation within which a wish arose, to that of the immediate impression that has been processed, and to the imagined situation of the fulfillment of the wish.** Just such situations are, however, in the proletarian life-context, "damaged situations." In the real life cycle they appear disjoined, intermingled with other moments, transposed hither and thither without regard for the fantasy linked to them. The chaotic quality of fantasy is not an aspect of its true nature but of its manifestation in situations indifferent to its specific mode of production. The latter, moreover, remains reactive: it takes its cue from reality and therefore reproduces the distorted concreteness of this reality.

Whereas standard language and instrumental rationality do not cross the boundary between bourgeois and proletarian publicity, colloquial language and the workings of fantasy are exposed to the conflict between them (as attempts to express and grasp life). The junction between bourgeois and proletarian publicity, between the bourgeois and the proletarian articulation of the circumstances of everyday life, does not exist as a spatial, temporal, logical, or concrete threshold—which could, for instance, be crossed by vigorous translation work. Proletarian publicity negates bourgeois publicity because it either dissolves, destroys, or assimilates the latter's elements. For opposite reasons, the bourgeois public sphere does the same with every manifestation of proletarian publicity not supported by working-class power, and thus cannot repel attacks. Coexistence is impossible. It is true that centers for

28. Freud describes this by means of an example. It is, to be sure, no accident that he takes it from the labor process, even though the essay is about writers.

> Take the case of a poor orphan lad, to whom you gave the address of some employer where he may perhaps get work. On the way there he falls into a day-dream suitable to the situation from which it springs. The content of the fantasy will be somewhat as follows: He is taken on and pleases his new employer, makes himself indispensable in the business, is taken into the family of the employer, and marries the charming daughter of the house. Then he comes to conduct the business, first as a partner, and then as successor to his father-in-law (Sigmund Freud, "The Poet and Day-Dreaming," in *Collected Papers*, vol. IV, London, 1971, p. 178).

the articulation of proletarian interests can confront corresponding bourgeois centers in one and the same society; but when they come into contact, their interaction proves unreal. Fantasy that is drawn away from this point of conflict therefore takes on that travestied form that has hitherto made it impossible to conceive of science, education, and aesthetic production as organizing forms of the fantasy of the masses or, conversely, of incorporating fantasy, as it manifests itself among the masses, in emancipatory forms of consciousness appropriate to the level of industrial production. In this way, one of the raw materials of class consciousness, the imaginative faculty grasped as a medium of sensuality and fantasy, remains cut off from the overall social situation and frozen at a lower level of production—that of individuals or of only random cooperation. The higher levels of production in society excludes this raw material. At the same time, industry—in particular the consciousness industry—tries to develop techniques to reincorporate fantasy in domesticated form.

Insofar as fantasy follows its own mode of production, which is not structured by the process of exploitation, it is threatened by a specific danger. Fantasy has a tendency to distance itself from the alienated labor process and to translate itself into timeless and ahistorical modes of production "which do not and cannot exist." It would prevent the worker from representing his interests in reality. This danger is not, however, as great as may appear from the bolstered standpoint of the critical-rationalistic tradition of thought. As fantasies move further away from the reality of the production process, the goal that drives them on becomes less sensitive. Therefore, all escapist forms of fantasy production tend, once they have reached a certain distance from reality, to turn around and face up to real situations. They establish themselves at a level definitively separated from the production process only if they are deliberately organized and confined there by a valorization interest.[29]

Fantasy in the dissociated sense of modern usage is a product of the bourgeoisie. Accordingly, the word does not denote the underlying, unified intellectual productive force which represents a specific process with its own laws. **On the contrary, this productive force is from the outset schematized according to the alien principles of capitalist valorization. It is in this process that what is subsequently called fantasy is created by dissociation and confinement.**[30] That

29. This can be an interest in economic exploitation or in legitimation profits. The latter are the currency that enables subsumption under specific power relations. This can entail legitimation out of a desire for orthodoxy or also entertainment or new news values that are intended to justify subsumption under a news industry. The bourgeois novel, of which Lukács says that it does not have to be read but devoured, offers, at least in part, a comparable framework in which for long stretches fantasy moves alongside reality and not within it. It is absurd for Lukács to demand that precisely this quality of the "hermetic" work of art must be imported into socialism.

30. The *internment* of fantasy takes place in two respects: elements of it are absorbed as a cement to sustain alienated conditions of work, life, and culture. Ultimately, for instance, on the assembly line

which, from the standpoint of valorization, appears particularly difficult to control, the residue of unfulfilled wishes, ideas, of the brain's own laws of movement, which are both unprocessed and resist incorporation into the bourgeois scheme, is depicted as fantasy, as vagabond, as that component of the intellectual faculties which is unemployed. **In reality, fantasy is a specific means of production engaged in a process that is not visible to capital's interest in exploitation: the transformation of the relations between human beings and nature, along with the reappropriation of the dead labor of generations that is sedimented into history.**[31] Fantasy is thus not a particular substance—as when one says: "so-and-so has a lot of imagination"—but the organizer of mediation. It is the specific process whereby libidinal structure, consciousness, and the outside world are connected to one another. If this productive force of the brain is divided up to such a degree that it cannot obey the laws according to which it operates, the result is a significant obstacle for any emancipatory practice. This means that an important tool is lost for the self-emancipation of the workers, the precondition of which is an analysis in the social and historical sense, by analogy with the principle of the reappropriation of the repressed as developed by Freud for an *individual* life history.[32]

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and in sweated labor, it consists almost solely of the internalized imagination of the consequences—real or imagined loss of love, punishment, isolation, etc.—if one were simply to escape from confinement. Here fantasy transforms itself into discipline, "realism," apathy. Other parts of this same energy, which appear to be floating around freely, roam through past, present, and future, but on account of their own libidinally directed laws of motion seek to avoid contact with alienated actuality, with the bourgeois reality principle. They were interned in the ghettos of the arts, reveries, beautiful feelings.

In the process of this partition the "realistic" and "unrealistic" elements of fantasy developed opposing need structures and capacities. Their opposition is not, by mere addition, capable of being reunited. Their combination into an effective intellectual productive force presupposes the reactualization of the entire prehistory of this partitioned fantasy activity.

31. By contrast with the bourgeois usage of the term *fantasy*, Freud therefore rightly speaks of dream-*work*, grief-*work*, the *work* of the imaginative faculty, etc. These are, however, only partial aspects of fantasy as a productive force which can develop itself as a whole only when its own laws of movement enter into the reality principle, against which it wears itself out, in the shape of a new reality principle.

32. What Freud is concerned with is the reappropriation of individual life history and its conflicts. The medium of analysis here is language. For the emancipation of social classes, the reappropriation of the dead labor bound up in the history of the human race, the medium of analysis is, by contrast, not verbal language but a language in the wider sense that embraces all mimetic, cultural, and social relationships as means of expression. The analysis of language is here only one aspect. The most important medium for a self-analysis of the masses would be work. It is, however, in part due to the partitioning of fantasy as a productive force, not understood as an agent of communication between past, present, and the desire for an autonomous identity in the future, but can operate only in the immediate context of the alienated labor process. If one sees the process of social revolution not in the form of public events, but as a specific process of labor and production, it becomes clear what political significance the productive force underlying fantasy possesses. Unless it is organized, the process of social transformation cannot be taken up by those who produce the wealth in society.

Proletarian Publicity as a Historical Counter-Concept to Bourgeois Publicity

By contrast with the bourgeois class in which the interests of individuals are organized and implemented in private and public form alternately, the interests of workers can, since they are unrealized, be organized only if they enter into a life-context, in other words, into a proletarian public sphere. Only then do they have the chance to develop as interests, instead of remaining mere possibilities.

The fact that these interests can be realized as social labor power only through the needle's eye of their valorization as labor power for commodities makes them initially mere objects of other interests. If subsequently they are directly suppressed, in other words, if they are not socially valorized, they survive as living labor power, as raw material. In this capacity, as extraeconomic interests, they are—precisely in the forbidden zones of fantasy beneath the level of taboos—stereotypes of a proletarian life-context organized only in rudimentary form not susceptible to additional suppression. Therefore they cannot be assimilated either. **In this respect, they have two characteristics: by their defensive attitude toward society, their conservatism, and their subcultural character, they are once again mere objects; but they are, simultaneously, the block of real life that stands against the valorization interest.** As long as capital is dependent on living labor as a source of wealth, this element of the proletarian life-context cannot be extinguished by repression.

This state of affairs represents the initial phase of the constitution of proletarian publicity, and indeed at every stage of social development. Where attempts are made to fit this block into the interests of capital, for instance by the subsumption of the life-context under the program and consciousness industry or the new production public spheres, the accompanying oppression and exclusion produce the substance, appropriately differentiated, of a newly emergent block. On this block of proletarian life interests is based Lenin's belief that there is no situation without some solution. It is no contradiction that, initially, at the level of social mediation depicted, no concrete solutions present themselves. Capital cannot destroy this block, and the proletariat cannot take hold of society from within it.

In reality, this founding phase of proletarian publicity is only rarely encountered in this pure form. It is concealed by more highly organized levels of proletarian publicity.[33] For the history of the labor movement, it is above all two aspects of this higher level of organization that have been important. It is necessary to distinguish them, since all forms of proletarian publicity are the

33. As against this, it would not be concealed by the pure form of the bourgeois public sphere. It is precisely the result of exclusion and suppression, in other words, the very opposite of this bourgeois public sphere.

qualitative expression of the proletarian life-context and therefore tend—by contrast with the costumed character of the rapidly changing bourgeois public spheres—to exclude more developed forms.

Word and Film*

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I.

Experts and publicists have proposed a whole series of views on film and language. These views resemble and contradict each other.[1] A random selection of statements corresponding to various conceptions of film and evidently varying degrees of importance have one thing in common: they proceed from a fixed notion of film as well as an established, or presumably established, notion of language. The issue at hand, however, requires going beyond such general definitions. As trivial as it may sound, words can interact with film in a hundred different ways. Add to this the diversity of conceptions of film. For every one of these conceptions, for every kind of literary expression, the issue presents itself differently and demands a different answer. Walter Hagemann argues that film does not raise any new questions, "because it does not speak a new language; rather it conveys the old language through a new medium. This is the real reason for the backlash which the language of film suffered with the advent of sound."[2] We have to examine how the old language relates to the old film, how new forms of language available today relate to new concepts of film, and how the interplay of word and film may produce new, nonliterary forms of language. Given the essay format, we can only outline a set of problems, we cannot offer any solutions. The following speculations, therefore, are merely intended as examples.

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1. The texts quoted in the original German version of this text are omitted here. The sources of the quotes are Walter Hagemann, *Der Film, Wesen und Gestalt,* Heidelberg, 1952; Curt Hanno Gutbrod, *Von der Filmidee zum Drehbuch: Handbuch für Autoren,* Wilhelmshaven, 1954; Béla Baláz, *Der Film: Werden und Wesen einer neuen Kunst,* Vienna, 1961; N. A. Lebedew, *Literatur und Film,* Leipzig, 1954; Fedor Stepun, *Theater und Film*; Feldmann, Goergen, Keilhacker, Peters, *Beiträge zur Filmforschung,* Emsdetten, 1961; Rudolf Arnheim, *Film als Kunst,* Berlin, 1932.—Tr.
2. Hagemann, *Der Film, Wesen und Gestalt,* pp. 46ff.

II.

In the cultural history of the cinema, the transition to sound marks a radical break. In the beginning of the silent era, films often consisted of lengthy shots of theatrically staged scenes. This method proved problematic when making the transitions from one scene to the next. The principle of montage was the answer to this problem of transition, which could not have been solved otherwise. Montage, in turn, set free a whole range of forms of filmic expression. Without montage, neither the German, nor the Russian, nor the French cinema of the 1920s would have been conceivable. With the introduction of sound, however, film—or rather, commercial film—reverted to the naturalism towards which it had aspired in its early stages. Thus, the addition of sound actually entailed an impoverishment rather than the extraordinary opportunity that it could have been and should be today; this is why Chaplin, in his first sound films, used sound so sparingly, if at all.

As Walter Benjamin has shown, film works on the principle of attention without concentration; the viewer is distracted. This disposition permits film images to move along by association, which involves temporal gaps between shots as well as leaps of logic. The introduction of sound, then, makes it possible to create polyphonic effects which before could only have been deployed successively. François Truffaut, for instance, uses verbal effects like adjectives in conjunction with particular images; other films utilize various registers of sound and thus achieve an epic[3] multiplicity of layers. The current movement in filmmaking, which can be observed on an international level, points toward an emancipation of film sound, in particular of verbal language. These films make it difficult to determine whether speech is subordinated to action, image to speech, or action to theme, or vice versa. The films as they are elude this kind of hierarchical definition.

Why are such innovations so hard to accomplish in Germany? Why does the emancipation of film encounter such powerful obstacles? A major reason for this is the intellectual indifference of German film productions—they just have not contained an idea in years. Apart from the particular conditions in Germany, however, two other reasons have been important. (1) The pressures of naturalism: allegedly, audiences who are interested in nothing but "sitting and staring" do not wish to be disturbed by language they have not heard a hundred times before in the media and everyday life. (2) The demand for coherence and superficial continuity makes every film conform to the model of the novella. "Pure entertainment and what it implies," as Adorno and Horkheimer say, "the relaxed abandoning of the self to diverse associations and happy nonsense, is cut short by what is currently marketed as entertainment; it is impeded by the

3. In addition to its conventional meaning, the term *epic* here invokes the particular connotations of Brecht's concept of epic theater.—Tr.

surrogate of a coherent meaning by means of which the culture industry insists on ennobling its products, while actually and admittedly misusing them as a pretext for the presentation of stars."[4] This procedure is typical of conventional commercial films, but it can also be found in films produced with artistic intentions. Cinema is hampered in this regard by modelling itself on the genre of the novella, which prevents cinema from developing its epic possibilities. Only in the epic ranges of film, however, could language fully unfold. As far as the construction of plots is concerned, even silent film, with its limited registers, could do better than the multi-level sound film.

III.

Let us compare film and literature as modes of expression, choosing two examples at random. Is film capable of condensation? Can film attain the same expressive effects as highly differentiated language? Can film be precise? Helmut Heissenbüttel recently quoted the following sentences from Barbey d'Aurevilly's *The She-Devils* [1874]: "and to all this fury she replied like the woman of the species [*Frauenzimmer*], who no longer has any reason to care, who knows the man she lives with down to his bones, and who knows that at the bottom of this pigsty of a common household lies eternal warfare. She was not as coarse as he, but more atrocious, more insulting, and more cruel in her coldness than he was in his anger."[5] With prose of such a high degree of figuration, film cannot compete.

Film cannot form metaphoric concepts [*Oberbegriffe*] (pigsty of a common household, fits of fury) or clichés (the female of the species); it is not capable of antithetical discourse on such a level of abstraction; it can never condense in such a manner; finally, film does not have the means to imitate the internal movement of language—which is what distinguishes this text—unless the filmmaker decides to quote the text. It might be interesting to imagine ways in which the event described could be rendered in filmic terms. This would probably require a short film of about twenty minutes, which could be broken down into the following sequences:

—study of the argument between husband and wife;
—study of irritated, reactive behavior of this woman and of women in general;
—study of marital habits;
—study of the habit of loving someone "down to the bones";
—the helplessness of both in the course of a long marriage, largely on the part of the husband;

4. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* Amsterdam, Querido, 1947, p. 169; translated from the German original.
5. Jules Amédée Barbey d'Aurevilly, "A un dîner d'athées," in *Les diaboliques: les six premières,* Paris, Editions Garnier Frères, 1963, p. 288; translated from both the original and the German version cited in the text.

—the history of bourgeois marriage over the past two hundred years;
—the condition of eternal warfare;
—the biological superiority of the woman, her coldness;
—visual analysis of the conflict by means of a montage sequence which alternates, over an extended period of time, between the facial expression of the woman and that of the man, thus conveying the disproportionate and asynchronic nature of their struggle.

This filmic treatment would attempt, with great effort, to destroy the superficial sense of precision which film conveys on account of its excessive visual presence [*Anschauung*]; likewise, one would have to recover the degree of abstraction inherent in language by accumulating details. Only then would a film be capable of achieving any degree of conceptual precision.

As is well known, language has an advantage over film, owing to several thousand years of tradition. Modern Western languages derive from the differentiated languages of antiquity, which in turn are influenced by more archaic languages. If the cinema were to cultivate the narrative forms necessary to cope with the d'Aurevilly text over a longer period of history, at a later date a whole range of filmic metaphors would be available to filmmakers, allowing them to achieve the same economy of narration as is now available in the figurative and conceptual ranges of language. Even today we can discern developments in this direction. Louis Malle, for instance, alludes to individual films by Chaplin and thus evokes the aura of Chaplin's oeuvre as a whole. Another instance would be the conventions of a genre like the Western, which can be quoted and repeated with figurative brevity. Most of the more recent Westerns are animated by allusions to the old clichés of Western narratives. The stagecoach, the entry into the saloon, the beginning of the showdown, the new sheriff, the almost masochistic position of the drunk judge, the iconography of the Western hero, and the code of honor that binds all participants—through all these elements the accumulated aura of the genre is present in each individual Western. This opens up a space for ambiguity, polyphony, and variation, which, as is well known, has often made the Western a vehicle for political, social, and psychoanalytic messages; it might just as well encourage poetic modes of expression. Only when the cinema will have sufficiently enlarged its tradition of figuration will it be able to develop abstractions and differentiations comparable to those of literature. Because it already includes language anyway, film would actually have the capacity to articulate meanings that elude the grasp of verbal expression. Contemporary cinema, however, is not prepared for this project, since neither film production nor the spectator has as yet realized film's verbal and visual possibilities. The cinema, as we see it at this point, is not merely in the hands of the film authors (just as literature is not the product of writers alone), but is a form of expression which depends as much upon the receptivity of a social formation as on the imagination of its authors. A truly sophisticated film language requires a high level of filmic imagination on the part of spectators, exhibitors, and distributors alike.

Such a project, however, meets with almost total opposition from the cultural establishment, which regards the contamination of human minds by filmic images as a disastrous development. Instead, there is a tendency to impose upon the cinema the aesthetic ideals of the classical arts (which, in this context, could be said to include still photography). This creates a kind of visual "culture" which, in effect, robs film of its specific means of expression. The misleading ideal of the priority of image over word derives from a contemplative, purist position whose proponents dismiss filmic expression or content as merely secondary, a position that ultimately results in formalism. A cinema split between, on the one hand, the formalism of experimental film (whose experiments do not seek any new experience but rather aim to perpetuate a metaphysical "state of transition") and, on the other, the superficial naturalism of narrative film—this kind of cinema will never be able to compete with the great tradition of literary language.

Would a twenty-minute adaptation of the two sentences by d'Aurevilly have a substantially different, or even more complex, meaning than those two sentences? The film would have to use language, over and above the image track. Language in this case would not be literature, but an integrated part of the film. Compared to the literary source, the film would probably fall short of the precision achieved there; in terms of visual detail, however, it would be superior to the written text. At first sight, this would produce an effect similar to that which would have been produced if Marcel Proust had used the d'Aurevilly text to satisfy his own narrative proclivities for fifty to three-hundred pages. The film would still remain on the side of visual presence. Yet the analytic capability of the camera might afford additional perspectives on the subject matter which would go beyond subjective experience. Thus we would have an accumulation of subjective and objective, of literary, auditory, and visual moments which would preserve a certain tension in relation to each other. This tension would make itself felt, among other things, in the gaps which montage created between the disparate elements of filmic expression. In layering expressive forms in such a manner, the film would succeed in concentrating its subject matter in the spaces between the forms of expression. For the material condensation of expression does not happen in the film itself but in the spectator's head, in the gaps between the elements of filmic expression. This kind of film does not posit a passive viewer "who just wants to sit and stare." Obviously such a conception of cinema remains a utopian project, given the limited ambitions of both film producers and audiences today; in the future, however, cinema could surpass even the tradition of literature, at least in certain aspects. The combination of verbal, auditory, and visual forms and their integration through montage enable film to strive for a greater degree of complexity than any of these forms in isolation. At the same time, the multiplication of materials harbors all the dangers of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total work of art).[6]

6. Implied here is a critique of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* as developed in the context of the Frankfurt

The relatively greater precision available to literary language is not merely a blessing. Centuries of tradition have endowed language with such polish and refinement that it has become immune to large areas of reality. Every expression, according to Kant, oscillates between concept [*Begriff*] and sensuous perception [*Anschauung*]. "Perception without concept is blind; concept without perception remains empty." Throughout most of its metaphors and expressions, language has settled into a compromise between these two poles; it is neither concrete nor really abstract. Film, by contrast, combines the radical concreteness of its materials with the conceptual possibilities of montage; thus it offers a form of expression which is as capable of a dialectical relationship between concept and perception as is verbal language, without, however, stabilizing this relationship, as language is bound to do. This opens up particular opportunities for the insertion of literary language into film, especially because it might help rid that language of some of its literary constraints.

Let us raise the question from the reverse angle. Is film capable of controlling its degree of precision? Can film refract or deconstruct [*auflösen*] a given expression? How can it maintain a sufficient degree of indeterminacy? Does film have the option of remaining imprecise? Literary language can easily do so because it may use a conventional expression as a stylistic device. "When the secretary opened the door, a young lady, pretty as a picture and dressed to tease, entered the room"—such a phrase could not be reproduced in filmic terms. Film does not grant the variety of impressions that words like *pretty as a picture* and *dressed to tease* or *young lady* may provoke in the imagination of different readers; the image always refers to an individual instance. This could be counteracted somewhat by devices such as an extreme long shot or close-up, both of which introduce a high degree of indeterminacy. Likewise, iconic information can be reduced by means of shallow focus, high contrast, shots of extreme brevity or duration, transgressions of chronological order, multiple exposure, negation of the image track through sound or written text. All these, and other devices that one might use to achieve the effect of indeterminacy, are devices that interfere with reality and that question the apparent concreteness of iconic information. If a film were to give its viewers conceptual instructions as they are implied in phrases like *dressed to tease,* for instance, or *pretty as a picture,* it would have to resort to concrete clichés—which is what Hollywood films tend to do. We conclude, therefore, that film, insofar as it uses its resources legitimately, cannot convey any really precise mental images.

We cannot ignore the fact that producers of commercial films, like those of

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School. This critique focuses on the ideological trajectory linking Wagner's aesthetics with the total mobilization of effect in both the capitalist culture industry and fascist mass spectacles; cf. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1935), epilogue; Theodor W. Adorno, *In Search of Wagner* (1937–38), London, New Left Books, 1981, and the chapter on the culture industry in *Dialectic of Enlightenment.*—Tr.

dime novels, have no intention whatsoever of disturbing the massive circulation of their products by anything that resembles precise description. The empty shells of literary commonplaces, such as abound in bad novels, are ideally suited for deploying narrative clichés. In the course of its history, conservative narrative cinema has succeeded in amalgamating the prefabricated forms of imagination with prefabricated vernacular language, so that people have come to expect this amalgam from any narrative film. If the pretty young lady above actually were to appear in a film, this event would be read in a way similar to its literary equivalent. Nonetheless, commercial cinema has to keep reestablishing the basis of these conventions. While literary commonplaces may have a certain degree of legitimacy, since they appeal to something in the reader's imagination which is not yet totally absorbed by cliché, and while such commonplaces may even be stylistically necessary, as for instance in Madame de Lafayette's *Princess of Cleve* or in Brecht's plays, film inevitably distorts reality when it typifies. For film allows inference from the concrete only in the direction of a cliché, but is incapable of creating a general image of concrete multiplicity. The question remains whether or not individual films can escape this quandary through particular uses of language, for instance by speaking about things on the sound track which will not appear on the image track.

IV.

There are no rules for combining word and image in film. We can roughly distinguish between modes of dialogue, modes of commentary, and more independent combinations of word and image.

Dialogue

Narrative cinema promotes the fictitious ideal of realistic dialogue. This type of dialogue is supposed to accompany the image track in a "natural" manner. Dialogue is motivated by narrative action, or all too often substitutes for action. Such is the case not only in commercial films, but also in films that simply adopt stage conventions to the screen, for example, *Twelve Angry Men* [1957; directed by Sidney Lumet, based on a play by Reginald Rose], *Les jeux sont faits* [1947; based on a play by Sartre], *Zeit der Schuldlosen* [*The Time of Your Life,* 1948; based on a play by William Saroyan]. In either case, both language and the image track are subject to the regime of narrative. Such a concept of dialogue hinges on the belief that narrative events relate to each other as an organic whole, that drama is still possible. Take a film like *Password: Heron* [*Kennwort: Reiher,* Rudolf Jugert, 1964], recently awarded the Federal Film Prize; consider, for instance, the moment at which the characters note, via dialogue, that they "have been waiting here for hours." Immediately following the accidental killing of a patriot, a man emerges from a completely different chain of dramatic events and happens to identify the dead "comrade," whom he had not seen in twenty years, and thus

the enigma gets resolved. The entanglement comes about, in the first place, because the hero stumbles into the very center of the French Resistance, led by an old man who, on the basis of a parallel chain of events dating back to World War I, is bound to misunderstand the hero. Held to a strictly realistic standard, such dramaturgy (unlike that of Ibsen, who first invented this kind of dramaturgical incest) would collapse. At the same time, such films are defined by a grotesque effort to make the illusion appear realistic. Realism in this sense extends only to the detail; the film as a whole remains in the realm of fiction. It is a realism without enlightenment, a realism intended to cover up the fact that once more we have been cheated out of reality.

It has become apparent that, as a rule of thumb, dialogue is not a suitable means for advancing action. Moreover, dialogue is a specialized branch of film production, which is to say that the texts are written by specialists as mere supplements to the image track. As we see in the work of Antonioni, however, the function of dialogue can just as well be taken over by the image track, while spoken dialogue is carried along like a shell or fossil. Spoken dialogue in this case does not tell us anything about the actual inner movements of the film; dialogue loses its function as dialogue. "We have replaced dialogue with the communiqué," as Camus says. One might add that, precisely because it no longer serves any narrative purpose, dialogue is now available as a medium of reflection. When the prostitutes in Jean-Luc Godard's *Vivre sa vie* [1962] quote Montaigne, when Zazie and the other characters in Louis Malle's film *Zazie dans le métro* [1960] spout argot, their speech no longer has anything in common with the dialogue of conventional narrative film. But neither has it anything to do with Ionesco or Samuel Beckett; on the contrary, moments like these, when dialogue is actually not needed, allow for the development of specifically cinematic forms of expression. Godard and other film authors realize this opportunity when they apply to dialogue the same principles of montage as to the image track.

