

**Fatherland: Left-wing terrorism presented as the
continuation of National Socialist patriarchy in
Fassbinder's *Die dritte Generation* and von Trotta's *Die
bleierne Zeit***

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Introduction

Der Baader Meinhof Komplex [The Baader Meinhof Complex]

In 2008 Uli Edel created a film based on Stefan Aust's book, *Der Baader Meinhof Komplex*, which tells, from an insider's perspective, the story of the infamous Red Army Faction (RAF) terrorist group that terrorized West Germany in the 1970s and 1980s. Aust's book follows the story of the RAF from the formation of the group out of the West German student movement of the late 1960s, through the events and aftermath of the events of the German Autumn in 1977. Through their collaborative work on the leftist magazine *konkret*, Stefan Aust became closely acquainted with Klaus Rainer Röhl and his wife, Ulrike Meinhof. Aust's insider perspective is a result of his relationship with Meinhof prior to joining the RAF. He was even involved in intercepting the couple's twin daughters in Sicily, while Meinhof was receiving guerrilla warfare training in Jordan. However, his personal involvement in the events leading up to the German Autumn was rather limited and his book includes a significant amount of information that he could only know from other eye witness accounts. Therefore, the reader must not only be conscious of Aust's subjective perspective, but also that of his sources, which are typically not clearly indicated.

In the preface to the new edition of the book, which Aust wrote in 2008 to coincide with the release of the film, he states that "the founders of the RAF, Baader, Meinhof and Ensslin, became icons," in reference to art that has been inspired by the terrorists' wanted poster pictures (Aust xvii). This is an interesting statement, because Edel glorifies them in a similar way. The blockbuster film achieved tremendous success, including an Oscar nomination, which can be partially attributed to the high energy and action-packed narrative, executed by an all-star cast, including Moritz Bleibtreu as the sexy, bad-boy terrorist, Andreas Baader.

The film highlights the sexually charged scenes from the book and intertwines sex with violence. According to Aust's book, Baader did in fact see a link between the two when he said to the Palestinians in Jordan that "fucking and shooting are the same thing" (Aust 70). However, the film includes scenes such as the sexual affair between Brigitte Mohnhaupt and Peter-Jürgen Boock, as Boock explained it (Aust 276). However, in the film the setting for the affair is different and Mohnhaupt initiates the intimacy by saying: "Fast schon fünf Jahre im Knast... so lang hab' ich mit keinem Mann gefickt" [*Almost five years in prison... that's how long I haven't fucked a man*]¹ (*The Baader-Meinhof Complex*, 2008). Just before she says this, Boock has handed her a pistol, which she plays with for a moment as she starts to deliver this line. The implication is that Mohnhaupt gets the same excitement from shooting a gun as from intercourse. The terrorists, specifically the women, are presented as sexually promiscuous and driven by sexual relationships to an inaccurate extent. For example, during a moment which is described in the book as having taken place at a juvenile detention center, Gudrun Ensslin is portrayed bathing nude (Aust 40). This film almost presents this wave of terrorism as a result or an extension of the free love concept from the sixties and reduces the complexity of women's rights and roles that had been a significant issue in public policy in West Germany beginning in the 1950s and continuing through the 1980s to one of sex and promiscuity.

The main problem with Edel's film is not that it diverges from Aust's book at some points, but that it greatly downplays the social issues that plagued West Germany during this time period. These social issues seem fairly universal for the time period, including the student movement of '68 and the feminist movement, but contained aspects unique to West Germany that were directly related to the country's National Socialist past. What set the West German students apart from their peers in the United States or France was that they were fighting against

¹ All original German-English translations will be italicized and in brackets and are my own.

what they saw as the fascist inclination or tendency of their parents' generation. This paper explores the socio-political context from which the radical left-wing terrorism in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) emerged in the seventies and analyzes films about this topic, created by directors that were also part of this generation.

Though there are a number of films addressing this topic, the main films chosen for this study are *Die dritte Generation* [*The Third Generation*] (1979), written and directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder and *Die bleierne Zeit* [*Marianne and Juliane*] (1981), written and directed by Margarethe von Trotta. Both of these directors are considered to be key figures in the group of filmmakers that identified as part of the New German Cinema.

Der Deutsche Herbst [*The German Autumn*]

The term “the German Autumn” refers to the kidnapping and murder of Hanns-Martin Schleyer, the hijacking of a Lufthansa plane, and the death of the terrorists in the high security prison at Stammheim, all of which took place during September and October of 1977. These events were centered on a left-wing terrorist group that went by the name Rote Armee Fraktion, or Red Army Faction (RAF), but was also widely known as the Baader-Meinhof Gang. This group of left-wing extremists evolved from the West German student movement in the 1960s and plagued the country with violent acts throughout the seventies and eighties. The most significant era for the organization and most terrifying for the German people culminated in the events during these few months.

By 1977 the surviving members of the first generation of the RAF, including Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Jan-Carl Raspe, and Irmgard Möller, had been incarcerated in a high security prison since their arrests 1972. On September 5, 1977, their predecessors, members of the second generation of the RAF, kidnapped Dr. Hanns-Martin Schleyer, the President of the

Employers' Association of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and of the Federation of German Industry (Aust 305). In exchange for the release of Schleyer, the kidnappers demanded the release of all imprisoned RAF members.

As the kidnapping plan proved ineffective in achieving the terrorists' goals, an additional plan, "Operation Kofr Kaddum"² developed with the assistance of RAF allies from the Popular Front on the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). On October 13, four members of the PFLP boarded Frankfurt-bound Lufthansa flight 181, known as "Landshut" in Majorca, and forcibly took control of the plane midflight (Pflieger 171). Five days later, after landing in a number of different countries for refueling, the plane ended up in Mogadischu, Somalia, where a group from the Federal German Police that specializes in counter-terrorism (GSG 9) stormed the plane, killing all four terrorists and saving the 86 passengers and all of the crew members, with the exception of pilot Jürgen Schumann, who had been killed the previous day (Aust 393-408).

The rescue operation concluded just after midnight in Germany. The following morning, prisoners Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, and Jan-Carl Raspe were found dead in their cells. Irmgard Möller suffered stab wounds in the chest, but was rushed to the hospital and survived. It is not clear exactly what took place between 11:00 pm and 7:41 am, nor is it clear how Baader and Raspe had acquired the pistols found next to their bodies (Aust 410).

The events of the German Autumn concluded on October 19 when the body of Hanns-Martin Schleyer was found in the trunk of a car near Mulhouse, in the Alsace region of France. He had been shot three times in the back of the head (Pflieger 198-9). This is the end of what is considered the German Autumn, though not the end of the RAF, which only formally dissolved two decades later in 1998.

² Kofr Kaddum, also spelled Kafr Qaddum, is a small Palestinian town in the northern West Bank "that had been razed to the ground by Israeli soldiers" (Aust 353).

Terrorists

Red Army Faction

The Red Army Faction was the guerrilla militant group, founded by active supporters of the student movement, who felt that their goals could only be achieved through violent means. The goal of the RAF as summarized by Klaus Pflieger³ in his 2011 book about the Red Army Faction is

die staatliche Ordnung und die gesellschaftlichen und wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland sowie die Nordatlantische Verteidigungsgemeinschaft durch Gewalttaten wie Mord- und Sprengstoffanschläge zu bekämpfen. (Pflieger 15)

[to fight the national order and the societal and economic relationships in the Federal Republic of Germany as well as NATO through acts of violence, such as murderous and explosive attacks]

The group began with Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ensslin. Baader, a high school dropout, was one of the few RAF members without a university education and had been involved in criminal activity prior to his terrorist pursuits. As a child he was described as intelligent, opinionated, and volatile (Aust 9). Gudrun Ensslin grew up in the south-western region of Germany, the daughter of a Protestant pastor. She was gifted at English and spent a year with a Methodist community in the United States. While in the States, Ensslin became critical of the Christianity in America and its hypocrisy. “At home, she had learned that Christianity does not stop at the church door, but embraces political and social action” (Aust 15). Before meeting Baader, Ensslin had a son, Felix, with a man by the name of Bernward Vesper, with whom she originally moved to West Berlin. Ensslin left Vesper for Baader at the beginning of 1968.

³ According to his personal website, Klaus Pflieger was the head of the department for the state prosecution during the investigation of the Stammheim deaths. He was also involved in pressing charges against second generation RAF members, including Peter-Jürgen Boock, Christian Klar, and Brigitte Mohnhaupt.

The terrorism began with two acts of arson committed by Baader and Ensslin (with Thorwald Proll and Horst Söhnlein) in two separate department stores in Frankfurt am Main on April 2, 1968. Shortly before closing, Baader and Ensslin entered the *Schneider* department store and hid timed explosive devices in the furniture and women's clothing departments. The two other terrorists acted similarly in the *Kaufhof*. All of the bombs exploded around midnight. All four terrorists were arrested on the fourth of April (Pflieger 18-19).

Ensslin explained their actions as a protest against the indifference towards the genocide in Vietnam (Pflieger 20). It was following their conviction for this crime that the couple came into contact with Ulrike Meinhof, who was writing an essay, "Warenhausbrandstiftung" [*Department Store Arson*], about what they had done. In this essay, although Meinhof supports the terrorists' violent course of action, she argues that the offense did not harm the capitalist system, but rather supported it, because ultimately the stores had insurance to cover the damages. She points out that the law that was broken was a law protecting property, not a law protecting the people (Meinhof, 1968).⁴

Despite the current popularity of the term "Baader-Meinhof Gang," Meinhof⁵ did not join the group until she became involved in a plan to free Andreas Baader from prison, along with Horst Mahler and Gudrun Ensslin, on May 14, 1970. The escape plan involved Meinhof pretending to collaborate with Baader on writing a book. This caused the authorities to bring Baader to the reading room of the Zentralinstitut für Sozialfragen [*Central Institute for Social Questions*], where Gudrun Ensslin, Irene Georgens, and Ingrid Schubert stormed in, shot the

⁴ "Das Gesetz, das da gebrochen wird durch Brandstiftung, schützt nicht die Menschen, sondern das Eigentum."

⁵ Ulrike Meinhof eventually became known as the voice of the RAF, thanks to her strength and the consistency of her ideology. She became the star writer and editor for the left-wing magazine *konkret*, which was created by her ex-husband Klaus Rainer Röhl. From early on, Meinhof was accredited with "purity of purpose" and was even described by Röhl as "fleischgewordene intellektuelle Redlichkeit [intellectual integrity incarnate]" (Colvin 4).

guards, and left with Baader and Meinhof. Following this, the entire group immediately went underground (Pflieger 22).

Soon after Baader's escape the group made their way to Palestine for guerrilla warfare training. In an interview with *Der Spiegel*, former RAF member Peter Homann shared details about this trip. Homann claims that their Palestinian comrades saw them as "keine revolutionäre Gruppe, sondern die Organization einer Gang" [*no revolutionary group, but rather the organization of a gang*] ("Andreas Baader? Er ist ein Feigling" 52). They also voiced their opinion of Meinhof, which Homann saw as very accurate.

Ihr Problem sei ein ungeheures Schutzbedürfnis, sie könne es im Augenblick nur in dieser Gruppe realisieren. ("Andreas Baader? Er ist ein Feigling" 52)

[*Her problem is a tremendous need for protection, which at this time she can only achieve through this group.*]

The Palestinian comrades also thought Baader was a coward. According to Homann, they said he was „ein Feigling, der diesen ganzen Aufstand macht, um seine Feigheit zu verdecken" [*a coward, who did this entire rebellion to cover up his cowardice*] ("Andreas Baader? Er ist ein Feigling" 52).

