

**The Author of the Film:  
The Cultural Mode of Production in the New German Cinema**

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*The New German Cinema as Art Cinema?*

Even during the buoyant mid-1970s, then, when the New German Cinema peaked both in terms of the number of important films being made and in the growing self-assurance of its directors, there was a sense of crisis that could not simply be put down to the film-makers' sense of marginalisation and lack of public recognition.

Three basic anomalies typified the situation. The central ideology of the New German cinema was that of the *Autor* (author), but the films themselves were massively determined by the production mode (state finance supporting an artisanal conditions of production) and the exhibition context (either an American distributor even for the German market or television). Secondly, despite these common conditions and a united (left-liberal) political front, no group style emerged. Much of the output remained amorphous and very diverse, which is to say, there was no stable horizon of expectation for a public that was used to genres and stars as the markers of recognition. Additionally, instead of authorship being conferred on a director's films retrospectively, to honour the perceived coherence of an achieved body of work (as was the case with the *auteur* theory when initially developed for Hollywood directors), in West Germany, it was more at the level of ambition and intention that a filmmaker became an author, while each individual work often seemed to remain economically and aesthetically a one-off effort.<sup>1</sup> *Autor*-status became a euphemistic way of classifying the unclassifiable: no other national cinema was able to promote so many directors as authors in such a short space of time. Nonetheless, despite the diversity, the amorphousness and individuality of an extensive if not unlimited number of films, the label New German Cinema did have validity beyond its marketing value: there is a recurrence of similar themes, ideological motifs and basic narrative configurations (for instance, the family, authority, the outsider), there is a recurrence of formal issues (static compositions, tableau shots, a distancing or ironic point of view), and above all, a remarkably consistent tone (of melancholy regret, nostalgia and loss).

Hence the need to try and account for the logic of this production and provide a rationale for the diversity but also the unity of the films. The most obvious answer is to treat the New German Cinema as a variant of the art cinema. European post-war cinema evolved closely in relation to two contradictory impulses: safeguarding the national film culture with government measures, while trying to develop a cinema formally distinct from that of Hollywood.<sup>2</sup> The film industry, however, invariably wanted a national cinema that could compete commercially with Hollywood. Art cinema, however, was often produced on the

margins of the industry, neither in outright opposition to it, nor a serious rival to Hollywood.

In countries like Italy and France, the art cinema often succeeded in being nationally specific by capitalising on intellectual and literary traditions. It gained international recognition and hard currency where the films addressed themselves to a national audience which most probably regarded the cinema as a 'mass' form of entertainment, yet looked to certain films and their directors for a representation of Modernist literary themes. Existentialism, the absurd, alienation were never far from the critical discussions of, for example, the early films of Ingmar Bergman, Michelangelo Antonioni, Alain Resnais and even Joseph Losey, once he had moved to London: it means that the art cinema auteur works within a broad cultural consensus and for an identifiable public.

However, while some of this applies to the German situation, notably the origin and purpose of the funding system, such interpretations of New German films in the European auteur tradition (with the possible exception of Herzog's) are almost as problematic as are the genre divisions sometimes put forward. Furthermore, the absence of either a film industry or an ideological consensus enforcing technical standards or representational norms makes analyses analogous to those attempted of Hollywood films inappropriate. Although the New German Cinema remained throughout, and despite some notable exceptions, a narrative cinema,<sup>3</sup> a reading of the films as genre narratives, and of these narratives as socially symbolic forms often yields disappointing results. For it is precisely in the area of narrative that the output of the German cinema presents a major paradox, since the films are, by conventional Hollywood standards, often artless in technique, poorly scripted and badly constructed as drama, while visually intriguing and emotionally haunting. Moreover, they break many of the rules of classical narrative, without, however, necessarily developing alternative paradigms, such as can be found in, say, the films of Jean Luc Godard or Jean Marie Straub. Thus, in economic terms (state-funded, anti-formula, promoted as national) the New German Cinema belongs to the art cinema, as opposed to genre cinema; but as an art cinema, it is far less self-conscious about its film-historical place than the cinema of Bresson or Fellini, not to mention the cinema of critics-turned-directors such as Jacques Rivette or Francois Truffaut, and instead, the German films seems much more aware of a (film-) political role and of pressing social issues, such as unemployment, the status of women, the plight of minorities (quite untypical for the European auteur-art cinema of the first post-war generation).

Did the New German Cinema, then, because it generated a historically distinct 'mode of production'<sup>4</sup> also develop a distinct 'mode of representation'? Features which in the analysis of commercially produced films tend to be of minor importance, such as the different self-definitions of the directors, for instance, took on a new prominence within the films themselves, while other factors, such as the mode of address, or the different patterns of

recognition and identification reflected nationally specific, but generationally shared cultural experiences. On the other hand, evidence of particular formal features - the touchstone of identifying the classical narrative cinema as well as defining avant-garde modes of representation - are in the New German Cinema difficult to define at a more comprehensive and general level, but become very distinct and unmistakable in the styles of individual directors, such as the *mises-en-scène* of R.W. Fassbinder, Werner Herzog, Alexander Kluge, Werner Schroeter, Hans Jürgen Syberberg or Wim Wenders, who were soon recognized as *auteurs* by an international (festival) public.<sup>5</sup>

Yet this chapter wants to offer a broader account of the New German Cinema, rather than absorb all the films into the stylistic idiosyncrasies of its art-cinema *auteurs* (into which many directors of the German *Autorenfilm* fitted only with difficulty). It is therefore what I call the 'cultural' mode of production that must serve as starting point not only for indicating what, if anything, the internationally recognized *auteurs* just listed have in common with their less well-known colleagues, but to highlight those aspects of the production logic that appeared to have had a determining effect on the films themselves.

In the following I sketch three interdependent areas of structured signification that can be found in the output of the New German Cinema. The first of these semantic fields focuses on the *ideological* determinations: the concept of the *Autorenfilm* and its contradictory inscription of self-expression and state subsidy. The second concerns a number of *institutional* determinations, mainly to do with the status of a so-called independent cinema, existing between the subsidized art house and thus only semi-commercial exhibition venues, the *Kommunale Kinos*, and the late-night program slots of public service television. The third field touches on the *spectatorial* determinations, i.e. the real, perceived or projected demands made by German audiences (but also critics and the State) on this nationally-funded cinema, and the directors' response to such expectations. The author-*auteurs* and their international productions mesh with these national determinations in complex but demonstrable ways, making the meanings given to the films by their art-cinema audiences outside Germany often a mere abstraction of the precise historical inscriptions present in the films.

The polemics quoted earlier in this study that greeted many of the films in the late 1960s and early 1970s insinuated that German filmmakers were self-indulgent, or arrogantly indifferent to their home audiences. I would want to advance the opposite hypothesis: that the films, their forms (ranging from realist narrative, documentary fiction to stylized fantasy), their subject-matter (dealing with matters of recognizable public debate) and titles (often quite uncinematic) imply a continuing anxiety about audiences, and can only be understood against the internalized and exterior pressures coming from a pervasive *legitimation gap* affecting a cinema sponsored by the state and its cultural institutions while not supported by

the critics and shunned or ignored by the mass public. In short, the vast majority of German independent films seem at some level always concerned with justifying filmmaking not so much as a creative individual act, but a critical activity, involving issues of public accountability and thus socially useful. The German film-maker is “other-directed”<sup>6</sup> twice over: parallel to negotiating approval from the committees and state bureaucracies in charge of finance, he or she must also woo a public, however elusive. Besides the skills to deal with government-appointed funding bodies, it is this search for audience appeal that constitutes the other defining aspect of the cultural mode of production.

### ***Subsidy versus Self-Expression: The Autorenfilm***

If for the first ten years or so, the *Autor* proved the most decisive focus for both production and reception, it was also the most confusing concept in the New German Cinema. This was due largely to the way it combined a certain self-understanding of the film-maker as author in the legal sense, and his more directly ideological role as an artist, the creator of personal works. The confusion was compounded by the existence of the term within the art cinema generally, where it often functions as a transcendent category of value. Not so in West Germany: *Autoren*, in order to be able to make films, as we saw, first had to create the conditions for making them. The authors' film is thus tied indissolubly to the authors' policy: the cultural-political demand for recognition and subsidy. Film aesthetics often became indistinguishable from film politics.

The cultural mode of production differs from the industrial mode (for which Hollywood is still the shorthand name), and from the avant-garde model of co-ops, workshops, galleries and aesthetic theory. Yet it shares elements of both these diametrically opposed conceptions of film and cinema, and is nevertheless neither a compromise between the two nor does it supersede them in practice. At one extreme, raising finance under the German system resembles, paradoxically, the Hollywood 'package deal', the norm in international film financing which succeeded the studio system. Commercial package deals are put together by a producer or an agency who sells to often quite unlikely clients or interest groups a package of stars, story, production values. In the 'cultural' mode of production, it is the individual filmmaker who has to shop around, fill in the application forms, present proposals to committees, submit budgets, attend hearings, before knowing whether the project will ever become a film. What this has in common with the package deal is the add-on practice of separate financing sources combining to fund a single product. Where it differs is that the client is ultimately the State buying "culture", and that the diversity is not in the ingredients of the product but the number of decision-making bureaucracies involved in its genesis.

At the other extreme, what Pam Cook has defined as typical for the avant-garde, to a large extent also applies to the New German Cinema:

Traditionally the relation of the avant-garde film-maker to her or his work has been artisanal, i.e. the film-maker, like a craft worker, is in control of all aspects of the process of production and distribution/exhibition, retaining rights of ownership over her or his film. The artisanal mode of production has several levels: it implies a particular mode of production which is small scale and therefore, in a capitalist economy, lies outside the dominant system.[...] Artisanal production stands in opposition both to the capitalist economic organization of the film industry and to the structure of labour within the industry (in terms of its hierarchy and organization)... In general, because of its marginal position *vis-à-vis* the industry, artisanal film production has been supported by patronage of wealthy individuals, funding in the form of grants from State institutions and by the organization of co-operative workshops.<sup>7</sup>

Most German directors manifested an extreme ambiguity towards the subsidy system and its effects on their work. Herzog for instance, was already in a 1972 interview tired of passing round the begging bowl:

[What bothers me are] the quite appalling efforts involved in raising finance for filmmaking.... Maybe three-quarter of my energies go into organizational matters. With more money, I could invest myself in a much more purposeful way.<sup>8</sup>

For Herzog, Wenders and Fassbinder, as their films began to earn automatic subsidy for investment in future production, the cultural model appeared to be of importance only as a secondary source of finance. They gradually phased themselves out of the subsidy maze, and once their reputation as directors was established, they possessed a 'value' which the international film industry understood, so that for them, a version of the Hollywood model re-emerged. Fassbinder once scornfully said that he could make an entire film in the time it took others to read the small print on the application forms of the grant-aid committees.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, though surprisingly for someone widely considered to have been the mind behind the subsidy system, Kluge has made no secret of his hostility to its practices. He once compared the committee hearings to a school board in session, and complained about the indignity of being treated with every new film like an examination candidate threatened with relegation.<sup>10</sup> Kluge also never tired of pointing out that the German Cinema of the 1970s attained even its international reputation not *because of* the West German funding system, but

*in spite of it.*<sup>11</sup> This may be a polemical exaggeration but it points to the fact that estimations of the benefits of the subsidy system were by no means unanimous, and that the cultural mode stood in tension not only to the Hollywood ambitions of a Fassbinder, or the fierce individualism of a Herzog, but also to the collectivist-egalitarian aspirations of a Kluge,<sup>12</sup> not to mention the political avant-garde positions of Jean Marie Straub. In fact, the secret of subsidy system's 'success' may have been that it was in many ways self-contradictory.