Voice-Over Commentary

Voice-over commentary is usually reserved for documentary film. It has the reputation of being "uncinematic," not only because it seems to be tied to a particular subject matter, but also because it assumes a certain autonomy in coordinating text and image and because it is often merely superimposed over live sound. There seems to be a general injunction against using voice-over in a way that would merely duplicate the events on the image track. This injunction presumes that commentary and a sequence of images are identical if they refer to one and the same thing; as a rule, however, this is not the case. A documentary on industrial work processes, for instance, shows a worker taking a scoop of liquid metal from one container and pouring it into another; voice-over: "The worker removes a small amount of liquid alloy for testing purposes to ensure a consistent quality in the final product." Or, in another film, the voice-over

explains: "The extract can be obtained from the abdominal cavity of the dead mouse without difficulty"; the image shows a dead animal laid out on a red surface and rubber-gloved hands manipulating a syringe in its belly.[7] In both instances, the image would remain illegible without the voice-over, and it would take a considerable amount of demonstration to produce the same meaning.

Voice-over commentary is not limited to documentary film; it may also be used in fictional genres—as, indeed, it has been—with interesting effects. Narrative events tend to come across in different ways, depending on whether they are enacted on the image track or narrated by a voice-over. A double-track description may stylize an event and produce a mutual distancing effect [*Verfremdungseffekt*], as it calls attention to the material difference of verbal and visual expression. The voice-over in this case may either be identifiable as that of a particular character within the diegesis—and thus associated with a particular narrative function—or the voice could be altogether foreign to the narrative.

A special case in this context is the insertion of written titles. This practice has a tradition of its own dating back to the silent era. Whereas at that time written titles were the only way of confronting image and language, their special effect today is one of muteness. The result is an overlay of filmic events with the inner voice of the reading spectator—the spectator has to assume a more active role. The language of written titles, which does not assume any particular voice and thus cannot really be attached to characters within the diegesis, is even further removed from the filmic events than any conceivable form of voice-over. This greater distance, however, gives it an affinity with literary language. The increased participation of the spectator, in turn, creates a peculiar identification of the meaning of this language with the visually concretized events of the film (a recent impressive example in this respect is Godard's *Vivre sa vie*). Written language may enter a film in a variety of shapes and combinations: e.g., text superimposed upon moving images, inserts of written text, or text superimposed upon background images [*Stehkader*]. Writing may even push images aside completely; whole passages of film could consist of writing; written and spoken texts could be interwoven in many different ways.

Language at Liberty

Under this rubric, we are dealing with language that, detached from narrative events, accompanies and colors the image track, language that is not motivated by any subjective or objective point of view as in the case of dialogue or commentary. Examples of such use of language can be found in *Hiroshima, mon amour* [1959] by Marguerite Duras and Alain Resnais, in *The Parallel Street*

7. These examples are taken at random from a medical and an industrial documentary. They may sound idiotic, but they highlight the interaction between commentary and images which go beyond mere illustration.

[*Parallelstrasse,* 1961] by Ferdinand Khittl, in *Moderato Cantabile* by Peter Brook [1960; text by Duras], and in other films. Its mode may be recitation, poetic meditation, or "nonsense language," as in *Zazie.* In the cinema, words may be used more freely than in their usual syntactic or grammatical configurations. Film permits the disruption of the linear sequence of scenes, as well as of individual shots. In the field of literature, an author like Hans G. Helms tries to liberate language from the conventions of grammar and existing vocabulary. Nonetheless, his writing depends upon elements of literary language. If he abandoned even those tenuous semantic links, he would lose the last means of conveying expression, an objective to which even a writer like Helms is still committed. We could imagine, however, an experimental film (albeit one of extreme artistic intensity) which forcefully utilizes the oscillation between literary, visual, and auditory elements as well as the gaps between these elements; such a film might succeed in producing clusters of expression which are not required to yield meaning down to the last detail, which can be understood without having to be prefabricated or historically reconstructed. In a world in which everyone else conforms to rational reason, someone at least could be unreasonable. Since the totalizing quest for meaning has itself become irrational, literary language should be shifted to areas in which it is not totally subjected to the imperative of meaning, as it is in its proper field. Language in film may be blind.

V.

We have been speaking of possibilities; let us now focus on actual instances and develop some criteria for the combination of language and film.

(1) Michelangelo Antonioni, *L'Avventura* [1960], scene 3: [Anna arrives at Sandro's apartment . . .].[8]

Commentary: What actually goes on between the two characters takes place on the image track. Detached from the image track, the text would not make sense. It does not consist of ordinary, "natural" speech, but a highly stylized form of language. This is even more evident at other points in the script. The difference between the inner movement of the filmic image and the movement of the dialogue paradoxically makes us aware of the sound of language. This device can also be found in films by Roman Polanski and Louis Malle.

(2) Alain Resnais, Marguerite Duras, *Hiroshima, mon amour* ["The streets of Hiroshima, more streets. . . . He laughs ecstatically, which has nothing to do with their words."][9]

Commentary: Here we have a pure instance of parallelism between image

8. Michelangelo Antonioni, *L'Avventura,* New York, Orion Press, 1963, pp. 99–100.
9. Marguerite Duras and Alan Resnais, *Hiroshima, Mon Amour,* New York, Grove Press, 1961, pp. 24–25.

and literary text. The image track does not settle on any particular scene; instead, moving shots of bridges and streets dissolve into each other and form a kind of impressionist tableau. This tableau-effect also emanates from the sound track. The visual texture colors the language; the spoken text modifies the meaning of the image track. Both resonate with associations of Hiroshima/Nevers—love, death, and so on. The method of composition is basically the same as in music by Richard Wagner or Richard Strauss. The film here taps emotional connotations which exist in the social imaginary, in the spectator's head, rather than in the film itself. Without this point of reference, images and words would disintegrate, as would the Duras text, with its abrupt changes of mood. The immersion of language in image, the emergence of language from image, the mutual pursuit of verbal and visual texts, figures of parallelism and collision, polyphony—Resnais has developed a great variety of word/image constellations throughout his work, in other films as well. Even if one resents the pathos of the texts, one has to acknowledge Resnais's originality.

(3) Ferdinand Khittl, *The Parallel Street.*

Image track: A title card with the number 305. Documentary footage of Tahiti, an island in the Pacific: shots of a fishing expedition, of a girl named Roarai, of whaling, of a seaplane starting and landing in the laguna between a coral reef and the beach. Then a series of shots from the burial site "at the big rock" near the capital of Madagaskar, Tananarive: the ceremony of Famadhina, the so-called turning of the dead. A body that has been dead for three years is disinterred and given a new shroud, a "lamba." The corpse remains laid out for twenty-four hours, surrounded by dancing and celebrations; then it is returned to the burial chamber.

Sound track: "The plane is due at eight. If you have ever been in love, you know that the plane can come at any time. That it always comes at eight. The farewell without meaning recalls the spot behind the ear. The arc below the knee. To arrive only to say good-bye. Having never before thought of the warmth of this hair.

"Everyone listens to the dying odor of the old fish. The airplane comes at eight. Try not to think of it: the heart has already given up. A forgotten caress—your skin. A boat without wings, its sails smelling of hibiscus flowers. *Ia ora na*—welcome."[10]

Commentary: The text in this case confronts a rather stark, naive image track. The author of the images and the writer are two different individuals who evidently did not succeed in integrating their mutual intentions. The image track diverts attention to some degree from the bombastic quality of the text; but as a result, image and text move along in a rather disconnected manner. The effect at

10. Ferdinand Khittl, *Parallelstrasse,* script in *Spectaculum: Texte moderner Filme,* Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1961, pp. 346–47.

first is one of surprise, owing to the juxtaposition of unrelated elements; also, the fixed speed of the film tends to impair our literary judgment in a way that is not the case in the reading of a written text. Such surprise tactics, however, will not produce a cinematic integration of word and image. The words spill over the margins of the image. A film does not acquire a poetic quality through words alone. Nonetheless, *The Parallel Street* enjoyed a considerable success at various festivals, in particular with the leading French reviewers at Cannes in 1964. This once again confirms the impression that if one arbitrarily accumulates interesting ingredients and adds some sort of text, one ends up with an arbitrary product that may still reap success, since "he who gives generously, offers something to everyone."

(4) Orson Welles, *Citizen Kane* [1941]: [a sequence from the "News on the March" section, beginning "Its humble beginnings, a dying daily—"/shot of old *Inquirer* building].[11]

Commentary: This is an example of voice-over used in a fictional context. Of course, *Citizen Kane* also uses dialogue that differs little from conventional dramatic dialogue and obviously is not crucial to the textual and stylistic principles of the film. The voice-over commentary in this sequence more or less decribes what we see on the image track. One could say that the image illustrates the text just as the text illustrates the image. When the voice-over speaks of "forests," the image track uses the rhetorical device of *pars pro toto* and shows a tree. When the text concerns the perspective of a whole continent, through a long shot so extreme as to suggest that the continent could not be captured in a single image, the voice-over implies this extensity by way of enumeration. When connotations like "humble, ramshackle, poor" dominate the commentary, three black people can be seen in one of the lower windows of the building. The mutual energizing of text and image is rather schematic, but at the same time incredibly robust. *Citizen Kane* is the kind of film in which neither sound nor image track, in themselves, have much artistic distinction, although together they constitute a work of art.

It would be interesting to explore further examples of the interaction of word and film, especially in the large realm of commercial film. The current use of language in film is likely to come across as highly dilettante. Often an especially badly written text serves to underscore the common remark, "the camera work was excellent." On the map of the arts, film has always been placed next to photography. As a thorough inquiry into the history of cinematic forms would probably show, film has a much greater affinity with literature than with photography.

11. Pauline Kael, et al., *The Citizen Kane Book*, New York, Bantam, 1974, pp. 142–43.

VI.

The cinema depends upon language not only within each film but also through all the stages of preparation and planning. Without highly differentiated skills of articulation, no filmmaker can approach the realization of his ideas. Author, cinematographer, and producer need to communicate with each other, a task for which the prevailing jargon of the industry is crudely inadequate. The unnecessary hierarchy that determines the production process of special features is just one aspect of this lack of verbal differentiation; another is the "speechlessness" which characterizes the studio sound of the ordinary commercial film. The organizational structure of film production in Germany only aggravates these problems, but these problems are not intrinsic to filmmaking, nor is the prevailing organization of production unalterable. According to a well-known nineteenth-century German thinker and political economist, all thought is mediated by language. Unlike the classical arts (and even television, which actually employs a considerable number of intellectuals), the cinema has to compensate for a lack of tradition. Therefore, the cinema is in a situation different from that of the classical arts, whose very purpose is to escape tradition. German cinema would benefit greatly from intellectual centers, which would have to be established independently of the commercial centers of production so as to exert influence upon the latter. Such intellectual centers, however, should above all foster an awareness of the immense lead that literary language still has over the expressive means of the mass media.

Cinema today stands at the crossroads of an important development. On the one hand, we can already envision a complexity of expression that film could achieve and the kind of intellectual institution that would encourage such complexity; on the other hand, we can just as well imagine an institutionalization of filmmaking that would merely canonize the inferior products of the status quo and make film into a specialized branch of the mass media, thus perpetuating the current ratio of ten percent specials to ninety percent regular commercial features. Such films cheat not only the loyal patrons in whose name they pretend to be made, but also those who produce them, not to mention those who expect to see a work of art. It would be better if academies designed to teach that kind of filmmaking did not exist at all. The worst that could happen to film would be to be banished to its own domain.

Why Should Film and Television Cooperate?

On the Mainz Manifesto*

ALEXANDER KLUGE

translated by STUART LIEBMAN

I.

The changes in the media landscape that represent challenges to film and television in no way derive *solely* from the new private media. Rather, these changes are rooted in losses of "publicity"[1] inherent in all societal processes. Active counter-production, which is rooted in the cultural mission of television and the film-historical mission of cinema, must gather together the forces of both, for if each acts only on its own behalf, they will probably fail. Therefore, there must be *cooperation* between film and television.

Today, we are witnessing—imperceptibly, because for the moment, nothing visible is happening—the speculative phase[2] of the New Media. In order to emerge, they need a kind of symbolic flagpole: the satellite.

Modern industry no longer experiences such speculative phases, at least not in our part of the world. Speculative phases lead directly to speculative crises: elimination bouts, cut-throat competition, overproduction, obstruction of outlets, bankruptcies—in all, an enormous sacrifice of capital, which today's integrated industry would surely not permit. In the New Media, this atypical development occurs, so to speak, for "purely idealistic" reasons. Precisely because the object of and the network for this new market still do not exist (heads are not

* This essay first appeared in Kraft Wetzel, ed. *Neue Medien contra Filmkultur?*, Berlin, Volker Spiess, 1987, pp. 237–244. The "Mainz Manifesto," coauthored by Heinz Ungureit, Günter Rohrbach, Gunther Witte, and Kluge, was read on October 26, 1983, during the television criticism conference held at Mainz. It contained ten points, proposing, among other things, (1) that the purpose of both film and television was the production of a broader based and more open public sphere; (2) the strengthening of independent documentary film production as a source of renewal for fiction film; (3) screening old television programs in movie theaters. See also the expanded version of Kluge's essay in Klaus von Bismarck et al., *Industrialisierung des Bewusstseins*, Munich, Piper, 1985, pp. 51–129. (All notes are by the translator.)

1. For an explanation of the translation of the key term *Öffentlichkeit*, see the translator's first note to the selections of *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung* in this issue.

2. The German *Gründerjahre*, which refers specifically to the years of financial speculation following the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, has been translated as "speculative phase."

wired, satellites are not beaming, nor do pay TV, cable, and advertising budgets really exist), development assumes an atavistic form. Hardly any of the competitors (aside from the dealers in canned feature films) approve of rapid development; each company, however, feels compelled to stake a claim, as in a gold rush. The outward form: speculative phase, foreseeable speculative crises. For it is now as difficult to increase people's time budgets as it is to increase property in the center of the city. A competition among twenty stations with the same product can only lead to collapse. It is not difficult to predict a crisis, which will be precipitated as soon as even a hint of this market exists.

All intelligent people with whom I have spoken about this respond by saying: surely you don't believe something like that will happen. Those are projects, crazes of Mr. Schwarz-Schilling;[3] they can be managed. I really trust some of these people, but in the meantime, I have looked into the matter closely, and I am convinced that my best friends—and indeed all public opinion—are badly mistaken in this regard. Certainly, considering the strength of our country's public institutions and, for the moment, the slight indication of viewer interest, the reality content of the New Media's project is particularly meager. None of the pretenders to power over the New Media has even a *single* adequate program. All run on canned feature films from the Edeka stores' subsidiary PKS and news from either the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* or the newspaper publishers Aktuell Presse-Fernsehen-Gmbh. A poor beginning. As I already said, a big mistake.

In large measure, what is at stake in this project is the *industrialization of consciousness*. In any event, it is only indirectly a matter of entertainment programming on television broadcasts. It encompasses a radical modernization of industrial intercourse: the laying of cable, the possibility of decentralized work places, communication links between stores of commodities.

Reversing the evolution of human mental powers, social consciousness as it is constituted and stored in industry was *first* wired as cerebral cortex, *then* as nerves. Now it is a matter, so to speak, of developing an extensively automated cerebellum and midbrain that will control the motor system of economic currents beneath consciousness. What increases in speed will be unleashed by such developments, what will turn out to be impossible (and on that account will either not take place or will occur as a destructive process), what will emerge through the dissolution and new coalescence as the new industrialized consciousness—none of this is precisely known. Even the catch phrases "industrialization of consciousness" and "consciousness industry" do not denote anything precisely. Will the movements of the mind be industrialized? The contents or the accomplishments of consciousness? Or only the memory banks? Or will it be the

3. Kluge is referring to the Federal Republic's postal minister, a Christian Democratic member of the ruling coalition, who is widely regarded as responsible for the introduction of legislation promoting the creation of private television and radio stations in the Bundesrepublik.

exchange of information, or one's mental equilibrium, or the markets and values which also exist for conscious activities? Or will only the consciousness built into commodity concentrations, machinery, or computers be "liquid"? In any case, all this has nothing to do with television programming, or a show by Frank Elstner.[4] The real question is: where is the enormous technological potential of digitalization and of cable headed? This is the question posed over and above the project designers' fantasies.

What is at stake is the future form of our public spheres. One can no longer think of the public sphere as an integral whole, because increasingly it is becoming only a regulative idea. In reality the public sphere has already disintegrated into partial public spheres. Every minority constructs its own separate camp. Coalitions of such camps assert that they are public.

II.

Merely feeling or thinking something is not sufficient raw material for my consciousness of self, my identity. When I observe that others also feel or think as I do, or that they contradict my feelings or thoughts, that they therefore *relate* to me, that there are *modes of expression* making what concerns everyone and what touches me personally *mutually comprehensible*, I can be sure that these are products of the public sphere. There is no identity in isolation from others. The form of the people's and the individual's consciousness depends on our public sphere's modes of expression.

For a long time, the classical public sphere, like the forest, the earth, and the air, seemed to be something natural and accessible. It seemed to arise of its own accord, like the market. After the capitulation in 1945, the Allies artificially started it up again by granting licenses.[5] For example, the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, *Nürnberger Nachrichten*, and *Axel Springer* companies were licensed to publish newspapers. This did not make the *Frankfurter Rundschau* wealthy. A fifteen-percent fluctuation in advertising rates can drive it off the market. Somewhat less committed to diversity than the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, the *Nürnberger Nachrichten* has built an empire on local papers[6] in Franken.The emphatic bias of the Springer press's strategies has expanded a 1946 license into an enormous conglomerate. We know how stunned students were in 1968 when they observed how parts of the public sphere were expropriated. The conglomerates do not yet exercise absolute control, however, over the individual kiosks in which newspa-

4. Frank Elstner is a well-known West German television celebrity whose approximate equivalent in the United States would be Johnny Carson.
5. The licensing system was instituted in order to control the ideological content as well as the personnel of all publishing enterprises, particularly newspapers, in postwar Germany.
6. Kluge uses the word *Kopfblättern* (here translated as "local newspapers") to refer to the practice of large newspaper chains that purchase local newspapers, retain the original name and format, but dramatically change the content by increasing the number of syndicated, i.e., nonlocal, articles and features.

pers and magazines are sold. Distributors offer a variety of papers, though hardly any smaller newspapers. On closer inspection, most of them belong to interrelated big businesses—not a monopoly, but an oligopoly.

New cable and satellite technology adds an innovation. For the first time, the distribution outlets (the "kiosks," the "channels") are being appropriated by the media producers, and the middlemen are being cut out. Two different processes are involved: (1) the formation of groups, of consortia, of closed-shops; (2) the construction of a formal institutional facade which these groups or consortia set up, in order to procure the necessary public authority. The two processes are *group formation* and *governmental agreements*.

The limitations imposed on the media by party influence and by the principle that only that which excludes one's neighbor is good are evident in the phrasing of the media laws. They use established media double-talk. The multivocity of social expression, what is called communication, consists of the triad: (1) information, (2) entertainment, (3) education. In other words: news, shows, school, or documentary film, feature film, reportage.

Compare this, for instance, with the riches of the classical public spheres, with what was charming about *Florence*, what constituted music, theater, classical film, newspapers, the narrative arts, and a science that is more than popular broadcasts about stars and animals. Such riches had *one* flaw: not everyone had access to them. But it would be a criminal act of destruction to preserve the exclusivity of these *bountiful modes of expression* and simultaneously to discard the utopian possibility hidden in the classical public spheres: that it is possible for one individual or another, *and possibly even for everyone, against all probability*, to know something, to be fully aware, etc. Anyone who destroys the classical public spheres commits a crime against history.

III.

The challenge of the New Media, the ecological threat to the structures of consciousness, requires nothing less than a return to the origins of all the products of the public sphere. The components of this capital, dating back to 1802 (and, for the most part, earlier), must be updated, revitalized. As for the moving images of the cinema, the journey *only* goes back to Lumière and Méliès, once again to the origins. In 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 very interesting ways.

No one knows if independent businesses and a labor force capable of such revisions (in cooperation with public institutions *and* the companies' private economic consortium, but with each remaining independent, "for the time being") will be motivated to make a sufficient effort to develop programming. Such development work cannot *realistically* be expected from either public institutions or the consortia alone. Both constituents are far too bureaucratized, technocratic, and goal-oriented to program the New Media.

It comes down to a tripartite division of all programming time. One-third must continue to be reserved for the forms of the classical public spheres. Official institutions and big firms would have rights equal to the other two-thirds.

Therefore, a third of programming time, created through the cooperation of nonprofit enterprises and the so-called culture channel, must be available as a "window" [*Fenster*].[7] These three easily identifiable criteria clearly distinguish the independent third's status from that of the public third (which is always connected to large enterprises) and from consortium status (which is what a company consisting of offices and services always is).

By the end of 1987 in Europe and in the Federal Republic, *three* powerful, private, full-blown program schedules, constructed as profit-oriented entertainment vehicles competing ruthlessly to eliminate each other, will arrive on the scene.

Politically, it is a question of the future equilibrium between the public system and the nascent forms of a private broadcasting system. The underlying issue is the struggle between a concept of the individual as a mere buyer, a consumer of the entertainment industry, and an opposing view of the individual as the controller of his or her reality, sensuality, and life experience, one who therefore depends upon a variety of factors that allow for, but are not exclusively concerned with, entertainment. Obviously, this struggle is at odds with the division between public and private. But the two modes offered to consciousness presuppose stability and dualism in the institutional area.

Probably only the experts can conceive what is necessary to make a full-blown program schedule of five to ten hours a day, 365 days a year, that is attractive to a sufficient number of viewers. A decisive condition, internationally, in the competition for comprehensive program schedules seems to be the lengthening of program times (up to twenty-four hours). Therefore, in the future the majority of domestic program suppliers (print companies [aside from Bertelsmann], all independent third parties, producers of "cultural variety," etc.) will also only be able to showcase programs [*Programmfenster herstellen*] in conjunction with partners who already have umbrella program schedules (the network principle). Programs that are not significantly distinctive will be considered one program schedule; viewers can regard foreign suppliers without important domestic partners as *one* program schedule. The same is true for stations that broadcast programs only at different times.

Given the possible capacities for umbrella program schedules, the following six possibilities result from the combining of showcases [*Fenster*]:

7. Kluge uses the word *Fenster* in several different senses throughout this essay, as well as throughout his work. Here, he uses it metaphorically to suggest that television programming provides a "window" onto experience. *Fenster* is also used to mean "showcase," "time slot," or "niche." When these variants are meant, *Fenster* or its derivatives will appear in brackets after the translation.

Public/with private third parties

(1) A full-blown program schedule A[rbeitsgemeinschaft der] R[undfunk-anstalten] D[eutschlands] with slots [*Fenster*] for other Europeans;

(2) A full-blown program schedule Z[weites] D[eutsches] F[ernsehen] II, plus a music channel, with the participation of ORF [Austrian radio], SRG [Swiss radio] (eventually in combination with private third parties) [cf. 3SAT];[8]

(3) a public/private third-party joint program schedule;

Purely private

(4) Arbeitsgemeinschaft ECS 1, Ludwigshafen [cf. SAT 1];

(5) Bertelsmann/RTL [Luxembourg radio and television]/Luxembourg;

(6) English full-blown program schedules (for example, Murdoch).

Comprehensive program schedules other than these are unlikely because of the lack of an umbrella program schedule.

During the phase of competitive confrontation in about one and a half years, none of the three *purely* private programs will be able to act in the interests of "cultural variety," on behalf of minorities, or in cooperation with independent third parties.

After establishing the three possible, strictly private, full-blown program schedules, there remain private interests that can only participate in the new media public spheres in cooperation with the umbrella program schedule of the public broadcasting system. If this possibility is precluded, arbitrary competitive distortions in the private sector will be created. If, on the other hand, cooperation between the public systems and private third parties is required because of the practical necessity of an umbrella program schedule, this will guarantee a cultural variety of independent program producers.

It is not a matter of *one* culture channel, but cultural variety in *all* channels. The realization of such a *principle* indirectly also has repercussions for the quality of the three purely private comprehensive program schedules.

IV.

The simple addition of media worlds produces repressive works of art. Real human and historical relations are *repressed*. This prospect is disastrous for the community, and very seductive to opportunists.

Will our country be able to incorporate these new media public spheres as part of our communal life?

At stake is our language, the particular experiences of our country, that quantum of "seriousness of life" not exhausted by entertainment. If the essential

8. 3SAT and SAT 1 are commercial venture broadcasting via satellite in West Germany.

creative powers of our country are not to be lost to foreign countries, we need a high level of integration within the country. The fragmentation and provincialization, comparable to the small-state mentality of pre-Bismarck Germany, that result from a lack of conscientious commitment on the part of the federal authorities and the cross purposes of the powers-that-be will dissipate our energies. In such a case, the concentrated interest in our market by foreigners would not cease. The responsibility for meeting this challenge cannot be assigned to one state or another.