Upon returning to Germany, the group participated in a number of armed robberies, bombings and shootouts with the police. However, by 1972 most of the first generation had been captured and put in prison. Those responsible for the worst wave of terrorist activities, including primarily the events associated with the *Deutscher Herbst*, were carried out by the second generation of the RAF. Their emergence was rather unexpected, because "the second generation of the RAF was the first terrorist movement in Germany that did not develop out of the socially exceptional situation of the non-parliamentary opposition movement of 1968/69, but which

started the armed struggle in the politically stable situations of the 1970s” (Rojahn 4). Unlike the first generation, the second generation had no clear message behind their motives, which also appeared to be distinctly different from the first generation (Rojahn 7). This second wave of terrorism seemed to be made up of people who were simply jumping on the band-wagon established by the first generation. Peter-Jürgen Boock of the second generation says that there was a lot of argument when deciding whether or not to follow through with Operation Kofr Kaddum, because there were a few members who realized that this action would “contradict [their] own statement” (Aust 352).

Key Characteristics

The following is a list of characteristics associated with members of the RAF, as summarized by Klaus Pflieger (24):

- having falsified identification documents
- living underground
- acquiring money for illegal activity through bank robberies
- using conspiracy dwellings as hideouts, but also for crimes
- carrying large caliber handguns, prepared to shoot
- shooting freely without regard for human life in the case of potentially being caught
- participating in Palestinian resistance group training camps in the Middle East

The majority of these characteristics are consistent in representations of the RAF or similar groups in German films both from the period and in subsequent decades.

Government Response

The West German government responded fiercely with its counter terrorism tactics by greatly increasing nationwide security measures.

Ein massiver personeller und finanzieller Ausbau der Bundessicherheitsbehörden in den frühen 1970er-Jahren sowie eine... vorangetriebene Computerisierung waren die Kernelemente der Sofort- und Schwerpunktprogramme der Bundesregierung zur Inneren Sicherheit. (Dahlke 5)

[A massive personnel and financial expansion of the federal safety authorities in the early seventies as well as a propelled computerization were the core elements of the immediate and priority programs of the federal government for internal security.]

As the security measures increased, the rights of the private citizens arguably decreased. Many people believed that the police were overstepping their boundaries. According to Aust, a woman was arrested in a Bremen hotel because the staff thought she was Ulrike Meinhof. She was in police custody for two hours until she was released after they learned her fingerprints were not Meinhof's. One RAF member, Astrid Proll, was falsely charged with attempted murder (though she was un-armed) by false testimonies given by two police officers. She was later cleared by a memo filed by a third officer who witnessed the incident (Aust 104-105).

Imprisonment and Death of the First Generation

During their imprisonment, the members of the RAF, including Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Ulrike Meinhof, Astrid Proll, Holger Meins, Jan-Carl Raspe, and Irmgard Möller, were kept in total isolation from the rest of the prison and the outside world. From her cell, Meinhof described her isolation as “the feeling that your head is exploding” (Aust 180). Prison guards went to great lengths to ensure there was no communication among the terrorists. The prisoners saw themselves as victims of inhumane treatment and began multiple hunger strikes as a form of protest. While supplying information about the prison conditions for the defense, Baader stated, that he would not “eat until those conditions had changed” (Aust 190). These hunger strikes were

largely to no avail and resulted in the death of Holger Meins. Supporters of the RAF's ideology, including student leader, Rudi Dutschke, gathered at the funeral to show their support for the revolution and their anger at the government's wrong-doings.

Although the deaths of Baader, Ensslin, and Raspe were determined to be suicide, many claimed that it had actually been murder by the state. Part of this was fueled by Irmgard Möller, the only survivor, claiming (even after thirty years) that her wounds were not self-inflicted (Kellerhoff). Additionally, there were a number of statements made by the group members insisting that they would not commit suicide, but that alluded to their approaching death.

Even though they had committed acts of terror against their own country, the RAF prisoners were able to obtain a great deal of empathy by playing the victim. "In a post-war German society stricken with guilt... at last they could play the role of martyrs" (Aust xvii).

Students

The Student Movement in West Germany

The motivations of the RAF were allied in large part with the student movement of the 1960s in West Germany.

A popular opinion of the student movement was expressed by the future terrorist and editor-in-chief and star columnist of the left-wing magazine, *konkret*, Ulrike Meinhof in her 1967 open letter to the wife of the Shah of Persia, Farah Pahlavi. In an interview with the *Neue Revue*, a German magazine for women, the empress described her life in order to give insight to the German people of life in Iran. Meinhof accuses the empress of exaggerating the normalcy of her life as a Persian, since the majority of the Persian people were living in poverty. The majority of the article, however, addresses grievances with the Shah and his policies. The following excerpt emphasizes the tyrannical consequences of the Shah's absolute power.

Ist er doch der Garant dafür, daß kein Dollar in Schulen fließt, die das persische Volk lehren könnten, seine Geschicke selbst in die Hand zu nehmen; sein Öl für den Aufbau einer Industrie zu verwenden und Devisen für landwirtschaftliche Maschinen auszugeben, um das Land zu bewässern, des Hungers Herr zu werden. Ist er doch der Garant dafür, daß rebellische Studenten und Schüler jederzeit zusammengeschossen werden und Parlamentsabgeordnete, die das Wohl des Landes im Auge haben, verhaftet, gefoltert, ermordet werden.

[Isn't he after all the one who guarantees that no dollar goes towards schools, which could teach the Persian people to develop their own skills; to use their oil to build an industry and use foreign currency to purchase agricultural equipment, in order to irrigate the land, to combat hunger. Isn't he after all the one who guarantees that

rebelling students are always shot and that the members of parliament, who are concerned with the welfare of the country, are arrested, tortured, and murdered.]

The above passage highlights the two main motivations behind the student movement in Germany. First, the younger generation was afraid of becoming complacent like their parents were during the Nazi era (Klein 47) and allowing authoritarian rulers to rise to power. In the case of Iran, the authoritarian power they were fighting against was from outside of West Germany, but this was a tremendous issue at this time within the Federal Republic, as well. For instance, students were seeking more democracy in the universities, where the Ordinarienuniversität [*professor university*] system dominated, in which the professors had absolute power in deciding curriculum and the students had no say in their education (von Dirke 36). The students also took issue with the creation of the Grand Coalition in 1966. This was the first time the major parties of the German parliament, namely the Social Democratic Party and the Christian Democratic Union, had joined forces. This political compromise was viewed by the students as a step away from democracy, especially since this allowed the government to pass the Notstandsgesetze [*Emergency Laws*]. These laws allowed the government to suspend most civil rights (including freedom of assembly, speech, press, and right to strike) in the case of national emergency, without defining what constitutes as a national emergency (von Dirke 35). The passing of these laws were a necessary step towards sovereignty for West Germany. Without these laws, the occupying Western allies (the United States, France and Great Britain) maintained the right to intervene in the case of a crisis. Meanwhile, many Germans saw great similarity between these laws and Article 48 of the Weimar Republic constitution, which arguably aided Hitler in his rise to power (Colvin 26). The students were fighting against what they saw as the fascist inclination of their parents' generation.

Secondly, the students were morally opposed to oppression in Third World countries, which they saw as a direct result of the imperialism of the US and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Clearly it was the Shah who was oppressing his own people, but in her article Meinhof additionally extends her criticism by drawing a link between the Shah and the US.

Das persische Volk hat ihn doch nicht gebeten, in Persien zu regieren, sondern der amerikanische Geheimdienst.

[The Persian people did not however ask him to govern in Persia, but rather the American CIA.]

Students saw the role played by the United States around the world as imperialistic and oppressive, and thus their main target of protest was the war in Vietnam. For many Germans, the images they saw of the Vietnam War were reminiscent of the images from the concentration camps (Colvin 40). The new democratic system in Germany was supposed to be modeled after the US system and the students were disillusioned by the brutal warfare that hypocritically “defied [the country’s] humanitarian rhetoric” (von Dirke 36).

Events of June 2, 1967 and Reactions

On June 2, 1967, Benno Ohnesorg, student, pacifist and active member of a Protestant student organization, was shot and killed by policeman Detective Sergeant Karl-Heinz Kurras⁶ in West Berlin during a student demonstration. This demonstration, the first in which Ohnesorg had ever participated, was held to protest the visit of the Shah of Iran, Reza Pahlavi, and his wife,

⁶ In 2009 it became known that Kurras was working as an unofficial agent for the East German Ministry of State Security (Stasi) at the time of Ohnesorg’s shooting. Speculation has been made over whether the development of the RAF would have occurred differently had this information been known already in 1967 (Pflieger 16).

Farah Diba Pahlavi, to West Berlin. The protest was fueled by the students' objection to the Shah's oppression of his people.

According to the account of events by Stephan Aust, the demonstration on the 2nd of June turned violent when the Persian supporters of the Shah began beating the protesting students with wooden cudgels. The West German police simply watched without reacting, until they finally joined the conflict—on the side of the Persians. The violence continued throughout the day and it was around 10:30 pm that Sergeant Kurras and his colleagues chased down Ohnesorg, thinking he was a ringleader of the demonstration, and beat him unconscious. It was then that the pistol in Kurras hand went off less than a meter from the student's head, killing him. Kurras claimed that the gun had simply fired. Kurras was tried, but not found guilty of any crime. Aust characterizes June 2 as “a turning point in the thinking and feeling of many, not all of them students” (Aust 27). Similarly it has been expressed that “not only the fatal shot, but also the acquittal [of Kurras] contributed significantly to the radicalization of the student movement” (Pflieger 16). Many members of the student movement saw the events of this day as revealing the true fascist face of the West German government.

It was in response to Ohnesorg's death that the justification for violence became verbally expressed. Rudi Dutschke, one of the most well-known leaders of the student movement, started using the word *Gegen-Gewalt*, meaning counter violence, as a term for self-defense shortly after Ohnesorg's murder (Colvin 31). Dutschke became widely known, due in large part to the attacks written against him by the media empire, the Axel Springer Corporation, as well as a result of the assassination attempt that may or may not have been influenced by what was printed in a Springer publication. Ulrike Meinhof also took to using this term, as well as other terms such as “police state,” “police terrorism” and “press terrorism” (Colvin 31).

Co-founder of the RAF, Gudrun Ensslin was motivated by her belief that the German state was “not only ‘fascist’ but determined to kill all the student protestors” (McCormick 180). It is in response to June 2 and Ohnesorg’s death that she is quoted as saying what many people were thinking: “Dieser faschistische Staat ist darauf aus, uns alle zu töten. Das ist die Generation von Auschwitz! Wir müssen Widerstand organisieren. Gewalt kann nur mit Gewalt beantwortet werden“ [*This fascist state is out to kill us all. That is the Auschwitz generation! We must organize a resistance. Violence can only be answered with violence*] (Pflieger 16). Regardless of whether Ensslin had violent inclinations before this event, she clearly used Ohnesorg’s death as strong justification for her future actions.

The Axel Springer Press

As mentioned in the preceding section, the student movement and Rudi Dutschke, in particular, became targets of attack for the Springer Press. Though it is unclear whether or not the articles calling for Dutschke’s removal led to Josef Bachmann’s attempted murder of Dutschke, it remains a widely held popular opinion that Springer Press played a large role in precipitating the attack.

The Axel Springer Corporation owned the majority of Germany’s newspapers, which was actually something the Western Allies had hoped to prevent after the war. By the 1960s around 57% of the West German population read a publication by the Springer Press daily, which also controlled 90% of the Sunday papers in West Germany. To say that this corporation had tremendous influence on and control of public opinion is an understatement. The Allies were originally against this, in part because Hitler had used the power of the press to come to power. However, being in the midst of the Cold War, it became practical to have such a far reaching channel in the press, which they could control. According to Dr. Tighe of the University of

Derby, this is an example of failed de-nazification. He explains that a number of Nazi intelligence agents were excused from the de-nazification process and ushered directly into West German intelligence positions or into the press (including publications outside of Axel Springer such as *Der Spiegel*). In his opinion, the press was basically still being run by Nazis (Huffman).

The Springer Press, thereby, immediately clashed with the student movement. Writers such as Böll criticized the publications for doing things including declaring the Baader-Meinhof-Gang guilty before they even stood trial. Interestingly, Axel Springer, Jr., who was the intended inheritor of his father's conglomerate, was horrified by the slanderous things written about Rudi Dutschke in the Springer Press. Following the assassination attempt on the student movement leader, under the alias Sven Simon, he began visiting Dutschke and giving money to his family. Over time he became a close friend of the family and ten days after Dutschke's death in 1979 as a result of his injuries, the younger Springer committed suicide at the age of 38.

