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# Reclaiming “geballte linke Energie”: War in Alexander Kluge’s Docufiction *Heidegger auf der Krim*

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## **Introduction**

In his docufiction *Heidegger auf der Krim*, the German author, director, and television producer Alexander Kluge rekindles the polemical debate between two towering figures of German philosophy (Martin Heidegger and Theodor W. Adorno). The nucleus of the story emerges in a discussion with Heiner Müller on the role of the intellectual faced with war and dictatorship, but the text is also a direct reaction to the discussions surrounding the *Wehrmachtsausstellung* (1995), which hinged on the involvement of the regular *Armee* as well as the complicity of civilians and prominent intellectuals in the atrocities of the Holocaust. Kluge puts Heidegger’s philosophy to the empirical test by confronting it with one of the most extreme scenes of war: the persecution of the Jews on the Crimea during the Second World War. Making use of avant-garde montage techniques, Kluge scans discourses from various intellectual angles in view of their potential for salvaging “geballte linke Energie.” The aim is to establish (post factum) a utopian alliance that possibly could have channelled world history into a less destructive course. In an act of retroactive headhunting, Kluge calls upon a wide range of thinkers to build a trans-ideological alliance. I argue that this counterfactual text is pivotal in Kluge’s literary oeuvre because it strives to situate war within a wider, global frame. The particular geographical location of *Heidegger auf der Krim* – the Crimea – is juxtaposed with geopolitical constellations and other historical time frames, thus testifying to a global turn in Kluge’s documentary representations of war.

## **Historical Heidegger, Fictional Heidegger**

War has always been a prominent theme in Kluge’s writings. His earliest literary endeavours, *Lebensläufe* (1962; *Chronik 2*: 673–826) and *Schlachtbeschreibung* (1964; *Chronik 1*: 509–794), tackled the topic of war along the lines of a strictly objective conception of documentary literature. Especially *Schlachtbeschreibung*, compiled out of documents and reports, minutely details the “organizational construction” of the collapse of the German army in Stalingrad. Written from a

“cold” point of view informed by Marxism, it attempts to clarify how the subjective decisions and psychological dimensions of the conflict are underpinned by objective media and communication structures as well as long-term processes of ideological habitus formation. His most famous war text, *Der Luftangriff auf Halberstadt am 8. Mai 1945* (published in 1978; Kluge, *Chronik 2*: 27–82), is a multiperspectivist rendering of the industrial dimensions of the air war over a medium-sized German city, which hardly mentions that Kluge himself was a survivor of that air strike. When Hans Magnus Enzensberger compiled a re-edited translation of Diderot’s *Encyclopedia*, Kluge contributed the entry “Krieg.” With his *Chronik der Gefühle* (2000), Kluge made a somewhat surprising comeback as a literary author, culminating in winning the Büchner Prize in 2003. While Kluge’s earlier works had been associated with a raw, documentary approach to both film (New German Cinema) and literature, the new millennium saw his style shift to a more outspoken (and bewildering) mixture of fact and fiction.

In his docufictional collection *Heidegger auf der Krim*, Kluge dispatches a person called Heidegger to the peninsula of the Crimea during the German invasion of Russia (*Chronik 1*: 415–507). In order to understand the motivation for this fictional departure from reality, it is fruitful to give some background to the debate between representatives of Critical Theory (with whom Kluge identifies) and Heidegger. The text is an aggregate of quotations predominantly stemming from Heidegger’s 1933 rectoral address, “Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität,” and his writings on Heraclitus, Hölderlin, and Nietzsche. In the years leading up to the Second World War, the historical Heidegger infamously proclaimed his support of the Hitler regime in his 1933 acceptance speech as the newly appointed rector of Freiburg University. In what is now known as the “Rektoratsrede,” Heidegger called upon all academics to join forces with the new political regime and imagined a new university structure with philosophy as its centre, similar to the university during antiquity. The post-war years saw this speech and his other texts as the core of a methodological and philosophical disagreement between Adorno and Heidegger – a critical assessment which served as one of the key shaping factors of German intellectual history in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. Adorno was a Jewish thinker with progressive-left inflections and a biography marked by the experience of exile. Heidegger’s philosophy, on the other hand, was rooted in the provincial setting of Freiburg and the Black Forest and was associated with the Conservative Revolution. Adorno took issue with Heidegger’s hermeneutical interpretation of Hölderlin, and at a deeper level with the philosopher’s involvement with the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (NSDAP). He also objected to his usage of philosophical jargon. Heidegger never answered the critique.

