

Gender in the Films of Alexander Kluge

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Abstract

This thesis examines the portrayal of gender in a selection of feature films by the German filmmaker Alexander Kluge. These films are *Abschied von Gestern*, released in 1966, *Der starke Ferdinand*, released in 1976 and *Die Macht der Gefühle*, released in 1983. It is argued throughout this work that despite previous critical reception which has seen Kluge's attitude to gender in his films as patriarchal, they can in fact be shown as progressive in gender terms, and even to fit with some feminist aims.

In the Introduction to this thesis, the critical reception to Kluge's films is historicised by discussing and re-evaluating the feminist credentials of his 1973 film *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, before the evidence of a somewhat feminist viewpoint in Kluge's theory is re-examined. The first chapter then analyses how Kluge uses words and language, as well as discourse in *Abschied von Gestern* to both show the construction of patriarchal power and how this power can be subverted and challenged by women in this film. The second chapter goes on to discuss how Kluge's presentation of gendered bodies in *Der starke Ferdinand* undermines patriarchal norms, gender stereotypes, and the ability of men who represent patriarchy to be taken seriously. The third chapter examines what impact Kluge's theory concerning emotions has on his portrayal of gender relations in *Die Macht der Gefühle*, arguing that he appears to give his optimum approach to emotions to women and those characters who are in non-conventional relationships. Throughout all of these chapters it is argued that Kluge consistently challenges institutions of conventional gender norms, and supports female victims of patriarchy, showing that his films have the potential to be read as more progressive in terms of gender than previous commentators have argued them to be.

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INTRODUCTION

In this thesis I will examine how three of Alexander Kluge's films, *Abschied von Gestern* (1966), *Der Starke Ferdinand* (1976) and *Die Macht der Gefühle* (1983), can show Kluge to be a progressive filmmaker in terms of gender, and how he problematises the patriarchal nature of society. Even though Kluge has depicted issues in his films that are key to feminist struggles, such as abortion in *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin* (1973), and the overwhelmingly destructive nature of female experience within patriarchal society in *Abschied von Gestern*, feminist critics have often seen his films as deeply problematic. This was a particularly prevalent view in the early decades of Kluge's career. During this period he was involved in making the types of full-length feature films I will be examining in this thesis, rather than short films or producing works for television, as he went on to do in later years. B. Ruby Rich, for example, spoke for many early feminist commentators when she attacked Kluge's very style of filmmaking as 'patriarchal' (Rich, 1998a, p.252, originally published in 1982). Her critical position was preceded by views expressed in an edition of the journal *Frauen und Film* published in 1974. This publication contained several articles written in response to what was regarded as his regressive depiction of women, and his lack of political contextualisation around the issue of abortion. As we shall see later in this Introduction, these critiques had a lasting impact, representing a position that has since dominated the critical view of his work in terms of his gender portrayals.

Since these early critiques, there has been little critical re-evaluation of Kluge's work from a feminist perspective. Crucially, few recent commentators have attempted to examine Kluge's output in terms of gender from the point of view of his own theoretical writing, or from a perspective which takes into account more recent developments in feminist and gender theory. Moreover, I wish to historicise the original attacks on Kluge's

filmmaking practice. I will carry out this historicisation in my Introduction by taking into account the feminist struggles that were occurring at the time he was making the films that caused the most controversy. I will undertake this re-examination in order to reposition him as a filmmaker that has made a significant contribution to film culture in terms of a progressive view of gender relations. Elements of his films which can be seen as contributing to a progressive view of gender include his particular interest in portraying female subjectivity, his awareness of women's existence as oppressed within patriarchal society, and his aims to form an alternative film culture.

The specific films I have chosen for my research cover the years from 1966 to 1983, when Kluge's output primarily took the form of the feature film. I will justify my choice of films in greater depth later in this Introduction. Throughout this thesis I will explore the question of how Kluge's films can be potentially seen as anti-patriarchal, in contrast, for example, to Rich's assessment of them. In order to consider this question I will examine the way that words, including their use of speech and language, function in order to convey power struggles in *Abschied von Gestern*. I will then primarily concentrate on the portrayal of male and female bodies in *Der Starke Ferdinand*. In the case of *Die Macht der Gefühle*, I will look at Kluge's theorisation of emotions, and the implications this theorisation has for the characters' embodiment of gendered identities in this film. I will argue that these films can be read as offering a critique of patriarchal society, counteracting the views of previous feminist critics.

Alexander Kluge is still producing films and writing literature at the age of 80 and he has been active in German filmmaking culture since the 1960s. He was heavily involved in the explosion of filmmaking in West Germany during the 1960s and 1970s, which was initially given the name of Young German Film and later the New German Cinema. Born in Halberstadt in 1932, Kluge lived through the bombing of the city. His parents divorced

during the war, and in 1946 he moved to Berlin with his mother and step-father (Combrick, 2011, p.91). He first trained to be a lawyer, studying law in Frankfurt, with minor studies in history and church music (Fiedler, 1984, p.196).

After this immersion in academia, Kluge turned to the world of film. His interest in filmmaking was fully established after he worked with Fritz Lang as an assistant on the film *The Tiger of Eschnapur*, released in 1959 (Wirt, 2012). Whilst he was working on this film, he began to write short stories, one of which, titled 'Anita G.', came to form the basis for one of the films I will be discussing, *Abschied von Gestern*. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Kluge had not yet begun to make feature-length films and instead was making shorts and collaborative works, such as the short *Brutalität in Stein*, made in 1960 with Peter Schamoni, and *Rennen*, co-directed in 1961 with Paul Kruntorad (Bechtold, 1983, p.261). Kluge was making connections during this time with young directors, such as Schamoni and Kruntorad, who had new ideas about filmmaking and who were trying to distance themselves from what they saw as the previous generation's conservatism. These connections meant that when the time was right for a rejuvenation of the German film industry, Kluge was able to be at the centre of its rebirth.

In this regard, Kluge was heavily involved with the Oberhausen Manifesto. This famous document, which was presented by Kluge along with 25 other young German filmmakers at the Oberhausen film festival in 1962, set out the plan for a new type of German cinema, which the signatories wished to see established separately from what they saw as the dying West German film industry. The manifesto's signatories believed that the filmmaking style of the previous generation in West Germany was aesthetically inadequate, especially in the case of dealing with questions of West Germany's problematic past. As they put it, provocatively, 'Der alte Film ist tot. Wir glauben an den neuen' (Oberhausener Manifest vom 28. Februar 1962, 1962). The Manifesto stated the

necessity for a new type of aesthetics and filmmaking to replace that of the previous generation. Kluge's status as one of its signatories showed his commitment to this political and, in his view, progressive type of filmmaking. I will explain Kluge's film-theoretical framework and his chosen techniques with which he aimed to create a progressive type of film at a later point in this Introduction.

Kluge also became involved in the setting up of the institutional and financial basis for a rejuvenation of West German cinema throughout the 1960s and 1970s by successfully pressuring the West German government to create the *Kuratorium junger deutscher Film*. The foundation of this particular institution meant that first-time filmmakers could be financially supported by the government, who distributed 5 million DM to new directors over a period of five years (Lutze, 1998, p.49). This was the institution that allowed Kluge's *Abschied von Gestern* to be made. Kluge also helped to set up the permanent film department at the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm, showing his commitment to encouraging a new type of filmmaking based on both theory and film production. Kluge's biography shows that he was dedicated to a radical reform of West Germany's film culture. He was evidently in favour of a shift in the way that films were being made, and to a new type of filmmaking, as described in the Oberhausen Manifesto. I will explain in further depth Kluge's own film-making theory in a later part of this introduction. While he was clearly attempting to create a new and progressive filmmaking culture and aid the rejuvenation of German film during this period, the establishment of the women's film movement in West Germany was also occurring. I will also describe the development of the women's film movement in West Germany in greater depth later in this Introduction. However, despite this concurrence of events in West German film, it remains to be seen if the shift in filmmaking that Kluge's films were a part of could in fact be described as progressive in terms of gender, or as anti-patriarchal.

If Kluge's films are to be seen as representing an anti-patriarchal point of view, then patriarchy must first be defined. The term 'patriarchy' describes any type of system consisting of male over female domination. As Sylvia Walby puts it, 'patriarchy [is] a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women' (Walby, 1990, p.20). Feminism can be defined as the critique of patriarchy, as any action which attempts to dismantle this system of domination. This action can take the shape of establishing feminist forms of counter-culture, or trying to establish equal representation in terms of gender within sections of society that are male dominated. Both of these types of acts can contribute to increased equality for women, and therefore can be seen as feminist acts which dismantle patriarchal structures and as acts which are progressive in terms of gender relations. Patriarchy can be present in both the private and public spheres. Walby notes: 'Private patriarchy is based upon household production as the main site of women's oppression. Public patriarchy is based principally in public sites such as employment and the state' (Walby, 1990, p.20). Thus, not only public areas such as business, but also the home and the domestic sphere can be arenas for patriarchal control. Patriarchal forces can permeate all areas of society, especially employment and women's access to the ability to earn capital, as patriarchal forces often force women into lower-paid areas of work (Walby, 1990, p.24). Hegemonic masculinity also helps to contribute to patriarchal power, as noted by Connell and Messerschmidt. In their article 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept', they define hegemonic masculinity as the normative form of masculinity, which legitimates women's subordination to men (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, pp.832-833). Although hegemonic masculinity is bound to cultural contexts and history, and is neither monolithic nor unchanging, one constant attribute that this type of masculinity holds is that it enforces gender hierarchies, with men remaining at their head (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, pp.832-833). Therefore, another important

form of feminist disruption of patriarchal power can take the shape of a challenging of hegemonic masculinity. As patriarchal forces and the way that feminism can fight these forces can take so many diverse forms, in each of my chapters I will define the specific arenas in which patriarchy finds expression. I will discuss patriarchal power in areas such as the home, the law, and education, and examine the extent to which Kluge's films can be said to be challenging hegemonic patriarchal power in each of these areas in his films.

In the rest of this Introduction, I will first describe the feminist critical controversy that arose around Kluge's film *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*. This controversy provides a useful access point from which to explore what many critics have defined as the problems with Kluge's onscreen gender portrayals. I will include the specific socio-political context in which the feminist critics were operating, such as the developments in the feminist movement in West Germany in the 1970s, and the women's film movement. I will then explain how some aspects of Kluge's writing supports the views of these early critics, as he appears to express a stereotypical and regressive view of gender differences. However, I will then outline how his films can be seen to challenge such views. I will show how this counter-argument is also supported by some of Kluge's ideas about femininity working alongside his idea of the necessity for a suppressed, or as he terms it, 'proletarian', (Dawson, 1974, p.55) element being presented on-screen. I will investigate how this impulse to present a 'suppressed element' (Dawson, 1974, p.53) on screen, and Kluge's overall aim to support the creation of a proletarian counter-public through his films can be seen as commensurate with a progressive view of gender relations. I will also elaborate on how Kluge's re-conceptualisation of the gendered basis of motherhood in his theoretical writing could be seen as supporting certain ideas that were prevalent within the feminist movement in West Germany at the time. I will then justify my choice of films for analysis by explaining their positions within his filmic oeuvre and emphasise the new

contribution to the pre-existing scholarship surrounding Kluge's work that my thesis will make.

Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin

The key controversy surrounding Kluge's on-screen gender portrayals, which have often been seen as representing a patriarchal viewpoint by feminist critics, can be examined in greater detail by looking at the critical response to his film *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin* (1973). The film concerns a female protagonist, Roswitha Bronski, who begins the film working as an abortionist, and must earn money to support her unemployed husband who is studying chemistry. Her clinic is shut down by the West German authorities due to the illegality of abortion. Her husband takes the legal responsibility for running the practice, which leads to his subsequent imprisonment. On his release, he takes a job at a factory, and Roswitha turns to political activism with her friend Sylvia. We see the two women demonstrating outside the same factory where Roswitha's husband works in a bid to inform workers that the factory is due to be relocated and that they will soon lose their jobs. She attempts to generate interest in this story in the local newspaper, but is ignored. Ultimately, however, the factory is not in fact relocated, and the workers do not lose their jobs. Kluge's authorial voice, embodied in an intertitle in this case, explicitly states that it is not her efforts that cause this outcome. Instead, the intertitle informs the viewer that 'Durch Belegschaft und Öffentlichkeit unter Druck gesetzt, verzichtet die Geschäftsleitung- unabhängig von Roswitha und Sylvia- auf die Stilllegung'. Although Roswitha's desired outcome is achieved, it is not through her political efforts, but occurs through independent external factors. The film ends by showing her handing out political pamphlets, the contents of which are not shown, as they are wrapped around hotdogs distributed to the factory workers.

Critics at the time of the film's release said that Kluge had created a patriarchal film, despite it having a female lead character and depicting issues that were, and still remain, important to feminists, such as abortion and motherhood. It is this film that is at the root of B. Ruby Rich's afore-mentioned accusation of Kluge's style being 'patriarchal' (Rich, 1998a, p.252), as well as the claims from the writers of the feminist film journal *Frauen und Film* that Kluge's films were 'ein aktiver Beitrag zur Aufrechterhaltung des Patriarchalen Systems' (Sander, 1974, p.17). Before these critical opinions are described in more detail, their political context must be described, in order to aid an understanding of the view of Kluge as a patriarchal film maker.

The critical opinions surrounding Kluge's film were formulated in the context of an emergent feminist movement in the early 1970s, and the briefly afore-mentioned growing women's film movement in West Germany. At the time of the film's release, the fight for the repeal of paragraph 218, which outlawed abortion in West Germany, was at its height amongst feminist activists. In 1971, Alice Schwarzer organised the front cover of the magazine *Stern*, which showed 374 women of differing backgrounds and the headline 'Wir haben abgetrieben!' to draw attention to the campaign, which was then named 'Aktion 218' (Gorski and Markovits, 1993, p.138). This highly public step brought the issue to the country's attention, helping to change public opinion and aiming to remove the taboo on speaking about abortion. Six weeks after this issue was published, 2,345 women had publicly reported that they had had abortions (Gorski and Markovits, 1993, p.138). In 1972 there was a meeting of delegates from over 40 local women's groups in Frankfurt, who met to discuss the campaign (Frevert, 1989, p.295). The self-determination of the women that met and their independence from men was emphasised, as a speaker at the conference declared 'Frauen müssen sich selbst organisieren, weil sie ihre ureigensten Probleme erkennen und lernen müssen, ihre Interessen zu vertreten. [...] Wir schließen

Männer aus unseren Gruppen aus, weil wir die Erfahrung gemacht haben, dass sich Bevormundung und Unterdrückung, die wir in allen Lebensbereichen erfahren, in gemischten Gruppen reproduzieren' (Schwarzer, 2011). Grassroots protests against the law continued throughout the decade and caused measurable change in both public opinion and legislation. In a 1971 survey, 71% of those asked were in favour of the law being repealed, and in 1973, this number jumped to 83% (Frevert, 1989, p.294). A safer method of abortion using suction was demonstrated in 1973, which further increased support for the movement as abortions themselves were seen as less dangerous (Gorski and Markovits, 1993, pp.139-140). On the 16th of March 1974, the women's movement created a national protest day, and women marched in support of the abolition of the law (Gorski and Markovits, 1993, pp.139-140). In 1976, abortion up to 12 weeks was declared legal, although access was still difficult for West German women, especially in more Catholic areas (Frevert, 1989, p.295).

In addition to this political activism, there was also a great growth in the women's film movement in West Germany during the 1970s, the rapid expansion of which ran concurrent with the release of *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*. Part of this filmmaking movement was aiming towards an equal representation of women on the production side of film, and it helped many female directors, such as Helke Sander, rise to prominence. During this period, women's enrolment in the Berlin Film Academy rose from 6 % in 1966 to 57 % in 1979 (Elsaesser, 1989, p.187). In addition, there was also the establishment of the *Verband der Filmarbeiterinnen* which was set up in 1979 in order to achieve gender equality in the filmmaking industry (Haffter, 1985). From the outset, the women's film movement had a strong political impetus to make films about and attempt to publicise women's issues, thereby bringing them to public attention. The issues being depicted on screen by those involved in the movement were those that were central to women's lives,

such as contraception, women at work, child-care and women's education (Elsaesser, 1989, p.186). The political aim of these films was not just to describe the issues at hand, but to measurably help campaigns, such as the campaign against paragraph 218, and to increase support for feminist activism. Films concerning the fight against paragraph 218 included Ingrid Oppermann & Gardi Deppe's *Kinder für dieses System- Paragraph 218* (1973) and Sabine Eckhard's *Paragraph 218 und was wir dagegen haben* (1976-77). Eckhard's film is a documentary, telling the stories of three women who must bring unwanted children into the world, as well as showing interviews with doctors on the subject of paragraph 218 . Opperman and Deppe's film contains a fictional section which describes the plight of three fictional women who are denied abortions. This film also has a documentary section, showing petitions, leaflets and posters from an anti-paragraph 218 protest in 1971, intercut with statements from doctors against the law, in order to depict the fight for abortion rights as one that fostered widespread solidarity in both men and women (Sander and Alemann, 1974, p. 51). The makers of these films were not just concerned with illustrating political issues, but also wanted to make sure that they could express the fact that political and social change was indeed possible. For example, Perincioli's film *Die Macht der Männer ist die Geduld der Frauen* (1978) did not just show the problem of domestic violence, but also aimed to educate women about how they could gain access to shelters (Knight, 1992, p.79). Many feminist filmmakers attended screenings of their own films to encourage post-film discussions about the important issues raised by their work (Knight, 1992, pp.79-80). Sander summed up the political roots of these films thus: 'So sind auch viele Filmprojekte zu Kampagnen [...] aus der gesellschaftlichen Verantwortung entstanden' (Sander, 1978, p.8).

These filmmakers were also concerned with the depiction of women's experience from a female perspective, as they felt this had previously been only shown from a man's perspective. As Sander put it:

Dazu kommt, daß die Definition von Weiblichkeit bis in die jüngste Geschichte hinein immer von anderen, von Männern gegeben würde und erst in allerletzter Zeit Frauen damit begonnen haben, sich selbst als gesellschaftliches Subjekt zu begreifen und Fremdinterpretationen über Ihr Sein und Wesen über den Haufen werfen [...] Die Frauenbewegung macht die Anstrengung, die Scherbenhaufen der Geschichte von Ihren Interessen her zu untersuchen. (Sander, 1978, pp. 6-8)

Aside from these aims in filmmaking to change the way women's experience was depicted, and to help contemporary feminist political struggles, there was also an encouragement within the women's film movement to change the way that film criticism was approached. This change was seen as necessary 'patriarchale Ideologien in Kunstwerken, d.h. meist in männlichen Kunstwerken, systematisch zu erkennen' (Sander, 1978, p.7).

It is important to recognise that this growth in the women's film movement is the context in which Kluge was making *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*. The feminist critics who reacted to this film at the time of its release came from a context where they were expecting to see films about women's issues being made by women. They expected these films about women's issues to offer hope to those affected by these problems, in order to directly support the feminist political movement and campaigns that were then very much alive. Feminist film criticism at this time was focussed on pointing out inherent patriarchal ideologies, as Sander notes above. These expectations of how feminist issues were supposed to be approached on screen are at the root of the negative feminist reception

received by Kluge's depiction of abortion and of women's issues in *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*.

B. Ruby Rich, although writing outside of the context of the West German women's film movement, was still a supporter of their political cause and of their aims in filmmaking. In her article 'She Says, He Says: The Power of the Narrator in Modernist Film Politics', written in 1982-3, she achieves the aim of the type of criticism that the feminist film movement wished to undertake, by recognising what she saw as the patriarchal ideology at work in Kluge's film. She compares *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin* unfavourably with Helke Sander's *Redupers*, made in 1977, which depicts similar characters to those found in Kluge's film. To summarise, Rich interprets *Redupers* as dealing with issues of patriarchal control in a way that more closely reflects feminist aims of dismantling patriarchal power. Throughout this article, Rich levels many accusations against *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, concentrating on the way in which the narrative and voice-over elements of the film contribute to a patriarchal type of filmmaking. In Rich's view, Roswitha has access to little or no knowledge in this film, whereas a position of 'omniscience' (Rich, 1998a, p.239) is shared by Kluge with the audience through the use of his voiceover. She says that the use of Kluge's voiceover, making his authority a constant presence throughout the film, 'consistently undermines the film's female protagonist by a process in which the audience is actively complicitous' (Rich, 1998a, p.241). She contrasts this authorial position with Sander's film's use of voiceover and narration, which she sees as creating a feminist film form, where the 'narrative is discursive rather than controlling, the narrator is female and benign' (Rich, 1998a, p.252). Her conceptualisation of the way that Kluge approaches abortion in the film is that he sets up a false dichotomy between selfish personal actions (abortion) and truly political work, namely that of factory reform: 'Kluge has constructed a false contradiction between

abortion work (apolitical) and political work (workplace organizing). The spectator is led to accept the false choice posed to Roswitha of sleazy abortion profiteering versus the righteous work of combating multinationals' (Rich, 1998a, p.242). Rich sees Kluge's portrayal of Roswitha's abortion work as apolitical, and a slight against the feminist movement, which as a politicised filmmaking movement was clearly trying to aid the fight for abortion rights (Rich, 1998a, p.241). Overall, she argues that Kluge merely 'describe[s] woman as inscribed within patriarchy' (Rich, 1998a, p.249), as hopeless and incapable. She says that he fails to offer women any way to dismantle patriarchal structures, thereby forcing an overly authoritative male voice into female issues (Rich, 1998a, p.246). In Rich's view, the film unambiguously shows Kluge representing patriarchal ideology on screen.

In this article, Rich also mentions the women who wrote for the West German feminist film journal *Frauen und Film* in 1974, who challenged the lack of political contextualisation of abortion in the film at the time of its release. Helke Sander was one of these critics, levelling yet more accusations against Kluge's film. Sander's accusations in her review of the film are that it supports patriarchal sexism by portraying Roswitha as ridiculous and unable to fight patriarchy herself. She states: 'Roswitha handelt wie eine Geisteskranke und diese von Kluge Frauen unterstellte Verrücktheit, die er als Kraft interpretiert, wird dann verherrlicht' (Sander, 1974, p.19). In Sander's view, Kluge did not aim to deepen any understanding of the issues concerning abortion in his viewers: 'Auch die sprachlichen, musikalischen und filmischen Anspielungen des Regisseurs vertiefen nicht das Verständnis für Probleme, sondern sie sind lediglich illustrativ oder protzen mit wissen' (Sander, 1974, p.22). In her terms, he simply refers to this important political topic of abortion in a superficial manner, using intellectual references in order to distract from his lack of engagement with abortion as a feminist subject. Furthermore, Sander calls Kluge's lack of political contextualisation of the issues surrounding paragraph 218

'abgeschmackt' (Sander, 1974, p.20). Her view is that 'Der Film ist für uns ein aktiver Beitrag zur Aufrechterhaltung des Patriarchalen Systems' (Sander, 1974, p.17).

Marlies Kallweit, in the same issue of *Frauen und Film*, accuses Kluge of supporting stereotypes that present women as irrational and overly emotional, as well as depicting a woman who fails to fight against her position in patriarchy. She says that 'es ist eine Unverschämtheit, mit dem Anspruch, einen fortschrittlichen Film über Frauen zu machen, wieder nur eine Frau zu zeigen, die sich wie in einem Klischee-Bilderbuch "typisch Frau" verhält' (Kallweit, 1974, p.12). She then refers to how Kluge portrays Roswitha as ridiculous and incapable, as a woman who constantly drops plates, gets into car accidents, and is unable even to look after her children (Kallweit, 1974, p.12). She claims that he supports negative clichés regarding femininity, that Roswitha 'lässt sich von ihrem Mann tyrannisieren und reagiert in jeder Situation irrational, emotional [...] Während Kluge vorgibt, die positiven Eigenschaften der Frauen (wie Emotionalität, Ursprünglichkeit etc) zu unterstützen, bestätigt er auf der ganzen Linie die alten Rollenklischeen [sic]' (Kallweit, 1974, p.12). She points out the issues with Kluge's portrayal of abortion in the film and its lack of political contextualisation, as she feels that he portrays the law concerning abortion in an unquestioning light, rather than suggesting what could be done differently: 'Abtreibung wird als kriminell bezeichnet, ohne dass Kluge diese Bezeichnung jemals in Frage stellt' (Kallweit, 1974, p.13). She concludes that the film does not contribute productively to any feminist struggle because it supports patriarchal stereotypes about women, and as women's issues are apparently trivialised in it, that Kluge 'Die Probleme der Frauen nur für seine intellektuellen Spielereien benutzt hat' (Kallweit, 1974, p.15).

The final detractor in this issue is Maedi Kemper. She describes how she went to the press conference when the film was released as the only female critic, and was the only one who viewed the film negatively, questioning Kluge in person as to why he

portrayed women who consistently failed to achieve their goals (Kemper, 1974, p.24). She reports that Kluge replied that he was always impressed by how the women's movement could come back after being knocked down: 'Der "Stehaufmännchencharakter der weiblichen Kraft" sei es, der ihn beeindruckt. Sich nicht unterkriegen lassen, meint Kluge, egal wozu und wobei, das sei das revolutionäre Moment der Frauen' (Kemper, 1974, p.24). In the same article, Kemper also accuses other critics of being part of a personality cult surrounding Kluge and his filmmaking, and criticises the other members of the press who did not engage critically with the important issue of paragraph 218: 'Auf die diffamierende Abtreibungsszene wurde nirgends eingegangen und das zu einer Zeit, in der die Diskussionen um den Artikel 218 am heftigsten waren und die dritte Lesung vor der Tür stand' (Kemper, 1974, p.24).

In summary, these critics in *Frauen und Film* claim that Kluge expresses a patriarchal viewpoint in this film. They base this accusation on the fact that it plays into patriarchal stereotypes by portraying Roswitha as ridiculous, by not engaging with the political issue of abortion and the activism previously mentioned that was fighting against paragraph 218, and by not taking women's issues seriously. They say that by portraying Roswitha as incapable and clumsy, Kluge supports patriarchal stereotypes of women as stupid. Their view is that Kluge offers a regressive view of gender relations in this film, especially in comparison to that of the West German's women's film movement, which was clearly contributing to supporting feminist political causes.

To a degree, the way that abortion is depicted in the film can be read as showing Kluge portraying a patriarchal viewpoint on screen, in line with the pre-existing critical arguments of the *Frauen und Film* writers. The level of detail and realism in the scene which depicts an abortion being carried out by Roswitha is likely to cause the viewer (no matter what time period they are watching this film in, be it in the 1970s when it was

released, or today) to have a visceral and shocked reaction to this controversial topic. This reaction may occur as the scene is very graphic. A spectator may not consider the feminist activists' campaigning against paragraph 218 during this scene as they are preoccupied with their own shock and dismay.

The omission of any discussion by Kluge of the repeal of paragraph 218 is especially noticeable in a scene in which Roswitha's husband is arrested when he takes responsibility for the abortion practice. Despite the officers who arrest Herr Bronski naming the law itself, and the fact that this law is the impetus for the entire narrative, Kluge does not contextualise paragraph 218 in feminist terms. A feminist filmic portrayal of paragraph 218 would be one that explored the political struggle that was happening at the time, rather than merely naming the law and showing it being upheld. As already described, Deppe and Opperman's *Kinder für Dieses System* (1972-3) shows a feminist portrayal of the fight against paragraph 218, explicitly showing, in documentary form, political mobilisation against this law. In Kluge's film's case the law is merely mentioned by name and enforced by the police officers, without being explained, or problematised. When Roswitha's husband is arrested, he does not fight against this arrest; he merely accepts it. Roswitha herself also does not show any resistance to the law's existence. *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin's* omission of the feminist political context, as it was articulated at the time by feminist filmmakers, and as noted by the contributors to the issue of *Frauen und Film* described above, can indeed be interpreted as Kluge wilfully ignoring feminist political activism by refusing to show this fight on screen. Kluge's film can potentially be seen as playing into patriarchal power structures by supporting conservative attitudes to reproductive rights, as he does not explicitly contextualise this political issue of abortion in a way that feminist film makers at the time thought would best support feminist struggles.

It is also notable that the officers who arrest Roswitha's husband on the charge of the violation of paragraph 218 are women. **Figure 1:**



Figure 1: Female police officers arresting Herr Bronski.

Once again there is a profound contrast between Kluge's depiction of the law regarding abortion and the approach to this topic in the films made by the women's film movement. As already mentioned, one of the primary aims of *Kinder für dieses System* was to show solidarity between all genders in the fight against paragraph 218. Kluge's choice of making the law enforcers female is therefore in complete opposition to this aim of showing that both men and women were involved in this important political struggle. On the contrary, he appears to show that women were upholding this law, not protesting against it, as well as showing that men did not resist the law's enforcement. Kluge can once again be seen as a patriarchal filmmaker as he appears to undermine feminist struggles in the arena of abortion. In this particular interpretation, he does not appear to communicate a message

that would be seen as appropriate by the women's filmmaking movement, or the feminist movement at the time.

In the first shot of the film where the audience is told that Roswitha has a great power within her, Kluge's voice-over, as noted by Rich 'consistently undermines the film's female protagonist' (Rich, 1998a, p.241). While Kluge's voiceover ensures that he retains authority, Roswitha's face communicates uncertainty. **Figure 2:**



Figure 2: Roswitha appearing uncertain and lacking authority.

This image is accompanied by Kluge's contrasting, authoritative voice over. The mismatch between Kluge's male voice and her uncertain female image emphasises her powerlessness as a woman, once again potentially contributing to the view of Kluge as a patriarchal filmmaker- he can be seen as holding authority as the narrator while the woman on screen does not. An analysis of the visual elements of this scene supports Rich's

view as one possible reading, that of Kluge minimising any authority for Roswitha while retaining it for himself.

A reading that sees Roswitha constantly making mistakes in her professional life and day-to-day existence, making her seem ridiculous and ineffectual, is also possible. As noted by the *Frauen und Film* critics, depicting women as both irrational and unable to protest against their situation in a patriarchal society because of their stupidity can be interpreted as Kluge reinforcing patriarchal stereotypes. To re-iterate, as Kallweit puts it, Roswitha 'reagiert in jeder Situation irrational, emotional [...] Kluge [...] bestätigt [...] auf der ganzen Linie die alten Rollenklischeen [sic]' (Kallweit, 1974, p.12). One specific instance of Roswitha being portrayed as incapable of carrying out her objectives occurs when she goes to report the closure of the factory Beauchamp & Co to a newspaper. The editor does not take her or her companion's concerns seriously and refuses to publish them in the manner the women wish, while Roswitha and her friend repeatedly misspell the name of the factory. Nothing appears to cause Roswitha to misspell this name- she is merely depicted by Kluge as thoughtless. Despite her efforts, she undertakes no successful activism, which may leave the spectator with the view that female attempts to cause political change are pointless. Kluge's depiction of Roswitha and her companion in this scene can be seen to undermine feminist political activism, by showing that even when women do make significant efforts to cause societal change, these actions can lead to no measurable outcome. The points made by the *Frauen und Film* critics appear to be supported by further analysis in this interpretation, as Roswitha is ridiculed, and Kluge shows no support of the possibility of women's efforts to cause political change on screen.

From this one particular reading of the film, it appears that the pre-existing feminist critiques of this film are able to be supported. Roswitha does indeed appear ridiculous and unable to mount any challenge to the patriarchal powers around her. She is

too uneducated to enforce any real change or to be taken seriously, in addition to being an incapable mother, as noted by the *Frauen und Film* critics. Kluge appears, in this reading, to have transferred a patriarchal viewpoint onto women's issues. He does not offer any hope that these issues can be resolved, or indeed that they should be problematised, as the feminist critics wished that he had done. He also seems to have made a film that was counter to prevailing trends in feminist film criticism and feminist filmmaking at the time, the aims of which were to provide a space for women to make films for women, to draw attention to feminist efforts and to show that social change was possible. This historical context thereby caused his film to be read as patriarchal at the time of production as it was not seen as showing any hope for the success of the feminist political campaigning that was occurring at the time.

Kluge did not let criticism of the film go by without his own comment. In the accompanying text to *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, 'Kommentare zum antagonistischen Realismusbegriff', he attempts to answer the question of why he chose to depict specifically female-oriented issues, such as those of abortion and family life in this film. The answer he gives is that he is interested in women as representative of what he sees as 'suppressed elements' in society. In his 'Kommentare' he claims he is not interested in representing women 'im Sinne des Geschlechterunterschieds, sondern Chiffren unterdrückter Eigenschaften, die auch bei Nicht-Frauen vorkommen' (Kluge, 1975, p.233). He therefore explicitly distances himself from a feminist position where the specificities of women's disadvantaged position in society are discussed. Instead, he suggests that he portrays women in order to represent repressed characteristics which are not only present in women. I will explain later in this Introduction the specific gender implications of Kluge's definition of women as being representative of 'unterdrückter Eigenschaften' (Kluge, 1975, p.233). However, for the moment, it remains important to

note that in this response to his feminist critics, he appears to deny the presence of a specific feminist intent in his depiction of women's experiences in society, and he also shows a lack of interest in discussing gender and power. In an interview with Jan Dawson, he discusses the issue of why he chose to depict abortion in the film, saying that he wanted to explore the contradictions in Roswitha's actions, as she performs abortions in order to keep her own family intact (Dawson, 1974, p.56). The contradiction between what he sees as the destruction of domestic life for business reasons (for this is how he sees abortion), in order to maintain domestic stability for personal reasons, is where his interest lies. The critique from the feminist writers in *Frauen und Film* is swept aside by Kluge, who insists that he uses women and their experiences as metaphors of societal contradiction, and also as a cipher for the experiences of other 'unterdrückten Eigenschaften' (Kluge, 1975, p.233). Kluge would appear once again to be disavowing a specifically anti-patriarchal position in his response to the feminist criticism of this film.

In summary, Kluge was repeatedly accused by feminist critics of using the issue of abortion for his own purposes in *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, ignoring important feminist political struggles, as well as supporting patriarchal clichés regarding women being emotional and stupid. My own analysis of this film thus far shows that these accusations can potentially be supported with further textual analysis. However, this is only one particular reading, and does not account for the fact that his films can in fact be read in a light which does not concentrate on Kluge's own statements on the importance of gender differences in his films. It is not just Kluge's own statements that are important in reading his films, as the films as texts can be read in a light that in fact contradicts a view of him as a patriarchal film-maker. This view is possible through a textual analysis of his films on a visual level, concentrating on the filmic texts themselves and their effects on audiences, away from these specific theoretical statements. The view of Kluge as a

patriarchal filmmaker is one that will be challenged by my analysis not only in this Introduction, but also throughout my thesis, as I will be examining how his films could be said to be more progressive in gender terms than previous critics have seen them to be.

Nevertheless, if for now we remain with a reading that sees Kluge as a patriarchal filmmaker, parts of his theoretical texts also appear to support an arguably stereotypical and regressive view of gender differences.

Reading Kluge's theory as patriarchal

Further evidence of what can be seen as Kluge's stereotypical view of femininity as reflected in *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin* can be found in his theoretical text *Geschichte und Eigensinn*. This text, which consists of multiple theoretical, historical and illustrated sections and will be referred to repeatedly throughout this Introduction, was co-written by Kluge with Oskar Negt in 1981. Its primary concern is with how human characteristics such as obstinacy can be traced through history as productive forces, and how these forces are able to mass together in humanity after capitalism has forced splits in human subjectivity to occur. In one section of *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, Kluge appears to reinforce patriarchal gender stereotypes about women being emotional and unstable. He defines the type of work that is carried out by groups of women thus:

Beobachtet man kooperativ tätige Frauen [...] Die Intensität der Gefühle, Intimität der Situation, und nicht eine äußere Anordnung, wie sie der Vorarbeit eines Vereinsvorstands oder Planung eines Arbeitsablaufs oder dem Vorverständigungsprozeß in Politik und Öffentlichkeit entspricht, stellt die Vereinigung her. Fusionierende Gruppen prüfen aber die Korrektheit der Beziehungsverhältnisse in jedem Moment neu. Sie haben deshalb einen subtilen und prekären Zusammenhalt.

Eine fusionierende Gruppe kann man schwer institutionalisieren. Es wäre ihrer wirklichen Tätigkeit auch nicht adäquat. (Kluge and Negt, 2001, pp.338-339)

Kluge appears to be supporting stereotypical views about femininity in this section of the text, rather than re-conceiving gender differences. The statement above suggests that Kluge sees women's co-operative groups as too fragile and emotional to be institutionalised. This interpretation feeds into a view where Kluge's writing supports negative patriarchal stereotypes about women being emotional and unstable, and unsuitable for participating in mainstream political movements. The reinforcing of female stereotypes in this text supports the accusations made by the critics in *Frauen und Film* concerning his portrayal of Roswitha in *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, for example Kallweit's statement that he is only capable of showing women 'die sich wie in einem Klischee-Bilderbuch "typisch Frau" verhält' (Kallweit, 1974, p.12). Kluge therefore appears to not only support patriarchal, stereotypical views of women in his films, but also in this particular example of his theoretical texts.

Re-reading *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*

Despite the statements from Kluge regarding the critical response to *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, and the above interpretation of his theory, there are ways of reading *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, as well as interpreting other parts of his writing that would seem to support a progressive view of gender. It is indeed possible to argue that his female protagonists are also cast as sympathetic women surviving under patriarchal conditions. In portraying women who are depicted as victims of patriarchy and who appear to encourage viewer identification, Kluge's films could be said to problematise the

very existence of a patriarchal society by showing the negative consequences for those who are victims of gender inequality.

If we return to the film, it can also be seen that Roswitha is portrayed as unable to thrive in an academic setting which is dominated by male power. In one scene, her husband accuses her of not having read enough when she tries to educate herself with books from the library. Kluge's voice-over says that she has bought books home so that 'Sie will endlich mit dem belesenen Bronski gleichziehen'. Her husband then chastises her for having only read 15 pages in 3 weeks. The voiceover subsequently informs the viewer that Roswitha has to listen to her husband's summaries of the books. She is clearly trying to improve her status in society, but it is a man, embodying patriarchal power, that punishes her verbally for failing to make adequate progress with her education. As her husband has to read the books for her, it is also implied that only men may partake in academia, and not Roswitha. It could be argued that the audience is encouraged to sympathise with Roswitha, who wishes to better herself, but she is crushed by the representatives of patriarchy around her, who do not encourage her to continue, and reinforce patriarchal control. She is depicted as a sympathetic victim of patriarchal forces. The film appears to encourage viewers to reflect upon gender inequality, thereby showing its potentially progressive position. To further support the interpretation that the film presents a progressive view of gender, Roswitha's inability to keep her family running smoothly, and all of her domestic accidents and unhappiness, such as her clumsiness in the home, can be seen as physical symptoms of the psychological damage being inflicted upon her due to the fact that she is forced to exist in a patriarchal society. Kluge's film can therefore be seen to actively critique women's domestic role, rather than supporting stereotypical roles for women.

In a scene mentioned previously, at the end of the film Roswitha also succeeds in becoming politically active by handing out hotdogs wrapped in political pamphlets. This activism shows her ability to circumvent conventional structures of political power: she does not appear to be able to enact large scale change by preventing the factory's closure, but still retains the ability to undertake some small-scale political action by handing out these pamphlets to factory workers. It is not clear what the pamphlets concern, unlike the montage of campaigning leaflets which presents a direct and clear attack on Paragraph 218 seen in the afore-mentioned film concerning abortion rights, *Kinder für dieses System*. Nonetheless, the point remains that Roswitha is evidently undertaking some form of political action. This film, therefore, does not completely disavow the possibility of female political engagement. On the contrary, it ends by showing that women should be encouraged to express themselves politically. Women in this film are shown by Kluge to engage with politics, which could be seen as progressive in terms of gender, even if this action does not lead to large-scale political change, or to political action in the mainstream public sphere.

Despite the fact that I have already offered one potential reading for the graphic abortion scene in the film, it is also possible to read this scene in an opposing light. The explicit way that the abortion in Roswitha's clinic is depicted can also potentially be read as an argument for the repeal of paragraph 218. It can be interpreted as highlighting the barbarity of the contemporary situation regarding abortion in West Germany at the time, and encouraging critical reflection on the law's existence, rather than just shock in the viewer. The scene is lengthy, and there is no extra-diegetic music or sound while the audience sees Roswitha handling medical equipment. This lack of music remains when the audience is shown a woman who has a speculum inserted, and finally when the actual abortion itself is shown being carried out. The lack of music and extra-diegetic sounds

leaves room for the audience's own complex and potentially critical reactions to the scene. On the one hand, the shock experienced by the viewer because of the graphic nature of the abortion scene may cause them to be unsympathetic to Roswitha's actions and horrified that she would choose the career path of an abortionist. However, in an alternative viewer reaction, the shock they experience may give way, due to the length of the scene and the lack of music trying to elicit a specific viewer reaction, to a deeper examination of why they are shocked by abortion, and its supposed barbarity. The second possible spectator reaction would indeed support the efforts of the women's movement in West Germany, encouraging a dialogue to be opened about why abortions are performed and their legality. This particular interpretation would not only support feminist views expressed in West Germany at the time, but also the aims of the women's film movement.

Although *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin* has been interpreted in the past as offering evidence of Kluge's patriarchal viewpoint, it also has some elements that suggest that it also shows the possibility of female-led political action. It can also be argued that in depicting women under patriarchal control through this film, Kluge has produced a progressive film by highlighting problems faced by women. This is a point that will re-emerge in my later film analysis in the rest of this thesis, especially when discussing the role of the female protagonist in *Abschied von Gestern*.

Re-reading Kluge's theory and his views of motherhood: Context

It is not only Kluge's films that can potentially be read as challenging patriarchal structures. Some of his theoretical writings can also be read in this light. Kluge's theoretical writings, along with his films, have the potential to be seen as progressive in terms of gender in multiple ways. Indeed, some sections of his writing have much in common with views that were prevalent in certain strands of West German feminism at the time. These

particular strands of feminism with which his views can be said to coincide are ones that stand apart from the views expressed by the writers of *Frauen und Film*, and are concerned specifically with motherhood.

Among the ways in which Kluge's writing is able to be seen as progressive is in his re-conceptualisation of the gendered ties to motherhood. When writing about motherhood in his texts *Geschichte und Eigensinn* (1981) and *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung* (1972) he speaks of the fact that the type of relationship that is represented by motherhood is not something that is strictly confined to women, thereby showing a defiantly non-traditional view of this conventionally stereotypically gendered role. He also emphasises the importance of the mother/child bond as a successful type of relationship that evades capitalist forms of production, allowing the mother/child relationship to be seen as positive. I will explain the details of Kluge's formulation of motherhood after I have contextualised it. I will carry out this contextualisation by looking at several different views espoused by the women's movement concerning motherhood that preceded Kluge's writing.

Certain parts of feminist activism and thought regarding motherhood, both within and beyond West Germany, positioned motherhood as a central facet of female identity, and a source of power for women. For example, the movement of cultural feminism in the 1970s and 1980s in America was based on an ideal of womanhood rooted in motherhood. Jane Alpert's *Mother Right*, published in 1973, claimed that motherhood was imprinted onto every female's genetic makeup (Echols, 1989, pp.247-250). The vision of the feminists who were involved with cultural feminism was that of a feminist revolution based on an idea of female biology linked to motherhood, with no divisions between women as they were all bound together by a biological destiny (Echols, 1989, p.231). In the US, the radical 1970s feminist group simply called 'The Feminists' based its vision of a utopian future on a

matriarchal society and feminine mysticism, centred on the female body's ability to bear children. This group's campaign included a panel at an event in New York entitled 'Matriarchy versus Humanism' in 1973 (Echols, 1989, p.183). There was a corresponding West German movement to the movement of cultural feminism, based on the translation of American pro-maternalist texts grounded in female biological differences. These texts included Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice* (Ferree, 2012, p.124). During this time, West German books such as B.Sichter's *Weiblichkeit: zur Politik des Privaten* in 1986 were also published, which claimed female bodily specificity and the ability to bear children as a basis for feminism and for women's power (Frevert, 1989, p.302). In 1986, a group of West German feminists published a document which was intended to be a manifesto for mothers, which advocated 'a model of emancipation that took account of the value of the traditional content of women's work, that is, giving care to people [...] questioning so-called "objective pressures" and offering [mothers] appropriate social, political and financial recognition' (Ferree, 2012, p.122). The women who produced this text defined themselves as feminists and primarily as mothers, rather than identifying themselves by their position in any paid occupation, by class, or by political affiliation (Ferree, 2012, p.122).

These particular groups of feminists operating in the US and in West Germany at this time show that there was a trend within feminism towards considering motherhood to be a valuable identity, and a potential source of power from which women could draw in order to fight patriarchal forces. However, this maternalist facet of feminism is only one aspect of the feminist cultural context, and there were other feminist views during this period and pre-dating it with a more nuanced view of motherhood as potentially problematic and feeding into pre-existing patriarchal power structures. This particular impulse within the feminist movement during this period was more concerned with re-

evaluating traditional notions of motherhood, rather than considering motherhood to be the central force in women's existence. There was a wide-ranging series of campaigns in West Germany, as well as around the world, which signalled this need to re-consider the significance of motherhood, as will now be elaborated upon. These campaigns came alongside the afore-mentioned fight for abortion rights which occurred in the 1970s, which can be seen as West German women fighting to re-evaluate motherhood's central role in female experience.

There were discussions throughout the 20th century about the significance that the role of motherhood should play within women's lives by feminist thinkers and writers. In Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*, published in 1949, she writes that 'Woman is doomed to the continuation of the species and the care of the home' (De Beauvoir, 1979, p.449) and 'no maternal "instinct" exists [...] The mother's attitude depends on her total situation and her reaction to it' (De Beauvoir, 1979, p.526). On the topic of domesticity, de Beauvoir notes: 'to surrender the child to its mother, the wife to her husband, is to promote tyranny in the world' (De Beauvoir, 1979, p.483). Moreover, she emphasises what she perceives to be the negative consequences of child-rearing, such as the potential for depression and pain which a mother may undergo when she must fulfil the needs of her child (De Beauvoir, 1979, p.524). Her viewpoint stresses that motherhood is not an invariably positive experience, and can contribute to patriarchal control of women in the home, as well as to women's unhappiness if the experience of child-rearing is not successful. Debates concerning the necessity of re-evaluating the role and centrality of motherhood in women's lives included the 1968 women's liberation conference in Sandy Springs in America, which, among other discussions, was concerned with re-evaluating women's reproductive capability as a central facet of being a woman (Echols, 1989, p.113). Shulamith Firestone, who wrote the famous *Dialectic of Sex* in 1970, aimed to question

and re-evaluate the supposed necessity of the female body having to go through childbirth, and any perception of motherhood as natural. As Firestone states, the 'kingdom of nature is not absolute' (Firestone, 1970, p.18) and in her view, in similar fashion to de Beauvoir, 'The heart of women's oppression is her child-bearing and child-rearing' (Firestone, 1970, p.73).

In West Germany, there was also a branch of the feminist movement which was concerned with changing the way the domestic home was run by women and re-conceiving traditional notions of motherhood. This type of feminist activism aimed to provide the means with which to share domestic burdens, making these burdens lighter, including those of child-rearing. The aims of this movement show another instance of feminist activism being concerned with re-examining traditional ideas of motherhood, and questioning women's domestic role, this time in the specifically West German context concurrent with Kluge's filmmaking. In 1968 the Berlin group named *Aktionsrat zur Befreiung der Frau* attacked women's traditional role in society and the lack of support for women in their individual roles in the home by setting up independently run, anti-authoritarian child-care groups for communal care (Frevert, 1989, p.288). The following year, this same group established four more centres, to be run in the same way (Harrigan, 1982). There was clearly an impulse within the West German women's movement towards re-examining motherhood. This branch of feminism was concerned with making motherhood less bound to tradition and more practical for women who did not necessarily wish to have motherhood dominate their lives, such as those who needed to work as well as being mothers.

As we shall now see, Kluge's ideas about motherhood as expressed in his theoretical texts appear to chime with these impulses to re-examine the traditional ideas about the role motherhood should play in women's lives. He therefore seems to be

undermining stereotypical gender roles in some sections of his theoretical writings.

However, despite his undermining of gender stereotypes concerning motherhood in some instances, he also appears in others to support the facets of feminist thought and action described previously which could be seen as being more pro-maternalist in nature.

Kluge's theory of motherhood

Kluge writes about motherhood in both *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*, co-written with Oskar Negt in 1972, and in *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, which has already been mentioned in this Introduction. *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung's* primary concern is with theorising the means of production for an alternative public sphere. In both this text and in *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, the importance of the mother/child bond and relationship is noted, when compared to any type of relationship influenced by capitalism. Even though this apparent valorisation of motherhood could be seen as an overly simplistic view of what it means to be a woman, Kluge and Negt deny any type of mystical mother/child bond, or that the relationship between a mother and child is entirely biologically based. Their denial of any simplistic biological basis for the mother/child relationship would suggest that their theorisation of this role for women chimes with the position of certain strands of feminism mentioned above. This idea would chime with the thoughts of those that were concerned with the re-evaluation of the position that motherhood had in women's lives, and those who wished to fight the traditional conceptualisation of motherhood. However, the fact that Kluge and Negt view motherhood as the basis for a positive type of relationship between humans can be seen as evidence of them supporting those more pro-maternalist aspects of feminist thought previously mentioned.

In *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*, Kluge and Negt describe their view of the mother/child relationship thus:

In der gelingenden Mutter-Kind-Beziehung erhalten sich Rudimente einer vorindustriellen, auf Bedürfnisbefriedigung durch reale Gebrauchswerte beruhenden Produktionsweise. Die frühen Beziehungen zwischen Mutter und Kind, soweit sie gelingen, lassen sich auch dann nicht auf Tauschbeziehungen reduzieren, wenn sie von Tauschabstraktion umlagert sind. (Kluge and Negt, 1972, p.49)

They claim that the mother-child relationship is based on the satisfaction of real, human needs ('reale Gebrauchswerte') (Kluge and Negt, 1972, p.49), and is not able to be reduced to the abstraction of these needs, even though it may be surrounded by the abstraction of these same needs in a post-industrial, capitalist societal context. They develop this idea further in *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, saying 'Wenn sie aber gelingen [Mutter-Kind-Beziehungen], so ist dies die einzige reale Vorstellung eines Verhältnisses "jeder nach seinen Fähigkeiten, jedem nach seinen Bedürfnissen", auf eine zumindest einseitige Weise dort verwirklicht' (Kluge and Negt, 2001, p.310).

In Kluge and Negt's formulation, the matriarchal force of production, represented by motherhood and the mother-child bond, is superior to any other type of production because it exists outside of capitalist structures. For them, the mother/child relationship is the only type of relationship where human needs are truly satisfied. This satisfaction of true needs according to Kluge and Negt takes the form of a mother's 'Erziehung und Versorgung' (Kluge and Negt, 2001, p.310) of her child. Education and care, in their terms, are a mother's true capabilities, which remain important because they are not subsumed by capitalism, which in contrast implants false ideas about what needs should and can be fulfilled. Consequently, motherhood is defined by Kluge and Negt as being inherently anti-capitalist. In their view, along

Marxist lines, capitalism is about fulfilling false needs in contrast to the fulfilling of true needs represented in the mother/child relationship. By emphasising the way that motherhood can be seen as a successful relationship which satisfies genuine human needs, and therefore as a relationship that should be aspired to, Kluge and Negt appear to express opinions coinciding with the pro-maternalist strands of feminism described at the beginning of my section concerning different feminist viewpoints on motherhood.

However, despite their understanding of motherhood as the root of a successful type of relationship between mother and child because it fulfils 'real' needs, Kluge and Negt also note the potential difficulties associated with their conceptualisation of motherhood. They themselves problematise the idea of the mother/child unit as representing a relationship entirely without flaws:

Dadurch, daß Frauen, auch wenn sie das selber nicht wollen [...] körperlich, die Bedürfnisse des Kindes befriedigen, werden sie in nichts aus den Druckverhältnissen [...] entlassen [...] Das Kind verhält sich [...] wie ein Parasit. Es besetzt die Zuarbeit des Mutterkörpers, ohne etwas zurückzugeben [...] Kinder sind das, was man undankbar nennt. (Kluge and Negt, 2001, p.312)

This admission of the potential for unhappiness for women involved in the mother/child relationship is entirely in line with the ideas of the feminist thinkers writing about motherhood described previously who note that motherhood can be an unhappy time for women, such as de Beauvoir and Firestone. Although Kluge is indeed supportive of the type of caring and nurturing relationship that motherhood can give rise to, he does not see motherhood as unproblematic or entirely positive. Rather, he

appears to have a nuanced conception of the potential problems that it can raise for mothers, such as ungrateful children and increased work for women. It would appear that Kluge's writing on motherhood can be said to potentially support both pro-maternalist (as already discussed), and less whole-heartedly pro-maternalist, yet still feminist, conceptualisations of motherhood.

In addition, Kluge and Negt deny the idea that the mother/child relationship and its associated means of production is something that is biologically based, or restricted to women only. When talking about this relationship, they state that 'Es ist falsch, sie allein an Vorgänge im Hormonhaushalt, einen bloß biologisch begründeten Mutterinstinkt zurückzuführen' (Kluge and Negt, 1972, p.50). In *Geschichte und Eigensinn* they re-iterate their belief that their concept of a type of production that is based on motherhood need not be isolated to women, even though it may indeed have its roots in the mother/child relationship:

Es ist eine in der Gesellschaft sonst so nicht vorkommende Form der Kooperation zwischen zwei extrem unterschiedlichen Stufen der menschlichen Arbeitskraft (Kind, Frau) [...] Erlern sind diese Produktionsmittel, lebensgeschichtlich, gattungsgeschichtlich, früher. Sie könnten ebensogut auch von Nicht-Frauen erlernt werden. (Kluge and Negt, 2001, p.231)

By emphasising the fact that these forces of production, which have their basis in motherhood, can in fact be transferred to anyone and not just women, Kluge and Negt suggest that certain aspects of motherhood are not entirely based in biology, but are in fact transferrable to those outside of the mother/child relationship. They thereby reject gender stereotypes regarding motherhood, and encourage a re-conceptualisation of what

motherhood and the mother/child relationship means. By encouraging this re-examination of traditional gender roles associated with motherhood with their writing, it can be said that their writing does indeed support the aims of those West German feminists described previously who wished to share out the responsibilities of motherhood. It could also be said that they share some common theoretical ground with the campaigners against paragraph 218, who in campaigning for abortion rights showed that they wished to re-examine motherhood and think of it in a new, non-traditional light and stop motherhood from being the absolute centre of female experience.

Kluge appears to have a nuanced vision of motherhood, which corresponds with several differing views of this role for women. This view of his theory concerning motherhood suggests a reading of his films which will be offered by my thesis, which is one where his films are in fact able to be seen as progressive in gender terms in several different lights, including an interpretation where he is seen to challenge gender stereotypes.

Re-reading Kluge's theory as progressive in terms of gender

As we have seen, it is indeed possible to construct a reading of Kluge's work where it is seen as progressive, a view that was ignored in the initial wave of feminist criticism that his films provoked. However, it is also fair to say that while his work can be read in this light, this is not Kluge's explicitly stated aim, but rather an implication of his broader critical project. Filmmaking, for Kluge, is a process through which he seeks to create what he calls a 'Proletarische Öffentlichkeit' (Kluge and Negt, 1972, p.29), which represents what he considers to be the avenue for the expression of 'suppressed element[s]' (Dawson, 1974, p.56) in society and within human nature. I will now go on to explain how Kluge uses the terms 'proletarian' and 'suppressed element' (Dawson, 1974, p.56) interchangeably, and

how women as a group fit into these ideas. I will then explain how Kluge envisions the idea of a re-constructed proletarian public sphere, in the interests of those who constitute his vision of the proletariat, including women. After the theoretical basis for Kluge's idea of a proletarian public sphere has been established, I will explain how this idea of a re-envisioned public sphere impacts upon his filmmaking.

In *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*, Kluge and Negt elaborate upon their macro-project of suggesting ways in which the public sphere might be re-organised to give those in society who represent 'suppressed element[s]' (Dawson, 1974, p.56) a voice, although in this volume, they use the term 'proletarian'. In order to understand Kluge and Negt's idea of a proletarian public sphere, the concept of the proletarian in their terms must first be understood. Their usage of the term 'proletarian' is metaphorical rather than based strictly on class. Negt explains this choice of terminology in an interview: 'wir haben diesen Begriff "proletarisch" immer im Sinner unterdrückter und enteigneter Eigenschaften verstanden und nie im engen Zusammenhang der Klassentheorie' (Stollman and Schulte, 2005, p.13). By 'unterdrückter [...] Eigenschaften' (Stollman and Schulte, 2005, p.13) they mean what they see as certain characteristics that are suppressed and split off from their supposed owners; these split off and suppressed elements are, in their terms, proletarian characteristics. A proletarian element in a person's consciousness, for example, could be feelings, needs and hopes that have been suppressed, blocked, or distorted, and that have been unable to develop fully. In their terms: 'Proletarischer Lebenszusammenhang ist deshalb zunächst **negativ** bestimmt, als ein Blockierungszusammenhang, in dem Erfahrungen, Bedürfnisse, Wünsche, Hoffnungen zwar konkret entstehen, aber sich nicht als eigene entfalten können' (Kluge and Negt, 1972, p.483, emphasis in original). They also define their version of the proletariat as that section of society which does not have control over the means of production: 'Als Lager läßt sich die proletarische Klasse deshalb

nicht begreifen, weil ein wesentlicher Faktor, nämlich die Verfügung über die materielle Produktion, ihr fehlt' (Kluge and Negt, 1972, p.342).

In their formulation, women fit into their idea of a proletariat, as they are not in control of capital in a patriarchal society. This view of women is confirmed in *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, where they discuss women's position in the domestic sphere. Kluge and Negt note that the female productive force, in the domestic sphere, consisting of producing and rearing children, is unpaid. In their formulation, women lack control over their own means of production and of capital, thereby making them representative of a proletarian element in society.

Das Erbe definiert das Produkt um als das von Männern. Insofern ist die spezifische Klasseneigenschaft von Frauen Enterbung: Während sie doch mit ihren Körpern und in den erodierten Formen der Hausarbeit am Reichtum des gattungsgeschichtlichen und geschichtlichen Erbes festgehalten sind. Dies, daß sie vom Erbe sich nicht lösen könnten und zugleich im modernsten Kontext unbezahlte Zuarbeit leisten, ist das Zerreißungsprinzip. Es bildet einen permanenten Prozeß der Trennung. (Kluge and Negt, 2001, p.330)

To summarise, Kluge and Negt see women's role in the domestic home as one where their means of production is taken control of by men. Even though women are domestic workers, historically, Kluge and Negt note, they have never had control over what they produce: domestic labour, for which they are unpaid. They confirm that in their terms women are part of the proletariat, as the 'Frauenklasse', Kluge and Negt say, 'gehören dann mit dieser Eigenschaft, je nach Tätigkeit, zur herrschenden Klasse, zur proletarischen, zur bäuerlichen usf' (Kluge and Negt, 2001, p.320).

With their version of the proletarian public sphere, Kluge and Negt wish to create a space for proletarian, suppressed elements of society, such as that element represented by women, where they are able to reach a state resembling coherence. This element of coherence is important as thus far, they believe that these proletarian elements have been suppressed, and defined in negative terms: 'Proletarische Öffentlichkeit ist hier die Summe der Situationen, in denen in einem Prozeß miteinander verknüpfter Subjekt-Objekt-Beziehungen diese unterdrückte und im Kapitalverhältnis verdreht entfaltete menschliche Sinnlichkeit zu sich selbst kommt' (Kluge and Negt, 1972, p.297).

There is a political element to their conception of a re-imagined public sphere in the interests of those who they define as members of the proletariat. Kluge and Negt see the formation of this re-envisioned public sphere as encouraging political action through bringing together new groups of people. As Negt says in an interview when discussing his and Kluge's ideas about the possibility of a proletarian public sphere: 'We understood the proletarian public sphere as a form of counter-public [The] counter-public for us is a process of igniting solidarity among people who might otherwise have very different ideas' (Krause, 2006, p.121). Kluge himself says in an interview with Klaus Eder that 'dieses Produkt Öffentlichkeit [ist] das elementarste Produkt, das es überhaupt gibt, wenn es Gemeinwesen geht, um das, was ich mit anderen Menschen gemeinsam habe, es ist die Grundlage von Veränderungsprozessen in der Gesellschaft' (Kluge and Eder, 1980, p.59). In their re-envisioning of the concept of the proletariat and creating a counter-public sphere for these groups, Kluge and Negt hope to encourage different groups to come together who otherwise would not have anything in common, in order to support a kind of progressive social change.

By encouraging alliances among those who contribute to their version of the proletariat, Kluge and Negt support the re-envisioning of society in what can be seen as a

progressive manner. They conceive of their version of the proletariat as a way that marginalised groups can come together to gain political strength, through what they have in common. Women are part of this marginalised group, or proletariat, that does not have control over capital, among whom they wish to 'ignit[e] solidarity' (Krause, 2006, p.121) in order to encourage social change. Therefore Kluge and Negt can be interpreted as encouraging women to work towards social change, alongside others who form part of their version of the proletariat. Encouraging women to be politically engaged could of course be interpreted as co-inciding with progressive views of gender. Indeed, this interpretation of their theory would appear to be in complete opposition to their arguing that female political participation is pointless, as Kluge was previously accused of doing in the feminist readings of *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin* undertaken by the *Frauen und Film* critics.

Now that it has been established that in Kluge's terms women are indeed part of the proletarian sector of society, which he intends to encourage toward taking political action, how should a proletarian public sphere be constituted, away from theory and in practical terms, in order to give this section of society a voice and encourage these new alliances? Kluge's key approach to the creation of this re-envisioned public sphere is the establishment of counter-products that challenge pre-existing cultural norms, such as an alternative proletarian film culture. Kluge and Negt say that 'Die Produktions- und Kampfform kulturrevolutionärer Veränderung besteht in der Produktion gegenläufiger kultureller Verhältnisse. Die Form der Kritik der alten Kulturverhältnisse und der Maßstab für neue sind kulturelle Produkte und veränderte Produktionsorganisation' (Kluge and Negt, 1972, p.427). In addition, they claim that 'Nicht die bloße Kritik der Produktion, sondern wirksame Gegenproduktion vermag diese Produktion zu kritisieren' (Kluge and Negt, 1972, p.433). When 'wirksame Gegenproduktion' (Kluge and Negt, 1972, p.433) is

seen in concrete terms, what Kluge and Negt are saying is that for the proletarian public sphere to exist and help encourage social change, it must be manifest in proletarian products which run counter to mainstream cultural products. Kluge and Negt's proletarian products are also intended to facilitate proletarian experiences:

Öffentlichkeit bezeichnet bestimmte **Institutionen**, Einrichtungen, Aktivitäten (z.B öffentliche Gewalt, Presse, öffentliche Meinung, Publikum, Öffentlichkeitsarbeit, Straßen und Plätze); sie ist aber gleichzeitig auch ein allgemeiner gesellschaftlicher **Erfahrungshorizont**, in dem das zusammengefaßt ist, was wirklich oder angeblich für alle Mitglieder der Gesellschaft relevant ist. (Kluge and Negt, 1972, pp.17-18, emphasis in original)

So, their vision of the public sphere contains space not only for experiences. In their terms, it also includes cultural institutions like the media, which can be politicised to enact social change in the interests of those whom they consider to be part of their version of the proletariat. In the case of his films, Kluge wishes to create this proletarian experience within the spectator's mind by encouraging their active engagement. Hansen explains this concept further: 'The degree to which a filmmaker seeks and stimulates the cooperation of the film in the mind of the spectator, according to Kluge, determines the measure of *Öffentlichkeit* generated in the process and thus the potential role of the cinema in the transformation of the public sphere' (Hansen, 2012, pp.52-53, emphasis in original). Kluge himself states 'Das eigentliche Produkt ist nicht die einzelne Einstellung, nicht die kombinierten Einstellungen in einem Film, auch nicht alleine das Verhältnis des Autors zu den Zuschauer; sondern die Produktion von Öffentlichkeit' (Kluge and Eder, 1980, p.147).

Kluge sees this alternative public sphere through film as not only needing to facilitate proletarian experiences, but also needing to describe the proletariat itself. In the afore-mentioned interview with Jan Dawson, when asked about his gender politics on screen, Kluge describes his interest in portraying women thus: 'I do think that it's always the suppressed element in society that has to be described: the dominant element describes itself; there's no need to add to it in the cinema. It's much better to describe the sub-dominant element, the suppressed element' (Dawson, 1974, p.56). In this same interview he also displays his awareness of the fact that he is making films in a patriarchal society, one which is 'a society dominated by men—a society whose mentality and institutions, from school to university to the law courts, are essentially masculine' (Dawson, 1974, p.56). Thus he is able to draw attention to social inequality in patriarchal society and describe women in their disadvantaged position in his films, with women representing a 'suppressed element' (Dawson, 1974, p.56). Highlighting gender inequality can, of course, be seen as a key first step within feminist critique, one that appears to be undertaken in the portrayal of Roswitha in *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, as previously discussed. I will return to this aspect of Kluge's filmmaking, that of drawing attention to societal gender inequality, frequently throughout my analysis.

By reading *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung* alongside *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, as well as looking at other statements by Kluge explaining the theory supporting his filmmaking, it becomes apparent that Kluge wishes to provoke a re-structuring of society and experience through his films that can arguably be construed as supporting a progressive view of gender. In Kluge's formulation, this re-structuring of the public sphere and the production of proletarian cultural products, such as film, has the potential to encourage proletarian experiences. In this process, new alliances can be formed which have the potential to generate social change. Women, as part of Kluge's proletariat, can be

a part of this social change and these new alliances. The change within society that can be generated by this new public sphere is indeed in the interests of those, such as women, who represent his version of the proletariat. In addition, the proletarian counter-public sphere, as embodied in Kluge's filmmaking, can also create an arena in which women's role in patriarchal society can be portrayed and critiqued. It is therefore clearly possible to identify an impetus towards a progressive view of gender in Kluge's theory, as he appears to be encouraging women, as a part of his understanding of the proletariat, to be politically engaged through his version of an alternative counter-cultural public sphere. His theory also appears to support the creation of filmic products which can critique women's disadvantaged role in patriarchy.

Kluge's film techniques

To re-iterate, Kluge aims to create an alternative type of culture and proletarian public sphere through his films, one that can encourage those who represent his idea of the 'suppressed element' (Dawson, 1974, p.56) in society to undertake political action. This alternative film culture manifests itself as a film aesthetics which counteracts the way that a viewer may expect to interact with onscreen images. Kluge attempts to encourage a reaction in the spectator through montages of unexpected and non-cohesive layers of image, sound and text. His aim is to implicate the viewer in the creation of meaning, forcing them to become active in their film-viewing, creating a filmic reality in their mind which can spur them on to political action and the creation of a proletarian public sphere.

Kluge explains his attitude to filmmaking and the spectator in detail in his 'Kommentare zum antagonistischen Realismusbegriff'. In this text, he explains that when making films, they should be confrontational for the viewer, in order to create a political statement, as 'Das Motiv für Realismus ist nie Bestätigung der Wirklichkeit, sondern

Protest' (Kluge, 1975, pp.216-217). He explains how this protest can be carried out on the level of the film's form:

Ein solcher Protest drückt sich verschiedenartig aus: durch radikale Nachahmung (Imitation, Clownerie, Insistieren, Nachäffen, Oberflächenzusammenhang, absurder Sinn, Mimesis), durch Ausweichen vor dem Druck der Realität (Traum, Negation, Überhöhung, Erfindung, Ersetzung eines Problems durch ein anderes, Übersprung verhalten, einfaches Weglassen, Utopie) oder durch Angriff [...] aggressive Montage, Vernichtung des Gegenstandes, Klischierung des Gegners, Selbstzweifel, Darstellungsverbote, Zerstörung des Metiers, Guillotine. (Kluge, 1975, pp.216-217)

In Kluge's terms, confrontation of the viewer, in order to make film into a form of political protest, can be achieved by destroying clichéd forms of filmmaking. This destruction is used to encourage an active and imaginative viewer. His understanding of 'aggressive Montage' (Kluge, 1975, pp.216-217) is that it can be a means to destroy filmic clichés, by combining unexpected elements on film, be they elements of sound or vision. He might, for example, cut documentary footage into a fictional film, or use sound that does not match the images being displayed on screen.

Kluge's aggressive and confrontational form of montage is also detailed in 'Wort und Film', co-written with Edgar Reitz and Wilfried Reinke. This article describes his specific form of montage where different elements of the film (auditory, literary, visual etc) are kept discrete from each other and do not necessarily form a cohesive whole. This separation of filmic elements is used so that the viewer is able to make their own meaning in the gaps which are left in between these disparate components. Consequently, the

viewer remains active by creating this filmic meaning themselves. In the words of Kluge and his co-authors:

Für den experimentellen Film (dies gilt allerdings nur für äußerste artistische Intensitäten) wäre es möglich, das Changieren zwischen den literarischen, visuellen und akustischen Komponenten durch Ausnutzung der Bruchstellen zwischen diesen Komponenten soweit zu treiben, daß Ausdruckseinheiten entstehen, ohne daß die einzelnen Faktoren permanent unter Sinnzwang stehen, präfabriziert oder geschichtlich ermittelt sein müssen, um verständlich zu werden. (Kluge et al., 1965, pp.1024-1025)

The importance of the space between these montage elements for the active viewer to produce their own meaning is emphasised by Kluge in an interview with Enno Patalas: 'die Schnittstellen, die nicht im Film enthalten sind, sind genauso wichtig wie das Bild' (Patalas et al., 1966, p.3). He gives the specific example of how the interaction between disparate filmic elements should impact on the viewer by using intertitles. Kluge's intended use of this particular filmic element is to make the audience read them aloud in their mind, thereby becoming active in thinking about the mismatch and the gap between the intertitle and the onscreen image: 'Die innere lesende Stimme des Zuschauers überlagert sich dabei mit dem Filmgeschehen. Es findet eine Aktivierung des Zuschauers statt' (Kluge et al., 1965, p.1024).

Kluge's aggressive form of montage is an attempt to challenge the audience's expectations, to encourage their active participation in film-viewing. He accepts the fact that this is a type of viewer/film relationship that needs a sophisticated spectator who is ready to interact actively with the film rather than passively viewing it: 'Eine wirklich differenzierte Filmsprache ist auf eine filmische Vorstellungswelt in den Hirnen der

Zuschauer, Kinobesitzer und Verleiher angewiesen' (Kluge et al., 1965, p.1019). The importance of the viewer, who is made active by this specific form of montage, is repeated time and time again in interviews with Kluge. As he says, 'eigentlich rezipiert der Zuschauer den Film nicht, sondern er produziert ihn in seinem Kopf' (Kluge, 1975, p.196). In the Jan Dawson interview he re-iterates that 'film is not produced by auteurs alone, but by the dialogue between spectators and authors' (Dawson, 1974, p.55. The difference between the term 'auteur' and 'author' used here is in the original). In the aforementioned Enno Patalas interview, he once again states 'Ich glaube, das ist der Kern: Der Film stellt sich im Kopf des Zuschauers zusammen, und er ist nicht ein Kunstwerk, das auf der Leinwand für sich lebt' (Patalas et al., 1966, p.3).

There is evidently a connection to be made between Kluge's aim of creating an active and politicised viewer who can help to create a counter-public, and Brecht's aim of creating an active and politicised viewer through his *Verfremdungseffekt*. To briefly summarise, Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* was the affect he wished to achieve through his use of theatrical techniques which would not fulfil expectations of realism on stage. In his terms, these expectations of on-stage realism were not met in order to interrupt the viewing experience, creating a viewer who is no longer passive, but is active. This viewer should then be spurred on to political action and to create political and social change through this affect. The connection between Kluge's film techniques and Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* has been noted by Kluge himself. In an interview with Angelos Koutsourakis discussing Kluge's relationship to Brecht, the interviewer states that 'As a film director you have consciously employed Brechtian strategies in your films' (Koutsourakis, 2011, p.225), which Kluge does not deny. Later in the interview Kluge states that 'at the moment I think that it is necessary to bring Brecht back to the society and place him into our contemporary reality' (Koutsourakis, 2011, p.225), implying that he believes that

Brechtian techniques still have their place in his film-making. For a more in-depth comparison between Kluge and Brecht's aesthetic aims, see Bruch's extensive analysis 'Brecht and Kluge's aesthetics of realism' (1998). I will return at a later point to the connection between Kluge and Brecht, as in the films I have chosen there is not only an alienation of the viewer through Kluge's confrontational film techniques, but there are also direct references to Brecht's own works. However, as there are many other theoretical frameworks that I will be using in order to examine Kluge's films in this thesis, including Kluge's own film theory, and many other branches of gender-focussed theory, I will not be focussing on an analysis of his films through a specifically Brechtian lens, so that my focus on the key issue of gender in Kluge's own works may remain.

Kluge's approach to the de-construction of the filmic medium has a large impact on his portrayal of gender and will be important for my analysis, leading to questions that I explore in my thesis. I will ask what implications Kluge's technique of deconstructing filmic clichés has for the way his films critique gendered clichés. I will also explore how his challenging of gendered clichés, through his confrontational, alternative filmmaking methods, impacts on his work being able to be seen as progressive in terms of gender. When I examine Kluge's films in order to address these issues, a new interpretation of his films will emerge that stands in opposition to those offered by the *Frauen und Film* critics.

An alternative view of Kluge's gender portrayals

There is a small amount of critical precedent for my project, which offers a view of Kluge's work as, to a certain extent, progressive in terms of gender. Heide Schlüpmann begins to tentatively suggest a feminist potential in some of Kluge's later work. She asks whether his films reflect a patriarchal ideology in an article published in 1988, entitled "'What Is Different Is Good': Women and Femininity in the Films of Alexander Kluge". In this article

she repeats the debates surrounding *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, and adds the films *Abschied von Gestern* (which I will also be examining as one of my case studies) and *Artisten in den Zirkuskuppel: Ratlos* (1968) to her examination of Kluge's depiction of gendered difference and power. She calls *Abschied von Gestern* a false celebration of female specificity, saying that Kluge only ascribes 'positive' attributes to actions undertaken by women that are not perceived as positive by mainstream society, such as a refusal to engage with public life (Schlupmann, 1988, p.132). She makes the point that Roswitha in *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin* only expresses Kluge's ideas, without offering a specifically female viewpoint to empower the female viewer (Schlupmann, 1988, p.141). In her terms, this empowerment could have taken the shape of a woman who is given the authority to produce creatively, or who re-gains power over the male gaze by using her own voice (Schlupmann, 1988, p.145). Conversely, she sees Kluge's *Artisten in den Zirkuskuppel: Ratlos*, as embodying this specific potential for an alternative relationship with a female viewer. She asserts that this film's female protagonist, Leni Peickert, finds a way to counteract male authority through her use of language and also in Peickert's own creative output (Schlupmann, 1988, pp.142-150). In this article, Schlupmann identifies contradictory impulses at work in Kluge's films. In some cases, they are able to be seen as potentially supporting patriarchal views, but in others they can indeed be seen as progressive.

Although it is Schlupmann's point of view that corresponds most closely with that expressed in my thesis, I will considerably expand upon her ideas. I will carry out my analysis using different films in addition to *Abschied von Gestern*, adding the examination of the specific ways that words, bodies, and emotions are portrayed in gendered terms by Kluge. These specific elements of his films will allow me to further nuance Schlupmann's view while updating the one-sided views of the feminist critics from previous decades.

Film Choice and Choice of Themes for Analysis

In order to expand and update the gender-focussed avenue of research established by prior critics such as Schlüpmann, Rich and others, I will use a selection of specific areas which Kluge has previously written about as lenses through which to examine his depiction of gender. In particular, I will look at the implications of his usage of language, the body, and emotions. These are areas that have yet to be used as the primary lenses through which to examine gender in his work, despite the fact that Kluge has written extensively on each of these topics.

The body, language and emotions are all conceived of by Kluge as elements that hold the potential to be disruptive. When writing about language's role in film in 'Wort und Film', Kluge, along with his co-writers, notes that language could play a key part in the construction of his alternative film culture. Words and language, according to Kluge, can disrupt accepted filmmaking methods: 'Es ist zu untersuchen wie sich [...] die heute uns zur Verfügung stehenden neue Sprachformen sich zu den neuen Vorstellungen vom Film erhalten, aber auch wie Wort und Film zusammen neue nichtliterarische Sprachformen ergeben' (Kluge et al., 1965, p.1016). In this article he describes how 'konservativen Spielfilms eine Verbindung zwischen den vorgefabrizierten Darstellungsformen und dem ebenfalls vorgefabrizierten sprachlichen Jargon ergeben, wie er im Spielfilm von den meisten Menschen dann auch gewohnheitsmäßig erwartet wird' (Kluge et al., 1965, p.1021). In contrast, he aims to create a new form of film where 'literarischen, akustischen und visuellen Momentaufnahmen [...] zueinander in Spannung stehen' (Kluge et al., 1965, p.1020). Language in Kluge's terms therefore has the ability to disrupt accepted methods of filmmaking, and accepted ways of communicating meaning, within film.

Kluge conceives of bodies as assemblages of multiple parts. He suggests that these assemblages, despite appearing as a coherent whole, may dissolve at any moment, and that they have within them the potential for disruption because of this possibility of disintegration. In *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, Kluge describes bodies as 'disharmonische Ganze' (Kluge and Negt, 2001, p.1214). Throughout this text he emphasises what he calls the 'Elementarisierung' (Kluge and Negt, 2001, p.238) of bodies, by which he means that bodies, despite appearing whole, are made up of many constituent parts which are often in opposition to each other. Bodies, therefore, in Kluge's formulation, hold the potential for fracture and represent the possibility of disruption of the image of completeness.

Kluge personifies feelings in his theory, saying they have the potential to be disruptive, although this potential is not always met. In an interview with Florian Hopf, carried out at the time that the film *Die Macht der Gefühle* was released in 1984, he states that emotions can be too conservative to cause change, and can instead defend existing powers:

Man könnte [Gefühle] vergleichen mit Proletariern, die sich vor die Wahl gestellt sehen, entweder sind sie arbeitslos oder sie akzeptieren Kernkraftwerke und den ganzen Schlamassel, der ihre Arbeitslosigkeit mitproduziert. Jetzt treten sie auch noch für Rationalisierung ein und sind gegen Störer. Und diesen Status haben Gefühle, sie sind Proletarier in uns, mächtige Proletarier. (Kluge, 1984, p.186)

To summarise, he makes the point that this revolutionary, disruptive potential is not always met as feelings are often in the service of the existing status quo. Kluge's personification of feelings as 'mächtige Proletarier' (Kluge, 1984, p.186) is important, as

this phrase emphasises the fact that feelings could be revolutionary in his terms, thereby showing what he feels to be their potential as a disruptive force.

It is clear that bodies, language and feelings are all conceived of by Kluge as holding the potential for disruption. Social change in terms of gender and power can be seen as a societal disruption, as it aims to disturb the hold taken by patriarchal powers which control society, in order to cause change and help bring about gender equality. Therefore the common aspect of disruption means that these elements of bodies, language and feelings, are all suitable choices of concepts to use as focus points to ask the question of how, in certain lights, Kluge's films can be seen to be progressive in terms of gender.

It must also be noted that although these themes are evidently worthy of further analysis, they are not ones which have been chosen as frequently as other topics have been as ways to critically focus on Kluge's film works. In contrast, Kluge's work has frequently been viewed through the lens of his relationship to the Frankfurt school and through the usage of critical theory. Examples of this avenue of analysis include Forrest's 2007 *The Politics of Imagination: Benjamin, Kracauer, Kluge*, which examines and compares the role of fantasy and imagination in the work of all three figures. Schlüpmann's 1998 article 'Reinventing the Nickelodeon: Notes on Kluge and Early Cinema' uses critical theory to elucidate Kluge and Negt's version of the filmic counter-public sphere. Berg's 2006 article 'Benjamin und Deleuze: Ansätze für eine kritische Geschichtswissenschaft in Filmbildern' compares films by Kluge and Lanzmann through the lenses of both Benjamin's and Deleuze's theory. Christian Schulte often uses Benjamin's work as to examine Kluge's filmic oeuvre, including his 2004 article 'Dialoge mit Zuschauern: Alexander Kluges Modell einer kommunizierenden Öffentlichkeit', his 2010 article 'Kritische Theorie als Gegenproduktion. Zum Projekt Alexander Kluges' and his 2012

article 'Konstruktionen des Zusammenhangs. Motiv, Zeugenschaft und Wiedererkennung bei Alexander Kluge', all of which use critical theory to explain Kluge's films and his aims in film-making. It is clear from this overview that Kluge's films have already been extensively analysed using the ideas provided by the Frankfurt School, aiding my claim to originality in choosing to focus rather on gender, language, the body and emotions.

It is not only this new approach to looking at gender in Kluge's films through these specific elements which allows me to differentiate my work from that of Schlüpmann, and also from other previous commentary on Kluge's work as mentioned above. I will also examine a different combination of films to those that she, as well as other commentators who have discussed Kluge's approach to gender, have studied up to this point. As it stands, the films which I will be examining provide a selection of Kluge's important feature films. They come at the beginning, middle and end of when he was primarily making works for the cinema, rather than for television, for the internet, or producing literature. *Abschied von Gestern* was Kluge's first feature-length film, made in 1966. It concerns a female protagonist, Anita, and her various attempts at romantic relationships and finding employment. *Der Starke Ferdinand* came a decade later in 1976, and follows the protagonist Ferdinand Rieche's attempts to reform a factory in which he is newly employed as the chief of security. Finally, I examine *Die Macht der Gefühle* from 1983, which consists of a series of interconnected vignettes concerning the power of emotions throughout history, with multiple storylines and protagonists. After making *Die Macht der Gefühle* Kluge turned to the medium of television, for which he has made, and continues to make multiple shorts and documentaries.

The films I will be examining were all critically acclaimed at their times of release, helping to establish and then sustain Kluge's international reputation as an important filmmaker for West Germany's film culture. *Abschied von Gestern* won the Silver Lion at

the Venice film festival, as well as the Spanish Critics' Luis Buñuel Prize (Lutze, 1998, p.233). *Der Starke Ferdinand* won the Cannes International Film Critics' Prize as well as the Naples Special Prize in 1976, while *Die Macht der Gefühle* won the Venice Critics' Prize in 1983 (Lutze, 1998, p.233). The international acclaim for these films supports a view of these as canonical films in Kluge's feature film output, which are worthy of further study.

My structure

Within my overarching question of how Kluge's films can be said to be progressive in terms of gender, despite previous critical opinions, there are several sub-questions which have been raised by this Introduction: Do Kluge's films offer women a filmic product which can help them to become politically active by disrupting gendered clichés, including disrupting clichéd filmic methods of depicting gender, as his theoretical writings would suggest? How does he portray women under patriarchal control? How does he portray patriarchy itself? In order to answer these multiple questions, in each chapter, I will analyse a specific film, and I will examine in what ways the film in question can be seen as a counter-cultural product supporting a progressive view of gender. I will establish what shape the film's potential for an anti-patriarchal viewpoint takes in each case, be it in the form of language, patriarchal discourses about how male and female bodies are constructed, or the use of emotions.