Women

The Women's Movement in West Germany

The feminist movement in Germany reemerged in the late sixties and early seventies and, similar to the student movement, the goal of the feminist movement was the unmasking and deconstruction of Germany's patriarchal construction of society. Whereas the students disliked the fact that society was run in a hierarchical, authoritarian manner, many women focused on gender oppression within this male-run society.

In imagining the ideal utopia of his Third Reich, Adolf Hitler saw women as naturally inferior to men and therefore put an immediate stop to the feminist movement upon coming to power. The National Socialist ideology insisted that woman's role could be defined by three things: *Kinder, Kirche, Kuche* [*Children, Church, Kitchen*]. In order to protect, preserve, and grow the Aryan race, it was imperative for German women to have more children. Thus the Nazis considered the ideal woman to be "the 'Aryan' eugenically sound, socially conformist wife and mother" (Heineman 17). However, women were not just divided into married and non-married, but the single were categorized as well. Those who were not yet married were considered either valued and desirable or unimportant and undesirable. This classification determined the difficulty a single woman faced in trying to get married and once again divided them in terms of social status. This system marginalized many women in the society, especially single mothers (Heineman 18).

The feminist movement in Germany had taken major steps backwards in comparison with its counterpart in the United States. Following the war, women played a large role in piecing West Germany back together, encouraging them to immediately rekindle the fight for their rights. In 1949, despite being constitutionally granted the same rights as men in West German

society and work life, women were still subordinate to their husbands in family life. Women “continue[d] to become different legal persons upon marriage” and “the Federal Republic offered no ideological base on which single women could understand themselves to be significant” (Heineman 138). Although the establishing of women’s rights regardless of marital status would denounce Nazi misogyny, maintaining the “traditional” family structure became a source of comfort in a time of challenging social conditions. During the 1950s women’s rights were the subject of many heated debates within public policy. According to Alan Rosenfeld, assistant history professor at the University of Hawai’i, as women became more liberated in the sixties, conservative men saw their rejection of the traditional female sphere as a direct confrontation of the order in society, thus “female guerrillas functioned as lightning rods for the expression of broader social anxieties over rapidly changing gender relations and the (in)stability of the nuclear family” (Rosenfeld 354).

Feminism and the Left

Despite having similar goals of equality and defining a common enemy as patriarchy, feminist movements and socialist movements have historically experienced conflict. Of course, these two movements did not begin completely at odds. In 1891 the Social Democratic Party in Germany supported women’s suffrage and right to work. According to Clara Zetkin, a feminist writer of this time period and then the editor of a women’s publication known as *Die Gleichheit [Equality]*, this divided the women’s movement into two separate movements: the “proletarian” and the “bourgeois”. She concluded that the respective goals of the socialist and feminist movements did not necessarily lead to a common outcome. The class consciousness of working women that came into play from the “bourgeois” women’s movement “is a serious, dangerous power of the counter-revolution” (Altbach 12).

A few more radical feminists from this time, including Lida Gustava Heymann and Anita Augspurg, became disillusioned by the socialist women, who they saw as being misguided by the hypocritical social democratic men. They wrote: “Where he had the opportunity—namely in his own family—the social democratic man exploited the woman in the same manner as did the men of the middle classes” (Altbach 12-13). Despite struggling for equality among men, socialists did not necessarily see women as equals to men. They still wanted to maintain the traditional roles of the nuclear family.

These same conflicts emerged in the relationship between the leftist APO and the second wave of feminism. In 1975 a feminist group at the Free University in Berlin welcomed all women to their group “except those who, under the cloak of a commitment to women seek to sell an ideology which regulates the oppression of women to a secondary or subordinate status” (Altbach 10-11). Because the feminists felt alienated from the left, the hostility was returned. The left-wing terrorism only increased the conflict between the two groups, due mainly to the feminist movement’s commitment to peace.

However, in her introduction to *German Feminist: Readings in Politics and Literature*, Edith Altbach writes that “in 1977, during the period of outrage and government reprisal following the escalation of terrorist attacks on government officials and the death of the RAF prisoners at Stammheim, the women’s movement was forced to clarify its position on ‘armed resistance’” (20). In 1984 when this book was published, this discussion was still ongoing, but the fact that the feminist stand against violence needed to be reevaluated raises an interesting point. Following the German Autumn, people were not only discouraged by what had become of the movement of ’68, but were shocked by the actions taken by the government. An example is German feminist writer Gabriele Goettle’s characterization of the autopsy of Ulrike Meinhof “as

a ritual of society's revenge" (118). Goettle depicts the "hyena-like" destruction of Meinhof's body as the symbolic sequel to the psychotic destruction caused by absolute isolation and holds the German State responsible for the Meinhof's death.⁷

Though the RAF included numerous women, some playing powerful roles, their "political path lay apart from that of the women's movement" (Albach 20). These women abandoned the role of the "traditional" woman and thus rejected the issues that were central to the women's movement. The best example of this is that of Gudrun Ensslin and Ulrike Meinhof abandoning their role as mother (and for Meinhof, also as journalist) to further their radical agenda. Although Meinhof tried to keep her daughters underground with her, it became impossible for her to be both terrorist and mother. Meinhof was always consistent in her ideology and a consequence of consistency "means giving up all the situations and material things that do still help one to half-way enjoy life; it means isolation and rejection of stabilizing love-relationships" (Goettle 117). Being truly committed to a cause means giving up everything for that cause. Of course we see a clear double standard. If a man were to do this same thing, for instance Andreas Baader who fathered a daughter at the age of 22, no one is concerned with the child at all. However, when the mother is the radical who abandons the child, it is considered extreme and dangerously irresponsible to the development of the child.

Ulrike Meinhof's writings also display the incompatibility of the feminist movement with her own anti-imperialist armed struggle. As a journalist for *konkret*, she defended the Council for the Liberation of Women for breaking with the male-dominated Socialist German Student Union, but "she moved away from this position as an urban guerrilla, attacking the women's

⁷ Goettle re-released her essay after an article came out in Frankfurt suggesting that Meinhof's death was not suicide, but rather sexual assault and strangulation. This could not really be proven, since, as explained in the essay, Meinhof's body was dissected past the point of recognition. Goettle's comment to this was: "Even the murder of Ms. Meinhof during a sexual attack could not make the image of reform fascism in Germany... clearer than it already is." (118-119)

liberation movement for ‘creat[ing] in the bourgeoisie a situation of competition with men’, a process she disparagingly labeled ‘cunt chauvinism’” (Rosenfeld 372).

Images of Terrorist Women in the Media

Despite being greatly outnumbered by men in the different left-wing terrorist groups, it was the women who received most of the press’s attention. “Both government officials and the mainstream press focused a disproportionate amount of their attention on women’s contributions to the escalation of terrorist violence” (Rosenfeld 354). For the men, society seemed to accept their political activities as a political decision, yet this reason could not explain women’s involvement. This clear double standard shows the West German society rejecting the idea that a woman could have political opinions, for which they would fight. Conservatives began pointing to the feminist movement as a catalyst for women’s involvement in terrorist activities. They suggested this rebellious behavior that women were suddenly displaying was caused by excessive emancipation. The development of the birth-control pill in the 1960s also played a large role in promoting the idea that women had too much freedom.

The German media seemed to pay special attention to the sexuality of the terrorists. The men were often characterized as gay or effeminate, while the women were characterized as more masculine or lesbians. However, in actuality, the opposite was true. Andreas Baader was quite misogynistic and even oppressive towards women, characterized as a “cult figure [who]... wielded his power largely through verbal abuse, humiliation and cultivating cumulative peer pressure” (Rosenfeld 370). Because the leadership within the RAF was dominated by men, drawing a connection between feminists and terrorist groups is irrational.

This focus on sexuality and its relationship with violent political activity has continued on into more recent film portrayals of left-wing terrorists. In Volker Schlöndorff’s 2000 film,

The Legend of Rita (Die Stille nach dem Schuß), Rita (Bibiana Beglau), a former terrorist, has a short-lived lesbian relationship with her coworker Tatjana (Nadja Uhl) once she has escaped to the GDR (East Germany). However, it must be noted that the relationship with Tatjana is not fueled by Rita's masculinity, but rather by Tatjana's aversion to men following a painful divorce. The relationship develops naturally, based on mutual loneliness and need of support, and the sexual or physical aspect is actually initiated by Tatjana, although Tatjana is not a terrorist.

According to Tatjana's mother, it was after the divorce that Tatjana started her downward spiral and became an alcoholic. It was being wronged by a man that drove Tatjana not to outward violence but to more of a self-inflicted abuse. This film characterizes woman as controlled by emotions and ultimately driven to violence when mistreated by men.

This is similar to the portrayal of Ulrike Meinhof in *The Baader-Meinhof Complex*. In the very first scene of the film, Meinhof (Martina Gedeck) glares jealously at a naked woman who stops to flirt with her husband on the beach of Sylt, when the family is vacationing. Shortly thereafter, Meinhof walks in on her husband and this same woman having sex and promptly packs up her twin daughters and heads to Berlin to become a terrorist. To summarize this in a few words: spurned housewife goes violent. Again, we are presented with this idea that women are only concerned with "womanly things" and are incapable of formal political thought. In actuality Meinhof was very intelligent and politically outspoken long before her divorce. Edel's film downplays her political expertise. In the film's second scene, when she reads her essay at a garden party at her admittedly bourgeois home, the open letter to the Farah Palavi, only a very small section directed specifically at the Shah's wife is read. The majority of the actual letter and the heart of her argument, which is a direct attack on the Shah's oppressive policies, is completely omitted.

This tendency to de-politicize women's thoughts and actions was common at the time. In an actual interview conducted in her Berlin apartment by Helma Sanders-Brahms just a few months before going underground, we see Meinhof's political motives downplayed once again. The clip of the interview is introduced by a narrator who sets the scene for the viewer. The narrator describes Meinhof as "überfordert, quälte sich bis zu verzweifelt" [*overwhelmed, struggling to the point of depression*] in her new role as a single mother. The content of the interview is based solely on this feminist topic. She talks about how the structure of society oppresses women by making it difficult for them to have both a professional life and also raise children. In reference to her own experience, she says "schwer, schwer, das ist unheimlich schwer" [*hard, hard, it is unbelievably hard*]. This interview ends by reminding the viewer that she soon afterwards abandoned her children. Again, to summarize in a few words: single mother cannot handle raising kids, becomes violent. By ending with such a statement, the video clip is clearly insinuating that she was political for feminist reasons, which is simply not the whole truth. However, the main problem with this is that it is untrue according to Aust. She actually initially took her daughters underground with her and Stefan Aust was involved in intercepting the girls on behalf of their father in Sicily while Meinhof was in Jordan receiving training in guerilla warfare. *The Baader-Meinhof Complex* completely disregards Meinhof's personal struggles as a working single mother, instead demonizing her as a poor and irresponsible mother, as well as a jealous housewife.

Another example from *The Baader-Meinhof Complex* of a sexually biased point of view is the portrayal of Gudrun Ensslin. The scene in which the viewer is introduced to Peter Jürgen Boock when the young runaway joins the RAF and receives a leather jacket literally off the back of Andreas Baader displays a naked Ensslin (Johanna Wokalek) in the bath. Ensslin immediately

invites Boock (Vinzenz Kiefer) into the bath with her. According to Aust's book, this initial meeting and the gifting of the leather jacket does not happen in this setting and the book contains no bathtub scene. However, this portrayal is consistent with the tabloid press at the time, which "presented her as a uniquely talented bisexual temptress who seduced married men and women" (Rosenfeld 363). Though the makers of this film set out to recreate the actual events that took place, they are unable to abandon the media-induced stereotypes that surround the RAF. "It is a film about the past which is also trapped in the polarized mindset of that past" and is perpetuating false information about the Baader-Meinhof-Gang to the next generation (Homewood 145). The problem with this film, as expressed by Chris Homewood in his essay, "From Baader to Prada: memory and myth in Uli Edel's *The Baader-Meinhof Complex* (2008)," is that it is presented as factual, though everything from the choice of actors, to the music, camera angles, lighting, etc. creates a very subjective point of view. The political events as explained in the preceding sections of this paper were also either skimmed over or completely omitted from this film.

The New German Cinema

Following the Second World War, under the guise of denazification, the Allied Control Commission broke up the UFA (Universal Filmaktiengesellschaft), which was the holding group of film production organizations under the control of Goebbel's Ministry of Propaganda (Elsaesser 16). The film industry in Germany had until this point been a highly vertically integrated monopoly since 1933 and completely under state control. In order to ensure that this would not happen again, the Allies hoped to separate production, distribution, and exhibition activities, as well as have competing companies within each of these areas (Elsaesser 11). However, this restructuring made film-making in the Allied Zone and later the FRG much more difficult due to a shortage of funding and the fact that the companies simply did not have sufficient capital for film production. Additionally, in an effort to satisfy both economic and political goals, "the United States Senate passed the Information Media Guarantee Program in 1948, which effectively gave the go-ahead for the commercial exploitation of the German market" (Elsaesser 10). Thus the excessive influx of Hollywood films significantly lowered the demand for domestic films.

As was the case for the rest of German society, complete denazification within the film industry was impossible to achieve, especially taking into consideration that to work in the film industry during the war one had to be a member of the Nazi Party. "As late as 1960, 40 per cent of the directors active in the West German film industry had either been working in the industry before the arrival of Hitler or had started their careers during the Nazi era" (Elsaesser 13). These older filmmakers such as Wolfgang Staudte and Helmut Käutner, who still held a strong presence in the industry, though capable of producing quality films, were unable to create films

that dealt with more current issues. Thus, the conflicts between the sixties generation and their parents' generation also played a role in the next phase of German film.

On February 28, 1962, twenty-six German filmmakers signed a document known as the Oberhausen Manifesto, declaring that “der alte Film ist tot” [*the old film is dead*]. Following the international success of short films, created by members of this group, they argued that German cinema must abandon old conventions and follow this new artistic style of film making. This Manifesto led to the Bundestag's creation of the Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film [*Board of Young German Film*] in 1967, an institution intended to carry out the Oberhausen goals (Elsaesser 22). The result of this was that young filmmakers relied heavily on subsidies that were really intended only as starting capital. The Young German Film movement ultimately struggled due to poor funding and “the absence of a distribution strategy” (Elsaesser 25). In the early seventies, new sources of funding were created, including the *Filmverlag der Autoren* (Auteur's Film Distribution Agency), the *Berlin Basis-Film-Verleih* (Berlin Grass Roots Film Distributors), and the co-production opportunities made possible through the “Filmmakers' Syndicate.” These new organizations (as well as revisions to the film subsidies) allowed directors to exercise control over distribution and enter the market directly. It also gave opportunity to a number of new or unknown directors.

The resulting art films that were produced became known internationally as the New German Cinema. In order to diverge from the more commercial films of the 1950s, the New German Cinema directors desired to give their films the signature of an *auteur*, much like the directors of the French New Wave (Nouvelle Vague), including Godard, Truffaut, and Charbrol (Kaes 9). As the first generation to grow up in the postwar divided Germany, these younger directors confronted topics surrounding German history and identity that were uncomfortable for

the older generation. This artistic movement “has become as renowned for its formal and stylistic inventions as for its “working through” (Aufarbeitung) or “coming to terms with the past” (Vergangenheitsbewältigung)” (Flinn 2). The directors discussed in this paper, Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Margarethe von Trotta, are considered driving forces within this artistic movement.

Die dritte Generation [The Third Generation]

Rainer Werner Fassbinder

Although he was one of the more controversial filmmakers, Rainer Werner Fassbinder was considered the ‘heart’ of the New German Cinema (*Fassbinder’s Germany* 19). Within two decades he created over forty feature length films, which he personally wrote and directed. By constantly producing films, often multiple films simultaneously, there was little opportunity for separation between Fassbinder’s private and public life. We see this in his casting decisions, which typically include the same group of actors, made up of friends, lovers, and his mother. Biographers often draw connections between the filmmaker’s personal relationships and the relationships between the characters in his films.

Fassbinder’s personal life simply cannot be separated from his films, but while most of the focus is placed on his childhood and social life, it cannot be overlooked that he was greatly influenced by his identity as a German and he saw this as an essential part of himself. The purpose of shooting *Germany in Autumn* was to express the emotions of the Western Germans and Fassbinder chose to use himself as this representation, meaning that he believed his life to be a direct outcome of the events that had taken place. There was a time during which he became disillusioned with the current politics in Germany and desired to leave, but found himself unable to because he felt a deep connection to the country and wanted to express his German identity (Watson 160). In 1980, Fassbinder expressed that his goal was to create “a lot of films until [his] history of the Federal Republic reaches the present” (*Fassbinder’s Germany* 20-21). This sentiment nicely summarizes his oeuvre as a representation of Germany through his personal experience.

Fassbinder's motivation for filming *The Third Generation* was the murder and kidnapping of Hanns-Martin Schelyer, yet presents an interesting perspective on the events that occurred during the German Autumn. "Many on the left (including Fassbinder) were convinced that the official response was more dangerous than the terrorist threat" (Watson 25).

Film Summary

When a top executive of a computer company, P.J. Lurz (Eddie Constantine), notices that computer sales are down due to decreased terrorist activity, he decides to collude with August (Volker Spengler) to finance his own terrorist group. This group, made up of middle-aged and middle class men and women, does not follow any ideology, but rather are individuals who participate in this group as an escape from their mundane daily lives with the excitement of carrying guns, dressing up, and using codes. In reality the group is being manipulated by August. While Lurz is financing this terrorist organization, he is also being protected by a policeman Gerhard Gast (Hark Bohm), who is unknowingly hunting an organization to which his son Edgar (Udo Kier) and daughter-in-law Susanne (Hanna Schygulla) belong.

The members of this terrorist group communicate via their secret code: "Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung"⁸ [*The World as Will and Representation*]. Their illegal activities throughout most of the film involve passing documents to each other and arranging secret meetings. They typically meet in Rudolf's (Harry Baer) large, Berlin apartment where they play games, watch television, and create new identities. Other terrorists include a teacher, Hilde Krieger (Bulle Ogier), a housewife, Petra Vielhaber (Margit Carstenson), and an experienced terrorist, Paul (Raul Gimenez).

⁸ *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* is the title of a book by the German philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer.

Rudolf also allows a heroin addict, Ilse Hoffmann (Y So La), to live in his apartment. One day, her old friend and lover, Franz Walsch (Günther Kaufmann) shows up with his friend Bernhard von Stein (Vitus Ziplichal) and asks to stay. Walsch, an explosive expert who has just gotten out of the military, only joins the group after being unable to find work and after Ilse dies from an overdose. Bernhard is cast out by the group and made fun of for carrying a suitcase full of books by Mikhail Bakunin, a Russian philosopher and anarchist.

When Paul is brutally killed by the police, the entire group is forced underground and must assume their new identities. They then come up with a plan to rob a bank, blow up a building, and kidnap Lurz. While attempting to plant explosives in the Schöneberger Rathaus, Petra is also brutally killed by the police. The same thing happens to Franz while he is simply visiting Ilse's grave.

Bernhard is picked up by Gerhard at the Ilse's grave, where Bernhard had followed Franz. Gerhard interrogates Bernhard, who cannot answer his questions and nervously repeats the same sentences over and over. Bernhard suddenly falls down a stairwell and dies.

The remaining terrorists dress in ridiculous Carnival costumes and kidnap Lurz from his car. Lurz is placed in front of a camera and forced to read a message from the terrorists. At the end of the message he smiles at the camera.

Analysis

In analyzing *The Third Generation*, it is important to first establish who this third generation is to which Fassbinder is referring. Following the capture and incarceration of the first generation of the RAF (Meinhof, Ensslin, Baader, etc.), a second generation quickly surfaced and continued to carry out acts of terrorism, most notably those surrounding the events that

pertain to the German Autumn⁹. Fassbinder explained that the title refers to the evolutionary stages of terrorism:

The first generation was that of '68. Idealists, who thought they could change the world with words and demonstrations in the street. The second generation, the Baader-Meinhof Group, moved from legality to the armed struggle and total illegality. The third generation is today's, who just indulges in action without thinking, without either ideology or politics, and who, probably without knowing it, are like puppets whose wires are pulled by others. (*Fassbinder's Germany* 38)

Therefore, Fassbinder's third generation is actually referring to the second generation of terrorists. From his perspective, this group did not follow a strong ideology and had joined the "revolution" for the excitement of it. Fassbinder does not sympathize at all with any of the characters, but uses this film to be critical of both terrorist groups and the West German government's counter-terrorism response.

Historical Connection: Polar Politics

The Third Generation, establishes a number of connections to German history in order to show the rise and fall of both right-wing and left-wing politics suggesting that the extremes of the political spectrum played off of each other and prevented the FRG from establishing a balanced government. Fassbinder's film captures how a radical swing to the right will cause a radical swing to the left and this cycle will continue.



⁹ A third generation of terrorists identifying as the RAF did later emerge, however this was a number of years after the creation of this film.



The very first shot captures an image of the new and the old Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche [memorial church] towering over a gray and frozen Berlin, bringing the memory of the Third Reich to the forefront. The ruins of the old church were left standing after the Second World

War as a reminder to the German people of the destruction caused by Hitler's fascist regime. As the camera retreats from the window, revealing a corporate office with a computer and television, it becomes clear that the church is actually not the dominant structure in the city, but is being looked down upon from an even taller building. The camera slowly circles around the room until the Gedächtniskirche is almost completely hidden by the television. Next to the television sits a small object, reminiscent of the symbol of the Schutzstaffel [Protection Squad] **⚡**, the section of the Nazi military responsible for the most heinous crimes against humanity. Within these first few minutes it is revealed that this is the office of P.J. Lurz, an executive of a multi-national corporation. The implication that Lurz, a former member of the SS, has once again risen up in society reflects the reality in the FRG at this time.¹⁰ The window acts as a divide between an inside and an outside perspective of West Germany. Despite the outward gesture of guilt and remorse, on the inside nothing has really changed and the people who were in charge during the war remain in control.

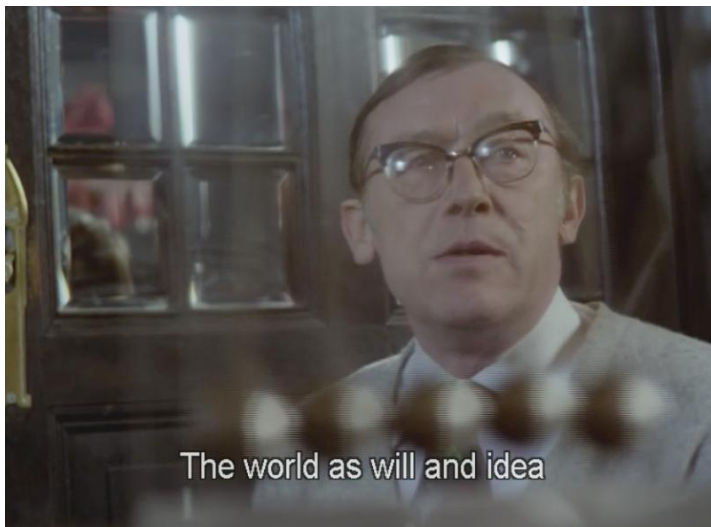
¹⁰ During the war Hanns-Martin Schleyer, who was kidnapped and murdered by members of the RAF, had been a member of the Himmler's SS. This paper does not support the idea that Rainer Werner Fassbinder had any intention of suggesting Schleyer participated in organizing his own kidnapping, though there are similarities between him and the character of P.J. Lurz. Such a message is not a common reading or interpretation of this film.

The Gedächtniskirche is mentioned again later in the film as the terrorists deliberate on what they are going to blow up. When they say it must be something symbolic, it is clear that they have lost sight of their predecessors' original cause. By razing the memorial church and wiping clean Berliners' memory of the Nazi regime, their message would be to forget and repress the memory of the war, contrary to the goal of the '68 idealists and the RAF.

Fassbinder's incorporation of historical context to comment on both the actions of the terrorists and the government are not limited to the Third Reich, but go back to the revolution of 1848. Near the beginning of the film, the viewer is introduced to Hilde who is leading a seminar. After covering the blackboard behind her with the year "1848", she poses a question regarding the National Assembly in Frankfurt and its importance for the development of the German Revolution. Two students answer her questions and continue, unprompted, to explain why the revolution ultimately failed. One of them explains that the National Assembly was politically ineffective and describes the revolution as "typisch" [*typical*]. His condescending tone suggests that all revolutions naively come to the same end when the middle class decides at the last minute that it does not actually want to give up its middle class values. He elaborates that it was the desire to hold on to these values that led to the rise of the Third Reich and these values are carried on by the current middle class. This characterization of the revolution of 1848 draws a direct connection to the RAF's revolution, which was made up of members of the educated middle class. Despite advocating left-wing ideology, the group did not elicit the support of the German working class, much like the revolutionaries of 1848 failed to gain support from workers. In the film the terrorists are quite obviously and comically portrayed as middle class. They work very normal jobs during the day and gather in the evenings in Rudolf's apartment for what looks more like a dinner party than a terrorist cell planning its next attack.

While her student makes a clear and logical statement, Hilde simply dismisses his answer without offering a counterargument. She tells the student that the Third Reich is irrelevant to the topic at hand. When he asks if that is her opinion, she tells him that they are only to discuss proven historical connections. Not only does her response expose her lack of free thought, but it also comments on the authoritarian structure of the universities in the sixties and seventies.

These images and ideas representing German history appear right at the beginning of the film to set the foundation upon which the rest of the film is built. By citing the left-wing revolution in 1848 and the fascist takeover in the 1930s, the viewer is forced to make connections and recognize how history repeats itself and shows how the opposing political forces seem to play off of each other. It is as if moving to the far right will cause an equal and opposite reaction to the far left. The two sides gain momentum from each other. Fassbinder demonstrates this with the reoccurring prop called a Newton's cradle, five suspended spheres demonstrating



the conservation of energy. The viewer is first introduced to this object as Opa Gast discusses Schopenhauer's philosophy with his grandson, Edgar. The camera captures his face through the strings of the Newton's cradle as he explains that it is people who follow this thinking who forget how good

things are between wars and will repeat the past. Thus war will lead to peace, which will lead back to war, illustrating a theme of back-and-forth motion where opposite forces fuel each other. Likewise, as previously mentioned, this can be used to describe the relationship between extreme

left and extreme right-wing politics. In the film we see that violence on the side of the police increases violence on the side of the terrorists and ultimately the dichotomy between the sides allows them both to become more polarized.

The same concept is further illustrated through a series of posters on the wall in Rudolf's apartment. The first poster shows a piggy bank, the second shows this piggy bank breaking, and finally the third shows the money from the piggy bank falling into a bag and then that bag dumping out.



The same money simply keeps switching hands, going back-and-forth as it is with August and Lurz. By giving money to August, Lurz is going to sell more computers and acquire more money. Lurz understands the interdependence between capitalism and terrorism, thus explaining his financial support of the terrorists. Ultimately the force fueling both sides is not ideology, but money.

Verfremdungseffekt [*Alienation Effect*]

For a viewer who is used to watching Hollywood productions, this film may seem rather confusing, annoying or frustrating. The viewer's senses are simply overloaded from the beginning from the use of Brechtian Verfremdungseffekt.¹¹ As the camera looks out of the window over Berlin, electronic-green text flashes the opening credits (intertwined with a

¹¹ In the 1930s Bertolt Brecht coined the term *Verfremdungseffekt*, meaning alienation effect, to describe “die technischen und sprachlichen Mittel, die Verfremdung hervorbringen” [*the technical and linguistic devices to create alienation*] (Knopf 81). Instead of creating an illusion for the audience members through a dramatic experience, these techniques distance the audience, present them with a world view, and force them to be critical of the characters. Some of these techniques include the use of non-linear or curved time, multiple things happening simultaneously, a summary projected on a board or banner preceding a scene that foretells the narrative and thus breaks the audience's anticipation, and instead of events growing into a climax they are treated more as a montage or collage.

description of the film, a dedication, and a quote) to the heartbeat rhythm of a drum. In addition to the heartbeat, the sound includes minimalistic tones and the dialogue from a television. As the television comes into view, additional text appears on the television screen. It becomes impossible to focus on every image and every sound, forcing the viewer to become active and ultimately to decide what to focus on. Fassbinder's projection of text does not end with the opening scene, but occurs at the beginning of each of the six parts of the comedy. Instead of providing a summary of each part, Fassbinder provides sexually explicit and racially offensive quotes found on bathroom stalls that lack a clear connection to the content that follows. Because the texts are not summaries, Brecht's technique is arguably parodied, but the moving images behind the giant text are in competition with each other and the audience is ultimately still very alienated from the narrative.

The sound of the television, found in each terrorist's home acting as a secret symbol, is constantly droning on. The content is typically interviews concerning the student movement, but is often mixed in with character dialogue, singing, or other noises. These television programs, along with a radio broadcast on the Vietnam War and Hilde's "diary on tape" of a girl's account of being raped, add social commentary and highlight the societal issues of the 1970s. The irony is that these are the issues for which the terrorists are supposedly fighting, but instead of listening, they talk over them. Even when Hilde is simply listening to this rape account, she is simultaneously translating it into French, once again making comprehension difficult for the viewer.

In addition to text and music, the audience is alienated by multiple character actions sharing a frame. For instance, the death of the heroin addict, Ilse, coincides with Rudolph wetting himself out of fear. Franz's reaction to his partner's death is to silently sit down and cry.

One could potentially sympathize with him, but instead, Franz shares the frame with Susanne and Hilde recounting the peeing-story while laughing hysterically. The viewer cannot simultaneously feel both emotions and is therefore distanced from all of the characters in the frame.

Games and Playing: Spiel und spielen

Throughout the film, Fassbinder plays extensively with the word *Spiel*, meaning game, match or play. For example a tennis match is a **Tennis**spiel** and a theatrical performance is a **Schaus**piel**. Likewise, the German verb meaning “to play” is *spielen*, which is used in terms of games, musical instruments, role playing/acting, and gambling, all of which the terrorists perform at some point in the film. Additionally the German word for “toy” is **Spielzeug** (literally meaning play-thing), a number of which are hidden in the mise-en-scene throughout the film, including Hilde’s yo-yo and random stuffed animals. The Newton’s cradle can actually be described as an executive toy, a word that also exists in German: **Managers**pielzeug**. In the film it is described in two separate instances as a “komisches Spiel” [*strange game*] and as a “Spiel, mit fünf silbernen Kugeln” [*game with five silver spheres*]. This object that is used to represent the polarized politics of the FRG is characterized as a game or a toy and consequently childish.******

Fassbinder tells the viewer at the very beginning of the film that they are about to see a comedy about games via a summary projected on the screen in green text:

eine Komödie in 6 Teilen

a comedy in 6 parts

um Gesellschaftsspiele

about parlor games

voll Spannung, Erregung und Logik

full of suspense, excitement, and logic

Grausamkeit und Wahnsinn

cruelty and madness

ähnlich den Märchen

similar to the fairy tales

die man Kindern erzählt

one tells to children

ihr Leben zum Tod ertragen zu helfen

to help them endure life until their death

The term used above, *Gesellschaftsspiele*, can be translated as parlor games, table games, board games or party games. However, the literal translation of this word is actually *society games*, which reinforces this idea of West German society as a big game. This is best illustrated when the terrorists are sitting on the floor and ironically playing the capitalistic game of Monopoly¹². August later names the group's terrorist mission, "Operation Monopoly". In another scene, August surprises Lurz in his office, interrupting a game of chess. Lurz angrily concedes to August's request for more funds, throwing a handful of cash onto the chessboard. The close-up shot of the chessboard covered in money is reminiscent of an earlier close-up shot on the Monopoly board. In addition to the money, these two images of board games are linked together by the use of a familiar American icon in the form of a pack of Marlboro cigarettes.



¹² By playing Monopoly, it also demonstrates how the terrorists have no regard for political ideology. Another example of this is when they play a game of keep-away from Bernhard von Stein with his book on Mikhail Bakukin, who was a Russian revolutionary writer and is considered by some to be the "most important anarchist political philosopher" (Hoselitz 13).

The connection of these two images indicates that the entire terrorist operation is a game. Through their childish affinity for games, the terrorists themselves seem to perceive their operation as such.

August takes all of the games in this film very seriously. In deciding whether or not to purchase Schlossallee, he gets up and walks away from the rest of the board game in order to count his Monopoly money in private. This act is reflective of his secretive role throughout the entire film. Despite Monopoly being, in part, a game of chance, when considering the use of dice, he is very careful to make sure that he will come out on top. August is shown on more than one occasion manipulating games of chance. Whenever the group needs to pick members for an operation, August hands out small pieces of paper, a few of which have an X on them. It is obvious that he is manipulating the game since he never receives an X, which he even points out.

The terrorists use games to escape the banality of their real lives, which is further emphasized by the incorporation of dressing up and role-playing. In the record store, Rudolph's boss alludes to the children's role-playing game of "Cops and Robbers" when he asks Rudolph whether he is currently playing the part of "Räuber oder Gendarm" [*the robber or the cop*]. This game is reflective both of the conflict in the film and in 1970s West Germany between the police and the terrorist groups.

By having the terrorists excessively role-playing, it becomes clear that they are being manipulated and controlled, instead of acting on the basis of their own ideology. Going back to Fassbinder's definition of the third generation, he describes a group with neither an ideology nor a political conviction, which acts as a "Schar von Marionetten" [*band of puppets*] (Uka 390). During the scene when Susanne and Gerhard (her father-in-law and a police detective) are having an affair, the two are role-playing, but only Susanne plays a part, dressed in a trench-coat

and hat. Gerhard feeds every line to her, which she then repeats back to him. He controls her like a puppet. Hilde regularly acts in a similar manner. For instance, when August comes to tell her that Paul has been killed, she begins to sob until he tells her to stop; she stops instantly. He then tells her to smile and she smiles immediately, so immediately in fact that it is noticeably unnatural to the viewer. She is simply a marionette, who changes from sad to happy at the pull of a string.

The theatrical theme is further accentuated by the excessive use of ridiculous costumes. August is constantly in disguise and Lurz criticizes him for being addicted to playing dress-up and fears that their entire scheme will be ruined by this “kinderliche Zirkus” [*childish circus*]. Likewise, when the terrorists are forced underground, they again seem to be playing dress-up, rather than actually disguising themselves for protection. Petra immediately gets excited and asks if she can be Chilean and go by the name Michaela Angela Maritnez, which is problematic since she neither looks nor sounds Chilean. Petra sees the opportunity to go underground as an opportunity to escape her life and become someone else. With some of the other disguises, the terrorists think they are being incredibly clever by choosing a disguise that no one would expect, such as a black man in black face, a couple with a child, a blind man, and a people in Karneval¹³ costumes.

In playing with various forms and uses of the word *Spiel*, Fassbinder characterizes the terrorists as children, not in the sense that they are innocent, but that they are naïve, easily manipulated, and entertain themselves by creating their own worlds. As they create new identities they become distanced from their real lives and escape into a romantic fantasy, instead of trying to make a real change in their lives.

¹³ The motif of carnival and circus is used to further this concept of childish fantasy and masquerade. During the scenes in the record store, the music in the background is always a woman singing in French. The singer is Fassbinder’s former wife, Ingrid Caven, and one of her songs is called “Carnaval” (French for carnival).

Role Reversal

Along the same lines of playing dress-up, there is a great deal of cross-dressing to draw attention to gender roles. When visiting Lurz in his office, August is dressed as a woman¹⁴, because women are less suspicious and he also wants to practice his disguises. When the terrorists kidnap Lurz on Fasching Tuesday, Edgar disguises himself as Miss Monaco, complete with bathing suit and panty-hose. The female sphere that he occupies throughout most of the film finally becomes outwardly visible. In contrast, the women are often dressed in a more masculine fashion as gangsters from the 1920s with trench coats, their hair pulled up into hats, in the style of Bonnie and Clyde. Interestingly, the characters never actually don the iconic dress of terrorists like the RAF, but dress up more like characters in a classic Hollywood crime film.



In the first scenes with the Gast family, it is immediately clear that Susanne and Edgar do not play the traditional gender roles. While Susanne works full time as a secretary, Edgar, a composer, stays home playing piano and taking care of their toddler son. Ironically when the group is forced to go underground, their new chosen identities as bookseller and housewife respectively return Edgar and Susanne to their “traditional” roles. However when they initially go underground, it is Susanne who maintains her composure, while Edgar sobs aloud in multiple

¹⁴ In 1978, the year before the filming of *The Third Generation*, Volker Spengler played Erwin/Elvira, a transsexual, who undergoes a sex change for the man that he/she loves, only to have that love not returned in Fassbinder’s film *In einem Jahr mit 13 Monden [In a Year with 13 Moons]*. Spengler’s cross-dressing as August is reminiscent of his appearance as Elvira. The difference is that August is presented as less of a convincing woman and comes off as completely ridiculous. When he removes his hat in Lurz’s office he reveals a horrible blonde wig and sideburns.

scenes. Annoyed, Susanne pleads with him to stop crying and to focus on memorizing his new identity. Similarly, during a stealth robbery mission, Hilde and Susanne are very calm and methodical, while Rudolf becomes so scared that he loses control of his bladder.

Portrayal of Women

Women often play central or leading roles in Fassbinder's films, but are not always portrayed in the most positive way. While some characterize the director as misogynistic, his film editor, Juliane Lorenz, describes him as someone who really valued women. Fassbinder had a distaste for Hollywood's portrayal of women, because it simplified what he considered the more complex of the two sexes. He explains his use of women in his films by saying that "women are more exciting... because while being oppressed they are also likely to use their oppression as an instrument of "terrorization." Men, on the other hand are 'so simple... primitive in their means of expression'" (Watson 133). The use of the word "terrorization" is especially appropriate for *The Third Generation*, as the leading female characters are terrorists. While Fassbinder was not against the feminist movement, he was also not a fan of feminist rhetoric. From his perspective, men and women were equally oppressed in German society (Watson 134). Likewise, the women are no more victims in this film than the men, though their oppression does bring up gender specific issues. In harmony with the media coverage of terrorists at this time, Fassbinder also plays with gender roles and cross dressing to blur the line between men and women.

When the terrorist cell gains a new member, Paul, Hilde is forced to host him. Upon entering her apartment, Paul asks if she lives without a *Führer*, literally meaning leader, but also a term forever associated with Hitler. Because of this association, this term is rarely used anymore, with the exception of in compound words. To a German audience, the use of this term

is provocative and insinuates that a heterosexual relationship is a patriarchal and authoritarian institution. Hilde initially comes across as a strong, independent woman as she insists that she has no Führer and will not have one in the future. Hilde maintains this strength of character until Paul insists on sleeping with her, violently wrestles her onto the bed, and presumably rapes her. The strong, independent Hilde does not appear again for the remainder of the film. Instead she reappears as the committed lover and servant of Paul. The next time they are together in her apartment, he is forcing her into the traditional female role of cooking and serving him dinner and reassures her that she will improve over time.

As Hilde seemingly becomes content with her new position under the control of Paul, Petra becomes increasingly dissatisfied with her “oppressive” husband, who is not part of the terrorist group. Interestingly, her husband, Hans Vielhaber, is never portrayed as oppressive. In the scene where they are shown interacting at home, Petra becomes incredibly defensive and hostile towards Hans, although he only asks a simple question. Like Paul, Hans also tries to initiate intimacy, but unlike Paul, Hans releases her when she cries for help. Petra creates excitement by turning herself into a victim of her capitalist husband. By shooting her husband several times while robbing his bank, she is using her fake oppression as an instrument of terrorization.

Even though, Petra is not really a victim in the sense that she thinks she is, she is actually oppressed by the men in the terrorist cell. When she tells them that her husband hit her and she will never go back to him, Rudolf suggests that they take a vote. The men vote against her and because there are more men than women, they win with the majority. This illustrates a rather anti-democratic use of a democratic concept, under which the women seem to suffer.

Trapped: Authoritarianism and the Police State

Immediately following the German Autumn and before creating of *The Third Generation*, Fassbinder collaborated with ten other New German Cinema directors on the 1978 film *Deutschland im Herbst [Germany in Autumn]*. In the segment that he wrote and directed, Fassbinder stars as himself with his partner Armin Meier and his mother Lilo Pempeit.¹⁵ Throughout the roughly twenty-five minute piece, the editing cuts back and forth between Fassbinder's interaction with Armin at home and a conversation with his mother in a restaurant. Set during the peak days of the German Autumn, both Armin and Lilo express a desire for undemocratic action by the state for what they view as an extreme situation. Despite arguing against both his lover and mother that the government does not and should not have that kind of authority, he becomes violent and acts in a fascistic manner towards his partner. This segment underlines the fear that the West German government was once again becoming an authoritarian police state due to the complacency of the population.

The opening sequence of *The Third Generation* contains a quote from the current Chancellor of the FRG, Helmut Schmidt, printed in *Der Spiegel* in January of 1978 that reflects exactly what both Armin and Lilo are saying:

Ich kann nur nachträglich den deutschen Juristen danken, dass sie das alles (gemeint ist die Aktion in Mogadischu. Und vielleicht auch anderes um Mogadischu herum?) nicht verfassungsrechtlich untersucht haben.

[I can only retrospectively thank the German lawyers that did not investigate all of this constitutionally. (in reference to the action in Mogadishu. And perhaps also others apart from Mogadishu?)]

¹⁵ Lisolotte Eder was credited in her son's films by her maiden name. She appeared in many of his films, including *The Third Generation*, in which she played "Mutter Gast," who comes across as crazy thanks to outrageous make-up and costuming and odd behavior.

Even the highest office of power in West Germany showed support for the use of anti-democratic practices in specific crisis situations. What Fassbinder seems to be arguing in both films, and explicitly in *Germany in Autumn*, is that there cannot be these exceptions in the law for certain situations, otherwise there is nothing stopping the government from taking complete and unregulated control.

In *The Third Generation* the police are actually portrayed as more violent than the terrorists. The only person killed by a terrorist is Hans Vielhaber, whom Petra shoots several times out of her own personal spite. The police do not just kill Paul, Franz and Petra, but spray them with bullets as if it is an execution by firing squad. As all three of them are unarmed and unthreatening, the shooting is unnecessarily bloody and violent. There is no warning and no due process. In *Germany in Autumn* Fassbinder shows his extreme fear of the police while cutting lines of cocaine. The sound of sirens outside the apartment causes him to panic and immediately flush the drugs down the toilet. Since the police have no clear cause to enter the apartment, Fassbinder's reaction seems unreasonable, but this is his point. If the police are allowed to take liberties while tensions are high during a crisis situation, there is nothing stopping the formation of a full-fledged police state.

In *The Third Generation*, the conflict between the police and the terrorists is simultaneously portrayed as a familial conflict. At the dinner table in the Gast household, Edgar asks his father, Gerhard: "Wieder Menschen gejagt heute?" [*People-hunting again today?*]. Gerhard, the father, has adopted or maintained the authoritarian mindset of the Nazi generation. This tension between generations is also present in Fassbinder's conversation with his mother. Her opinion of the current state of West German society shows the same complacency that characterized the Nazi generation. She says she would not recommend anyone discuss these

unpleasant topics, especially in the press. In resorting to this desire for a savior-like leader to come and fix all of society's problems, she presents the same attitude that allowed Hitler to come to power. Interestingly, although Fassbinder fights this mindset, he ultimately cannot escape it either.

Fassbinder cannot free himself from authoritarianism and as he inwardly struggles with himself he seems to be trapped. In both of these films the characters are portrayed as trapped with the confines of a society that is unable to deviate from its authoritarian structure. The beginning scenes shot in the Gast household in *The Third Generation* include establishing shots from an extreme high angle, as if they are objects of study or trapped within a confined space, and they ultimately appear powerless within this frame. Throughout the film, the same effect is achieved by framing the terrorists through doorways. In *Germany in Autumn* this is emphasized in the moments directly after Fassbinder has acted in a fascist manner. After wrestling Armin to the ground, he slouches guiltily in the doorframe and calls out to his partner who has already run off. Likewise after throwing a homeless man or backpacker out of his apartment, Fassbinder sits down in a doorframe at the end of the hallway and cries. The doorways visualize Fassbinder's inward feeling of being unable to change; though he is advocating for more democracy, he finds himself unable to break away from his authoritarian tendencies.

Preceding the quote from Chancellor Schmidt is a cryptic dedication:

gewidmet einem wahren Liebenden

als keinem wahrscheinlich?

[dedicated to a true lover

so no one probably?]

Film editor, Juliane Lorenz revealed in an interview that the word *Liebenden*, meaning lover, was originally meant to be *Liberalen*, meaning liberal. Fassbinder saw this mistake, but decided not to correct it. Considering the original text, the use of *liberal* is appropriate with respect this idea of limited freedom within society. No character in either film seems capable of truly advocating progressive political change, nor can they consider themselves really free. They are trapped within the confines of an old German tradition of rigid patriarchy and order. In *The Third Generation*, this is also demonstrated by filming characters through doorframes. In Rudolph's apartment the terrorists are often framed in large doorways that are reminiscent of a stage, which brings us back to the theme of role-playing and puppets. In marionette theater the subjects are trapped within the confines of the stage and are at the mercy of the manipulator, the person pulling the strings. The idea of marionettes on strings within the frame once again relates to the Newton's cradle, a metal frame containing spheres suspended on strings. Although the terrorists believe they are breaking down the walls of society, Fassbinder shows that they are still very much trapped within its frame and the game continues, back and forth, back and forth.

Die bleierne Zeit [Marianne and Juliane]

Margaretha von Trotta

Cinema, like most other industries in West Germany in the early sixties, was very much male-dominated and no one would “think that a woman could be a director” (von Trotta). This began to change with Margarethe von Trotta, who became “regarded not only as a visionary of the New German Cinema but also as an example of those German feminist filmmakers who benefited from the sweeping societal changes that the student movement brought about” (Hofer 38).

Born in Berlin in 1942, von Trotta belonged to the sixties generation that grew up during West Germany’s reconstruction era following the war. She was raised solely by her mother, a Russian immigrant, whose “sense of alienation and of critical distance from a German identity was passed on to her daughter” (Hehr 8). After leaving a Protestant boarding school, where she felt oppressed by the strict structure, von Trotta joined her mother traveling from place to place, usually staying in the homes of elderly people and she was often under the supervision of women enforcing rigid authoritarian structures.

As an adult Von Trotta eventually began studying art, which brought her to France, where she was introduced to the Nouvelle Vague. Her political beliefs were greatly shaped by her first husband, who was involved in left-wing politics. However, when he stopped supporting her acting career, she filed for divorce, which she characterized as a great emancipation, giving her the courage to embrace the world view of the movement of 1968. She soon after became acquainted with a group of Munich directors when Volker Schlöndorff¹⁶ hired her and Fassbinder to act in an adaptation of Brecht’s *Baal* (Hehr 10-13).

¹⁶ Von Trotta and Schlöndorff were married from 1971 to 1991.

In creating the film, *Marianne and Juliane*, von Trotta is quoted as saying that she “tried to understand these people [terrorists] in [her] film and to reach to the roots of their behavior” (Hofer 38). From the beginning, the original German, meaning “The Leaden Time,” already provides the German audience, which recognizes this term in reference to the “repression of the Nazi-past in post-fascist Germany,” with insight to what these roots are (Hofer 38).

Film Summary

Based on the life of Gudrun Ensslin of the RAF and co-written by her older sister, Christiane Ensslin¹⁷, this film follows the lives of two sisters who, despite their close childhood relationship, ended up following two very different ideological paths as adults. Juliane Klein (Jutta Lampe), representing Christiane Ensslin, is a feminist activist, who helped establish and write for a feminist newspaper. Marianne Klein¹⁸ (Barbara Sakowa), representing Gudrun Ensslin, is her younger sister, who had left her boyfriend Werner (Luc Bondy) and son Jan (Patrick Estrada-Pox) to establish a terrorist group with her new lover, Karl (Satan Deutscher). Told as a reflection on the past from Juliane’s perspective, the film mixes shared moments from the sisters’ childhood, adolescence and adult lives.

The childhood flashbacks portray two normal little girls, who experienced the horror of bombs falling outside their shelter and grew up under the strict control of a protestant pastor father (Franz Rudnick). In adolescence Marianne acts as the well behaved daughter, who reads poetry aloud in class, while Juliane is the rebellious older sister, who refuses to discuss the literature provided by their teacher and goes out into the school hallway to smoke. Their

¹⁷ This film is dedicated to Christiane.

¹⁸ The name Marianne Klein was also used in *The Third Generation* as Hilde’s alternate identity. Both Marianne Kleins are strong female characters who allow themselves to be ruled by men. It is unclear whether or not von Trotta meant to directly reference Fassbinder’s film, but it would be too much of a coincidence for it not to be. Marianne’s full name is only mentioned once in the entire film.

difference in personality becomes pronounced during these early teenage years, yet they are both greatly disturbed by the viewing of Alain Resnais's 1955 documentary *Nuit et Brouillard* [*Night and Fog*], depicting graphic images of the Holocaust.

In their adult life, though the two sisters are both social activists, their ideologies and means of social change are vastly different. Marianne makes a number of disruptive, surprise appearances in Juliane's adult life. After her arrest, it is Juliane who keeps their relationship going through letters and visits.

Following Marianne's death in prison, Juliane begins to focus all of her energy on proving that her sister did not commit suicide. Her obsession with finding the truth causes Wolfgang to leave her and she creates her own isolation. When Jan is nearly murdered in a fire, Juliane takes custody of him. In the very last scene, Jan comes into Juliane's office and rips up the photograph of his mother. When Juliane tells him that he was wrong to do this and that his mother was an exceptional woman, he demands that she tell him everything about her.

Juliane's Story

By telling this story from Juliane's perspective and by structuring the plot so that Marianne is presented only with respect to her relationship with her sister, the viewer is exposed to a broader understanding of the cultural conditions of West Germany. As a feminist who has an unavoidable and close connection to the terrorism, her point of view displays an interesting intersection between the feminist and student movements. Because Juliane is not living underground like her sister, the audience is given a more general outlook on how life was at this time in the FRG, instead of a more fantasized idea of life in the underground. The empathy in this film is consequently not shared with the terrorist, and in doing this von Trotta prevents the viewer from deciding that the terrorists were justified in their actions. However, since Juliane is

the sister of a terrorist, there is a basic understanding of the terrorists' motivations and thus the viewer can still empathize indirectly.

By identifying with Juliane, who really understands her sister even if she does not condone her violent actions, the viewer cannot help but also develop empathy for Marianne when aided by the childhood flashbacks, showing a young, sensitive Marianne, who cared for her sister and cried while watching *Night and Fog*. In adulthood, there are very few moments during which Marianne shows real emotion and one can identify with her. When Juliane leaves her work to meet Marianne in a museum, the latter immediately begins discussing her ideology in an emotionless and rather pretentious tone of voice. She maintains this attitude upon hearing of her ex-boyfriend's suicide. It is at the mention of her son that she breaks down and shows actual emotion. At this point, the empathy that the audience feels comes from identifying with her as a mother, not as a revolutionary.

There are a few additional moments when the adult Marianne breaks her hard façade, including during a prison visit when she embraces her sister. Again, she shows emotion with respect to family relations, but there is never an opportunity for the viewer to identify with her political ideas and motivations. As in life, the viewer is also alienated from Marianne in death. Instead of appearing peacefully asleep inside her coffin, her face is monstrously disfigured and her eyes are still open.

Circular Time: Mixing Past and Present

In the opening scene the camera foreshadows the polychronic treatment of time. As Juliane paces pensively around her poorly lit shoebox of an office, she suddenly pauses, as if she has had a revelation, and then quickly proceeds to the bookcase full of binders. These binders are marked by year spanning from 1967, just before the height of the student movement, to 1978,

just following the German Autumn and arguably the abatement of the movement. The camera ceases to follow her as she walks away studying a binder marked “1978”. Instead the camera pans leftward slowly across the binders, follows the binders up and around clockwise, until completing the circle and returning to the empty space where the “1978” binder once stood. This movement suggests a circular or cyclical understanding of time. This is further illustrated by the frame narrative structure of the film. The opening and closing scenes are set in the same place and time, while the scenes in between are images from different places and times in the girls’ lives. By having these two scenes act as bookends, the narrative comes full circle.

By using scene transitions that replicate human memory, von Trotta uses the fragmented structure of the film to tightly intertwine the past and present in order to emphasize how the latter is the product of the former. While sitting with Marianne in the museum, Juliane looks down at the two cups of hot cocoa. The camera inhabits her gaze with a close up of the cups and finally the scene transitions to an almost identical shot of two cups sitting in front of the sisters as children.



Just as senses spark our memories, Juliane’s senses in the film spark flashbacks, which can then be understood as Juliane’s personal memory. Her memories capture significant events in both her personal life and in West German history. Another example of this occurs when the adult Juliane sees a train going by. The loud sound of the train reminds her of bombs falling during the war. The flashback is a chaotic scene of the mother pulling the girls out of bed and running down the

stairs to the bomb shelter. The camera follows the girls down the spiral stairs in a disorienting manner, conveying fear and confusion. This was clearly a traumatic event, which left a lasting impression on the girls.¹⁹

The polychronic understanding of time forces the passive viewer to become active. In understanding the film, it becomes the task of the audience to piece together the sisters' story from the images they have seen into a logical order. This structure also causes the viewer to become more critical. Had the events been presented chronologically, the viewer may not otherwise compare the Holocaust scenes from Alain Resnais's 1955 documentary *Nuit et Brouillard [Night and Fog]*²⁰ to the scene that directly follows, which takes place in the Stammheim prison. With these two scenes side-by-side, the viewer is able or encouraged to draw a connection between them. The images chosen from *Night and Fog* heavily emphasize the emaciated bodies of the Holocaust victims. This is followed by a prison visit, where the sisters are discussing Marianne's hunger strike. Marianne's starvation is self-inflicted, but the conversation turns to the topic of her inhumane isolation treatment. The scenes are further connected by the camera's focus on the audience, as well as the subject. Just as the camera focuses in on the children watching the film, it pauses on each individual overseeing the prison visit. The comparison between Marianne and the Holocaust victims echoes the rhetoric of those who claimed that the West German government repeating an aspect of its fascist past.

This flashback of the two teenage sisters viewing *Night and Fog* is located at the very center of the film. This scene contains two layers of the past: the girls' adolescent experiences and the Holocaust. By occupying the central position in the film, it suggests that this experience

¹⁹ This scene was taken from von Trotta's own experience of living in Berlin with her mother during the war (Hehr 8). The Ensslin family, living in a small village in the south of Germany, probably did not experience an air raid like this.

²⁰ This documentary was created from stock footage shot during the liberation of two concentration camps, the trials against Nazi officers, and Resnais's own footage of the camps a few years later.

played a central role in the girls' lives, as well as suggesting that the Holocaust was the central event that moved a generation. However, the two levels are so intertwined that the cause-and-effect can only be understood with both levels. It is the culmination of the events of the Holocaust, the lack of justice served to the perpetrators, the girls watching the documentary with their peers, the father behind the projector and keeping a close eye on the children, and finally the girls' disturbed reaction to the documentary that lie at the heart of this film and perpetuate the conflict within and outside of the family.

When the girls are older, they are shown viewing footage of the innocent victims of the war in Vietnam. Just as members of the student movement drew similarities between the Vietnam War and the Holocaust, the two scenes in the film are very similar in terms of the disturbing content of the images shown and the way the camera focuses on the sisters' reactions. Once again the camera emphasizes that it is not merely the images being shown, but the images in combination with the people viewing them. The final shot of this scene captures both the film and the audience. The sound of Juliane's typewriter from the previous scene becomes non-diegetic as it carries over to this film within a film. This sound identifies the key difference between Juliane and the Springer press, which is that Juliane can write about her sister with understanding and empathy. She does this without really supporting Marianne's actions, which the viewer later learns from Marianne's negative reaction to the article.

Von Trotta is able to capture the relationship between the past and the present in a single shot. During the sisters' meeting in the museum the camera cuts to a man looking at a statue of what appears to be a past



member of the German aristocracy. The man mirrors the statue by the way he is standing and his noticeably large mustache.

Generational Gap and Family Hierarchy

In her fictional portrayal of the Ensslin family, von Trotta creates a microcosm of West German society: with Juliane representing the feminists, Marianne the left-wing idealists who turned radically violent, the parents the rigid, antidemocratic Nazi generation, and finally Jan representing the next generation. The relationships between family members are not necessarily portrayed as they actually were. For instance, according to Aust, following the arson trial, Ensslin's father supports his daughter by saying that this experience was for her a "holy self-realization such as we find mentioned in connection with saints" (Aust 40). This understanding and admiration is completely absent from the father character in this film, who remains consistently in a position of strict authority. In *Marianne and Juliane*, the family serves as a reflection of the social conditions in the FRG.

The generational gap and its attendant conflicts are best illustrated in the dancing scene at the community ball. From a medium shot length, the camera shifts from couple to couple, showing the young ladies dancing with old, white-haired men, while the young men dance with the older women. The dancing partners appear uncomfortable and stiff. Every couple avoids eye contact and no one makes an effort to engage his or her partner in conversation. The two generations are literally not speaking to each other, exhibiting the silence that characterized the Nazi generation following the war. Parents felt too ashamed and guilty, that they made the topic of the war taboo.

In this same scene, Juliane disrupts the entire dance floor by waltzing without a partner. Her dancing alone is so disruptive to the rest of the dancers that everyone stops to watch until she is dancing around completely alone on the dance floor. Like most of the scenes from the girls' teenage years, it is Juliane who is constantly fighting against the rigid structure of her family and society.

Juliane's sense of oppression becomes expressed visually as she walks down a path outside the museum lined with statues of men from the past German ruling class, which tower over her. From the initial establishing shot, Juliane appears small next to the large, overpowering statues. The camera then adopts her perspective, looking up from a low angle shot at the sternly sculpted faces staring down at her.



A similar low angle is used when Juliane, as a child, looks up at her father angrily preaching from the pulpit. This time, the editing creates a shot-reverse shot of Juliane and the painting of Jesus on the cross that hangs in her parents' home. The first shot is of the girl's face with eyes looking upwards, followed by a low angle shot of the painting as if from her perspective. The camera returns to girl and then to her father in the elevated pulpit, shot from an extreme low angle looking down at the camera, again, as if from the perspective of the little girl. The use of extreme angles exaggerates the distance between them, reinforcing the sense of a

large generation gap, as well as her father's—literally the patriarch's—position of dominance over her. This image of the father embodies what he represents throughout the entire film, which is the patriarchy and the authoritarianism that characterized much of German history.



Portrayal of Women

Through her portrayal of the two sisters, von Trotta highlights the conflict between the feminists and the socialists on a personal and inward level. First, there is Juliane, a feminist, who is a women's rights activist who works with a group of women to publish a feminist newspaper²¹ in Germany. Second, there is her sister, Marianne, who is a radical supporter of the left-wing student movement and later turns to violence. However, instead of focusing on the difference in ideology between the two sisters, von Trotta turns the spotlight on their differences in personality. Juliane's partner, Wolfgang, expresses his view of the two women after Juliane shares her nightmare about him cheating on her with Marianne.