Implicit in the Oberhausen rebellion, therefore, was an ideological stance which has always been a main platform of the independent cinema: the right to self-expression, and the demand to use film as the medium for an autonomous personal vision. As a militant position from which to fight the film industry, the "personal vision" argument is both necessary and flawed. When the writer Alfred Andersch put forward the notion in the 1950s "that the eye of the camera only starts seeing when a literary consciousness is behind it"<sup>13</sup> he echoed Alexandre Astruc's "camera-stylo", but Astruc had outlined a parallel and complementary practice to that of the film industry, rather than a competing or mutually exclusive one. The generation of Oberhausen on the other hand wanted to replace the film industry. Had they been avant-garde film-makers, they might have insisted on self-expression (though in actual fact, the German avant-garde directors were fiercely suspicious of this concept), arguing that they were concerned to protect their project from the contingent obstacles attending its realization. But state-subsidized filmmakers, in contrast to painters or writers, cannot escape their social obligations; after all, so the argument goes, they use tax-payers' money to fulfil a 'private' fantasy. Indeed, they were only too aware of the constraint which receiving public funds puts on self-expression. As Edgar Reitz explained:

Practically, the situation today is this: you receive money from the Ministry of the Interior, and then you have to try incredibly hard to forget where the money comes from, and why it was given to you.<sup>14</sup>

However, what is valued by a government financing its film-makers is not a particular use-value or even propaganda function, but precisely, a relentless commitment to self-expression. Or at least a commitment to the idea of film as art, and of art as existing in the realm of aesthetic autonomy. This was part of the traditional compromise that subsidized art in whatever field had concluded with the powers that be, in order to escape the odium of being 'official' art, as most of the state-supported arts are in socialist countries. In Western democracies, the problem with patronage is that those who receive it must not appear to bite too fiercely the hand that feeds them, while displaying sufficient discontent to pass as independent. Much of the peculiarity of the New German Cinema can be traced along the fine

line of this tension: between the role that the grant-awarding bodies projected onto the film-maker, and the image that film-makers had of themselves and of the cinema in general.

The task, thus, of mediating between mutually exclusive projections and expectations fell above all to the Autorenfilm<sup>15</sup>, a term serving as a sort of turnstile between ideology and practice, an ideal and a dogma so strong that for a time, the renaissance of the cinema in Germany could be attributed to the fact that "the author [was] a public institution".<sup>16</sup>

Autorenkino [was] in essence institutionalized directorial autonomy. It would also give rise to intense competition among individual Autoren .... Likewise it would put the creators at the beck and call of the very institutions so much of their work aimed to call into question.<sup>17</sup>

While it disguised rather than eliminated the contradictions, the victory of the *Autorenfilm* gave state-funded film-making a certain identity<sup>18</sup>. But the author in the German cinema is neither a retrospective category of coherence applied to a film text, as is the case in Hollywood *auteurism*, nor was he, at least initially, the "film director-as-superstar".<sup>19</sup>

Instead, the *Autorenfilm* is more an example of an ideological concept and a discourse functioning as a form of coherence for the cultural mode of production itself. It determined the political and administrative machinery put in place to fund films practically and it furnished the criteria which validated film-making as "art". The ideology of self-expression, institutionalized, became a surrogate economic category: for by being accepted as an "author" a film-maker found access to the subsidy system and could command a certain legal and financial power within it. Sheila Johnston even goes so far as to say that "Autoren were defined as such from the very outset, often before they had even made a film".<sup>20</sup>

Crucial for the *Autorenfilm* were the statutes of the Kuratorium which by and large set the pattern for the contractual relations between film-makers and film subsidy as cultural aid. By recognising as its legal partner, and answerable for the project, the person submitting a script and intending to realise it, they defined the author for all intents and purposes as the director:

The film-maker should have autonomy in giving shape to his film idea without having to take legal or serious financial risks. He was to retain control over the direction and the entire production process.<sup>21</sup>

Was this a progressive move, intended to counter the employee status of the film director in German labour law, or did its regressive side predominate, confining German film production to glorified home movies?<sup>22</sup> By shaping the directors' self-definition and the films themselves, the ambiguities inherent in the concept of the *Autorenfilm* became themselves one of the most productive aspects of the German situation.

One feature, however, was only noted towards the end of the 1970s: assuming the main battle for control to be between the director and the producer, the ideologues of the *Autorenfilm* had left no separate or defined role for the script-writer. By its very nature, the subsidy system heavily favoured the director as his own script-writer, a bias which became a problem as soon as the German cinema needed to confront seriously the task of making films which were both narrative and aimed at the cinemas:

A script-writer, e.g. Hark Bohm wants to be and is immediately advanced to "author" even if he happens to be a bad director. Conversely, no director -despite all the complaints about the difficulties of writing a good scenario- wants to entrust his idea to a professional writer, for fear the writer might turn into a film author himself.<sup>23</sup>

If one sees the *Autorenfilm* and the interpretations it received against a wider historical horizon, such as the legal or judicial status of film authorship prior to the War, it becomes apparent that not only did the writers feature prominently in the debate in the early years of German film history,<sup>24</sup> but authorship in the New German Cinema retained its literary associations very strongly at another level: in the notion (evident in a name like *Filmverlag der Autoren*) that distributors should regard a film director in much the same way as a publisher treats his or her author.

The legal contradictions emerging from authorship in the cinema were polemically probed – again from the writer's point of view – famously by Bert Brecht, in his *Threepenny Opera Lawsuit*, a study written after the court case he and Kurt Weill had fought with Nero Film, the company making *The Threepenny Opera* in 1931 as an international, multi-language production designed for a mass public. Brecht argued that in the film industry it is the producer (through the contracts he holds on the story, on the director, the scriptwriter, the cameraman, the technical crew, the actors) who appropriates the labour of others and makes himself the owner and thereby the author. The model of authorship in the cinema is thus that of industrial production and not that of bourgeois notions of creative authorship. But as Brecht also pointed out, behind the producer stands that which he invests, namely capital, so that ultimately capital itself, in the human shape of the producer, appears as the author of a film. The various other authors – the writer for instance – are expendable or replaceable (as is evident in the Hollywood film industry, where directors are taken off a film). Brecht was not surprised that he lost his case, but nonetheless relished the ‘sociological experiment’:

If in practice, the legal system is to enable production, how should it then be able to protect an ideology ("intellectual property is inviolable") which endangers production? [...] Capitalism is coherent in practice, because it must. But its coherence in practice obliges it to be incoherent in its ideology.<sup>25</sup>



Brecht's argument is that the bourgeois legal system has to step in and mediate between an artistic form of production and an industrial form of production, but finds itself ill equipped to do so, since both have become subsumed under the laws of capitalism and the market. The "author" in the New German Cinema fulfilled a similar function: the ideological task was to hold together a bourgeois notion of art and a capitalist notion of production.

Norbert Kückelmann, a trained lawyer and co-founder of the Kuratorium, for example, argued that film had a special role in advanced industrial societies: "Art is becoming more and more an instrument of [...] an individual's defence against pressure from economic and social power structures which are increasingly reducing art to a commodity. This is especially true of film art."<sup>26</sup> Kückelmann thus seems to think that the commodity status of film constitutes an abuse which the *Autorenfilm* could rectify by reinstating "the extremely underprivileged director as true originator of the film work".<sup>27</sup> Here, Kückelmann and the Kuratorium perform the role Brecht had diagnosed: creating a definition intended to arbitrate between positions that cannot be reconciled. It is, of course, the core of the debate that Hollywood and Europe have had for many decades over the "cultural exceptionalism" that cinema represents, and which therefore must be protected with import restrictions and be exempt from "free trade" agreements.

### ***Legitimacy and Legitimation***

Only since the Romantic period has art or creativity been judged in terms of originality, and valued for its personal, subjective form of expression. As a historical development it was not unconnected with the disappearance of private patronage and the need for artists to make a living on the open market.<sup>28</sup> The contradictions of the free market in matters of art re-emerge every time the state assumes patronage for an area of production where private property and personal authorship are regulated by the buying and selling of commodities and services, rather than by originality, artistic intention and subjective commitment. The authors' cinema inherited the dilemma, but could not resolve it other than practically, by the director becoming the producer, acting as the author and hiring him/herself as writer and director.

In ideological terms, the nexus of autonomy and patronage as embodied in the *Autorenfilm* gave the quest for legitimation and legitimacy a momentum which in more ways than one predestined the New German Cinema to a restaging of the Romantic rebellion. The Oberhausen Manifesto, with its rhetoric of freedom ("the new film needs new kinds of freedom. Freedom from the conventions practiced in the industry. Freedom from the influence of commercial partners. Freedom from being under the tutelage of vested interests"<sup>29</sup>) sounded a familiar note, and served a particular strategy. Freedom being the traditional battle-cry of the liberal bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie at least since the French

Revolution, such an appeal in West Germany also constituted a reminder of the bourgeoisie's own anti-feudal, 'revolutionary' ethos. As a Bill of Rights, the Oberhausen Manifesto is plainly addressed to the West German State in its self-appointed role of representing not only Germany's liberal-democratic traditions, but defending the freedom of expression, of opinion, of movement and of trade against the rival claims of the other Germany: the anti-bourgeois socialist traditions represented by the German Democratic Republic. To take the constitution of a liberal democracy at its own word may often prove an effective way of bringing to the fore the discrepancies between ideology and practice. Yet it cannot by itself overcome the contradictions thus highlighted. This was to be true of the *Autorenfilm* as well:

One has to understand that neither as a paid director of a big company nor as a small producer-director is one in a position to control the market. National and international firms are in charge, and as an individual one cannot take them on, not even as an 'independent producer'. Which is why it is so important for filmmakers to recognize their situation, get organized, and stop deluding themselves about their 'freedom'.<sup>30</sup>

Among the reasons why the West German government ultimately welcomed the Oberhausen Manifesto and pursued such an apparently generous funding policy was its own "legitimation gap". In the political vacuum left by the collapse first of the Weimar Republic and then the Nazi State, while initially facing social divisions that were exacerbated by the ideological and geographical splitting of Germany into two sovereign states, it was high culture which was meant to promote consensus and foster social cohesion.<sup>31</sup> Envisaged as part of this high culture, an art cinema was welcomed as a form of social glue. Secondly, the notion of a national cinema, as opposed to a domestic film industry, corresponded quite closely to one of the major ideological tenets of the Federal Republic, namely to be the sole legitimate representative of German culture and German history. The cinema was a particularly effective way of arguing West Germany's case to be considered in this role, against the rival assertion of the German Democratic Republic. Already at the time of the UFA decartelization plans in the early 1950s, one aim had been "to export, as it were, culture, civilization, German prestige via German films -not only abroad, but also to help the German cinema at home to new esteem."<sup>32</sup> The drive to legitimate West Germany in this way against the GDR appears to have been largely successful, as the label "New German Cinema" proves: few would insist on specifying New "West" German Cinema.<sup>33</sup>

The State, addressed by the film-maker as patron, not surprisingly in turn addressed the film-maker, assigning him a specific role and public function. If the role was that of "artist", the function was to represent "national culture". Werner Schroeter recognized the dilemma early on:

With my mini-productions I am something of a marginal figure but I'm just as embroiled in *Kultur* as is Fassbinder or Reitz. And I find this abominable. I think the worst danger for me and for others [about subsidized filmmaking] is that we become nationalized figures, common property.<sup>34</sup>

The promotion of film and the cinema as high art thus corresponded to both a domestic and a foreign policy aim: it supported artistic activity on a broad front, and provided an art form that could represent West Germany as the legitimate heir of German culture, a phrase quite enthusiastically taken up by Werner Herzog when on his first visit to the United States as a celebrity, he proclaimed that "after Kleist, Büchner and Kafka, we are legitimate German culture".<sup>35</sup>

The subsidy system protected film-makers from the 'market' which would never have allowed them to exist otherwise, by withdrawing them partially from the circulation of capital, and establishing a secondary circuit - that of cultural legitimation. They had to prove that the cinema was a serious art and that they were serious artists. But by obtaining the benefit of subsidy without actually having overcome the "legitimation gap" which the cinema had always suffered from compared to the other arts, German films became involved in a much older dilemma: that of the artist and bourgeois society, where he is enormously important as a symbolic figure. Kückelmann, the quotation above, pointed out how the artist in some sense represents the last refuge of the sovereign subject, in the form of an individualism that has apparently escaped the negative consequences of modernity. His activity is not affected by the division of labour, and in a society of part-subjects, part-objects and commodities, he holds up the image of the possibility of non-alienation. The ambiguity of such a position derives from the fact that it puts responsibility on society to keep the ideal alive for everyone as a practical human potential (which is why the arts are funded) but the artist is also an alibi for a society far from working towards such a possibility. He is the guardian of a totality and wholeness, the loss of which the rest of society accepts as the price of technological progress and material well-being. In the satisfied post-war prosperity enjoyed by most West Germans by the mid-1960s, the self-tormented, but spiritually free artist was a highly-prized cultural asset.

### ***Romanticism and Kultur***

The co-option of film as an art that merited public subsidy brought the cinema from the margins to a position near the centre of German cultural politics. At this centre, literature, but also the theatre and film find themselves invariably confronted with the question of national identity and representative German culture. The critics' ambivalence, especially vis-à-vis directors such as Herzog and Syberberg who assumed this legacy of culture more overtly and

stridently than others, is due to the fact that the very idea of *Kultur* is itself a profoundly embattled notion in German history. It not only polarized critics and filmmakers, but filmmakers themselves. Already in 1972, Werner Schroeter insisted on dissociating himself from film as art and the director as artist:

I have no intention whatsoever of playing a leading part (in the New German Cinema), and submit to the expectations of producing *Kulturscheisse*, even if it may be true that I carry around with me and into my films the past of this *Kulturscheisse*. I neither depend on it, nor do I admire it. The elements of this *Kultur* are the materials I play with.<sup>36</sup>

This antipathy of the label 'art' and 'culture' must, however, be judged also as the sign of a new self-confidence. For instance, knowing his stature as the father of the Young German Cinema and theoretician of film-as-culture to be secure, Kluge could assume for the cinema a place alongside literature, philosophy and music while explicitly repudiating the name of artist:

I don't know what an artist is. I'd say, my roots are in Hebrew theology; in the Critical Theory of Horkheimer, Adorno, Oskar Negt; in Walter Benjamin. On the other hand, Hölderlin, Kleist, James Joyce and Arno Schmidt are a source (...) not to mention music. The achievements of the classical arts: that is the tradition I understand myself in, as part of a profession which doesn't exist as a defined profession.<sup>37</sup>

Herzog and Syberberg would probably agree, but it is difficult to think of a non-German director, even a well-established auteur, placing himself in a similar line of descent. The pointed omission of any film-maker either past or present from Kluge's list of spiritual ancestors and influences underlines the different conception of film culture in Germany. It makes Fassbinder's or Wenders' cinephile attachment to father-figures such as Douglas Sirk or Nicholas Ray both comprehensible and provocative.

Despite denying an affiliation with art as it might have become ritualized in visits to the opera or the concert hall, Kluge and Schroeter, along with many other German directors, nonetheless place themselves in a recognizably German tradition, that of Romantic anti-capitalism and their claims and counter-claims to cultural legitimacy and representation invariably also involved taking a stand in the fight for the right interpretation of the Romantic legacy also in German history. The conflicts of art and politics, of absolute subjectivity within an absolutist Prussian monarchy, for instance, was what made the person and work of Heinrich von Kleist play such a central role in German film culture during the 1970s. Economically, the New German Cinema owed much to the political objectives of the Social Democrats who, since their entry into a Coalition government in 1966, had pressed for

greater state intervention in the Free Market economy. Ideologically, however, the New German Cinema has to be seen in the context of the radical politisation which started in the universities around 1963 and peaked in the late 1960s with the broadly-based movement known as the extra-parliamentary opposition. Although having its roots, as Kluge put it, in Horkheimer and Adorno's Critical Theory, which was itself to some extent an essentially romantic reading of classical Marxism,

the extra-parliamentary opposition developed a rhetoric, if not a practice, that was extremely hostile to liberal notions of art, culture and subjectivity. As a response to the Vietnam war and Third World movements elsewhere, the outlook was internationalist rather than national.

In this respect, much of the New German Cinema did indeed appear to signal a return to Romantic, irrational and nationalist values and positions. To German critics, unable or unwilling to see the peculiarity of a national film-production within an international market place, such a return amounted indeed to a counter-revolution. The fact that the neo-romantic tendency which came to be known as 'sensibilist' should be so prominent among film-makers (notably in Herzog, Wenders, Schroeter, Syberberg and Achternbusch) is in no small measure due to their self-conscious or militant exposure to the contradictions of their situation. For them, subsidy of cinema by the State revived, in the age of corporate capitalism and media-conglomerates, a preoccupation with the processes of individual aesthetic production, with subjectivity and non-alienated labour, which was perhaps quite out of proportion with the importance of art as an instrument of critical reflection and cognition, but which exactly reflected the consequences of an art-practice under public funding. In this respect, it is arguable whether the political categories of left and right can be applied, for the Romanticism which manifested itself in the New German cinema was itself a radical response to the crisis in critical thinking, regardless of whether it understood itself in the traditions of the Enlightenment, Romanticism or Modernism.

Yet the sense of Germany as a nation, with a culture specific to its history has always been associated more with the phases of Romantic pietism and subjectivity than with Enlightenment rationalism or practical political engagement. Thus, although it might be argued that literature and the arts flourish in Germany more often as a result of a failed revolution, this might well be in reaction to frustrated desires for change, rather than a sign of resistance to change. No other European country, it seems, is as unsure of the meaning of its culture as Germany, or as obsessed with its national identity. The reasons are evident: the post-war division of Germany into two sovereign states, each with its own highly partisan version of national history fixated on the phenomenon of Fascism, has ruptured and set up barriers to any notion of cultural or historical continuity. Germany never became a nation state like France or Britain, through a bourgeois revolution or a civil war such as the United

States. Even more so than Italy, it was eventually united from above, developing geographical and social cohesion under a bureaucratic-imperialist monarchy, in the wake of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870.

Only the long-established reflex of regionalism and centuries of decentralization can explain why so many Germans accepted what in effect were five fundamentally different political regimes in less than a century. Likewise, the division of Germany or the severance from its eastern provinces after the Second World War came to be accepted quite readily by a majority of the population, not so much because it was felt to be a just price to pay, but because German intellectuals and the educated classes had always tended to consider *Bildung* and *Kultur* fair compensation for political disenfranchisement and geographical division.

The ideological shifts that transformed large sections of West Germany's highly educated but traditionally a-political middle class into an ultra-left, radical intelligentsia, between 1963 and 1973 strikingly confirms a recurrent cycle in German politics and culture: that of a brief, para-revolutionary surge, followed by longer periods of conservative backlash and restoration. The pattern has repeated itself several times since in the 1790s - the poet Hölderlin, the young Hegel and Kleist became fervent admirers of the French Revolution, only to turn, upon Napoleon's invasion of Germany and his alliance with a mercantile bourgeoisie, passionately conservative and advocate political nationalism as well as cultural provincialism. Thus, periods of European and international 'rationalism' have in Germany been often succeeded by spells of Pietist inwardness, safeguarded externally by politically reactionary regimes. German Romantic nationalism could appear militant, utopian and revolutionary, but in the context of Europe and world politics, it just as often proved to be profoundly conservative.