In my first chapter, concentrating on *Abschied von Gestern*, I will ask the question of how language, including words and speech, is shown by Kluge to be exploited by the female protagonist, Anita, for her own purposes to fight patriarchal control. This will be contrasted with the portrayal of the patriarchal public spheres of society, such as that of the law and education, which maintain this control. I will contrast the potential for Kluge's film to be seen as progressive through the portrayal of Anita's control over language with

the impossibility of any existence offered to her in succeeding to live outside of patriarchal authority. I will also discuss how Anita's marginalised existence in a patriarchal society is portrayed sympathetically by Kluge, similarly to how Roswitha's portrayal can be seen in *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*. My second chapter will concentrate on *Der Starke Ferdinand* and the portrayal of gendered bodies. I will first establish the theoretical basis for the prevalent trends in the ways that male and female bodies have been discursively constructed. I will then discuss the way that this film and the portrayal of Ferdinand Rieche, as well as his partner Gertie Kahlmann, subvert conventional gender portrayals and ridicule patriarchal power, thereby showing this film as fitting into aims of challenging gender stereotypes. My third chapter will examine *Die Macht der Gefühle* and how Kluge uses emotions with regards to gender relations in this film. I will first elaborate on Kluge's theory of emotions. Through the use of Kluge's idea of his ideal emotional state, I will examine which characters, both men and women, appear to make the best use of their emotions and whether this plays into a patriarchal power structure or not. I will also analyse his use of non-normative male/female romantic and sexual relationships in this film. These avenues of analysis will once again ask the question of whether Kluge's films do indeed support a progressive view of gender.

CHAPTER ONE

Words and language, gender and power in *Abschied von Gestern*

The relationship of language and words to gender and power is frequently highlighted throughout Kluge's film *Abschied von Gestern*. Issues of who has power over language at what time, and the possibility or impossibility of constructing alternative ways of using words are issues that remain present throughout the film. In my analysis I will explore to what extent those outside of mainstream, hegemonic power in gendered terms are able to subvert and resist patriarchal ways of using words and what implications this pattern of communication has for Kluge's depictions of gender differences. If women are depicted as being able to successfully resist patriarchal power through language, then what has been seen by previous critics as Kluge's controversial vision of female specificity, as was described in my Introduction, may be shown to be less problematic. In this chapter I will examine whether this film shows female characters who are able to create a viable alternative usage of words to that of the patriarchy. I will also analyse how this film depicts patriarchy's construction of power through the discourse of specific areas of society, such as that of the law and academia, be it critically or merely by presenting this power as an unchangeable fact. I will go on to define the specific way I use the term 'discourse' before I begin my analysis.

The film depicts the story of Anita, a Jewish émigré from East Germany, as she drifts from one occupation to another, and also from one love interest to another. It begins with scenes of her trial for having stolen a cardigan, and continues with her attempts to re-integrate into society. After this the film follows her working for a language-learning record company, then for a hotel, before we see her going to university and trying to educate herself. Her love affairs are documented with her boss at the record

company, with one unnamed man and also with a married politician, Manfred Pichota, who causes Anita to become pregnant. She then attempts to flee from the police, as she has not been paying her accommodation costs, before submitting and giving birth in prison. Anita is characterised by her constant movement between jobs, places and love interests, and by her problems with figures of authority.

Discourse, language and power

The interaction between gender, power, and words in the film is clearly portrayed as an area of struggle by Kluge, but this has yet to be analysed by any critical commentators.

When considering language and words, as well as power relations and the flow of control between different sections of society with different levels of privilege, it is useful to refer to Foucault's ideas of discourse. Language and verbal communication are key constituent parts of discourse in Foucault's conception of the way in which power is transmitted, transformed and can be resisted.

According to Foucault, discourse can be defined as a system of signs that is used for communication by a group with common values. He says that 'the term discourse can be defined as the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation; thus I shall be able to speak of clinical discourse, economic discourse, the discourse of natural history, psychiatric discourse' (Foucault, 1972b, pp.107-108). He also says that 'discourse is not the majestically unfolding manifestation of a thinking, knowing, speaking subject, but, on the contrary, a totality, in which the dispersion of the subject and his discontinuity with himself may be determined. It is a space of exteriority in which a network of distinct sites is deployed' (Foucault, 1972b, p.55), meaning that discourse is about the communication of a group, rather than the expression of an individual subject. Foucault also says that discourse can operate via exclusion, as 'a certain "way of speaking"; and one would show

how this way of speaking is invested [...] in a system of prohibitions and values' (Foucault, 1972b, p. 193). Discourse in his terms also therefore operates by not allowing certain things to be communicated: 'I am supposing that in every society the production of discourse is [...] controlled [...] In a society such as our own we all know the rules of exclusion' (Foucault, 1972b, p.216). Foucault explicitly states that words and verbal communication are a constituent part of discourse. In *The Discourse on Language* he states that 'discourse is [...] manifested materially, as a written or spoken object' (Foucault, 1972b, p.216). Although he does say that verbal communication and therefore words are a part of discourse, discourse in his terms is also more wide-spread than this narrow definition. Foucault's idea of discourse contains space for systems of communication in general, not always in verbal terms. For example, discourses can include 'postulates, operational schemata, linguistic rules, a set of affirmations and fundamental beliefs, types of images, or a whole logic of the fantastic' (Foucault, 1972a, p.150). However, in my analysis, I will concentrate on how verbal discourse through words is used by Kluge in order to show gendered power relations in *Abschied von Gestern*.

Returning to Foucault, he also famously relates discourse to power, saying that power is not only produced by discourse and discursive boundaries, as 'in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established without [...] discourse' (Foucault, 1980a, p.93). He claims that, in turn, discourses are produced by power. 'What makes power hold good [...] is [...] that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse' (Foucault, 1980b, p.119). Power itself is conceived of by Foucault as an extensive network of force relations, rather than a hierarchy which works from those that hold the power downwards towards subjected victims. He states that 'Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather

something which only functions in the form of a chain' (Foucault, 1980c, p.98). In Foucault's terms 'these [force] relations don't take on the sole form of prohibition and punishment, but are of multiple forms' (Foucault, 1980a, p.142).

Foucault also elaborates upon the key issue of resistance to this polymorphous type of power, which is possibly the most useful term in his conceptualisation of power to my analysis. According to Foucault, resistance is inherent to power itself and there cannot be any power without resistance. As he says: 'there are no relations of power without resistances, the latter are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised' (Foucault, 1980a, p.142). In addition, he says 'like power, resistance is multiple and can be integrated into global strategies' (Foucault, 1980a, p.142). These resistances are far from futile, on the contrary: 'it is doubtless the strategic codification of these points of resistance that makes a revolution possible [...] They are the odd term in relations of power: they are inscribed in the latter as an irreducible opposite' (Foucault, 1990a, p.96). Power in Foucault's terms therefore can always be resisted at the point where it comes into existence. In his terms, the possibility of revolution, change and upheaval is constant, because of the way that power is able to flow between individuals. As discourse both produces power and is produced in turn by power, Foucault also sees discourse itself as, naturally, a plausible place for resistance: 'Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it' (Foucault, 1990a, p.101).

Foucault's ideas concerning the importance of discourse in exposing power relations, the malleability of power as it flows between individuals, and the inherence of resistance via the use of discourse within power relations will all be highly useful in my analysis of gendered power and words as a part of discourse in *Abschied von Gestern*. This analysis will examine how male characters as representatives of certain social bodies such

as the law and academia establish and maintain discursive power. I will also discuss how resistance through words by female characters occurs in the same spaces where power is being established discursively by men. The question of how Kluge's film appears to show the ability of women to subvert masculine power through the use of speech, as part of specific types of discourse, will also be explored. I will now describe how this analysis will fill a gap left by the existing critical context surrounding the film.

Critical context

As discussed in my Introduction, Kluge sees the re-envisioning of the use of words and language as key to establishing a new type of film, which could potentially be politically progressive. Despite this fact, the relationship between his approach to language and words, and to gender, has not been a subject of critical analysis with regards to *Abschied von Gestern* thus far. This lack of critical commentary on this combination of subjects remains, even though the film has a female protagonist who is clearly existing in a patriarchal environment and uses her speech and words, as well as pre-existing male-created discourse in certain sectors of society, in an attempt to undercut patriarchal authority. Previous criticism of the film has consistently neglected to analyse what consequences this complex construction of power has for Kluge's filmic portrayal of gender relations.

Other analyses of the film, such as those provided by Marten and Hansen, have often subordinated the topic of power and gender to that of history. They have analysed Kluge's film by asking questions about how Anita's marginal position offers the possibility for the existence of histories that are alternative to those told by mainstream historical narratives. Marten suggests that the spatial aspects of the film offer a forum for the narration of history. In her article 'Leinwand und Richtertisch. Räumlichkeit und

Theatralität im Film und vor Gericht in Alexander Kluges *Abschied von Gestern* (Anita G.)' Marten analyses the way that Kluge uses space in the film to show Anita as a victim of history. She also asserts that Anita is used to show that 'Da Geschichte nicht ungeschehen zu machen ist, ist umso eher aufzuzeichnen oder darzustellen, wo und warum etwas anders sein könnte' (Marten, 2009, p.198), thereby arguing that the film also offers the possibility of the existence of alternative histories through Anita's characterisation.

Hansen's analysis of the film explores how Anita's constant, cyclical movement through space in the film represents the movement of the diaspora, as Anita is a Jewish émigré (Hansen, 1986, pp.207-211). Hansen notes how Anita is constantly displaced throughout the film in terms of space and geography because of this émigré position, which marks her as an outsider (Hansen, 1986, p.196). Hansen also claims that Anita's overall function as a character is to express the themes of remembrance and forgetting, as well as the impossibility of telling coherent historical stories about the past (Hansen, 1986, pp.202-205). Hansen does approach the subject of discourse in the film. She uses the term to describe accepted configurations of speech and words used by groups, rather than the individual subject, which is concurrent with my outline of Foucault's definition of the term above. She discusses how Kluge contrasts the use of official discourse by those in power, such as legal discourse as used by the judge in the film, with the words used by speaking individuals such as Anita (Hansen, 1986, p.198). However, her overall point is not one that discusses how speech as a part of discourse functions as an expression of gendered power struggles. Instead, she analyses Kluge's use of discourse in the film to show that Kluge wishes to foreground 'the discrepancy of discourse and speaking subject as a theme' (Hansen, 1986, p.196), which shows his 'self-conscious ambivalence toward the power of representation' (Hansen, 1986, p.212). When Hansen discusses how power functions in the film, she is more concerned with the power to represent and tell specific versions of

history, than she is with gender and power. Although this article shows that there has been some prior critical examination of the way that discourse functions in *Abschied von Gestern*, the fact remains that there has yet to be an in-depth analysis of how discourse also conveys power struggles between genders in this film, as my research will examine.

Some critics at the time of *Abschied von Gestern*'s release considered the way that it presented a progression in filmmaking techniques via Kluge's approach to montage. Kluge's innovative usage of montage was seen as a new filmic language at the time, as 'Das Neue (und vielleicht nie so konsequent Versuchte) besteht darin, daß Kluge all diesen Mitteln ihren Eigenwert läßt, die Formen der Filmtätigkeit selbst benutzt für das, was er darstellen will' (Heißenbüttel, 1966). What was seen as new with this type of montage was that every individual element contained within the film was being used for its own unique purpose. This type of montage was seen as an improvement in film techniques due to its novelty and difference to pre-existing usages of montage, and one that was 'immerhin besser als die Beruhigung in der unendlichen Variation eines rasch erreichten stilistischen Konzepts' (Heißenbüttel, 1966). Other critics at the time of the film's release did not add gender to their analysis and despite characterising Anita as being part of a broken history of those marginalised in West German society (Nettlebeck, 1966, p.4), her marginal status as female was not analysed at this point of the film's critical history.

However, in later analyses, Kluge's approach to issues of gender in *Abschied von Gestern* has been seen as alternately progressive and regressive by different critics. In Schlüpmann's view, as expressed in her article "'What Is Different Is Good": Women and Femininity in the Films of Alexander Kluge', the film can be seen as evidence of deep-seated problems with Kluge's depiction of women. As already noted in my Introduction, Schlüpmann sees Anita's characterisation as a false celebration of female specificity, which is linked by Kluge to female powerlessness. In this argument, Kluge's position as an

outsider to the female experience means that he attempts to reproduce female experience on film, but without a female spectator first formulating this experience for him, thereby making his attempts to reproduce this experience inappropriate and an unwanted imposition of a patriarchal viewpoint (Schlöpmann, 1988, p.132). Schlöpmann claims that with *Abschied von Gestern*, Kluge is supporting the view that women should not be involved in political activism, due to his view of femininity, a view which is ultimately contrary to both mainstream society and accepted attitudes to politics (Schlöpmann, 1988, p.132).

Elsaesser, on the other hand, provides an optimistic view of the film's gender politics, seeing Kluge's depiction of women in it as progressive. He says that *Abschied von Gestern* shows an increasing political engagement in West German women, through a depiction of a 'radically subjective, militant' and feminist version of reality (Elsaesser, 2008a, p.54). Anita is described as 'tomorrow's woman' (Elsaesser, 2008a, p.54), against a caricatured and simplistic depiction of weak male characters. Despite describing the film as 'radically subjective' (Elsaesser, 2008a, p.54) in showing a woman's viewpoint, Elsaesser's argument does not describe how Anita's subjective version of reality is constructed via either her usage of words, or via the use of discourse by representatives of certain societal groups. He also does not discuss how this discursive construction of reality could add to the view of Kluge supporting feminist aims, by depicting women who attempt to resist patriarchy through their own usage of the words which come to form discourse. The nature of Elsaesser's article, as it is an overview of Kluge's entire filmic oeuvre, also means that his analysis is brief and does not go into a detailed textual reading of how exactly Anita's character is able to be seen as a progressive portrayal of gender relations by Kluge.

If an examination of discourse were added to Schlüpmann's analysis of gender in *Abschied von Gestern*, then female powerlessness could be seen to be inconsistent within the film. Anita's ostensible lack of power is in fact questioned by Kluge's use of discourse by women in order to subvert patriarchal power structures. Elsaesser's point of view, although it may only be expressed briefly, is a useful point of comparison for my analysis as it also offers the possibility for this film to be read as expressing a progressive view of gender relations. By analysing how patriarchal power is depicted through words and their use in discourse, such as that of academia and the legal sphere, as well as how female characters are able to subvert this power through their own use of discourse and words, I will further expand upon Elsaesser's view of how this film explores power and gender.

Power, subversion, discourse and gender in the bourgeois living room

In a scene near the beginning of the film, issues of language, verbal authority and subversion are highlighted. Female characters are shown as victims of patriarchal speech, which takes away their authority. In turn, verbal subversion of this way of constructing authority is also shown as possible. Power's flow between genders is shown as highly inconsistent and able to be manipulated and subverted through women's use of speech, consistent with Foucault's view of power as malleable and able to flow between individuals with differing levels of privilege and authority.

The scene in question occurs near the start of the film, after Anita's parole for stealing a cardigan has been organised, but before she is re-employed. She is having tea in a stereotypically bourgeois setting of a living room, accompanied by her female parole officer, another older woman, a younger man, and a priest. The scene comprises of a series of monologues from each character, which overlap each other and do not seem to relate to each other directly. These speeches include a quotation from Brecht's

Dreigroschenoper and a section in which the parole officer directly repeats what the priest has said, her own words overlapping his. The older woman appears to become frustrated at the fact that no-one is listening to each other, while the priest himself does not react emotionally to anything that occurs during the scene. The younger man listens without speaking and Anita herself also listens while eating. The bourgeois living room setting of this scene immediately recalls stereotypical scenes of familial interactions, as does the fact that there are at least two generations present, that of Anita and the young man on the one hand, and the priest, older woman and parole officer on the other. The family is a key structure within which gender roles are formed, tested, and can be supported or subverted. Even though Kluge is not explicitly using the family as an arena for exploring gendered issues of power in this scene of the film, he still refers to family life implicitly.

The highly un-naturalistic dialogue between the characters (or more accurately, overlapping monologues) helps introduce the issue of how words and gender interact to show power relations between genders, wherein male verbal authority is more valued than female speech. At the same time, the way this scene develops also suggests how masculine control can be subverted through a specific use of words. While the older man in this scene attempts to enforce his verbal authority, this authority is simultaneously resisted by the older woman who is present, much as Foucault notes that wherever power is constructed, it is also simultaneously opposed. Female resistance to the priest's power is reflected through the older woman's frustration, which she expresses verbally, and later via the probation officer's repetition of the priest's words.

The older woman becomes frustrated when her calls for others to be quiet are not heeded. 'Seien Sie doch ruhig vielleicht', she insists, before finally asking in exasperation, 'Ist es denn alles Christlich? Herr Gott noch mal!'. The exclamation's religious tone links her verbally to the priest in the scene, who completely ignores her, despite what could be

read as a direct call for him to respond. She is clearly not being listened to and appears to have no authority through her own use of words. Nobody stops speaking, and the male authority figure does not acknowledge her. In this instance, traditional concepts of gendered authority being constructed via words are shown, as a woman is denied power through language. Traditional, patriarchally controlled power relations are shown by Kluge to be constructed, rather than challenged or subverted by this female use of words. However, Kluge also appears to display the frustration that these traditional power relations can cause for those who are disadvantaged by them. The woman's annoyance at not being listened to shows that male authority is not being depicted uncritically by Kluge—he shows instead that women are frustrated by their denial of verbal power within hegemonic structures. This film seems to be depicting patriarchal authority in a critical light.

It is not the older woman's character that shows how words can be used as an aid in subverting traditional gender roles. That responsibility lies with Anita's parole officer in this scene. She quotes Brecht's famous *Die Dreigroschenoper* by asking 'Heisst es der Mensch, oder das Mensch?'. This quotation is spoken by a thief in the original text, who is responding to the protagonist Mac's question of 'Wisst ihr denn überhaupt, was das ist, ein Mensch?' (Brecht, 1968, p.42). In Kluge's usage of this quotation in the scene, the female parole officer does not in fact say it in response to anyone, the quotation is rather part of the overlapping speeches of the characters that do not address each other. This quotation is not simply an inter-textual reference to Brechtian alienation techniques, linking to Kluge's film techniques that aim to encourage an active rather than passive viewer, the same type of reaction Brecht was trying to invoke with his *Verfremdungseffekt* (for the connection between Brechtian techniques and Kluge's own film-making methods, which has already been described, see my Introduction). On the contrary, this quotation

directly addresses issues of gendered power within language, wherein changing the gender of a word can cause it to have negative associations. 'Das Mensch', a neutral noun, means a prostitute, whereas the more common masculine noun 'Der Mensch' means a human. This Brechtian reference serves to highlight how meaning can be constructed through understandings of gender. The reference achieves this highlighting effect by directly referencing the different implications of a positive, masculine word versus an unacceptable, neutrally gendered word, thereby highlighting the unequal worth of masculinity versus other gendered terms within society. This scene could thereby be seen to draw attention to gender inequality in this instance by using this quotation.

This intertextual reference causes the incoherency of the characters' conversation to be highlighted, drawing attention to the constructed nature of their speech. This highlighting of the female parole officer's dialogue in this case strengthens her subversion of the priest's authority later in the scene, as will be analysed subsequently, as the audience has already been asked once by Kluge to pay close attention to her words. The fact that it is the female parole officer who uses the Brecht reference while also being able to subvert male authority and use words for her own purposes is significant. Brecht references are also present in another instance of subversion and resistance of male verbal authority by Anita, the film's protagonist, as I will examine later in this chapter. Kluge appears to use inter-textual references at points where women are able to gain control.

The interaction between the male priest and the female parole officer in this scene shows how in this case verbal authority rests with a woman, rather than with a man, as might be expected. The priest, without any acknowledgement of the camera, says 'Sehen Sie, wenn heute jemand fromm ist, so meint man gleich er ist plemplem' which the parole officer repeats, overlapping his speech and looking directly to the camera. The overlapping

speech causes the meaning of his words to become abstracted as the words of the priest become less comprehensible through repetition. The fact that it is the female parole officer repeating a patriarchal figure's words, but undermining his ability to be understood, adds a gendered aspect to the balance of power here. A woman is undermining a man's power to express himself and to be understood, through her use of his own words. The parole officer's look to camera underscores this undermining effect, as the priest does not acknowledge the viewer but the parole officer does, making sure that the camera lingers on her more than the priest. This shot emphasises her repetition and confusion of the meaning of his words, rather than highlighting the priest's original one.

Figure 3:



Figure 3: The probation officer addresses the viewer.

The possibility of the subversion of patriarchal authority through words is explored here. The female parole officer is able to take the anecdote of the male priest and make it into her own, more important, speech. Her speech is portrayed by Kluge as more significant as

she is given the majority of screen time in this brief instance. This action suggests that this film is making a point about the possibility of the resistance of traditional male authority as constructed through words. The male priest, representing homogeneous mainstream patriarchal authority as constructed through language, is being linguistically undermined by a female. She uses his words for her own purpose, that of drawing attention to herself, and gains power in the process. In this case, this scene shows that a feminine subversion of masculine power is indeed possible via the use of a pre-existing, male-created verbal construction. This subversion occurs in the same site that this power was originally manifested, that of the bourgeois family living room, along the lines established by Foucault's claim that wherever power is manifested, it can also be challenged. This early scene in *Abschied von Gestern* establishes the fact of patriarchal verbal authority. This film also shows this type of authority in a negative light, as the older woman does not just accept this authority passively. Rather, she reacts negatively to it. The point remains that female verbal subversion of this authority is shown to exist, as exemplified by the parole officer's use of words.

The motherly female parole officer

The female parole officer is not only able to subvert masculine authority. She also fits with Kluge's ideas about femininity and motherhood, which are an important aspect of his conceptualisation of female specificity. She is portrayed by Kluge using imagery that would place her squarely in a maternal role, even if this is not necessarily conceptualised as a biological form of motherhood but more of a symbolic position. The mother-like characterisation of the parole officer is reminiscent of Kluge's idea of the role of motherhood and the mother/child bond as expressed in *Geschichte und Eigensinn* and *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*. As explained in my Introduction, Kluge's conceptualisation of

motherhood is not based on a biological motherly instinct, rather on the specificity of the bond between mother and child, which according to Kluge can be experienced outside of the biological boundaries of motherhood. In his formulation, the role of 'mother' can be played by many different types of people, of different genders, who may not have even ever given birth. Although a woman playing the role of a mother-type figure might be expected to uphold traditional gender roles, as motherhood is a stereotypically female role, in the case of the female parole officer, she is both defined as a mother-type figure, and also one that can undermine male authority. Kluge appears to be undermining gender stereotypes with regards to motherhood, and supporting progressive views of gender roles.

In a very brief scene preceding the one described above in the bourgeois living room, the parole officer embraces Anita and says 'Mein liebes Kind. Jetzt machen Sie sich einen schönen Abend. Jetzt machen wir uns recht gemütlich!'. There is a clear mother/daughter relationship being depicted by Kluge here. This scene is highly domestic, especially as the parole officer refers to Anita as 'Kind', emphasising this parental relationship. During this scene, Anita gazes into the camera and her head rests on the parole officer's shoulder. **Figure 4:**



Figure 4: The female parole officer depicted as a mother figure, with Anita as her daughter.

The parole officer is indeed given the symbolic role of 'mother', and is then able to subvert the patriarchal priest, as already noted, in the subsequent scene. This scene can be interpreted as saying that female characters and even those who are portrayed like mothers can subvert patriarchy, thereby resisting its power. This point remains, despite the fact that to be a mother could be seen as a stereotypically traditional female role. There appears to be an undermining of stereotypes concerning motherhood as a refuge for traditional forms of femininity. In this film, even those who are symbolic mothers in his terms are able to subvert patriarchal authority, rather than this role forcing them to uphold stereotypical gender roles.

Discursive construction of masculine power in the legal sphere

Even though the female parole officer does indeed appear to be depicted as a mother figure who is able to subvert patriarchal usage of words in the private area of the bourgeois living room, she is also a representative of a stereotypically hegemonically masculine and patriarchal societal structure: that of the legal sphere. She is complicit in Anita's unhappy ending wherein she is forced to give birth in prison. The way that the patriarchal, public sphere of masculine power in the form of the legal sphere, the male judge in Anita's trial, and his usage of specific legal discourse is depicted, is worthy of examination. The usage of words by this male character in this arena will now be examined to see exactly the degree of negative impact the legal sphere has on Anita, and how the impact of patriarchal society upon her life is framed by Kluge, eliciting sympathy for her.

It is immediately clear from one of the first scenes in the film, Anita's hearing for the crime of having stolen a cardigan, which takes place in court, that hegemonic masculine authority is established via a particular use of language that is in this case gendered as male. This authority is established through the judge's speech, which consists of official, complex legal discourse. The whole scene also serves to make the point that Anita lacks control over the way her life is verbally described, as her life history is constantly questioned by the judge, who accuses her of dishonesty. However, she is also depicted by Kluge as having the power to question this discursive control which the judge attempts to hold over her, and is able to somewhat subvert this power using her own words. The judge's usage of complicated technical terms, which can only communicate their full meaning with those who are part of the legal community, the speed at which he speaks, and the consequences of his words for Anita all serve to emphasise the fact that Anita is in a less powerful position than him. The male judge is depicted as embodying

patriarchal authority and the state and uses official, complex, legal discourse to construct this power, all of which subsequently leads Anita to an unhappy ending in the film.

The initial shot of this court scene is not a traditional establishing shot to explain the location of the scene. It does not, for example, show the exterior of the courts, or Anita entering the court room. Instead Kluge shows the audience the back of the judge's head, with the judge's official legal language dubbed over this shot. **Figure 5:**



Figure 5: The first shot of the scene: the back of the judge's head.

The fact that there is no establishing shot provided for the audience to prepare themselves for what is on screen serves to make them sympathise with Anita's emotional state. This lack of establishing shot causes viewer disorientation. The effect of masculine discourse in this realm of the law is thereby heightened and is brought to the audience's attention by Kluge's editing choices- this variety of discourse is disorientating, confusing, and causes disempowerment.

Kluge uses an almost static shot of the back of the judge's head. The judge's movements are present, although almost imperceptible. He appears like an unmoving monolith representing patriarchal power, without a face to make the arena of the law appear approachable or personable. This representation is combined with the speed and complexity of his words, which serves to draw the audience's attention to the power of what the judge is saying. His personal characteristics are not important, however his words and the power they have over Anita are. His usage of legal discourse is dense with official meaning and requires concentration from both Anita and the viewer because of the speed with which it is delivered. Concentration is also required because of the lack of opportunities for the audience to lip-read as an aid to further comprehension. Only his dialogue is audible and his face is invisible, emphasising his words and their power over Anita.

When Anita's name is called by the judge and she answers 'Ja', only her voice is heard, and her face is not shown. When she does enter into shot, her face is not in focus, rather the focus remains on the judge. **Figure 6:**



Figure 6: Anita out of focus, while the judge remains in focus.

Although it is Anita's story being told, and it is her trial, the power that others in more authoritative positions have over her use of words is highlighted by Kluge's filmic techniques. Male authority over women and patriarchal control is emphasised by Kluge in this shot.

While Anita's words are de-emphasised by Kluge's shot composition, the judge attempts to control her discursively, by being prescriptive about her life's details and attempting to enforce his own views on her actions and motivations. However, in this case, Anita resists this control. Before the judge begins to question Anita about the theft of her colleague's cardigan, he first questions her entire identity, removing her authority to even speak about herself. He questions her accent, saying that although she claims to come from Leipzig, 'Sie selber aber sprechen nicht so'. When he asks her about her parents and she says that their factories were returned to them in 1945, he once again questions her, saying 'Ist das wahr?' to which she replies 'Wenn ich es Ihnen sage'. The fact that she

replies to his questioning in this manner shows that she is rejecting his use of words to try and control the narrative of her life, by using her own words to resist this power. While power is established by patriarchal forces through words, Kluge also shows that women are able to resist this power at the site of its construction. He thereby appears to show that women can actively resist patriarchal powers in this instance, in a Foucauldian manner.

The judge then refuses to believe any of the motivations that Anita gives for her actions. He refuses to believe the reasons given for her choices, such as in the case of her stealing the cardigan as it was summer, and he says she could not have been cold. He also does not believe her when she informs him of the other details of her life, such as why she chose to migrate to the West. After the judge has compelled Anita to admit that she did not move to the West out of some sort of inexplicable fear, rather that she wanted to improve her chances (presumably to earn money, although this is not clarified in their dialogue), this cross-examining of Anita by the judge is interrupted by a shot of the judge himself looking sceptical. **Figure 7:**



Figure 7: The sceptical judge.

This shot, like the previous shot of the back of the judge's head, is not consistently linked with the dialogue being spoken, and it serves to interrupt the audience's listening to the words being used in the scene. The judge's mouth is closed, but his line of questioning continues in the audio level alone. This interruption of the expected relationship between words and their speaker (it would be expected that the judge's mouth would move in time with the words being spoken, but this expectation is not met) highlights the way that legal discourse is being used by the judge to establish his power over Anita. This disconnect serves to draw attention to the dialogue with which the judge is attempting to discursively control her. He then attempts to construct his own narrative for Anita's actions by asking if she felt guilty about the stolen jacket, that she must have felt some 'innere Hemmungen'. She replies that something just came over her. This explanation does not satisfy the judge, who says 'Das ist nicht abschließend festzustellen'. The verbal explanation of Anita's

motivation, emotions and thoughts behind her unlawful activity is carried out entirely by the judge.

In this scene, Anita does show resistance to the narratives about her that are constructed by others. She initially verbally denies the motivations foisted upon her by the judge as explanations for her actions and claims that her own reasons that she gives for her actions are true, despite his questioning. Much as Foucault notes, the site where authority is established, that of this legal scene, and the legal discourse and other speech being used within it, is also the same place where resistance against this authority comes into existence. This resistance is significant even if it is in the minority, as it shows the possibility of resistance against patriarchal forces in the realms of legal discourse and other types of language. Kluge thereby shows a progressive view of gender by portraying the possibility of verbal resistance to patriarchy.

When I discussed this particular scene with Kluge himself during an interview carried out in 2014, he pointed out that he intended for this scene to display the different ways in which Anita and the judge are able to communicate verbally, and that they are able to express different things via their usage of words. He claimed that because Anita is multiply oppressed, as a Jew, and as a woman, that she has a different understanding of the world than the judge does, and this is why she and the judge speak in different ways. He pointed out that while the judge is a 'generaliser', when Anita speaks, she has something very concrete and 'authentic' in her mind. What she is able to communicate is her own, specific, personal experience as an oppressed minority, while he remains 'an abstract speaker' who instead speaks for those who are not oppressed. By emphasising the fact that Anita and the judge use words in different ways, to establish different kinds of truths which are applicable to different sectors of society, be they that of the oppressed minority or that of the mainstream, Kluge confirmed that he intended to give Anita some

verbal power in contrast to that of the judge. Her power lies in being able to use her words to represent a certain concrete and unassailable kind of truth which explains the reality of those who are marginalised. In contrast, the judge's verbal power remains that taken by the masculine societal hegemony and also that of the abstraction of language into legal discourse. The difference between these two ways of approaching verbal power in these characters could be interpreted as showing Kluge supporting Anita. He arguably supports her by allowing her to have her own specific kind of power, the power of representing the real experiences of those who are marginalised through words and language in this film. He also shows, coinciding with Foucault's view, that even those in marginalised positions can have their own kind of power. Anita being able to have the authority to express her own type of truth shows that in Kluge's film power does not exist within a strict hierarchy. Instead, he can be interpreted as showing that even disadvantaged individuals, such as women existing within patriarchy, like Anita, are able to exercise power through verbal self-expression.

Even though Kluge himself confirmed that he intended to give Anita some kind of verbal power which contrasts with the judge's, this power does not prevent her ultimate confinement in prison. Anita's sentencing is never shown, despite the courtroom scene described above concluding with the judge and another legal representative re-entering the courtroom. This sequence's final inconclusive shot cuts to the interior of the prison, and then to Anita in her cell. **Figure 8; Figure 9; Figure 10:**



Figure 8: The courtroom, from which Kluge cuts immediately to...



Figure 9: The prison environment, and finally to...



Figure 10: Anita in prison, fore-shadowing the end of the film.

Anita's disappointing fate is fore-shadowed by Kluge in the use of these shots. Despite her efforts in the court scene to verbally resist patriarchal power as it is simultaneously constructed by legal discourse, she remains in prison at the film's close. Anita's attempts to subvert masculine power through her use of language do seem possible in the sphere of the law, but her resistance is counteracted by her having to submit to patriarchal authority at the end of the film.

Even though Anita has to give birth in prison at the end of the film, and is not able to subvert the masculine authoritative sphere of the legal system successfully, this unhappy ending is not portrayed unsympathetically. On the contrary- the audience is encouraged to consider Anita's fate throughout the film, as this fore-shadowing of her ending in prison is present on screen within the first 7 minutes. As seen in **Figure 10**, her restriction in prison is emphasised by Kluge's framing of the shot. She takes up a small amount of space on the screen, and the image is split up by multiple vertical and

horizontal lines, conveying how she is trapped and is considered to be an insignificant member of society. This technique of only allowing Anita to take up a small amount of screen space is used repeatedly and conveys how insignificant Anita's own desires become when she must submit to the masculine powers represented by the law. Near the end of the film, he returns to the point in the narrative which was hinted at earlier on, that of Anita's arrest. He shows Anita ceasing her flight from the police, and going to prison. Anita is first shown running away from an invasive police spotlight. **Figure 11:**



Figure 11: Anita is finally caught by police spotlights.

When she gives herself up to the police, she is pictured entering the prison through an expansive and visually intimidating forecourt. **Figure 12:**



Figure 12: Anita entering the prison.

In both of these shots, similarly to **Figure 10** above, it is clear that Anita is physically overwhelmed by her environment, which represents the masculine, authoritative sphere of the law. Kluge draws attention to how insignificant and small she must feel due to her inability to control her own life within this patriarchal society.

The way that Kluge depicts Anita giving birth in prison also shows that he is representing the negative impact that existing under patriarchal control can have on women. Anita actually giving birth is not shown on screen. Instead, she is shown preparing to give birth with a midwife. Kluge then cuts to an extreme close up of her face, which appears neutral. **Figure 13:**



Figure 13: Anita's face being shown instead of her giving birth.

The above image is not accompanied by any sounds of her giving birth, such as her cries, or those of a baby. Instead, the only voice heard is that of the midwife, instructing her to push 'fester'. Kluge then cuts immediately to Anita destroying her prison cell. **Figure 14:**



Figure 14: Anita destroying her prison cell.

The midwife then restrains her. Anita is shown to be so restricted when in prison, that she is not even allowed to make any noise during childbirth, or react in a way that a woman would naturally expect to, as childbirth is self-evidently an extremely painful and stressful event. On the contrary, Kluge contrasts the voice and words of her midwife with Anita's impassive image. This combination of image and sound suggests that Anita is unable to offer resistance to being utterly controlled by this restrictive environment, one that is representative of patriarchal authority. The audience's expectations of a traditional birth scene are interrupted, and instead this partial or non-birth scene provides an opportunity for the viewer's sympathy to be engaged for a woman who is allowed no control over her own life. By cutting immediately from this non-birth scene to Anita destroying her cell and then being restrained, Kluge implies that her unhappiness and anger has been channelled into aggressive action. The camera during this scene moves from close-ups to mid-shots, and also in and out of focus, emphasising the turbulence in Anita's mind and her lack of

control. She is also crying, but these cries lack verbal communication or understandable words, only conveying her emotional state.

Kluge shows that Anita is unable to gain any control over the sphere of the law, which is constructed both by legal discourse in the words of the judge and also through physical means as she is physically restrained and controlled in prison. However, the fact remains that he shows this control over Anita while also showing her as a sympathetic victim of patriarchy. The viewer is constantly reminded that she lacks control in this situation, and this causes her distress. Therefore although Anita may not be allowed to totally destroy stereotypes regarding the control and oppression of women in the patriarchal legal sphere, her depiction by Kluge arguably encourages the audience to regard this patriarchal control in a critical light.

The masculine sphere of academia

It is not only the spheres of employment and the law which are characterised in this film as both patriarchal and unwilling to accept Anita without first exercising control over her. She is also shown as unable to integrate successfully into the primarily masculine arena of academia, where academic discourse as used by men restricts her expression. After an intertitle which states that 'Sie will ein neues Leben anfangen', Anita is shown entering a university building and attending lectures on philosophy. We then see her in the university library, reading books in English, before she goes to talk about her academic specialism in a personal meeting with a professor. After this, she is shown by Kluge to have trouble paying for her accommodation. Consequently, she seeks advice from the same professor she was talking to previously but in a highly frustrating exchange, he refuses to give her any suitable guidance. She receives no useful information from him, and after this scene Kluge cuts to her running away from a police spotlight.

Academia is presented as a masculine arena of authority. In the university building, the audience sees sculptures which emphasise a masculine space. **Figure 15; Figure 16:**



Figure 15: The first male statue.



Figure 16: The second male statue. Even in low lighting it is clear this is a male silhouette.

Although there is a mixture of both men and women present at the lectures that Anita attends, every one of these lectures is given by a man. There are no female voices of authority present. It is men who control the use of words here and who produce academic discourse, which can only be understood by other academics and capable male students: when the lecture attendees are shown leaving, only male students are shown discussing the lecture, even though there was a mixed-gender group present. **Figure 17:**



Figure 17: Male students discussing the lecture.

This shot immediately cuts to yet another all-male group of academics in their formal dress, which marks their authority and indicates the highest level of academic achievement. **Figure 18:**



Figure 18: Academic men discussing their own lectures.

After the lecture, Kluge shows Anita falling asleep alone in a lecture theatre. He then cuts to a dream sequence. In contrast to the masculine academic setting she is currently in, this dream sequence shows a sped-up scene of both men and women engaging in dialogue in a cafe. **Figure 19:**



Figure 19: Anita's dream of men and women in equal dialogue with each other.

Unlike the homogeneous patriarchal sphere of academia in which only men are allowed to establish, advance and dominate academic discourse, Anita's dream is one where there is an equal chance for both sexes to speak. There is a marked contrast between this highly stylised dream scene shown above, which Kluge shows at double speed, and the more natural shooting style of the lectures. Kluge shoots everything in the lectures at its natural speed, accompanied by the diegetic speech of the lectures being given. The difference in shooting styles between these two scenes emphasises the fact that Anita's dream of men and women engaging on equal terms and both being allowed to speak is just that, a dream. The reality is, in fact, that she will not be listened to in this patriarchal sphere.

When Anita tries to interact with a professor in a meeting regarding her potential university work, where they are the only two people present, Kluge depicts this scene in a similar fashion to his portrayal of the male judge in Anita's trial. Anita is not given any opportunity to speak, and when she does speak, she does not receive any time on screen.

On the contrary, the professor is given time to explain at length what he thinks she should study. Anita merely nods in response to his suggestions. When the professor asks her what her specific interests are, she responds that she is interested in 'soziologische Probleme'. She is not on screen when her speech is heard; rather the camera remains on the professor's reaction to this statement. When he inquires as to whether she knows any of his colleagues in other departments, to gauge her previous academic experience, Kluge continues to only show him asking these questions, and not Anita's response, even though she can be heard replying to his inquiries. Once again, in an academic setting, it is suggested that men's verbal responses are privileged and given attention, not those of women.

After Kluge shows that Anita is having trouble paying her rent, there is another scene where she interacts with the same professor. Anita has come to him for practical advice on what action she should take, as she is now running from the law. Their interaction is highly frustrating for both the viewer and Anita. She does not receive any practical advice whatsoever. She specifically asks the professor for guidance, saying 'Herr Professor, passen Sie auf: Ich brauch' einen Rat', to which he replies 'Ich meine es gut mit Ihnen. Ich versuche Sie zu erziehen', completely avoiding her questioning. She then describes her own situation as a fugitive, and his advice is 'Vor allen Dingen müssen Sie viel lesen'. As he continues to ramble on at length about the subjects of learning and reading, without answering her questions, he goes as far as to state that she is 'eine gute Zuhörerin'. This statement highlights the fact that she is not allowed to be listened to. She must remain the listener, and her voice and use of words are completely ignored. Her words remain unimportant, it would appear, because of his unassailable academic authority. Anita's frustration is audible in her speech. She repeatedly states that she needs

'einen Rat'. The delivery of this line becomes more forceful and her face more animated, showing her distress, as she does not receive the advice she is asking for. **Figure 20:**



Figure 20: Anita's visibly frustrated and animated questioning of the professor.

After she does not receive the advice that she needs from him, she is then pictured by Kluge running away from the police. Anita's frustration at this situation is palpable, and the audience's attention is drawn to how negative this situation is. This film can be interpreted as critically portraying the highly patriarchal nature of academia, within which women are not allowed to use words for their own purposes, are not listened to when they do speak, and are marginalised by men.

The sphere of employment

It is not only the law and academia where patriarchal authority figures block Anita's attempts to be successful in life. The areas of employment and business are also shown to enforce patriarchal control. When Anita is employed as a saleswoman by a company which

sells language-learning records, shown by Kluge after her trial near the beginning of the film, there is another depiction of an attempt by a male character to take control over her usage of words. The way the language-learning record selling is depicted is very similar to a depiction of prostitution, which underscores how the film portrays a negative view of patriarchal control over Anita; she appears to be being exploited as well as being controlled. This exploitation is depicted via the concurrent use of Anita's body for both patriarchal and capitalist purposes. It is notable that patriarchal control thrives in a business selling language-learning records. These are records that are specifically about prescriptive usages of language and grammar. The control of the company which provides these records rests with a man. Kluge therefore immediately links the strict control of language and its usage with a male figure, and also with patriarchal control. Conversely, it could also be argued that this language-learning opportunity, which Anita is connected to by selling the records, offers a certain degree of freedom of expression and authority in a different cultural sphere. This offering of freedom and authority to others through language-learning becomes highly ironic when the effects that working in this sphere have on Anita are examined. Instead of expanding her horizons and cultural authority through learning another language, she instead remains directly under patriarchal control.