Selections from *New Stories, Notebooks 1–18* *"The Uncanniness of Time"**

ALEXANDER KLUGE

translated by JOYCE RHEUBAN

Foreword

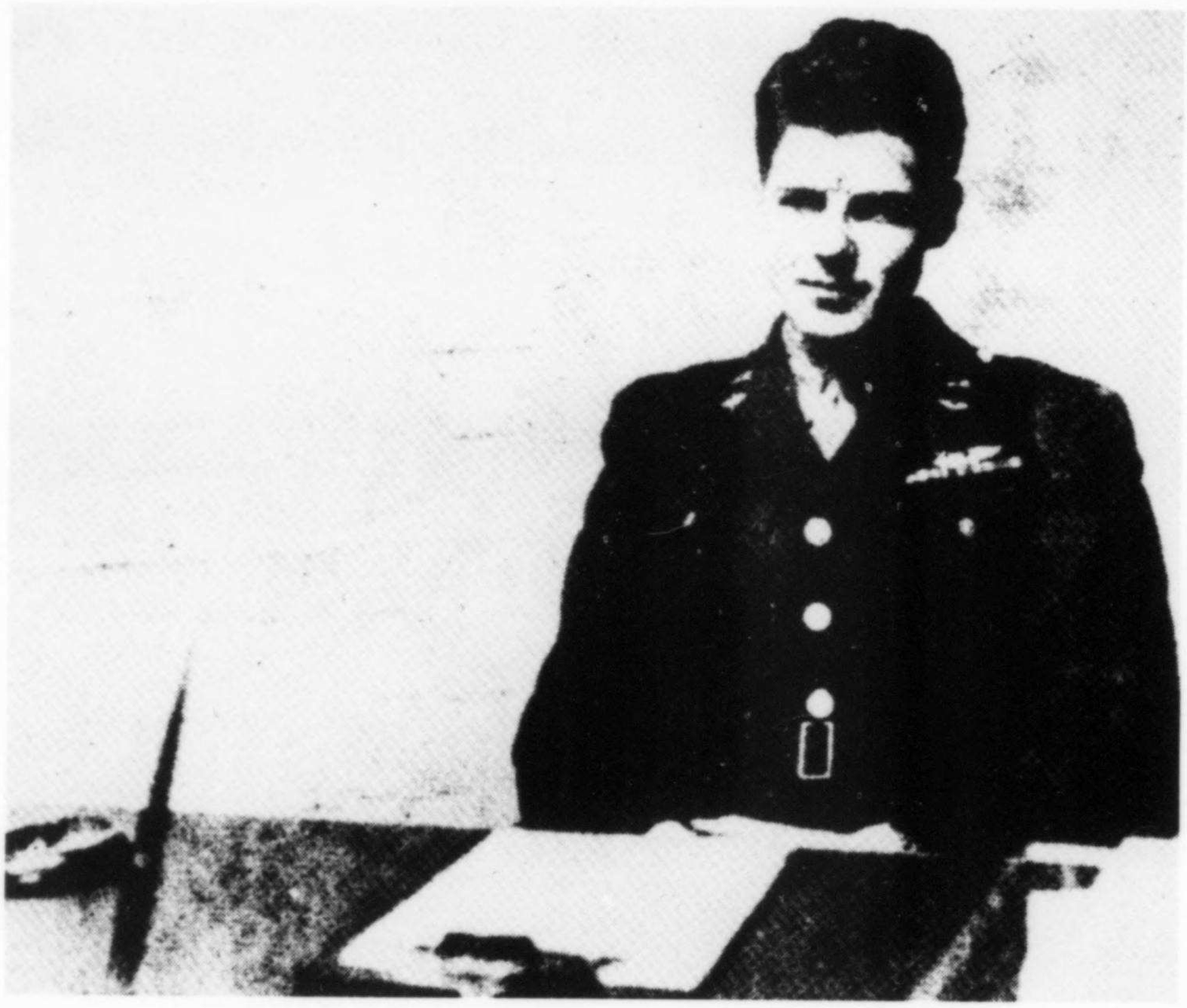
The stories in this book are told in a series of notebooks: 1–18. *Stories without a unifying concept.* I don't claim that I myself always understand how they relate to one another.

It may seem as though some of the stories are concerned not with the present [*Jetztzeit*] but with the past. They deal with the *present.* A few of the stories appear to have been *cut short.* Then it is precisely this being-cut-short which is the story. The form of a bomb blast makes an impression. Such a form is constituted by being cut short. On April 8, 1945, I was ten meters away from such a blast.

A rain puddle which no one needs, which isn't terrorized so that it "behaves," may attain a classical form—the harmony of form and content. We human beings are distinguished by the fact that form and content wage war with each other. If content is a moment in time (whose duration may be 160 years or one second), then form is all the rest, the gaps, precisely that which, at this moment, the story does not tell.

Just one more thing: when I have comprehended something, I go into action, travel, get something under way, or write a theoretical book. The present book is not one of those. Nevertheless, I intend something similar in what I write here. I don't set about "touching up" the stories once I've written them down. I could, for example, have used supplementary citations to clarify mistakes, historical inaccuracies, misinterpretations (that which I did not fully grasp as I wrote). But that is not the *form* in which these stories are told. This form is a feeling which is right only once. And if, theoretically (that is, upon reflection), it is wrong, then it is wrong, and in being wrong, it is also right.

* These selections are taken from Kluge's *Neue Geschichten, Hefte 1–18,* Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1977, pp. 9, 232–237, and 500–504. Translation by permission of the author.



The Planner

"The Boys"

The Concrete Tomb

I.

In the Spring of 1943, Plant 2 of the Dingelstedt Army Munitions Factory blew up. The staff technicians were directed to produce an explanation. What were we supposed to do? Our hands were tied. Of course, we immediately took Huy Street toward Dingelstedt and drove into the woods where the munitions factory lay surrounded by a wire fence. There was simply nothing left to "save"; it wasn't even necessary to write out death certificates for the casualties—no injured, no burning buildings, no anything. Assisting physician Jürgens, who was rubbing his neck to ease his lumbago, asked why there weren't any bodies. Well, there were enough of them to warrant the all-out alarm from Halberstadt to Braunschweig—you just couldn't see them.

The factory building was built with brick side walls which supported a massive five-meter-thick roof made of reinforced concrete. How could anyone conceive of an accident that could blow up a factory building like this? Actually, the explosion, whose cause remained unknown (though it was later presumed to have been an exploding munitions container), "blew away" the building's weaker side walls; and the solid, five-meter-thick security ceiling came down in one piece on top of the women defense workers at work inside the building—a virtual tomb.

II.

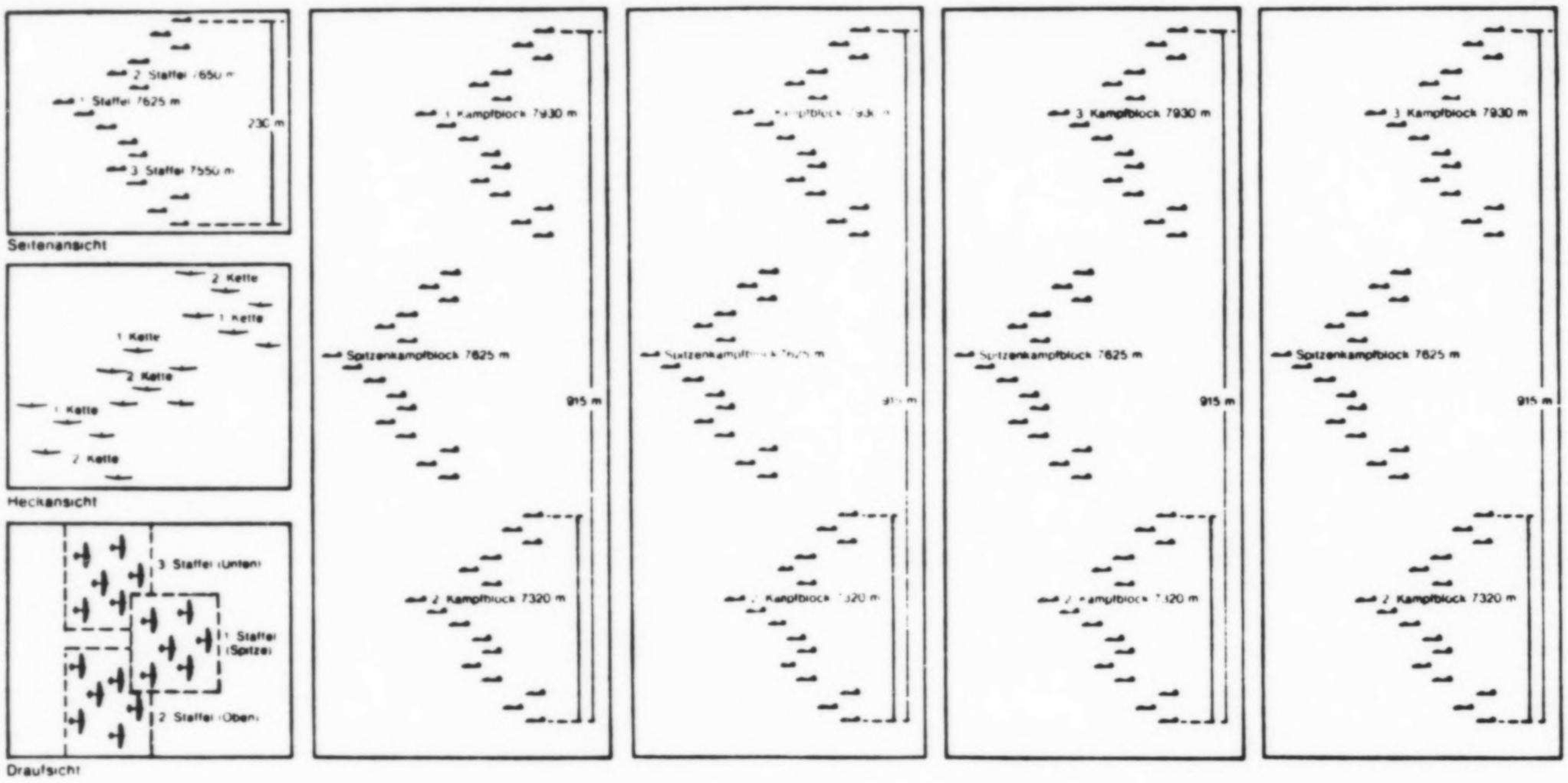
A local physician, Dr. Gaubitz of the local hospital in Halberstadt, was having his lunch that day—sour cherry compote—when the call for help came. On Braunschweiger Street, he passed a column of Pioneer vehicles and cranes. Fire brigades from Badersleben, Athenstedt, and Braunschweig arrived and drove into the preserve—one of the most important secret sites in the district. Dr. Gaubitz always wanted to have a look inside the site's security fortifications. Thanks to a happy coincidence, this was now possible.

Fire Chief Toelke was there, his fourteen fire trucks lined up at the scene of the accident. He rushed over to Dr. Gaubitz, whose Mercedes Cabriolet, which had been painted gray like a military vehicle, was parked among the trees.

Did you bring the death certificates?

Dr. Gaubitz had two. That wouldn't be enough. He wanted to see the bodies first. Then he could always look for a few sheets of paper and tear these into four pieces, since it wasn't the form that mattered but the physician's signature and certification of death. The fire department experts couldn't be expected to know that.

That will do fine, said Dr. Gaubitz. There were no dead to be seen anyway. We can't lift this concrete roof, said the Pioneer First Lieutenant, whose cranes were waiting on the access road outside the compound because, for the moment,



Staggered battle formations from which planes fly preplanned sorties

there was no place to park on the factory grounds. Most of those on the scene were in uniform — military personnel, munitions officers, engineers — since the munitions factory, an Army Weapons Office installation, was in a military zone. We have to wait until we can get the cranes in here. Before we can do that, the fire trucks have to be moved. If you are thinking of lifting this roof with a couple of cranes, the First Lieutenant answered, let me tell you that it can't be done.

There was nothing else to do for the time being but stare at this cement roof and wait.

III.

I don't need forms for the death certificates, said Gaubitz, pieces of paper will do. It's the wording that counts. But without the bodies, I can't do anything. I don't even have the names of the casualties.

There's a lot of them — countless, said the major, the provisional director of the munitions factory. One of the engineers added: they're buried underneath there. He was also upset, now that he had created the impression of activity. Uncountable, said Fire Chief Toelke, doesn't mean innumerable — not by a long shot. The fact that we can't see through the five-meter-thick roof just makes it technically impossible to count them. About how many do you think there are?

Die Ware

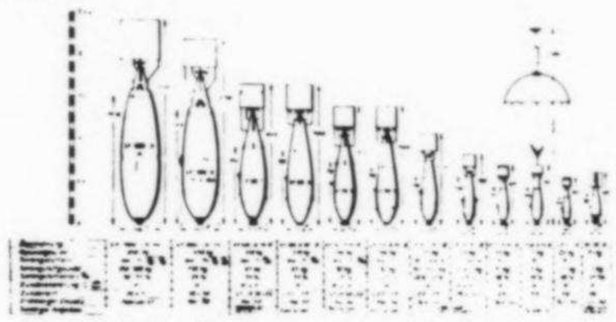


Abb.: GP = General Purpose, Mehrzweckbombe; HEF High Explosive Fragmentation = Splitterbombe

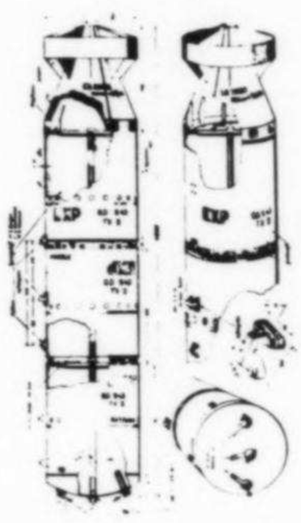


Abb.: HC 12 000 LB 5100 kg = Großladungsbombe

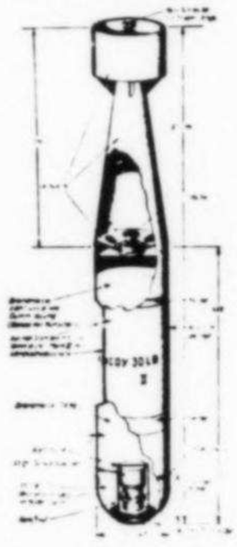
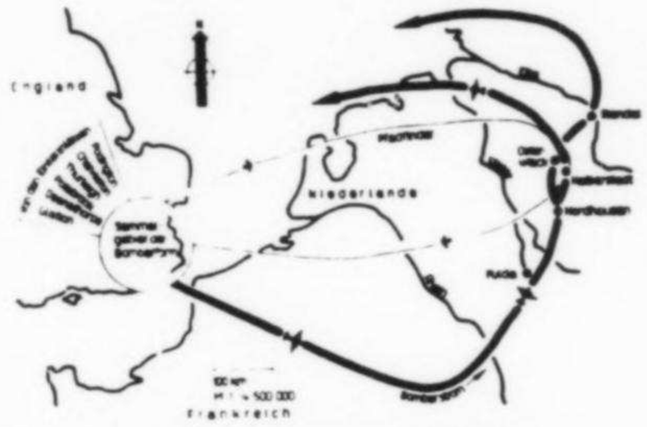
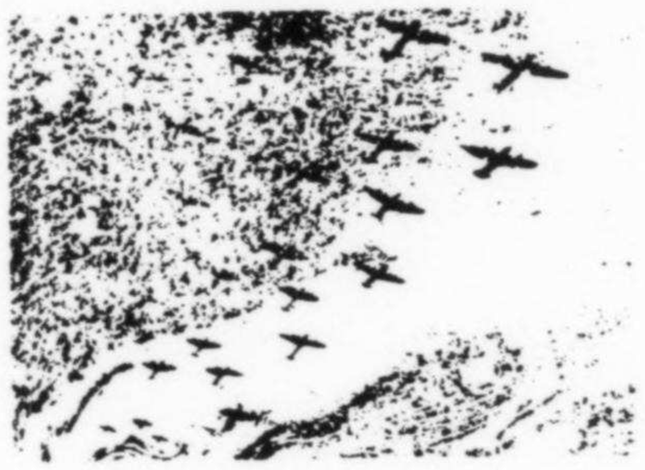


Abb.: Flussigkeits-Brandbombe INC 30 LB MK IV -mit Langsschweißnaht-, 14 kg



Kurs der angreifenden Maschinen (8.4.1945)



The Merchandise

Route of the attacking planes. April 8, 1945.

All women, answered an artillery officer who was standing there with them. What I meant was, said Gaubitz, that we need the names of each of the casualties —those going to eternal rest— to establish the number. Maybe we can get a list of people who worked in the building. We can use that to figure out the number of dead, since there don't appear to be any injured. The factory director's adjutant responded immediately: the names of the women on this shift are all on file. Soon more fire trucks arrived from Dardesheim, Ballenstedt, Quedlinburg, along with two Pioneer vehicles from the direction of Heudeber-Danstedt. We have to clear this parking lot right now, said Colonel von Elchlepp. Move them out into the woods. You could hear the explosion almost all the way to London. If the enemy takes the trouble to send a few bombers over here to find out what's going on, this formation of vehicles—according to von Elchlepp—would be next. There has already been enough damage for one day.

In the meantime, Gaubitz set up a first-aid station, where H's emergency team was brought. One fireman cut his finger. The engineers and officers stood around the explosion site in groups. A couple of them climbed up on the concrete roof and walked around the top of this imposing structure.

"Let's not ask about times to come,
Let's just stay here a little while longer."

IV.

This is inexcusable, said Gaubitz, who was standing around with Colonel von Elchlepp, Fire Chief Toelke, several engineers and munitions officers. The question of blame forced its way into the conversation. Gaubitz: it's ridiculous to make the walls so weak and expect protection from an extrareinforced concrete roof. It disregards what we learned from Verdun—that explosions always blow sideways. You could predict a disaster like this from the building plans. If this place hadn't been so secret, if a reasonable person had been permitted to see something like this beforehand—but nobody was allowed to come here, not even nearby to dig up some moss for my rock garden—then this cement ceiling would still be standing and we'd have no more than a few injured.

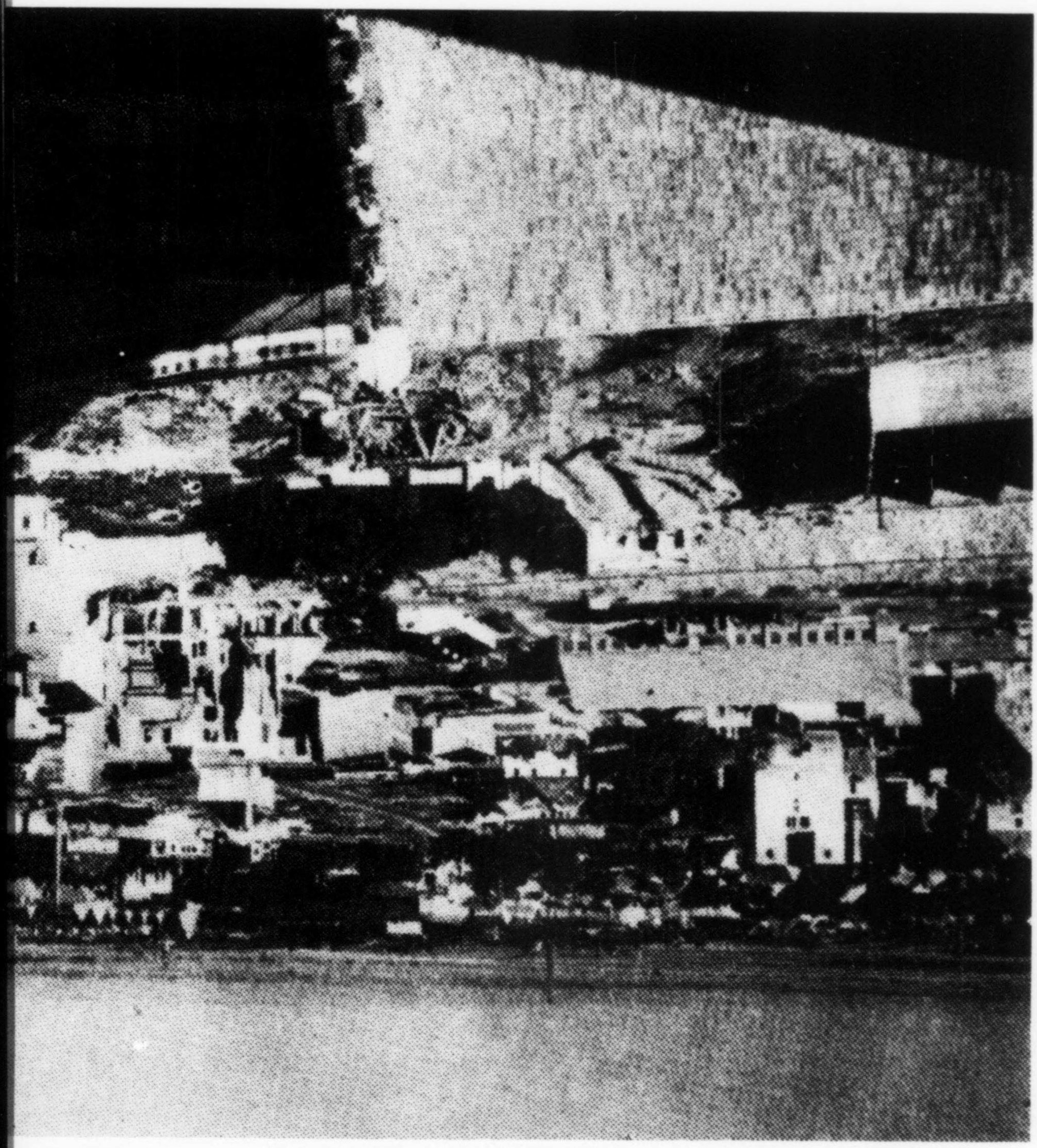
Engineer Wendland considered such hypothesizing "unnecessary" interference. He said: yes, that's possible. Then who is responsible?, asked the Colonel. Toelke: that will be the subject of a report. Several reports, said engineer Wendland. An oversight or sabotage, we may never know.

V.

Then police reinforcements arrived, but since this was a military zone, they had nothing to investigate. The shock still affected those at the scene. No one made a move to direct the officials. Chief of Detectives Wille came over to Colonel von Elchlepp. A young woman was led over by two sentries. The woman claimed she had escaped the "massacre" because she had "stepped out." It was not permitted, however, under any circumstances, to leave the building during work hours. How did this woman get outside the building? Chief of Detectives Wille intervened. Let the woman have her say first. The commander of the security guard, which was implicated now that the suspicion of sabotage had arisen, retorted: it's out of the question that this woman had permission to leave the building. Did she know something in advance? *If* it was sabotage, asserted the criminalistically trained Wille—a big if. But the excited gentlemen who were under pressure to report to their superiors about something that should not have happened—they had all imagined an accident happening quite differently, assuming that in a "serious situation," which obviously had to be reckoned with, there would always be something you could do, and that a concrete roof would not just hermetically seal off the whole place—behaved as if they had taken leave of their senses. Take her away, said the Colonel, who to some extent shared responsibility for the weak side walls. Things did not look good.

Everyone was inclined to assume that the woman had left the building through the front door the moment everything "went up in smoke." "Anything else is an alibi." In view of the draconian penalties for leaving the inner, restricted zone, that is, the factory building, without authorization, no one would do so without a motive. And we would have caught them, said Chief Engineer Arnold. They went to see the woman, who had been taken away, and asked her

Sketch of the probable route of the unknown photographer. Thicker arrow to the right: path of the wave of bombers. Thinner arrow from the middle to the left: the photographer's path.



"We see how the history of industry *and its* objective *existence, are the* open *book of* man's essential powers, *human* psychology *made present and perceptible . . .*

about the exact circumstances of her exit. The woman's answers were confused. How can she have been in the ladies' room one moment, and gone the next, when she can't even give a coherent account of where the women workers' lavatory was located? Wille, who had no authority here: we know that these women doze off when they are overworked. I don't draw any conclusions from what she says. How do we know the concrete roof came down all at once? It could have come down more slowly on the left side than it did over by the front door. That way, a woman running for her life would have had a chance. Major Löhlein retorted: not so fast. That is a total physical impossibility. And you can't just say this woman was overworked. Or would you like to make this into an allegation of culpability against the plant administration? This is all just speculation, added the Colonel.

VI.

The woman was taken away and held for the time being in the guard house at the gate. It occurred to no one that she was the only witness who could give an account, however fuzzy, of what went on inside the building just before the accident. The First Lieutenant of the Pioneers and Artillery Engineer Gerstäcker mused about what a shame it was not to have had a chance for an amorous *tête à tête* first with one of the women who now lay dead. They were looking at the I.D. photos in the personnel files which had been brought over. What if it was this kind of incident that led to the accident—maybe an unwanted pregnancy—everything then would have been covered up. That would have made it impossible to charge anyone with rape. All sorts of advantages of the accident.

The winter barley and wheat crops were scanty because of the dry weather; it didn't even pay to harvest them. Farmers across the whole region were complaining, at least the ones who hadn't been drafted.

The young woman, wiry, dark, from the Wiesbaden area, remained under suspicion the whole day. She was in custody in the guard house, watched over by two sentries. Around three o'clock she tried to escape and was shot in the back. Now, at least, Gaubitz had some use for one of the two death certificates he had brought with him. (For the approximately 126 women who lay under the cement slab, he simply signed a list of employees made up from the personnel files.) The young woman who was shot, who had almost been saved by the call of nature, lay until noon of the next day in a room used to store pipe. No next of kin came for the body.

"We won't see a spring like this for another hundred years . . ."

An Episode from the Age of Enlightenment

Baron Harkey, who controlled a vast estate in the vicinity of Boston, married Lady Diana Milford in June 1732. Diana was so cold that the Baron was unable to get close to his wife in any sense of the word. She had acquired this reserved demeanor during her upbringing.

Since no one in her Bostonian family ever touched liquor, the Baron was able to get the young woman drunk at one of his hunting lodges during a hunting trip. He and several of his hunting companions succeeded in overpowering the desperately resisting woman, who, without her customary strength, could not defend herself, and they forced themselves upon her.

Once she realized that screaming and struggling were obviously of no use, she bit into the cushions in distress. She was looking at Lord P., one of the younger members of the hunting party, the same Lord P. whom she later, during her attempt to save her child, regarded as its father.

To her husband she behaved as though nothing had happened. She did see to it, however, that when he sat down to the supper table with his friends, he ate his favorite hunting dog, which she had killed and prepared as game. She tried to obtain a divorce from the Supreme Court in Ottawa, but this was futile since, in a legal sense, her husband had committed no breach of the marriage vow; in fact, it was she more than the rapist who violated the "literal" terms of the marriage contract. As it pertained to the hunting companions, the rape charge did carry a sentence, but the Court dropped the charges in view of their high social position.

Since Diana saw no other way to be free of her husband, she shot the Baron in front of his friends while on a hunting trip. While riding a few feet behind him, she shot him with a powerful hunting rifle. He swayed and then hung down against the horse's body. She came up alongside the shying, runaway horse and hit her husband on the head a few times with the butt of the rifle. The Baron's friends disarmed her and brought her and the dead man to the manor house. She remained silent. For a few weeks, people believed it was a hunting accident, until a few witnesses, people who were not of the aristocratic class, came forward to testify.

Diana, Baroness Harkey, with the assistance of Major-General Vickers, who actually believed in her innocence, was highly circumspect in defending herself before the Court. (Unlike the British nobility in their homeland, the colonial aristocracy had no recourse to an appeal to the House of Lords.) Both were, nevertheless, lured into a situation which had been set up by the presiding judge, an ambitious commoner who already held a baronetcy and wanted to prove his acumen. They consented to a hearing proposed by the Court for the alleged purpose of exonerating the unfortunate lady. The sworn witnesses used this opportunity to claim that the accused was guilty and to condemn her "to hang by the neck until dead."

The accused woman accepted this verdict calmly and resolutely, since she preferred it to having to live with her former husband. She couldn't stand people who didn't know what they wanted, who took action and then complained when the time came to pay the price—their weakness of will merely fended off their enemies for a short while. She changed her attitude, however, when in prison she determined that she was having a child. She knew immediately what these strange sensations meant, and had her defense attorney, Major-General Vickers, Ret., who commanded a certain political influence in the mother country, petition the Governor. She herself turned to the Lord Chief Justice and the Court that sentenced her to request a stay of execution until she could bring the child into the world. Since there was a precedent which forbade putting a pregnant woman to death before the child could be delivered, she succeeded in having a doctor sent to examine her. The doctor, who knew nothing about the rape in the Baron's hunting lodge, but gathered from the testimony that the murdered Baron Harkey had been prevented from consummating the marriage because of his wife's frigidity, concluded on grounds of probability that the woman was not pregnant. Since he was relying on the facts of the case, the doctor felt a conversation with the condemned woman sufficed in this instance. He thought it was absurd that a woman like this, who was supposedly so reserved, expected him to examine her by touching her and feeling her body. He left her believing that the actual examination was yet to come and said nothing about his findings to the Baroness's defense attorney. Rather, he simply sent his report to the Attorney General, so that for the time being the condemned woman believed her child was protected—after all, it was using all its might to see the light of day and poking her—until she received the order of execution from the Attorney General. The authorities arranged for the execution to be carried out as quickly as possible since certain social groups which had taken a lively interest in the case saw the sentence as one of the few satisfying official acts of justice. On the other side, the aristocracy was arrayed in opposition to this "unreasonably excessive sentence." Some seventy prominent Lords filed a brief with the Governor urging him to set the verdict aside because the defendant was a member of the peerage. With this, the Governor could no longer permit the matter to drag on until a pardon was eventually granted by the Queen. Now that the middle-class majority, with a certain show of force, was pressing for a demonstration of their power, the Governor had to act as their representative and accede to a swift execution of the death sentence.

The condemned woman fought back desperately, but was limited to the scope of what she could accomplish from her prison cell. A hastily planned rescue attempt by some of the younger noblemen was foiled when sentry reinforcements appeared. Major-General Vickers, Ret., returned his decorations to the Governor, filed petitions, and finally decided, when all else had failed, to travel to England to interest the Queen in the case. His ship was held up by fog off the coast of Ireland, and he arrived too late.

In response to the urging of the condemned woman, who threatened to tell what she knew about Baron Harkey's private life, the Governor, himself a member of the aristocracy, arranged for one more final hearing to consider the matter of the execution of the sentence. The condemned woman, without her defense attorney, did not succeed in obtaining a second medical examination. All she won was an opportunity to present her argument supporting the fact that she was raped by her husband and his hunting companions, whom she still refused to name. She cited the physical symptoms she had observed. She asked how anyone could think it was her imagination when she could describe the changes in her body so precisely. This very precision, however, raised the suspicion of hypochondria. Since the presiding judge understood nothing about these symptoms and there was a medical report, the jury took the symptoms to be the signs of some illness—if, in fact, these signs actually existed. Illness, however, was not cause for staying the execution. Presiding Chief Justice Dorsen pronounced that, as matters stood, the execution, if it did not take place quickly, would not take place at all. He enumerated, *objectively*, the reasons for sparing the life of the condemned: the uncertainty of human justice and a certain harshness of the woman's fate, *if* her account was true. He came to the conclusion, nevertheless, that she must be put to death, "so that her deed does not devolve upon the province."

Terrified, the condemned woman tried to halt this machine that was taking her child from her. She turned to the aristocracy, her friends, young Lord P., the Queen, and sent messengers to meet Major-General Vickers in Plymouth on his arrival to urge him to hurry. They were successful in having the Queen informed about the case, but the procedure for obtaining a ruling was not completed in time to stay the execution of the sentence. Diana was taken from her cell and hanged, though she fought with all her strength and screamed and struck out so that several executioners were needed to restrain her.

An examination of the dead woman, which had been called for by the aristocracy, established that she was four months pregnant. Major-General Vickers returned from England with an official pardon from the Queen. He challenged the unfortunate Governor and the Attorney General—who were compared to murderers in one of the newspapers he controlled—to a duel, which they declined. Proceedings against the presiding administration led to the Governor's removal from office. Once it became known that the hanged woman was pregnant, the scandal brought about the further result that the credentials of physicians serving the colonial government were henceforth to be more carefully scrutinized. This miscarriage of justice intensified the tone of the Enlightenment, that is, American society of the eighteenth century pressed with intemperate severity toward a more consummate purity.

"The closer you look at a word
the more distantly it looks back at you."

GERMANY

Alexander Kluge, Die Patriotin, *1979.*

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 filmmaker 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 filmmaking. 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 assump-

1. Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "Ein herzloser Schriftsteller," *Der Spiegel*, no. 1 (January 2, 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 monographs by Rainer Lewandowski, Gerhard Bechtold, and Stefanie Carp, as well as the essay collections published by Suhrkamp Materialien and *Text + Kritik*. (See bibliography.)

tion 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 postwar 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 filmmaker, 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 characterize 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 postwar 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 (victimizers, fellow-travelers, 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 modernization 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 behavior.

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 individualized and therefore always recognizable, "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 Samual 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 humor. 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 historicization, and the notion of the social gest as it manifests itself in language, attitudes, and behavior. 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 recognizable 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 modernization 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, behavior, and action. Thus *Lebensläufe* provide 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 theater (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 authentic-

3. Alexander Kluge, *Lebensläufe,* Frankfurt, Fischer, 1964, p. 5.

ity, which the document suggested to many at that time. He was skeptical 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, labor power, and the maximization 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 filmmaking and his theoretical analyses of the public sphere, experience, and the history of labor power, the project of his and Oskar Negt's last gigantic cooperative venture, *Geschichte und Eigensinn* (*History and Obstinacy*).

4. On the relationship between Kluge and Adorno, see especially Miriam Hansen, "Introduction to Adorno: 'Transparencies on Film,'" *New German Critique*, 24/25 (Fall/Winter 1981–82), pp. 186–198. Also see the already mentioned book by Stefanie Carp.

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 filmmaker and film politician, nor was he willing to embrace the abstract choice between literature and politics, to abandon literature for politics 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 organization 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 analyzed 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 realized 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 labor, leisure time, organized 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 characterized by *Sinnentzug,* a withdrawal of meaning.[5] In the foreword, Kluge writes: "With-

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 modernization.

drawal of meaning. A social situation in which the collective life program of human beings falls apart faster than new life programs 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 criticized 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 centerpiece 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 organized sequences, sometimes not. Some of the eighteen notebooks have titles ("Images

6. Alexander Kluge, *Lernprozesse mit tödlichem Ausgang,* Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1973, p. 5.

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 decentered. In opposition to the homogenizing 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 nonidentical is not paralyzed in isolation, not cut off from the larger context in which it is embedded. On the contrary, the glance of radical particularization opens up questions of mediation, coherence, *Sinn*. The multiplicity of stories, voices, 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 nonrepresentability 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 mind set 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

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 Thomas Böhm-Christl, ed., *Alexander Kluge: Materialien*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1983, pp. 212–232.

still "antifictional," as some critics have called it.[8] Mise-en-scène and the counterfeiting of documentary materials results in an antifictionalization of narration which, as Stefanie Carp says in her superb study, is directed "against the cultural fictions that mythicize 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 ideological 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 homogenized 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 homogenization, centralization, administration from above. But rather than privileging heterogeneity as romanticized 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 homogenizing system itself, the heterogeneity which results from the processes of specialization, division, separation that make up the modern world.

The difference between *Neue Geschichten,* on the one hand, and *Die Patriotin*

8. Dietmar Kamper, "Phantastische Produktivität," in Böhm-Christl, 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, Suhrkamp, 1975, p. 222.
11. For an account of this aspect of Kluge's work, see Rainer Stollmann, "Alexander Kluge als Realist," in Böhm-Christl, pp. 245–278.
12. Kluge, "Die schärfste Ideologie," p. 216.

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, labor 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 analyzed.

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 enamored of the repetition compulsions of tragic theater 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-house 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, 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

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 Böhm-Christl, pp. 77–116.

> 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.

14. Kluge, "Die Differenz," in Kluge, *Theodor Fontane, Heinrich von Kleist, Anna Wilde*, Berlin, Wagenbach, 1987, p. 89.

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

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> *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 authorization.*
>
> —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 toward a repeal of Paragraph 218,[1] and who were daily confronted with the problems of birth control and

1. This paragraph of the penal code outlawed abortion in the Federal Republic.

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 trivializing their most important problems. He goes even further than this: abortion is characterized as criminal without Kluge's ever questioning this characterization. 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 women 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

2. *Frauen und Film,* 3 (1974), p. 13.
3. B. Ruby Rich, "She Says, He Says: The Power of the Narrator in Modernist Film Politics," *Discourse,* 6 (Fall 1983), p. 34.
4. *Frauen und Film,* p. 17.
5. See especially the interview with Ulrich Gregor in *Herzog, Kluge, Straub,* Peter W. Jansen and Wolfram Schütte, eds., Munich, 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, Suhrkamp, 1972.

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 thematization 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,* 1965–66) 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 socialization, 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.

Alexandra Kluge in Yesterday Girl, *1966.*

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 sensitizing 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 behavior 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.

Hannelore Hoger in Artists under the Big Top: Perplexed, *1967.*

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

8. Kluge, "Die Utopie Film," *Film,* February 1965, pp. 11–13.

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 1912–13, 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 analyzed 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 prefascist 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 '30s.

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 politicizing the author, which is not identical with impressing upon him his obligation to produce "tendential literature" (*Tendenzliteratur*), but is rather a demythologizing and socializing 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 fascism, dialectically forces the author to revise his position. Otherwise he will be liquidated by the universal development of technology, which is economically and

9. Lecture given on April 27, 1934 at the Institute for the Study of Fascism in Paris, which appears in Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften,* vol. II, no. 2, Frankfurt, 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.

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 toward "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 institutionalized public; and, as an example of such a modification, the transcending of the "barriers between writing and image" in the sense of a "literarization 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 toward revolutionary beginnings. In a similar way, in the 1960s, when the task at hand was that of opposing the postwar 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" (*Nummerndramaturgie*) 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 mainstream 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

11. Benjamin, "The Author as Producer," pp. 230–233.

reconceptualization 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's 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 filmmaker, 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 labor."[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

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,* Susan L. Cocalis and Henry A. Lea, eds., 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. Gregor, p. 163.

14. See Kluge, "Zum Autorenfilm," in Klaus Eder and Alexander Kluge, *Ulmer Dramaturgien,* Munich, Hanser, 1980, p. 101.

15. Kluge in the interview with Ulrich Gregor, p. 158.

16. "Marktstruktur und Bedurfnis," in Michael Dost, Florian Hopf, and Alexander Kluge, *Filmwirtschaft in der BRD und in Europa. Götterdämmerung in Raten,* Munich, Hanser, 1973, p. 75.

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 organization 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 toward realization. The author, cameraman, and producer cannot make themselves adequately understood in the jargon that is typical for the industry.[19]

17. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
18. Klaus Eder and Alexander Kluge, *Ulmer Dramaturgien*, p. 26.
19. *Ibid.*

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*-filmmaker 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 "literarization" 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 filmmaker 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 filmmakers' efforts, of whether or not they get stuck on the way to a 'unity within variety.'"[21] Kluge has recognized 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,

20. Interview with Ulrich Gregor, p. 160.
21. Kluge, *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, pp. 208 ff.
22. Eder and Kluge, *Ulmer Dramaturgien*, p. 106.

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 organizational 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

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 Bedurfnis," p. 84.

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 toward 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

27. Kluge, interview with Ulrich Gregor, pp. 159 ff.

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 "literarization" 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 realization 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 nonprofessional 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 theater.

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 toward 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 toward 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

28. Kluge, *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, p. 182.

himself in his conceptualization 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 toward 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 sociohistorically 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 re-form 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 filmmaker, 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 filmmakers had to realize 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 filmmakers 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 toward 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 characterization as

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: ratlos. Die Ungläubige. — Projekt Z. Sprüche der Leni Peickert,* Munich, Piper, 1968.

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 recognized 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 fetishization 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 sound track 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 relativizes 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 fetishize by installing a male gaze. A critical reflection of this kind on the role of the actress is continued in the film itself—

30. Rudolf Hohlweg, "Musik für Film—Film für Musik. Annäherungen an Herzog, Kluge, Straub," in Peter W. Jansen and Wolfram Schütte, eds., *Herzog, Kluge, Straub,* p. 54 ff.

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 "aestheticization 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 toward 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 emblematize 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 labors 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 characterization 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 good-bye 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 thematizes the break with bourgeois art—which had been understood by Benjamin as auratic, and by Adorno as autonomous—and the turn toward 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 filmmaker 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 Peickert—"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 defense 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 toward 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 Labor of Sorrow: Manfred Peickert R.I.P." are in color. 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

Alexander Kluge. Artists under the Big Top: Perplexed. *1967.*

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 color 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 demon-

strate 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 distantiation 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 dramatizing; 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

31. This is true of Kluge's films in general. See, for example, Miriam Hansen's essay, "Kluge's *Yesterday Girl,*" in Eric Rentschler, ed., *German Film and Literature. Adaptations and Transformations,* New York and London, Methuen, 1986, pp. 193–216.

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 narrative 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 criticize 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 centered 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.

On Negt and Kluge

FREDRIC JAMESON

Nine years separate *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung* and *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, the two collaborative works of Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge.[1] What first strikes the "materialist" reader (the reader of physical books, rather than of "ideas") is the evidence they exhibit of the typographic revolution that—along with the postmodern, the end of the '60s, and the defeat of the Left—intervenes between them. The first of the two clearly suffers under the constraints of classical discursive form. Its six official chapters, which set out to establish a theory of the "proletarian" public sphere, find themselves forced against their will to produce instead the rudiments of a theory of the bourgeois public sphere. Here everything has already begun to flee into the footnotes and appendices: three "excurses" and some twenty separate "commentaries" now fill up a third of a five-hundred-page volume, into which already a few illustrations begin to emerge.

Elsewhere in the various theoretical zones of the "First World," new ideologies of the heterogeneous and of Difference have begun to inspire "rhizomatic" notions of form: Deleuzian "plateaus" are being laid out side by side in separate and seemingly unrelated chapters, while the two stark columns of *Glas* dare you to figure out when to jump from one to the other. But even more definitively the discontinuities of Kluge's stories and films bar any return to the traditional essay or treatise, closing the road with a landslide of rubble ("You can imagine the problem of antagonistic realism in terms of the analysis of the site of an explosion. The explosion scattered objects across a wide area. The force of the explosion, in other words, what really moved, is no longer present . . ." [p. 348]). Benjamin's "dialectical constellations" or montages—like Pound's ideograms—seem genealogically to present a family likeness, although in these predecessors the "heap of images" still strongly hints at some *right* way of putting everything together. Yet Kluge's own aesthetic (and that of *Geschichte und Eigen-*

1. *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung: Zur Organisationsanalyse von bürgerlicher und proletarischer Öffentlichkeit*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1972; *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, Frankfurt, Zweitausendeins, 1981. All page numbers given in the text refer to this second volume.

sinn, which is something of a theoretical film) is decidedly post-Benjaminian rather than post-Brechtian. And (despite Kluge's long personal association with Adorno), the later volume finds its ancestors in Benjamin's enormous and fragmentary *Passagen-Werk,* or at least in what one imagines this last project might have become. Here, for example, is what Kluge says about one of his own films:

> [It] does not produce statements but *proportions;* an *object* one can argue with. Our point of departure is the following observation: that there is no immediate form of sense experience, or at least no organized form, that can encompass the various individual areas of work and milieus of production. Only a spurious public sphere offers such order and unity, as in the media. . . . The question is: how does one proceed with a disordered reality, with mixed experiences? How does one learn in the middle of errors? How do we deal with distorted objective and subjective impressions . . . ? You have to take on *reality as raw material.* . . . Our opinion is that the viewers can use this film to test their own concepts of what is public and what is realistic.[2]

The segmentation in Kluge's stories, however, is not merely perspectival and cinematographic (a fifteen-minute sequence of experience juxtaposed with a paragraph foreshortening eight years); it also projects qualitative leaps into incommensurable dimensions; this particular reading experience is prolonged in *Geschichte und Eigensinn,* where notes on Marx's "mode of production" (he dozed much of the day on the sofa, with people coming in and out, wrote nasty comments in the margins, strewed his papers with tobacco spots), disquisitions on *Blitzkrieg* and on the *Chanson de Roland,* illustrations drawn from evolutionary theory and the history of automata, anecdotes about Kant, quotes from the letters to Fliess, studies of domestic labor, the history of prices, the politics of the German romantics, on-the-spot readings of fairy tales, succeed each other unpredictably and compete with an extraordinary collection of hundreds of images drawn from medieval manuscripts, films, workers' newspapers, ads, graphs, scientific models, newsreel photographs, pictures of old furniture, science fiction illustrations, penmanship exercises, and the reconstruction of Roman roads or Renaissance battles. The various chapters, sections, paragraphs, notes, and digressions (themselves following a variety of numeration systems) are reclassified typographically, by means of alternate typefaces, frames and blocks, and, most dramatically, black pages with white type that interleaf the more "normal" experiments (sometimes, as with the alternation of color and black and white in the *Heimat* series by Kluge's former cameraman Edgar Reitz, one has the feeling

2. Alexander Kluge and Edgar Reitz, "In Gefahr und grösster Not bringt der Mittelweg den Tod," *Kursbuch,* 41 (1975), pp. 42–43.

that it is the shift that counts, and not any stable one-to-one correspondence between the content and the mode of representation: Proust already said as much about the alternation of the imperfect and preterit in Flaubert's tenses).

Authority is thus displaced and transformed; reading is still an exercise, a training, a socialization, and a pedagogy, but there is very little of the terroristic or the disciplinary in this work, nor even the dialectical imperative of the older montage, where, as in Godard, one is still challenged to find or guess the proper standpoint. Here the gaps and leaps suggest an associative process different from our own, or at least trust suggests the existence of such an alternative somewhere that it might be interesting to try to approximate, if not to learn. Indeed, the emphasis on learning is here so ubiquitous that we are willing to entertain the possibility of some utopian way of establishing relations between themes and exhibits which is not Negt and Kluge's private style or methodological property, but which remains to be invented.

Yet, as Negt and Kluge never tire of reminding us, the experience of production is distinct from and incommensurable with its instruments or its products: political economy, capitalogic, deals with this last, but it is more difficult, and fraught with indirection, to seek, as here, to write a "political economy of labor power" (p. 139). This also means that it will be structurally perverse to seek to convey anything about this book by means of the various "theories" it throws up in passing, as we shall have to do here, patiently turning back into a "system" what wanted to be a way of doing things, or even a habit, in some strong, positive sense. Thinking here (including "theory," which throughout this book means Marxism) is therapeutically reduced to a component of action, itself considered as a form of production—as we shall see shortly.

A similar qualification must be registered at this point about language, and in particular about our words for concepts, about which Negt and Kluge have taken some relatively uncanonical positions. One of the ways in which the story of modern thought can be told, indeed, is as an exploration of the consequences of a radical linguistic skepticism, in which Nietzsche's philological sophistication or the Sartrean attack on ordinary language in *Nausea* culminates paradoxically in a philosophical privileging of language in structuralism and poststructuralism that seals the diagnosis and confirms language itself (in forms that range from Western syntax to Kantian grids or discursive epistemes) as a new equivalent of ideology itself and as the source of all error. This formulation is, however, utterly misleading insofar as it implies the possibility of truth (that is to say, of getting outside of language itself). The problem of producing philosophical concepts under these circumstances slowly drifts into the problem of the status of a new "theoretical" language or discourse, about which all one can argue is that it must be radically provisional and must abolish itself in the process. Meanwhile, the equally influential discussions of essentialism and anti-essentialism or anti-foundationalism would be better grasped as an indictment of the master linguistic

codes rather than of "beliefs," about which no one is very clear whether or not they exist. Fulfilled or unfulfillable, however, the mission of philosophy today seems to be at one with the problem of ensuring the mortality of its language.

A related, yet inverted, impulse is at work in that tradition of German philosophical speculation which Jean Paulhan used to call the "proof by etymology,"[3] the inspection of the roots and radicals of contemporary German for traces of some older and more primal mode of relating to being itself. The procedure is defended on the grounds of some more direct, unmixed, unmediated relationship to the tribal language than what survives in the Romance languages or English, for example, and it allows German philosophy to assert its claim to parity with Greece, where Socrates (or Plato) often argued in a similar way, transforming "folk etymology" into an avenue of philosophical reason (a more distant, but related analogy, is to be found in China, where the written character offers similar evidence of older, "truer" meanings). The misuse of such arguments in Heidegger will make their recurrence in the Left thinking of Negt and Kluge perplexing (thinking—*begreifen*—as related to *greifen,* grasping or gripping in the production process [pp. 20–22]), until it is understood that it is not "nature," or "being" to which they appeal, but rather to what Marx called the *naturwüchsig,* or in other words the significantly different structure of earlier, simpler social formations. On the other hand, this "method" need have nothing of the religious solemnity of Heidegger's stylistic rituals:

> In Kluge's segment of *Deutschland im Herbst,* we already saw Gabi Teichert digging with a spade for German history. These scenes have been transferred to *Die Patriotin;* where digging for the German past and for German history has become the central metaphor. The figurative language of "digging for the treasures of the past" is taken by Kluge absolutely literally, rendering it visually in the concrete image of a physical excavation of the frozen earth. What results is a kind of surrealistic image-pun in the tradition of Buñuel or Karl Valentin, which has the effect of distancing the viewer: who is then brought to observe the eccentric activities of Gabi Teichert less with empathy than with critical skepticism. So also when she translates the knowledge contained in fat historical tomes into sense perception and in that spirit "works on" old folios, something also "literally" illustrated: she dissects the history books with saws, drills, and hammers, and dissolves their pages in orange juice in order to choke them down. She then thus "bores her way into history," "assimilates history into herself," etc.—all unrealistic dream images which are grounded on linguistic figures. As she participates in illegal excavations of the old city wall as

3. Jean Paulhan, *La Preuve par l'étymologie,* Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1953.

> a part-time archeologist, she hopes to "grasp" [*be-greifen*] the past in the form of the prehistoric utensils, that is to say, to be able to "take hold" of it and to "understand" it all at once.[4]

About such "efforts" to restore the purity of philosophical language, however, whether by way of fresh intervention or linguistic archeology, two further things now need to be observed. Whatever the crisis of philosophical discourse owes to the metaphysical or ontological doubtfulness of language itself, that crisis can also be read in socioeconomic terms as a local result of intensified commodification, by which abstract philosophical terms (now seen as something like the private property or brand names of their producers) enter the force field of commodity reification, where their increasingly rapid transformation into cultural objects and images equally rapidly undermines the philosophical legitimacy of these terms (along with that of philosophy itself). This is also what is meant when philosophical concepts are described as "outmoded" or "old-fashioned" (a response which would have sounded very strange indeed in traditional philosophy); this seems to be what Paul DeMan had in mind when he reflected on the "thematization" which was the fate of philosophical themes and concepts in modern times.

Other solutions remain possible, however, in the contemporary proliferation of ephemeral or provisional theoretical codes and discourses, solutions which do not (in some outmoded or old-fashioned way) propose either the invention of truer codes and discourses or the return to purer ones. Such is, for example, the notion of "transcoding" as a contemporary alternative to traditional philosophical critique. What is implied here is that the various "master terms" or "master codes" govern and name distinct, often contiguous and overlapping zones of the real, such that a systematic alternation between them or comparison of their signifying capacities results not in the emergence of any new linguistic or terminological synthesis, but in a kind of mapping out of the raw materials in which the real consists (Hjemslev's linguistic "substance"). The process is analogous to the problem of translation in the realm of natural languages, which all project at least minimally distinct cognates of the meaning a translated sentence is supposed to share with its original. What is philosophical about translation is, then, not the effort to reproduce a foreign utterance as the *same,* but rather the deeper experience it affords of the radical differences between natural languages.

Transcoding imposes itself at once with Negt and Kluge's first book, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung* (1972), whose title can only be imperfectly translated as *The Public Sphere and Experience*. The motivation for the English equivalent is clear enough, insofar as the substantive *publicity* has already long since been

4. Anton Kaes, *Deutschlandbilder,* Munich, Text + Kritik, 1987, p. 48 (forthcoming from Harvard University Press as *From Hitler to Heimat*).

captured by a specialized segment of that larger public domain the German *Öffentlichkeit* renders; while the notion of a "sphere" or "zone" — transferable to other dimensions of social life, such as culture — generates interesting theoretical problems in its own right (which the term would not do in German). Meanwhile, the topic itself can be said in some sense to "belong" to Jürgen Habermas, whose first book *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (*The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 1962) offers a history of the emergence of the institutions of the early bourgeois media, including their philosophical and juridical theorization, from a perspective that will remain constant throughout Habermas's work: namely, that the values of the bourgeois revolutionary period remain universal, so that it would be improper to analyze these values in terms of the functional ideology of a specific social class. The palpable limits and failures of those values are, therefore, for Habermas not internal or structural, but rather the result of the historical blocking of the bourgeois revolutionary process that has remained incomplete and unrealized. This perspective is not shared by Negt and Kluge, for whom the tendential monopoly of the public sphere in modern times is very intimately related to the class function of the bourgeois concept of the public and to the nature of the institutions that emerged from it. They thus propose and support a radically different type of collective openness and communication, which they call "the proletarian public sphere."[5]

Transcoding means, however, something more than mere translation. To appreciate the former's significance, we need to return to the second term of Negt and Kluge's title, *Erfahrung,* or "experience," in order to measure the deeper implicit claim that the concept of the "public sphere" governs a far greater area of social life than it does in Habermas. In his early work Habermas tends to reduce the public sphere to the relatively specialized institutions of the nascent media (newspapers, public opinion, "representative" or parliamentary debate, and so forth); his later philosophical development (speech acts, communicative action) makes it clear that he is as suspicious of such phenomenological concepts as experience as anyone on the other side of the Rhine. Negt and Kluge can, therefore, be aligned with anti-structuralist defenses of the notion of experience that range from E. P. Thompson and Raymond Williams to Sartre, but with some unexpected differences and modifications, as will become clear when we examine the prolongation of this idea and value in their later work.