The biographical Heidegger obviously did not participate in the invasion of the Soviet Union. Yet I argue that Kluge puts into (fictional) practice Heidegger’s militarist rhetoric from the rallying passages of his rectoral address. In the German original, Heidegger had used militarist metaphors to state that “die Lehrschaft der Universität muß vorrücken in den äußersten Posten der Gefahr der

ständigen Weltungewißheit” (Heidegger, “Selbstbehauptung” 112). Kluge turns the “progression” into a real military scenario and imagines this fictionalized Heidegger as a participant in the invasion of Russia, situated literally at one of the outermost positions of Operation Barbarossa, the Crimea.

In the text, “Pg. [= Parteigenosse] Heidegger” leads an expedition of professors who are called upon to establish an academy in the newly occupied territories. When confronted with the mass killings, Heidegger tries to remain unemotional, positing himself as an uninvolved tourist. Yet during the preparations for a mass execution, a desperate Jewish mother tries to save her child by handing it over to the protagonist, an act that suddenly makes the philosopher’s pose of academic distance impossible.<sup>1</sup> In a practical test of the real Heidegger’s concepts of “Sorge” and “Zuhandenheit,” the fictional Heidegger grabs the hand of the girl and decides to protect the child. However, despite numerous references to the jargon of decisionism, Heidegger’s decision to keep the child is not an act of resistance or bravery. It is, in fact, involuntary, motivated by indecision and the circumstances. He rather sees the girl as a new Iphigenie, as an heir of Greek authenticity, and refuses to acknowledge that the girl is Jewish. The (historically overdetermined) conception of “stille Einfalt und edle Größe” (Winckelmann) as an origin of German identity fails to materialize as the child’s health quickly deteriorates. Heidegger in the meantime loses sight of the girl because he is occupied with scavenging for remnants of ancient Greek civilization. Heidegger is consumed by his interest in Greek culture and clings to his pastoral lifestyle, taking long walks through partisan territory, entirely oblivious to the imminent dangers and much to the dismay of the military. Since the other members of the “front intellectuals” want to be at home for Christmas, he is finally transported back to Freiburg. The open-ended story collage makes it difficult to assess whether this dismissal should be read as a critique of Heidegger’s ideas or as a sign that he did not fit into the ideology underlying the Second World War and the Nazi regime.

In its vexing combination of facts and fiction, the text provides ample room for starkly ironic contrasts: while Heidegger is preoccupied with a careful hermeneutic search in order to understand the landscape, the military operation itself is hurried, ruthless, and destructive. Even though Heidegger has plans for establishing a new academy and making a prolonged visit, his stay lasts only a few days. Whereas Heidegger ruminates about dwelling and lasting cultivation, the actual

1 This event in fact occurred to SS-Obersturmführer August Häfner, who belonged to *Einsatzgruppe C*. He recounted the episode in an unacceptable, self-pitying way during the 1968 Darmstadt trial (Wette 119). In Bjelaja Zerkow (in the Ukraine), the *Einsatzgruppe* commanded by Häfner executed a group of nine hundred Jews yet left behind the children between the ages of 1 and 7. By taking into account the subtext, one can argue that the hand of the girl which Kluge’s fictional Heidegger grabs is actually the hand of one of those Jewish children to be executed near Bjelaja Zerkow (Friedlaender 73). It is interesting to note that Jonathan Littell uses the same “touching” scene in his documentary novel *Les Bienveillantes* (cf. Suleiman).

intention of the military operation he joined is deportation and forced resettlement. Heidegger's lofty hermeneutic ambition is to read carefully (in its Greek sense of *legein*, *sammeln*, i.e. "to collect") and to become immersed in the local culture: "Gegen Mitternacht komme ich ins Quartier zurück, habe mit den Füßen ein Stück Insel durchmessen" (*Chronik* 1: 422). This ambition soon degrades into a euphemism for scavenging the local museums for remnants of antiquity.

Der Ansatz, durch Grabungen Funde zu machen, erwies sich als falsch. Richtiger war es, die Fremd-Nachrichtensoffiziere um Hinweise zu bitten. Die Hinweise bezogen sich auf eine Liste örtlicher Museen und Hauptverwaltungen von Kolchosen. Tatsächlich fanden sich dort Fundstücke. Das zu Findende ist sozusagen schon einmal gesammelt. Es kommt darauf an, die SPUR DER FRÜHEREN SCHATZSUCHE zu verfolgen. (*Chronik* 1: 426)

The elevated Heideggerean ruminations on cultivation ("Bauen") are set alongside the very mundane and ruthless practices of occupation, extermination, and deportation. Heidegger is portrayed as an ivory-tower intellectual, preoccupied with his own abstract terminology of "Bauen" and "Wohnen" and with an ideological quest for the Greek origins of German identity.

Yet Kluge refrains from entirely demonizing Heidegger. So far, interpreters have indeed unanimously agreed that *Heidegger auf der Krim* is surprisingly benevolent to Adorno's former antagonist. According to Amir Eshel:

[...] the mode of emplotment in this narrative is irony. Kluge's plot clearly doesn't serve to set the philosopher or his work in demonic light, nor does it attempt to ridicule. The plot configures the historical circumstances of the German occupation of the Crimea in conjunction with the virulent *Ernstfall* philosophy of the 1920s and 1930s while focusing and examining all the possible feelings involved. (200)

Similarly, Richard Langston has argued that "Kluge neither trashes Heidegger's philosophy nor naively wishes to revert back to thought before Heidegger" (209). In order to gauge the full impetus and impact of Kluge's portrayal of "Heidegger," it is necessary to engage with the other intertexts and backstories behind the text.

While Heidegger's participation in the German invasion of Russia is completely fictional, it is an incontrovertible fact that high-ranking academics and intellectuals were among those directly responsible for the extermination of the Jews. In this respect, Kluge's Heidegger is associated with the sociological profile of the historical figure Otto Ohlendorf whose biography Kluge explicitly summarizes in the text in a didactic footnote (*Chronik* 1: 430). Ohlendorf's *Ein-satzgruppe D* completely eradicated the peninsula's Jewish population in a few weeks (Friedlaender 391). In his monumental documentation of the extermination of the European Jews, the Austrian-born American historian Raul Hilberg singled out Ohlendorf as an example of an intellectual turned war criminal.

Ohlendorf had studied at three universities, held a PhD in legal studies, and occupied a leading position at the University of Kiel. As head of the *Einsatzgruppe D*, which was active in the Crimea, he then committed atrocious war crimes. His intellectual background was not an impediment to his involvement; on the contrary, Ohlendorf’s skills made him an extremely efficient war criminal (Hilberg 287–88). The fictional Heidegger thus witnesses one of the most horrifying episodes of the war in the east: the main objective of the euphemistically named *Einsatzgruppen* was to eliminate Jews, communists, and also gypsies (Hilberg 309, 373; Lower 242–43).

Kluge mentions the real Heidegger’s membership in the NSDAP, but “Pg. Heidegger” is not portrayed as an ideological hardliner. Yet the text illustrates that some of Heidegger’s tenets could be instrumentalized by party members. Although he sticks to his sense of an “Aufbruchstimmung” and a decisionist philosophy (*Chronik* 1: 420), he remains peculiarly blind to its consequences. The figure Heidegger remains an outsider. Many of the thoughts that Kluge attributes to Heidegger, though, are based on the exculpatory strategies that the biographical Heidegger mounted after the war: he allegedly maintained an inner distance from the party, especially after 30 June 1934 (Kluge, *Chronik* 1: 423), which destroyed his hope that the movement would bridge the rampant polarization in society and help to establish an egalitarian community.

There is a particular reason why Kluge chooses to confront his central character with the aforementioned war crimes at Bjelaja Zerkow (in the Ukraine). These events allow him to detail both the close relations between the SS and the Wehrmacht, as well as the moral dilemma raised by any individual attempt at resistance, as exemplified by the Groscurth case. The local commander of the Wehrmacht, Georg Groscurth, filed a complaint and sought to save the children. Kluge devotes separate sections to Groscurth’s actual efforts (*Chronik* 1: 444–52). In the end, the Wehrmacht was accused of having delayed the activities of the SS, and the army officers received the order to execute the Jewish children themselves. According to Friedlaender, the events at Bjelaja Zerkow powerfully illustrate that the Wehrmacht, although internally divided over the genocide, was structurally involved in the carrying out of the Holocaust (54–57). By approaching these events from his philosophical background, Kluge takes a stance in the intense public discussions elicited by the exhibition on *Verbrechen der Wehrmacht* (and the predominant desire for “truth” voiced in these debates). Kluge’s focus is, of course, not on the question of what the real Heidegger would have done in this instance. Neither does he suggest a direct *causal* link between Heidegger’s concepts and the military jargon. Instead, Kluge shows the codes of conduct limiting direct intervention and details the differences in the long-term sociological habitus of the officers and the procedures and communication structures surrounding the incident. He does so in a manner that is highly reminiscent of his book on Stalingrad, *Schlachtbeschreibung*, but he goes beyond the strict Marxist focus of the text on war.

A well-known, typical example of a traditional Marxist critique of the “pristine” nature of Heidegger’s philosophy is Pierre Bourdieu’s early book *The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger* (1975). Kluge does not refer to Bourdieu, but he echoes one of Bourdieu’s arguments against Heidegger: Bourdieu held the view that the metaphysical concerns related to “Unbehaustheit” and “metaphysische Obdachlosigkeit” failed to address more pressing social housing problems (Bourdieu 88–89, 127). To some extent, Kluge’s 1977 collection *Neue Geschichten: Hefte 1–18 – “Unheimlichkeit der Zeit”* embarks on a similar Marxist critique of Heidegger. This collection of stories mentions in its subtitle some typical Heideggerian notions (“Unheimlichkeit,” “Zeit”), only to open with the very specific (non-)space and time of the bombed houses of Stalingrad and Halberstadt. It is tempting to argue that *Heidegger auf der Krim* undertakes another materialist literalization of a “pristine” (Bourdieu) understanding of philosophical notions. Kluge here certainly makes use of the satirical potential of confronting theoretical expressions (“enteignet,” *Chronik* 1: 433) with problematic real-world consequences (actual expropriation and deportation). Yet Kluge clearly resists a cheap biographical dramatization or traditional narrativization of the events. He aims to achieve more than just a *Gelehrten satire*, exploring and illustrating the viability of docufiction as a legitimate way to represent the events related to the Holocaust. He does so by taking recourse in the avant-garde techniques of radical montage to investigate hidden similarities and proximities between diametrically opposed (left-wing and right-wing) political and philosophical stances.

### **From Crete to the Crimea: Heiner Müller and Alexander Kluge on *Blitzkrieg* as “geballte linke Energie”**

One of the more surprising links that Kluge aims to explore in his text is a connection between Heidegger and the *Blitzkrieg*. In order to understand this link, one needs to trace the origin of *Heidegger auf der Krim*, which reveals a trajectory that is as adventurous as the thought experiment itself. The idea is based on collaborative discussions with the East German playwright Heiner Müller, which indicates that *Heidegger auf der Krim* partially dates back to the 1990s. The kernel of the counterfactual war story crops up as early as 1993, during Kluge’s official period of literary abstinence, in a television interview with Müller on 26 April 1993: “Heidegger hatte ja die Idee, daß er eventuell als Fürstenerzieher von Hitler eine Rolle spielen könnte” (Kluge and Müller, “Seneca”). According to the interview, Heidegger’s relation to Hitler resembles that between Nero and his teacher Seneca. In the conversation the latter’s suicide is deemed to prefigure the “Topos des scheiternden Fürstenerziehers in der deutschen Literatur im 18. Jahrhundert, der als eine spezifisch deutsche Illusion bis ins 20. Jahrhundert fortlebt” (Kluge and Müller, “Seneca”). The interview on Seneca’s role as an adviser to the bloody emperor Nero was undertaken as a response to allegations of Müller’s involvement with the Stasi, a situation that similarly poses questions about the behaviour of intellectuals when facing a dictatorship.

Müller’s suggestion concerning the Heideggerian issue was to send Heidegger off to Crete, which suggests the link with Graecophilia led astray that then surfaces later in Kluge’s writing. According to Müller and Kluge, the German invasion of Crete expended considerable energy and cost many lives but was rather useless from a military point of view. Nonetheless, it is expressive of the German fascination with all things Greek (Kluge and Müller, “Seneca”). This link is reinforced through Müller’s reference to Karl Korsch in the conversation. Korsch was a lesser-known Marxist thinker at the fringe of the Frankfurt School, and Müller credits him with having described the Nazi’s “Blitzkrieg” as an usurpation of “geballte linke Energie.” In his wartime correspondence with Bertolt Brecht, Korsch discussed the idea that the mass invasions were in fact defensive acts of workers and soldiers fleeing from their own superiors. Brecht and Korsch had also been discussing both the appeal and the efficiency of the Fascist military strategy. These ideas are also taken up in Brecht’s *Kriegsfiabel*. However, Barck states that the actual phrase “geballte linke Energie,” despite having been “quoted several times by [Heiner] Müller” in reference to Korsch and Brecht’s correspondence, cannot in fact be located in the Brecht Archives in Berlin (60). This questionable philological status of the reference to Korsch is a striking case in point for the way in which Kluge aims to forge new alliances by means of impure, nearly apocryphal source materials. At this stage, Kluge opens up a perspective of *longue durée*, spanning from the peasant wars of the sixteenth century to Verdun, which he sees as an important precedent for the failure of the working-class revolution. However, he also views it as one of the most important alternate routes that was not taken in German history (Kluge and Stollmann). That the labourers drifted to the right-wing political spectrum and got involved with the NSDAP sparks off the discussion of the phenomenon of *Blitzkrieg* in this context. Both the *Blitzkrieg* and the defection of the working class to right-wing politics are cast as instantiations of “the dramatic and dilemma-ridden history of German (and other) socialist movements” (Barck 60).

The encounter with Heiner Müller is not only seminal for the drafting of the fictional Heidegger in the *Blitzkrieg*. It is also pivotal in turning the Crimea from Heidegger’s imagined origin of a Graeco-German authenticity into a zone marked by hybridity and relentless resistance against any attempt at such a colonialist attribution of meaning. The crucial decision to dispatch Heidegger to the Crimea rather than to Crete (which had already been the setting of one of Kluge’s earliest stories, “Mansdorf” in *Lebensläufe*) is predicated on the ambition to tackle critically both colonialist and Orientalist presuppositions prevalent since German romanticism. Even more than Crete, the Crimea is linked with ideological presuppositions and, as a snow landscape, thus a blank screen onto which the Nazis’ ideological beliefs could be projected even more self-righteously. Hitler’s attempts to give cultural legitimation to Operation Barbarossa have been documented, as his military plans and imperialist ambitions were described euphemistically by Alfred Rosenberg, the author of the Nazis’ racist theories and in charge of the occupied eastern territories. It was argued that the



territories had belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, that they had been inhabited by *Siedler* before, and that they were part of a heroic Germanic-Gothic past dating back to Theodoric, a king of the Germanic Ostrogoths (471–526) who was popularized by Middle German literature. The German invaders thus were deemed to reiterate the mythological quest for the regeneration of an original, pure German identity. In addition, the Danube was conjured up as a *natural*, geographical link between Germany and the Black Sea. Hitler wished to rename Sebastopol Theoderichhafen. The ludicrous dimensions of these ideological pretensions (Jäckel) are echoed and caricatured in the fictional-hybrid Heidegger's somewhat pathetic and half-hearted search for remnants of the Ostrogoths. To some extent, the historical Heidegger joined in on this discourse tradition, Kluge argues, when he interpreted Hölderlin by focusing on the signifiers of dwelling, belonging, and *Eigenheit*.

In Kluge's hands, the Crimea is no longer the sublime origin of classicist humanity, as it was portrayed in Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, nor the birthplace of German identity, but a hybrid mix of cultures and languages. In doing so, Kluge acts on Adorno's cue, who stressed Hölderlin's sense of alienation and his formal application of the "harte Fügung." In his encyclopaedic universe, the Crimea has indeed been of ongoing interest to Kluge. It stands for the periphery, frequently characterized by a rebellion so absolute that it seems to be lagging behind in historical time (*Chronik* 1: 95). It has traditionally escaped centralist and imperialist attempts to bring it to heel. In 1983 Kluge reflects upon General von Totleben, a Russian hero of the Crimean War who played a major role in the defence of Sebastopol by sinking the fleet (Kluge, "Überleben"). He also references the battleship *Potemkin's* arrival in Sebastopol. During the Second World War, the Crimea was in fact highly partisan territory. Historians generally find that the persecution and extermination of Jews reached an added dimension of extremity there because the Germans were frustrated by their inability to control the partisans. Kluge elaborates on the idea that the Crimea is "a bridge too far," escaping the power of various attempts at colonization throughout history. Hitler's decision to press forward via the Crimea to the Caucasus Mountains impacted the size of the forces at Stalingrad and precipitated their downfall. The sheer length of the supply lines was felt more readily in winter and strengthened the sense that they had been stretched. Not only is the Crimea a cold and barren place; it is first and foremost a place where people, throughout history, have taken a final stance against the heavy-handed grasp of various empires, a place that defies any attempt at conquest.

This sense of sabotage and indirection also applies to Kluge's own narrative, which in the second half goes on to disrupt its own unity of place, time, and action. The textual arrangement is such that *Heidegger auf der Krim* seems to temporarily lose sight of its eponymous protagonist, just as Heidegger loses sight of the imagined "schöne Seele," the young Jewish girl he at first appears to save from a horrid fate. The ensuing palimpsestic juxtaposition of distinct historical moments and the broad geopolitical span of the story collection increasingly

allow Kluge to go beyond the German catastrophe and to consider history in the context of more encompassing colonial and imperial ambitions. The multiple references to the Indian subcontinent (*Chronik* 1: 420) echo Hitler’s outrageous plans to open up another theatre of war so as to defeat Great Britain in its colonial territories. Yet the text then wavers out into stories such as the violent path to independence of Pakistan. Dadaist methods kick in: one of the texts, largely consisting of maps and photographs, documents how the British envoy Cyril Radcliffe established the arbitrary border between Pakistan and India, a partition which then leads to the violence accompanying the formation of Pakistan and India (cf. Malkmus). One of the pictures of this story has the caption “Cyril Radcliffe liest and notiert” (*Chronik* 1: 464). However, the person in the picture is not Radcliffe but (most certainly) Heidegger.<sup>2</sup> The various cross-links are meant to frustrate the reader’s attempts to arrive at some hidden unity behind the stories, thus creating mobility and hybridity in the very form of the narration. This form-based evocation of hybridity and mobility will turn out to be vital to Kluge’s enterprise of reclaiming left-wing energy.

### **Reclaiming Left-Wing Energy: Heraclitus, the Father of War**

Another example of the attempt to reclaim “geballte linke Energie,” to retroactively wrestle free signifiers (terms such as “Der Arbeiter”) that had been claimed and/or “usurped” by right-wing thinkers and political parties, is the use of the Greek philosopher Heraclitus in the text. It is important to be aware that Heidegger lectured on Heraclitus throughout his career but especially near the end of the Second World War. Adorno, in turn, epitomized his own ideal of a philosophy of negativity after Auschwitz by way of a very different interpretation of Heraclitus. By drawing on the pre-Socratic philosopher, Kluge puts the relation between war and philosophy in an even broader historical perspective.

According to Heraclitus, war is the father of all things. References to Heraclitus and his world view were, especially near the end of the war, a secret code for the post-historical stance shared by Heidegger and other adherents of the Conservative Revolution such as Ernst Jünger and Carl Schmitt. Heraclitus’s aphorisms and the anti-historical, cosmological figure of the *ekpyrosis* abound in Jünger’s war diaries, especially near the end of the war, where they figure as testimonies to an ahistorical and even anti-historical cosmic world view with little space for human intervention (cf. Martens). Heraclitus’s fragment 74, “Das Ganze aber steuert der Blitz,” decorated Heidegger’s hut in the Black Forest, an anecdote which physically links the Greek philosopher with a specifically German landscape. Adorno’s interpretation takes its cue from Heraclitus’s nickname in the history of philosophy, which is “The Dark One” (in Greek: “Skoteinos”).

2 In the aforementioned story “Baron von Tottleben,” a similar trick is played on the reader: one of the photographs referring to the historical von Tottleben is in fact the French poet Charles Baudelaire.

Adorno mounts obscurity as a productive principle against science and philosophy. When Oskar Negt and Kluge turn to Heraclitus in their co-written philosophical work *Der unterschätzte Mensch*, they follow Adorno's footsteps as they stress the fundamental materialism of Heraclitus's philosophy, which they contrast with a tradition of idealist-Platonic thinking ranging from Parmenides to Heidegger (Kluge and Negt 1: 257). In this work, Heidegger is, despite the hermeneutic merits of his thought, ultimately blamed for reducing Heraclitus's dynamic cosmogony to a static ontology (1: 258). Other philosophers such as Nietzsche, Marx, and Lassalle, however, are credited with having recognized the concept of the openness of becoming in Heraclitus. Heraclitus is first and foremost dubbed "der Philosoph der Bewegung und der Trümmer" (Kluge and Negt 1: 257). This description takes into account both the content (*polemos*) and the form of his philosophy. The diffuse material existence of Heraclitus's writings has a particular appeal to Kluge, for they exist as isolated, enigmatic aphorisms; they are copies without an original, similar to the reference to Korsch, which exists only in oral transmission via Heiner Müller. Thus, Heraclitus's cosmology not only is a foundational document in the discourse on war but also prefigures a non-systematic way of thinking that may serve as a transnational, global bridge between national mythologies and religions.

The seemingly disjointed, paratactic allusion has become the hallmark of Kluge's writing practice. By writing a paratactic text, