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

STUART LIEBMAN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Kluge is referring to the character Robinson Crusoe in Defoe's novel.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SL: What do you mean by that?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6. As of January 1988, production of programs had dropped to roughly half this figure.

7. Kluge is here referring to the title of the book he coauthored with Oskar Negt, sections of which are translated in this issue.

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

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

AK: There are, in Europe, two developmental directions for television. The first direction is the Italian one, in which a state TV system like the RAI becomes ever more narrow-minded, and, on the other hand, the Berlusconi concern⁸ begins to offer American fast-food communication. Both are like islands in the Italian landscape. It's as if there were only McDonalds, and yet we know that in Italy there are other kinds of food and places where you can eat slowly and a lot. These penetrations into very old cultures—that is what we fear. We know from the situation in Great Britain that the situation can be entirely different. The BBC never had advertisements, and the "A" channel, which did accept advertising, never reached more than fifty percent of the people. So a balance came into being. Now there is Channel 4, a channel that accepts advertising but also develops programs for minorities. So a very balanced system has come into being, which pleases me as a European. In Germany we've had the new media, that is, the private media, for the past two years. Before this, television was a government monopoly, an arrangement which is rather unusual to Americans. Our concern is this: how can we, with all the power of the New German Cinema, in conjunction with the opera houses and book publishers, that is, with all the noncontemporary media, bring in independent productions for at least ten percent of all air time on the governmental and the private channels? That is, moreover, what we have always proposed. We would like to preserve the kind of freedom in which the directors of opera houses, such as Klaus Everding, or of the Schauspielhaus, such as Peter Zadek or Peter Stein, would make their own experiments. In the governmental TV system there are *Redakteurs*; it is con-

8. Silvio Berlusconi is an Italian television entrepreneur.

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

SL: How did this agreement come about?

AK: All the filmmakers, opera house directors, and book publishers went to the council of minister presidents of the various states. In the meantime, we broadcast examples of our work over the "Satellite 1" [SAT 1] channel and advertised them. Our strategy was to make the films at low cost, then buy the time on SAT 1.⁹ That way we could defend ourselves from being thrown out later. It was necessary for us to keep this window in a very conservative surrounding. It is the same scheme, the same model we used in our film policy.

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

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

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

9. SAT 1 was the first private German television satellite system. It began its broadcasts on January 1, 1985.

10. Bertelsmann is one of the leading publishers and media companies in Germany. Leo Kirch is a major German film distributor who has invested heavily in the new private television channels.

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

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

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

AK: Yes. That is the condition.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AK: Throughout the Federal Republic.

SL: At the same time?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SL: Are there students?

AK: No students. Strictly research and development.

SL: But there were students at one time?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AK: Yes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SL: You alone determine the budgets?

AK: Well, I ask them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SL: Certainly there was another side to Adorno!

AK: When he was waiting for a streetcar, he changed into Franz Kafka and believed that it would never come. His wife always had to drive him around. It was, among other things, because he had to travel, first in England and then later in the United States, that he got married. He was also a bit like a medieval monk who turns in another direction and doesn't follow the church. He held fast to these gnostic positions, and these were by no means pessimistic. But, he was also incredibly critical. *Aisthanomai luein*. These two Greek words—*luein* means to untie [*lösen*] and *aisthanomai* means to understand¹¹—summarize his approach. Its entire pathos results from combining these two methods. He did not wish to be shackled, like Odysseus. He wished to offer himself so completely to a thing that he could reproduce it, but at the same time remain analytical. I know no theory, no aesthetic, that is as clear-sighted, as relentless. Yet he was very generous. The *Aesthetic Theory* is generous, not skeptical, or rather, not *just* skeptical. He was a radical theoretician. In the United States he was only respected and admired, never accepted.

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

11. P. Adams Sitney has informed me that *aisthanomai* might more accurately be rendered as "to perceive."

12. See Miriam Hansen, "Introduction to Adorno's 'Transparencies on Film,'" *New German Critique*, nos. 24–25 (Fall/Winter 1981–1982), pp. 186–198. Adorno's essay was translated by Thomas Y. Levin as "Transparencies on Film" in the same issue of *New German Critique*, pp. 199–205. The essay appeared initially in *Die Zeit* (November 18, 1966) and then was published in Theodor Adorno, *Ohne Leitbild*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1967.

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

SL: So Adorno was not a fighter?

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

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

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

SL: Is that true of younger filmmakers too?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

13. See, however, the translator's note about the term in the selections from *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung* in this issue.

14. Neuwied, Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1962.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SL: Then it is not an inevitable trend?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AK: No.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SL: In the structuring of a particular work?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SL: The film is a kind of force field?

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

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

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

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

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

AK: This is very complicated. You cannot say that it has to do only with me because I would not have made these films. Mr. Hinz¹⁷ had the idea and the slogan. He would never make the film, of course. He is a distributor. But he had the idea and had more time to talk to directors than was usual. Second, to some extent, I can make concepts, but this has nothing to do with production. Therefore, you need someone like Hinz, who is generous. It thereby became easier for Fassbinder to believe that it was all right to combine his work with Schlöndorff's — they did not like each other, you see. It was not just me, you see, but Hinz too. It was like Eisenhower and Bradley. I was the midwife. But like a catalyst, I disappear from the process.

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

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

SL: There were no arguments about the final form?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SL: You reject the postmodernist label?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

18. Translated by Leila Vennewitz as "Anita G." in Alexander Kluge, *Attendance List for a Funeral*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1966, pp. 15–34.

19. Translated in part by Skip Acuff as "Big Business Bolshevik," in *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2 (Spring 1980), pp. 193–204.

20. Translated by Leila Vennewitz as *The Battle*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1967.

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

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

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