What is significant about Negt and Kluge's extension of the notion of the public sphere, however, is that, while continuing to include the institutional referents of Habermas's history (in their contemporary forms, such as television), they seek to widen the notion in such a way as to secure its constitutive relation-

5. In both books, Negt and Kluge use the term *proletarian* in its most general sense: "Proletarian, i.e., separated from the means of production, designates not merely the labor characteristics of the industrial proletariat, but all similarly restricted productive capacities" (*Geschichte und Eigensinn,* p. 445, n.16).

ship to the very possibility of social or individual experience in general. The structure of the "public sphere" is now seen as what enables experience or, on the other hand, what limits and cripples it. This structure also determines that fundamental modern pathology whereby "experience" itself is sundered, its unevenly divided halves assigned to stereotypical public expressions, on the one hand, and, on the other, to that zone of the personal and the private which seems to offer shelter from the public and the political at the same time that it is itself a social fact produced by the public and political. At once, therefore, *Öffentlichkeit* becomes something like a "named concept," in competition with a host of other concepts that range from Freud's "talking cure" to the very notion and language of "democracy" itself, in its political as well as its social forms. ("Work-place democracy," for example, now constitutes a central and ineradicable space of the "proletarian public sphere," and the political stake in transcoding can now be measured by way of a comparison between the relative weight of the political rhetoric of "democracy" and that of the new discursive space of *Öffentlichkeit.*)

The originality of Negt and Kluge, therefore, lies in the way in which the hitherto critical and analytic force of what is widely known as "discourse analysis" (as in Foucault's descriptions of the restrictions and exclusions at work in a range of so-called discursive formations) is now augmented, not to say completed, by the utopian effort to produce a discursive space of a new type. But this redramatizes the philosophical problem of the creation of a new language or terminology in a way that relates it to the very issue of the public sphere itself: for there are social and historical reasons why a new and more adequate philosophical language — which is to say a new *public* language — is lacking. The forms and experiences to which such a language corresponds do not yet exist. The very absence of a proletarian public sphere problematizes the attempt to name it, except in the gaps in our present discourse. This holds true especially for the conception of "work" and of "production" which Negt and Kluge attempt to produce in *Geschichte und Eigensinn,* and which they also describe as a "political economy of labor *power* [*Arbeitsvermögen*]" (pp. 136–143). But even in Marxism these words designate a restricted or specialized zone of human activity: work, labor, or production exist only insofar as they can be "realized" as such (as in "the reproduction of the worker's labor power"). In the first pages of *Capital* the inaugural separation of use from exchange *value* (and the subsequent use of this term to designate only this last) means that Marx will write a political economy of labor, a capitalogic, and not the anatomy of its demiurgic underside, the anthropology of human productive power attempted here. *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung* was in that sense a failure: we set out, Negt and Kluge tell us, to project a proletarian public sphere and found ourselves reduced to writing a critique of the limits of the bourgeois public sphere. *Öffentlichkeit* will, however, return in the later work in the climactic concept of a historically new "commercial-industrial public sphere" (*Produktionsöffentlichkeit*) which is identified with history itself.

The second book, therefore, partially transcodes the older one: but it produces a more fundamental discursive challenge to current doxa, not merely in its ongoing commitment to the category of experience (including the anthropological dimension of the description of a whole range of bodily, psychological, and cultural "capacities"), but above all in its most unseasonable foregrounding of the category of production itself (which the authors understand in a very different way from fashionable and metaphorical, often cultural, uses of this term in the Althusserian and post-Althusserian period). Is a concept of production absolutized in this way and extended to all of human activity still a "productionist" one in the bad sense? The judgment will be more adequately made, however, on the basis of the success of the language experiment itself, and on the capacity of a language of production to articulate a wide range of materials normally governed by other languages or codes, most notably the psychoanalytic realm, the area of desire, fantasy, the intimate, the unconscious, but also that very different order of realities which we call history, or historical events (here most specifically German history). We are familiar with cognate experiments in the first of these areas in Deleuze and Guattari (occasionally referred to in these pages). The second area would seem to stand in some conflict with what we have termed the anthropological dimension of this work, in the sense in which philosophical anthropologies (particularly where they posit "aggressivity" or a "will to power" as a component of human nature, as in sociobiology) generally involve an implicit commitment to positivities, thereby setting the violence and the catastrophes of history beyond their reach.

The problem of history is, to be sure, registered in the title of Negt and Kluge's second work, but not yet the concept of production (nor even that of labor power), which is oddly and substitutively "represented" by the untranslatable word *Eigensinn.* Miriam Hansen has rendered this term in English as "obstinacy," but also as "autonomy"; Andrew Bowie meanwhile renders it as "willful meaning."[6] I will add my own suggestion: "self-will," which restores the component of ownness or primal property and balances the (perfectly correct) insistence on the arbitrary and the stubborn with the coexisting connotation of an immanent logic, a drive or impulse remaining faithful to itself and pursuing its own autonomous line of force, its own specific trajectory, which is then also, as in Bowie's reading of the term, its meaning. I gloss the term this way to remove the

6. And see, on Kluge more generally, Miriam Hansen, "Space of History, Language of Time: Kluge's *Yesterday Girl* (1966)," in *German Film and Literature: Adaptations and Transformations,* Eric Rentschler, ed., New York, Methuen, 1985, pp. 193–216; and "Alexander Kluge, Cinema and the Public Sphere: the Construction Site of Counter-History," *Discourse,* 6 (1984), pp. 53–74; and "The Stubborn Discourse: History and Story-Telling in the Films of Alexander Kluge," in *Persistence of Vision,* 2 (Fall 1985), pp. 19–29. See also Andrew Bowie, "Alexander Kluge: An Introduction," *Cultural Critique,* 4 (Fall 1986), pp. 111–118; "*Geschichte und Eigensinn,*" *Telos,* 66 (Winter 1985–1986), pp. 183–190; and "New Histories: Aspects of the Prose of Alexander Kluge," *Journal of European Studies,* 12 (1982), pp. 180–208.

henceforth misleading overtones of the word *self* in my version. Not that there is no question of "identity" in this work, but that identity—collective or individual—is to be achieved in the future: the self, if you like, of Marx's *Gesamtarbeiter,* or collective worker, and not of any current or former notion of the construction of the subject (such as the Freudian structure, where, Negt and Kluge suggest, the psychic functions operate in the manner of bourgeois parliamentary representation [p. 382]). It is not, therefore, some primal "self" that has *Eigensinn,* but rather a whole range of historically acquired and developed skills, drives, capacities, each of which makes its own "stubborn" demands and has its own distinct "meaning." Such forces, however, can be residual or emergent; they often fail to be used to capacity; and their unemployment generates specific pathologies, as does their repression, alienation, or diversion. What also generates social pathology is their multiplicity, which is to say the permanent possibility for contradiction or for a harmful coordination among them. This is, for example, what explains the circumstance (so often dramatized for us by Kluge's fables) in which a "capacity," which is a splendid natural force in its own right, may, in the historical accident of combination with other equally valuable forces, have deathly or indeed deadly effects.

What is implicit in this first appeal to some deeper, more meaningful logic—if not of the human instincts, then at least of the socially and historically constructed human drives and powers—is a repudiation of vanguard Left politics. This is explicit in both of Negt and Kluge's books. *Eigensinn,* or labor power, labor capacity, becomes something like Gramscian "good sense," which is inherent in the collectivity and scarcely requires the supplement of intellectual or vanguard political stimulus. That this "good sense" may often seem to require supplement, however, is the effect of a deeper natural conservatism in the human organization, related to the requirements of shelter, protection, and subsistence. A number of pages in both books, indeed, systematically analyze historical crises in the labor movement from this perspective, and such analyses are clearly crucial to Negt and Kluge's project, which could still, in 1972, appeal to conceptions of cultural revolution, but which in 1981 speaks from a situation of Left discouragement and pessimism. Negt and Kluge nevertheless assert a longer, geological or evolutionary type of hope, a hope which retains from cultural revolution its pedagogical impulse and its drive toward self-formation and self-reconstruction.

Geschichte und Eigensinn is organized around three enormous subsections: "The Historical Organization of Labor Capacity"; "Germany as a Commercial-Industrial Public Sphere [*Produktionsöffentlichkeit*]"; "The Power of Relationship (or Relationality) [*Gewalt des Zusammenhangs*]." It will be misleading, but indispensable, to describe these sections as follows: the first sets in place the elements of what I have called Negt and Kluge's "anthropology," namely their "political economy of labor power"—something which involves not only the labor process, but evolutionary materials and an interest in the coexistence of a variety of temporal rhythms and cycles (individual, historical, and biological). The second

section then attempts to confront the "peculiarities" of German history by way of these new production categories: its formal problem lies, therefore, in the conceptual gap between the language of historical events and a conception of production whose scale and focus is clearly very different from historiography and often felt to be incommensurable with it. The final section—which also includes a disquisition on war as a kind of production, and a lengthy engagement with existential experience and psychoanalytic materials—can best be grasped as the attempt to produce a new active ethical and political value which is also a working analytical concept, namely that of relationship or relationality itself. Theoretical positions emerge in each of these lengthy sections, and I will try to convey some of them, though these positions are not "argued," as the philosophers might put it, and the form of presentation is no longer that of the philosophical treatise or discursive essay. Rather, we might describe the book as a kind of conceptual film (if by "film" we have in mind one of Kluge's own).

The crucial mediating concept in the introductory "anthropological" section—which must be abstract enough to function for a variety of different kinds of materials, but also contain within itself the force of an event (trauma, change, scar, transformation, an irrevocable modification that also generates new future possibilities)—is the still-classical Marxian notion of *Trennung*—separation, division; in Marx, above all, the historical "separation" of the producer from the means of production (as well as from the produced object and from production itself as my own activity). This is for Marx, of course, the central structural feature of the historical catastrophe at the very origin of capitalism, namely so-called "primitive accumulation." There is, therefore, already in Marx a mediation between a form of production and a historical event. Negt and Kluge will now project this event—primitive accumulation—along with its structural concept—*Trennung*, division and separation—into a more general historical and philosophical one, which designates all the catastrophes of history, most crucially at its beginning and in the destruction of traditional agricultural and communal societies. The concept of separation then becomes available for other kinds of materials: in the traditional Marxist literature, for the division of labor, for the separation between manual and intellectual labor, for the fragmentation of the psyche into distinct "faculties," and finally for the notion of reification itself (in Lukács, primarily a matter of the "Taylorization" of social life). Here in Negt and Kluge the primary emphasis seems to lie on the separation of the various work powers or capacities from one another, with results that will be clear later on.

It will be objected that such a concept implicitly or explicitly tends to valorize the phenomenon of "unification" on which it necessarily depends. That may be so—and their vision of communal life on the land would certainly seem to provide evidence of historical nostalgia—but Negt and Kluge explicitly repudiate conceptions of the dialectic that aim at restoring some primal unity ("what kind of reality would the reappropriation of something lost have?" [pp. 42–44]).

Far from perpetuating the longing for reunification, therefore, the fact and the concept of *Trennung* will have the very different effect of generating relationality as such, the ceaseless establishment of new connections and relationships. This, too, has its formal analogy in Marx, in the emergence, from the historical catastrophe of industrial wage labor, of the historically new value and social relationship he calls *cooperation* (p. 192, and see below).

The other concept that emerges from this enlarged and generalized notion of "primitive accumulation" turns on what is thereby accumulated: in this "political economy of labor power" that will be precisely "dead labor," stored labor, the human labor of the past—a mysterious capital of human productive activity most dramatically associated in Marx with machinery and industrialization, in which there is a sudden quantum leap in the amassing of the labor time that had characterized previous human history. In its larger deployment here in Negt and Kluge, "dead labor" means tradition generally, cultural capital *and* habitus all together (to use Bourdieu's terminology), and very much includes the reproduction of acquired characteristics, of archaic character structures, and the historical levels of the psyche. Dead labor is, however, for Negt and Kluge, a baleful concept,[7] which can account for the violences of history and its seemingly cyclical, irrepressible disasters (and which thereby avoids the ideological and anthropological temptation to posit negative forces within "human nature," such as aggressivity and a will to power). In this negative inflection of the notion of stored labor they approach the Sartrean idea of the "practico-inert" (developed in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*), where human praxis, successfully invested in the transformation of the object world, then "magically" returns upon human beings with an autonomous power of its own, as destructive fate and the now incomprehensible and antihuman "counterfinality" of a history beyond all human control. Any comparison between these two cognate philosophical projections needs to register the difference in emphasis between Sartre's central category of praxis—as realized human activity of any type—and Negt and Kluge's notion of labor power or capacity, which stresses potentiality and the subterranean formation and exercise of a variety of capabilities. Sartre's vision of counter-finality is thereby incomparably more dramatic and vivid than Negt and Kluge's, but also relatively monolithic, subsuming a whole range of historical disruptions beneath the single named concept. In Negt and Kluge, however, dead labor can have a variety of distinct historical results: in German history, the ur-trauma of the peasant wars, but also the initial disintegration of communal

7. "Only in wartime is the abrupt liquification of dead historical labor translated into a real acceleration. The thousand-year-old city of Magdeburg burned down in two days during the Thirty Years War. But as far as the historical process is concerned hardly anything was brought into movement during the Thirty Years War. In particular no social relationship expressed itself in any real way in the burning of Magdeburg . . ." (*Geschichte und Eigensinn*, p. 276).

production at the dawn of feudalism, and the great "lost opportunity" of the anti-Napoleonic war of national liberation of 1811.

But the assessment of these historical events involves a reading of the Marxian "modes of production," which must first be put in place. Characteristically, the attention that Negt and Kluge give to the various modes of production will be directed by their interest in the specific capacities and forms of labor power developed in each. Their first schema (pp. 165–210), then, isolates three different moments of production: agriculture, handicraft, and industrial work. To specify these as distinct kinds of labor (as well as different historical dominants or moments of social development) is to begin to imagine how capabilities needed and developed in one form might undergo a kind of sedimentation in the succeeding one, leaving traces and scars in layers on subjectivity and the body, on experience, and in history itself. Like a swimmer's muscles, mobilized during wartime for the digging of trenches, and then used in the postwar era to make a living in circus acrobatics, historically developed capabilities persist, unused, misused, or readapted, occasionally interfering with each other or symptomatically marking and deforming the gestures current in some new kind of daily life.

Labor on the land is clearly for Negt and Kluge the "natural" form of human social life; or rather (since propositions of this type are alien to their work), it is the oldest form—the foundation, but also the starting point—of the European, and specifically the German, social formation:

> We can only measure the comprehensive potentialities of field work by way of their modern transformations. Since all producers today derive, via their ancestors, from the peasant class, there is something like a "peasant in me." This component of contemporary labor capacity—in a certain respect the latter's foundation—reveals itself (and reveals itself today, as distinct from its *historical* representations) as *versatile* [*wendig*], working in a *noncompartmentalized* way, developing more concrete visions and intimations of *collective life* than the other, later modes. The subtle component of properly *intellectual* activity follows the logic of a *peasant* or *gardening* mode of production. Labor capacity that aims at emancipatory processes or economic consciousness must necessarily deploy some vision of original property that stems from the history of agriculture. The idea of the "natural" qualities of a product and the development of human measures of time and temporality also derive from that source. In contrast, actual agricultural work in this country today is a subset of the industrial process. (p. 174)

The observation will be misused or misunderstood if it is taken to be the development of a conservative or nostalgic ideological vision of the past. It poses, rather, an empirical question about the actually existing utopian imagination and, thereby, about the possibility of the development of a political vision of change

and action. What is asserted here and throughout is that *Eigentum* designates something more fundamental and necessary than property (the literal meaning of the word) in the juridical sense of forms of private property that come into being historically and can also be abolished. *Eigentum*—now in the more etymological sense of ownness, what belongs to me or us, what informs *Eigensinn*—is not a matter of possession, but of place and space and of our relationship to what Marx called "the body of the earth." The consequence is that for Negt and Kluge the vision of a purely urban utopia is impossible.[8] The utopian imagination will always have to come to terms in one way or another with the demands of this oldest layer of consciousness or labor capacity. What must then be stressed is not merely that this is also an urgent political issue—for there can be no development of any genuine political movement or praxis without a vision of the future and of radical change—but also that, in the postmodern era, characterized by the atrophy of the historical imagination in general and of the capacity to project the future in particular, the analysis of the way in which the utopian imagination functions is very much on the agenda.

In contrast, Negt and Kluge's devaluation of handicraft is to be read against a situation in which intellectuals are as a rule strongly drawn to this mode, which seems to offer an idealization of their own professional activities and of writing and cultural production in general[9] (the authors' more comprehensive discussion of the derivation of the work of intellectuals from more general productive capacities is to be found in the chapter entitled "On certain striking evasions in the functioning of intelligence," pp. 415–488). Handicraft can then be seen to project values of métier and craftsmanship whose darker side is less often stressed: not merely the extension of labor to non-natural products, nor even the tendential "liberation" from time and space, from the earth and from the seasons, but above all some historically new principle of competition which arises from the work of small producers,

> each of whom finds his point of honor in the effort to distinguish his activity from that of everyone else. This principle of competition determines a general expansion of production. . . . Such tendential expansion is deeply embedded in handicraft, even to the point of self-destruction. The guilds then necessarily try to correct this impulse by a limitation on products and a restriction on the choice of possible trades or callings. (p. 175)

8. Here once again their thought finds some resonance in that of Raymond Williams: the claims of an urban versus a pastoral utopia have been dramatized most richly in science fiction, particularly in the "debate" between Samuel Delany and Ursula Le Guin. Kluge seems, however, to have modified this anti-urban position in *Industrialisierung des Bewusstseins,* Munich, Piper, 1985.

9. As, for example, in Roland Barthes's description of the handicraft aesthetic of the early modern, in particular in Flaubert and Baudelaire. See Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero,* trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith, Boston, Beacon Press, 1967.

The very values of craftsmanship itself, then, lead dialectically to competition and to a limitless drive to overproduce commodities, which foreshadows the market system itself and its structure and rhythms.

> The craftsman must work at two kinds of things at once: (1) his product and (2) the conviction in his client . . . that *his* product is indispensable and *uniquely* useful. This is a conviction the field worker does not particularly need to arouse. But what happens in handicraft labor is that, where painstaking effort is not visible, where the métier does not self-consciously make its presence felt, the activity ceases to be thought of as a matter of craftsmanship and stops being a viable profession. Professional honor must be present in the thing, like a payment for it—some first payment, which includes the recognition of its style and specificity, only then to be followed by the second one, in cash. (p. 176)

Professional jealousies, pride, competition, as well as the limitless dynamic of sheer commodity accumulation are therefore already implicit in this mode as the vices inherent in its virtues.

The industrial mode, and the nature of industrial labor, needs less attention since it has been so carefully examined from Marx himself on down. In a very different spirit from Negt and Kluge, the essentially urban perspective of Sartre often led him to celebrate the anti- and postnatural consciousness generated by work with machinery—an insistence that is clearly an essential feature of any consequent "workerism" or "workerist" ideology. The specific forms of the alienation of factory work—and in particular its specific divisions, or *Trennungen*—are more vividly reflected in contemporary theory, particularly in Harry Braverman's fundamental analysis of Taylorism and its effects. This kind of analysis, whose relevance for culture and intellectual work has not been lost on contemporary theory, is not particularly stressed by Negt and Kluge, even though they include a striking description of a subsegment of production in a steel mill (pp. 202–207). The unique and historically new capacity developed by factory work is, however, cooperation; and the emergence of this new form of labor capacity will then allow Negt and Kluge to stage the final section of their book in terms of the relationality that now issues from it.

Modes of production are, however, generally discussed and debated more historically, in terms of various formations: feudalism, capitalism, the Asiatic mode, and so forth. In order to understand how the preceding discussion can be related to that type of historical category, and also in order to grasp how war can sometimes stand as a grisly caricature of cooperative labor on a national scale, we must now (to borrow one of Negt and Kluge's favorite expressions) pass through the "needle's eye" of German history.

This history has the same starting point as those we have encountered previously, namely the primacy of peasant experience and of the specific capaci-

ties developed through labor on the land. Meanwhile, the German experience is determined by the spatial situation of central Europe, which offers all the peculiarities of a land-based and land-locked collectivity. If the word *experience* means anything, however, it designates not merely the kinds of problems and dilemmas or crises confronted, but also what is learned from those repetitive solutions, and what is transmitted in the form of habit and pedagogy. But where are we to find the traces of such experience and the codification of these collective learning processes?

In fairy tales, which are not merely the repository of peasant utopian wishes ("those who don't believe in fairy tales were never in distress" [p. 619, n. 48]), but also preserve the most characteristic collective experiences of danger or menace, along with the age-old solutions devised to ward them off. In Germany, fairy tales are thus a collective testimony equivalent to, but significantly different from, the myths and sea-based epic legends of the Mediterranean classical world, to which it is instructive to compare them. For the activities, the skills, strengths, and capacities celebrated, preserved, and transmitted by the Greek stories—those well-known "virtues" of shrewdness and cunning, resourcefulness and wiliness, of which Odysseus is the prototype—are the professional attributes of a world of commerce and trade, of merchant ruse and imperial diplomacy—shipboard attributes, augmented by ultimate recourse to the sea, to sailborne flight or the return, at night, with muffled oars. For a peasantry, however, such narratives are problematic and unserviceable: unlike the great ships, "house, farmyard, and field cannot evade their dangers" (p. 752). Meanwhile, for a peasant storytelling, for which "the dimension of production (or its impoverishment) is the determinant moment," tales of exploration and maritime adventure may look rather different and find their perspectives inverted.[10] So it is, for example, that the protagonists of the Argonaut myth are, from the Greek standpoint, Jason and his crew, a focus which relegates the peasant experience—the landed population of Colchis—to the position of the Other: they are here the prize and the object of exploitation, the story is not told for them. This radical reversal of a peasant perspective is most evident in the inhumanity and monstrousness with which the figure of Medea herself emerges, a figure who, from the indigenous point of view (compare the roles of Malinche or Pocahantas in the New World), takes on the attributes of the patriot and the guerrilla, of Judith and of the struggles of wars of national liberation. From this perspective the Argonauts are not mere adventurers. Their function is to bring exchange and the market, to spell the doom of the older agricultural and communal system: "various episodes taken together make up the equivalent of what is, for *production,* the separation of labor power from the land and from the commune,

10. Contemporary studies of the literature of modern imperialism—also essentially a literature of adventure—are very relevant here. See, for example, Edward Said, "Kim, The Pleasures of Imperialism," *Raritan,* vol. VII, no. 2 (Fall 1987), pp. 27–64.

namely primitive accumulation. From the perspective of goods distribution or the exchange relationship, there emerges an analogous mark of forced learning, of the introjection by violence" (p. 747).

Within the peasant environment, therefore, and specifically within the world of the German fairy tale, this violence of commerce, this forcible "opening" and threat from without, will be registered in very different narrative forms and will demand the development of very different kinds of essentially defensive skills. In "The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids," a premium is placed on powers of discrimination or judgment:

> What the enemy is is no longer clear. It becomes exceedingly difficult to decide whether the flour-covered paw of the wolf or the high-pitched voice belong to the mother, or whether the mother (end or means) may not actually have a pelt covered with flour or a high-pitched voice, and so forth. The mind is thus directed, not toward adventure as such, but rather toward a more decisive question: How can I distinguish the enemy exactly, where are the boundaries between the inside and the outside, between safe and unsafe? All German myths, as testimony of historical experience, take as their content the question about the How of wishes, and tell the story of this central uncertainty: How can we know about the outside from within the inside? . . . This also shows *how difficult it was, on the basis of the German relationship to history, to ascertain what was being let inside with Hitler.* (pp. 754–755)

The originality of these analyses of Negt and Kluge, which prolong Benjamin's thoughts on collective narrative in *The Storyteller* in new and unforeseeable ways, consists in a hermeneutic which, although registering the function of the tale to reflect the collective situation in a twofold positive and negative way (it both incorporates utopian hope and inscribes historical catastrophe), now strikes out in a third interpretive path, rereading the text as collective pedagogy, as the transmission not merely of experience, but also of collective vocational training. The instinctive recall of Brecht, which occurs whenever the pedagogical function of literature is invoked in the contemporary period, should not be allowed to distract us from some basic differences in emphasis. The content of Brecht's pedagogy is very different from Negt and Kluge's insistence on the learning of skills and capacities. Brecht's reading of the texts of the past most often stresses bad pedagogy, in the spirit of negative ideological critique (see the splendid sonnets on *Hamlet* and on Kleist). This is not to say that for Negt and Kluge a lesson, even well-learned, cannot be without mixed consequences:

> The prototypical fairy tale that tries to rework this historical experience [an ideal dream of happiness finds no encouragement in the social facts themselves] in a way propitious for wish-fulfillment is

> "Sleeping Beauty": an evil witch—a witch in any case evil out of disappointment and therefore not merely evil, but also, in some sense, a comrade—has cast princess and castle, including all its inhabitants and workers, in a magic sleep. Impenetrable hedges now surround it. But at the very outset a good witch has also sworn an oath, etc., etc. The main thing is simply to have the patience to endure the thousand-year rhythm in which change takes place. So when it turns out that the prince looks like Bismarck, Hindenburg, Hitler, or Adenauer, it isn't out of stupidity that you make a mistake and believe in the awakening kiss, nor out of lack of experience (some of the princes are obviously very old, others come from distant peripheral areas of the Reich and are very unaristocratic), but rather out of the urgent need to give objective expression (however improbably) to the ongoing immemorial work of wish-fulfillment. It must somehow be applied, and applicable. Even if those who pretend to be princes are false a hundred times over. (p. 619 n. 48)

This first strand of analysis of the German situation, therefore—a kind of cultural investigation—retains the significance of the peasant world, whose endemic crises and dangers it confronts with the specific habitus of labor capacity developed in peasant life, which is evidently not altogether equal to the task of overcoming the former.

The same story is then told again, with reference to the various historical modes of production—and in particular in terms of the crisis of feudalism—in a more concrete way, in which historical events and catastrophes now make their formal appearance. Indeed, Negt and Kluge develop a provocative analysis of feudalism (pp. 559–565), in which they suggest that what gives other national situations and histories their productive dynamism—their capacity not merely to "evolve" into capitalism, but especially to generate active political movements of all kinds—is the essentially impure or mixed nature of the feudalisms implanted there. The various feudalisms of Italy, France, and England are never indigenous or autochonous, but the result of various kinds of foreign intervention: in Italy, the German emperors; in France, the Franks; in England, the Normans. These importations mark the new socioeconomic system in such a way that its own specific internal contradictions cannot take deep root, and it becomes susceptible to radical historical modification and change. But Negt and Kluge follow Marx —in that section of the *Grundrisse* often renamed "precapitalist modes of production"—in seeing feudalism as a dialectical, but nonetheless organic outgrowth of the communal structure of the German tribes. Feudalism is thereby at home in Germany in a very different way from the Western histories, with the consequence that "the capitalistic principle found no original introjection [*originäre Verinnerlichung*] in our country" (p. 893):

> The basic rule is this: where a social formation *originates,* it continues to bear all its contradictions and the radicality (*die Gründlichkeit*) of its emergence within itself. It therefore does not develop systematically into its fullest form, since those very contradictions and radicalities by definition tear apart its absolute principle. In this sense no original prototype, but rather the feudal structure that William the Conqueror and his barons brought with them to England, stands as the most perfect realization of a classic feudal constitution. (pp. 562–563)

Replaced within the current "modes of production" debate, the analogy might well be the history of the capitalist mode, whose "indigenous" form in England remained notoriously unaccompanied by any "pure" political development of a triumphant bourgeoisie and a middle-class state (as in France).

However one judges this new theory of "transition," it will have in Negt and Kluge two different lines of consequence. One has to do with what is often called national character: "In the German configuration of the feudalism/capitalism form, the principle of abstraction [for Negt and Kluge, as for the Marxist tradition generally and Adorno in particular, a more general description of the essentially abstract "logic of capital"] appears as that of uncertainty in the application of power; by the same token, its specific principle of production can be described as an ideal of completeness and thoroughness [*Gründlichkeit*]" (p. 564). We will return to this habitus, which combines arbitrariness with a compulsive work ethic, shortly.

The other, historical result of the contradictions in German feudalism is an event: the catastrophe of the peasant wars, the ur-trauma of German history and one of those "resolutions" of class struggle about which Marx was probably thinking when, in the *Manifesto,* he evoked, as an alternate outcome to the "revolutionary reconstitution of society at large," the possibility of "the common ruin of the contending classes."[11] For this common ruin is very specifically what the peasant wars achieve:

> The peasant wars end with the political victory of a coalition made up of city burghers and feudal lords, but from an economic perspective all three of the classes involved in the struggle—peasants, lords, cities—all know defeat. In the future no one of the three classes will ever be able to establish its independent political dominion. Economic and political determinants drift apart. (p. 556)

Negt and Kluge stress the cultural consequences of the catastrophe; and it is logical, in the light of their valorization of the land and of peasant labor, that they

11. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Basic Writings,* L. Feuer, ed., New York, Doubleday, 1959, p. 7.

should isolate as a supreme symptom the way in which peasant culture is stigmatized and repressed in Germany in the succeeding centuries, giving rise to an artificial culture based on what Bourdieu calls "distinction." Even the emergent middle classes now want to be "refined," have manners, transcend the body, and acquire "culture" and "taste" in their new ideological senses. Another fairy tale, "The Three Brothers," which shows the absurdity of a competition for arbitrary new skills when the upshot will be to live all together in the old home after all, is in this respect cautionary. It dramatizes

> the distance that now divides collective life, the simple house on simple soil, from "simple" activity. Simplicity is not so easy to achieve. One's own soil and collective life correspond rather to a complex psychic structure and remain the high point and the prize towards which all labor power strives. On the human or individual scale, such values then become ever more distant and difficult to realize, and for that reason you have to work ever harder and take more pains. This is very precisely the developmental path of the introversion of labor capacity in Germany. (p. 632)

This is then the point at which the tendential repudiation of peasant culture, the radical turning away from peasant "labor capacity," and the repression of the "peasant in me," dialectically generate the German form of that principle of abstraction which has been mentioned above (and which is for Negt and Kluge a virtual *thanatos* or death drive within capitalism as well as German history). The stress is not on the features of some national identity or national character (which then in the pluralism of human cultures and collective identities takes its rather unique and grisly place), but rather on the failure of national identity, and on what they call "national loss" (*Nationalverlust,* p. 538), seen not in terms of a collective psychology, but as a subset of a general loss in reality itself (see below). There emerges here a specific form of German "inflexibility" that ranges across a host of historical and cultural embodiments, as well as of a variety of linguistic expressions: from the work ethic of painstaking thoroughness (*sich Mühe geben, Gründlichkeit,* see above) to the terrible righteousness of Kleist's Michael Kohlhaas (and of Luther and Kant), and, beyond, to the inexorability (*Unerbittlichkeit*) of last-ditch obedience to the state in the last weeks of World War II, or the implacable strategy of the Baader-Meinhof Red Army Fraction in the mid-1970s: *fiat justitia pereat mundus!* ("let justice prevail even though the world itself should go under"):

> Even if civil society were to dissolve itself with the consent of all its members (for example, if a people who inhabited an island decided to separate and to disperse to other parts of the world), the last murderer in prison would first have to be executed in order that each should receive his deserts and that the people should not bear the guilt of a

> capital crime through failing to insist on its punishment. . . . "It is better that one man should die than that the whole people should go to ruin." For if justice perishes, there is no further point in men living on earth.[12]

These chilling words of Kant are more deeply and figurally inscribed at the very center of *Geschichte und Eigensinn* in the form of the shortest and most dreadful of all the Grimm fairy tales, "The Willful Child" (*Das eigensinnige Kind*), whose obstinacy, first expressed in disobedience and then in a kind of psychosomatic illness, persists after death (a hand stubbornly emerging from the grave) and must be chastised posthumously by the mother before rest is found. In the German history section, then, the enigmatic *Eigensinn* of Negt and Kluge's title (interpreted philosophically in our various translations above) now takes on an ironic literalness, not only by formally posing the question of the relationship between history and inflexible self-will in Germany itself, but also by raising issues of the current relationship to the past and the dead in Germany, and in particular the much-discussed question of the "work of mourning" (Freud's expression, *Trauerarbeit*) needed to exorcise that past (rather than to repress it). For this particular fairy tale, however, the Greek equivalent comes as a rebuke (pp. 765–769): for the stubbornness of Antigone is a heroic form of political resistance with a social and collective resonance utterly lacking in the German story. Antigone's *Eigensinn* remains, to be sure, deadly, but it is a deathly outcome which, as Hegel showed us, is now consecrated as tragedy, which is to say, as contradiction and as the unavoidable blocking of historical development. It has none of the shame that oddly clings to the Grimm tale, where the child seems pathological, but even the mother (in Negt and Kluge, a nurturing, sheltering figure associated with the primal commune) becomes strangely ambivalent and repulsive as she shatters the child's dead arm with her rod.

What must now, in conclusion, be shown is the way in which in the third section of this book, relationship, relationality as such (*Zusammenhang*), affords a diagnosis of such symptoms, and even a prescription for their transcendence. What must now most urgently be related are those realms which are conventionally dissociated as the public and the private; the political and the psychic; the realm of the socioeconomic, with its language of production, and that of the psychoanalytic, with its language of desire and fantasy. This act of relating will be, as a whole range of currents in contemporary thought testifies, a punctual and discontinuous one, a provisional exchange of energies, a spark struck across boundaries of separation. The older systematic attempts at a formal Freudo-Marxian synthesis, in which Freud's findings were somehow built into Marx to

12. Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals,* in *Kant's Political Writings,* H. Reiss, ed., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970, pp. 155–156 (quoted in this form in Kluge's story, "Hinscheiden einer Haltung," in *Lebensläufe*, Hamburg, Fischer, 1964, p. 26).

form some new total system, are not replicated here. What underlies the provisionality of the new "relational" approaches is no doubt the feeling that dimensions which are objectively sundered in our social order cannot finally be reassembled and put back together by an effort of pure thought.

Here, too, in one sense, Negt and Kluge prolong and correct Habermas, whose "synthesis" of Marx and Piaget[13] aimed to substitute a cognitive evolution for the discontinuous violence of social revolution. In Habermas, issues of desire, the unconscious, and sexuality are no longer much in evidence, but Piagetian psychology still affords in his work a kind of bridge between the "objective" historical and social situation and the "subjective factor," the kinds of individual dispositions and mental equipment necessary for social change and for the inauguration of a new stage in social development. In Negt and Kluge, the Piagetian reference is merely one in a constellation of illustrative or analogical materials, along with Freud, evolutionary theory, anatomy, cultural archeology, and the rest. But Habermas's great theme of the cognitive—here transformed into the pedagogical and the formative—is centrally maintained, and offers a utopian response to the classical Frankfurt School critique of bourgeois "enlightenment" as such (a critique which remained an embarrassment for Habermas himself, since he has been concerned to promote the utopian possibilities inherent in precisely that bourgeois enlightenment and the bourgeois concept of reason).

As for desire and fantasy, their status in contemporary theory seems to result from the widespread feeling that narrative, image, fantasy, embodied symptom, are no longer mere subjective epiphenomena, but objective components of our social world, invested with all the ontological dignity of those hitherto "objective" social materials presented by economics, politics, and historiography. What is even more significant is that subjective or psychological phenomena are now increasingly seen as having epistemological and even practical functions. Fantasy is no longer felt to be a private and compensatory reaction against public situations, but rather a way of reading those situations, of thinking and mapping them, of intervening in them, albeit in a very different form from the abstract reflections of traditional philosophy or politics. Deleuze and Guattari's two-volume *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (which so often comes to mind in reading this other collaboration) testifies to the richness of such explorations, as does Theweleit's related *Männerphantasien* (both are invoked in these pages). Along with the traditional notion of Reason, however, one of the casualties of this new valorization of fantasy (which surely corresponds both to historical changes in the structure of society and to the media apparatus of late capitalism) is the traditional concept of ideology and ideological analysis (essentially still the false-consciousness, or base-superstructure model, not often appealed to here). Into the breach opened by this loss, a whole range of new "ideologies of desire"

13. In *Zur Rekonstruktion des historischen Materialismus*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1976.

have flowed. It is certain that, in the spirit of their anti-vanguard political positions, Negt and Kluge's utopian work implicitly rejects the negativity of traditional forms of "ideology critique"; it becomes clear, especially when we consider the theoretical collaboration alongside Kluge's own stories and films, that it is the primacy of the "subjective factor" that is here everywhere affirmed, but as a historical fact. Just as Marx ascribed to capital itself a *Heisshunger* (voracious appetite) for the realization of value, so Negt and Kluge identify a comparable appetite and lust for the "private," the "intimate," and the "subjective" in modern society:

> Relationships are to be found in all public areas or in areas which have been structured as private enclaves. But the libidinal relationships encapsulated in private contacts in the narrower sense reach the most bewildering levels of intensity of all social relationships. . . . The disintegration of the traditional public sphere programmed into the current crisis system therefore leads not merely to the strengthening of forces intent on constructing alternate or proletarian public spheres. Its disintegration also simultaneously encounters this other tendency toward the private accumulation of the work of relationship [*Beziehungsarbeit*], a kind of voracious appetite for the work of relationship, the private search for happiness. (p. 877)

This compensatory reading of the subjectification of modern life is, however, complicated in Negt and Kluge by their (properly post-'60s) insistence on the importance of "intimacy" as such: "intimacy is the practical touchstone for the substance of the public sphere" (p. 944). This emphasis now reconnects the materials of *Geschichte und Eigensinn* with the proletarian public sphere, about which it is now affirmed that the latter can only be tested (politically as well as theoretically) by its capacity to handle all the raw material of the private or intimate (or, using our own narrower terminology, to transcode this last).

The earlier work, however, which necessarily dealt extensively with the commodification of fantasy in contemporary media (and also in fascism), took a somewhat simpler, populist position on the transformation of the subjective in the new proletarian public sphere. Drawing on Basil Bernstein's notion of the "restricted code" of working-class language (which Bernstein sees as essentially situation-specific), and driven by a related critique of the "principle of abstraction" in the bourgeois media, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung* stressed the bodily and sensual/sensuous (*sinnlich*) requirements of proletarian consciousness (as well as the ways in which these sensuous necessities are appropriated and displaced by the dominant media).

The emphasis on the body is maintained in the later volume (most strikingly in the Bourdieu-like diagnosis of the repression of a corporeal peasant culture by bourgeois "distinction"), but the analysis of fantasy is far more complexly articu-

lated. Indeed, Negt and Kluge propose at one point a sixfold differentiation of the coordinates or dimensions of social consciousness: horizontal, vertical, functional, irrational, imaginary, and revolutionary (p. 511). The first two of these still designate the immediate, individual possibilities for thinking and mapping out a given situation, observing it from across a wide perspective or, on the other hand, digging into it,[14] reading it diachronically or synchronically, much as in the successive volumes of *Capital* Marx shows that processes can be described either as cycles or as simultaneous interlocking operations. But both *horizontal* and *vertical* dimensions remain bounded by the horizon of the immediate situation. What is structurally not fully perceptible within the set of immediate coordinates — such as, for example, the multifarious prolongations of social institutions and firms whose significance and operations I cannot deduce on the basis of my phenomenological contact with their public facade — falls under the category of the *functional,* which requires a different kind of evidence and different kinds of thinking or analysis: "I must *measure* in order to orient myself; here immediate forms of essential relationship no longer exist unless I can manage to produce them myself. Here, therefore, orientation finds itself dominated by synthetic conducts. Immediate impressions are as misleading as the 'obviousness' of hegemonic categories" (p. 513).

The functional is therefore already the place of alienated reality in the strict sense of the term; but it is also the place of scientific analysis and of the correction of appearance and ideological distortion by theory. The next three coordinates, however, clearly move us into the area of the "libidinal," or of fantasy and "subjectivity." Negt and Kluge articulate this whole area in an original and complex way, setting out a threefold system which usefully complicates and differentiates the usual dualisms (such as the Deleuze-Guattari binary opposition between the paranoid and the schizophrenic — the molar and the molecular, the statist and the nomadic — which are there somewhat too easily assimilated into the value opposition between the fascist and the revolutionary, respectively). The philosophical and psychoanalytic connotations of the often synonymous terms *irrational* and *imaginary* fall away as these words are returned to their original mathematical senses: where *irrational* designates quantities which, although existent, have no objective embodiment in reality (that is to say, they correspond to no *ratios* or integers) and *imaginary* designates negative quantities to be taken into account in computations but which cannot be thought of as corresponding to any particular existent: the distinction would be what obtains between π and the square root of minus 1, for example.

14. Digging, part of the peasant "labor capacity," is often associated in fairy tales with finding buried treasure: being lucky, where the word for good fortune in German, *Glück,* is also the word for happiness. On happiness itself, see the very remarkable pages in *Geschichte und Eigensinn,* pp. 924–930, which in many ways prolong Adorno.

> If the functional is the coordinate of my determination from the outside, the *irrational* is the sum of *direct* answers, compromises (or balancing acts), evasions, furnished by the *antirealism of motives*; the imaginary is then the coordinate of reality loss, historical loss, identity loss, and—something of the greatest interest in the present context—national loss. But if the determination from the outside [the functional] still includes a dimension of human praxis (distorted but continuing to realize itself), i.e., alienated *labor*, inverted *life*, false *consciousness*, including their reification and elaboration on higher levels, and if the irrationality produced by that dimension and its production process is still present within it, the *dimension of the imaginary* is, on the contrary, determined by the becoming unreal of the world and its loss of objectification. Attention exclusively directed to the functional and the irrational, which aims at protesting the loss of natural relations in spatial and temporal contexts and in human arrangements, tends generally to overlook this antidimension of the loss of solid ground and the conjuring into nothingness of real time. The *dimension of the revolutionary*, simultaneously virulent in all the other dimensions, where it has, however, failed to realize itself, stands in the sharpest antagonism possible to this particular dimension of the antiworld and the imaginary: much more sharply than it does to the functional or the irrational, which to be sure set barriers to the revolutionary, but also lend it new substance and content. (pp. 511–512)

These distinctions will be clarified in Negt and Kluge's discussion of the concept (which is to say the experience) of "reality," articulated into the axis of determinacy (or indeterminacy) and objectivity (or the dissolution of the boundaries of the object) (p. 343). As the preceding passage suggests, however, the real has not one, but two opposites: the antireal and the unreal. The first is a refusal—through protest and revolt—to accept reality, while the second names a passive, floating relationship to an only feebly cathected phantasmagoric outer world. The point of such distinctions, finally, is to confront and come to terms with the ambivalence of mass political commitment, both that of the past (the Nazi mass movement) and of a present about which everyone seems intent on assuring us that its masses have become mere consumers, or at least definitively depoliticized. The systematic reinterrogation of Nazism's successful appeal to the working classes—which began in the 1960s (often including a return to Wilhelm Reich's early works on the subject), and which constitutes the central motive power of the Deleuze-Guattari works mentioned above—obviously becomes meaningless when the distinction between reactionary and progressive impulses is abandoned. The problem lies in maintaining this distinction while depriving it of its dualistic tendency. In effect Negt and Kluge maintain the drive toward a utopian transformation of present circumstances by way of their "revolutionary"

coordinate, while articulating what used to be called "reactionary" (on the basis of its effects) into a variety of different coordinates whose constellation varies historically.

As for the present, the authors explain repeatedly that *Geschichte und Eigensinn* emerged directly from the reflections on the labor movement which took up so large a part of their earlier work (p. 389). But although the later volume also concludes with an explicit discussion of aspects of working-class politics, it is clearly pitched at a more general theoretical level and in terms of a longer (not to say more evolutionary) time scale, moving beyond the question of the current situation toward the problems of tradition, collective pedagogy, collective habitus, and the scars of the past. Not the least interesting moment of *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung,* indeed, involved the lessons of defeat, about which the Left has often enough been pious when not sanctimoniously triumphalistic. Mao Zedong, they remind us, describes the *Internationale* in one of his poems as a "tragic song," a memorial of bloody failures; and the authors quote the closing fragment of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*[15] to telling effect: "Stupidity is a scar . . . good will turns to evil when it suffers repeated violence," adding

> Yet social sensibility needs the resistance upon which it works and from which it works itself out in order to constitute itself as experience. Learning processes based on defeat must therefore be undertaken in terms of two distinct kinds of experience: a destructive and an emancipatory one. When only one is present, a mistake in the analysis can generally be detected.[16]

Lernprozesse: this word, along with the term *Lebenslauf* (individual life history, as in the title of Kluge's first book of stories), is probably the most insistent terminological signal in Kluge's work, as well as in this collaboration. Life trajectories are those units of passionate, existential experience which have been reduced and compressed into glacial, well-nigh statistical anecdotes by the mass of History itself: a woman fleeing the American bombs and hiding in the cellar of a bombed-out house, a superannuated high school teacher writing a memoir of Charlemagne in the debacle of May 1945, juridical cases, compulsive thefts and flights, postwar survivals in which both rubble and unexpected affluence are equally bewildering for the subjects in question, who often, in Kluge's stories and films alike, seem quietly aberrant and bereft of the social habits that might have given their movements some stability, even in the absence of individual motivations and ambitions. Anecdote is here what binds the individual to the collective and historical by problematizing the connection: it can scarcely teach lessons, save to raise the supreme riddle of how we learn anything in the first place. In

15. "On the Genesis of Stupidity," in Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialektik der Aufklärung,* Frankfurt, Fischer, 1986, pp. 228–230.
16. *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung,* pp. 404–405.

this sense, the one optimistic note in Kluge's first feature film (*Abschied von gestern*)—"You can't learn not to learn"—often seems wildly premature.

Yet it suggests that "learning," whatever it is, is not a conscious or voluntary process; and that some first step consists in discovering what has in fact been learned, in detecting the powers and habits, the capacities (*Arbeitsvermögen*) which have already been accumulated, in the body, in the unconscious, in the collectivity. Relationality—which, as we have seen, is Negt and Kluge's ultimate practical message or slogan—is far from proposing any organic synthesis of those capacities; and indeed their proposal for the making of connections sometimes has a remarkably postmodern ring:

> But these multiple languages of the various relationships cannot be reduced to anything unified. Nor do the capacities for autonomy require complete translation in the detail. They can perfectly well accommodate untranslatability and even the incomprehensibility of these various languages among each other, provided the untranslated is grasped as relationship. (p. 1088)

Yet it would be useful to think of relationality (even here) in the light of the value of *Öffentlichkeit* proclaimed in the earlier work—a bringing into the open, an expressing and making public, which cannot quite be reduced either to Habermas's notion of communication, on the one hand, or to the mere establishment of new kinds of institutions, on the other. The relationship, then, between "relationality" and the "public sphere" might best be grasped by way of the blocking of both and the limits and boundaries built into our current social arrangement:

> For conveying the rigidity of the social compartmentalization of experience, nothing better occurs to us than the prison. Here we have the institution of the visitors' room: the only point of contact between the realm of experience of those inside and of those outside, even though ultimately each prisoner belongs to both. But in industry provision is not made even for this kind of visitors' cell as a place of exchange of those points of contact which the worker needs, as an organism which exists indivisibly inside and outside all at once. (p. 795, n. 5)

A politics of *Öffentlichkeit* would necessarily begin from this situation and this image, and it would clearly also be a cultural politics in the wider sense in which Negt and Kluge once used the term *cultural revolution* (oddly, there is very little discussion of culture as such or even specifically cultural production in *Geschichte und Eigensinn*).

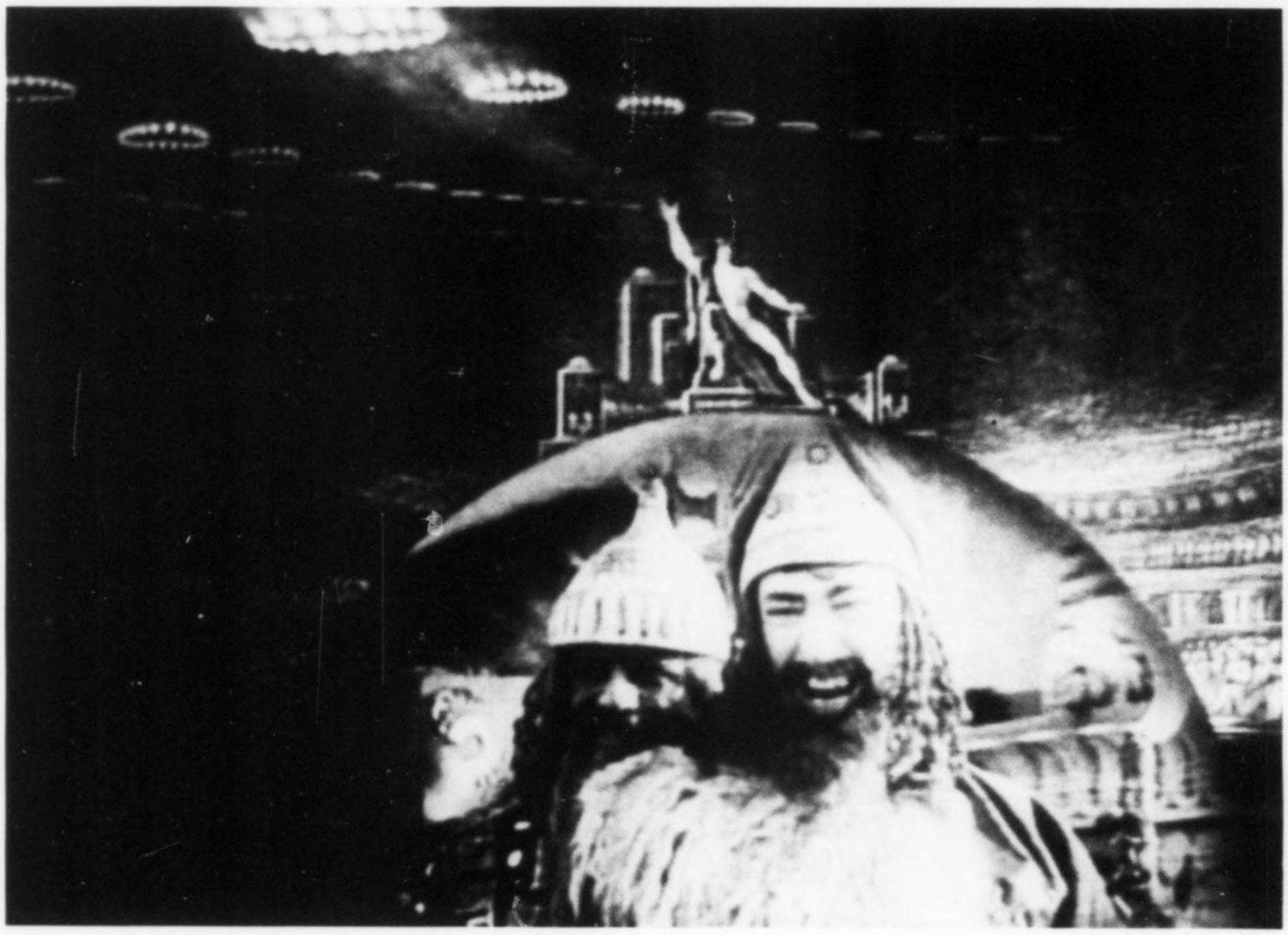
Relationality, like "labor capacity," also means judgment or discrimination (a power which must itself, as in the fairy tale illustrations, be developed in its own right): it involves not merely the assessment of a given force or power in and

of itself (craftsmanship, perseverance, courage, etc.), but also of the way in which that power intersects with other forces and the kinds of combinations within which it is applied. Judgment of this kind is a well-nigh juridical matter: above and beyond the "accident" of his personal profession, there is, therefore, a deeper significance in the considerable role played by lawyers, law courts, legal judgments, in the stories and films of Kluge. For a capacity such as "reliability" (*Verlässlichkeit*) is finally, in concrete history, exceedingly ambivalent: combined with other contradictory "capacities," the devotion to duty of a bomber pilot or technician can figure in very different kinds of stories: on the one hand, in what seems to be the ur-trauma of Kluge's stories, the bombing of his own town of Halberstadt on April 8, 1945, when he was thirteen years old;[17] on the other hand, the "unreliability" of the technician who told on Nixon and Kissinger when he discovered that the targets assigned were in fact located on the far side of the Cambodian border (pp. 700–703).

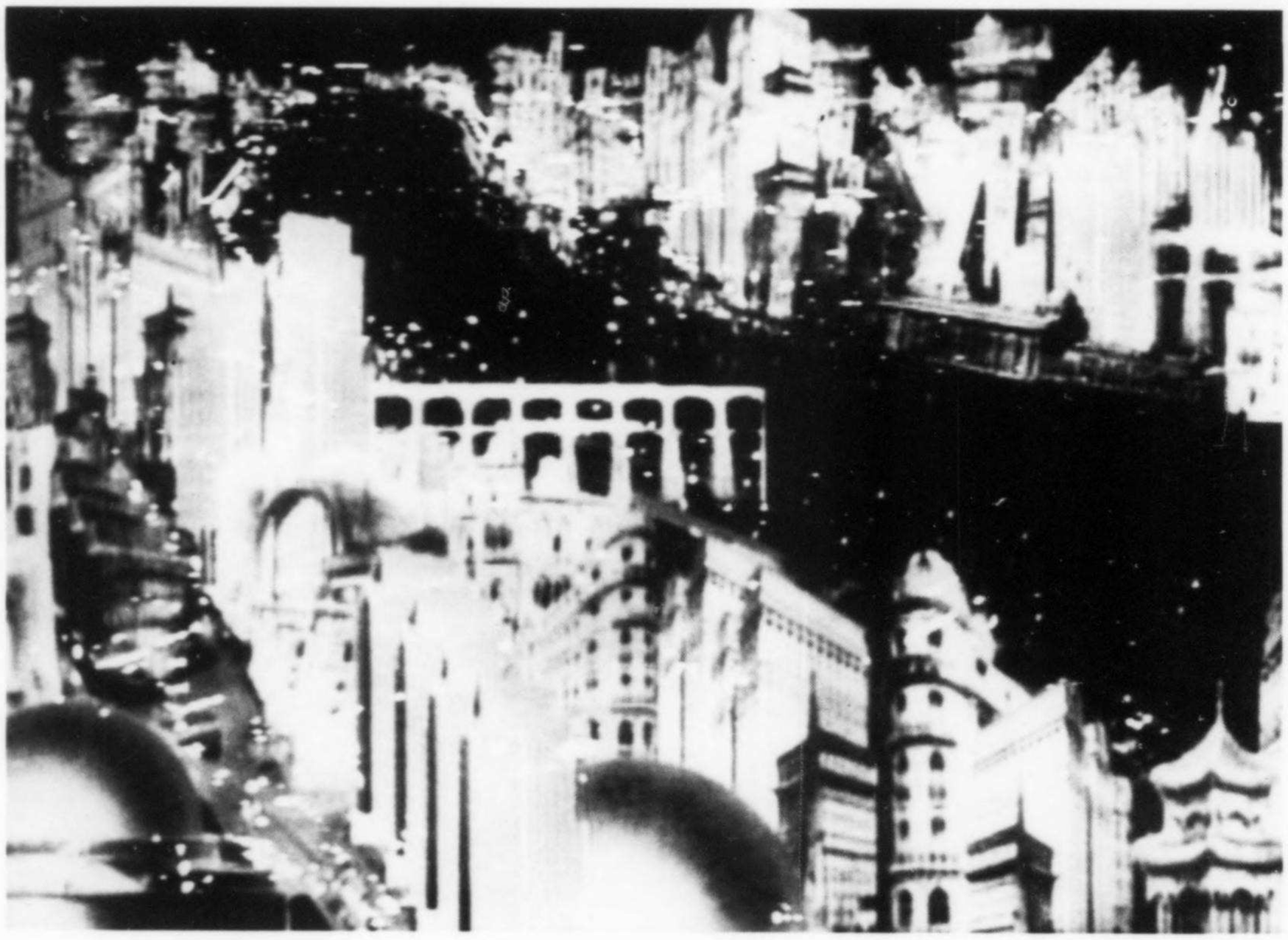
In such examples, the whole issue of the personal and of individual and collective pedagogy veers around into the ethical, but in a new way which no longer needs that term and its history, and which redirects our attention from the putative qualities of individual talents and forces it to the more urgent matter of their combinations. *Arbeitsvermögen* thus becomes a new way of raising the issue, not of virtue as such, but of the original Aristotelian "virtues," of which Alisdair MacIntyre's book *After Virtue* reminds us that they are multiple and collective, and demand a rethinking of the individualist traditions of conventional moral philosophy.

New learning processes would be required for such a reinvention, for which *Geschichte und Eigensinn* tries to give us some new names. The task cannot even be begun, however, without a vivid awareness that there also exist *Lernprozesse mit tödlichem Ausgang*—learning processes that have deadly outcomes (the title of one of Kluge's collections of stories). That other outcomes, other learning processes, are at least conceivable is what the present volume asks us to imagine.

17. See, for example, the "second notebook" in his *Neue Geschichten*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1977, pp. 33–106.



Images from Alexander Kluge's Zehn vor elf, *1988.*



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 emphasized 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 *Zehn vor elf* (*Ten to Eleven*), which is alloted 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 program, 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*), conversations 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). *Ten to Eleven* is coupled with a program 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 programs) 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 *Ten to Eleven* 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 filmmaker 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 programs (80%) than the other satellite and cable channels—as well as depoliticized, "soft" news programs?[1]

The rationale Kluge offers for this strategy is consistent with his longstanding 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 analyzed 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 program." Thus, public television inherited the worst of both worlds: the tendency toward abstraction and exclusion attendant upon the bourgeois public sphere and the institutionalized time pressure of the consciousness industry. "Of the autonomy of the

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 Wetzel, ed., *Neue Medien contra Filmkultur?,* Berlin, Volker Spiess, 1987. For a more recent description of *Ten to Eleven,* see Andreas Kilb, "Der lange Abschied des Herrn K.," *Die Zeit,* July 1, 1988, pp. 15–16.

2. Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung: Zur Organisationsanalyse von bürgerlicher und proletarischer Öffentlichkeit,* Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1972, pp. 169–266; trans. forthcoming, University of Minnesota Press. For a summarizing review, see Eberhard Knödler-Bunte, "The Proletarian Public Sphere and Political Organization," *New German Critique,* no. 4 (Winter 1975), pp. 51–75.

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 theaters 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 current 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' organizations, 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 mobilize 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

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 unrealized aesthetics of television, see Theodor W. Adorno, "Prolog zum Fernsehen" (1953), in *Eingriffe*, Frankfurt, 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 *Nahtstellen* (seams, surfaces of friction between competing institutions), pp. 121ff., *Gegengift* (antidote), and *Gegenproduktion* (counter-production), pp. 125ff. Kluge analyzes the relationships among cinema, television, video, and the public sphere at length in *Bestandsaufnahme: Utopie Film*, Frankfurt, Zweitausendeins, 1983, which partly overlaps with his contribution in *Industrialisierung*. Also see Gertrud Koch and Heide Schlüpmann, "'Nur Trümmern trau ich . . . ': Gespräch mit Alexander Kluge," *Frauen und Film*, no. 42 (1987), pp. 83–92.

> 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 synchronized sound film. Kluge, an intellectual descendent of the Frankfurt School, clearly participates in this discourse, and may well be the most important filmmaker 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.

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In what sets out as a critique of Habermas, Negt and Kluge question the

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*, nos. 24–25 (Fall-Winter 1981–1982), pp. 186–198.

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 de-substantialize 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 organized 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 epitomizes the historical subject of alienated labor and experience. Empirically, they assert, rudimentary and ephemeral instances of a "proletarian" public sphere already emerged—in the fissures, overlaps, and interstices of nonlinear historical processes.[10] As a discursive construction, they insist, it could be derived

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, 35ff., 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 organization 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).

from its negation, i.e. from hegemonic efforts to suppress, destroy, isolate, split, or assimilate any public formation that suggests an alternative organization 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 favor 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 theater 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

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 toward 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,* nos. 24–25 (Fall/Winter 1981–82), pp. 211–214.

13. Here Kluge again follows Habermas—and Benjamin scholars like Marleen Stoessel—who recognize 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"

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 theater 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 mobilized by the cinematic apparatus are the very mechanisms for the reproduction of ideology. Even though Kluge might concur with the

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essay; see Habermas, "Consciousness-Raising or Redemptive Criticism" (1972), *New German Critique*, no. 17 (Spring 1979), pp. 30–59; also see Hansen, "Benjamin," pp. 191ff. and 212ff. Kluge's notion of the "film in the spectator's head" is pervasive in all his writings, most recently in *Bestandsaufnahme*, pp. 45ff., 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, Zweitausendeins, 1979, pp. 294–95; trans. in *New German Critique*, nos. 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 Willemen, 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 Schlüpmann, "Phenomenology of Film: On Siegfried Kracauer's Writings of the 1920s," *ibid.*, pp. 97–114.

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 organization 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).

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.

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 theater, 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 theorized 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

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 1978–79), 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 Philip Rosen, ed., *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology,* New York, Columbia University Press, 1986, pp. 483–506; and Tom Gunning, "The Non-Continuous Style of Early Film (1900–1906)," in Roger Holman, ed., *Cinema 1900/1906,* 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 John L. Fell, ed., *Film Before Griffith,* 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, nos. 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.

films were shown, in urban areas at least, as part of vaudeville programs, 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(ized) 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 legitimation 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 theaters 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 standardize 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

19. Russell Merritt, "Nickelodeon Theaters, 1905–1914: Building an Audience for the Movies," in Tino Balio, ed., *The American Film Industry*, 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, pp. 202ff. 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

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 organizing 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 urbanized 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 standardization, the normative side of film history. Thus, the cognitive interest is directed toward the overlap of unequal, nonsynchronous modes of organization, 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

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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 and 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.

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, specularized 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 traveling shows. Whatever the number and status of films within a given program—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 program 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 theorized under the term *distraction*. Kluge, even before he began to use the variety format for his television show, had analyzed the dramaturgy of the circus (*Nummern-Dramaturgie*) as a way to maximize both contact within and friction between numbers—"the unity of predictability and surprise." The comparison which valorizes this "preclassical" temporality for Kluge (as for Kracauer and Benjamin) is the two-hour cabal of classical drama, opera, or feature film with its hypostasizing 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 distantiation, but a mode of reception that contains the possibility of abandoning one's waking self to a dreamlike sequence of sense impressions and associations.

23. Kluge, *Bestandsaufnahme*, pp. 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 depersonalized 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" (1935–36) and "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" (1939), trans. Harry Zohn, *Illuminations*, New York, Schocken, 1969.

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 1912–13), 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 theater.[24] Thus, film programs tended to include a number of activities relating to the moving image, such as lectures accompanying films, music and sound effects, as well as nonfilmic 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 organization 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 theater 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 nonfilmic 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 theater experience remained considerable well into the 1920s, at the latest, until the advent of synchronized sound and a standardized 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 idealize this margin in a nostalgic essentialism or utopian purism. Neither a mere multiplication of standardized 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 homogenizing imperative of mass-cultural consumption. Whatever alternative organization of experience may have resided

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.

in that overlap is the result of the very mechanisms—the instability and voracity of the commercial-industrial public spheres—which appropriate and desubstantialize 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 nonfilmic 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 crystallize.

On the level of film style, this process of negation involved strategies of narration aimed at suppressing awareness of the theater space and absorbing the spectator in the illusionist space on screen: closer framing, centered 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 program. 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 publicized humanitarian act toward 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

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*, nos.

framework of newsreels and political cartoons, Porter not only mobilizes 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 labor—and hierarchy—between fiction and documentary.[28] Following Richter and Godard, Kluge analyzes 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 realized 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 immobilization of avant-garde aesthetics between utopian project and capitalist context of realization, 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 program 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

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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," *Cinema 1900/1906,* vol. 1, pp. 243–258.

28. Alexander Kluge, *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer sklavin: Zur realistischen Methode,* Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1975, pp. 202ff., 215ff., 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.

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 visualize the passage of time; tinting, iris masks, and dream balloons; long takes and traveling 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 filmmaker's own, reminiscent of a primitive lecturer or explainer) or through monologues by the characters, frequently off-screen or nonsynchronized. Music in Kluge's films mimics the repertoire of silent film accompaniment insofar as it emphasizes 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 adaptions 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 toward 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 antithetical 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

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 hetereogeneity 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), Theodor Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften,* vol. 3, Frankfurt, 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.

seem to organize 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 center 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 organizing 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 '30s, *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 organized carnival, preparations for a theater 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 herself 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 compartmentalized 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 theater.[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 filmmakers, 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 defenses 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.

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.

Alexander Kluge and Edgar Reitz. In Danger and Dire Distress. *1974.*

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 organized 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.

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.

Alexander Kluge: Filmography

compiled by STUART LIEBMAN

Items marked with an asterisk are included in the traveling retrospective exhibition of Kluge's work cosponsored by Anthology Film Archives, New York, and Goethe House, New York. Whenever possible, existing English titles of the films have been used; other titles have been translated by the editor. Useful Kluge filmographies listing secondary members of the production teams, additional cast members, television premieres of films made for theatrical distribution, etc., can be found in Thomas Böhm-Christl, ed., Alexander Kluge, *Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1983, pp. 328-332; in Rainer Lewandowski,* Die Filme von Alexander Kluge, *Hildesheim, Olms Presse, 1980,* passim, *and in "Alexander Kluge,"* Kinemathek *63 (September 1983), pp. 9–52.*

* *1960, Brutalität im Stein* (*Brutality in Stone;* since 1963, a slightly altered version has been called *Die Ewigkeit von gestern, The Eternity of Yesterday*).
Format: 35mm, b & w, 12 mins. Script: Peter Schamoni, Alexander Kluge. Voiceover: Christian Marschall, Hans Clarin. Cinematography: Wolf Wirth. Music: Hans Posegga. Editing: A. Kluge, P. Schamoni. Production: A. Kluge, P. Schamoni. Direction: A. Kluge, P. Schamoni. Premiere: February 8, 1961.

1961, *Rennen* (*Running*).
Format: 35mm, b & w, 9 mins. Script: Hans von Neuffer, Paul Kruntorad. Voiceover: Mario Adorf. Cinematography: archival material. Editing: Bessi Lemmer, A. Kluge. Production: Rolf A. Klug, Alexander Kluge. Direction: Alexander Kluge, Paul Kruntorad. Premiere: 1961.

*1962–1963, *Lehrer im Wandel* (*Teachers through Change*).
Format: 35mm, b & w, 11 mins. Script: Alexander and Karen [aka Alexandra] Kluge. Cinematography: Alfred Tichawsky. Sound: Hans-Jörg Wicha. Editing: Alexander Kluge. Production: Alexander Kluge. Direction: Alexander Kluge. Premiere: February 20, 1963.

*1963, *Protokoll einer Revolution* (*Protocol of a Revolution*).
Format: 35mm, b & w, 12 mins. Script: Alexander Kluge, Peter Berling. Cast: Uschi Glass. Voiceover: Sammy Drechsel, Rolf Illig. Cinematography: Günter Lemmer, Peter A. Wortmann. Editing: the filmmakers as a collective. Production: P. Berling, G. Lemmer, A. Kluge. Direction: Günter Lemmer.

*1964, *Porträt einer Bewährung* (*Proven Competence Portrayed*). Format: 35mm, b & w, 13 mins. Script: Alexander Kluge. Cast: Police Inspector Müller-Seegeberg. Cinematography: Wilfried E. Reinke, Günter Hörmann. Sound: Peter Schubert. Editing: Beate Mainka. Production: Kairos-Film.[1] Direction: Alexander Kluge. Premiere: February 24, 1965.

*1965–1966, *Abschied von gestern* (*Anita G.*) (*Yesterday Girl*).
Format: 35mm, b & w, 88 mins. Script: Alexander Kluge from his story "Anita G." Cast: Alexandra Kluge, Hans Korte, Alfred Edel. Voiceover: Alexander Kluge. Cinematography: Edgar Reitz, Thomas Mauch. Sound: Hans-Jörg Wicha, Klaus Eckelt, Heinz Pusel. Editing: Beate Mainka. Production: Kairos-Film and Independent-Film, Berlin. Direction: Alexander Kluge. Premiere: September 5, 1966.

1966, *Pokerspiel* (*Poker Game;* a reedited version of Mack Sennett's *Nip and Tuck,* 1923). Format: 35mm, b & w, 14 mins. Editing: Alexander Kluge. Production: Kairos-Film. Direction: Alexander Kluge. Premiere: October 14, 1966.

*1967, *Frau Blackburn, geb. 5 Jan. 1872, wird gefilmt* (*Frau Blackburn, Born January 5, 1872, Is Filmed*).
Format: 35mm, b & w, 14 mins. Script: Alexander Kluge. Cast: Martha Blackburn [Kluge's grandmother], Herr Guhl. Voiceover: Alexander Kluge, Hannelore Hoger. Cinematography: Thomas Mauch. Sound: Bernd Hoeltz. Editing: Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus. Production: Kairos-Film. Direction: Alexander Kluge. Premiere: June 28, 1967.

*1967, *Die Artisten in der Zirkuskuppel: ratlos* (*Artists under the Big Top: Perplexed*).
Format: 35mm, b & w and color, 103 mins. Script: Alexander Kluge. Cast: Hannelore Hoger, Siegfried Graue, Alfred Edel, Bernd Hoeltz, Kurt Jürgens. Voiceover: Alexandra Kluge, Hannelore Hoger, Herr Hollenbeck. Cinematography: Günter Hörmann, Thomas Mauch. Sound: Bernd Hoeltz. Editing: Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus. Production: Kairos-Film. Direction: Alexander Kluge. Premiere: August 30, 1968.

1966–1969, *Die unbezähmbare Leni Peickert* (*The Indomitable Leni Peickert*).
Format: 35mm, b & w, 60 mins. Script: Alexander Kluge. Cast: Hannelore Hoger, Bernd Hoeltz, Nils von der Heyde. Cinematography: Günter Hörmann, Thomas Mauch. Sound: Bernd Hoeltz. Editing: Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus. Production: Kairos-Film. Direction: Alexander Kluge. Premiere: Broadcast over West Deutsche Rundfunk on March 29, 1970.[2]

*1968, *Feuerlöscher E. A. Winterstein* (*Fireman E. A. Winterstein*).
Format: 35mm, b & w, 11 mins. Script: Alexander Kluge. Cast: Alexandra Kluge, Hans

1. Kairos-Film is the name of Kluge's production company. Its offices are in Munich. Especially in the early part of his career, Kluge also served as producer on most of his film projects although numerous individuals have assisted him as production supervisors.
2. In 1976, Kluge and Maximiliane Mainka prepared a new, approximately 35 minute version of this film for a special exhibition of the Freunde der Kinemathek. It premiered in October 1976.

Korte, Peter Staimmer, Bernd Hoeltz. Cinematography: Edgar Reitz, Thomas Mauch. Sound: Hans-Jörg Wicha. Editing: Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus. Production: Kairos-Film. Direction: Alexander Kluge. Premiere: Not released.

1969, 1970, *Der grosse Verhau* (*The Big Mess*).
Format: 35mm, b & w and Eastmancolor, 86 mins. Script: Alexander Kluge. Cast: Maria Sterr, Vinzenz Sterr, Hannelore Hoger, Hark Bohm. Cinematography: Thomas Mauch, Alfred Tichawski. Special Effects: Günter Hörmann, Hannelore Hoger, Joachim Heimbucher. Sound: Bernd Hoeltz. Editing: Maximiliane Mainka, Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus. Production: 'Kairos-Film. Direction: Alexander Kluge. Premiere: June 30, 1971.

1969–1970, *Ein Arzt aus Halberstadt* (*A Doctor from Halberstadt*).
Format: 35mm, b & w, 29 mins. Script: Alexander Kluge. Voiceover: Alexandra Kluge. Cast: Dr. Ernst Kluge [Kluge's father]. Cinematography: Alfred Tichawski, Günter Hörmann. Sound: Bernd Hoeltz. Editing: Maximiliane Mainka. Production: Kairos-Film. Direction: Alexander Kluge. Premiere: October 1976.[3]

1969–1971, *Willi Tobler und der Untergang der 6. Flotte* (*Willi Tobler and the Destruction of the 6th Fleet*).
Format: 35mm, b & w and Eastmancolor, 96 mins. Script: Alexander Kluge. Cast: Alfred Edel, Hark Bohm, Hannelore Hoger, Kurt Jürgens, Helga Skalla. Cinematography: Dietrich Lohmann, Alfred Tichawski, Thomas Mauch. Sound: Bernd Hoeltz. Editing: Maximiliane Mainka, Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus. Production: Kairos-Film. Direction: Alexander Kluge. Premiere: Broadcast over Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen on January 19, 1972.

1970, *Wir verbauen 3 × 27 Milliarden Dollar in einen Angriffschlachter* (*We Are Expending 3 × 27 Billion Dollars on an Attack Ship*).[4]
Format: 35mm, b & w and color, 18 mins. Script: Alexander Kluge from his story "Angriffschlachter En Cascade." Cast: Hannelore Hoger, Hark Bohm, Kurt Jürgens, Ian Bodenham. Cinematography: Alfred Tichawski, Günter Hörmann, Hannelore Hoger, Thomas Mauch. Sound: Bernd Hoeltz. Music: Bernd Hoeltz. Editing: Maximiliane Mainka, Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus. Production: Kairos-Film. Direction: Alexander Kluge. Premiere: March 1970.

1973, *Die Reise nach Wien* (*The Journey to Vienna*).
Format: 35mm, color, 102 mins. Script: Edgar Reitz, Alexander Kluge. Cast: Elke Sommer, Hannelore Elsner, Mario Adorf. Cinematography: Robby Müller, Martin Schäfer. Production: Edgar Reitz Filmproduktion. Direction: Edgar Reitz. Premiere: September 26, 1973.

3. In 1987, Kluge reedited the film for broadcast on December 21, 1987 over SAT 1. This version, which he prefers, is 14 minutes long.
4. This film is also known by the titles *Der Angriffschlachter* and *Angriffsschlachter En Cascade*.

1973, *Besitzbürgerin, Jahrgang 1908* (*A Woman of Means, Class of 1908*).
Format: 35mm, b & w, 11 mins. Script: Alexander Kluge. Cast: Alice Schneider [Kluge's mother], Herr Guhl. Cinematography: Thomas Mauch. Sound: Francesco Joan-Escubano. Editing: Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus. Production: Kairos-Film. Direction: Alexander Kluge. Premiere: not released.

*1973, *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin* (*Part-Time Work of a Domestic Slave*).
Format: 35mm, b & w, 91 mins. Script: Alexander Kluge. Cast: Alexandra Kluge, Bion Steinborn, Sylvia Gartmann, Alfred Edel. Cinematography: Thomas Mauch. Sound: Gunter Kortwich. Editing: Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus. Production: Kairos-Film. Direction: Alexander Kluge. Premiere: December 7, 1973.

*1974, *In Gefahr und grösster Not bringt der Mittelweg den Tod* (*In Danger and Dire Distress the Middle of the Road Leads to Death*).
Format: 35 mm, b & w, 90 mins. Script: Alexander Kluge, Edgar Reitz. Cast: Dagmar Bödderich, Jutta Winkelmann, Norbert Kentrup, Kurt Jürgens, Alfred Edel. Cinematography: Edgar Reitz, Alfred Hürmer, Günter Hörmann. Sound: Burkhard Tauschwitz, Dietmar Lange. Music: Richard Wagner, Giuseppe Verdi, among others, selected and edited by Kluge and Reitz. Editing: Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus. Production: RK-Film [Reitz-Film, Kairos-Film]. Direction: Alexander Kluge, Edgar Reitz. Premiere: December 18, 1974.

*1975–1976, *Der Starke Ferdinand* (*Strongman Ferdinand*).
Format: 35mm, Eastmancolor, 97 mins. Script: Alexander Kluge from his story "Ein Bolschewist des Kapitals." Cast: Heinz Schubert, Vérénice Rudolph, Joachim Hackethal, Gert Günther Hoffmann. Voiceover: Alexander Kluge. Cinematography: Thomas Mauch, Martin Schäfer. Sound: Heiko Hinderks, Reiner Wiehr. Editing: Heidi Genée, Agape von Dorstewitz. Production: Kairos-Film in conjunction with Reitz-Film. Direction: Alexander Kluge. Premiere: April 4, 1976.[5]

1977, *Die Menschen, die das Staufer-Jahr vorbereiten (The People Putting Together the Hohenstaufen Commemorative Year*).
Format: 35mm, b & w and Eastmancolor, 41 mins. Script: Alexander Kluge, Maximiliane Mainka. Cast: Staff of the Würtemberg State Museum, Stuttgart. Cinematography: Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein, Alfred Tichawsky. Editing: Maximiliane Mainka. Production: Kairos-Film in conjunction with the Ulm Institut für Filmgestaltung. Direction: Alexander Kluge. Premiere: April 1977.

*1977, *Nachrichten von den Staufern* (*News from the Hohenstaufens*).
Format: 35mm, b & w and Eastmancolor, first part: 13 mins; second part: 11 mins. Script: Alexander Kluge, Maximiliane Mainka. Cast: Staff of the Würtemberg State Museum, Stuttgart. Cinematography: Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein, Alfred Tichawsky. Editing: Maximi-

5. In 1977, Kluge and Maximiliane Mainka reedited the film for theatrical rerelease. The second version differs primarily in the editing of the final scenes. There are as well several other versions differing in minor details of the editing.

liane Mainka. Production: Kairos-Film in conjunction with the Ulm Institut für Filmgestaltung. Direction: Alexander Kluge, Maximiliane Mainka. Premiere: April 1977.