The New German Cinema, in its international presence, shares many of the characteristics of such a Romantic, radical phase in German culture. In addition, it is polarised regionally, not so much between East and West as North and South. For much of the 1970s Munich predominated over Berlin or Hamburg. The polarization has to do with the location of the traditional centres of filmmaking, but the fact that German film culture has a strong Bavarian flavour is reflected in the biographical data of many of the directors. Fassbinder, Herzog, Achternbusch, Geissendörfer and Adlon were all born in or near Munich. Kluge, Reitz, Hauff, Schlöndorff, von Trotta, Uwe Brandner, Schilling, Petersen and Lilienthal live in Munich. Wenders studied at the Munich Film Academy, wrote for a Munich daily paper and lived in Munich. Syberberg comes from Pommerania, but has lived in Munich since 1953. The stereotype, already exploited by Thomas Mann, of the sentimental, impulsive, romantic South and the cold, rationalist North transfers the historical tensions discussed above also onto the map, and the same configuration turns up in many of Syberberg's films

(explicitly in *Ludwig-Requiem for a Virgin King* and *Ludwig's Cook*, but also in *Our Hitler*). It is furthermore a prominent motif in Fassbinder (*Effi Briest*, *Bolwieser*, *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*) where it often conveniently symbolised a male/female polarity.

### **"Author-Oriented" vs "Issue-Oriented" Filmmaking**

While this overview may seem to make the concept of the author a progressive one, the fact that many of the films produced under state sponsorship failed to reach the cinemas either in Germany or abroad indicated that the German Cinema had not found its identity as an art cinema. The designation of the author as the contractual partner and addressee of the funding system meant filmmakers had to legitimate themselves as 'artists'. But the need to legitimate themselves with an actual audience, both for the sake of their professional self-image and in order to counter the accusations and hostility of the commercial film industry lobby made directors seek active ways of adjusting themselves to what they perceived to be particular audience expectations.

In fact, the search for audiences provides the most obvious key to the apparent heterogeneity of the major output of the German cinema. The difficulties in classifying the films according to common stylistic or thematic traits begins to resolve itself when one relates them not only to the funding system but also to the other major determining factor, the conditions of reception. While initially after Oberhausen, filmmakers tried to find subjects and styles that would make their films resemble those, for instance, of the *nouvelle vague*, and other directors very quickly turned to reworking genre formulas, accepting that the cinema lives from repetition and recognition as much as from originality and uniqueness, another kind of film is more typical for the New German cinema. No complex theoretical and historical arguments are needed to realize that the bulk of the films made by German directors in the 1970s and early 1980s does not follow the logic of self-expression nor that of genre, but is intensely concerned with social and political questions. Some critics have therefore divided the New German Cinema into author-oriented films (where the emphasis is on self-expression, or the implied audience is the international, art house spectator) and issue-oriented films (dealing with social problems or controversial issues aimed at home audiences).<sup>38</sup>

On the face of it, this makes good sense. Even at the time of the Young German Film, the tendency was to make films around issues: one of the few popular successes immediately following Oberhausen, Ulrich Schamoni's *Es* (1965) was about abortion; Kluge's *Yesterday Girl* (1966) was about vagrancy, petty crime and social work, Johannes Schaaf's *Tätowierung* (1967) about youth criminality and foster homes. Fleischmann's *Hunting Scenes in Lower Bavaria* focused on social prejudice and sexual deviancy and Fassbinder's *Katzelmacher* (1969) on unemployment and racial prejudice towards foreign workers.

Equally remarkable is that since the 1970s, there has hardly been a single "social issue" not dealt with by a major fiction film.<sup>39</sup> One explanation for their prevalence must be the "television-orientation" of many film-makers funded either directly or indirectly by the networks. By the mid-1970s it was clear that film production in West Germany would be decided by those film-makers who could either command an international following (and in turn feed a national narcissism) or at least address at home two kinds of audiences with the same films: those of television and those of the communal cinemas and non-commercial outlets, exploiting rather than ignoring the differences between the cinema and television.

This did not necessarily lead only to social documentaries or the dramatization of current issues, although many films suggest that state funded cinema is primarily a forum for social work. A popular book on women's films, for example, is divided into chapters called: "Young Girls, Mother-Daughter Relationships, Living Alone, Sexual Relations, Family, Pregnancy/ Birth, Abortion, Women at Work, Women and Trade Unions, *Berufsverbot* (job discrimination), Women and Violence, What Makes Women Mentally Ill, Oppression and Resistance", and it ends with "Growing Old, Handicapped Women, Foreign Women in West Germany, Women in the GDR, Women in the World, Film Classics, Experimental Feature Films".<sup>40</sup>

A counter-example, where issue-orientation is used to find back to genres suitable for both film and television is *Das Brot des Bäckers/The Baker's Bread* (Erwin Keusch, 1976). It is the story of a small-town bakery where the labour-intensive business of baking good bread comes into conflict with the demands of rationalisation, and the master baker finds himself isolated not only from his trade union but from his sons, who prefer to go to college. The film was a great success in the cinemas - the careful depiction of a milieu around a solidly constructed plot, reminiscent of German thirties films (or Ealing comedies, in its sympathy for the family business), seen through the eyes of the outsider-hero and across the story of his apprenticeship. It did well on television, too (not only in Germany), because of its appeal as a family sit-com, with its crabby patriarch, a disgruntled assistant, the salesgirl attempting suicide, and a mother energetically holding both family and business together. Yet its virtues for these markets were precisely what made *The Baker's Bread* unsuitable for the art-cinemas or for launching its director as an international auteur.

That the independent cinema was exploring areas where television would do least damage to style and form could be seen in many films focussing on rural communities and confining themselves to family issues, such as *Ich dachte ich wäre tot (I Thought I was Dead)*, Wolf Gremm, 1974), *Paule Pauländer* (Reinhardt Hauff, 1976) or *Albert Warum (Albert - Why?)*, Josef Rödl, 1978). Similarly, a steady stream of films tried to capture the youth



audience by blending the American road movie with issues of truancy, juvenile delinquency and the temptations of drugs: Rüdiger Nüchtern's *Schluchtenflitzer* (*Ravine Racer*, 1978), billed as "*Easy Rider* in Lower Bavaria", Uwe Friesner's *Das Ende des Regenbogens* (*The End of the Rainbow*, 1979), Adolf Winkelmann's *Die Abfahrer* (*On the Move*, 1978) a German trucker film, for which Hark Bohm's *Nordsee ist Mordsee* (*The North Sea is Murderous*, 1976) might have been the inspiration, where the two central characters steal a sailboat rather than a car. In each case, the very nature of the subject - the roads, the wide open spaces, the sensation of speed or adventure demands the big screen. All were shown on television, but only Winkelmann's film was a success in the cinema, and in Doris Dörrie's *Ob's stürmt oder schneit* (*Come Rain or Shine* 1977), a semi-fiction film about a rural cinema owner, it is *Nordsee ist Mordsee* that prompts the heroine to say: "It breaks my heart, sitting here in my ticket booth, with such beautiful films on the programme, and nobody to come and see them". By contrast, Wenders' *Kings of the Road* (1976) worked in both media, not least because of the extraordinary care taken over composition and pacing, and because it combined the temporality and intimacy of television with the sense of space typical of the cinema.

Another index of both television-orientation and the inscription of exhibition constraints is the seriousness, the didactic and pathos-filled stance of much of New German Cinema during the 1970s. Even the films of Syberberg and Hauff, Herzog and Fassbinder, Sanders-Brahms and von Trotta whose target was an international art house audience were relentlessly earnest and often school-masterly, while manifesting a gesture of ambitiousness often manifestly at odds with the means at the filmmakers' disposal. It was a 'poor cinema' not ashamed of thinking big. Assured of their television audience, the films envisaged, but in a sense also despaired of, finding the audiences of that 'cinema of the future' which Kluge and Syberberg in their different ways never tired of evoking in their writing.<sup>41</sup>

A third reason for the issue-orientation may have been the desire to break out of the confines that the institutional pressures of public funding and broadcast television imposed on film-makers to style themselves as artists. One of the New German Cinema's most distinctive products of the early 1980s were films which combined an engagement with sexual politics and the women's movement with a highly idiosyncratic conception of film form, opening spaces for the self-representation of women, of homosexuals, and for social minority views treated from a partisan perspective.

This last point, however, also indicates the limits of thinking of such films as issue-oriented. For if television is partially responsible for the strong social and even sociological bias that the dual production and reception context makes apparent, it does not by itself explain the preference for "issue films", and for several reasons. In the first place many of the films that would fall under this heading were not financed by television. Secondly virtually

all them would be claimed by their directors to be personal, authored works. Finally, among them are some of the major international successes of the New German Cinema. The distinction "issue oriented" versus "author-oriented" which opened this section seems thus difficult to maintain, unless one can assume that the directors themselves divided their own work along these lines, for which there is no evidence. One may have to think of both "issue-oriented" and "author-oriented" as "audience-oriented", and to consider more closely not so much the institutional or sociological context of reception, but a more general condition of receptivity typical for the generation and the decade in question.

### **"Contentist" versus "Sensibilist"**

If the decisive change which brought the national television networks into the film-funding system as co-producers, commissioning editors and exhibitors of the finished product thus eased the severely congested distribution situation, it also contributed to the emergence of a new cinema-going public. Audiences only began to return to the specialized art cinemas after television had developed a new interest in film culture and a certain cinephilia, from which contemporary filmmaking could also benefit. At the same time, a more broadly political film-culture gave a different value to going to the cinema, compared with the old family audience, both as an aesthetic and as a social event (the pleasure derived from a particular film and from 'going to the cinema' is not necessarily the same).

An intriguing account of this renewed interest in the cinema during the 1970s in West Germany which links it to social and political changes is given in an essay by Michael Rutschky<sup>42</sup> entitled "Dreaming the Real", published in Germany in 1978. Loosely inspired by Siegfried Kracauer's pieces during the 1920s for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, about the cinema and the emergent *Angestelltenkultur* (culture of the white collar class),<sup>43</sup> Rutschky imagines (or describes) a case history, the student M, and his movie-going habits.

In the early Seventies, M went to the cinema about three times a week, mostly in the evenings, but occasionally he would 'indulge himself' as he called it, and go to a film already in the afternoon.(...) In the early Seventies, M studied sociology. This was the subject he had switched to during the student protest movement.<sup>44</sup>

M's favourite films are *Last tango in Paris*, *Taxi Driver*, *The Lacemaker*, and of course, Wenders' *Kings of the Road*. According to Rutschky, this puts M squarely in one of the two factions that made up the cinema-public in the 1970s: the sensibilist side, rather than the contentist one. The sensibilist faction, disappointed by the 'failure' of the protest movement, and their sociology-and-politics courses, had sought a refuge from dejection and melancholia in the cinema, as a realm of images. In their opinion, words only served to aggravate the

sense of being alienated from what is of value and from true feeling (hence the attraction of Herzog 's films),or words were simply superfluous, compared to the self-evidence of things viewed through a camera (hence the reassurance emanating from Wenders' films).