To summarise what happens when Anita becomes a seller of language-learning records, when Anita begins her work for the record company, her boss explains the way in which the business functions, and overtly notes the gender divides in the company. After a scene in which Anita is seen trying to sell records to passers-by on the street, he notes that 'Wir haben sonst keine Frauen, sondern Vertreter mit Kravatten an, durchaus seriös' and that, when targeting potential buyers, 'Angestellte sind zu pingelig, lieber Arbeiter zwischen zwanzig und dreißig'. There is a brief interlude as Anita attempts (unsuccessfully) to sell the records first to a mixed gender pair, and to a pair of young men. The film

subsequently returns to her boss, who gives her more advice: 'Manchmal können Sie sich aufstellen in der Nähe von Vergnügungslokalen. Sie müssen sich den Ausweis zeigen lassen wenn zu vermuten ist, dass die Betreffer zu jung, dass heißt unter einundzwanzig Jahre ist. Sonst sind sie gut'.

Her boss attempts to control how she should express herself and how she conducts herself at work. First, when he is introducing the concept of the work to Anita, he constantly polices her use of language, being prescriptive about the way that she is allowed to portray herself through words and how she should conduct herself verbally. The first instance of Anita being controlled by her male employer through the usage of words occurs when he shows her the forms for the customers, and where they should sign. Initially, she points to the wrong area for them to sign, and he must correct her, showing his attempt to control what she should say to customers. Anita then practices her speech to potential customers, and her boss says 'Genauso müssen Sie sagen'. When explaining how she should carry out her work, he describes the exact words one should use, explaining to Anita that she should say: "'Sie wollen sicher ihren Chancen verbessern, Sie bezahlen etwas mehr dafür, haben aber später etwas mehr davon" das sagen Sie Ihnen'. The prescriptive way that he controls her use of words shows how figures who represent the mainstream, male hegemony, retain power over Anita.

The emphasis on her boss's words is heightened by his hand gestures, as he points his finger while describing how interactions with potential customers should occur, saying 'Sie müssen sich den Ausweis zeigen lassen'. **Figure 21:**



Figure 21: Anita's employer telling her what to do and exactly what to say, emphasised by his physical gesture.

He appears extremely authoritative in comparison to Anita. Anita's face is not shown and is not in focus, she merely replies 'Ja' while the back of her head is shown, once again emphasising her boss's control over her own use of words. When she returns from selling the records, there is a scene where the two meet in his office. He tells her that the addresses she has written on the forms are in fact incorrect, and she states that she cannot explain how this has happened. The fact that she cannot explain this occurrence points to her linguistic disempowerment- she is unable to express herself adequately in this situation, when interacting with her male superior. He then responds by saying 'Sie dürfen einen Vertrag nicht einfach selber ausschreiben'. By telling her that she is not allowed to fill in the forms herself, he restricts her usage of words even further.

This usage of what Anita's employer sees as inappropriate words on the forms could, however, be seen as evidence of Anita subverting masculine authority by re-using

words that have previously been used by men, and not conforming to male expectations. By filling in the forms wrong and being told off for this, Anita is depicted as trying to use language for her own purposes. She could be seen as using words in her own way, which is counter to the patriarchal norm. This attempt to regain power through words is similar to the way in which Anita also attempts to regain power in the court scene by verbally emphasising her own motives for her actions, rather than the ones foisted upon her by the judge. Although Anita does not achieve any large-scale resistance in this scene, she still manages to somewhat unsettle her boss's hold on power in the workplace through these written mistakes. He must re-iterate rules to her and ensure that she does not repeat these errors. Anita can be interpreted as wasting his professional time, as he should not have to correct such a basic mistake. She can thereby be seen to disrupt his masculine power in the workplace through what could be seen as her time-wasting. Once again, Kluge shows that female resistance can occur where men try and establish their power, in accordance with Foucault's theory that resistance occurs wherever power is produced. Kluge does not unquestioningly depict Anita as a passive victim of patriarchal power as established through her boss's use of words. Instead, he shows that resistance through words and language is indeed possible for women, which could be seen as progressive.

Anita's attempts to sell records to strangers on the street are depicted as if she were soliciting. Her selling is accompanied by her employer's voice-over. This voice-over remains present rather than the expected diegetic sounds of her selling the records, or noise from the streets on which she is selling. This use of her employer's voice emphasises his power, exercised through his words, over her actions. Anita does not carry her wares with her and has no advertisements to hand out. Therefore, when she approaches men on the street, she appears to be selling herself if she does not have time to explain her true business intentions. Kluge is clearly likening the specific circumstances of her labour to

that of prostitution. The way that her boss explains who she should aim to sell to continues this comparison, as he emphasises the importance of selling the records outside of 'Vergnügungslokalen', and also that she must check the age of the potential buyers.

While her boss explains the way the business runs, there is a brief shot of Anita smoking, which includes a zoom to a close-up on her licking her lips. **Figure 22:**



Figure 22: Anita's lip-licking.

The sexual undertones of this physical gesture are self-evident, once again linking prostitution to Anita's occupation.

This set of scenes shows that Kluge does not simply portray patriarchal control of men over women in this instance in a neutral manner. Rather, he is critical of the way society is constructed. In the same scenes where Kluge shows that patriarchal society exists, he also compares women's being controlled in the sphere of employment to that of an exploitative industry, that of prostitution. Once again, it appears that although Kluge does indeed portray women who lack control over their lives within a patriarchal society,

this society is viewed critically and Kluge portrays it as exploitative, thereby showing this film as progressive in terms of gender.

Male control over Anita's words and body in her personal life

Anita's employer's verbal and physical control extends into her personal life, and this unequal power dynamic is also reflected in her other romantic relationships. Male control over Anita is not only exercised through the use of speech and words by the men whom she enters into affairs with, such as her employer and later the politician Manfred Pichota. The men around her also use her body as an arena of control. However, in some instances of the depiction of her romantic life, Anita shows her ability once again to convert the speech and words of men into her own subversion and resistance.

Her boss's control over their clandestine (and extra-marital) romantic relationship is underlined in the first scene when they discuss meeting secretly in hushed tones on a stairwell. **Figure 23:**



Figure 23: Anita and her boss.

It is clear from this shot that Kluge is depicting a relationship in which Anita's actions are being controlled by her employer. His body language, shown above, reflects the inequality of power in this relationship: he encloses Anita in his arms, not allowing her to move up the stairs. This image also clearly represents the position of women who are unable to reach societal equality and freedom within patriarchy. Her male employer prevents her from moving and there is no possibility of Anita resisting him, as she is being physically restrained. The dialogue adds to the fact that once more, Anita holds no power in this relationship. He speaks in hushed tones to her and uses full sentences, delivered quickly, explaining that his wife need not know about the affair. She, in contrast, responds monosyllabically and uses fragmented phrases. She is depicted by Kluge as both physically and verbally controlled, without the opportunity to express herself in this relationship.

In the next scene, Anita's employer and his wife are shown eating dinner together. His wife asks who 'Die Rothaarige' is, which implies that she is aware of Anita's existence.

He replies 'nichts Besonderes'. It is clear that he is attempting to retain power in his marriage through words by claiming that Anita is unimportant. There is then a scene in which the audience discovers that Anita's boss has broken off the affair in order to save his marriage. This fact is explained by Kluge in a voice-over, which accompanies images of Anita packing her things and being forced to move out of her current home. The voice-over explains that 'Um seiner Frau zu beweisen, dass nichts gewesen wäre, sagte der Chef "Damit du mir glaubst, werd' ich sie anzeigen"'. The choice by Kluge to use a voice-over to describe this plot development, and his delivery of the speech of the owner of the record company, emphasising 'sagte der Chef', underlines the power of words as they are used by men, which control the lives of the women around them. It would appear that in this specific instance during the end of her romantic relationship with her employer, Anita is not able to subvert her boss's verbal authority or use words in an alternative manner to gain any kind of power through language. On the contrary, Kluge shows the negative consequences of patriarchal power for Anita as her romantic relationship is ended without her agreement.

Anita's affair with the politician Manfred Pichota suffers from a similar lack of equality, as he attempts to control their relationship using his verbal power. Some way into this relationship, after Anita is shown playing the role of his wife (trying to make his domestic space more homely by putting out ornaments and accompanying him on official business) there is a scene which is set in Pichota's home. During this scene, Anita says that at an engagement at which she was present as Pichota's companion, one of the officials called her 'Gemahlin', to which Pichota replies 'Das geht ziemlich weit'. Anita tries to claim the right to the position of wife by being named as such, but Pichota denies her this right. His verbal authority is far more important than hers. Much like the owner of the record company, Pichota continues to police Anita's verbal expression. He does not let her

express herself in a way that is untruthful, by saying that she is his wife when she in fact is not, or use language or words to construct an alternative reality for herself in which she can imagine herself as his spouse.

Anita's later attempts to exercise control via words and to use language for her own purposes show her resistance to Pichota's masculine power. A sequence where she lies about having a new flat and being able to afford it portrays Anita in a light where she tries to use language to resist Pichota's authority. While in Pichota's apartment, they discuss her future flat, and Anita says she only has to pay towards the building costs and wait for it to be built. Pichota asks where she is getting the money for this construction from. Anita will not answer this question, although she does admit that she does not have the funds yet, saying 'Ich hab' es noch nicht'. Pichota says that her version of events, in which she is able to afford the flat, 'ist nicht wahr', and so they travel to see the prospective flat. The disbelief and cross-examination of Anita's stories which is undertaken by Pichota in this scene, is reminiscent of her cross-examination by the judge in the legal scene at the start of the film. He does not believe her when she tries to tell her own version of events and indicates that she is lying and not expressing herself in a way that meets his expectations. Her use of words and verbal self-expression is still heavily policed by Pichota at this point. However, Anita's resistance to giving Pichota the specific information he requires about the source of her money once again shows the possibility of resistance and subversion of masculine authority through words. Even though Pichota is controlling Anita's speech, she is still somewhat able to subvert this control by not adhering to his rules about how she should express herself verbally.

After a sequence of scenes in which Pichota and Anita look around a building site, Kluge cuts to Anita and Pichota discussing the trip on the return car journey. Pichota says that they need not have bothered to make the journey there, as he thinks that 'kein Wort'

of Anita's story was true. Anita is once again being chastised for her inappropriate usage of words, or to put it another way, for her attempt to create her own reality through her use of language. Pichota then proceeds to tell her exactly what she should have said, prefacing this instruction with 'Sie hätten zum Beispiel sagen können'. He then goes on to say that she should have asked him to lend her money for the building costs. Just as her employer did at the record company, as well as the judge, here in the sphere of personal relationships, men are telling her exactly how she should express herself, down to each individual word. She is thereby denied verbal agency.

The negative consequences of Anita's inability to express herself in a way approved by Pichota are self-evident. Even though she does exactly what he asks her to do, and asks him for money after she is told that this is the action she should take, he tells her that he cannot pay for her flat as his wife checks his bank transfers. Even when Anita does as she is asked by the men around her who hold authority, and uses words in a way that is pre-approved by them, she still does not gain any advantages. Patriarchal control remains and Anita is disadvantaged by this overwhelming control over her usage of words. This scene shows a critical view of this situation where patriarchy, as embodied in this case by Pichota's control over Anita through words, does not help her achieve any happiness.

Anita's subversion of masculine control via verbal repetition

There is one scene in which Anita appears to gain more subversive power over Pichota via language than she is able to in the instances previously discussed, by de-railing how words in the sphere of learning are used. She also establishes her own verbal power by resisting Pichota's attempts to retain his authority. This scene comes after they return from visiting the building site of Anita's future apartment, and it shows Pichota attempting to educate Anita. The scene is interrupted by an intertitle announcing 'Wenn Pichota ihr schon nicht

helfen kann, will er sie wenigstens erziehen'. The use of the word 'erziehen' implies a highly unequal power relation, infantilising Anita within the relationship. The scene is therefore set up with a traditional distribution of power and gender, where a more authoritative man teaches a woman who is in a subservient position. However, this balance of power is disrupted by Anita's usage of words, as will now become apparent.

It is very unclear what exactly Pichota is teaching her in his first attempt. They appear to be going over texts together while he tests her comprehension. At one point Anita takes one of the phrases apparently seen by Pichota in the book they are reading and says 'Auf deutsch', then tries to re-summarise the phrase. She does this erroneously, causing Pichota to throw his pen on the book in frustration. Anita, however, does not show the same frustration and does not acknowledge Pichota's annoyance. There is then a cut to a different comprehension scene, in which we see Pichota read aloud from Brecht's collection *Geschichten von Herrn Keuner*, specifically the text 'Wenn Herr K. einen Menschen liebte' (Brecht, 2012, p.45). The fact that there is a Brecht quotation here harks back to the scene with the female parole officer discussed previously. That scene also uses a Brecht reference before the parole officer undermines a male character's control over words, foreshadowing what is about to take place here. Pichota reads from the Brecht text to Anita: "'Was tun Sie", wurde Herr K. gefragt, "wenn Sie einen Menschen lieben?" "Ich mache einen Entwurf von ihm", sagte Herr K., "und Sorge dass es ihm ähnlich wird" "Wer, dem Entwurf?" "Nein, der Mensch". Anita then repeats what she can understand from this reading and Pichota checks her comprehension of the text. Anita appears to fail his comprehension test, mixing up the order in which the person should fit the draft, or the other way round. They repeat the exercise and Pichota gives her the correct answer as to which way round it should be, to which Anita replies 'Hab' ich schon gesagt!' and laughs, smiling at Pichota. Pichota does not return the smile when the camera re-focuses on him.

Anita appears, upon first watching this scene, to be incapable of basic tasks of comprehension or of repeating set phrases. This interpretation would make Pichota appear to be in the privileged knowledge position and gender position, as would traditionally fit his status as a man in society, and a teacher in this situation. Anita in contrast cannot master the simple task of repetition. She appears unable to be educated, thereby seeming to fall into a stereotypical, subservient female role. However, this interpretation does not account for Anita's attitude, which develops in the repetition of the Brecht quotation. When Anita's repetition of the Brecht quotation is taken into account, this scene can also be read as Anita short-circuiting expected ways of interacting with language. She can be seen as subverting power through words, as well as Pichota's power as her teacher, her hierarchical superior and, ostensibly, her gendered superior. She creates her own way of using words taken from Pichota's dialogue which he is using to try and educate her. Once again, despite her marginalised status as a woman in society, she can succeed in using language in a way that subverts patriarchal authority and undermines men.

Anita says that she understands what Pichota is reading to her, but then repeats it incorrectly. She then asserts that she has in fact understood his words and that she did originally repeat it correctly, causing Pichota's frustration. In this scene she is highly disruptive and knowing. This knowingness is indicated by her laughing at Pichota's frustration. She also smiles while repeating his point erroneously, and while Pichota corrects her, she cannot suppress this reaction. **Figure 24:**



Figure 24: Anita's knowing smile when Pichota corrects her.

The camera in this scene also moves from focussing on Pichota to highlighting Anita's reaction as she laughs and smiles. Kluge privileges her image in this scene through his use of the camera's focus, drawing the audience's attention to her humorous undercutting of his authority. While she makes the point that she did actually understand the phrase, she also interrupts and overlaps Pichota's speech. This interruption adds to her undermining of him. It brings the audience's attention to her attempt to take control over the arena of learning, and also to her taking control over her own words. Her interruption detracts from Pichota's attempt to teach her and use education as a tool with which he may dominate her.

Therefore, although this scene may initially appear to place Anita in a traditional gender position and one that lacks power, her reaction to Pichota's attempt at teaching her shows her subverting, via language and repetition, this relationship's power dynamics. She also shows her ability to construct her own meaning out of existing language, by

disconnecting words from their traditional meanings. She achieves this disconnecting effect by using Pichota's words and turning them to her own use, just to aggravate him. By inverting the original Brecht quotation and making it her own by re-ordering the words and repeating them for her own purpose, she shows her ability once again to successfully create new uses for existing language. It could be argued that Kluge again shows how women are indeed able to resist male authority through using language for their own purposes and power. In an echo of Foucault, this resistance takes shape at the same time and in the same place as the men around them try to construct this power, thereby establishing a space for a critical view of hegemonic patriarchal power structures.

Frau Pichota, words, power and performativity

It is not only Anita and the female parole officer who show the potential for a progressive view of gender held in Kluge's female characters. Frau Pichota's relationship with her husband also shows some upsetting of traditional power relations. Not only does she control and monitor his finances, she also subverts his masculine authority via language to some degree. When her dialogue is analysed and when she is not just mentioned by Pichota and actually speaks herself, this subversion is inconsistent, although it is still definitively present.

Frau Pichota appears to be portrayed as an authoritative woman by Kluge, who has some command over her husband. As previously noted, Pichota claims that his wife checks all of his bank transfers, and this is why he is unable to lend Anita any money for her apartment. If this is the truth, then Frau Pichota clearly holds a great deal of power in this marriage through this financial control. By checking her husband's finances, she also ensures that he is not holding any secrets from her by purchasing items she is unaware of, or by financially supporting his extra-marital affairs. Her presence and authority over

Pichota are also felt by the audience during his affair with Anita in visual terms. In a scene after Anita and Pichota have been in a romantic embrace, Anita asks if she can either go with Pichota to his meeting, or stay in his apartment, to which he replies 'Lass mich 'mal in Ruhe'. The camera then pans to a framed picture of Frau Pichota. **Figure 25:**



Figure 25: Frau Pichota's image looking on disapprovingly.

It is clear that Frau Pichota's presence in Pichota's mind, represented by this shot, holds some influence over his actions and contributes to his inability to commit fully to his affair with Anita. Her character is thereby given power over her husband, and does not conform to any traditional standards of a passive female characterisation.

In the only scene where Frau Pichota is physically on screen, rather than her presence being invoked by her husband or represented through a photograph, her words show both her traditional role as a submissive wife who is not allowed to use her words for her own purposes, as well as her own attempts at discursive resistance. This particular

scene comes after Pichota is seen declaring his love for Anita, and his willingness to do anything for her. The scene in question depicts Frau Pichota talking about her marriage, accompanied by a female companion, while getting changed into different outfits. Frau Pichota's usage of words here suggests an attempted subversion of language and an alternative usage of the power of military discourse. However, this subversion is ultimately rejected in favour of the established structures of accepted, bourgeois life, including marriage. An alternative use of language and words, conveying a rejection of tradition within marriage and an accompanying subversion of traditional gender roles is not fully established by Frau Pichota, although the idea is entertained by her.

In her first spoken line, Frau Pichota states 'Ich kann nicht die totale Ehe ausrufen', to which the other woman in the scene replies 'Wie meinst du das?'. The fact that the woman replies to Frau Pichota in this manner, requiring further explanation from her, highlights the incongruity of Frau Pichota's expression and draws attention to her words. This brief dialogue thereby highlights language's role in constructing power relations. The choice of 'ausrufen' and 'Ehe' in this context causes marriage to be seen in an aggressive and militaristic light, as the term 'ausrufen' would normally be associated with declarations of war. This use of militaristic discourse highlights the power struggles that can frequently characterise marriage and gendered relationships.

The use of the word 'ausrufen' is not only militaristic, but it is also significant as it brings to the viewers' attention the power of language itself. If one 'declares all-out marriage', then the marriage/battle is not being fought yet. It is the performative nature of the word 'ausrufen' that brings battle into being. An aggressive state is connoted in the viewer's mind not through actions, or through Frau Pichota talking about any specific military acts, but by her referring to a declaration itself, and the usage of militaristic words. The power of language is thereby highlighted here through Frau Pichota's speech. The fact

that it is a woman and not a man using this militaristic discourse is notable, subverting traditional gender roles and potentially showing Frau Pichota as able to subvert normalised masculine power. It would conventionally be a male character, such as an army general, who would use militaristic discourse, rather than a woman such as Frau Pichota. Kluge's film subverts stereotypes regarding masculine and feminine characters and thereby supports aims of deconstructing gendered stereotypes on screen.

However, this discursive subversion of gender roles is not carried out without hesitation. Despite the militaristic references in her language, Frau Pichota specifically says that she will *not* be 'declaring all-out marriage'. Even though there is the potential for subversion of gender roles through language in this instance, this subversion is lessened by the overall meaning of Frau Pichota's statement. The audience remains aware that although their attention is drawn to this deconstruction of gender roles through language, this is only a partial and frustrated subversion of gendered power. Her character does not entirely deconstruct gendered stereotypes, although her portrayal hints that it is possible.

Frau Pichota speaks further about her unsatisfactory marriage and lack of power in this scene. She says, referring to her husband, that 'Er dreht durch wenn ich was sage, wenn ich nichts sage dreht er auch durch, also sage ich nichts'. When this phrase is combined with her previous assertion that she cannot simply proclaim all-out marriage, despite her aggressive language as previously noted, the overall conclusion that Frau Pichota appears to come to is that her speech is not listened to, and her opinion counts for little. It would appear that in her view, her own use of words and language, subversive or otherwise, is ignored. Naturally, this lack of power is linked intrinsically to her position within patriarchy. It is her husband's potentially aggressive reaction that ensures that she will not say anything, and therefore he is the reason that she cannot 'die totale Ehe ausrufen'. With Frau Pichota's characterisation in this scene, it would appear that Kluge is

arguably highlighting the potential for subversion of gender roles through language and an alternative use of militaristic discourse. However, he could also be simultaneously showing the fact that this subversion may be ultimately frustrated due to the patriarchal power structures that surround women.

When discussing how she will re-integrate into Pichota's life after the end of his affair with Anita, Frau Pichota says that she will suddenly re-appear on the scene, after her absence is noted by other men whom Pichota works with. While she says this, Frau Pichota is getting changed from wearing a simple black long-sleeved dress into a highly elaborate beaded evening gown. **Figure 26, Figure 27:**



Figure 26: Frau Pichota's first, simple dress.



Figure 27: Frau Pichota changing into an evening dress.

By showing her changing clothes from a simple outfit into an elaborate one, this scene implies that for Frau Pichota, the role of politician's wife is in fact a highly artificial, constructed one, requiring a certain degree of performance. The act of changing clothes, as seen above, could be seen as an on-screen costume change in order to perform this role convincingly.

A brief theoretical explanation of performativity as a method of deconstructing gender roles is necessary at this point. Understanding the concept of performativity can help explain why showing how this gendered role of 'wife' is constructed could be seen as something that supports a progressive view of gender. In Butler's theory of performativity as elaborated in 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory' (1988) and *Gender Trouble* (1990), there is no such thing as an essential or inherent gender, it is rather constituted through repeated social acts and rituals, which are learnt through repetition and copying of other prevailing discursive

representations. In *Gender Trouble* (1990) gender is described as both a 'construction that regularly conceals its genesis' and a 'cultural fiction' (Butler, 1988, p.522). Butler explains that the performance of an intelligible gender occurs when there is an appearance of contingency between sex, desire and gender (Butler, 1990, p.23). This contingency then forms an illusion of a 'true' gender identity and sexual 'truth' which produces coherent identities and coherent gender norms, which take the forms of heterosexual desire and discrete, asymmetrical gender relations (Butler, 1990, p.23). Exposure of the performativity and artificiality of gendered constructs can be seen as a way in which gender can be de-stabilised. This de-stabilisation can take different forms- for example the repetition of heterosexual constructs, but in non-heterosexual contexts (Butler, 1990, p.41). Butler also suggests a 'subversive repetition' (Butler, 1990, p.42) of the acts that constitute gender, as well as an exposure of the artificiality of these acts as ways that gender stereotypes can be de-stabilised and fought against (Butler, 1990, p.44).

Frau Pichota getting changed to perform her role as a politician's wife could be seen as a 'subversive repetition' (Butler, 1990, p.42) of an artificial gender role. It is clear that she is in fact not happily married and is rather fully aware of her marriage's problems, and is playing this role in an artificial context. She is deliberately exposing the artificiality of her role as a politician's wife by discussing how she will go about playing it, and also changing her clothes while discussing this. The setting of this clothes-changing scene also adds to Kluge's portrayal of Frau Pichota as a woman who is playing a constructed gender role. The backdrop, as pictured above in **Figure 26** and **Figure 27**, is reminiscent of a curtain, calling to the viewer's mind a theatrical stage. Once again, the fact that she is performing the role of a wife, rather than naturally and seamlessly existing in a married state is emphasised, hence her reluctance to declare all-out marriage. It could be said that Kluge appears to question and problematise the traditional role of 'wife' here, much as I

have argued in my Introduction that he also does with the role of 'mother'. He undertakes this problematisation by highlighting the artificiality of the role of a politician's wife, and exposing its constructed nature.

Although Frau Pichota also appears to be a woman who could be seen as stereotypically feminine in appearance, it is notable that Kluge does not portray this as a 'natural' kind of beauty. On the contrary, she is shown as wearing obvious makeup, heavy jewellery, and a hairstyle which would take a great deal of time, styling and money to maintain. **Figure 28:**



Figure 28: Frau Pichota's elegant, feminine, but not necessarily natural appearance.

As can be seen above, heavy eyeliner, pearls and a neatly maintained hairstyle are all part of Frau Pichota's meticulously constructed appearance which helps her to play the role of the politician's wife. Although it is not the case that we see her putting these elements of her appearance together, unlike when the audience sees her getting dressed, they remain

highly noticeable nonetheless. Kluge's decision to show Frau Pichota's face in this close-up as shown in **Figure 28** draws the audience's attention to her features, with their artificial markers of femininity. Her appearance is especially notable when contrasted with Anita's image in the next scene, where she has previously been in a romantic embrace with Pichota. **Figure 29**:



Figure 29: Anita's less manicured, more natural and less posed appearance.

Even though Anita's scene, as it is set after she and Pichota have apparently made love, would lend itself more obviously to Kluge showing her getting dressed or putting make-up on, these actions are not present. The artificiality and constructed femininity of Frau Pichota's role as a politician's wife is further highlighted by the way it contrasts with the type of femininity portrayed by Anita.

To summarise the position held by Frau Pichota in this film, her use of aggressive language and military discourse as a character who appears to be traditionally feminine shows her entertaining the possibility of breaking free of established gender stereotypes.

However, she does not ultimately convert this potential into a permanent disruption of the power relations at work in the marriage she is a part of. It is implied by Kluge that she does not undertake this action because of the restrictions placed upon her by patriarchy and because of her husband's potentially aggressive reaction, as she says that he will 'durchdrehen' if she says anything, showing her to be another character who is a victim of patriarchal control. Frau Pichota's character also undermines the image of the traditional married couple. She displays the artificiality of the role of a politician's wife, which she must play. Her character can therefore be read as supporting the view of this film as progressive in terms of gender in multiple ways, centred around different ways of deconstructing stereotypical female roles.

Conclusion

The relationship between language, gender and power in *Abschied von Gestern* is constantly highlighted by Kluge in the film, which in turn exposes unequal power relations. The female characters in this film have differing levels of ability in subverting male authority and resisting traditional language use. In addition, a subversive use of discourse and words is shown by Kluge to be a strategic method used by female characters to resist masculine power. When Kluge depicts women in this film being blocked from achieving happiness, success or self-improvement by patriarchal structures, he portrays patriarchy in a negative light.

The female parole officer does indeed manage to show the possibility of overtaking male authority via language. Anita also subverts male authority via language in the scene where Pichota tries to educate her, undermining his authority via laughter and changing the way language is connected to traditional meaning. She therefore shows her ability to create alternative meaning out of pre-existing words, in the same way that her

parole officer subverts the priest's authority and suggests her own ability to use words to resist patriarchal power. Frau Pichota is also able to partially subvert masculine discursive power through her usage of militaristic discourse. It could be said that a point is being made by Kluge that, following Foucault, there is a definite potential for subversion of masculine authority by female characters through words and discourse. This subversion can take shape through a strategic use of words and language in the same arenas where masculine characters try to establish power, and this subversion can change the flow of power between individuals.

However, when Kluge depicts the spheres of the law, male-controlled employment and academia, he unambiguously shows these as areas where male discursive authority ultimately remains in control. That said, the audience is encouraged to identify with and feel sympathy for Anita's plight, caused by her mis-treatment in these areas of society. Even though she may not successfully verbally subvert all arenas of masculine authority, the way Kluge portrays those that block her path could still be seen as progressive, as he appears to depict patriarchal forces negatively. This film therefore is able to be seen as progressive in terms of gender in multiple ways. It shows women as somewhat able to subvert patriarchal forces through language, and when they are forced to submit to patriarchal powers, the audience is encouraged to sympathise with their position.

Bodies and Gender in *Der starke Ferdinand*

When considering Kluge's 1976 film *Der starke Ferdinand*, the question of how Kluge portrays patriarchal figures when they are his filmic protagonists emerges. Ferdinand Rieche, played by Heinz Schubert, is the protagonist of Kluge's film. The film is based on a short story of Kluge's, *Ein Bolschewist des Kapitals*, originally published in his volume *Lernprozesse mit tödlichem Ausgang* in 1973. To summarise the film's narrative: Ferdinand Rieche becomes the new security guard at a large factory, after having left his job as a policeman. In this job, Rieche becomes fanatical and begins to train his work-force into a para-military organisation. He is depicted as constantly at odds with those around him, especially his superiors at work, leading to his being fired. To prove that his extreme security measures are in fact necessary, the film culminates in Rieche trailing a politician, before accidentally shooting him with a sniper rifle (it was intended to only be a warning shot). After this incident, Rieche is caught and interviewed, and the film ends. The film is mostly shot in a conventional style and has a narrative without too many great leaps forward or backward in time. Overt montage or dissonance between sound and image, or discontinuous editing, are also not found in the film. As we have seen in my previous chapters, these film-making elements are generally recognised hallmarks of Kluge's film style (we see them, for example, in *Abschied von Gestern*). However, the audience is still encouraged to become active through Kluge's use of humour and unexpected images throughout the film. Interspersing the film's main narrative are the sub-plots of Rieche's thoroughly odd relations with women, such as Gertie Kahlmann, and his attempts to reinforce patriarchal authority in his workplace, which are often frustrated and shown to be somewhat ridiculous.

The fact that there is a male central character in this film who would be expected to be a source of hegemonic patriarchal authority, as he is the factory's chief of security, means that this film is a suitable subject through which to interrogate further the question of how exactly Kluge depicts patriarchal forces in his films. The question remains- does he support patriarchal forces and stereotypical depictions of gender in this film, as feminist critics like Schlüpmann and Sander who were mentioned in my Introduction have accused him of doing in his other films? Or, does he show a view of men, as well as a view of gender relations, which serves to challenge patriarchal control and gender stereotypes? These are the questions around which I will centre my discussion of this film.

In this chapter I will focus on the representation of bodies in this film to explore how Kluge depicts patriarchal control. I will also look at how he uses the physical aspects of characters on screen to challenge prevailing discourses about male and female bodies. The reason given in my introductory chapter as to why I have chosen to look at Kluge's depiction of bodies in my research on this film is that Kluge has written about the body as something that can contain an element of disruption. In his words, the body is a 'disharmonische Ganze' (Kluge and Negt, 2001, p.1214). It would therefore be useful to see if Kluge's ideas about disruptive bodies extend to the portrayal of bodies which subvert and disrupt gender expectations and stereotypes, allowing Kluge's depiction of bodies to be seen as progressive in gender terms.

I have also chosen to focus on bodies in my analysis because it is immediately evident on first watching *Der Starke Ferdinand* that the physical elements of character portrayals do not necessarily conform to gender stereotypes. Heinz Schubert, who plays Rieche, is much shorter than all of the characters around him. His lack of physical stature immediately leaps out at the viewer, even on first viewing the film, and contrasts with his attempts to be a conventionally patriarchal and authoritative figure. This casting choice of

a shorter man immediately brings forth questions of how Kluge has chosen to depict patriarchal characters in physical terms, as well as how he appears to be dismantling gender stereotypes in this film through the use of bodies. Both of these questions will be explored in this chapter.

Dismantling gender stereotypes, as well as showing patriarchal figures that attempt to embody traditional hegemonic masculinity to be fallible, are both acts that could be seen as progressive in terms of gender. These actions undermine existing ideas and stereotypes of how men and women are supposed to act in certain ways. Harmful gender stereotypes are those that place women in passive roles and show women to embody negative attributes, only allowing men to be seen positively, and as the holders of authority. These ideas harm women as they trap them in roles in which they cannot reach self-determination or authority. Undermining these stereotypes helps to move society in the direction of gender equality by removing these self-evidently harmful ideas about gendered behaviour. By discussing how Kluge undermines patriarchal control and dismantles gender stereotypes through his depictions of bodies in this film, this analysis will provide further answers to my overarching research question of how progressive in terms of gender Kluge's films can be said to be. I will also shift the focus of my analysis. My focus will move from how Kluge examines women under patriarchy, the prime concern of my chapter on *Abschied von Gestern*, to how he depicts the representatives of patriarchal control themselves. This shift will bring a new dimension to my analysis of Kluge's depiction of the issue of gender relations in his films and their relationship to patriarchal structures.

Critical context

As noted in my preceding chapter and Introduction, there is a great deal of existing critical analysis which concentrates on Kluge's portrayals of women in order to examine his approach to gender relations in his films. In contrast, despite the fact that there has been a large number of publications in the past decade which have examined the portrayal of men and masculinity in German film, this critical trend has not continued into the discourse surrounding Kluge's films. Publications concerned with the portrayal of men and masculinity in German film during this recent period have included Krämer's 2012 article 'Models of Masculinity in Postwar Germany: The *Sissi* Films and the West German *Wiederbewaffnungsdebatte*', and Leal's 2012 article 'American cinema and the construction of masculinity in film in the Federal Republic after 1945'. Layne's 2011 thesis *Black Voices, German Rebels: Acts of Masculinity in Postwar Popular Culture* and Morag's 2009 volume *Defeated Masculinity: Post-traumatic Cinema in the Aftermath of War* also show this recent trend towards examining masculinity and men in German cinema. The latter volume does contain a discussion of masculinity in the New German Cinema but only refers to Kluge's film *Die Patriotin* extremely briefly (Morag, 2009, p.41). By looking at the portrayal of Rieche in this film as an example of Kluge's attitude to masculinity and how he portrays men, I will place my research in this continuing trend of film criticism. This chapter will thereby expand the range of critical analysis concerning gender in Kluge's films.

Some critics have examined *Der starke Ferdinand's* position as an appeal to the mainstream by Kluge. Fiedler's analysis of the film mainly concentrates on the context in which it was produced and what Kluge was trying to achieve with the film. He notes that the use of a well-known television actor to play Rieche and the lack of overtly non-mainstream film-making techniques show that Kluge was trying to reach a wide audience

with *Der starke Ferdinand* (Fiedler, 1984, p.228). Fiedler also says that this aim of reaching a broad range of spectators was behind Kluge's decision to release a re-edited version in 1977 with a different distributor in West Germany, as the original release was a commercial failure (Fiedler, 1984, p.228). He notes that the re-edited version became a modest success (Fiedler, 1984, p.228). Corrigan, another critic writing at the time of the film's release, comments on the lack of overt montage in this film (Corrigan, 1983, p.93). He suggests that this stylistic choice was indeed an attempt to appeal to the mainstream, and points out this style as an outlier within Kluge's oeuvre (Fiedler, 1984 p.228). I will elaborate further on Corrigan's overall argument concerning the film in due course. Other analyses of Rieche's portrayal have concentrated on his political significance within the context of 1970s West Germany. Pflaum interprets the film as showing how an obsessive concern with law and order can turn into violent conduct (Pflaum, 1990, p.72). Fiedler notes the film's violent end and its political significance, saying it reflects the terrorist acts of the RAF in 1977 (Fiedler, 1984, p.220).

Returning to Corrigan's afore-mentioned article, his overall argument is one that sees Rieche as constantly negotiating control over the different spatial zones within which he exists and moves. These zones are those around his immediate body, his home, and the factory. Corrigan suggests that this negotiation represents Rieche's own subjective interpretation of reality, which in turn comes into conflict with the views of others (Corrigan, 1983, p.99). He then puts this analysis into the larger context of Kluge's work. He interprets the narrative techniques employed by Kluge in this film as representing 'a world made of multiple fictions in a plethora of spatial and temporal circumstances' (Corrigan, 1983, p.108). According to Corrigan, these narrative techniques in *Der starke Ferdinand* represent Kluge's view of both reality and history being entirely subjective and the impossibility of finding any concrete, singular truth.

Thus far, there has been little discussion of how Kluge represents bodies in this film, and the relationship between the body and his understanding of gender. Flinn discusses the issue of gendered bodies in Kluge's work, but she is not concerned with *Der starke Ferdinand*. Rather she is interested in another of Kluge's films, *Die Patriotin*, a film which she uses to analyse Kluge's approach to history. Her prime concern is how gendered bodies are allowed to represent trauma. To examine this subject she uses the example of the speaking General's Knee in *Die Patriotin*, a film consisting of different vignettes in which the fictional history teacher Gabi Teichert attempts to unearth the past by literally digging it up with a shovel (Flinn, 2004, pp.91-135). In this analysis, Flinn notes a difference in Kluge's attitudes to male and female bodies. She feels that in his films, 'women's bodies are constructed in terms of (illogical, blundering) potentiality', whereas male bodies are characterised by '(unmoving, blundering) activity' (Flinn, 2004, p.122). She also re-iterates Kluge's view of the body as an 'unstable power centre of potential' potentially divorced from any kind of gendered specificity and its restrictions (Flinn, 2004 p.123). She finally comes to the conclusion that the use of the fragmented body part of the general's knee to tell historical stories in *Die Patriotin* is supposed to offer a different context for new histories to be told (Flinn, 2004a). However, as it is in fact a male general's knee, she suggests that there is no space given by Kluge to alterity in historical representations, as the usage of a male general's knee as a narrator re-inscribes pre-existing power structures of military and masculine authority (Flinn, 2004a). I will, to a degree, be expanding upon Flinn's approach. In my analysis I will note how Kluge depicts a different attitude to male and female bodies respectively in *Der Starke Ferdinand*. However, this is a point that Flinn only makes briefly, and I will be looking at this issue in a different filmic context. More importantly, I will be examining the way in which this film reverses conventional expectations of depictions of gendered bodies, an issue which is pointed to in some of

Flinn's conclusions about Kluge's approach to gender relations but which she does not herself examine.

Common discursive tropes concerning gendered bodies

As I will be questioning how Kluge uses bodies in this film in a way which undermines both gender stereotypes and patriarchal power, I first need to elaborate on certain specific concepts that are frequently used in discussion of gendered bodies. These concepts will give me a framework of prevailing tropes in gender portrayals against which to compare Kluge's own depiction of bodies in this film, to see how they fit into, or challenge, stereotypical depictions of gender. I will be drawing on concepts of fragmentary and unstable femininity, the cyborg, as well as gender performativity, which has already been discussed in my analysis of *Abschied von Gestern*.

In *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (1994), Grosz outlines a key difference between the way masculine and female bodies are frequently constructed in prevailing discourse. Specifically, she suggests that female bodies are frequently constructed discursively as 'leaky'; that is they are viewed as being potentially out of control, and therefore as more unstable than male bodies. She states that female bodies are 'represented as [...] liquidity [...] uncontrollability [...] contagion and disorder' (Grosz, 1994, p.203). She contrasts the discursive concern with female bodily fluids and female bodies' permeability with the lack of medical literature on male bodily fluids (Grosz, 1994, pp.193-203). From this comparison she draws the conclusion that in a discursive sense, women are more linked to their bodies, which are constructed as fallible, while men are rather more distanced from their bodies, which are constructed as stable and infallible (Grosz, 1994, pp.193-203). She also makes the point that this is how bodies are often constructed textually, rather than being an objective reality (Grosz, 1994, p.ix). Grosz's

conceptualisation of the discourse of women's bodies follows theorisations as to why female subjectivities are perceived as out-of control and unstable. Women in this theorisation are seen as irrational, due to discourses that emerged during the Enlightenment, such as the 'Man of Reason' (Shildrick, 1997, p.98). This 'Man of Reason' was by definition rational, intelligent, knowledgeable and male, leaving femininity to be construed as the reverse of this (Shildrick, 1997, p.98).

In addition to the discursively constructed concept of female bodies as unstable, female bodies are also frequently seen as monstrous. The idea of female bodies as monstrous is one that will be referred to throughout my analysis, as it appears that Kluge's film reverses this expectation, and shows male bodies to be the monstrous and boundary-breaking ones in this film. The idea of female bodies as monstrous is explored, for example, by Braidotti, who writes about the discursive construction of female bodies with references to the motifs of multiplicity, monsters, and gender in both her 'Signs of Wonder and Traces of Doubt: On Teratology and Embodied Differences' (1996) and 'Mothers, Monsters and Machines' (1997). In 'Mothers, Monsters and Machines', Braidotti explains the link between instability, monstrousness, and femininity. She notes that women's bodies, especially pregnant ones, can be presented as sources of horror, together with monstrous bodies (Braidotti, 1997, p.63-65). This is because, she claims, pregnant bodies are discursively constructed as reminders of both life and death concentrated in one grotesque body, which does not fit the normative view of human perfection which, following traditions established from Aristotle, is presented as male, constant and unchanging (Braidotti, 1997, p.63-65). As Braidotti notes, the female body is construed as 'monstrous by excess; she transcends established norms and transgresses boundaries', she is 'ambiguous' and 'Other-than' (Braidotti, 1997, p.66). The maternal imagination is noted by Braidotti as being linked to monstrous births, and the instability of both pregnant

bodies and monstrous ones in medical discourse is also noted (Braidotti, 1996, pp.145-139). Braidotti's overall view can be summarised as emphasising the links between the monstrous in discourse and the feminine body. She provides another discursive lens through which Kluge's depiction of gendered bodies in this film can usefully be analysed, namely that of the monstrous being associated with the feminine.