1977, *"Zu böser Schlacht schleich' ich heut' nacht so bang—"* (*"Into this Evil Fight Tonight I Am Afraid to Creep . . ."*).[6]
Format: 35mm, Eastmancolor, 81 mins. Script: Alexander Kluge, Maximiliane Mainka. Cast: Alfred Edel, Helga Skalla, Hark Bohm, Kurt Jürgens, Hannelore Hoger. Cinematography: Dietrich Lohmann, Alfred Tichawsky, Thomas Mauch. Sound: Bernd Hoeltz. Editing: Maximiliane Mainka. Production: Kairos-Film. Direction: Alexander Kluge. Premiere: July 1977.

*1977–1978, *Deutschland im Herbst* (*Germany in Autumn*, a collective film).
Format: 35mm, b & w and Eastmancolor, 123 mins.[7] Script: Heinrich Böll, Peter Steinbach, and the directors. Voiceover: Alexander Kluge. Cinematography: Michael Ballhaus, Günter Hörmann, Jürgen Jürges, Bodo Kessler, Dietrich Lohmann, Werner Lüring, Colin Mounier, Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein. Sound: Klaus Eckelt. Editing: Heidi Genée, Mulle Götz-Dickopp, Juliane Lorenz, Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus, Tanja Schmidbauer, Christine Warnck. Production: Pro-ject Filmproduktion[8] im Filmverlag der Autoren in conjunction with Hallelujah-Film and Kairos-Film. Direction: Alf Brustellin, Bernhard Sinkel, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Alexander Kluge, Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus, Maximiliane Mainka, Peter Schubert, Edgar Reitz, Katja Rupé, Hans Peter Cloos, Volker Schlöndorff. Premiere: March 3, 1978.

In addition to playing a considerable role in determining the final form of the entire film, Kluge worked on the following scenes: "Burial of Hans-Martin Schleyer"; "Burial in Stuttgart." Cinematography: Bodo Kessler, Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein. Sound: Klaus Eckelt. Editing: Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus. Direction: Alexander Kluge, Volker Schlöndorff; "Gabi Teichert"; "Autumnal Song by Tchaikovsky"; "At the SPD Party Convention." Script: Alexander Kluge. Cast: Hannelore Hoger, Horst Ehmke. Cinematography (16mm): Günter Hörmann. Editing: Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus. Direction: Alexander Kluge.

*1979, *Die Patriotin* (*The Female Patriot*).
Format: 35mm, b & w and color, 121 mins.[9] Script: Alexander Kluge. Cast: Hannelore Hoger, Dieter Mainka, Alfred Edel, Alexander von Eschwege, Beate Holle, Kurt Jürgens, Willi Münch, Marius Müller-Westernhagen. Voiceover: Alexander Kluge. Cinematography: Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein, Thomas Mauch, Werner Lüring, Günter Hörmann. Sound: Peter Dick, Siegfried Moraweck, Kurt Graupner, O. Karla. Mix: Willi Schwadorf. Edit-

6. This film is a completely reedited version of Kluge's *Willi Tobler und der Untergang der 6. Flotte* (1969) using new as well as old footage. The title comes from Brünnhilde's dialogue with Wotan in Wagner's *Die Walküre*, Act II, Scene 2.
7. At the film's premiere at the Berlin Film Festival, a 134 minute version was projected, but it was shortened for the film's theatrical release on March 17, 1978.
8. This firm is owned by the head of the important distribution company Film Verlag der Autoren, Theo Hinz, who Kluge credits with the original idea for the collective film project.
9. An earlier 89 minute version was shown in June, 1979 in Berlin.

ing: Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus. Production: Kairos-Film. Direction: Alexander Kluge.[10] Premiere: September 20, 1979.

*1979–1980, *Der Kandidat* (*The Candidate,* a collective film).
Format: 35mm, b & w and Eastmancolor, 129 mins. Script: Stefan Aust, Alexander von Eschwege, Alexander Kluge, Volker Schlöndorff. Cast: Franz Josef Straus, Marianne Strauss. Voiceover: Stefan Aust. Cinematography: Igor Luther, Werner Lüring, Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein, Thomas Mauch, Bodo Kessler. Sound: Manfred Meyer, Vladimir Vizner, Anke Appelt, Martin Müller. Editing: Inge Behrens, Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus, Jane Sperr, Mulle Goetz-Dickopp. Production: Pro-ject Filmproduktion im Filmverlag der Autoren with Bioskop-Film and Kairos-Film. Direction: Stefan Aust, Alexander von Eschwege, Alexander Kluge, Volker Schlöndorff. Premiere: April 18, 1980.

*1982–1983, *Krieg und Frieden* (*War and Peace,* a collective film).[11]
Format: 35mm, color, 120 mins. Script: Heinrich Böll and the directors. Cinematography: Igor Luther, Werner Lüring, Thomas Mauch, Bernd Mosblech, Franz Rath. Sound: Christian Moldt, Edward Porente, Olaf Reinke, Manfred von Rintelen, Karl-Walter Tietze, Vladimir Vizner. Editing: Dagmar Hirtz, Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus, Carola Mai, Barbara von Weitershausen. Production: Pro-ject Filmproduktion im Filmverlag der Autoren with Bioskop-Film and Kairos-Film. Direction: Stefan Aust, Axel Engstfeld, Alexander Kluge, Volker Schlöndorff. Premiere: October 1982.[12]

In addition to playing a major role in determining the final edited form of the film and the scene with Bruno Ganz, Kluge was responsible for the following episode: "From the Infantry's Standpoint." Script: Alexander Kluge. Cast: Hans-Michael Rehberg, Michael Gahr. Cinematography: Werner Lüring, Thomas Mauch. Sound: Olaf Reinke, Karl-Walter Tietze. Editing: Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus, Carola Mai. Direction: Alexander Kluge.

1974–1983, *Biermann-Film* (*Biermann Film*).
Format: 35mm, b & w, 3 mins. Cinematography: Edgar Reitz, Vit Martinek [footage taken from *In Gefahr und grösster Not . . .*]. Music: Wolf Biermann. Editing: Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus. Production: Kairos-Film. Direction: Alexander Kluge, Edgar Reitz. Premiere: October 1, 1983.

*1983, *Die Macht der Gefühle* (*The Power of Emotion*).
Format: 35mm, b & w and color, 115 mins. Script: Alexander Kluge. Cast: Hannelore Hoger, Alexandra Kluge, Edgar Boehlke, Klaus Wennemann. Cinematography: Werner Lüring, Thomas Mauch. Sound: Olaf Reinke, Karl-Walter Tietze. Editing: Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus, Carola Mai. Production: Kairos-Film. Direction: Alexander Kluge. Premiere: September 16, 1983.

10. The "Bundeswehrlied" section was directed by Margarethe von Trotta.
11. Kluge has made several different versions of this film although the materials and general strategy remains essentially the same.
12. A partly reedited, shortened version was premiered on February 1, 1983.

1983, *Auf der Suche nach einer praktisch-realistichen Haltung* (*In Search of a Practical and Realistic Method*).
Format: 35mm, b & w, 13 mins. Script: Alexander Kluge. Cinematography: Thomas Mauch. Editing: Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus. Production: Kairos-Film. Direction: Alexander Kluge. Premiere: October 2, 1983.

*1985, *Der Angriff der Gegenwart auf die übrige Zeit* (*The Blind Director*).
Format: 35mm, color, 113 mins. Script: Alexander Kluge. Cast: Jutta Hoffmann, Armin Mueller-Stahl, Michael Rehberg, Rosel Zech. Cinematography: Thomas Mauch, Werner Lüring, Hermann Fahr, Judith Kaufmann. Sound: Josef Dillinger, Olaf Reinke, Georg Otto. Editing: Jane Seitz. Production: Kairos-Film in conjunction with Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen and the Frankfurt State Opera Theater. Direction: Alexander Kluge. Premiere: October 1985.

1986, *Vermischte Nachrichten* (*Miscellaneous News*).
Format: 33mm, b & w and color, 103 mins. Script: Alexander Kluge. Cast: Mariata Breuer, Rosel Zeck, Sabine Wegner, Andre Jung, Sabine Trooger. Voiceover: Alexander Kluge. Cinematography: Werner Lüring, Thomas Mauch, Michael Christ, Hermann Fahr. Sound: Willi Schwadorf. Editing: Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus. Production: Kairos-Film in conjunction with Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen. Direction: Alexander Kluge. Premiere: September 25, 1986.[13]

In addition, Kluge has contributed to the following films:

1965, *Unendliche Fahrt—aber begrenzt* (*The Never-Ending but Finite Journey*).
Format: 35mm, b & w and color, 60 hours; 60 sections of different durations. Script: Edgar Reitz from a story idea by Alexander Kluge. Cinematography: Thomas Mauch, Gerhard Peters. Production: Insel Film. Direction: Edgar Reitz. Premiere: June 1965.

1966, *Mahlzeiten* (*Meals*).
Format: 35mm, b & w, 94 mins. Script: Edgar Reitz. Advisor: Alexander Kluge, Hans-Dieter Müller. Cinematography: Thomas Mauch. Production: Edgar Reitz Filmproduktion through the Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film. Direction: Edgar Reitz. Premiere: March 21, 1967.

1981, *Zwischen den Bildern. 3. Teil: Über die Trägheit der Wahrnehmung* (*Between the Images. Third Part: On the Laziness of Perception*).
Format: 35mm, color, 12 mins. Script: Alexander Kluge. Cast: Alexander Kluge [explaining his montage methods]. Cinematography: Helmut Herbst. Production: Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek in conjunction with Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen. Direction: Klaus Feddermann, Helmut Herbst. Premiere: April 22, 1982.

13. The documentary material of Helmut Schmidt's visit to the DDR was filmed by Franz Rath and directed by Volker Schlöndorff.

Alexander Kluge: Selected Videography

This videography, prepared by Dr. Meinhard Prill of Munich, West Germany, with the assistance of Alexander Kluge, has been adapted by the editor. All scripts and direction are by Alexander Kluge. All programs were first broadcast over the private television station SAT 1 as part of the series "Stunde der Filmemacher. Filmgeschichte-Filmgeschichten."

1985, *Vermischte Neueste Nachrichten. Eine Magazin-Sendung (The Latest Miscellaneous News. A Broadcast Magazine).* Format: In three parts: (1) a portrait of the film director Ulla Stöckl; (2) an interview with Linda Himbert, the lead actress in the film *The Invincible*, by Hamos; and (3) an unreleased film scene with Alfred Edel and Jutta Brückner. Length: 57 mins. Camera: Werner Lüring. Editing: Kajetan Forstner. Broadcast Date: October 8, 1985.

1986, *Ein Vormittag mit Christa Wolf (A Morning with Christa Wolf).*
Length: 29 mins. Script Advisor: Meinhard Prill. Camera: Werner Lüring. Editing: Kajetan Forstner. Broadcast Date: March 23, 1986.

1986, *. . . Null Verständnis. Die schönsten Szenen aus Filmen mit Alfred Edel (No Comprehension. The Most Beautiful Scenes from Films with Alfred Edel).*
Length: 27 mins. Camera: Werner Lüring. Editing: Kajetan Forstner. Broadcast Date: July 27, 1986.

1986, *Kurzportrait: Michael Gielen (Michael Gielen: A Brief Portrait)* [A conversation with Gielen, the Director of the Frankfurt City Opera, during rehearsals for Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*].
Length: 27 mins. Camera: Werner Lüring. Editing: Kajetan Forstner. Broadcast Date: November 9, 1986.

1986, *Jutta Hoffmann. Herzogin von Malfi (Jutta Hoffmann, The Duchess of Malfi)* [A conversation with the East German actress Hoffmann about her experiences on the West German stage, most recently in Peter Zadek's production of John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*].
Length: 27 mins. Camera: Werner Lüring. Editing: Kajetan Forstner. Broadcast Date: December 14, 1986.

1987, *Der Generalintendant. Aus dem Terminkalender von August Everding (The General Director. From the Appointment Book of August Everding)* [A conversation with Everding, Director of the Bavarian State Theater, about his everyday schedule, his production of Richard Strauss's *Electra*, and his desires].
Length: 27 mins. Camera: Werner Lüring. Editing: Kajetan Forstner. Broadcast Date: January 8, 1987.

1987, *Götterdämmerung in Frankfurt. Proben zum 3. Aufzug, 1. Szene (Twilight of the Gods in Frankfurt. Rehearsal of Act 3, Scene 1)* [A working session with Michael Gielen].
Length: 27 mins. Camera: Werner Lüring. Editing: Kajetan Forstner. Broadcast Date: June 4, 1987.

1987, *Heiner Müller über Tacitus (Heiner Müller on Tacitus)* [A conversation with the East German playwright and a pictorial montage about ancient Rome and Caesar's death].
Length: 27 mins. Camera: Werner Lüring. Editing: Kajetan Forstner. Broadcast Date: July 2, 1987.

1987, *S.P.Q.R. Das Laszive im Gaumen der Römer (S.P.Q.R. The Lascivious in Roman Taste)* [Interview with Wilfried Stroh, Professor of Classical Philology, University of Munich].
Length: 15 mins. Camera: Werner Lüring. Computer Editing: Marcel Peragine. Editing: Kajetan Forstner. Broadcast Date: September 20, 1987.

1987, *Ich habe eine laute, schrille und unangenehme Stimme—Alla Pugatschowa zu Besuch in München (I Have a Loud, Shrill, and Unpleasant Voice—Alla Pugatschowa during Her Visit to Munich)* [An interview with the Soviet pop star about *perestroika, glasnost*, Lenin, and music].
Length: 15 mins. Camera: Werner Lüring. Computer Editing: Marcel Peragine. Editing: Kajetan Forstner. Broadcast Date: October 25, 1987.

Alexander Kluge: Selected Publications in Chronological Order

compiled by STUART LIEBMAN

Books

Die Universitäts-Selbstverwaltung. Ihre Geschichte und gegenwärtige Rechtsform, Frankfurt am Main, Klostermann, 1958.

Kluge, Alexander and Hellmuth Becker, *Kulturpolitik und Ausgabenkontrolle,* Frankfurt am Main, Klostermann, 1961.

Lebensläufe, Stuttgart, Goverts, 1962. (Selections: *Attendance List for a Funeral. Eleven Stories by Alexander Kluge,* trans. Leila Vennewitz, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1966; republished as *Case Histories*, with a new introduction by Hans-Bernhard Moeller, New York, Holmes & Meier, 1988.)

Schlachtbeschreibung, Olten and Freiburg, Walter, 1964. (*The Battle*, trans. Leila Vennewitz, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1967.)

Schlachtbeschreibung, Frankfurt am Main and Hamburg, Fischer, 1968. (Revised paperback edition.)

Die Artisten in der Zirkuskuppel: ratlos. Die Ungläubige. Projekt Z. Spüche der Leni Peickert, Munich, Piper, 1968. (Selections: "The Spectator as Entrepreneur," trans. Thomas Y. Levin and Miriam B. Hansen, *New German Critique*, 24–25 [Fall/Winter 1981–1982], pp. 210–211.)

Der Untergang der Sechsten Armee (Schlachtbeschreibung), Munich, Piper, 1969. (Reprint of the 1964 edition of *Schlachtbeschreibung* with only a new title added.)

Der Untergang der Sechsten Armee (Schlachtbeschreibung), Stuttgart, Hamburg, 1969. (Newly typeset version of the 1964 edition of *Schlachtbeschreibung* with new title added.)

Kluge, Alexander and Oskar Negt, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung. Zur Organisationsanalyse von bürgerlicher und proletarischer Öffentlichkeit,* Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1972. (*The Public Sphere and Experience*, trans. Peter Labanyi, Introduction by Miriam Hansen, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, forthcoming. Selections published in this issue.)

Kluge, Alexander, Michael Dost, and Florian Hopf, *Filmwirtschaft in der BRD und in Europa. Götterdämmerung in Raten*, Munich, Hanser, 1973.

Lernprozesse mit tödlichem Ausgang, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1973. (Selections: "Selected Writings of Alexander Kluge," trans. Skip Acuff and Hans-Bernard Moeller, *Wide Angle*, vol. 3, no. 4 [1980], p. 32; "Excerpts from 'Big Business Bolshevik,'" trans. Skip Acuff, *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2 [Spring

1980], pp. 195–203; "Mass Death in Venice," trans. Jeffrey S. Librett, *New German Critique*, 30 [Fall 1983], pp. 61–63.)

Lebensläufe. Anwesenheitsliste für eine Beerdigung, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1974. (Revised and enlarged edition of *Lebensläufe*, 1962.)

Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin: Zur Realistischen Methode, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1975. (Selections: "The Occasional Work of a Female Slave," trans. Jan Dawson, in Jan Dawson, *Alexander Kluge and The Occasional Work of a Female Slave*, New York, New York Zoetrope, 1977, pp. 2–25; and "Roswitha's Programme," trans. Stephen Elford, in *ibid.*, pp. 43–48; "Selected Writings by Alexander Kluge," trans. Skip Acuff and Hans-Bernard Moeller, *Wide Angle*, vol. 3, no. 4 [1980], pp. 26–31; and *Toward a Realistic Method: Commentaries on the Notion of Antagonistic Realism*, trans. James Terry Acuff, Jr., Austin, Texas, University of Texas, unpublished Master's thesis, 1980.)

Neue Geschichten, Hefte 1–18: "Unheimlichkeit der Zeit," Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1977. (Selections: "Military Training Films," trans. Skip Acuff and hans-Bernard Moeller, *Wide Angle*, vol 3 no. 4 (1980), p. 33; "The Air Raid on Halberstadt, 8 April 1945," trans. Reinhard Mayer, *Semiotexte*, vol. 4, no. 2 [1982], pp. 306–315; and "Foreword," "The Concrete Tomb," and "An Episode from the Age of Enlightenment," trans. Joyce Rheuban, in this issue.)

Schlachtbeschreibung. Der organisatorische Aufbau eines Unglücks, Munich, Goldmann, 1978. (Expanded version of the 1964 edition of *Schlachtbeschreibung*.)

Die Patriotin Texte/Bilder 1–6, Frankfurt am Main, Zweitausendeins, 1979. (Selections: "On Film and the Public Sphere," trans. Thomas Y. Levin and Miriam B. Hansen, *New German Critique*, 24–25 [Fall/Winter 1981–1982], pp. 206–210.)

Kluge, Alexander and Klaus Eder, eds., *Ulmer Dramaturgien: Reibungsverluste*, Munich, Hanser, 1980. (Selections: "On Film and the Public Sphere," trans. Thomas Y. Levin and Miriam B. Hansen, *New German Critique*, 24–25 [Fall/Winter 1981–1982], pp. 211–220.)

Kluge, Alexander and Oskar Negt, *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, Frankfurt am Main, Zweitausendeins, 1981.

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compiled by STUART LIEBMAN

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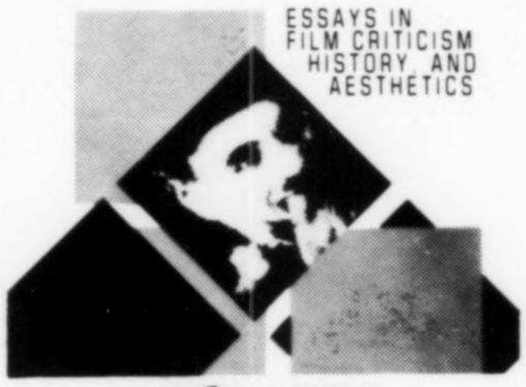
has done more than any other individual to promote German cinema in the US, handled most of the exacting details concerning the creation of new subtitled prints and the publicity as well as the itinerary for the exhibition's tour across North America.

That this exhibition should have its premiere at the new Anthology Film Archives in New York City is testimony to Jonas Mekas's courageous persistence in creating an exhibition space, archive, and museum devoted primarily to the work of independent and avant-garde filmmakers in the US and abroad. Jonas understood the interest of Kluge's initiatives for American filmmakers, and thus designated the retrospective as the first major exhibition in Anthology's new permanent home. Because of the generosity of Herr Theo Hinz, the director of the Filmverlag der Autoren, and of Kluge himself, six of Kluge's films—including three rarely seen shorts and the three important "cooperative" films produced in the late 1970s and early 1980s—have become part of the "Alexander Kluge Archive" at Anthology, and as such they are now available for study by film scholars.

Annette Michelson was one of the earliest supporters of this project. It was she who, hearing of my wish to have a catalogue of sufficient scale to indicate the scope and nature of Kluge's achievements, proposed this special issue of OCTOBER. I am gratified that her coeditors Joan Copjec, Douglas Crimp, and Rosalind Krauss unanimously endorsed the idea. For more than a year since their decision, Annette has followed the production of texts for the issue with constant interest and sage advice; Douglas and Joan must be singled out for their careful final editing and layout of the issue. It gives me great pleasure to know that, thanks to InterNationes, a West German, nonprofit media production and distribution service, copies of the journal will accompany the exhibition on its travels throughout the US, Canada, and other English-speaking countries.

Finally, I must thank two individuals without whom this catalogue and exhibition could not have come into being. Alexander Kluge spent many hours of his valuable time speaking with me about his work and reviewing tapes of his films and television programs. He also introduced me to his superb editor, Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus, and attended to many other details that ensured the success of the project. Perhaps this is only second nature to him by now—after all, he has been tireless in his efforts for New German Cinema since it began—but I am deeply grateful for his commitment to me and for his support of what I have tried to accomplish toward the larger goal we share. As the exhibition and this catalogue will show, his creative work as well as his activity on behalf of independent film—and now television production—in a lively, argumentative, and therefore potentially free "public sphere" could well serve as an example to filmmakers here in the US as well as Germany. It is a measure of my wife Lois's devotion to me and my project that she expects no formal thanks for the countless hours I was working, surly, and exasperated. I cannot, however, begin to thank her enough.

STUART LIEBMAN



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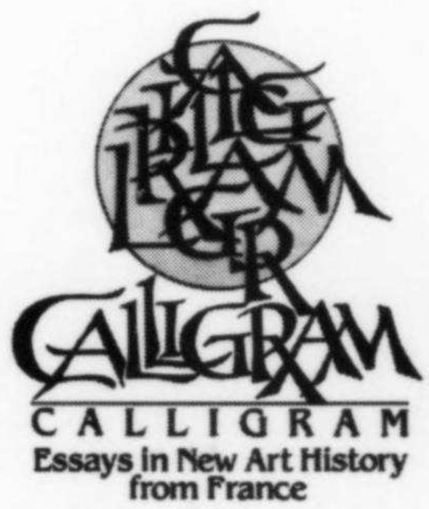

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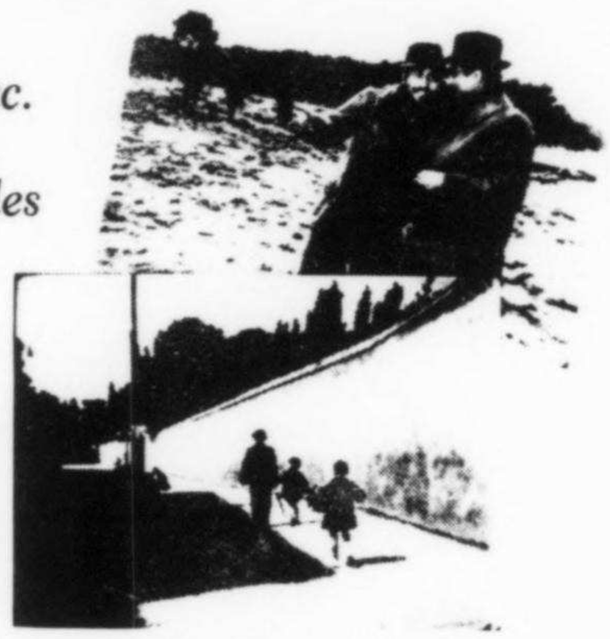

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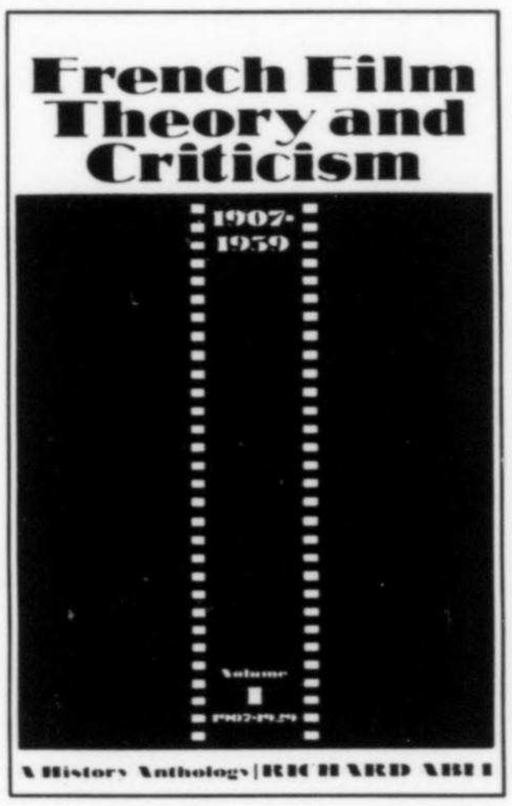

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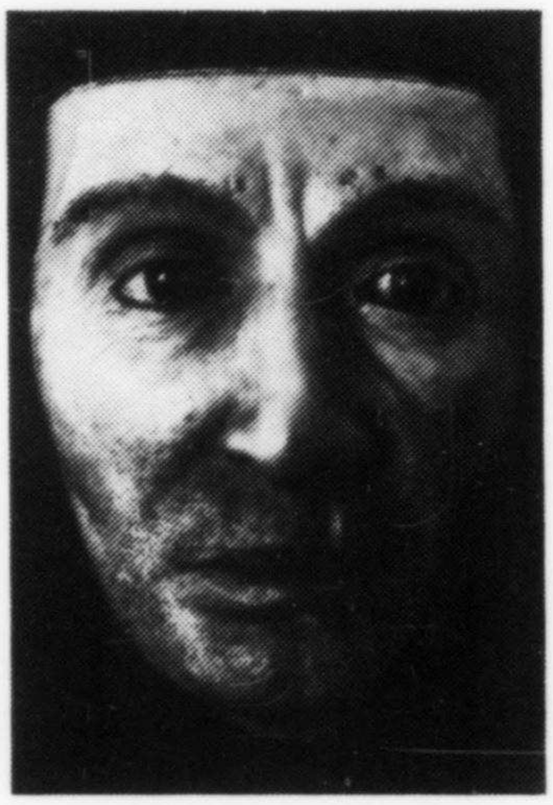

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