Juliane: Als du uns kennengelernt hast, hast du sie gemocht. [*When you met us, you liked her.*]

Wolfgang: Nur weil sie pummelig war und schwach... [*Only because she was chubby and weak...*]

Juliane: Bin ich schwach? [*Am I weak?*]

²¹ This is most likely a reference to *Emma*, which Christiane Ensslin co-founded with Alice Schwarzer and a group of other women (Kalendar).

Wolfgang: Für mich bist du die stärkere von euch beiden. [*For me, you are the stronger between the two of you.*]

The sisters' level of strength is most easily understood by comparing their relationships with the respective men in their lives. In the relationship between Juliane and Wolfgang, Wolfgang is portrayed as the more passive partner by taking on traditional female roles. He cooks dinner for the two of them and picks up the clothes that Marianne throws on the floor when she scours the closet. He is also passively obedient, for example, in the scene when he says he wants to get married and Juliane tells him no. It is she who gets the final say.

In comparison, Marianne still occupies the woman's sphere even in her radicalism. When she shows up at Juliane's apartment in the middle of the night with two men, she immediately goes to the kitchen and begins making coffee for them. Despite being the co-founder of this terrorist group (as Ensslin was), this does not cancel out her subservient role as a woman. After having only a sip of coffee, when Karl says that they are leaving, Marianne immediately obeys without saying a word.

From an early age Juliane is intolerant of the role into which women are forced. While at the dinner table her father begins to complain about her not wearing skirts to school, but his discontent quickly transfers to his wife, saying that it is her job to make sure the girl is properly dressed before leaving the house. Juliane comes to her mother's defense and says that she has enough to worry about with the younger kids. In saying this, Juliane is challenging her father's control over both her and her mother, as well as highlighting her mother's heavy burden as the sole caretaker of the home and children.

The story of the two sisters begins with Marianne's former life partner Werner, bringing their son, Jan, to Juliane and asking her to take custody of him. He expresses that he can no

longer take care of his son alone and says that he “kann nicht die nächsten zehn Jahre Kindermädchen spielen” [*cannot play nanny for the next ten years*]. His insistence on Juliane raising his son shows his inability to let go of the woman’s traditional role. This also highlights the difficulty of surviving as a single parent in German society without the support of the nuclear family. Based on the aforementioned interview with Ulrike Meinhof, it was incredibly difficult to be a working, single mother at this time. Instead of representing this as a gender issue, by using a man to present this issue, von Trotta shows a major fault in the structure of society, at the same time as she reveals the double standard between the expectations set on mothers and fathers.

Like Wolfgang, Werner is also portrayed as a weak character. He is driven to commit suicide, because he simply cannot take the pressure of being a parent and simultaneously having a job. In comparison, there are a number of strong female roles, including the pregnant doctor. When Juliane asks about what her pregnancy means for her career, the doctor nonchalantly replies that she can manage both.

Werner is not only unable to separate women from their traditional role in society, but he also holds on to the idea that women are intellectually inferior. As he blames Marianne for his misfortune by running off with Karl, Juliane comes to her sister’s defense by arguing that her sister’s actions were not solely determined by Karl. Werner ignores this and concludes: “Er kann wahrscheinlich besser ficken als ich“ [*He can probably fuck better than I*]. Werner’s comments ultimately undermine Marianne’s political convictions and reduce her to a simple woman, easily swayed by her sexual urges. To him, it is not possible that she could have wanted to leave him for political reasons, as if a woman is incapable of being motivated by anything other than her

desires. This view of the female terrorist that was commonplace in the press at this time, is ultimately offensive from a feminist perspective.

Martyrdom and Revenge

As Marianne's time in prison progresses, security measures increase and Juliane's empathy for her sister grows. She identifies so deeply with her sister during her suffering in prison, that she starts to become her. Juliane goes to extraordinary lengths including forcing a feeding tube down her own throat to understand what Marianne is experiencing. In their final moments together, the sisters are separated by a glass window and are forced to communicate through microphones. For a moment, the sisters' faces blend together as Juliane's reflection in the glass aligns with Marianne's and the two briefly become one. The next time Juliane sees her sister's face is after her death, when her body is presented to the family. Her face almost looks disfigured from the numerous scratches and bruises, and from her mouth and eyes remaining open.

This experience throws Juliane into a panic attack and she seems to experience a death of her own. While being taken to the hospital in an ambulance she says: "ich muss weiter für sie machen" [*I have to continue for her*]. While Juliane is being carried to a bed in the hospital, Handel's Cantata: "O numi eterni," HWV 145 (La Lucrezia²²) plays in the background:

My heart is more deeply hurt by the pain of this un-avenged wrong than by the fury of approaching death. But if I am not granted to punish the tyrant here and now and defeat

²² The story of Lucrezia entails a young woman being raped, asking the Roman gods to avenge her, and finally committing suicide. According to classical music composer, Joseph DuBose, "Appalled at her rape by the king's son and her consequent suicide, the prominent families of Rome rebelled against the tyrannical rule of the last king of Rome, Lucius Tarquinius Superbus. They effectively expelled the entire Tarquin family and formed the Roman Republic." As DuBose characterizes this story, it is much bigger than Lucrezia. It is about the overthrowing of an authoritarian system of government for a more democratic system.

him with the barbarous cruelty he deserves, I will see to it that he falls dead, I will grasp the deadly arrow, and , furious and cruel, I will wreak my vengeance in hell. (Pamphili)

During her hysterical rambling in the ambulance, it is unclear what Juliane actually means by “I must continue for her.” She does not pick up where her sister left off and start blowing up buildings. Instead, she becomes consumed by her mission to prove that her sister’s death was not suicide. She sincerely believes that her sister was murdered by the state. When the lyrics of the Handel’s Cantata are taken into consideration it seems as if Juliane’s key motivation is avenging her sister. However, this choice of music makes more sense in the context of the story behind the lyrics (see footnote 22). In Lucrezia’s story, her death was simply a catalyst for the Roman revolt against the king. The Romans were not simply seeking revenge on her behalf, but were fed up with the corruption and tyranny under which they lived. This is what Juliane means by continuing for Marianne. She continues to fight the corruption of the West German government by proving her sister’s murder.

The sacredness of this “mission” is reinforced by the religious imagery throughout the viewing sequence. While in the casket, Marianne’s body is wrapped completely in a white sheet and surrounded by white bedding. Similarly, when Juliane is carried into the hospital, she is illuminated by white light. The combination of the solemn music with the white light makes the sleeping Juliane also appear dead. Arguably there is a part of her that has died, since the rest of the film shows a significant personal transformation in her. Aided also by the crucifixion painting and the juxtaposition of the white light with the red light that surrounds their father in this sequence, both sisters appear as martyrs or as holy, which is also reflected by the name that they share: Anne, meaning favored by God.

Concluding Discussion

In looking at these two films side by side, Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Margarethe von Trotta have a similar perspective on the connection between Germany's National Socialist past and the terrorism that took place three decades later in West Germany. Their response to the German Autumn was to look inwardly at West Germany and identify what is at the core of their culture and society, which led both filmmakers to concentrate on the family unit and interfamilial relationships.

When the war ended and the authoritarian and patriarchal government collapsed, the patriarchal organization of the family unit remained in large part unchanged. The man was still the head of the household and he ultimately had the final say in domestic matters. In *Marianne and Juliane* this is demonstrated through the father. As previously mentioned, von Trotta seems to use the Ensslin family as a microcosm of the FRG, bringing the family and the relationships between the family members to the forefront of her film, yet using these relationships to reflect the social conditions of West Germany.

Although less explicitly, Fassbinder's film also centers on the family unit. In large part the film focuses on this game of "cops and robbers" as the police hunt down the terrorists, the struggle of which is most clearly addressed through the relationship between Gerhard the detective and Edgar the terrorist, who are father and son. Additional strict father figures turn up throughout the film, including Rudolph's boss, who is the one to bring up the game of "cops and robbers," thereby treating Rudolph as a child. Lurz also acts fatherly towards August, with whom he gets frustrated for repeatedly asking for money (in a whiney, childish voice) and for playing dress-up. While the motif of games and playing portrays the terrorists as children, the reactions of the older characters portray them as the parents.

Both of these films also place a lot of emphasis on women and their role in society, which can be tied back to the family structure advocated by the Nazis and how women ultimately suffered from it. The women who are involved in the terrorist groups in these films are still stuck in a subservient position to men. Although the terrorists are fighting against what they view as an authoritarian government, the patriarchal structure remains, which is still oppressive and antidemocratic. Both films are very clear on the point that participation within these groups did not change rights or social position for the women. Instead of addressing the laws that were currently keeping them at the status of second class citizen, they went after more grandiose and less tangible ideas of social change.

The filmmakers further integrate the concept of West German society into a family structure by combining the struggles between generations and the struggles between the terrorists and the state. Fassbinder's police and von Trotta's prison wardens, who are reminiscent of female Nazi prison guards from *Night and Fog*, are representing the older generation opposite the terrorists, the younger generation. While Fassbinder focuses on the danger of policemen overstepping their boundaries in their hunt for terrorists, von Trotta expresses the horror of the treatment of prisoners. Both approaches show the organs of the state acting in an authoritarian manner and directly link these actions to the Nazi-generation.

In the end these films show a glimmer of hope for the future generations in breaking this cycle of patriarchy, authoritarianism and violence. However, Fassbinder's actual ending is not in itself very optimistic. Lurz, being held as a prisoner, looks directly into the terrorists' camera, says their message and smiles. The former Nazi is still in control and the terrorists have changed nothing. This cannot be seen as a loss, since it also shows that violence and terrorism are not effective in bringing about social change. This open ending allows for the struggle between left

and right and between generations to continue. The viewer is not introduced to a potential hero and Fassbinder presents the end of this struggle from generation to generation merely as a possibility. This idea can also be understood through the mysterious dialogue between Rudolph and his boss.

Boss: Haben Sie Ihren Vater endlich gefunden? [*Have you finally found your father?*]

Rudolph: Sie sind ein Schwein. [*You are a pig.*]

Boss: Aber das wissen wir doch längst. [*But we've known that for a long time.*]

Rudolph: Eines Tages wird eine dir so in die Fresse hämmern, dass Sie dran ersticken.
[*One day someone will punch so hard you in the face that you will choke on it.*]

Boss: Schon möglich, aber das wird ganz bestimmt net Sie sein. [*That's possible, but it will most certainly not be you.*]

This first question from the boss, though cryptic to the viewer, places the concept of family back into the viewer's mind. The rest of the dialogue represents the struggle of the terrorists against the authoritarian state. By showing the failure of terrorism along with hope for the future, this is ultimately an optimistic perspective.

Von Trotta's ending has a similar message, but with a more immediate solution. Her film especially highlights the silence between the Nazi-generation and their children. The family is by definition dysfunctional and is this way because there is no communication between parents and children, and thus no room for understanding or empathy. In addition to the scene of intergenerational couples dancing silently together, the father is also very quiet during the few scenes in which he appears and there is very little dialogue exchanged between him and his daughters. The film ends with Jan, who represents the next generation, breaking this silence and demanding Juliane to tell him everything about his mother. The last line of the film is Jan

yelling, “Fang an!” [*Begin!*]. By putting an end to the silence, there is hope for the next generation to learn from their grandparents’ and parents’ mistakes, so that they will not be repeated.

Instead of simply portraying the terrorism of the seventies as a result of an international movement for social change, these films showed it as a result of generations of patriarchal structures that fueled oppression and violence. Fassbinder and von Trotta were also members of the sixties generation and shared some of fears that drove the original members of the RAF to violence. By creating these films, which manifest the problems with both the state and the terrorists, and which contain no heroes, these filmmakers were seeking to ignite discussion and mobilize audiences to bring about the change that the RAF failed to do.

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