The idea of the cyborg is connected to the concept of gender instability, and this idea will be used in my analysis of unstable portrayals of gender in *Der starke Ferdinand*. Haraway defines the figure of the cyborg as a 'cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of reality as well as a creature of fiction' (Haraway, 2004, p.7), and 'a creature in a post-gender world' (Haraway, 2004, p.9). The cyborg presents a method of thinking about different formations of alliances between genders, human and machine, across divisions of race and class. In Haraway's formulation, by re-envisioning these traditional ways of dividing up the world, the cyborg challenges these divisions as natural or essentially bound to specific types of bodies, for example, in re-imagining the concept of gender divisions. Haraway explores the position of the cyborg as an unstable being that can contain seemingly contradictory impulses, fighting against gendered dualisms which reinforce the attempt to enforce domination of one over an imagined 'Other'(Haraway, 2004, p.35). The cyborg does not reflect a gender dualism. Rather it reflects inconsistency in gender through a non-traditional gender form. The motif of the cyborg reflects a radical way of thinking about gender and it can be seen as a figure suggesting the possibility of new gender forms and of gender instability, providing another lens through which to examine Kluge's portrayal of bodies in this film.

The way that the cyborg can represent a figure beyond traditional gender divisions, along with the discursive construction of female bodies as leaky, unstable and monstrous, will all be used in my analysis as lenses through which to examine Kluge's portrayal of

gendered bodies throughout *Der Starke Ferdinand*. To begin with, I will look at how male bodies in this film appear to be shown as cyborg-like and unstable entities by Kluge, and what implications this has for the deconstruction of gender norms in the film.

Destabilisation of masculine bodies in the medical sphere

The sequence of brief scenes towards the beginning of the film where Rieche and his colleague Herr Grün are in a medical facility helps to establish the fact that gender portrayals within this film do not conform to traditional standards or patriarchal norms. This particular sequence depicts the way the factory carries out health checks on the two men and begins with an examination of Herr Grün. It is made clear within this scene that he has evidently failed some tests, the results of which are given to him by a male doctor. It would appear that his failure is due to his age, and as a result he is in danger of losing his job. We are then taken to Rieche's office where he asks a female worker, who has been accused of theft, if he can use her urine for his health test. He is shown decanting the urine into a container in a toilet. He uses this sample for his health check, only to be told that his stolen urine has tested positive for pregnancy. He is then put onto a strange machine with many straps and a facemask and mounts an exercise bike, while a female doctor informs him that his other test results are all very good.

If we start by looking at the scenes with Herr Grün, who is here a medically observed object, he has to strip to his waist, and it is abundantly clear that he is not in the peak of health. As he is undergoing a health test, he could lose his job if he appears to be unfit or unhealthy. His required virility and, in turn, his masculinity is undermined by his body shape and the sagginess of his chest, which is suggestive of female breasts. **Figure 30:**



Figure 30: The feminised body of Herr Grün.

The fact that he is naked while the doctor is clothed also emphasises his vulnerability, further feminising him on a bodily level. Clearly, Grün's job is in danger, as he says that if he were to be replaced in this position, 'Das überlebe ich nicht'. This dialogue can be read in gendered terms. What one cannot see in this sequence, but can in the rest of the film, is that the only area in which only men are employed within the factory is the upper executive levels. There are women on the factory floor, in secretarial roles and evidently, as shown within these scenes, as medical professionals, but none of the factory directors are female. For Grün, the loss of his job in a traditionally hegemonically male and executive area, and one that is evidently all male in this film's context, is a threat to his masculinity. As this potential job loss is due to his aging, his body could also be interpreted as having betrayed him through its disintegration. If we adopt the discursive framework suggested by Braidotti and Grosz, who point to the ways in which feminine bodies are

often constructed discursively as unstable, this interpretation would suggest that he is being feminised.

When considering the issue of aging being portrayed negatively, the work of Woodward, (1999) Kaplan (1999) and Sontag (1979) all suggests that the conceptualisation of aging as negative is something that is more associated with femininity than masculinity. Woodward states that women's aging has more profoundly negative consequences than men's aging (Woodward,1999, p.xiii). Kaplan, in her analysis of the aging female body on screen, says that the female aging body is pushed away from society as it has outlived its use, and this is more an issue for female than male aging bodies (1999, p.188). Sontag (1979) notes the increased vulnerability of aging women compared to men, and the fact that aging female flesh is often discursively constructed as more fear-inducing than male aging flesh. In this scene, the depiction of an aging male body that is shown to embody the negative consequences of aging (via the potential loss of a job and removal from a male working sphere) can be read as a discursive construction of femininity transposed to a male body. This sequence de-stabilises the depiction of gender expectations within the film, showing this film to be deconstructing gendered stereotypes on a physical level. Even within this short sequence of a few minutes it is evident that those in charge of organising the factory are not safe or secure in their hegemonic masculinity, but are given what could be seen as feminine attributes, thereby deconstructing expectations of gender portrayals and showing patriarchal figures as fallible.

Moving to the film's protagonist, Rieche remains in a position far below the authority and knowledge of the doctors examining him. As authority is traditionally associated with masculinity, as is the possession of knowledge, a position in which Rieche lacks knowledge could be said to be putting Rieche in a position of femininity and powerlessness. He is not only examined by the same doctor who gave Grün his test

results. He is also given his results by a female doctor. This scene fragment requires close examination to analyse its reversal of what are normally seen as typical gender roles with regards to the interaction between Rieche and the female doctor.

Much like Grün's half-naked appearance and his being sat next to the fully clothed doctor, Rieche is defined in this scene as profoundly feminised. He also seems to be presented visually almost as a cyborg, which confers even more gender instability on him, as will be explored later. The female doctor asks him to remove his undershirt, which he does, revealing a body similar to that of Grün- feminine breasts, generally saggy, with a paunch. **Figure 31:**



Figure 31: Rieche's feminised body, similar to Grün's.

The fact that his underwear seems to be digging into his paunch emphasises his fleshy physicality and also the fact that, despite test results, he may not be entirely healthy. Once again, it is necessary to put this in the wider context of the film, as we find out in a voice-over by Kluge later on that Rieche in fact has a weak kidney and a sensitive stomach. His

portrayal on a bodily level reflects this fallibility, his ageing and once again his feminisation, in line with the theories of aging often being presented as more negative for women, outlined above. Kluge's depiction of Rieche is also particularly interesting when Rieche's examination by the female doctor is considered. In this scene, it is Rieche who possesses the disintegrating, aging and feminised body, and not the authoritative female doctor, as she is fully clothed, is not as old as Rieche, and her body appears cohesive rather than disintegrating. It can be seen that traditional gender roles of authority and also the ideas of the fallibility and disintegration of feminised bodies are in fact reversed. This reversal suggests that conceptions of gender in this film do not straight-forwardly reflect any prevailing social attitudes to gender, but that aspects of masculinity and femininity are in fact fluid and not bound by biological expectations. By confounding gender expectations, it could be said that Kluge's film appears to be progressive by not portraying prevailing gender stereotypes.

There are other aspects of Rieche's depiction in this medical test that can further support the view of his character as a figure who represents an intentional confusion of gender norms, with regards to his body and physicality. The key aspect of this characterisation is the visual presentation of Rieche as part man and part machine. At first Rieche has his blood pressure taken by the male doctor. The doctor does not stop to take off the equipment from his arm while he records his measurements, and only takes it off when giving him the results. For this brief time, Rieche's arm is under the control of the male doctor, who drags it, as if Rieche were transformed into a cybernetic puppet whose limbs are controlled by the trailing cables of the medical equipment. **Figure 32:**



Figure 32: Rieche depicted as a medical cyborg puppet under the doctor's authority.

This movement emphasises the fact that even though he is high up in the factory's hierarchy, within the medical establishment he is in a vulnerable position. He is at the doctor's mercy, be they male or female, once again putting him potentially in a feminised position through a loss of authority. This loss of authority for Rieche in the medical environment remains, despite the fact that he ostensibly has power in the factory's hierarchy, emphasising that in this case patriarchal power, as embodied in the figure of Rieche, is not in fact infallible.

This depiction of Rieche as a mechanised puppet or cyborg occurs not only in the sequence with the male doctor, but also when the female doctor leads him to the exercise bike, with its strange wires and breathing apparatus. Rieche is depicted as a man-machine hybrid. In this scene, he is not being made into a humorous figure, but rather a de-familiarised and mechanised one. **Figure 33:**



Figure 33: Rieche and his technological appendages, helped by the female doctor.

When the doctor gives Rieche his results, he replies and his voice is metallic and distorted, emphasising his robot-like depiction and suggesting a fusion of human and machine. Even though Rieche is outwardly male, the cyborg-like depiction of his body in this scene makes him into a figure that would be more associated with bodies that are unstable in terms of gender. As explained in my introductory section, Haraway's theorisation of this figure is one that is representative of a character both beyond gender binaries and representative of gender fluidity. His cyborg-like representation in this scene thereby suggests a problematisation of gender boundaries, rather than the simplistic reflection of gender as fixed to biologically stable, gendered bodies.

It is the female doctor that has the closest contact to Rieche at this point, and appears to have the authority to not only give him his results, but also to remove him from and hook him up to the machine. She puts the breathing apparatus on Rieche at the outset, and takes it off him at the end of the tests. It is she that has the singular, un-

fragmented body *and* authority, placing her in a traditionally male position. We can link this position to the theories discussed above, where fragmentation, multiplicity and instability are the ways that feminine subjectivities and bodies are constructed, and she can also be compared to the unstable cyborg of Rieche whom she is controlling. It appears that traditionally female attributes are embodied by a male central character and vice-versa.

Away from this particular cyborg-like depiction of Rieche, there is also a key scene where he transfers the urine into the sample pot in the toilet in the factory before his health check, which also shows further evidence of his own biology being combined with technology. In this brief scene, the camera pans from Rieche's face down to the pipette and flask where he is decanting the urine. Although it was indicated in a previous discussion between Rieche and the female worker that this was what her urine would be used for, if viewer expectations were to be met, then Kluge would show a pan down from Rieche's face to his actual urination, as the sound of dripping fluid would suggest. The substitution of an expected urination shot with that of the pipette is something of an upheaval of expectations for the viewer, underlining the upheaval of gendered norms in this scene with regards to bodies, once again centred on Rieche.

The actual act of the transferral of urine is highly suggestive, once again, of a cyborg body. For one, Rieche's pipette can be seen as a penis substitute and is indicative of the hybrid of non-human and human already discussed. **Figure 34:**



Figure 34: Rieche with his pipette/penis substitute.

This striking image suggests a replacement of what is commonly seen as the most significant male signifier- a penis- with a medical/technological substitute. This shot undermines a naturalised image of a male body by disrupting expectations of what 'should' be seen here in the act of urination. The fragmentation of the cyborg-like body of Rieche is also emphasised by the composition of the colours in this shot. The bandage on his stomach is never explained and has disappeared by the time he is in the medical facility. It helps to create a shot of contrasting tones and also emphasises the fragmented nature of Rieche's body, not only in its colours but also in the fact that he appears to have undergone a kind of bodily repair. The portrayal of Rieche in this scene denaturalises traditional signifiers of hegemonic masculinity, those of unity, coherency and stability through the cyborg-like depiction of his body. Once again, Rieche's depiction shows an

unstable portrayal of gender roles in this film, rather than one where they are fixed, or reflect prevailing gender discourses.

The mechanisms that construct gendered bodies are exposed in this scene through the depiction of Rieche's urine transferral in order to create the illusion of a healthy body for the medical test. This exposure means that the performativity of gender is shown, and gender norms are thereby destabilised. To re-iterate, in Butler's terms of performativity, the exposure of the mechanisms of the construction of gender is one way in which gender norms can be undermined (Butler, 1990, p.44). This scene shows Rieche attempting to construct a seemingly healthy body with this urine-transferral. He exposes his body's methods of construction, as it is the combination of female urine with his own body's other test results that Rieche will present to the medical facility as representing his entire body. It could therefore be argued that Rieche is also trying to perform the role of a healthy male. The audience, however, is fully aware that this is not a 'natural' or 'coherent' body in gendered terms. Rieche's de-naturalised body and the audience's awareness of its construction in this scene thereby exposes the fact that the 'natural' gendered body can be perceived as an artificial construct and that gendered norms can be perceived as unstable. This scene thereby challenges the conception of gender as stable or immutable.

When Rieche's results after this urine transferral are given to him, he is told that he has 'ganz junge Urin', to which he replies 'Selbstverständlich'. There is huge irony in this exchange, of which the audience is fully aware. It is not at all natural that he should have young urine, which brings up the issues of aging and bodies, previously discussed in this analysis. He has already exposed the mechanisms of construction of this supposedly youthful and healthy male gender position, and the audience knows that his 'ganz junge Urin' does not belong to him. It is neither natural nor self-evident that he should have achieved these test results. By implying that his body is 'of course' natural, while the

audience knows that it is most definitely not, the idea of a gendered body as natural and consistent is once again thrown into question.

It could be said that in using a pregnant woman's urine, Rieche is combining his own bodily construction with that of a woman in a physical state that is considered to be exclusively female, namely that of pregnancy. This interpretation would tip Rieche even further into feminisation as he is being merged in bodily terms with a woman in an exclusively feminine state. There is also an implication that Rieche was not aware of the female worker's pregnancy. He probably would not have chosen her for the urine substitute if he was aware of her status. When he is given the results of the urine sample, he says 'Aha', before taking a momentary pause for thought. Rieche is in a position of unawareness when compared to the female worker whose urine he has obtained, thereby conferring on his character the attribute of ignorance, also further feminising him by denying him specific scientific knowledge. The fact that Rieche is unable to access correct scientific knowledge feminises him due to the discourses of the 'Man of Enlightenment' and science being a traditionally male pursuit, as described earlier in this chapter. By showing him to be ignorant in this context, Kluge could therefore be said to feminise him and further confuse gender stereotypes in this film, as well as undermining assumptions of hegemonic patriarchal authority.

It is not only in this medical arena where Rieche appears to have a relationship with technology that depicts him in cyborg-like terms. There is also a scene when he is observing a rival factory, and has what appears to be a double periscope to aid him in this observation. **Figure 35:**



Figure 35: Rieche's periscope carrying out technically aided observation.

By using this technology, which aids his abilities in surveillance, it could be argued once again that Rieche is given attributes which support the view of his characterisation as a semi-mechanic man. By being depicted as a cyborg, he becomes a figure that de-stabilises gender roles, this time outside of the medical sphere, and instead in his enforcement of security and in his own sphere of employment.

In addition to the fact that the image above shows Rieche's body once again merging with technology, it also brings up another facet of his characterisation which is important- that of a constant ridicule and humour that Kluge brings to Rieche's physical portrayal. The shot shown above is evidently amusing. The periscope eyes look alien-like and also emphasise the fact that Rieche is not as all-powerful or omniscient as he would like to be in his job. The use of humour and ridicule throughout Kluge's portrayal of Rieche, especially in his working environment, will now be discussed as another way that Kluge depicts a disempowered and physically fallible man.

Rieche's humorous, emasculated body in the sphere of employment

Rieche is constantly made into a humorous figure throughout the film. Kluge sets him up as a character who believes that he is both omniscient and all-powerful. However, Rieche's physicality often undercuts any sense of authority that he has in his job, preventing him from being seen as a successful and authoritative man. In contrast, he seems unprofessional because of this humorous depiction. As authority is a key aspect of patriarchal control, whenever he is ridiculed, it appears that Kluge is undermining the ability of patriarchal authority to be taken seriously, thereby challenging gendered stereotypes about hegemonic masculine authority.

Rieche's professional attitude is summed up by Kluge's statement near the beginning of the film. Kluge's voiceover says that, concerning the area of security, 'auf diesem Gebiet weiß [Rieche] alles'. Rieche's self perception as both omniscient and a consummate professional is counteracted and humorously contrasted with the constant ridicule that Kluge subjects him to. Towards the beginning of the film, after the context has been set for Rieche's new position in the factory (Kluge has shown a previous scandal that was caused by inappropriate actions taken by the outgoing head of security), he is shown wandering down a street past a police car. He then kicks a can across the street. **Figure 36:**



Figure 36: Rieche kicking the can across the street.

This image is accompanied by Kluge's voiceover, saying that 'Rieche ahnt von all dem nichts.' He is placed in a position of ignorance. He is simultaneously made to seem immature by taking out his frustration in a particularly child-like action. The camera during this scene stays stationary while Rieche walks down the street. The audience is not invited to sympathise with his frustration, rather to observe and laugh at his physically taking this emotion out in a particularly futile fashion. By having his knowledge questioned, and being infantilised by Kluge, Rieche seems to have his access to traditional pillars of masculinity, such as knowledge and power through work, questioned. By infantilising Rieche, who should be a patriarchal and controlling figure, the self-image of patriarchy itself is also ridiculed.

This infantilisation continues after Rieche has been accepted into the factory as its new chief of security. In order to perform his duties properly, he feels that he must know

every single inch of the factory. To depict Rieche gaining knowledge of the factory, Kluge chooses to show him climbing up the factory wall. **Figure 37:**



Figure 37: Rieche climbing up the side of the factory.

However, the fact that he is doing this to help his knowledge of the factory is not clear until after the scene of climbing has taken place, when Kluge explains via his voiceover that 'Nach 48 Stunde kennt Rieche jede Ecke im Betrieb'. This action does not appear to the audience like an understandable move for Rieche to take in order to gain full control over the security of the factory. Instead, the delayed explanation of his actions allows them to come across first and foremost as another strange act on the part of Rieche. Climbing buildings, in order to explore them, would be more associated with children, and is an immature action. Rieche's physical presence on screen is once again used by Kluge to make the audience aware that Rieche does not fit into stereotypical authoritative masculinity and to show patriarchy to be built on unstable foundations.

In addition to being infantilised by his physical actions, Kluge also humorously contrasts Rieche's on-screen presence with much taller figures on screen. This occurs with employees from multiple sectors of the factory, his superiors and also those who are his subordinates. He goes to see Herr Wilutski, one of the members of the board of the factory, who tells Rieche that he is not happy with Rieche's new position, and that he personally would not have hired him. While this discussion takes place, Rieche is several steps below Wilutski, who literally looks down upon Rieche. **Figure 38:**



Figure 38: Wilutski looks down on Rieche.

Their height difference is exaggerated by this setting of Rieche as physically below Wilutski. After Wilutski tells him not to take it personally, Rieche replies 'selbstverständlich nehm' ich das persönlich!', following Wilutski up the stairs, but Wilutski shuts his office door in Rieche's face. Rieche is physically disempowered once more, unable to gain access to where he wants to be, or to be taken seriously professionally, all of which undermines his masculinity.

When he attempts to settle into his new headquarters at the factory, he is surrounded by guards who loom over him. **Figure 39:**



Figure 39: Rieche is being physically dwarfed by those around him.

He takes up only a small part of the screen. His dialogue conveys frustration as he points out that this office is highly unsuitable, and he needs to be stationed in the central part of the factory, presumably so he can carry out his observational duties more thoroughly. He then walks purposefully out of his inadequate office. His small physical presence in the office, being loomed over by two much taller men, and his frustration combine once again to diminish any sense of traditional patriarchal authority that Rieche may have in this professional area.

There are other instances where Kluge seems to create humour for the audience out of Rieche's physical presence, and through how Rieche sees his own authority versus how others see him. In a scene later in the film, after he has begun trying to re-train the

security force in the factory, Kluge depicts Rieche in visual terms that are strikingly similar to the figure of Napoleon. **Figure 40:**



Figure 40: Rieche being depicted as a Napoleonic figure.

This image is accompanied by Kluge's voiceover describing Rieche's theory of security that he is trying to enforce throughout the factory. The key element that forms this visual comparison to Napoleon is his hand gesture, with Rieche's right hand tucked into his jacket. Rieche also attempts to cultivate an aura of authority by looking into the middle distance, a gesture associated with stoic heroism. In one sense, Rieche appears to be trying to portray authority through his physicality, and also through the supposedly unassailable theoretical grounding for his professional conduct. However, only interpreting this comparison to Napoleon as an attempt by Kluge to portray him as heroic and professional would not account for the alternative connotations that this comparison may bring to the mind of the viewer. These associations are those of the Napoleon complex. In this well-known characterisation, the Napoleon complex stands for those men who are

short, and feel that this is something that they must compensate for by gaining authority, thereby making them figures of ridicule. As Rieche is extremely short, it appears that Kluge has not chosen this visual comparison merely to represent Rieche attempting to internalise Napoleon's exceptionally successful military reputation. Rather the reference to Napoleon will cause the viewer to potentially think that Rieche, too, is a victim of a Napoleon complex, a man whose sense of masculinity is threatened, and who suffers from an increased sense of inferiority. This sense of inferiority is why he has chosen to go into the security business, which in his mind is closely associated with the military, in order to compensate for this perceived physical lack. His attempts at retaining authority and his desire to perform successfully in his job are not taken seriously by Kluge, who instead uses Rieche's physicality to undermine him. The ironic mismatch between Rieche's authoritative self-perception and reality once again humorously plays with gender stereotypes of hegemonic masculine authority and undermines the image of an unassailable patriarchy.

When Rieche's professional efforts at the factory escalate to his own espionage on other factories, he once again is portrayed as a character whose physicality serves to undermine his ability to be taken seriously and to be seen as a patriarchal source of power. He is shown by Kluge as on the run from the rival factory's security, due to his attempts at sabotage. While being pursued, he first falls down a sandbank, emphasising his physical instability, and is then caught. He is surrounded by security forces with torches. **Figure 41:**



Figure 41: Rieche's face is illuminated when he is caught.

This shot then cuts to a close up of his face, which is covered and partially obscured with a skin-coloured stocking. **Figure 42:**



Figure 42: Rieche's attempt at disguising his face.

He then kneels down on the floor, while the flashlights illuminate parts of his body, sometimes failing to light up his head. **Figure 43:**



Figure 43: Rieche kneeling down on the ground, partially illuminated.

This combination of striking shots, combined with the way that Rieche falls down the sand bank by the factory, show him as both a comical and grotesque figure. By showing him to fall over when being pursued by security, he is evidently being characterised along the lines of a slapstick and humorous figure whose authority is not to be taken seriously.

The face shown in **Figure 42** and the lighting choices made by Kluge in this night time scene indicate an attempt to gain a viewer reaction that is halfway between horror and laughter. It is the fact that Rieche has clearly chosen a skin-coloured stocking rather than a more effective balaclava which conveys the fact that he is once more being ridiculed by Kluge. Despite being a so-called expert in security, who 'weiß [...] Alles' that there is to know about this sector, his attempt at sabotage is highly ineffectual. He is physically incapable (falling over) and his body is a vehicle for the representation of this failure to act successfully. He is unable to disguise his face as shown by his choosing the wrong method of disguise- a transparent stocking rather than an opaque balaclava. He is

emasculated by being shown as physically incapable and unprofessional, and unsuccessful in the masculine sphere of security work, thereby showing his representation of patriarchal power as a subject of ridicule.

He is also arguably being visually compared to a monster in these shots. When he is lit in ways indicated in **Figures 41, 42** and **43**, he appears to be a headless and sometimes limbless creature- his head is in darkness, as are his legs and arms in some instances. His head in **Figure 42** is clearly monstrous, with a distorted face which appears swollen due to the way it is restricted by his attempt at disguise, the stocking pulled over his face. While one potential viewer reaction to his image in this scene is laughter, in another potential viewer reaction, he also could be a source of fear for the viewer who sees him as more monstrous than pathetic. In this interpretation, his figure becomes one that transgresses physical boundaries, is distorted, and is representative of what are commonly seen as feminine attributes, as attributes of a monstrous body are more commonly associated with women than men, as previously noted at the beginning of this chapter. The figure of Rieche as monstrous, which undermines conventional ways that gendered bodies are portrayed, is one that will be returned to later in my analysis, where it gains significance in comparison to the way that his romantic partner Gertie Kahlmann is depicted.

While training his security force, there is another scene where Kluge uses Rieche's physical onscreen presence in order to ridicule, infantilise and emasculate him. The scene is set on a desolate frozen wasteland, and Rieche is shown getting undressed and handing his clothes to some male assistants. The camera then pans across to the security team of the factory, making it clear that this scene is in fact some sort of training exercise. There is then a splashing sound off-screen, and the camera pans back to show that Rieche is having an icy bath in a hole that has been cut in the frozen surface. The camera pans back once

more to his security force, who are still observing him. Kluge then shows Rieche getting out of the hole and being wrapped in blankets. He zooms in to a close-up of Rieche being dried off by his assistant, whom he thanks. **Figure 44:**



Figure 44: Rieche wrapped in blankets.

This scene is humorous for multiple reasons. There is no contextualisation of this scene, for example via a voice-over explaining what the purpose of this training exercise is. The surprise for the viewer of seeing Rieche get undressed on screen is easily converted into a humorous response. Kluge pans across from an initially completely stationary security team in the first shot when the audience sees them, to showing the security team becoming slightly uncomfortable after Rieche undresses. Their unease is conveyed by the fact that they are shown to shift slightly in their positions. Their discomfort at his physicality is a cause for amusement in the audience and shows that even when trying to enforce his authority above his inferiors, Rieche is unable to do this.

The shots where Kluge shows Rieche being dried off from his icy swim are highly amusing. As shown in **Figure 44**, Rieche is clearly infantilised and is shown to be almost swaddled by his assistant, who is yet another character considerably taller than Rieche. The action of going for a swim in an icy lake was presumably supposed to be an inspiring show of masculinity by Rieche to encourage his men to be physically strong, resistant to the elements, and to embody other stereotypes of masculinity. However, in showing Rieche in this way, being dried off by someone else and being wrapped like a baby, Kluge simultaneously shows that this attempt at depicting stereotypical masculinity by Rieche is ridiculous, and infantilises him. Kluge thoroughly dismantles hegemonic masculinity by using Rieche's physicality throughout this film, including instances where he is supposed to be depicted as professional and authoritative. He is rather ridiculed, undermined, and emasculated by Kluge, showing that patriarchal figures are not to be taken seriously.

Another instance of Kluge ridiculing Rieche by showing him to act inappropriately using bodily gestures is evident when Rieche is given the assignment of protecting the upper members of the factory board from an assassination attempt. The scene is contextualised by yet more ridiculing of Rieche's inappropriate lack of physical boundaries, and his lack of professionalism. In the preceding scene, Rieche informs the board of the factory about assassination attempts on their lives, and his intention to increase security efforts. He says that this action should not be a problem, as long as the board members co-operate. Herr Wilutski asks what he means by 'co-operate', 'zum Pinkeln begleiten?' to which Rieche replies 'Unter anderen Dingen'. Rieche's lack of understanding about what appropriate physical boundaries are, with regards to working environments, is clearly being used by Kluge to humorous affect. Kluge then shows Rieche accompanying these important individuals to the opera and acting thoroughly inappropriately. He begins to do exercises behind them in the opera boxes, including stretches and squats. **Figure 45:**



Figure 45: Rieche exercising in the opera box.

During his exercises, the man shown on the furthest right of **Figure 45** turns to look behind him and shakes his head at Rieche, showing how ridiculous Rieche's actions are. Rieche also interrupts the board's enjoyment of the evening by leaning in between the boxes, ostensibly trying to look for assassins. Kluge uses Rieche's physical actions, such as undertaking exercise in an inappropriate context, as a way to show him to be ridiculous and unable to be taken seriously in his work. This usage of Rieche's body undermines his ability to be seen as a figure who performs his job successfully, and also once again shows patriarchal control as embodied by Rieche to be utterly ridiculous.

The way that the film ends supports the view that Rieche is having his masculinity and professionalism completely undermined, and again Kluge's parodic presentation of the body in gendered terms is key. At the end of the film, Rieche shoots a government minister in the chest, attempts to flee, but is captured by security forces. He is then interviewed while being taken away. In this interview he explains that he had in fact

intended to shoot at the space behind the minister in order to prove that the security forces were inadequate, as a kind of threat, but missed, and that was why the minister was injured. There are several ways in which this incident can be interpreted. The fact that Rieche misses his intended target could show that he lacks complete control over his body, and that his ability to aim a weapon was diminished because of this lack of control. This interpretation would show a potential feminisation of Rieche through his body, which is unstable and out of control, similar to how women's bodies are commonly discursively constructed, showing him to break the boundaries of gender expectations. Another potential interpretation would be to see the gun as a phallic object, representing Rieche's masculine power. In this interpretation, the gun has released its load inappropriately, in the wrong time and place, showing that Rieche does not control this phallic part of his body. His masculinity is definitively undermined by Kluge at the end of the film, showing that Rieche cannot control his body in the area he would consider to be his domain of ultimate omnipotence and power, that of security. His physicality in the domain of his workplace is used by Kluge throughout the film, including at its end, in order to ridicule Rieche, simultaneously infantilising him, undermining gender stereotypes, and showing patriarchy to be a worthy subject of ridicule.

Rieche's interactions with female workers

I will now elaborate upon the way that Rieche's interactions with women in the workforce continue to not only emasculate him, but also in some cases, show women to be more authoritative than he is. This characterisation continues the precedent set by the female doctor in the medical scene described previously. Female employees in the factory are used to emasculate Rieche in the film and to turn him into an almost slapstick figure. After a scene near the beginning of the film which shows him making notes on all of his

employees' transgressions, Kluge shows him walking outside of the factory, followed by a female employee, who chases after him. She catches up with him and confronts him, asking 'Sind Sie Herr Rieche?' He replies 'Ja' and she slaps him across the face. **Figure 46:**



Figure 46: Rieche being slapped.

He is extremely confused and as she walks away, he shouts after her 'Was?'. **Figure 47:**



Figure 47: Rieche after having been slapped.

Even though the height difference between the two is neither great nor dwelt upon by the camera in this scene, it is still notable, as can be seen in **Figure 46**. It is also significant that a woman in a supposedly subordinate position as an employee is the one who is physically punishing Rieche, further emasculating him and reversing gender expectations. Once more, Kluge appears to use physical humour when portraying Rieche's lack of power. The humour in this scene comes from the fact that the slap comes without any warning. The audience has never seen this particular employee before, and the scene is only approximately 20 seconds long, not leaving the audience time to reflect or consider what her motivations could have been. Rather she appears, slaps Rieche and disappears in an instant. Her sudden appearance and humorous actions are a provocation to the audience, asking the spectator to actively participate in interpreting the scene, and thus to consider Rieche's disempowerment.

If we now return to Rieche's scene with the female worker whose urine he uses in order to pass his health test, it can be seen that she appears to hold a great deal of authority. The fact that Rieche compels the female worker to help him pass the health test by using her urine could be seen as reflecting traditional gender norms of an active male in comparison to a passive female who submits to masculine authority. However when the depiction of their interactions is further analysed, this power dynamic is revealed to be far from straight-forward. It can be noted that the figure of the female worker is far more authoritative and has a less fragmented depiction of her body than Rieche. The viewer never sees the female worker with the same medical equipment as Rieche. They do not see, for example, her taking the urine sample herself, or delivering it to him. There is instead a direct cut from her asking why Rieche needs her urine to the afore-mentioned scene of his urine transferral. She is not portrayed as medicalised, leaky, or unstable in any way, as would perhaps be expected from traditional discursive representations of female bodies as previously mentioned.

The height difference between the two characters is immediately noticeable at the beginning of the scene, putting Rieche, until they sit down, in a physically lower position than the female worker. **Figure 48:**



Figure 48: Rieche and the taller female worker.

This height difference is perhaps also why, when the worker sits down at his desk, there is a visible moment of surprise when she makes contact with the seat - it is lower than she had expected, putting her physically on his level. This moment emphasises their height difference, despite the fact that by being sat across a desk from each other, the implicit differences in professional authority and traditional gender roles is also underlined. It is also notable that in Kluge's voiceover, she is referred to as 'eine wegen Werkdiebstahls verdächtige Person', emphasising gender neutrality. Rather than being 'eine Frau', she is 'eine [...] Person'. Her gender becomes an issue later when her urine tests positive for pregnancy, but at this point, it is not, perhaps allowing her to be read as gender neutral. While she may not yet be specifically masculinised in her depiction, she is certainly not over-feminised, as her gender neutrality is rather emphasised.

The way that the pair interact via dialogue emphasises the fact that Rieche is more uncertain than she is, giving him yet more characteristics that could arguably be read as

feminine in prevailing discourses of gender differences. He is elliptical in his aims when talking to her, asking her for 'einen persönlichen Gefallen', then changes this to 'ausgefallene Wunsch', and then finally to 'etwas ganz allgemeines'. He is most definitely avoiding directly confronting the issue. The female worker, supposedly in a subordinate position, in both gender and work terms, takes charge of the conversation, telling Rieche 'Schießen sie sich schon los', which is far more direct. Rieche does not tell her verbally what he requires, he lets the equipment and note deal with this, and it is the female worker who reveals what is about to take place. It would appear in this interaction that roles of directness and responsibility for leading the conversation, as well as traditional female and male conceptions of physicality in the two character's heights, are undermined and reversed. This reversal occurs even though Rieche has called the female worker to his office in order to use her urine, and thereby appropriate her biology.

As already noted, the audience does not know the reason for the urine switching at this point. Later in the film, they find out that Rieche in fact has one weak kidney. Therefore he must have switched this urine in order to help him give the impression of being a strong and healthy individual who is fit to take on the role of Head of Security, and to pass a health test for this role. It is only a female worker, a member of a lower strata of the factory's organisational structure, and also of a different gender, who can provide him with this validation.

If we link the female worker's authority back to Kluge's theoretical writings, then her characterisation could admittedly show that she is in fact only allowed to be strong because she is pregnant. She is therefore going to reproduce outside of capitalist structures by giving birth. This interpretation would link a productive type of femininity with maternity, along the lines of Kluge's theory as expressed in *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung* and *Geschichte und Eigensinn* and discussed in my Introduction. However, this

interpretation would not allow for the fact that the female worker's pregnancy does not define her character from the outset. She is not visibly pregnant, and does not mention it when she is on screen. This linking of positive female attributes with a pregnant woman is not an instant association for a first-time viewer of the film, who would surely initially only see an authoritative woman. Her characterisation does not necessarily fit into any narrow confines of biological gender essentialism linked to motherhood, or into traditional feminine characteristics of passivity or a lack of authority. Both her and Rieche's characterisation in this scene, instead, show a non-traditional depiction of gender, and again one which confounds stereotypes. Rieche's body while he is at work constantly provides a surface upon which emasculation and the dismantling of gender stereotypes are played out. This emasculation takes shape as Rieche is consistently made less authoritative in the area of his work, and appears to reverse expectations of gender portrayals, not only due to his own actions, but also due to the actions of the women around him.

Rieche's monstrous and unstable body in his romantic relationships

It is not only in Rieche's professional interactions with women where Kluge appears to reverse expectations of bodily depictions of gender. There is also the key arena of Rieche's attempts at romance which warrants careful examination. His relationship with the factory worker and thief Gertie Kahlmann is the primary area for these attempts, although there is also a brief scene after their relationship collapses that shows his romantic interaction with other women. The issues of the body and whether its boundaries are solid or permeable, along with power relations and health come up once again in this romantic context. After I have discussed the issue of Rieche's apparently distorted, monstrous and fallible body in his relationship with Gertie Kahlmann, I will examine other aspects of his

romantic relationships, including Kluge's manipulation of the gaze. Kluge appears to use the gaze in a way that subverts gender expectations. He also portrays romance and traditional gender relations in ironic and de-familiarised terms.

When Gertie and Rieche become a couple in a romantic sense (the process by which this happens will be analysed subsequently), there are several scenes showing them attempting to sleep in bed together. Kluge depicts the two in bed in a thoroughly de-familiarised light; one where their bodies appear to merge with one another. The merging of their bodies conveys physical instability and discomfort. Rieche's bodily depiction also recalls that of the monstrous/feminine, a motif discussed earlier in this chapter with regards to Grosz's theorisation of the feminine body being discursively constructed as more monstrous than the male body. With this theorisation in mind, the image of Rieche and Gertie in bed takes on a new dimension with regards to gender portrayals.

Rieche's monstrous figure while in bed with Gertie is prefigured by a scene where he is woken by an explosion at the factory in the middle of the night. He wakes up, disoriented, and checks the time on his watch, which is hanging on the wall. The camera starts with a mid-shot on his face, but then zooms out and the viewer is made aware of his shadow on the wall, which appears disfigured in its stretched proportions, and grotesque.

Figure 49:



Figure 49: Rieche's grotesque shadow.

He then covers his head with a pillow and goes back to sleep. His body, as represented by the shadow as seen in **Figure 49** above, with its distorted and elongated form, is clearly made to seem monstrous.

The monstrous distortion of Rieche's shadow is then transferred to the depiction of his body at the point in the film when he sleeps in bed with Gertie. Shortly before Rieche is woken up from sharing a bed with Gertie to be given a report from the other security staff, there is a shot of Rieche in bed, apparently with his arms around Gertie's feet, which then cuts to a wider shot which reveals them sleeping top to toe, with the duvet joining them at the centre, merging them into what appears to be one singular entity. **Figure 50; Figure 51:**



Figure 50: Rieche with Gertie's legs.



Figure 51: The couple merging into one two-headed figure.

The image of mixed-up limbs and a double-headed figure call to mind monsters and monstrous-seeming humans, not least because when the first image of Rieche with Gertie's foot appears, the audience is not given any information in the preceding shot that would explain why he has a foot in the vicinity of his own head. Although the later shot of the two sleeping in the same single bed explains to some extent why they are in this particular position, due to space issues, the fact remains that this is still a strange position for a couple who are supposedly romantically involved to be sleeping in. There is an overriding sense of the bizarre and unfamiliar in this scene. Rieche is portrayed as the possessor of a potentially monstrous and de-familiarised body, which is still male, rather than a female monster as would be expected along the lines established in prevailing discourses described previously in this chapter. His body appears to have permeable boundaries that are being transgressed as he looks like he is one entity with two heads, two genders, and four limbs. The fact that any visible sexual markers of gender are obscured by the duvet adds to the sense that this image as shown in **Figure 51** is not showing a 'stable' or 'fixed' body. Rieche's body here thereby reverses expectations of how gender should be reflected through bodily appearances.

The monstrous aspects of Rieche in this scene with regards to his abnormally shaped body can be compared with the more predictable depiction of Gertie's body, which is portrayed as traditionally feminine. When Rieche stands up to receive the telephone call, he leaves a naked Gertie in bed. The image of Gertie appears to be conventionally woman-shaped, with no extraneous limbs or remarkable features, calling to mind traditional paintings of reclining female nudes. **Figure 52:**



Figure 52: Naked, conventionally shaped female Gertie.

Comparing this figure above to that of Rieche when he comes out of bed and stands at the telephone, taking the duvet with him, his body appears to be a bizarre shape. **Figure 53:**



Figure 53: Rieche's strange silhouette.

It can be said that Rieche's body shape in this scene is far from normal, the duvet recalling and further suggesting the rolls of fat seen during the earlier medical scenes. He is made into a monstrous figure with regards to his body, far more than Gertie is. He is thereby potentially feminised, as the monstrous body has more links to the feminine than the masculine in prevailing discursive representations of gendered bodies. Once again, Kluge seems to confound physical gender stereotypes with regards to the depiction of Rieche's body.

When discussing this scene with Kluge in the interview I conducted with him in 2014, he said that the significance of the couple being unable to become comfortable in bed was to show that Rieche's personality type means that he demands order in all places, even in bed and in his romantic relationships. He noted 'I think he is not experienced in love affairs [...] When he tries to bring order into the bed [It] is impossible for a policeman to bring order into the bed'. The fact that Rieche and Gertie seem so uncomfortable in bed

and that Rieche appears almost monstrous and deformed is lent an alternative interpretation by this statement from Kluge. Rieche tries to enforce a strict, military authority, which is arguably an interpretation of traditionally hegemonically masculine and patriarchal values, on an area that in an idealised and utopian world would entail an equal partnership of both genders, that of love. While Rieche tries to enforce this type of patriarchal order, at the same time he also turns into a monstrous figure and discomfort ensues for the couple. This interpretation supports an analysis of the depiction of Rieche which shows how masculinity is something that is portrayed negatively by Kluge. The monstrous image of the two in bed together is a consequence of an enforcing of patriarchal power by Rieche in an area where it does not belong. This interpretation would thereby support aims of de-constructing patriarchal power, denaturalising it, and showing it to have consequences including discomfort, showing Kluge portraying patriarchal power in a negative light.

The relationship between Gertie and Rieche damages Rieche's already fragile masculinity not only in this bedroom scene, but also in another scene where Rieche goes to exercise and Gertie joins him. The societal arenas of health, age and employment are ones that provide a space where Rieche's efforts to construct a strong physical masculinity are de-railed. While Rieche is walking for the purpose of exercise and Gertie accompanies him, Gertie says that she is experiencing strange reactions from other workers who know they share an apartment. Rieche replies that he cannot understand this, saying that he is in fact popular with his workers. She counters this by saying that something is evidently interfering with his popularity, as she does not think any man would have a beer with him in public, at which point Rieche makes an about turn in his walk. Gertie continues for a short while, then stops, while the camera continues on its pre-ordained trajectory.

The conversation between the two clearly puts Gertie in the position of knowledge, and therefore power, and Rieche in one of ignorance. The fact that this arena of knowledge is within the context of the factory further feminises him, as it destabilises his position of power in a work context. The physical presences of Rieche and Gertie in this scene underline this balance of power between the two. Once again their height difference is clearly noticeable, as is the ease with which Gertie keeps up with Rieche's walking. He is clearly exerting effort and taking this walk for exercise, while she seems more casual and can walk in a more relaxed fashion, with her hands in her pockets. He also appears to have sportswear on, while she wears her coat. **Figure 54:**



Figure 54: Gertie and Rieche's different clothing choices.

She does not need to expend extra time or money to keep herself healthy. Her youth here is evident, while his age and attempts to ward off the ill-effects of the aging process are emphasised. He is portrayed as physically disadvantaged compared to Gertie and his exertions foreground his body's instability due to age. Kluge also appears to reverse

gendered expectations with regards to the emphasis placed on physical image, as Rieche is more concerned with his appearance than Gertie is. This emphasis would portray him as having feminine attributes, as bodily instability and concern with physical appearance are conventionally linked to the feminine in prevailing discursive representations. Gertie appears to be comparatively masculine in her bodily characterisation. The inversion of traditionally gendered attributes shows yet again that gender expectations are once more being subverted by Kluge in this film through his use of bodies, this time in the arena of Rieche's romantic relationships.

De-naturalisation of romance, heterosexual relationships and traditional gender roles in Rieche's relationships

It is not only in the way that Rieche's body appears in comparison to Gertie's that is an arena of destabilisation of normalised gender roles in this film. Their continuing attempts at romantic engagement are rife with other instances of de-familiarisation of traditional gender roles. This de-familiarisation can be seen in the way that the power of the gaze functions between the two. Mulvey's seminal text of feminist film analysis, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', published in 1975, suggests that the male gaze is a way for men to take power over women on screen, by transforming them into passive objects, without agency (Mulvey, 1975, p.11). She also suggests that there is a concurrence between how the female characters in a film become erotic objects for the other film characters, and how the same female characters become an object for the gaze of the film viewer (Mulvey, 1975, p.12). Mulvey's ideas regarding the male gaze provide a useful lens through which to examine Kluge's depiction of gender and power in the example of Gertie and Rieche's relationship. There appears to be a challenging of the dichotomy as set up by

Mulvey, and there is a different balance of power through an alternative use of the gaze to the one that she suggests.

When Gertie and Rieche first interact, the gaze is clearly marked as an arena for an uneven power relationship between them. Rieche enters the cafeteria where Gertie works, and the audience sees him observe her. This is countered by a shot, not of Gertie as a passive object of the gaze, but of Gertie as the possessor of the gaze. We are first shown Rieche gazing at Gertie, but then Kluge shows her looking back at him. Rieche's gaze is returned, and her eyes flicker up and down, appraising him. **Figure 55:**



Figure 55: Rieche's gaze on Gertie, which is not followed by a passive Gertie as a gaze object, but by... **Figure 56:**



Figure 56: Gertie's gaze on Rieche, returned with equal power.

By explicitly showing the exchange of gazes between the male and female character and by not showing Gertie as passive, Kluge undermines the traditional economy of gender roles suggested by Mulvey. Gertie does seem to be actively evaluating Rieche and deciding how attractive she considers him to be. As Kluge himself expressed to me in my interview with him, her characterisation was indeed intended to be subversive, and to embody a power struggle between her and Rieche, as 'In [her] case, the opposing role, she steals a little bit and she does not obey [She represents] the type of [...] people, who seem to be obedient but are not'.

The power struggle between the two characters, which is reflected through their exchange of gazes, is repeated when Rieche places himself in Gertie's car and makes her drive him home after their first meeting. Although this scene is not portrayed as especially coercive, he nonetheless imposes his wishes on her. When they arrive back at Rieche's apartment, he says that he has been observing her for three weeks. It is possible here that

Rieche's visual power has been undermined by Gertie's active observation of him, and he wishes to place her back in the position of being the passive object of his gaze. It is also evident that she has been stealing from the cafeteria, thus undermining his position as chief of security, and so this conversation carries an undercurrent of Gertie's seeking to subvert Rieche's professional power. The power also shifts to Gertie when she comes out of her apparently passive silence to explain why she has been stealing the supplies- in order to start her own taxi firm. This explanation introduces the fact that Gertie indeed has some measure of agency and her own dreams and wishes for employment, suggesting an active and dynamic personality. The authoritative nature of her characterisation and the challenges that she poses to gender norms are emphasised as she is defined here as an aspiring business woman. Business is of course traditionally viewed as a male arena, and it is one upon which she wishes to make her mark, showing Kluge's film to be challenging traditional gender roles.

However, Gertie is then revealed to be dependent on Rieche's decision not to expose her as a thief, otherwise she will be fired. This discussion is followed by Gertie saying she would kill herself if the sequence of events following her exposure as a thief were to happen. Rieche replies that she should go ahead and kill herself, to which Gertie replies 'wie macht man das?'. This conversation seems to show an extremely unstable, ever shifting balance of power between the two. Gertie's threat of suicide if Rieche were to expose her puts the power of mortality in her hands, but she then concedes that she would not know how to go about it. She then agrees to be in a relationship, symbolised by her acceptance of the drink he has offered her and a subtle smile after he has introduced himself on first-name terms and suggests that he will not report her. It is hard to say who has the upper hand in this situation, suggesting a balance of power that is definitely not steadily in Rieche's hands, despite his being male and appearing to be the more active of

the two in his questioning of Gertie. The addition of the prospect of suicide adds to the discomfort for the viewer elicited in the scene, despite it being the beginning of the relationship. The beginning of a romantic relationship is not conventionally predicated on a threat of suicide, and therefore heterosexual rituals are not being carried out in the way that the audience would expect them to be in this scene. The discussion of suicide adds an element of de-familiarisation to the heterosexual relationship depicted here, undermining any idea that traditional relationships and the gender roles associated with them are natural.

This latter interpretation brings in another key theme that reoccurs in the depiction of Rieche's romantic relationships; that of how de-naturalised they are, something that invites further analysis through the lens of performative gender. To re-iterate, Butler's concept of performativity is one where traditional gender roles can be undermined not only by exposing their methods of construction, but also by parodic repetition (Butler, 1990, p.176-9). It could be said that these scenes undermine stereotypical gender roles by portraying the couple in a highly parodic way. Although there may appear to be some stereotypical presentation of Rieche as dominant and Gertie as subordinate in their romantic relationship, the way this is depicted is so de-familiarised by Kluge that this split is undermined and made ironic. The mechanisms by which this relationship is constructed are also exposed, thereby undermining gender roles in romantic relationships along performative lines. The interactions between the pair in the conversation in this scene firmly de-familiarises any sense of a traditional heterosexual relationship through not only their dialogue but also their body language and gestures.

Firstly, when he begins to question her about her conduct at the factory, he takes her hand without any prompting. At this point she has not said one word to him. **Figure**

57:



Figure 57: Rieche takes Gertie's hand within minutes of their first on-screen meeting.

Gertie could be construed here as passive, conforming to a standard characterisation of the active male and passive female character on-screen, as she does not speak when Rieche takes her hand, she drives him home without a word spoken and it is Rieche who takes her hand, not her his. When they sit inside his flat, Gertie appears to have shut down entirely in terms of her body language. She sits with her head bowed and slumped in a chair, exuding a deadened lack of emotion. **Figure 58:**



Figure 58: Gertie's passive body language.

However, the increasing level of strangeness in Rieche's behaviour serves to undermine this traditionally gendered dichotomy. After Rieche has taken her hand, he remarks that she surely cannot have eaten all the supplies she has stolen from the factory, as she would have become as fat as 'eine polnische Mastgans'. He then inspects her breast by grabbing it and finally opens her mouth, as if to inspect her teeth, underlining his comparison of her with a piece of livestock. **Figure 59; Figure 60.**



Figure 59: Rieche inspects Gertie's breast.



Figure 60: Rieche inspects her teeth.

There is a brief exchange when it is explained what Gertie does with the stolen goods. An unspoken agreement appears to be reached when Rieche posits what will happen if he does not report her, before lifting her skirt slightly and stroking her legs. **Figure 61:**



Figure 61: Rieche, still appraising Gertie.

The incongruity of these gestures, as Gertie gives no indication of enjoyment or reciprocity, makes this scene highly uncomfortable to watch for the spectator. The static camera and lack of cuts gives this scene an almost documentary-like aesthetic and there is very little emotion portrayed in either of the characters, all of which combines to convey an atmosphere of distance and neutrality, despite the fact that this is supposedly the start of a romantic relationship. The spectator is also encouraged to take the position of voyeur, as if they are watching this scene themselves from a hidden viewing space, although what they are presented with is neither romantic, nor titillating. Kluge appears to be challenging audience expectations with regards to the filmic depiction of gender relations in this film and undermining stereotypical portrayals of gender relations.

The degree to which Gertie's passivity is taken in this scene, where the active/passive dichotomy of male and female is exceptionally obvious, makes it uncomfortable to watch. If we view this scene in light of Kluge's film techniques, it could be said that the viewer is being encouraged to react to the way this relationship is portrayed, as one is alienated by its strangeness. The viewer is given a sense of critical distance from the characters and is encouraged to become active, analysing the way the relationship is being portrayed, rather than just passively accepting it. This scene therefore encourages a critical view of gender roles while portraying heterosexual relationships in ironic terms, despite what would appear at first to be the ostensible portrayal of traditional gendered norms.

When the couple emerges from bed at 4 am in order for Rieche to make Gertie a cup of cocoa, Rieche's bodily interactions with Gertie once again seem to place her in the position of an animal. When she is given her drink, she proceeds to drink it like an animal, while Rieche strokes her hair. This imagery is generally associated with pets. **Figure 62:**



Figure 62: Gertie as Rieche's pet?

However, there is an underlying power struggle being played out here. Gertie would appear to be performing this animal impersonation knowingly, if we note her raised eyebrow and the fact that she is playing along with the animal comparisons set up by Rieche in the previous scene. There is no encouragement or order from Rieche for her to act like an animal, she appears to be doing this of her own accord. Although Rieche does also contribute to these actions by stroking her hair, if we add an analysis of the way the gaze is functioning in this scene, then it would appear that Gertie is in fact once again destabilising Rieche's masculine power to her advantage. As can be seen in the image above, Gertie is gazing directly at Rieche, while he avoids the return of this look, preferring instead to stare at her hair and avoid eye contact. They then converse about how she should return the stolen goods, and the scene finishes with Rieche saying that he has got more than he bargained for with her. He then smooths the hair over Gertie's eyes. **Figure**

63:



Figure 63: Rieche attempting to cover her gaze.

Although he has made eye contact with Gertie, he also moves her hair over her eyes which were previously the source of the power of her gaze. He is bringing attention to the fact that she also holds the power of the gaze over him. Gertie may indeed be passive in preceding scenes and Rieche turns her into something animal-like by groping her. However, this attempted construction of patriarchal power by Rieche is something that can be subverted and used against him by Gertie. She undertakes this subversion through her authority over the gaze and her active bodily gestures. This relationship's active/passive dichotomy with regards to the roles normally played by men and women is portrayed highly knowingly, and therefore undermines traditional gender roles.

It is possible that this heterosexual relationship is being undermined in a performative manner as we are seeing the attempted construction and subversive repetition of gender roles. The groping of Gertie by Rieche is comparable with an exaggerated version of an awkward sexual fumble on a date, as well as the actions of any

individual entering into a relationship who is appraising the physicality of his partner, albeit in far more physical terms than one might normally expect. A normal entrance into a romantic relationship would involve his appraising her with his gaze rather than comparing her to a goose, then groping her and investigating her teeth, all of which amounts to a subversive representation of a heterosexual relationship. Gender norms within this relationship are shown to be subverted through their performative exaggerated expression.

The next scene in Gertie and Rieche's developing relationship, where they decide to go to bed, emphasises once again how this couple contributes to the destabilisation of heterosexual romance and gender roles. It is now evident that the two have agreed to something resembling a romantic relationship and are about to spend their first night together. The dialogue between the two shows how un-romantic this evening is. Rieche says matter-of-factly 'Ich brauch' meine Nachtschlaf. Ich muss morgen um sieben Uhr aus'. There is little sense of this being a traditionally romantic relationship with the associated conventional gender roles. There appears to be minimal sexual tension between the two, despite the previous groping, and he goes on to say that they will do what is required tomorrow night, which may mean consummating their relationship. The tone is formal and the lack of sexual tension or warmth produces yet more critical distance for the spectator, making their relationship seem even more artificial and alienating. While Gertie and Rieche are struggling to get physically comfortable, Rieche says that 'Ich kann nur Frauen auf meiner rechten Seite vertragen!' and forces Gertie to move. The awkwardness between the two is palpable. The fact that Rieche can only stand to have women on his right side suggests some sort of neuroses on his part about women and yet again makes this scene uncomfortable. The awkwardness of the dialogue undermines their heterosexual relationship and Rieche's attempts to be both masculine and authoritative in

this romantic area of life seem so petty as to be ridiculous. Once again, it appears that Kluge's depiction of relations between genders is not one with any space for a traditional authoritative hegemonic masculinity or patriarchal power. There is instead a de-naturalisation of traditional conceptions of gender relations.

The strange bodily relationship between the two is even more palpable in the scene of Gertie's birthday dinner. After he has wished her happy birthday, they celebrate with a handshake and a chaste kiss on the cheek. The un-romantic nature of this scene establishes an ironic atmosphere. Irony is present for the viewer of this scene as they would expect the couple's dinner to be romantic, while it is not. Rieche recites a poem incorporating brand-names and advice on keeping young and healthy. The final line of the poem is an exhortation to not take life so seriously. This reading is also highly ironic. If there is anything that Rieche is not able to do, it is to be informal or take life lightly. Rieche's seriousness is evident in his conduct in the rest of the film and how seriously he takes the maintenance of security, to the extent that he shoots someone in order to prove a point. The strange context of this recitation and its proximity to the kiss on the cheek as a birthday celebration seems to emphasise the unnatural nature and stiffness of his relationship with Gertie. Once again a traditional romantic heterosexual relationship here is undermined, as any romance between the two is undercut by their apparent distance, this time created by Kluge's choice of dialogue.

Physical awkwardness in the arena of romance re-occurs between the two in a brief scene which depicts them having dinner and discussing his future prospects. He asks Gertie for a kiss, holds a lamp up above her head, but then says he cannot in fact kiss her as he has his mouth full. He takes a drink to clear his mouth, but then says he still cannot kiss her. **Figure 64:**



Figure 64: Rieche lighting up Gertie.

The strange decision to lift a lamp in order to kiss his girlfriend could be interpreted as highlighting (literally) her position as an object of the gaze. This physical gesture shows the construction of this act which maintains normative gender roles. This act does not, for instance, only show Gertie's glowing face, and so the naturalness of her position as the object of the gaze is undermined. Rieche also appears to be making excuses in order to avoid physical contact with Gertie. He shows how uncomfortable he is in this relationship through his excuses not to kiss her. As with many other scenes, any sense of natural-seeming chemistry between the two is completely destroyed by Rieche's strange behaviour. The idea of Kluge reflecting a traditional view of gender roles in this film is one again undermined here.

This awkwardness, which undermines any traditional norms of gender or heterosexual pairings, remains clear in the couple's later scenes together, such as that of their caravan holiday. In this scene it is made clear that Rieche had intended this holiday to

be a way of practising for Christmas, as 'man muss Heiligabend üben, trotz klappt's nie'. He produces a checklist and pronounces that they have all the necessary items for a successful practice for Christmas. The stiffness and uncomfortable and artificial atmosphere in the caravan is palpable. The Christmas tree is small and somewhat pathetic. The caravan has an unexplained sports shoe hanging from the ceiling, and Gertie shows no enthusiasm for the rehearsal. **Figure 65:**



Figure 65: The artificiality and unhappiness of the couple as they practice for Christmas.

Christmas is a cultural construct associated with the home, the traditional family, and domesticity. It is a time normally reserved for traditional gender roles, where a family unit or happy couple celebrates together, in the home. However, here Christmas is thoroughly undermined and ridiculed. The constructed nature of this traditional happy family unit or heterosexual couple is exposed, as Rieche runs down the list of the necessary components for a successful Christmas. The idea of a natural-seeming heterosexual unit with traditional

gender roles is de-stabilised through the strangeness of the caravan set-up. The heterosexual couple as it exists at the time of Christmas is also challenged on performative terms, as the artificial nature of Christmas as a traditional setting for these types of couples is exposed through Rieche's reading of the list.

The subsequent disintegration of this relationship can be interpreted as the ultimate statement of Gertie's unwillingness to live a life of tradition in a female role, and one which carries less financial responsibility. When Rieche comes home from work to discover that she is taking his belongings in order to sell them, there is an argument. This is the last scene with them together, before Rieche sends her a letter near the end of the film expressing his confusion as to why she will not return to him. Gertie, with her ambition to own a taxi firm, her height, health, youth, and apparent control over her own finances (even if this is achieved through stealing) is independent. The first and only open confrontation between her and Rieche is this one which centres on the division of property and money between the two. In attempting to show independent judgement and control of her own finances, she finally pushes Rieche too far and their relationship disintegrates. However, there is no sense that the end of this relationship is going to have negative consequences for Gertie. She does not chase Rieche after their confrontation in the hallway. She does not retreat from the argument or make any apologies for her conduct, and when Rieche writes her a letter expressing his dismay at her departure, he says that he 'kann nicht verstehen, dass du nicht zu mir zurückkehren willst'. It is clear that it is Gertie that has the control and has made the choice that they will not be reuniting. Her authority at the end of the relationship once again places her in a traditionally masculine role of having agency. Gertie Kahlmann's overall function as a character in this film is not only to show how de-naturalised the romantic relationship between her and Rieche is, but also to constantly subvert gender stereotypes.

Rieche's de-naturalised romantic relationships with other women

Even outside of his relationship with Gertie, Rieche's other attempts at romance fall amusingly flat. There is a level of irony in all of Kluge's depictions of male/female relationships in this film which undermines expectations of depictions of gender. After the collapse of his and Gertie's relationship, Rieche goes to the 'Ball der einsamen Herzen', where he dances with a hairdresser. During this scene there is a voice-over from Kluge, who tells a thoroughly inappropriate anecdote concerning an interaction between a man and a woman on the U-Bahn. This is accompanied by a shot of Rieche almost falling asleep in the Ballhaus. Rieche and the hairdresser are once again mismatched in height. **Figure**

66:



Figure 66: Rieche and the hairdresser's height difference.

Rieche's physicality puts him in a position normally occupied by a female- the couple to the right appear to be more in line with traditional notions of male/female body types. His

physicality ensures that he is ridiculed once again when he tries to take on traditionally male positions.

The dialogue in the scene, although brief, is bizarre. The anecdote recounted tells of a man sitting next to a girl in the U-Bahn and asking her if her hair is natural or permed, to which she replies that she did not ask whether his scrotum is knitted or crocheted. On first viewing this scene, it is unclear whether the anecdote being recounted is in fact Kluge's voiceover or Rieche's dialogue with the hairdresser. Despite the fact that there appears to be a cross-over from extra-diegetic narration with the voice-over to a diegetic conversation between Rieche and the hairdresser, this does not distract from the bizarreness of the anecdote. This lack of clarity once again encourages the viewer to become active and listen more carefully to what is being said by Kluge in the voice-over, highlighting the strangeness of the anecdote. This un-clarity also endows the scene with a degree of surrealism, setting Rieche up for yet another relationship through which Kluge's film can be read as deconstructing gender norms.

The context of this anecdote is remarkable. Firstly, the man in the anecdote is presumably remarking on the girl's hair in order to show his romantic interest in her, but is rejected, showing the failure of the traditional heterosexual couple. In a traditional male/female coupling, a female would tacitly accept the attention of a male suitor, not aggressively refuse it. Secondly, the choice of this as a voice-over during Rieche's first attempt at romance outside of his relationship with Gertie undermines any sense of a romantic atmosphere where traditional heterosexuality and comfortable acceptance of gender roles can take place. The tone of the anecdote is, instead, highly inappropriate for the situation, portraying Rieche as awkward in his romantic interactions, yet again. Kluge undermines traditional gender roles, rather than re-enforcing them here, by challenging any sense of a 'normal' relationship between genders in romantic terms. Thirdly, this

anecdote also highlights the artificiality of markers of gender in performative terms. Obviously a scrotum is a physical marker of masculinity. The girl asking whether it is knitted or crocheted does not leave any chance for the man to reply with an affirmation of the natural nature of his sexual organs. This implication that his sexual organs are artificial is significant as, to re-iterate, the subversion of gender in performative terms can be achieved by showing gender's constructed nature (Butler, 1990, p.44). The girl in the anecdote thereby challenges conventional notions of gender on performative terms, by referring to the man's body as artificial and constructed. In addition, the girl challenges how the man chooses to focus on her hair, and instead turns attention to his sexual organs and makes him into a sexual object. She thereby reverses gender expectations of how a woman should passively accept a man's romantic attention, and makes him uncomfortable in her stead. The anecdote again undermines any idea of traditional power dynamics in the context of romance and heterosexual relationships.

Clearly it is not just Rieche's relationship with Gertie that is unsuccessful, but his attempts to enter into any type of romantic relationship with a woman. Rieche cannot embody traditional gender roles within relationships and is given traditionally feminine attributes. He has his relationships portrayed ironically and bizarrely by Kluge, who often uses Rieche's body to enforce this irony and sense of the bizarre. In so doing, Kluge's film exposes the constructed nature of ostensible natural heterosexual roles through the distancing device of performativity, and thereby points to the potential for resistance within patriarchal power structures.

Conclusion

The romantic relationships that Rieche engages in, or attempts to engage in, suggest an inversion of gender norms and the transgression of supposedly rigid gender boundaries,

often through his inappropriate physical actions. The failure of heterosexual romantic relationships in the film is combined with a constant undermining and ridiculing of Rieche's masculinity, deconstructing patriarchal power. In some cases, he is given traditionally feminine attributes, and female bodies and characters, in contrast, appear to be stable and healthy in comparison to Rieche. It would therefore appear that the portrayals of gender and gender relations in *Der starke Ferdinand* do not fit into an interpretation of Kluge's films as patriarchal. On the contrary, it would appear that normative representations of gender are de-stabilised. Bodily expectations with regards to gender and relations between genders are also de-naturalised in performative and textual terms throughout this film, supporting feminist aims by challenging gender stereotypes. The film also consistently undermines the ability of patriarchal figures to be taken seriously, showing patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity to be highly unstable societal constructs.

Gender relations and emotions in *Die Macht der Gefühle*

In my previous chapter, discussing *Der Starke Ferdinand*, I focussed on the depiction of gendered bodies, which appeared to challenge conventional expectations of masculinity and femininity. I discussed how the depiction of bodies, specifically that of the protagonist Rieche in comparison to those around him, undermined patriarchal authority. I also examined how portrayals of bodies in the film challenged the way a heterosexual couple as a unit could represent traditional gender roles. Prior to this, in my analysis of *Abschied von Gestern*, I discussed Kluge's depiction of patriarchal control and the possibility of the subversion of this control through language, as well as discussing Kluge's sympathetic portrayal of those characters trapped by patriarchal constraints.

In this chapter I will discuss Kluge's *Die Macht der Gefühle*, released in 1983. I will first introduce the film itself, and then discuss how Kluge formulates his theory of emotions, which is key to understanding the film, and what implications his view of emotions has for his depiction of gender and power. I will then offer an overview of where my analysis fits into previous critical approaches. My analysis will then examine the ways Kluge depicts a complex relationship between emotion and gender on screen, and how this relationship in turn is used to provoke emotional responses in the spectator that can transcend the approach to emotion of some of his characters.

Die Macht der Gefühle does not have a singular plot arc or one central protagonist. Kluge's various protagonists are each given a section of the film. These multiple sections, which number 26 in total, all explore what Kluge defines as the power of emotions. Kluge examines how emotions have organised themselves throughout history, culture, and, crucially to my analysis, within gender relations. He uses a variety of film techniques taken

from different genres of film. For example, he uses extracts from silent films, showing backstage footage of operas and staged interviews, as well as including smaller narrative sections which have their own self-contained stories. These self-contained stories concern the subjects of (among other topics) male/female romantic relations, the family unit, as well as the continuing legacy of the Second World War. The film also includes inter-textual references to Kluge's own films, including *Abschied von Gestern*. Opera music is present in many sections of the film as a soundtrack, and the film includes many of Kluge's signature montages of unexpected and seemingly unrelated images. Many characters appear to have unusual emotional reactions to the events depicted on-screen.

The sections I will analyse in this chapter include the journalistic endeavours undertaken by Frau Pichota, played by Kluge's sister Alexandra Kluge, who interviews an opera singer and a military officer. I will also examine the onscreen portrayal of the court case of a woman who has shot her husband. Adding to the complexity of this section, her husband was involved in an incestuous relationship with their daughter. I will then look at the section which concerns a rapist and his victim, as well as Kluge's portrayal of Frau Bärlamm, a marriage broker, and her clients. Finally I will look at the portrayal of Knautsch-Betty, a prostitute, and her relationships with those around her. Throughout this chapter, I will explore how Kluge's depiction of gender relations can be read through his portrayal of what he defines as the power of emotion, as well as discussing how he depicts women interacting with emotion in comparison to men. I will also examine how Kluge attempts to position the viewer in order to provoke their own emotional reaction to the film. As I will explain, Kluge's provocation of audience emotions encourages a nuanced view of non-normative gender relations and a positive view of female characters.

There are several reasons for my choice to examine emotions in gendered terms in this film. There is not only the explanation given in my introductory chapter, namely

that Kluge sees emotion as something which can cause a productive variety of instability and lead to social change (I will elaborate further upon Kluge's specific theorisation of emotions below). There is also the fact that there are multiple instances in this film which show extremely non-normative and controversial relationships between men and women. As already mentioned, the film contains references to incestuous relationships and rape. These same sections also frequently suggest unexpected emotional reactions by the characters involved, which, I argue, could be said to problematize normative and traditional gender relations. However, despite the existence of these sections of the film, looking at Kluge's approach to both emotions and gender simultaneously in this film is a route of analysis that has yet to be carried out. I will elaborate upon this lack of research in these combined areas in my overview of the critical responses to the film later in this chapter. By examining how Kluge depicts non-normative gender relations and how he explores the power of emotions in gendered terms in this film, I will add another dimension to my analysis of how Kluge's films can be re-evaluated in a light which sees them as progressive in terms of gender.

Kluge and emotions

Kluge has written a great deal on how he conceives of emotions and their use in society. Emotions, in his terms, have an emancipatory potential, if they are put to what he considers to be their proper use. They must not be left in the service of capitalism, or the forces of exchange and the market. Instead they must be used in the service of humanity, in order to achieve 'einen glücklichen Ausgang' (Kluge, 1984, p.45), so that human-kind can avoid tragedy.

It has already been established in my Introduction that Kluge sees emotions as having the potential to bring about a change in humanity. In the accompanying text to *Die*

Macht der Gefühle, he elaborates on this point. This text contains not only the script of the film, but also explanatory texts, summaries of the operas referenced in the film, interviews with Kluge, reproduced engravings of battle scenes, fictional texts, and also theoretical elaborations on his conception of emotion and its power within individuals. In this text he describes how he personifies emotions, and says that he sees emotions themselves as holding optimistic potential, in an almost fairy-tale manner: 'alle Gefühle glauben an einen glücklichen Ausgang und [...] an ein ewiges Leben' (Kluge, 1984, p.45). This is a point which is repeated throughout the film in intertitles, stressing that feelings have the power to lead to a potential happy ending for humanity in the form of eternal life, rather than a tragic or conflict-ridden end. However, achieving such an optimistic emotional state is not uncomplicated. The question which he aims to answer in the film is why emotions, which *should* lead to happiness and emancipation for humanity, do not always achieve this optimistic or utopian end. Kluge asks 'Warum führen die Gefühle [...] am Ende zu soviel Unglück, wenn die Gefühle selber doch [...] Theologen des Glücks sind' (Kluge, 1984, p.184). He begins to answer this query in an interview with Florian Hopf in the same volume. In this interview he states that although feelings are indeed optimistic, they can also be too conservative to cause change, and instead defend existing powers:

Man könnte [Gefühle] vergleichen mit Proletariern, die sich vor die Wahl gestellt stehen, entweder sind sie arbeitslos oder sie akzeptieren Kernkraftwerke und den ganzen Schlamassel, der ihre Arbeitslosigkeit mitproduziert. Jetzt treten sie auch noch für Rationalisierung ein und sind gegen Störer. Und diesen Status haben Gefühle, sie sind Proletarier in uns, mächtige Proletarier. (Kluge, 1984, p.186)

It is the fact that emotions frequently remain in service to prevailing forces, defined metaphorically as 'nuclear power plants' here, that prevents Kluge from being completely optimistic about their power. According to Kluge, the existing forces which emotions serve are the powers of exchange, within which emotions remain bound, causing endless repetitious cycles of unhappiness without any movement away from this negativity. He says in the accompanying text that one of the film's key thematic concerns is 'Wie tauschen die Gefühle untereinander aus? Haben sie einen Markt [...]?' (Kluge, 1984, p.199). He frequently uses the example of opera to show the way that emotions are bound up in existing forces such as those of the market, leading to a tragic end. In the film *Die Macht der Gefühle*, he calls the opera house a 'Kraftwerk der Gefühle' and makes the point, through an intertitle, that in the 5th Act of every tragic opera, a woman must be sacrificed, thereby showing the link between the repetitious production of emotions in this form of culture, and tragedy. In a text written as a response to Jutta Brückner's analysis of Saura's 1983 film *Carmen*, Kluge re-iterates his view of emotions as being caught up in forces of the market, meaning that they are unable to be put to their true optimistic or utopian use for humanity. He responds to Brückner's critical analysis of Saura's film, which she sees as showing the emancipatory force of emotions, by saying that in his opinion this film in fact shows the opposite (Kluge, 1983, p.233). In his view, it is an example of an opera binding emotions into market forces and thereby leading to tragedy, in the form of Carmen's murder by Don José (Kluge, 1983, p.233-234). He suggests of emotions, in their current state as produced by the film in question and by opera, that 'Es gibt nur *die Opfer* und *den Markt*. Andernfalls kein Austausch, sondern Isolierung. In jeder Intimsphäre wird der Markt geleugnet, aber er ist da. Es muß nicht der kapitalistische Markt sein' (Kluge, 1983, p.234). The fact that he is referring to emotions here is shown by his reference to the world of the 'Intimsphäre' (Kluge, 1983, p.234), where emotions are found. Even

though he says that it is not necessarily the capitalist market within which emotions are constricted, there is still an implication here that in some instances it is indeed capitalism within which emotions are bound. Still referring to emotions and the 'Intimsphäre' (Kluge, 1983, p.234) in this article, he continues to denigrate the type of exchange relations within which emotions exist in opera: 'In einem Produktionsverhältnis, "zynisch, unschuldig, grausam, Fatalität" gedeihen Monstren, aber keine Menschen' (Kluge, 1983, p.235). He goes on to state that 'Ich kann ausschließen, daß diese schöne Oper irgendeine Auswege verrät' (Kluge, 1983, p.235). The current state of emotions, as he sees it, as exemplified by the production of emotions through tragic opera as a cultural form, is not one of hope. Rather it is one where emotions and the forces of the market, without change and through repetition of existing configurations of feelings, lead to sacrifice, unhappiness, and further conflict. It is the fact that emotions are still in the service of the greater forces of the market that means that Kluge cannot fully commit to their emancipatory potential in their existing state. As he says 'Die Pointe des Films "Die Macht der Gefühle" liegt darin: In den traditionellen Allianzen der Gefühle [...] gedeihen menschliche Verhältnisse überhaupt nicht' (Kluge, 1983, p.235).

What, therefore, is Kluge's programme for an appropriately emancipatory and potentially optimistic usage of emotions? He asserts that a productive use of emotions would be either to avoid them entirely, or to transform them through labour. He says of his favourite parts of *Die Macht der Gefühle* that 'Immerhin handeln die einzelnen positiven Beiträge in "Die Macht der Gefühle", die einzigen Beispiele für glückliches Ende, entweder von der Abwesenheit der Gefühle (Zufall, Glück, Rettung durch den Verbrecher), oder von Arbeit + Wunder' (Kluge, 1983, p.235). He also states that 'Wir haben nicht zu wenig, wir haben zu viele Gefühle' (Kluge, 1984, p.393), implying that he sees an excess of emotions as another way for emotion's power to lead to negativity. For Kluge, an absence

of emotion is a positive attribute for an individual to have, as this allows emotions to avoid being caught in systems of exchange and pre-existing configurations of emotions entirely. He explains further his idea of transforming emotion through labour: 'alle Gefühle gemeinsam aber verfolgen einen verheerenden Kurs [...] daß es immer wunderbar anfängt im ersten Akt und im letzten Akt fürchterlich endet [...] Das andere wäre, daß etwas hart anfängt, durch Arbeit geändert wird und anschließend glücklich endet, das wäre die Bauweise von Paradiesen' (Kluge, 1984, p.183). The type of labour being referred to here by Kluge, through which emotions can be transformed into something that can achieve a happy ending, brings back a concept previously explored in my Introduction. Kluge presents a specifically maternal type of labour, through nurturing and care. He states in his afore-mentioned article about Saura's *Carmen* that an alternative type of emotional force to the tragic and murderous one represented in the film can be found when 'der lebensnotwendige Mengen von Wärme, Lernen, Fingerspitzengefühl (auch von Zärtlichkeit) erzeugt wird. Das ist ein Produkt, das zur Herstellung von Menschen notwendig ist' (Kluge, 1983, p.234). He then confirms that this type of production that can transform the power of emotion into something positive is the 'Mütterliche Produktionsweise' (Kluge, 1983, p.235) that has been referred to in my Introduction. To re-iterate the ideas explained in my Introduction, Kluge sees maternal labour as positive as it exists outside of the context of capitalism. In his terms, maternal labour produces what humanity needs in the form of care and nurturing, rather than fulfilling false needs implanted by capitalism. For a discussion of the potential issues that Kluge also sees with maternal production, noting that it is not unproblematic, please refer to my Introduction. With regards to this type of labour and its connection to emotions, he advocates the idea of a type of female labour and production, namely that which consists of caring and traditionally maternal actions, as a conduit for the transformation of emotions in order to

achieve their full potential for the betterment of humanity. This type of labour offers a way of escaping opera's tragic end, such as is to be found in *Carmen*, along with escaping dominant existing configurations of emotions, which, he suggests, are not emancipatory.

To sum up, for Kluge emotions have a potential power that can be emancipatory. However, this can only be achieved if they can also escape the forces of the market and existing narratives of tragedy, represented for Kluge in opera, with its repetitious tragic endings and, in particular, its propensity to sacrifice women. In order to reconfigure emotions to avoid these pitfalls, emotions need either to be completely absent, thereby avoiding market relations where their excessive exploitation can lead to unhappiness, or when present, their power needs to be transformed through ostensibly feminine forms of labour, such as that of nurturing. Kluge sees this transformation of emotion's power through either an avoidance of emotions, or their transfiguration through labour, as optimistic and progressive for humanity.

Another idea that is central to Kluge's conceptualisation of emotion's positive potential is the way he wishes the spectator to engage with his film. He contrasts opera's interaction with emotions to that of cinema, arguing that 'Im 20. Jahrhundert ist der öffentliche Hauptsitz der Gefühle das Kino. Die Organisation lautet: auch die traurigsten Gefühle nehmen im Kino einen glücklichen Ausgang. [...] Im 19. Jahrhundert ist der Hauptsitz der Gefühle die Oper. Die erdrückende Mehrheit der Opern hat ein tragisches Ende' (Kluge, 1984, p.213). He wishes to change the way that emotions are produced in what is in his opinion the unacceptably tragic form of opera, to what he considers to be their potentially more successful use in the cinema.

Das Kino ist eine Gefühlsmaschine. Die großen Gefühle der Kinodramatik führen zum Happyend nur, wenn man sich ein paar Lügen einbaut. Gefühle selber aber können

nicht lügen. Die kleinen Gefühle wiederum, die Happyends produzieren [...] gelten kinodramatisch nicht als attraktiv. Ich arbeite langfristig daran, daß sich dies ändert. Der Ausdruck dafür heißt: Politik der Gefühle. (Kluge, 1984, p.200)

There is a clear sense that Kluge wishes to utilise emotions in his films in a different way to other cultural forms such as opera, and in a way that he sees as optimistic and progressive. In order to achieve this optimism for the viewer, he wishes to make them active so that they can generate an emotional reaction that can escape the instrumentalisation of emotions already described. The construction of this active type of spectatorship is central to the narrative and stylistic choices Kluge makes in *Die Macht der Gefühle*. This type of active emotional reaction is explicitly desired by Kluge in relation to his films, and links with his wider description of the type of active viewer that has been frequently mentioned throughout my writing. As Kluge explains in an interview with Ulrich Gregor: 'Die Triebökonomie in einem Film, das ist das Wichtigste, was ich überhaupt unterstützen kann, wenn ich will, daß der Zuschauer selbsttätig reagiert [...] da ist ein spontanes Moment drin und ein Moment des Vergnügens' (Gregor, 1976b, pp.175-176). When speaking specifically on *Die Macht der Gefühle*'s intended effect on the viewer, Kluge says 'Wir haben keinen Grund, das Störrische in diesem Film zu glätten. Die Gefühle selber sind ja auch störrisch [...] Was die Filme selber betrifft, so kann man glatte und rauhe Filme unterscheiden. Das ist kein Unterschied in der Filmherstellung, sondern ein Unterschied bei den Zuschauern' (Kluge, 1984, p.48).

Kluge appears to go about creating an active and emotional viewer in this film in two different ways. The first of these is by showing characters who frequently have unexpectedly neutral emotional reactions to potentially shocking events, and by using characters who are in romantic relationships that are outside of normative, heterosexual

contexts. The second way he attempts to initiate an emotional viewer reaction is by presenting characters who appear to be over-emotional, or have negative emotional responses of unhappiness to events on screen. Both of these two ways of creating an active viewer are comparable once again to the usage of a Brechtian alienation effect; using unexpected representations in order to provoke a viewer reaction. The key to interpreting the differences between these two types of viewer reactions lies once more with Kluge's film theory, as discussed in my Introduction. To re-iterate, he not only wishes to create an active viewer. He also wishes for viewers to actively create their own meaning in the gaps between the elements being used on-screen, such as elements of text and image, which he describes as the 'Bruchstellen zwischen [...] Komponenten' (Kluge et al., 1965, p.1024). When this aspect of Kluge's theory is considered, the various ways he seeks to generate active viewers take on a new dimension in this film. It could be argued that in portraying characters in this particular film who have unexpectedly neutral reactions to on-screen events, Kluge is providing the spectator with an emotional 'Bruchstelle' (Kluge et al., 1965, p.1024). He is allowing them room to both think and become emotional, to experience many different potential emotions, rather than being prescriptive about what emotions should arise, and thereby encouraging a complex and multivalent emotional response that simultaneously also has the potential to generate critique. In contrast, when he merely encourages the audience to directly react to the exaggerated or negative emotional responses of characters on screen, this type of viewer response is not focussed on engaging with the gaps between what is represented on screen. A more straightforward emotional reaction is being encouraged in this latter case, with less room for the spectator's own thoughts and imagination. Therefore, the emotional reaction that Kluge attempts to encourage in his spectators through those characters that appear neutral on screen is, in his terms, more multi-faceted. It encourages more audience activity and is

therefore more in line with what Kluge considers to be a successful emotional response than an emotional reaction which merely transfers the extreme emotions of his characters on screen to the viewer.

Returning to the issue of gender relations in this film, it will be shown throughout my analysis that it is in fact women and those characters in non-normative relationships who typically have unexpectedly neutral emotional reactions to events on screen and who encourage the former, exceptionally complex and multi-faceted spectator reaction. In contrast, men and those characters who are in traditional relationships are more likely to encourage the latter, less successful but still emotional spectator reaction. In addition, it is often women in this film, as well as those involved in non-normative relationships, who are presented as having the optimum approach to emotions in Kluge's terms, and are allowed to critique emotion's power. In contrast, there is a denigration of emotions and feelings which are felt by men, who are frequently shown interacting with emotions in ways seen as negative by Kluge. This inappropriate attitude (in Kluge's terms) to emotion is also found in characters who are in more traditional heterosexual relationships, not least those who wish to participate in the institution of marriage. As I will suggest, Kluge's tacit on-screen approval of women's actions could be seen as progressive in terms of gender, as he appears to support figures that would be otherwise unsupported and disempowered in patriarchal society, and he also offers a challenge to mainstream sensibilities regarding traditional relationships.

Previous critical approaches to this film

There has not been a critical precedent for examining both Kluge's approach to emotions in this film together with the gender politics he displays within it. Instead, the majority of criticism surrounding the film thus far has concentrated on analysing how *Die Macht der*

Gefühle is an expression of Kluge's theory of emotions and how the film relates to his aims in film-making. The critical responses to the film at the time it was released show this trend. Von Schlicht's review, for example, discusses how Kluge explores ideas about emotion and the way viewers are encouraged to react to the film, including his own reaction. He states that 'Die Verwirrung der Gefühle, ihre Blockade, das Erinnerungsvermögen, das Gegenteil und die Unvergleichbarkeit der Gefühle, ihr Zusammenhang' (Von Schlicht, 1983, p.226) are the prime concerns of the film. He then goes on to explain how the film fits into Kluge's aims of creating an active viewer, as 'der Zuschauer solle sich aus dem überreichen Angebot das aussuchen, was bei ihm bestimmte Assoziationsketten auslöse' (Von Schlicht, 1983, p.231). He finishes by describing the emotional impact the film had on him as a viewer himself: 'Meine Gefühle sind verwirrt' (Von Schlicht, 1983, p.231). Blumenberg's review, also written at the time of the film's release, concentrates on how the film fits into Kluge's film-making style, and once again on *Die Macht der Gefühle*'s intended effect on the viewer. He describes the 'Kühnheit dieser Collage aus Miniatur-Dramen, Dokumentarsequenzen, alten Spielfilmausschnitten, Opern-Zitaten' (Blumenberg, 1983, p.4) and also his own reaction to the film, calling it 'unruhig und schwierig' (Blumenberg, 1983, p.4). He concludes that this film is an example of Kluge fulfilling his aims in film-making as 'Kluge-Filme sind Material-Schlachten: um die Utopie Kino' (Blumenberg, 1983, p.4).

There has also been a large volume of critical attention paid to Kluge's usage of opera in this film. Examples of this trend include Flinn's extensive opera-focussed analysis of the film included in her 2004 volume *The New German Cinema: Music, History, and the Matter of Style*, Ernst's 2008 article 'Die Öffentlichkeit der Oper. Alexander Kluges Thematisierung der Oper in seinem Film *Die Macht der Gefühle* (1983)', Koch's 1990 article 'Alexander Kluge's Phantom of the Opera', as well as Noeske's 2009 article '„In allen

Opern, die von Erlösung handeln, wird im 5. Akt eine Frau geopfert.“ Film, Musik und Oper bei Alexander Kluge’. The amount of pre-existing criticism surrounding this topic is extensive. This volume of criticism is the primary reason that I have chosen not to focus on Kluge’s use of opera in this film, and have rather taken a different route of analysis, specifically focussed on gender and emotions.

Later criticism of *Die Macht der Gefühle* has shown that even if gender relations in this film have thus far been a minor topic for critics, they are a subject that has indeed been approached. Flinn's afore-mentioned critical approach to the film is primarily concerned with how Kluge uses opera in the film to expose the mechanisms of exchange in emotions and human relationships. Even though Kluge's approach to gender relations is not her focus, she briefly notes the relationship between the prostitute Knautsch-Betty and the criminal Schleich at the end of the film in the section 'Abbau eines Verbrechens durch Kooperation'. She sees this relationship as offering hope to the viewer (Flinn, 2004b). This hope is encouraged by Kluge through the couple’s resurrection of the business man Allewisch, and through the fact that they are allowed by Kluge to interact outside the conventional structure of emotions (Flinn, 2004b). Flinn also sees the depiction of Betty and Schleich as one that encourages the audience to reflect on their own ways of interacting with emotion through their reaction to the couple's blank stares at the end of the film (Flinn, 2004b). Despite this analysis of one instance of Kluge's portrayal of romantic relationships, Flinn does not see a significant pattern of behaviour in any of the film’s other characters who engage in non-normative romantic relationships that might encourage a particular emotional reflection or critical attitude on the part of the viewer. She is more concerned with analysing how the film reflects Kluge's theorisation of emotion's power through its use of opera. She does however refer to a point upon which I will expand, when she looks at the way that Betty and Schleich seemingly hold power over

emotion. In contrast to this article, I will examine how Kluge portrays non-normative relationships throughout the film, rather than just in this one instance.

The idea of examining the role of non-normative and controversial romantic relationships in Kluge's films is briefly touched on by Lutze. He mentions, for example, that taboo sexuality in Kluge's films is portrayed positively, as characters that appear to embody this type of sexuality are imbued with life-giving properties (Lutze, 1998, p.235). He also states the fact that sexuality is represented by Kluge in 'non-identificatory' terms, as nakedness is 'matter-of-fact', and the body is portrayed by Kluge as a source of labour, not of sensuality (Lutze, 1998, p.150). Amongst Lutze's examples of what he sees as a positive view from Kluge concerning unorthodox sexual practices is the fact that necrophilia in *Die Macht der Gefühle* appears to bring a dead woman back to life (Lutze, 1998, p.235). However, this mention of Kluge's depiction of these types of non-normative relationships is only a footnote in Lutze's description of Kluge's filmic work, and a topic that I will expand upon greatly in my argument.

Helke Sander, in her feminist analysis of *Die Macht der Gefühle*, does not see the film as at all progressive in terms of gender portrayals. Her key argument concerning this film is that it privileges a male authorial voice over the possibility of a female narrator. She considers women in the film, such as the victim of rape in the section 'In ihrer letzten Stunde' to be silenced by Kluge (Sander, 1990, pp.66-67). Although it may be the case that this particular woman fits into traditional, disempowered victim narratives, Sander's analysis does not take into consideration the way that Kluge's depictions of women in this film fit into his theory of emotions. Previous criticism, such as that from Von Schlicht and from Blumenberg, has shown that Kluge's approach to emotions in this film and its intended emotional effect on the viewer are very important. In addition, the volume of Kluge's own statements on the power of emotions as described previously shows that

understanding his theorisation of emotions is key to understanding this film. However, despite these facts, Sander does not add Kluge's theoretical approach to emotions to her analysis of gender in the film. As we can see from this critical overview, although analyses concerning gender and sexuality do indeed exist of *Die Macht der Gefühle*, such as those provided by Lutze and Sander, they do not take into consideration Kluge's own expressed view of what exactly an ideal interaction with emotion is. In contrast, Kluge's theorisation of emotions, and how his gender politics are reflected through this theory, will be the key focus of my analysis.

Frau Pichota

I will begin my analysis by examining the links between a character who is first introduced in *Abschied von Gestern*, and is developed by Kluge in *Die Macht der Gefühle*: Frau Pichota. A journalist, she is first introduced interviewing an opera singer, and then goes on to interview a military serviceman, Mr Anderson, before being pictured writing in a park. These appearances do not form a continuous narrative arc, but occur in a series of discontinuous vignettes. Frau Pichota forms a key link between this film and *Abschied von Gestern*, as well as appearing to re-examine emotion's power. She is one of the first characters whose presentation encourages the audience to become active and critical, as well as emotional themselves, thus creating Kluge's ideal viewer through what he sees as the correct use of emotions.

Kluge himself notes that *Die Macht der Gefühle* is not a stand-alone piece in his body of work. On the contrary, it is linked to *Abschied von Gestern*. In the accompanying text to *Die Macht der Gefühle*, he confirms that 'Ich knüpfe in diesem Film an meinen ersten Film an: *Abschied von Gestern*' (Kluge, 1984, p.66). The character named Frau Pichota in *Abschied von Gestern* is played by Eva Maria Meinecke. However, Frau Pichota

in *Die Macht der Gefühle* is played by his sister Alexandra Kluge, who plays Anita in *Abschied von Gestern* and who has an extra-marital affair with Manfred Pichota in that film. This casting choice by Kluge shows that in between the two films, in a fictional space created by Kluge, Anita has presumably married Manfred Pichota. As already discussed in my chapter analysing *Abschied von Gestern*, in this film Anita is denied a happy ending or a satisfactory relationship with Manfred Pichota. She is also unable to subvert masculine authority successfully. She is trapped in prison at the end of the film and constantly fights with men for control over her own use of language. Her character forms a link between *Abschied von Gestern* and *Die Macht der Gefühle*, encouraging a comparison to be drawn between the two films in order to examine the different ways that Kluge depicts women's position in society in each film. The Frau Pichota (formerly known as Anita) of *Die Macht der Gefühle* is an interviewer, an active resister and critic of the power of emotion. She is the first character to show a key method that Kluge uses in the film for representing women and characters that have gained power over emotion- a mid-range shot of a neutral face. This shot shows Frau Pichota rejecting emotion's power, which generates a complex set of feelings in the viewer, causing them to become active.

In the first section where the audience encounters Frau Pichota, she is interviewing an opera singer. She questions him, in an attempt to understand how he can express hopefulness in his performance, while he knows that the storyline of the opera in which he performs becomes tragic in the 5th Act. He replies that he does not know this outcome in the first act, which they discuss. He goes on to emphasise the fact that even if the storyline never changes over the multiple performances, there is always a possibility that the story may turn out differently, contradicting Frau Pichota's point about the repetitious tragic ending. The fact that it is a male opera singer who makes this point is significant because of Kluge's pre-occupation with opera and the way he links it to emotion's power. Frau

Pichota asks the opera singer 'wieso spielen Sie dann mit einem Funken der Hoffnung ins Gesicht?' despite the opera's repeatedly ending tragically. By questioning his emotional reaction and acting ability, Frau Pichota is also questioning his usage of the power of emotion to support the institution of opera. She thereby emphasises that he is part of the pessimistic institutionalisation of emotions and the trapping of emotions in market forces noted by Kluge in his theorisation of emotions in their negative configuration. Frau Pichota actively questions the power of emotions as they are used by men such as this opera singer, and emphasises the way they feed into pessimistic narratives in her interview. Even though the interview comes to a standstill, she still retains authority by challenging emotion's power through her questioning. This questioning sets the precedent in the film for female characters who gain authority through interacting critically with, or rejecting, accepted configurations of emotions.

In her next interview, Frau Pichota discusses the possibility of alternative historical outcomes with Mr Anderson, who was an allied commander during the Second World War and describes the bombing of Cologne. Once again, she challenges conventional ideas about emotion, this time in the arena of historical narratives. In her interview, Frau Pichota recalls the story of a woman who attempted to hoist a white flag to the top of the church tower, in order to stop the bombing. Mr Anderson dismisses this story, calling it 'Larifari' and saying that nothing about the story is true, before admitting that he did not know what the attack was supposed to accomplish. She accuses him of being cynical, and he retorts by asking what use his sympathy would do at this point, to which she replies 'Gar nichts'.

The scene is prefaced with a shot of Frau Pichota's blank and expressionless face while Mr Anderson speaks over it. **Figure 67:**



Figure 67: Frau Pichota's neutral face while interviewing Mr Anderson.

Frau Pichota's blank face suggests the refusal of an emotional reaction to the narrative being created by Mr Anderson. He describes the bombing of a town, an event that would generally elicit emotion and sympathy for its victims, but she remains completely unemotional as she questions him. Unlike Von Moltke, I do not see this scene as showing her increasing frustration during the interview (Von Moltke, 2010, p.241-242). The only show of emotion apparent in her interview is when she says that he appears 'zynisch' in a barely perceptible tone of disappointment. Her tone does not suggest anger or frustration. Despite the fact that the script provided in the accompanying material to the film adds an exclamation mark to this line (Kluge, 1984, p.96), Frau Pichota's delivery sounds far more neutral than the direction given. Her blank delivery and neutral face, lacking visible emotion, shows her rejecting conventional emotional responses, all of which is in line with Kluge's ideal of interaction with emotions.

In her final scene in the film, Frau Pichota's depiction by Kluge combines a sense of optimism via the use of music and Spring-like motifs, with her neutral display of emotions. This disconnect between a scene of optimism, set by Kluge through mise-en-scène and music, and Frau Pichota's lack of emotions, encourages a highly complex and multi-levelled emotional spectator reaction. In this scene, she is writing in a park in a highly picturesque environment. She is surrounded by cherry blossoms and with sheets of paper on the ground held down by stones. Kluge's voice over states 'Alle Gefühle glauben an einen glücklichen Ausgang'. **Figure 68; Figure 69; Figure 70:**



Figure 68: Frau Pichota writing in the park, surrounded by her writing and the sounds of Spring.

This shot is followed by images of her looking directly into the camera, and then by a montage of the park including long shots of the cherry blossoms around her, accompanied by birdsong. **Figure 69; Figure 70:**



Figure 69: Frau Pichota, with a neutral expression, looking directly at the camera.



Figure 70: Cherry blossoms in the park which are accompanied by birdsong.

An emotional reaction of hope, associated with the re-birth represented by Spring may be encouraged in the viewer due to the pink cherry-blossom and the bird-song which overlays the scene. However, this hope and optimism is countered by the shot of Frau Pichota's neutral face and lack of emotion.

The neutrality of Frau Pichota's face is especially notable when it is compared with a similar shot used in *Abschied von Gestern*, which is the last non-intertitle shot in the film.

Figure 71:



Figure 71: Anita's neutral face at the end of *Abschied von Gestern*.

In *Abschied von Gestern*, this shot of Anita's face is intercut with scenes of her giving birth in prison, as well as her laughing with her prison officer. In this case, a neutral face and rejection of emotion is not associated with an encouragement of optimism in the viewer. Quite the contrary, here Anita's neutral face is associated with a disappointing ending for her character and her succumbing to patriarchal forces around her. Although *Abschied von Gestern* and *Die Macht der Gefühle* may use similar visual motifs, these motifs have a

different function in each film with regards to causing any hope in the viewer, or offering any empowerment for the character on screen.

Returning to *Die Macht der Gefühle*, while Kluge's voiceover emphasises optimism and that the viewer should be hopeful, as does the Spring-like environment Frau Pichota is situated in, this optimism is prefaced with a rejection of emotions, and the visual show of emotional neutrality by Frau Pichota. She not only shows an ideal state of emotions in Kluge's terms by conveying neutrality here. In addition, the mismatch between the different elements of the scene causes emotions to be produced in the viewer themselves. While the viewer is encouraged by Kluge to be hopeful because of the *mise-en-scène*, they simultaneously become active and questioning. They are encouraged to fill in the gap left by Frau Pichota's own lack of emotion due to her neutral face. Their own complex set of emotional reactions comes to the fore, as they may question why she remains neutral, while the *mise-en-scène* is so optimistic. The spectator is given an opportunity by Kluge to become his ideal viewer, one who is emotional, is actively reacting to and yet also deconstructing what is on screen because of the contrast between the various visual elements on screen, not least Frau Pichota's lack of emotion. The fact that Kluge uses a woman and her neutral face to encourage this reaction, leading to his ideal viewer state, is a motif that reoccurs throughout the film, as will subsequently be shown.

Frau Pichota not only deconstructs the power of emotions being used by the men around her. Her depiction on-screen also gives the power of emotions to the viewer through her neutral face combined with a paradoxically hopeful *mise-en-scène* as portrayed by Kluge. Although her final shot in the film may be paradoxical in emotional terms, her character has a far more positive outcome than the same character at the end of *Abschied von Gestern*, who is trapped, has no control over her life, and must give birth in prison. Frau Pichota is given the opportunity to question those who are complicit with

the sectors of society where Kluge sees the incorrect use of emotion, showing that she has power over emotions, something positive in his formulation.

'Der Schuß'

The depictions of Frau Pichota and her interactions with the men around her are not the only sections in this film that show men as the carriers of negative emotions in Kluge's terms. She is also not the only woman in the film who causes the viewer to become active, critiquing emotion's power and remaining neutral herself. I will now show how this pattern re-occurs with the accused woman and the legal representatives around her in the section entitled 'Der Schuß'. If the comparison between *Abschied von Gestern* and *Die Macht der Gefühle* is continued, the way that the legal system is presented in the two films is extremely different when the portrayal of gender and power in this sphere is considered. In *Abschied von Gestern*, it appears that Anita is unable to subvert the system of the law, and is physically constrained by it, despite her attempts to subvert patriarchal control through her usage of words during her trial. In *Die Macht der Gefühle*, the court is an arena of female subversion of masculine authority through the unexpected interaction of emotions with pain, as well as a place where a highly non-normative conception of gendered and sexual behaviour exists. I will first elaborate on how the male judge is shown as susceptible to pain and therefore to negative, overwhelming feelings. He is unable to reject emotion's power, or to transform it. I will then show how the accused woman in this section, however, rejects both conventional shows of emotion, and conventional reactions to taboo familial and romantic relationships. The depiction of non-normative male/female relationships in this scene in turn causes an emotional reaction in the viewer, who may reconsider their own attitudes to gender relations, and in the process exhibit the features of Kluge's ideal viewer.

In 'Der Schuß', we see a court hearing which concerns a woman who has shot both herself and her husband. The fact that she has shot herself, and not only killed her husband, is not immediately clear until the judge's explicit questioning. Even at the end of the section, the motivation for the attack is unclear. The explanation for the attack is seen by the jurors as the fact that her husband was having an incestuous affair with their daughter. However, the woman strenuously denies this accusation, saying that the shooting was not an emotional reaction. She also denies the accusations of rape against her husband and the father of the daughter in question. The accused woman in this scene conducts herself similarly to Anita in *Abschied von Gestern*. Anita's motivations and feelings are verbalised for her by the judge, rather than her being allowed to explain these things herself. In 'Der Schuß', the accused woman is surrounded by male jurors who try and force her to accept certain emotional excuses for and reactions to her conduct, which she completely refuses. She thereby refuses conventional configurations of emotions. She is also able to remain neutral under questioning that one might assume would cause her to appear emotional. This emotional neutrality not only gives her a sense of authority in the scene and shows her being able to obtain one of Kluge's ideal emotional states. In addition, her emotional neutrality encourages the viewer to themselves become active and have their own complex and multi-layered emotional reactions to what is occurring on-screen.

The way that the main, male judge is depicted in this sequence is comparable with similar male figures in *Abschied von Gestern*, such as the judge who questions Anita. Crucially, the judge in 'Der Schuß' is far less authoritative than the judge in *Abschied von Gestern*. His portrayal is also comparable with that of the physically weak Ferdinand Rieche in *Der Starke Ferdinand*. The judge in 'Der Schuß' appears to be in physical pain, showing his susceptibility to excessive, negative feelings which could be associated with

unhappy emotions such as anxiety or stress. Much as Ferdinand Rieche has health problems (such as his weak kidney) and must combat these by faking his health test results, as well as actually exerting himself to do exercise, the judge in 'Der Schuß' is also depicted as physically unstable. However, unlike Rieche who hides his physical weakness and any associated pain, the judge in 'Der Schuß' seems to show his physical pain without attempting to conceal it, showing him to feel stress and therefore negative emotions. He represents a male character associated with an excess of emotional outputs, rather than with any kind of positive emotions in Kluge's formulation which are either transformed through labour, or avoided entirely.

Before the actual trial is shown on-screen, the judge discusses the woman's use of the gun in detail, before saying that he has a shooting pain in his back. **Figure 72:**

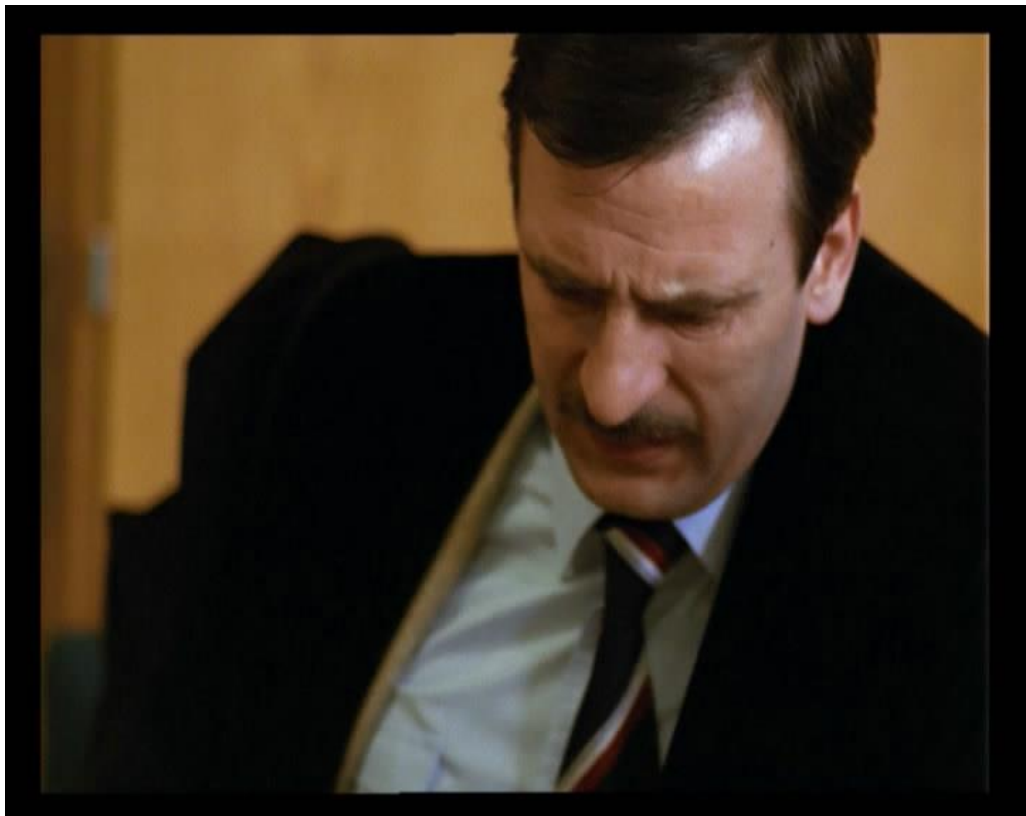


Figure 72: The judge's pained face on description of his back pain.

One of his fellow legal representatives says he has a similar pain on his left side. The judge asks what he does to alleviate this pain, to which the other man replies that he uses cat

skin, but the audience does not find out what exactly he does with this cat skin. This is because their conversation is interrupted by another man who delivers documents to the room and stops the discussion of their various ailments. Both men clearly are experiencing pain, and stress due to this pain, showing patriarchal figures to be associated with negative emotions which they cannot reject, unlike the emotionally neutral women shown in this film.

The way the gun is handled by multiple legal representatives and is finally handed to the main judge can be interpreted as contributing to the judge's physical awkwardness and negative emotions, such as the unhappiness and anxiety associated with pain, and bodily discomfort. The gun could also be viewed as representing a phallic object in a Freudian reading of this scene. It is passed between male and female judges before resting with the main judge, who awkwardly holds it and points it towards his own foot, while questioning the accused woman during her trial. **Figure 73:**



Figure 74: The judge's highly awkward body with the gun.

If one views the gun as a phallic object, the fact that the judge does not appear physically comfortable with the gun in this shot adds further weight to the obvious physical distress we see him experience in the previous scene. The negative emotions that one might associate with pain are thereby linked to male authority figures by Kluge, who appears not to support patriarchal figures but rather challenges their assumed authority. Kluge shows patriarchal figures to be unable to reconfigure or reject emotion's power, thereby showing patriarchy to be fallible according to his theorisation of emotions, wherein succumbing to existing structures of emotions and not rejecting them is something that he views as negative.

The women who come into contact with patriarchal figures in this film are able to control and reject conventional emotions, remaining more neutral. When the scene inside the courtroom begins, it appears to be set up antithetically to how Anita is depicted in her court scene in *Abschied von Gestern*. The accused woman's dispassionate response is

highlighted through a concentration of shots on her face, rather than on the male judge's face as in *Abschied von Gestern*. Whereas Anita's words are unimportant compared to the authority given to the judge in *Abschied von Gestern*, in *Die Macht der Gefühle*, although the judge's words are once again privileged, the accused woman's face and lack of emotion remain important.

At first, it is the woman being questioned who is granted screen time, as the judge's words overlay her impassive face. **Figure 75:**



Figure 75: The accused woman's lack of reaction.

The woman being questioned shows no emotional reaction to the supposedly shocking events that she is on trial for; namely having shot herself after shooting her husband. She seems on the contrary to be calm, neutral, and does not seem injured or damaged in any way. She is clearly being shown, like Frau Pichota, as able to resist the power of emotion, using this to her advantage, as she denies the judge authority through her dispassionate response to his questioning. Once more, it is a woman who is shown by Kluge as able to

avoid conventional approaches to emotions, and this is something positive in his formulation, showing him to arguably support female characters on screen.

The fact that this scene contains a depiction of a taboo romantic, as well as familial, relationship can be seen when the woman refuses to allow her husband and daughter's relationship be named as a rape. She states that it is consensual and therefore not rape, despite the fact that, in the legal sphere, sexual relationships between parents and children are defined as such. By insisting on this relationship's legitimacy and consensuality, she is directly challenging accepted societal norms of sexual, romantic and familial behaviour. The judge explicitly says, regarding the incestuous relationship, that 'Es ist etwas Schlimmes', to which she replies 'Wieso?'. Later in the scene she states that 'Es war, wie ich sagte, keine Vergewaltigung, sondern ein Liebesverhältnis unter besonderen Umständen'. This assertion of the legitimacy of the relationship happens more than once while the judge questions her, and each time she refuses to accept his definition of rape. She repeats that despite her husband's and daughter's circumstances, this was a consensual relationship. While she says this, she also explicitly refuses to express the type of emotions the judge suggests she should have, remaining very composed during his questioning. The judge asks her, upon finding out about her husband and daughter, 'Wie haben Sie reagiert', to which she replies 'Gar nicht'. Kluge is giving the ability to refuse emotion's power to a woman who is also directly challenging normatively acceptable relationship forms. The fight between the accused woman and the judge over how they should define what emotions she felt, and the strength of the emotions she experienced, continues into a dispute over the exact terminology that should be used to describe the woman's feelings. She admits that she did actually feel something about the affair, even if it was not the exact emotion described by the judge. She insists that she was not 'eifersüchtig', but, after a brief pause, that she was in fact 'neidisch'. As jealousy is wishing

that you were in the place of someone else, and envy is wishing that you possessed something that another person owns, one might argue that envy is in fact a less intense or aggressive emotion than jealousy. Jealousy has a personal and emotional aspect to it, while envy is more about ownership. The accused woman therefore rejects one strong emotional reaction in favour of one that is less extreme or personal. In this instance it is not only a woman who rejects conventional emotions, it is also a woman who is involved in describing a highly non-normative relationship. This is a motif that re-occurs at the end of the film with the couple created by the union of Knautsch-Betty and Schleich, as will be discussed subsequently.

The retaining of emotional neutrality by the accused woman is also another example of Kluge using unexpected on-screen emotions to provoke an emotional reaction in the viewer, causing them to become active. The fact that it is an incestuous relationship and the accused woman is defending it, while also rejecting expected emotional reactions, causes a sense of cognitive dissonance and a complex emotional reaction in the viewer. The mainstream public is not likely to see incest as acceptable. By portraying the woman as defending this relationship, Kluge causes the audience to become active and emotional themselves. Their own expectations of normative sexual and familial relationships are questioned, and they may experience feelings of discomfort. This is a complex and multi-layered emotional reaction, which fills the gap left by the accused woman's lack of an expected emotional response. This reaction is intended to transform the viewer into Kluge's ideal type of audience, one who is emotionally, yet also critically, engaged, and is encouraged to re-consider their own approaches to gender relations and expectations of romantic and familial life. Kluge is instrumentalising the portrayal of non-normative relationships in order to create an active and critical viewer who may reconsider their own approaches to gender politics.

Characters in this section, such as the accused woman, who describe non-normative relationships, are given the opportunity to reject the power of emotions by not having conventional emotional reactions. In contrast, men submit to overwhelming emotional power in its negative forms, as evidenced by the judge who is in physical pain. The audience's reaction to the taboo relationships portrayed by Kluge also adds to their attaining his ideal viewer state, one where the viewer experiences a multi-levelled emotional reaction, and becomes active. Kluge instrumentalises both portrayals of women, and of non-normative relationships, for a purpose that he sees as positive- that of creating an active viewer, who may also reconsider the gender relations being portrayed in this section.

'In ihrer letzten Stunde'

In the section 'In ihrer letzten Stunde', Kluge uses a controversial relationship to create an active viewer once again. However, in this case, Kluge problematises the actions of the man who is himself involved in the relationship. Kluge depicts the woman in this relationship as able to reject conventional powers of emotion, even though the relationship in question comes in the form of a highly unacceptable male/female interaction; necrophilic rape. 'In ihrer letzten Stunde' has been noted by other critics, such as Lutze, as part of the depiction of sexual relations in Kluge's work that could be named as both showing non-normative types of sexuality, and also as being optimistic in terms of offering hope for humanity (Lutze, 1998, p.235). Lutze makes this argument because of the fact that the woman involved is returned to life after death, although this resurrection occurs through the act of rape (Lutze, 1998, p.235). This section is also, as mentioned previously, one of Kluge's favourite sections of the film, because of its supposed happy end, despite the extremely problematic sexual relationship between the characters.

This section involves a woman, much like the accused in 'Der Schuß', who refuses to pathologise unacceptable sexual behaviour, and rather reacts neutrally to it. This sexual behaviour is her own near-necrophilic rape by the salesman Kudelski (she is in a state near death and is neither lucid nor aware of what is happening). She then excuses her rapist for his crime when she returns to life. Her rapist Kudelski could be said to be following his overwhelming physical feelings, which land him in prison. He is also depicted as physically weak, continuing the theme of masculine characters being associated with pain and physical weakness, and negative, overwhelming emotions. The complex and problematic gender relations being depicted in this section are another example of Kluge using non-normative sexuality and emotionally neutral women in order to activate the viewer's own emotional reactions.

This section can be read as a bizarre re-envisioning of the story of Sleeping Beauty. The female protagonist attempts to commit suicide in her car by taking an over-dose of pills after being betrayed by her lover. Kudelski the salesman, in another car, notices, attempts to revive her and then takes her away in his own car, where she appears to have lost consciousness again. These events are observed by another male onlooker. The salesman then takes the woman into the woods, where he rapes her while she is unconscious. He is then arrested and put into a prison cell. Scenes of his incarceration are intercut with ones of the woman in her apartment, who is depicted, along the traditional lines of the Sleeping Beauty fairytale, with a bouquet of flowers and in bed. The salesman's trial and the woman's testimony are then shown, and she denies any negative feelings towards Kudelski.

When taking the woman out of her car and carrying her to his own, Kudelski seems physically weak and has difficulty carrying her. **Figure 76:**



Figure 76: Kudelski straining to carry the woman.

Kluge generates a negative association with the physical feelings of a masculine character as he is in pain, as seen in the shot above. This depiction is similar to the judge who has a shooting pain in his back described previously. The feelings which overwhelm Kudelski are negative ones, such as discomfort. He also shows an extreme attitude to emotions- it is presumably overwhelming lust that has brought him to rape the woman. Kluge once again links emotions experienced by men to negative actions, showing patriarchal figures in a negative light and portraying men as a group frequently unable to reject emotion's power.

His victim, however, fits into the now established trope of the woman who rejects conventional emotions, and the woman who is accepting of a non-normative and controversial idea of a relationship. Her very survival (surprisingly, considering her circumstances as a rape victim) is combined with a neutral response, and with a lack of emotion and a rejection of accepted victim narratives when she is questioned in court. During the trial, she states that it was not Kudelski's actions that hurt her, as she was

unconscious at the time of the rape. Instead, she claims that the actions of her original lover who betrayed her were more painful. Here she reconceptualises Kudelski's conventionally unacceptable sexual behaviour, thereby offering a defence of his actions, which actually revived her. She undertakes this reconceptualisation and defence while also rejecting emotion's power, seemingly remaining neutral, in a way that corresponds with Kluge's ideal approach to emotions. She refuses to accept conventional victim narratives that mainstream society attempts to construct for her. This portrayal is similar to that of the accused woman in 'Der Schuß', who also refuses existing narratives concerning a controversial sexual relationship. Once again a woman, and this time a woman who is directly involved in a non-normative and controversial male/female relationship, is given the power to reject expected emotional reactions, and therefore relates to emotions in a positive manner in Kluge's terms.

When questioned by the judge, who asks 'Es hat also Ihrem Gefühl nicht ausgemacht, von dem Angeklagten [...] vergewaltigt zu werden?', she replies 'Hatte ich zu diesem Zeitpunkt überhaupt kein Gefühl. Ich war bewußtlos. Insofern muß ich mich für neutral erklären'. During this court scene, while she is questioned, her face remains neutral, in a similar fashion to other female characters previously mentioned in my analysis, who have their emotional states questioned, but remain externally impassive.

Figure 77:



Figure 77: The rape victim's neutral expression while discussing her emotional state.

The rape victim's discussion with the female judge could be interpreted as a comment on the situation between men and women who are in conventional, normative relationships. The woman states that the feelings which were caused by the end of her romantic relationship were worse than those which she experienced when she was raped. This statement could be taken as an indictment of normative, heterosexual relationships. Kluge appears to be saying that the emotional pain caused by this apparently conventional relationship was worse than any physical pain the woman could have experienced through the act of rape. He therefore appears to be showing an extremely negative view of normative, romantic, heterosexual relationships between men and women.

This section of the film could also be interpreted as another example of Kluge using non-normative relationships in order to allow the viewer's own emotions to come to the fore. He is arguably creating his ideal viewer who fills in the emotional gaps left on screen

with their own reaction. The lack of emotion from Kudelski's victim when she describes her reaction to the crime causes a disconnect, confusion and then an emotional response in the viewer. This emotion from the viewer could originally be sympathy for her plight, followed by confusion over the apparent mis-placement of their sympathy, as the victim does not see her situation as negative. It is her lack of emotional response, or the gap which has been left by Kluge for the viewer to fill with their own emotions, which has caused this viewer reaction. The viewer becomes increasingly engaged with what is being portrayed on screen, and is forced to concentrate on the protagonist's emotional neutrality.

This scene appears highly problematic in its depiction of sexual assault, along with the victim's refusal to place any blame on her assailant, as pointed out by Sander in her previously noted analysis of the film (Sander, 1990, pp.66-67). However, there are alternative interpretations of this section which may recuperate the gender politics expressed by Kluge here, especially when the viewer's reaction to Kudelski's character is re-considered. When I discussed this section with Kluge in my interview with him, he took it for granted that the rapist's actions were inexcusable. 'We agree that it is criminal, and it is brutal and so on to rape a woman. If she is not capable to defend herself, then it is even worse. This is settled. I do not think it is necessary to work on the cinema public which believes the same'. The reason, he claimed, that he used the specific configuration of the rapist taking advantage of a woman who is unconscious and almost dead was to take the most extreme case of this scene possible. His aim was to elicit a viewer reaction of disgust and to make them active. 'I could also tell a story [where] there was exploitation of a woman, and you would not notice it exactly [...] Therefore in the metaphor you should show excessive cases. This means even if you are dead, you will still react to it'. Kluge, therefore, uses Kudelski as an extreme case in order to create an active and emotional

viewer. However, the active viewer being created in this case is not one that should support Kudelski's actions, rather they should sympathise with the victim of his extreme and terrible act.

It is notable that the way that Kluge elicits this emotional reaction in the viewer by using Kudelski's character is different to how Kudelski's victim's characterisation functions. In the case of Kudelski, Kluge does not leave an emotional gap for the viewer to fill, rather he shows a controversial topic which only has one possible emotional outcome for the viewer, that of outrage at Kudelski's actions. It is not the same type of complex, multi-faceted emotional reaction in the viewer as elicited by the confusion over his victim's apparent neutrality, as described above. Therefore, it could be said that the type of active viewer created by Kudelski's actions, as opposed to that created by his victim's neutral reaction, is one that is less complex, generates less activity in the viewer, and is therefore less ideal in Kluge's terms. Negative emotional associations, and less successful viewer reactions in Kluge's terms, remain with a male character, who succumbs to lust. His characterisation produces a less multi-levelled viewer reaction than the portrayal of his victim does. In contrast, his victim's portrayal causes a highly complex and multi-faceted viewer reaction, because of her emotional neutrality, rather than just a straight-forward emotional reaction of shock. Male characters in this film continue to not be supported by Kluge. Women are, in contrast, able to reject conventional emotions and encourage a complex emotional spectator response, thereby supporting a view in which Kluge denigrates the actions of men, and supports victims of patriarchy.

Other traditional romantic male/female relationships in *Die Macht der Gefühle*

A sense of fatalism regarding traditional male/female relationships is established by Kluge earlier in the film than in any of the sections analysed thus far. Using silent film motifs at

the outset of the film, before any narrative sections have started, he emphasises that with regards to traditional romantic love, there will always be an unhappy ending to every encounter. He shows that in these types of relationship, emotions will not be experienced in a fulfilling or positive fashion. He thereby links negative, overwhelming emotions to traditional heterosexual relationships.

In the very first section of the film, Kluge uses a song with fatalistic lyrics over images of a river bank flanked by high-rise buildings, followed by a sequence of images of a fortune teller, and then of a couple. The song's lyrics, from Dajos Bela's 'Einmal sagt man sich adieu' tell of an unhappy end of a relationship. **Figure 78:**



Figure 78: The couple.

The lyrics to the song used by Kluge portray negative emotions: 'Einmal sagt man sich Adieu, wenn man sich auch noch so liebt. Einmal sagt man sich Adieu, weil es keine Treue gibt'. The addition of the visual element of the fortune teller adds to this fatalism- the fortune of the couple pictured by Kluge is clearly not positive and fate will keep them

apart. The iris effect around the couple seen above surrounds them in darkness, not only increasing the focus on them but also symbolising the unhappy end of the relationship. Even though their figures are backlit, they are still portrayed as if they are about to be engulfed by darkness. This image foreshadows the end of their being together and ensuing unhappiness –and thereby negative emotions. This unnamed couple, in a section separated from the main story arcs and shot in black and white, returns at the end of the section 'Die Vierte Nachtstunde'. At this point, there is an excerpt from another black and white silent film, with a couple who are saying goodnight to each other. We watch the woman's face change from happy to disturbed. Kluge's voiceover informs the audience that 'Er sagte "Ich liebe dich" und danach sagte er etwas Falsches'. Within this short snapshot of a generic heterosexual relationship, a man is once again linked to unhappiness. It is his words that cause the woman's face to drop and negative emotions to ensue. There is also no room for a lack of emotions in these characters or a complex viewer reaction to their portrayal. On the contrary, Kluge uses traditional male/female relationships to show how emotions can be experienced negatively by his characters when they are not tempered with neutrality. He shows that in traditional relationships, happiness, or a new approach to emotions which could be optimistic, cannot flourish. He thereby problematises heterosexuality and supports the deconstructing of traditional relationships, and the film appears to support a progressive view of gender relations.

Frau Bärlamm and her client Frau Gerti

The trend of challenging heterosexual traditions continues in Kluge's depiction of the marriage broker Frau Bärlamm. Frau Bärlamm is portrayed as being able to reject conventional emotions. This ability contrasts with her female clients, who appear to succumb to the overwhelming power of emotions, and thereby suffer. Frau Bärlamm's lack

of an expected emotional response, namely her humorous undermining of gender norms and heterosexual marriage rituals, is used by Kluge once again to incite an active audience.

The audience is introduced visually to Frau Bärlamm when she is investigating power cables under a city, which, according to Kluge's voice over, are in a dire state. After an interlude discussing how a woman must be sacrificed in the fifth act of every opera that deals with redemption, Frau Bärlamm is introduced by name, as well as being described as an 'Optimistin'. The fact that she is linked to optimism, rather than to the tragic emotional end offered by opera, appears to continue Kluge's trend in the film of portraying women as the model for how one should engage with emotions. However, her characterisation as a marriage broker also goes on to show the linkage of existing configurations of emotions to capitalist gain and market forces. This role shows her other function in the film- namely to undermine traditional heterosexual institutions such as marriage.

As briefly noted by Polak-Springer (2012, p.111), Frau Bärlamm appears to be staging a parodic version of femininity, as well as parodying heterosexual dating rituals, in a scene where she highlights her positive physical attributes to a man in a restaurant. She is portrayed as though she were placing an advertisement for herself as a wife to potential husbands. She seems to undermine heterosexual institutions such marriage, even though she is a marriage broker herself. This parodic version of femininity causes amusement in the viewer, while Frau Bärlamm remains serious.

During this scene, she has pegs on her face. **Figure 79:**



Figure 79: Frau Bärlamm's pegged face.

She asks the man to whom she describes herself to note that she has no wrinkles on her face, as well as the fact that her nose could be altered 'je nach Wunsch'. She also bites on her own hand in order to show off the quality of her teeth, which is noted by the man who writes down her possession of this desirable physical characteristic. **Figure 80:**



Figure 80: Frau Bärlamm showing her 'good teeth' to the observing man.

This scene can be read as Frau Bärlamm staging a parodic performance of femininity. She could be seen as staging this performance in order to undermine accepted notions of gender, along the lines previously discussed in other chapters with regards to Butler's concept of performativity. In this case she could also be seen as challenging, through parody, stereotypical patriarchal behaviour of men who seek to objectify women. This portrayal is similar to that found in the scenes between Gertie Kahlmann and Rieche at the beginning of their relationship in *Der Starke Ferdinand*. I described this portrayal in my previous chapter, which shows the same parodic repetition of the trope of a woman showing her potential suitability as a wife or romantic partner.

As seen in the scene above, Frau Bärlamm is wearing a bowler hat. This item of clothing is a signifier of masculinity, worn normally by men. By emphasising her suitability as a wife but also wearing traditionally masculine clothes, Frau Bärlamm is clearly actively interfering with coherent expressions of gendered norms in a humorous fashion. The hat is

also a signifier of business and capitalism, aspects of life not traditionally associated with a romantic or wifely femininity, and rather more in keeping with her position as a marriage broker. This signifier of business also adds an aspect of parody through the overt linkage of a symbol of capitalist exchange to this scene, representing her selling herself to a potential partner. There is a humorous disconnect between what Frau Bärlamm is saying, as she tries to prove herself as a suitable wife, and her physical and outer portrayal of herself in gendered terms. She is potentially showing a confusion of, and not a subscription to, gender stereotypes.

In addition to Frau Bärlamm's active subversion of gender norms, Kluge's inclusion of a reflected checkerboard surface overlaying the scene adds a sense of playfulness. The checkerboard is reminiscent of a board-game. However the tone of the delivery of Frau Bärlamm's speech in this scene is highly significant. The dead-pan and emotionless way in which she asserts her suitability as a potential wife belies the humorous impression given by her physical presence. The disconnect between the tone established by her physical presence, and the neutrality and dead-pan delivery of her lines causes an emotional reaction in the viewer. This emotional reaction is that of amusement, which comes into play in the space left by her neutral and emotionless performance. Her portrayal not only humorously undermines the institution of heterosexual marriage by causing laughter in the context of a scene where she is attempting to portray her suitability as a wife. Her characterisation thereby also creates Kluge's ideal type of active and emotional viewer.

While Frau Bärlamm may be shown as lacking conventional emotions, with her dead-pan tone, and subverts the tradition of marriage by parodying it, she also has another function as a character. She personifies the existence of a connection between traditional heterosexual relationships and the emotions bound into forces of exchange that come with these traditions. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, Kluge views

emotions as being trapped in systems of exchange, such as capitalism. In his terms this is a state of affairs that stops emotions from having an emancipatory function for humanity, instead leading to tragedy. Further examples of Frau Bärlamm's on-screen depiction and her interaction with her clients exemplifies this non-emancipatory state of emotions.

Kluge makes it clear that Frau Bärlamm's job as a marriage broker is not necessarily an altruistic occupation. He shows this point by saying via voiceover that although she does indeed spend her time creating connections between individuals, the majority of her time is spent dealing with the problems these connections create. While he says this, the audience is shown Frau Bärlamm counting out her money on a table from above. **Figure 81:**



Figure 81: Frau Bärlamm counting money.

This then moves to a shot of her hands, which are extremely dirty. She subsequently attempts to wash the dirt off with a lemon. **Figure 82:**



Figure 82: Frau Bärlamm's filthy hands after counting her money.

The implication of this scene is that being a marriage broker and receiving money for the act of helping people to get married is a negative and figuratively polluting occupation. It is Frau Bärlamm's position as a supporter of this heterosexual, traditional structure of marriage that is metaphorically polluting her skin, represented by the dirt on her hands. This pollution causes her to need to wash her hands with a lemon, which is a method of skin-lightening and bleaching, removing the dirt both metaphorically and on-screen. Marriage is portrayed as an institution that binds emotions, such as love, into systems of capitalist exchange, represented by the money seen above. The institution of marriage is clearly being challenged by Kluge's negative depiction of Frau Bärlamm's occupation as a marriage broker. Undermining the tradition of marriage could be interpreted as progressive in terms of gender relations, as Kluge problematises traditional relationship forms.

Frau Gerti, one of Frau Bärlamm's clients, experiences turbulent emotions caused by Frau Bärlamm's lack of sensitive counselling. Her character shows the submission of a woman to the power of uncontrolled emotions. Her submission to these types of emotions is connected to her wish to be in a traditional, heterosexual relationship, which in turn leads to unhappiness. We see her, after the scene where we learn of Frau Bärlamm's true occupation, preparing vegetables and experiencing de-contextualised emotional outbursts. **Figure 83:**



Figure 83: Frau Gerti smiling while at her work.

The audience is given no reason why she should be smiling. Her smile in this scene becomes all the more confusing when it is contrasted with the next and last time we see Frau Gerti, pictured below. **Figure 84:**



Figure 84: Frau Gerti's next over-emotional state.

In this scene, Frau Bärlamm attempts to counsel Frau Gerti, who sobs uncontrollably and then throws a glass of water across a table, which smashes. An association is generated here between Frau Gerti's profound unhappiness, the power of overwhelming emotions and linked to heterosexual romantic relations. This association occurs because the audience has very little information about Frau Gerti. The only information they have is that she desires a traditional heterosexual relationship through marriage, as evidenced by the fact that she is one of Frau Bärlamm's clients, and that she is very emotional, lacking the ability to remain neutral. This second point marks her as different from many other women in the film. The root of Frau Gerti's submission to the power of emotions could be her wish to be a part of a traditional heterosexual relationship within marriage. This desire to subscribe to heterosexual tradition leads to a violent reaction and causes her to be in a state that Kluge sees as dangerous, namely one overwhelmed by emotions. Frau Gerti does not problematise any traditional relationship forms, and is not a victim of male

aggression. Rather she shows Kluge to be challenging the institution of traditional heterosexual relations in the form of marriage, by showing this type of traditional relationship leading to negative emotions.

The viewer, too, may experience emotions because of Frau Gerti's appearance on screen. These emotions are likely to be those of sympathy and also sadness, reflecting Frau Gerti's own emotions. However, Frau Gerti shows no gap in her emotional responses, or any neutral expression. The viewer will therefore not experience the same set of complex or multiplicitous emotional developments or considerations that they would on viewing other characters who show unexpectedly neutral emotional responses to on-screen events, such as Frau Bärlamm. Kluge connects a type of straight-forward emotional viewer response to characters who are involved in traditional relationships, and do not challenge gender stereotypes, as well as to men, as described previously. Frau Gerti is a rare example of a woman in this film who does not embody Kluge's ideal state of rejecting traditional configurations of emotions by remaining neutral. She may indeed cause the viewer to become active and emotional. However, she is not associated with causing the same type of complex emotional viewer reaction that other women with impassive faces do throughout the film.

Knautsch-Betty

The prostitute Knautsch-Betty rejects conventional shows of emotion in some cases, but is also shown in others to be susceptible to physical pain, leading to negative emotions.

These negative emotions, moreover, are always caused by men. As such, she is a character that embodies a successful relationship with emotions, as well as being a victim of patriarchal forces. She also forms part of a non-normative couple with her partner Schleich, continuing to be emotionally neutral in this pairing. Their relationship is intended

to cause feelings of what Kluge would define as optimism in the viewer. This optimism is allowed to occur because the couple uses labour to transform emotion's power to undertake a positive action, by reviving a murdered man and caring for him. Once again, Kluge is giving female characters involved in a non-normative relationship the power to interact with emotions in, in his terms, the best possible and most productive way.

Before the audience is even aware of who Betty is and before her section of the film has begun, it is introduced to her image when she is applying makeup, with a neutral and unemotional expression. **Figure 85:**



Figure 85: Betty applying her makeup.

When Betty is introduced verbally, Kluge's voice-over says 'Liebe gegen Bezahlung', and the audience sees this shot of her face. **Figure 86:**



Figure 86: Betty's blank expression.

Her facial expression is inscrutable, much like the other unemotional women previously noted such as Frau Bärlamm with her deadpan delivery, Frau Pichota, and the accused woman in 'Der Schuß'. While her face betrays no emotion and rather shows neutrality, the heart around her neck in contrast is a symbol of romantic emotional attachment. Even before her character has acted, she is shown as able to remain neutral and reject conventional emotion's power, even when its symbols surround her.

After this introduction to Betty's character, the audience sees her about to go to work in a bar. **Figure 87; Figure 88:**



Figure 87: Betty adjusting her wig.



Figure 88: Betty drinks to prepare for work.

The images above show Betty's neutral state of emotions. Kluge's voiceover states that she is in danger (over the shots above, he states 'Betty ist in Not'), and she appears to rush through her drinking in this scene to go to work. However, her face remains emotionless and she shows no sign either of awareness of danger, or of conventional emotion at all. Once again, Kluge shows a woman who is able to reject conventional emotional responses, which he sees as positive in his formulation of emotions.

The function of this introduction of Betty's character as unemotional is not only to introduce her ability to maintain emotional neutrality, but once more to create an active audience. The audience hears Kluge say that she is in danger, but sees no emotional reaction to this statement, provoking viewers to consider why she could potentially be in danger. Their concern replaces her lack of emotion. They are once again invited to fill in the emotional gaps left by Kluge with their own complex thoughts and emotions, which causes them to become active.

Betty's apparent lack of emotions changes once she is pictured with male characters. She appears susceptible to their influence. Unlike other female characters in the film, who resist male authority and the attempts by men to make them feel certain emotions, Betty is physically intimidated and succumbs to male enforcement of the power of feelings. She is a victim of male characters, like the woman in 'In ihrer letzten Stunde'. Males and patriarchal power are once again linked by Kluge to an excess of unpleasant emotions, unhappiness and pain.

After being questioned by Inspector Mürke about her illegal occupation as a prostitute, thugs await her in an alleyway and then assault her. **Figure 89:**



Figure 89: Betty being assaulted.

This assault clearly causes her physical pain and the emotion of stress, as can be seen from her expression shown above. After the assault, she is left in a cage, where she holds her lipstick and then spits at her reflection. **Figure 90; Figure 91:**



Figure 90: Betty holding her lipstick in the darkness of the cage.



Figure 91: Betty spitting at her own reflection.

Betty's expression while holding her lipstick is one of fear, and when she spits at her own reflection she appears to be showing revulsion. In this situation, it is a physical show of negative emotion, without any emotional neutrality, that has been caused by the men around her. Even though she may be susceptible to emotion's negative power, this susceptibility is due to masculine characters, not from her own choices. Kluge once again shows the negative impact of patriarchal power on women.

Kluge does not appear to support a patriarchal attitude that would denigrate sex workers, but instead shows them to also be sympathetic victims of patriarchy. He confirmed in my interview with him that he does not see sex workers as those who should be rejected by society because of the nature of their work. He says of Betty that 'The prejudices that we have should not deny that she is a worker. And she is aware that the commodity is her body [...] [prostitutes] are damaged, it is awful because of the way we treat prostitutes in our society'. This statement shows that Kluge does not see prostitutes as those who should be shunned from society due to the nature of their work, but that they should be viewed as workers, alongside other physical labourers, and that their work is of equal value, despite its controversial nature. He also shows that he considers that they should be considered victims of patriarchal prejudices. Even though Betty is a prostitute, she is still portrayed sympathetically as a victim of patriarchal forces by Kluge.

Betty and Schleich versus Schmidt and Mäxchen

When Betty and the criminal Schleich form a couple, Betty's role shifts from an individual woman attempting to resist emotion's power, to becoming part of a couple and a non-normative relationship. Kluge portrays this shift exceptionally positively in terms of what the couple is able to achieve, in reviving the businessman Allewisch. He also contrasts the position of this couple with Schmidt and Mäxchen. The relationship between Schmidt and

Mäxchen is instead more traditional, does not exhibit any kind of emotional neutrality and instead is defined by an excess of emotion.

Whereas Schmidt and Mäxchen are portrayed by Kluge as being susceptible to the draw of greed, capitalism, and negative uses of emotions, Schleich and Betty are able to retain neutrality and reject emotions power. As previously mentioned in my introduction to this chapter, the section describing Allewisch's revival is one of Kluge's favourite in the film and he compares the two couples in terms of how they relate to emotions. He says that Schmidt and Mäxchen possess 'viel heißes Gefühl' (Kluge, 1984, p.214), but in contrast, Schleich and Betty 'verstehen etwas von [...] Sachlichkeit' (Kluge, 1984, p.214). As well as there being a difference in how they interact with emotion, there is also a difference between how traditional or respectable either couple could be said to be. Schleich and Betty's relationship could be put into the category of non-mainstream and challenging of societal expectations, as it consists of an ex-prostitute and a criminal. Betty appears to enter into this relationship freely. The fact that Kluge gives a prostitute the opportunity of having a romantic life, rather than keeping her personal life as a taboo subject (prostitutes are not conventionally portrayed as viable romantic partners) could be seen as non-normative. This choice shows a re-examination of unconventional sexual behaviour, rendering acceptable what is traditionally unacceptable or taboo.

Schmidt and Mäxchen, on the other hand, have a veneer of respectability in comparison to Schleich and Betty, and are profoundly unhappy in their relationship. Their relationship is depicted as having traditional romantic elements and emotions. Although the beginning of their relationship is not elaborated on at length, Kluge does say in his voiceover that 'Als [Mäxchen] Schmidt kennenlernte war sie auf ihn nicht versessen. Jetzt kann sie nicht mehr von ihm lassen'. This statement implies an eventual (if delayed) romantic longing on her part, in line with normative concepts of romance, as well as

potentially excessive emotions. She is also introduced as 'eine Direktrice', while Schmidt lives off her salary. They do not live outside the law like Schleich and Betty. There is a degree of challenge to tradition in this relationship as Schmidt's living costs are paid for by Mäxchen. However this relationship is arguably not as challenging to mainstream conceptions of acceptability as the relationship between a criminal and a prostitute, as in the case of Betty and Schleich. In addition, Schmidt and Mäxchen appear to be susceptible to the overwhelming power of negative emotions such as greed. They attempt to murder the businessman Allewisch because they are supposed to be carrying out a diamond-selling deal with him. They thereby embody an excess of greed and succumb to the forces of exchange. In this case, the forces of exchange take the form of capitalism as they want the diamond for themselves, to exchange for money. Kluge appears once again to be challenging traditional relationship forms, showing those involved with these types of relationships to succumb to excessive emotions in their negative configuration, as well as to the forces of exchange.

After attempting to kill Allewisch, Schmidt and Mäxchen then run away together and escape to Barcelona, where unhappiness sets in. In the couple's final scene, they are in hiding as they think they are responsible for Allewisch's murder, unaware of his revival by Betty and Schleich. This guilt leads them to hide out in a hotel room, in an environment filled with tension. They are alternately bored and angry, and take out these negative emotions on each other. The audience sees a grim couple trapped in an unpleasant and dingy hotel room. **Figure 92:**



Figure 92: Schmidt and Mäxchen contemplating their actions.

The above shot is accompanied by the sound of a dripping tap, emphasising how run-down their surroundings are and adding to the uncomfortable, desolate atmosphere. Their confinement and unhappy emotions connected to their actions as a couple are also emphasised by the next few shots of barred windows, including one in which Schmidt looks out the window. The focus on his face fades to that of a pigeon on a ledge, who may be able to fly away, unlike Schmidt who is trapped in the room with Mäxchen. **Figure 93;** **Figure 94;** **Figure 95:**



Figure 93: The first barred window.



Figure 94: Schmidt's reflection in the window.



Figure 95: The pigeon on the outside, able to escape while Schmidt cannot.

It is clear that Kluge shows their relationship to have an unhappy ending, full of feelings of captivity and restraint, and also associated with violent and aggressive outbursts of emotion. This aggression is shown later in the scene when Mäxchen says she should have hit Schmidt for what he said to her- the audience is unaware of what exactly Schmidt is supposed to have said to cause this reaction. He instantly reacts and starts to assault her physically. **Figure 96:**



Figure 96: Schmidt's assault on Mäxchen.

This assault is extremely sudden and violent, including his banging her head against the wall. The room shown above, where the assault takes place, also contains a broken piece of furniture, perhaps suggesting prior acts of violence. The couple has apparently achieved their aims, which are admittedly violent and illegal in themselves. However, they are now inextricably bound together, even though they appear to not wish to be. This unhappy ending for the couple is established by Kluge's use of an intertitle during this sequence which says 'Was bindet stärker noch als eine Ehe? Ein Mord, wenn jeder von der Tat des andern weiss'. The relationship between the two is clearly defined as morbid and unpleasant because of its link to their attempted murder of Allewisch. The murder was linked to greed and an excess of emotion, and the relationship ends in violence and aggression. In addition, the couple's actions are intended to elicit an emotional response in the spectator, that of shock and unhappiness at their actions and at Schmidt's violent conduct. However, this shock is a straightforward viewer reaction to the events on screen.

It is not a more complex reaction where a viewer would be made to consider why characters remain neutral despite their circumstances. Kluge reserves this latter type of highly complex viewer reaction for characters who are involved in non-traditional relationships, such as Betty and Schleich, as will subsequently be analysed.

The overall function of this on-screen couple is to provide an antithesis to Betty and Schleich, showing what happens when there is an excess of emotions in a traditional heterosexual pairing. The traditional couple is depicted as having negative emotions, such as greed, aggression and boredom. They show the audience that if emotions are left unchecked and are neither rejected nor transformed through labour, as discussed at the outset of this chapter, they will fall into pre-existing patterns of tragedy and lead to an unhappy end. There is also no neutrality present on screen to allow the audience to fill in emotional gaps left by Kluge with their own multi-faceted reaction to events on screen. Kluge once again appears to be undermining traditional alliances of romance with heterosexuality. He shows that more conventional couples are not able to associate with their emotions in what he considers to be a positive light. The conclusion of the story of this couple contrasts with the neutral emotions Kluge gives the couple of Betty and Schleich, as will now be discussed.

Betty and Schleich's relationship

Betty and Schleich's relationship is one whose narrative takes up the concluding section of *Die Macht der Gefühle*, titled 'Abbau eines Verbrechens durch Kooperation'. As already discussed, even though it is between a man and a woman, their pairing could still be viewed as creating a non-normative couple that challenges societal conventions. This is because of Betty's profession, which is not conventionally conducive to her having a romantic relationship at all, and Schleich's occupation as a criminal. Kluge uses his

technique of showing their neutral faces on-screen to cause an emotional reaction in the audience throughout this section. They are the couple that best embodies Kluge's ideal rejection of conventional emotional reactions. They also use labour to transform emotions' power, causing the ideal viewer to be reborn in Allewisch.

The couple is introduced with a re-emergence of the motif of Betty rejecting expected emotions. When Betty enters into a relationship with Schleich and is shown in his living space (now their communal home), representing her having integrated into his life, she looks directly and neutrally into the camera. **Figure 97:**



Figure 97: Betty after being taken in by Schleich, emotionally neutral.

The audience is reminded that she rejects conventional emotional reactions, rather than being overcome by emotion, like Schmidt and Mäxchen. Her lack of emotional reaction remains, despite the fact that she has entered into an apparently consensual relationship with Schleich. The audience is told that she is 'dankbar', in Kluge's words, provided by his voiceover, for the relationship. She could have been depicted as being happy or emotional

in this situation. Instead, she retains power in Kluge's terms by rejecting conventional ways of dealing with emotion, shown by her neutral face above. Again, the mismatch between what Kluge tells the audience on the audio level of the scene, and Betty's own image, causes a sense of cognitive dissonance in the viewer, encouraging them to be active and think about why her reactions are so neutral.

This lack of emotions re-emerges when Betty discovers Allewisch's body. Upon opening the door to the flat, she drops a glass and squints. That squint is the only evidence of any kind of surprise or feeling. **Figure 98:**

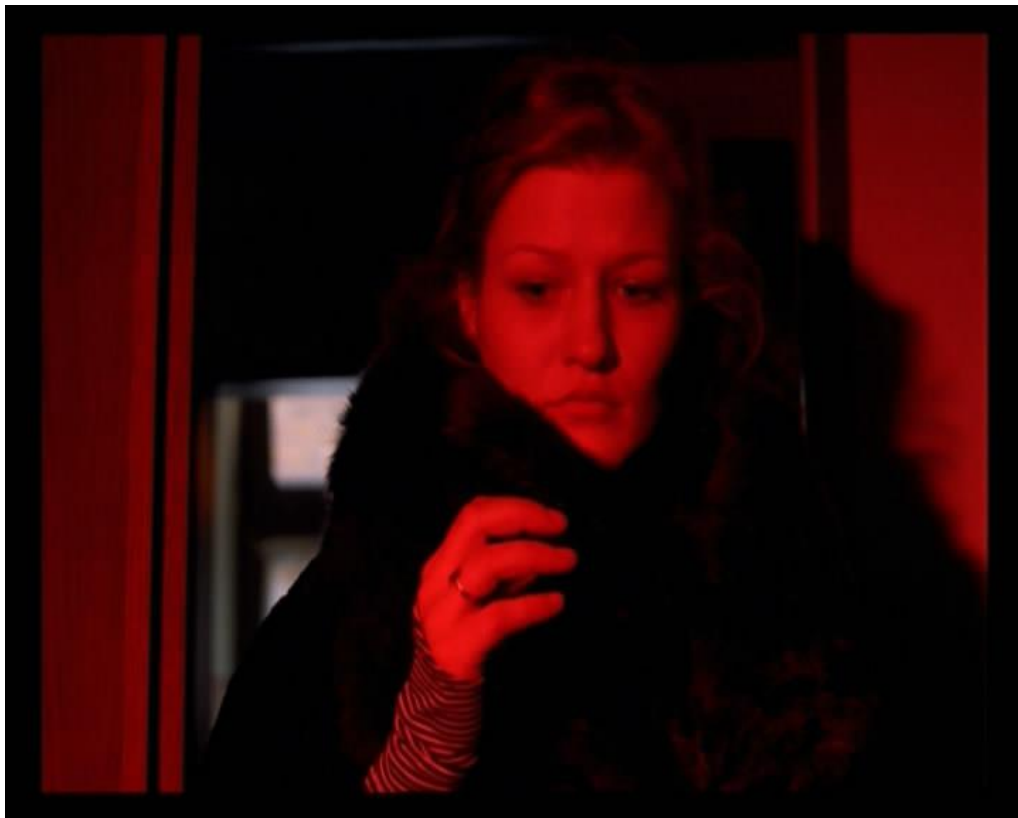


Figure 98: Betty's expression on discovering Allewisch's body.

After discovering his body, Betty does not scream, cry or show any other emotion. She then goes to report the information to Schmidt, and they have a conversation in a bar where they both appear incredibly calm considering the severity of the circumstances.

Figure 99:



Figure 99: Betty reports the situation to Schleich.

Even though their dialogue in this scene would seem to indicate that Schleich is showing some emotion, this does not appear to be the case in his physical performance. When Betty says that Allewisch is lying in the study, he replies 'Na und?'. She then says that he is dead, and that Schleich should 'bleib ganz ruhig', to which he says 'Und da bleibst du so ruhig?'. Despite this dialogue implying that one of them is experiencing turbulent emotions because of the drama of the situation, and that Betty is more calm than Schleich, the scene is played in a notably dead-pan and emotionally neutral tone by both characters. Kluge portrays the non-conventional couple as being able to reject emotions, despite the situation ostensibly calling for a more emotional response. Once again, he gives his optimal way of associating with emotions to characters who are in a relationship that would not be seen as acceptable by mainstream society. He thereby challenges mainstream conceptions of what can constitute a successful heterosexual romantic relationship. In addition, this highlighting of the emotional neutrality of the characters

shows yet another instance of Kluge using this type of emotional reaction to cause the viewer to become active and emotional themselves. The viewer is encouraged to fill the emotional gap left for them by Kluge themselves with surprise at the attempted murder, and confusion at the couple's emotional neutrality. Kluge uses this particular, non-normative couple to encourage a complex spectator response and make the audience into his ideal type of active viewer.

When Betty and Schleich take Allewisch to a cabin in the woods to attempt to revive him, he is visually represented as if he were a child being taken home from the hospital by his parents. Thus the group forms a type of non-normative family. The couple also appear to be undertaking what Kluge sees as specifically maternal labour, as previously discussed, as they care for and nurture him. Firstly, he is wrapped in a carpet, either like the dead body the couple believes him to be, or potentially like a swaddled baby who is wrapped in cloth. **Figure 100:**



Figure 100: Allewisch being carried by his figurative parents.

When inside the shack, he is treated like a child. He is educated and nurtured by the couple, who show the type of maternal labour that Kluge sees as able to transform emotion's power into something hopeful and positive. Betty adjusts and checks Allewisch's bandages on his head. **Figure 101:**



Figure 101: Betty adjusting Allewisch's bandages and nurturing him in a motherly fashion.

The bandages as seen in this shot above are also once more reminiscent of swaddling clothes for a baby, strengthening the comparison between Allewisch and a helpless child. The reduction of Betty in this shot to a pair of caring hands, while Allewisch has his eyes closed, emphasises the nurturing, parent/child relationship constructed by Kluge between these characters and her carrying out of maternal labour. The couple are also pictured preparing his medicine, another activity associated with parental care. They read aloud to him in order to keep his brain active, and believe that this is what has kept him alive,

according to Kluge's voiceover. When Allewisch wakes up, Kluge verbally compares him to a child. He shows Allewisch's eyes following a swinging lightbulb. **Figure 102:**



Figure 102: Allewisch's eyes following the lightbulb above him.

Kluge's voiceover accompanying this image talks about how a four month old child will follow the light from a glowing object with its eyes without moving its head, and how this constitutes an intelligent and active gaze. In this scene, Allewisch is not only infantilised and characterised as the child of Betty and Schleich, despite his obvious age. He is also given an important characteristic by Kluge in terms of becoming an active viewer. He is visually represented like a child who is actively viewing visual media, represented by his watching the swinging light bulb. The highly unconventional family that is constructed out of these three characters is something positive in Kluge's terms because of the family's ability to provide a context for this new characterisation of Allewisch, who is constructed as Kluge's model active viewer.

Before they take the revived Allewisch away from their makeshift home, Betty and Schleich are depicted as parents once more, as they stuff the box in which he is convalescing with furs. **Figure 103:**



Figure 103: Protecting Allewisch.

This action is not only another reflection of their unorthodox family dynamic as they cushion the area around him in order to care for his wellbeing. By using fur to surround him, they also provide a reminder of their existence as a couple who are outside of mainstream society and acceptability. Schleich is a thief by trade who specialises in stealing fur. It is the 'unrespectable' family that is able to save Allewisch from his being murdered by those who appear more normal to the outside world, through the transformative power of maternal labour.

The final shot of Betty and Schleich presents the characters, once again, as emotionally neutral. And once again, Kluge attempts to provoke the viewer to endow this neutrality with meaning through their own emotional response, which in this case would

appear to be one of hope. They are both in the car which they have used to smuggle Allewisch out, and are accompanied by Kluge's voiceover. The voiceover says they have undertaken six weeks of hard work that has been unpaid, and have become closer. He says 'Mit der Zeit wird die Technik besser', referring to the technique of caring and nurturing with which they have transformed emotion's power in order to revive Allewisch. He infers that they will continue to do this in the future, they kiss and then look towards the audience. **Figure 104:**



Figure 104: Betty and Schleich's neutral and emotionless look towards the camera and at the audience.

Their neutral faces, which comprise one of the last shots of the film, provoke in the audience a final, complex, emotional reaction. The audience is being asked to be optimistic by Kluge, who suggests that the couple's technique of providing emotional labour will 'improve with time', but this suggestion contrasts with the lack of emotions on the

couple's faces. The audience is encouraged to become his ideal type of active viewer who both reacts to and engages with what is on screen because of this contrast. They are asked by Kluge to consider how the couple has achieved this supposedly satisfying end, coming to the conclusion that this has been achieved because of the couple's desirable emotional neutrality. The audience will also consider the couple's ability to carry out nurturing acts, combined with their unorthodox romantic relationship, outside of the boundaries of mainstream society. They are the final characters who are shown to be involved in a non-normative relationship that Kluge arguably tacitly shows approval of by invoking complex and somewhat hopeful emotions in the viewer.

Conclusion

Die Macht der Gefühle represents a development in the approaches to gender evident in *Abschied von Gestern* and *Der Starke Ferdinand*. It shows this development by offering Kluge's positive approach to emotions throughout the film to women and those characters in non-normative relationships. The other films by Kluge that I have studied in this thesis have lacked any optimism with regards to relationships between men and women, suggesting that there are no romantic relationships that he supports. *Abschied von Gestern* shows Anita ultimately being forced to submit to the power of men around her, including in her romantic relationships. *Der Starke Ferdinand* shows a subversion and challenging of romantic heterosexual relationships in Kluge's presentation of Gertie Kahlmann and Rieche. It does not offer any hopeful view of co-operation between genders. Both these films offer negative views of male/female relations and depict unhappy romances, undermining the institution of heterosexuality. They do not offer any examples of what kind of relationships should replace traditional heterosexual romances.

Die Macht der Gefühle shows Kluge including the motif of unorthodox gender relations, which helps to undermine the institution of traditional male/female relationships in marriage. He gives power over emotions to characters that are involved in non-normative relationships, showing them to be able to reject conventional shows of emotions. This power is also given to many female characters throughout the film. In addition he shows that a non-normative heterosexual relationship can give rise to the transformation of emotion's power through labour, in the form of Betty and Schleich's revival of Allewisch. This choice could show Kluge to be optimistic about this type of non-normative heterosexual relationship. He also depicts women, and those in non-normative and controversial relationships, who incite complex emotional reactions in the spectator. He does this through the use of these characters' lack of emotional reactions to onscreen events. This emotional neutrality allows the audience to fill in the gaps in emotion left on screen with their own response, causing them to become Kluge's ideal viewers. He therefore not only shows these types of characters as having his ideal relationship with emotions, but this in turn leads to an ideal type of active and emotional viewer in his terms.

The depiction of male characters in this film, and of those characters who are in more traditional heterosexual relationships is used by Kluge to show the inadequate use of emotions in his terms, where they are overwhelming, leading to unhappiness. He also uses these characters to point out how emotions being bound into systems of exchange lead to a succumbing to emotion's power. Viewers may indeed become emotional and active because of these on-screen characterisations. However, this is a less multi-faceted and complex type of emotional activity than that caused by the emotionally neutral women Kluge depicts in the film as well as that caused by the depiction of those in non-normative relationships.

By allowing women and those who are involved in non-normative relationships to be linked to his ideal state of emotions, one that is not excessive but that is rather allowed to be transformed through maternal labour and is also linked to his ideal viewer state, Kluge appears to be showing his approval of these characters. This point could be interpreted as a progressive view of gender relations being espoused by Kluge, as he supports those characters who one might assume would be denigrated by a patriarchal society. By adding the element of hope to male/female relations and showing his approval of the actions of women, as well as those in non-normative male/female relationships, this film therefore shows the most optimistic depiction of a progressive type of gender relations in my case study films.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this thesis I have been re-evaluating how a specific set of feature films by Alexander Kluge can be said to express a progressive view of gender relations, when they are analysed using different types of gender theory than that previously used by critics. In this Conclusion, I will first reiterate the arguments that have been presented thus far, before presenting potential opportunities for further avenues of research that have been opened up by the precedent set in this work.

In my Introduction I established the prevailing critical trends regarding feminist critiques of Kluge's work. I historicised the debate around his depiction of abortion in *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, describing the problems that critics such as those in the journal *Frauen und Film* found with the film. The problems explored by the critics included those of a perceived de-politicisation of an important feminist struggle for abortion rights which was occurring at the time of the film's production. The feminist critics described saw Kluge as depicting abortion in an inappropriate light, by not showing how women were mobilising against the abortion law that was in place. I then offered a counter-analysis of *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, explaining how it could in fact be seen as an indictment of the position of women under patriarchy. I went on to explain how certain facets of Kluge's political ideas could be re-evaluated as progressive. These ideas included that of a type of feminine labour that, although based in motherhood, could be undertaken by all genders and individuals. I explained that this idea of maternal labour could be seen as progressive as this theorisation would seem to be removing gendered stereotypes about what type of roles men and women should play in society, despite retaining the term of 'maternal labour' which would suggest a traditional gender binary. I also elaborated on the purpose of his vision of a new type of cinema that could help 'suppressed elements' in

society. I explained that women represent 'suppressed elements' in Kluge's vision of the world, who he encourages, through cinema, to come together into new alliances. In his view, these new alliances would then be able to undertake political action. I explained that this theory of suppressed elements being brought together in Kluge's vision of the world meant that women were being encouraged to be politically active. This encouragement of women's political mobilisation of course could be seen as an act encouraging a progressive view of gender relations on Kluge's part. This point remains, despite the fact that previous critics such as those in *Frauen und Film* saw Kluge as specifically expressing a viewpoint that did not encourage women to be political engaged.

After this historicisation of previous feminist critiques of Kluge's work and my own re-evaluation of *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, along with some of Kluge's own theory, I then explained my reasons for choosing the areas of language, the body, and emotions on which to focus my three main chapters. I explained that all of these areas hold what Kluge sees as the potential for societal disruption. I also intimated that in Kluge's view, his cultural practice does, in fact, hold the potential for the expression of societal disruption of patriarchal norms, despite early feminist appraisals of his work. I then moved on to an analysis of *Abschied von Gestern*.

In Chapter One, I established the prevailing critical trends surrounding the film. I noted the fact that there had not been a study thus far which had seen the film as progressive in terms of gender relations, as well as examining the role that language has in playing out power struggles throughout the film. In order to evaluate the relationship between language, gender and power in the film, Foucault's notion of 'discourse' proved useful, as in his terms discourse both constructs and challenges power. With this theorisation in mind, I examined the way that the spheres of the law, education and employment, as well as the romantic relationships in which the protagonist Anita engages,

were portrayed by Kluge in the film. I examined these areas to explore how gender and power relations were in some cases depicted by Kluge in ways that challenge patriarchal power, and in other cases, showed what happens when this power prevails and women become its victims. In my analysis I discussed how Anita's experiences in the legal sphere were depicted through her trial and eventual incarceration, showing how she was trapped by patriarchal constraints constructed through language. However I also showed that she was given the ability by Kluge to challenge these verbal constraints through her own usage of words, even though she ends the film in prison and eventually submits to patriarchal forces. In my discussion of the sphere of employment in this film, I discussed how her male employer attempted to control her actions through words, while Anita once again tried to challenge this power verbally. I then elaborated on how Kluge used the arena of academia in the film to show Anita being trapped by patriarchal society, where she was not allowed to speak or express herself. I described how Kluge depicted this issue through the character of her professor, whom she asked for help, and who then completely ignored her, making her seem insignificant in this male-dominated environment. When examining Anita's position of power in her romantic relationships, I noted that it seemed evident once again that she was not being listened to, and men were shown by Kluge as trying to control her self-expression. However it was also shown that she was able to subvert power through her usage of words in this particular area of her life. This subversion was shown in her interaction with and challenging of Manfred Pichota's power when he tried to educate her, showing the possibility of a challenge to patriarchal authority. I also examined the character of Frau Pichota, interpreting her as one who showed how language and discourse can have an impact on gender relations and power. In my analysis she was shown as entertaining the idea of challenging the patriarchal status quo, but ultimately saying that she would in fact not be able to do this. I interpreted her characterisation as

showing Kluge's opinion that even if there may be a possibility of women challenging patriarchal norms through language, this possibility is often frustrated and not achievable by women, thereby showing women in his films to be sympathetic victims of patriarchy. I established the fact that although this film may not be entirely optimistic, as it does not show women as fully able to dismantle patriarchal forces through language, it still supports a progressive view of gender relations by showing women who have the impetus to challenge patriarchal authority through their usage of words. I also emphasised that the film shows the negative impact that patriarchal authority has on women's lives. For example, I discussed how patriarchal legal discourse ensured that Anita remained in prison at the end of the film, eliciting sympathy for her and thereby showing patriarchy in a negative light.

In Chapter Two, concerning *Der Starke Ferdinand*, I concentrated on how Kluge depicted bodies which appeared to challenge gender norms, patriarchal power, and traditional romantic relationships. I first noted that there was minimal criticism focussing on masculinity or men specifically in Kluge's films, despite this trend existing in the context of writing on German film in the past decade. I then established that there was very little gender-based criticism of this film. I elaborated upon how previous critics had instead concentrated on the film's political significance in the context of 1970s West Germany, and the film's position as a stylistic outlier in Kluge's oeuvre. I then discussed the concepts of unstable, leaky and monstrous discursive constructions of femininity, as well as the concept of the cyborg, which would be my key terms of analysis of gendered bodies in this film. By comparing the physical portrayal of the protagonist Ferdinand Rieche to these common discursive constructions of gendered bodies, I established that Kluge appeared to be reversing gender expectations, as well as challenging patriarchal masculinity. I discussed how Rieche was both emasculated and compared to a cyborg-like figure in the

medical area of the factory in which he worked, showing him to be a character whose existence challenged gender expectations. I then established that in the factory, and the broader sphere of employment, Kluge used Rieche's body to ridicule him and show him to be unprofessional, despite the fact that Rieche believed that his patriarchal authority was unassailable. I then moved on to discuss how women were portrayed in comparison to Rieche, seeing them as adding to his emasculation. In the case of the woman whose urine was used in order for Rieche to pass a health test, I discussed how she was depicted as more authoritative and less cyborg-like or unstable than Rieche. I then turned to the area of Rieche's romantic relationships. I discussed how his interaction with Gertie Kahlmann had the effect of showing Rieche's body to be the more monstrous of the two, and thereby more in line with discursive constructions of feminine bodies. I then changed the focus of my analysis to look at the characterisation of Gertie herself. I discussed how she was shown to be an authoritative figure, and then went on to explain how her romantic relationship with Rieche showed Kluge undermining the traditional image of the heterosexual couple. I explored Kluge's problematisation of heterosexual relationships by discussing how the 'performative' nature of Gertie and Rieche's relationship challenged norms of gender roles. I explained how the portrayal of their relationship exposed the constructed nature of these roles, and also subversively repeated them, for example in the parodic way that the scene in which they spend their first night together was depicted. I then established the fact that Kluge was not only parodying heterosexual relationships and traditional gender roles in his depiction of the relationship between Gertie and Rieche, but also in Rieche's other attempts at romance. I used the example of his visit to the 'Ball der einsamen Herzen', which was a highly de-familiarising scene in terms of what would traditionally be considered to be a romantic atmosphere. Overall in this chapter I argued that Kluge thoroughly ridicules patriarchal power through the character of Rieche and the

depiction of Rieche's body, which was consistently used for humour. I also argued that Rieche's body can be read in line with traditionally feminine discursive constructions of gender, thereby showing Kluge to be undermining gender stereotypes and potentially supporting a progressive depiction of gender relations. Finally, I also stated that the way that Kluge portrayed romantic heterosexual relationships in this film also undermines traditional gender roles, portraying them as de-familiarised, de-naturalised, and parodying them along the lines established by theories of performativity.

In my last chapter, I discussed the way that Kluge uses emotions in his film *Die Macht der Gefühle* to give power to women, and to those characters involved in non-normative relationships. I described Kluge's ideal state of emotions, where they are either avoided, in order to prevent them being trapped in systems of exchange and leading to tragedy, or where the power of emotions is transformed through maternal labour into something that can be emancipatory for humanity. I also established that there were different ways that Kluge wished to provoke an active response to his film by the viewer, that can help to reinforce his understanding of the emancipatory potential of emotion. I then discussed how the film has previously been discussed, with critics either very briefly noting the non-normative relationships contained within it, or examining Kluge's usage of the power of emotions without looking at the impact his theorisation of emotions has on his views on gender and power. I began my analysis of the film by discussing how Kluge portrayed Frau Pichota the interviewer, in comparison to how the same character appears in *Abschied von Gestern*, noting the fact that in *Die Macht der Gefühle* she was given more agency. I explained how her portrayal by Kluge sought to produce what he views as a positive emotional response in the viewer while maintaining 'emotional neutrality' in the performance of his actors on screen. I then discussed how the accused woman in the section of the film 'Der Schuß' was involved in refusing the labels given by the judge to an

a controversial, non-normative and incestuous relationship between her husband and daughter. I also explained how she appeared to be given power over emotion by Kluge by remaining un-emotional, in contrast to the male judge who experienced negative feelings of discomfort. I then elaborated upon how, in a similar fashion to Frau Pichota's interview, the accused woman's lack of emotions provoked the audience to fill in this emotional gap themselves, thereby becoming actively engaged in producing meaning from the film.

When discussing the section 'In ihrer letzten Stunde', I examined how Kluge showed the male rapist succumbing to the power of emotions and negative feelings, while his victim refuted emotion's power and thereby was allowed by Kluge to come back to life, despite her suicide attempt. I also stated how this sequence of events could provoke a complex emotional reaction in the viewer, once again causing them to become active. I then discussed how the portrayal of the marriage broker Frau Bärlamm showed Kluge undermining traditional relationship forms. I analysed how Kluge depicted her clients, who wished for traditional relationships, to be at the mercy of overwhelming emotions leading to tragedy and unhappiness. I interpreted this depiction as showing Kluge to be challenging traditional gender roles by challenging the idea that the institution of marriage is something to be aspired to. Finally I discussed the character of Knautsch-Betty, showing that although she had the power to reject emotions in some scenes, in others she was shown to be a victim of the emotions such as disgust caused by patriarchal forces. I also stated that she was in a relationship which presented a challenge to mainstream society, as this relationship was between a prostitute and a thief. In contrast, I discussed how the couple involved in mainstream society, Mäxchen and Schmidt, had the wrong approach to emotions in Kluge's terms, shown in their tragic and angry end after their diamond robbery and failed murder. I then discussed how Betty and Schleich formed a non-conventional family, who transformed emotion through maternal labour and nurturing, in

order to revive the business man Allewisch. I argued that this section showed that Kluge supported the actions of the couple who would have been viewed as unacceptable by mainstream society because of their criminal occupations. Kluge in contrast undertakes a rehabilitation of them as a romantic pair and family and empowers them by showing that they are able to undertake 'maternal labour'. I concluded by establishing that it was women and characters who were in non-normative relationships that had the optimum relationship with emotions, by either rejecting and avoiding them, or being able to transform their power through 'maternal labour'. It was these characters, I also stated, that caused the most complex emotional reaction in the viewer. In contrast, Kluge suggested that traditional relationships, such as marriage, or that between a businesswoman and her partner, as well as emotions as experienced by men, show the potential of emotions to lead to tragedy and unhappiness. I then argued that by tacitly giving power over emotions to his female characters, and to some of those involved in non-normative relationships, that Kluge has made a film that can be seen as progressive in terms of gender.

In the films I have chosen to analyse, there is a clear trend towards portraying patriarchy in a negative light, either through ridicule, sympathy with those who are victims of patriarchal power, or by showing patriarchal figures to be at the mercy of emotions. Women and those who are involved in non-normative relationships are portrayed sympathetically, as able to challenge the men around them either through language and their own physical presence, or by having power in Kluge's terms by interacting with emotions in a positive way.

Kluge's depiction of women, patriarchal power, and non-normative relationships are all subjects that could continue to be evaluated when looking at his more recent works. These areas could be used in the future as the focuses for gender-based criticism,

for example by looking at their portrayal in the large number of works made for his television company dctp, such as *Wa(h)re Liebe im Fronteinsatz* (2001), or his many shorts made for the internet that can be found on www.dctp.tv. None of these more recent works have been subject to feminist or gender-based criticism as of yet, or gendered criticism concerning the areas I have chosen to focus on, of the body, words and emotions. Kluge's approach to male and patriarchal figures is also an area that could bear closer scrutiny. It may be a fruitful avenue of analysis to examine, for example, his portrayal of masculinity in his science fiction films with male protagonists. These films include *Der Große Verhau* and *Willi Tobler und der Untergang der 6. Flotte* released in 1971 and 1972 respectively. Now that I have set a critical precedent for the examination of masculinity in Kluge's films, it may indeed be productive to continue this avenue of investigation in the future to further expand the range of gender-based criticism of Kluge's work.

Kluge's approach to gender relations remains an under-examined topic in the context of how much critical attention has been paid to his films. I hope to have begun to redress this imbalance. Interest in Kluge generally, however, is clearly on the increase. This has been supported by new developments in the distribution of Kluge's work. The recent publication of the English translation of *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, titled *History and Obstinacy*, translated by Richard Langston and released by MIT press in September 2014 may mean that in the future, more critics will be able to examine Kluge's theorisation of maternal labour, which is not necessarily bound to one gender or another. The fact that this source of Kluge's ideas about maternal labour will now be more easily accessible to researchers may indeed lead to an increase in gender-based criticism of his work, as more critics will be able to engage with this key text. If this is the case, then perhaps this piece of research will be the beginning of a new critical trend, helping to rejuvenate critical engagement with Kluge's gender politics.

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