To see *Kaspar Hauser* or *Kings of the Road* as manifestoes of a revulsion against words (in the tradition of Novalis or Hugo von Hoffmannsthal), and as a new partisanship for images, gives the romanticism implied in the films a concrete historical reference point in the distrust of verbalization and theory which followed the surge of political literature after 1968. The contentist faction, by contrast, more convinced than ever of the urgency of analytical categories and conceptual generalizations, expected a film to validate their views of social problems and of a political perspective:

They would prefer Christian Ziewer 's sociological realism, his films set among working class people, to Wim Wenders ' sensiblist films which seemed to them products of a decadent subjectivity. Or vice versa: *Kings of the Road* was a cult film for all those who had probably seen the film five times and who thought Ziewer 's *Walking Tall* was nothing but an illu-strated Open University lecture.<sup>45</sup>

Put like this, Rutschky's pair of opposites is very persuasive. It shifts the weight of the argument from auteurism-as-self-expression to the spectator and the conditions of reception. It also allows for the dual register outlined above: the success and fascination of a Fassbinder film might be precisely the way it knowingly accommodates both kinds of audiences, because the same texts, say, *Merchant of Four Seasons*, *Fear Eats the Soul* or *Effi Briest* could confirm the 'contentist' (dramatized discussion of racial prejudice, economic and sexual exploitation, the repressiveness and sexism of Prussian moral codes), while few 'sensibilists' would mistake Fassbinder 's camp revamping of Hollywood melodramas for "an Open University lecture" (though *Effi Briest* might just qualify). Indeed, the 'contentist ' versus 'sensiblist' opposition would roughly coincide with the division 'domestic audience' versus 'international audience', in which case the international audience would include that section of the domestic audience whose film culture was sophisticated enough to view Scorsese, Wenders, Bertolucci as belonging to the same tradition: a cinema made doubly reflexive by alluding to the European art-cinema and to Hollywood *auteurism*.

Rutschky 's M is meant to give an insight into what Kracauer would have called the 'psychic dispositions' of a typical spectator of the New Cinema. And in this sense, the cinema as a social space is almost more decisive than the film itself:

It is not clear in advance on which evenings M goes to the cinema; there comes a moment of decision. This moment is the experience of a vital lack, which can only be

alleviated by a film. Reading, even reading a cheap paperback would not help.(...) When the decision is made, M would call up his friends or an acquaintance, and there was usually at least one who had already half-decided to go to the cinema, too.<sup>46</sup>

'Going to the cinema' is in M's case obviously determined by a wider psychological context: the film is not experienced as a self-contained work, and more a sort of vehicle, transporting the spectator from solitude and boredom to sociability. It allows M to unite a number of divergent motives: these are mainly negative in relation to his working life, typified by indecision, hesitancy, a half-wish. Such a spectator's choices of entertainment are narrowly related to his sociological status and affiliation: unmarried, middle-class, going to the cinema because the alternatives are less tempting; but even then, he is picky and diffident. No mass-medium can live on such a slender slice of the population, but it is the typical constellation for an art-cinema audience, and films which share this knowledge with their audience can very accurately represent the experiences of a public as well-defined as this, and address themselves to its moods.

The picture Rutschky gives of the typical seventies spectator corresponds very closely to the findings of the Dichter poll mentioned earlier: the reasons why cinema attendances had declined was that neither the cinemas themselves nor the films they showed did justice to the "high expectations" associated with the cinema's educational or entertainment value. Not television ("a compromise solution for the disappointed filmgoer") was the cinema's enemy, but the cinema itself. Among the leisure needs that made films potentially so attractive, according to the Dichter study, were a desire for *Bildung* (culture and self-education), for social contacts, for permissible regression, as a catalyst for emotions, for making sense of the world and shaping experience.<sup>47</sup>

Such coherence as there was in the New German Cinema of the 1970s can, perhaps, be understood as part of the process of creating this sort of fit between at least some of the expectations surrounding the films, and the films themselves. It would explain, for example, why the concerted attempts at improving the cinema's cultural status were largely successful. The Dichter study had highlighted the low prestige value of the cinema as a public space, and of the image of the film spectator ("only rockers and dirty old men go to the cinema"). The New German Cinema became resolutely artistic and serious Dichter had pointed out that spectators missed social relevance in the films, and that there was a lack of credible or interesting figures to identify with. The New German Cinema tried to respond to both of these demands, even with a vengeance. According to Dichter, cinemas provided less social contact than the theatre, which meant that a visit to the cinema did not satisfy as a complete evening's entertainment. Cinemas accordingly turned their foyers into bars, some opened

small galleries, or a bookshop. Finally, the poll predicted that the cinema of the future would have to be more flexible in its programming and diverse in its offerings: the *Programmkinos* (municipally funded art-houses) did just that.

Equally telling, however, is the manner in which the films themselves 'managed' or transformed these partly contradictory social and psychological dispositions of the moment into recognizable attitudes and values (such as the ones described by Rutschky as typical for the sensiblists) or on the other hand, appealed to more activist interests. The hesitancy, diffidence and indecision of the typical Wenders protagonist, the endless sitting around in bars drinking beer in Fassbinder films, or the resolute spunk of a character like Christa Klages in von Trotta's film by that title, are mirror-images of the spectator, foils for direct (though possibly masochistic) identification. By contrast, there are films which make identification itself the issue, both within the narrative (von Trotta's subsequent films come to mind) and in their narrational stance, as in so many Fassbinder films which use an 'inner frame' in the composition of shots to 'place' characters and events, or in Herzog's documentaries, where characters often stare aggressively into the camera. From Christian Ziewer's solid working class types offered as role models in *Liebe Mutter mir Geht es Gut* to Werner Schroeter's elf-like and angelic factory workers singing arias from Verdi in *Palermo oder Wolfsburg* there is an extraordinarily broad spectrum of exemplary figures even within what might appear to be 'working-class' subjects and settings. The directors outline these 'horizons of expectation' in the "cultural" discourses with which they arm themselves, by talking about "making the spectator productive" or of "the film only takes place in the spectator's head"; but most of them also try to establish such a horizon through the *mise-en-scene*, and the specifically filmic inscription of the spectator.

### ***"Contentist" or "Spectator-position"?***

While Rutschky is able to give a convincing picture of the "sensiblist" spectator, his categorization of the "contentist" faction is less satisfactory. The name itself, with its implied form/content distinction, seems cruder than the phenomenon it tries to describe. Not only is the category of 'contentist' too unwieldy when applied to specific films and filmmakers, the opposition leaves out too much of the middle ground, and like all binarisms, is short on explanatory substance.

Given that a national audience, as both the Dichter study and Rutschky imply, can no longer be assumed to be socially homogeneous or demographically representative, the implied spectator of German films is very rarely identical with the national, though in truth multinational audience that either makes the latest Hollywood film a blockbuster or an art film a festival success. Such self-selected, self-conscious spectators could be called a domes-

tic "target audience", if the term did not suggest either too narrow a political orientation, in the form of preaching to the converted, or reflect too much the categories of market research, designed to deliver audiences ready bundled and labelled for the advertisers. Nonetheless, some form of preconstruction of the viewers does seem to have informed film-making and film-funding policy.

The problem with "issue-oriented", thematic interpretations is that they invariably resort to speculations about how a film 'reflects' trends, or embodies the *Zeitgeist*, a critical option made more dubious by the fact that most films manifestly did not capture a mass audience. In the same way, sociological categories devised for television popularity ratings may tell us how many spectators a programme managed to reach, but they rarely analyze how it affected them: something which would require a study of long-term effects on attitudes. A more useful index might be the sort of critical reception reported by Rutschky:

After a while, a lively discussion ensues, full of allusions which an outsider will not be able to follow. However, the film is not in the usual sense interpreted or criticised because the goal is not to locate some philosophical or political meaning. In fact, the conversation can come to an abrupt, unpleasant end if there is not spontaneous agreement in the group that the film was good. Even if a discussion finally reaches some sort of consensus, the evening is somehow spoiled, there is a chill which destroys the mood.<sup>48</sup>

The difference between calling the films listed above "spectator-oriented" rather than "issue-oriented" or "contentist" may at first seem trivial. However, it highlights the question of address: of who speaks in a film, on whose behalf and to whom. Are the workers' films, for instance, made by workers, or for workers, or simply about the working class? This is particularly important with regards to the women's films, or films about marginal groups, subculture life-styles or minority interests : the very areas where film-making in Germany has been particularly innovative and coherent.

An approach focussing on spectator-positioning and narrational strategies ought to be able to encompass both sets of determining instances, author-oriented as well as audience-oriented. A good example would be the congruence between women's films and their implied audiences, which allowed women film-makers the authorial- autobiographical ambition towards self-expression to coincide with and be reinforced by a female audience's desire for finding themselves represented and addressed in terms of their concrete life situation. Films like Helke Sander's *Redupers*, *Der Subjektive Faktor* and *Der Beginn Aller Schrecken Ist Liebe*, where in each case the director plays the lead, are shaped around personal-autobiographical themes, but the formal complexity is determined by a problem which is also a filmic one: how to give a woman (-character) a coherent identity, when the

very circumstances that make her a woman (in the eyes of the world) is the constant struggle and failure to cohere: the conflicting demands between private and the professional life (*Redupers*), of who she is now/ who she was then (*Der Subjective Faktor*), feelings of jealousy as both proof and betrayal of love (*Der Beginn aller Schrecken ist Liebe*).

This dramatic-formal tension cannot be assumed to be the sort of spectator-screen interaction valid for all constituencies, and there are films which communicate with their audience via a quite different set of assumptions and strategies. It would thus make sense to see the various styles of filmmaking and the different film forms which emerged in the German cinema less as distinct genres (the women's film, the workers' films, the youth films, the gay-scene film, the coming-to-terms-with-the-Nazi-past film), and rather as so many modes of identification, distanciation, spectator-address and discursiveness. The New German cinema would then be exemplary in its search for narrational stances appropriate for a national cinema functioning outside the commercial film industry but inside television, outside European auteurism but inside the art cinema, outside doctrinaire propaganda but inside a generally politicised media-consciousness.

For despite the prevalence of social issues, the New German cinema is actually rather poor in sociological detail; very few films give a convincing idea of West Germany's political reality or the workings of its social institutions. Even in the films of Schlöndorff, Hauff or Petersen (the most conventionally "realistic" directors in the 1970s), one learns little about the political establishment, the Flicks, the Schleyers, or Henkels, the spy and secret service scandals, the power brokers and their connexions with the Catholic Church, the new military establishment, or the extreme conservatism of the judiciary. Schlöndorff's *The Lost Honour Of Katharina Blum* is not an illuminating film about the German press, any more than Hauff's *Stammheim* conveys a convincing picture of German judges and the legal profession.

In 1978, Alf Brustellin and Bernard Sinkel tried, with their film *Berlinger*, to make a German *Citizen Kane*, but the film lacked a tight script and became too enamoured with its hero's grandiose death-wish. A film dealing, for instance, with the division of Germany, such as Niklaus Schilling's *Der Westen Leuchtet* (meant to allude to the Gunter Guillaume spy story) remained a helpless denunciation of luxury cars, villas and champagne breakfasts, while Hauff's *Der Mann Auf Der Mauer* used the other Germany as little more than a dramatic pretext for a love story. This reticence may well be due to the caution of television networks (all of which are headed by political appointees) to venture into politically sensitive areas. During a roundtable conference in Frankfurt in 1977, Kluge gave a lecture provocatively called: "Films that Were Never Made criticise the Films that Were Made", in which he named some of the stories that nobody would touch, although money was still forthcoming for the sixteenth film based on a novel by Heinrich Böll. Script-writer Gerhard

Zwerenz added: "German filmmakers carry the censor's scissors in their heads."<sup>49</sup> Six years later, taking Kluge's sentence as her motto, the critic Claudia Lenssen published a whole panorama of stories, types, situations "forgotten during twenty years of old new German cinema".<sup>50</sup>

On the other hand, it may be that the coolly analytical, left-wing stance typical of post-war European directors is simply not part of this cinema's repertoire of voices: it is difficult to imagine Rosi's *Salvatore Giuliano*, *Hands over the City* or *Cadavres Exquis* made by a German. Similarly, even though, as we shall see, West German television and independent films have a very strong documentary tradition, one looks in vain for the kinds of essays Fred Wisenman has made about American institutions, such as *High School*, *Basic Training*, *Welfare*, *Law And Order*. In this respect, some of the films from the despised 1950s, such as those by Wolfgang Staudte, Rolf Thiele and others, are more revealing than the products of the New German Cinema, as Fassbinder realized when, for his "BRD Trilogy" (*Maria Braun*, *Lola*, *Veronika Voss*) he skilfully cited or reworked many of the dramatic and melodramatic clichés from the problem films of the Adenauer era.

The German cinema of the 1970s excelled in critical, melancholy, angry, desperately excessive and extreme attitudes and stances, which the audience was invited to recognize and share. It was the feel, the mood of West Germany (of its film-making, cinema-going generations and groups) that predominated over action narratives: events filtered through a temperament and narrowed by the perspective of a single person, often the protagonist as victim, as we shall see. The famous "subjective factor" of the New German cinema is an effect of the cinematic form and its mode of address, and to this extent, the 'contentist vs sensiblist' distinction is a misleading one: more accurately, one could speak of different sensiblistisms being constructed through different filmic forms.

They are distinct from each other not by their degree of realism or fantasy, but chiefly by the degree of melancholy, fatalism, pathos, irony or loss and what these came to signify. Yet, although the images the German cinema gave of German sensibilities were by no means uniform, they did begin to codify themselves into story types, stereotypes, even something resembling genres - thus eventually taking specifically cinematic form.

Subsequent chapters are intended to argue this development in greater detail. Tracing the logic of production involves a close consideration not only of such apparently diametrically different forms as documentary and fiction film, which in the German cinema are part of a continuous spectrum and thus not opposed but contiguous (due to the absence of commercial constraints on film production, and the influence of television). It also necessitates a look at the kinds of self-representation of the author in the films, and a discussion of the idea of genre in the New German Cinema: from the perspective of implying



a specific spectator, filmmakers redefined genres not so much internally, or for product differentiation, but in the light of their suitability as vehicles for particular forms of audience identification.

Finally, the argument for spectator-positioning requires the introduction of a non-cinematic concept – that of experience (*Erfahrung*) which in the German discussions around the shifts between aesthetic and political sensibilities has played a crucial role. Before embarking on these issues, it is important to recall the connexion which the discussions around *Einstellung* (stance, position, but also frame and camera set-up) have with "realism" as the central problem crystallizing the failure of Oberhausen.

### ***Making Fiction Films with Documentary Methods***

The question of address first surfaced in Germany in the debates about realism (themselves very heavily influenced by the documentary strain in West German independent filmmaking) and discussions about the political function of cinema. The latter can be traced back to the founding years of the Young German Cinema. Indeed, in the arguments about a 'critical' perspective on society, and the kind of cinema appropriate for such an objective, the confusion of address and point of view, are a key to why the first films of the Oberhausen group failed to find audiences. In retrospect, the issues raised by the early critics of Oberhausen, notably Joe Hembus and Enno Patalas, set the terms for much of the theoretical debate inside West Germany, as well as for filmmaking itself. They were the theorists of sensibillism *avant la lettre*, and their target were the documentarists.

The directors who came together at Oberhausen had gained much of their filmmaking experience via industry-sponsored 'cultural' shorts, and often enough, the funding left its traces on the product: documentaries about Latin American countries or the Third World generally tended, if not to show the industrial activities of the sponsor directly, to extol the civilizing influence of Western progress and technology. Not surprisingly, much of this filmmaking was in fact designed to help West Germany's industry present a favourable image of its business dealings with the Third World.<sup>51</sup>

Against the ideology of the Hollywood 'dream-factory' and that of the commercial German cinema "remote from any relation with reality", the Oberhausen group could only base its aesthetic programme (as opposed to its economic and institutional one) on a conception of realism. Their realism, however, was not - as one might expect- neorealist in inspiration, but satirical: precisely because as directors of commissioned work they had had to accommodate themselves to an ideology of photographic transparency and propagandist commentary, they took revenge on this captivity by often brutally deconstructing the illusion of unmediated reality that the cinema can give. Their films played with the conventions of

continuity editing and sound-image synchronization by showing the object represented to be at the mercy of the act of representation. But they were not Brechtians: the result, when applied to feature films, was either involuntary caricature or deliberate satire of the people portrayed. Jürgen Pohland's film about the jazz-musician Bobby Fichelscher (*Tobby*, 1962) gave rise to the following remarks in *Filmkritik*:

For a film of this kind, Pohland would have needed the stance of an ethnologue, that of Jean Rouch: the willingness to collect illuminating moments, and to fix this process of collecting on film, and thus show willingness to let the spectator participate in the gradual structuring of an idea and a theme.(...)Tobby's own reaction to the film (was that) he felt himself unmasked and he left the premiere before the end.<sup>52</sup>

The charge, namely that the directors of the Young German Cinema did not respect the characters they portrayed, was to recur time and again. Social satire, when intended, relies on a consensus, and on generic rules: precisely what the German cinema did not have in the early 1960s and could not presume in its audience. The Oberhausen group had promised "a new language of cinema", but in the eyes of their critics, the early work of Reitz, Kotulla, Strobel and Tichawsky as well as films like *Es* (Ulrich Schamoni, 1965) *Mädchen Mädchen* (Roger Fritz, 1966) *Kopfstand Madame* (Christian Rischert, 1966), *Schonzeit für Füchse* (Peter Schamoni, 1966), *Der Sanfte Lauf* (Haro Senft, 1967) seemed distinctly problematic:

Racy and superficial, Ulrich Schamoni describes the sometimes gay and sometimes sad everyday life of a young couple in Berlin. Roger Fritz, less racy and even more superficial, describes the love between a rich, titled young man and a Bavarian girl from the people. Christian Rischert describes with dogged seriousness the inner problems of a young married couple in Kiel. Peter Schamoni describes with sluggish seriousness the *tristesse* of a couple in Düsseldorf. Haro Senft, most earnestly, describes the socially conditioned tensions between two young people in the Federal Republic.<sup>53</sup>

But the uncertainty of address also had another reason. On the occasion of Ula Stöckl's *The Nine Lives of A Cat* (1968), Peter M. Ladiges drew a sobering balance sheet of five years of independent filmmaking:

Something, I think, all the films of the Young German Cinema have in common, almost without exception: one can tell from them the tour de force, the effort it took to have made a film at all. For in fact, (the directors) do not just shoot a film, they are already advancing the argument for the next one. I think this is the most devastating consequence of the current film-political situation in the business. A psychological stress for all those who come before the public with their first film: the fear it might be their last.<sup>54</sup>

Ladiges emphasizes the conditions of production, but he also draws attention to the special case of the woman filmmaker:

One is often aware of overexplicitness, for fear of being misunderstood, which comes of course from insecurity of not having expressed it right. The uncertainties, however, also speak of something which the film as a whole addresses. In Ula Stöckl's own words: "Never before have women had as much opportunity to organize their own lives as they would want to. But now they first have to learn that they can want."<sup>55</sup>

The problem of Stöckl's film, according to Ladiges, has little to do with artistic self-expression: self-representation is first and foremost tied up with trying to make contact with spectators. The mode of address did not so much over-estimate the audience or underestimate them, as it showed the difficulty of addressing them at all: the director behaved as if she already anticipated the audience's hostility or feared their impatience, and as if noise interfered in the communication. This noise was probably not imagined: it was, as Kluge would put it "the commercial system itself in the spectators' heads".

### ***Pornography & Art Cinema: Oberhausen Goes Commercial***

My films will be ever more uncinematic, because the films one sees are becoming more and more cinematic. The commercial cinema is getting more cinematic, which is to say, more and more pornographic.<sup>56</sup>

Straub's remark can also be taken literally. While directors of the Young German Cinema foundered in their attempts at realism on the problem of how to address a non-existent spectator, the commercial film industry had resolved the question by aiming at the lowest common denominator among audiences: sexual voyeurism. It began massively to exploit the relaxation of censorship laws and became Europe's largest producer of soft-core porn films. An underground need had finally surfaced and, swelled by several million of at first mainly male *Gastarbeiter* from Southern, Catholic countries, a volatile and furtive but nonetheless numerically quite sizeable clientele began to oust, indeed eradicate the last remnants of the family audience. In most suburban areas of West Germany, going to the cinema in the late 1960s became synonymous with indulging in licensed pornography.

Lack of success with their first films, and loopholes in the original Film Subsidy Bill quickly turned a number of Oberhausen militants into producers of pornographic films. By 1966 Peter Schamoni and Rob Houwer, for instance, headed production companies which, apart from investing cautiously in the films of their erstwhile comrades-in-arms, made

sizeable profits out of sexploitation films like *Nights Of Lovemaking In The Taiga*, *Quartet In Bed*, *Little Angel-The Virgin From Bamberg*. Since even films of a more ambitious nature had titles like *Playgirl*; *Let's Get Down To Business, Darling*; *Bengelchen Loves Back To Front*; *Let's Play Hide And Seek*, the impression arose that the Young German Cinema was aiming directly at the porn market under cover of the liberated and swinging Sixties. Straub's angry asceticism is the more understandable when one learns that films with titles such as *The House Of Pleasure*, *Let's Kill Companeros* and *Don't Fumble Darling* were awarded the quality rating which *Chronicle Of Anna Magdalena Bach* only received so grudgingly.

As Vlado Kristl was to find out when he made *The Dam* (1964), the Oberhausen members' readiness "jointly to take economic risks" was soon strained to breaking point when individuals faced the ruin of their careers and personal livelihood. Prudence dictated to some directors the compromises that for Kristl or Straub were merely a cover-up for cowardice, venality, and corruption. But as Hans Günther Pflaum pointed out, even:

the circumstances surrounding Straub's (own film) illustrate the contradictory situation facing the cinema in the Federal Republic of Germany at the time of the emergence of the "New German Film".(...) In the end, no less than eight names now appear in the production credits as sources of finance, indicating how laboriously money had to be accumulated for this project.<sup>57</sup>

Finances were raised either by securing a distribution guarantee, or getting an established producer to back their project(36). The price was that they had to provide the right mix of what the 'old' film industry regarded as commercial values: a salacious title, sex, or show-business names. Straub, for instance, was offered complete finance on his Bach film by 'Atze' Brauner: all he had to do was to agree to Herbert von Karajan as J.S.Bach.<sup>58</sup>

The commercial film industry, more alert than the independent cinema, retooled its production in view of television, by adapting one of the new medium's typical forms of reception and programming: that of the series. Crime stories and thrillers taken from Edgar Wallace's pulp novels set in Edwardian London; adventure series based on the Western novels of Karl May; pseudo-scientific sex education films; pornographic class-room scandals, such as the infamous *Schulmädchenreports* and *Lümmelfilme* formed the basis for a commercial revival of sorts. There were even signs that the commercial film industry was prepared to risk larger financial investment in order to test these new markets and to imitate Hollywood's 'runaway productions'. The first Karl May Western *The Treasure Of Silver Lake* (1963), for instance, was greeted with enthusiasm by the public, perhaps because it had the production values of a prototype:

This Rialto Production is like a virgin, falling in love for the first time: making up for inexperience by passionate intensity. For weeks the team toured Yugoslavia in search of the wildest landscapes. For a single scene entire pueblos and Western towns were built, without a thought for future use, each costume was hand-made, each prop lovingly crafted, and not a single take of any significance was left to the second unit. The whole enterprise was by American standards, utterly wasteful. But the result had a certain authenticity which it would be hard to find in Hollywood westerns of this category.<sup>59</sup>

The calculations, however, had to be straightforward: the share of German films in the overall box-office tended to be so low that only the economies achieved by making series, could return a profit on investment. Especially in the years between 1968 and 1971, when automatic subsidy was still being given even on pornographic films, series production led to a temporary boost in audiences which pushed the market share above the 8% threshold.

Concentration on the domestic market had led German producers to stay with the tried and proven formulae of the 1940s and 1950s: melodramas, problem films, biopics, exotic travelogues, hit-parade and Heimat-films. But audiences who might have enjoyed variations on well-worn genres were also the ones increasingly watching only television: variety shows, pop-music, quiz-programmes, and the very popular crime series, *Tatort*. The screening of films from the 1950s in large numbers on television was itself almost a revival of a national genre cinema. While one of the effects of television in the long run was to create the illusion, after the event so to speak, of a fundamental continuity in German films, this continuity only manifested itself at the level of production in the 1970s, when the old German cinema began to have an influence on the more commercially inclined directors of the New German Cinema, as we shall see, especially in their choice of actors. In the 1960s, the disappearance from the cinemas of an audience for so-called "good entertainment" was the most visible and outward cause for the much lamented decline of the German commercial cinema.

It seemed as if for the sake of a fistful of films, the German film industry was prepared to damage its own infrastructure, oblivious to the fact that porn-films neglected almost the entire non-male population as well as the majority of middle-class spectators, and thus the very groups which would become the New German Cinema's most important audiences. While it confirms that the spaces for an independent cinema had to be created elsewhere than on the remains of the traditional film outlets, from a commercial point of view the industry's strategy did have its own logic: if the series concept competed directly with television, the commercial producers also specialized in the area of demand where television was neither able nor willing to compete.

Finally, sex films were to some extent parasitic on mainstream cinema traditions in ways perhaps not altogether different from television's own attitude to the cinema: as a fully

constituted, quotable body of familiar references, stereotypes, and formulae. As we shall see, it was the Bavarian mountain film, the "Heimatfilm" (popularized by Hollywood in *The Sound Of Music*) that served as the genre to be 'deconstructed' by pornography. The New German Cinema's own sense of identity came at first from rejecting totally the associations that had formed around such genres, but in a second move, it was the reconstruction of the concept of 'Heimat' as both a synthetic myth and a reality with historical roots, which gave filmmakers, at least temporarily, the sense of belonging to a 'national' cinema.

### ***The Oberhausen Style: Two Kinds of Spectatorship***

Retrospectively, one can see that satire was the least satisfactory solution to the problem of address. Irritated by what they saw as the chief vice: contempt for the subject and contempt for the audiences, critics and spectators refused to identify with the films' implied mode of address:

Two elements, which over and over again make the films of the Oberhausen group suspect: the tendency to despise people and the pseudo-esoteric penchant for formal excess. The two amount more or less to the same thing. Just as the Oberhausener seem to enjoy exposing people of a lower intelligence to the merciless ridicule of intellectuals, so they please themselves in the attitude of someone who can afford to ignore contact with the cinema stalls, and instead produce wild fantasies for an imaginary public of the day after tomorrow.<sup>60</sup>

Although this was written in 1964 and referred mainly to short films and documentaries (before any of the feature films had yet been made) on republishing his polemic twenty years later, the author conceded that only Alexander Kluge's *Yesterday Girl* had been an exception. For the rest, his strictures seemed prophetic, since they were repeated, in slightly different form, many times during subsequent years. For Peter Schamoni's *Closed Season For Foxes* the unofficial tag-line was: "a film about philistines, for philistines, by philistines".

The conformism without commitment which Schamoni thinks he is (and seems so busy) attacking in his film, is in actual fact merely reduplicated by his film.(...) *Closed Season For Foxes* is pretty well exactly the sort of film which his sullen hero full of self-pity might make if he were to succeed in switching from being a critic to directing.<sup>61</sup>

This may not do full justice to a film which in many ways is the first look at the provinces through the eyes of someone trying to break out, but it highlights the terms of the critical debate. Even more sharply, in an article entitled "Young German Cinema - The Dead Eyes", Enno Patalas attacked Kluge, Kotulla and others for the lack of affection they had for their material, their condescending attitude towards the characters, the fact that nowhere did they

let either the locations or the action develop a reality and a momentum of their own. Why, Patalas asked, can a trip to Italy not first of all be a trip to Italy, instead of serving as a mere occasion for sneering at German tourists and their consumerism (*Notabene Mezzogiorno*, Strobel/Tichawsky, 1962)? About Kluge's *Artistes At The Top Of The Big Top* (1967), he wrote:

The camera supplies particles of reality by the cart-load as if it was providing evidence for a trial. Images and objects are not there to be seen, felt, but to be interpreted and read. Instead of patiently observing one elephant, and let it work against the prejudices of the spectator, Kluge shows a whole herd of them, performing different activities, just as one can see them at least once a year in the newsreel. The same applies to his central metaphor - the circus. It is finally no more than a paradigm of "art today" for him: any other might have done just as well, this one is particularly picturesque, it gives the story a bit of glamour and the magic of disorderliness.<sup>62</sup>

What was at issue was the morality implicit in a given mode of address. Many filmmakers had come from documentary shorts: that directors tried to apply the principles of documentary filmmaking to feature films was deliberate policy, not accident. Without reproducing the format of the social case history as an instance of general relevance, but also without personalizing the issues as in the conventional fiction film, the ambition was to retain the authenticity of the documentary image, but gain the metaphoric possibilities of fiction.

Yet Patalas questioned the integrity of the documentarists' techniques. If Strobel and Tichawsky preceded their film *A Marriage* (1968) with the assurance that "documentary methods were logically extended to the fiction film", the logic did not even seem to extend to their treatment of sound:

The few scenes (in *A Marriage*) where one hears sync-sound stick out clearly from the rest: for a brief moment one can hear people speak as they do in life -and as they do in the films of Wildenhahn, Straub, Erika Runge, Ula Stöckl- in a language that speaks itself and therefore carries, apart from the intended, always a host of unintended and often more important meanings. These brief moments aside, the directors do not allow their characters any physical identity.(...) You don't even have to watch their lips to know that they do not say in the image what you hear on the sound-track: one constantly notices that gestures which belong to the movement of the spoken word have been sacrificed in the post-dubbing process.<sup>63</sup>

Such practices make it clear why a filmmaker like Straub felt himself doubly in opposition against the commercial cinema and against the directors of the Young German Cinema itself.

Two basic types of spectatorship solicited by the films of the Young German Cinema

can be isolated. Both are important indicators of the differences between Young and New German directors. In one case, the mode of address belaboured the spectator by relentlessly selecting events and incidents as proof for a thesis, because the film assumed the spectators to be hostile, or their attitude to be one of indifference; in the other, the implied spectator shared the film's perspective, and the mode of address presumed agreement, without first creating it. Put more polemically, one aimed to indoctrinate, the other to ingratiate. In actual fact, the peculiar malaise experienced by spectators and critics alike over works by Spieker, Schaaf, Senft is due to the extent to which the films were a combination of both stances: posing their protagonists as case studies, while exposing them to ridicule or patronising sentiment.

Much of the subsequent work of Kluge and Reitz, the uncompromising opposition of Straub, but also the beginnings of Fassbinder, Wenders, Herzog can only be understood as a reaction to the dual impasse of Oberhausen. Filmmakers of the first generation were trying to conjure up a consensus with spectators whom they already suspected of not existing, and doing so through a form of satire which understood itself to be critical, but was perceived as arrogant, derogatory and manipulative. Assessing the possible definition of the German cinema in the 1960s, one is confronted with what is economically an art cinema: state-sponsored and anti-Hollywood. Yet within this art cinema, one finds two strands: an authors' cinema growing only gradually confident of its audience, by a process of self-definition and self-representation, and a cinema, self-consciously social almost in the terms of the contemporaneous Third World national cinemas, unsure of its stylistic traditions, but politically engaged and prepared to be provincial.



## Notes

1. "In this field, neither a professional nor a trade union structure nor an organized market is in existence. German films are practically always the result of personal initiative, and the label 'authors' cinema' also, in this case, points to the material conditions of filmmaking." Werner Burzlaff, "Cinema = Argent + Film", *Cahiers de la Cinématique*, 32 (Spring 1981), 139
2. see Steve Neale, "Art Cinema as Institution", *Screen*, vol 22, no 1, Spring 1981
3. Directors, whose films are based on continuity systems other than narrative ones, or who, like Werner Schroeter use forms of narrativity derived from music and opera, had a much more difficult stand with subsidy commissions and funding authorities. See Wolfram Schütte et al., *Werner Schroeter* (Munich: Hanser, 1983)
4. For the concept of a 'mode of production', see David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema-Film Style and Mode of Production* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985)
5. Certain directors, such as Volker Schlöndorff, Margarethe von Trotta, Edgar Reitz, who undoubtedly belong to the New German Cinema, and have brought it some of its most commercially and critically successful films, have a much more conventional filmic style, and are identified with their national cinema mainly thanks to the historical and political themes they espoused.
6. The concept of "other-directed" is borrowed from the sociologist David Riesman, who in his sociological study of group behaviour and conformity, *The Lonely Crowd* (1950) distinguishes between existence of the "inner-directed" and "other-directed" personalities, the latter being individuals who depend for their self-worth on the community's approval and have to fear being outcast. I use the term somewhat ironically, to indicate that a degree of resistance but also insistence on autonomy in the New German Cinema's ideological make-up may have come from feeling under the coercive pressure of two kinds of very different communities: the overzealous funding committees on one side, and the wholly indifferent public on the other.
7. Pam Cook, "The point of self-expression in avant-garde film" in J. Caughie (ed.), *Theories of Authorship* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), 272
8. Werner Herzog in B. Bronnen & C. Brocher, *Die Filmemacher* (Munich: Bertelsmann, 1973), 18, 20
9. Quoted in Sheila Johnston, "Fassbinder and New German Cinema" unpublished Ph.D thesis, London University 1979
10. quoted in Peter Buchka, "Wir leben in einem toten Land", *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 21/22 August 1977
11. see Alexander Kluge, "Förderung: die modernste Form der Zensur" ("subsidy: the most modern form of censorship), *Das Parlament*, October 6th, 1979
12. When the industry lobby suggested that in order to curb overproduction, the Subsidy Board should raise both the qualifying threshold and the percentage share that a producer had to invest before becoming eligible for subsidy, and thus make the club of filmmakers more exclusive, Kluge wrote: "More happiness for fewer people by controlling the birth-rate. By analogy, the free-for-all which the New German Cinema creates by radically opening access to the profession is countered by saying that via the subsidy committees fewer but more highly qualified filmmakers should be supported. Clear the woods of the non-talents.(...) But the so-called top talents could not arise without the broadly based, overall developments." Alexander Kluge, ed., *Bestandsaufnahme: Utopie Film* (Frankfurt: Zweitausendeins, 1983), 171/2
13. Alfred Andersch, "Das Kino der Autoren" in *Merkur*, no 158, 1961.
14. Edgar Reitz in *Die Filmemacher*, 110
15. The term itself was not new in West Germany. In 1950 Wolfdietrich Schnurre had recommended "for the rescue of German cinema" that "the author (...) must be reporter, poet, photographer, director and cameraman all in one". Quoted by Leonhard H. Gmür, "Zur Chronik", *Der Junge Deutsche Film* (Munich: Constantin Verleih, 1967), n.p.
16. see Sheila Johnston, "The Author as Public Institution" *Screen Education*, no.32/33 (Autumn/Winter 1979/80), 67-78
17. Eric Rentschler, *West German Film in the Course of Time* (Bedford Hills, New York: Redgrave, 1984), 40
18. For background to the concept inside and outside Germany, see also Johnston, 70-74
19. For an application of the term to European art directors, see J. Gelms, *The Film Director as Superstar* (New York: Doubleday, 1971)
20. Johnston, 71
21. quoted in Johnston, 68
22. See Wilfried Berghahn, "Kino der Autoren-Kino der Produzenten" *Die Zeit*, 27 April 1962

23. Olga Grüber, "Armer Deutscher Film", *Transatlantik*, January 1981, 71
24. In Germany a tradition of the authors' cinema, in the sense of literary authors 'writing' for the cinema, goes back to 1913 and Hans Heinz Ewers' promotion of the film author, as the cinema began to attract a middle-class audience: "Today I know that it is as difficult, that it takes as much art to write a good film-script as it does to write a poem, a novel or a play." Hans Heinz Ewers, "Der Film und ich", in Anton Kaes (ed.), *Kino-Debatte* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1978), 103/4
25. Bertolt Brecht, "Der Dreigroschenprozess: Ein Soziologisches Experiment" in *Bertolt Brechts Dreigroschenbuch*, vol.I (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1978) p.171/2. See also Wolfgang Gersch, *Film bei Brecht* (Berlin (GDR): Henschel Verlag, 1975), 75-100
26. quoted in Johnston, 69
27. Johnston, 69
28. See for instance, Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art* (London: Routledge, 1962)
29. Quoted in English in Prinzler and Pflaum, *Cinema in the Federal Republic of Germany*, 5
30. Reinhard Hauff, in *Die Filmemacher*, 193
31. see J. Hermand, H. Peitsch, K.R. Scherpe (eds.), *Nachkriegsliteratur in Westdeutschland 1945-1949*, vol I (Berlin: Das Argument, 1982)
32. quoted in Kreimeier, p.182, but see also Enno Patalas: "a quarter million DM awaits those films that 'raise particularly the esteem of Germany abroad", in "Prämien für die Braven", *Filmkritik* November 1961, 465
33. For the development of the cinema in the GDR, see P.W. Jansen and W Schütte (eds), *Film in der DDR* (Munich: Hanser 1977)
34. Werner Schroeter in *Die Filmemacher*, 133
35. This often-quoted statement should perhaps be seen in full context: "What I do and others do right now in Germany with film is legitimate German culture: again we are legitimate. I have to say this because filmmaking and culture have been abused for the most barbaric purposes in recent history. People often try to link us with the Expressionist films of the 1920s, and it is not true. We do not have any links at all, but what links us is that both Expressionist film in the 1920s and what we do now is legitimate German culture. Lotte Eisner is so important to me because she has declared us legitimate, and she is the only person who has the authority to declare us legitimate." *New York Times*, Sunday Supplement, 11 September 1977
36. Werner Schroeter, in *Die Filmemacher*, 155
37. Klaus Eder and Alexander Kluge, *Ulmer Dramaturgien*, 116
38. Miriam Hansen makes a similar point, when she writes: "Nor does it seem appropriate to draw the line between an author-oriented and an issue-oriented New German Cinema", in "Cooperative Auteur Cinema and Oppositional Public Sphere", *New German Critique*, nos 24-25, Fall/Winter 1981-2, 41. She may have in mind James Franklin, *The New German Cinema: From Oberhausen to Hamburg* (Boston: Twayne, 1983), 44-46
39. Some examples of such issues are: law enforcement and the penal system (*In The Name Of The People, Die Verrohung Des Franz Blum*), Unemployment (*Na Und, Kanackerbraut*), Labour Disputes And Strikes (*Liebe Mutter Mir Geht Es Gut*), Trade Union Organization (*Der Aufrechte Gang*), Terrorism (*The German Sisters, The Third Generation*), The Yellow Press And Sensationalist Journalism (*The Lost Honour Of Katharina Blum, Dorian Gray In The Mirror Of The Yellow Press*), The German Communist Party (*Mother Küster's Trip To Heaven*), Right-Wing Extremism (*Und Morgen Alabama*) Alcohol and drugs (*Bildnis Einer Trinkerin, Veronika Voss*), Prostitution (*Shirins Wedding, Gelegenheitsarbeit Einer Sklavin*), Housing Problems (*In Gefahr Und Grösster Not*) Urban Redevelopment (*Berlin Chamissoplatz*), Property Speculation (*Shadow Of Angels*), The Berlin Wall (*Redupers, Der Mann Auf Der Mauer*), "Berufsverbot" and Education (*Vera Romeike Ist Nicht Tragbar*), Wife-Battering (*Merchant Of Four Seasons*) Party-politics (*Die Patriotin*), Schizophrenia (*Die Berührte*), Bulimia (*The Hunger Years*), Police Harassment (*Knife In The Head*), State Surveillance And State Terrorism (*Strongman Ferdinand, The Third Generation*), Juvenile Delinquency (*Jail Bait, Nordsee Ist Mordsee*), Racism (*Fear Eats The Soul, Palermo Oder Wolfsburg*).
40. Gudrun Lukasz-Aden and Christel Strobel, *Der Frauenfilm* (Munich: Heyne 1985)
41. see H. J. Syberberg, *Syberbergs Filmbuch* (Munich: Hanser 1979), 87
42. reprinted in parts in Michael Rutschky, *Erfahrungshunger* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1982), 167-192
43. See, for instance, the essays collected in Siegfried Kracauer, *Das Ornament der Masse* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1963)
44. Rutschky, *Erfahrungshunger*, 170

45. Rutschky, "Realität träumen", *Merkur*, no 363 (1978), 775
46. Rutschky, *ibid.*, 783
47. Ernst Dichter International, "Freizeitbedürfnisse und Präferenzstruktur" in D. Prokop (ed.), *Materialien zur Theorie des Films* ((Munich: Hanser, 1971), 339-382
48. Michael Rutschky, *Erfahrungshunger* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1982), 171
49. "Sie machen uns das Kino tot" *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 2 May 1977
50. Claudia Lenssen, "Filmstoffe ballenweise", *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 30 April 1983
51. *Filmkritik*, January 1961, 10-15
52. Reinhold E Thiel, "Mutmassungen über Walter", *Filmkritik*, January 1962, 13
53. Urs Jenny, "Abschied von Illusionen", in Leonhard H. Gmüher (ed.), *Der Junge Deutsche Film* (Munich: Constantin, 1967), 102-103
- 54 Peter M Ladiges, *Filmkritik*, December 1968, 843
- 55 Ladiges, 843
56. Jean Marie Straub in *Die Filmemacher*, 42
57. Pflaum and Prinzler, *op. cit.*, 9-10
58. This may be apocryphal, but it is a story Straub himself was fond of telling. I heard it at the Milwaukee Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin March 1982.
59. Joe Hembus, *Der deutsche Film kann garnicht besser sein* (München: Rogner & Bernhard, 1981), 204
60. Hembus, 200.
61. Jenny, 104
62. Enno Patalas, "Die toten Augen", *Filmkritik*, December 1968, 829
63. Patalas, 828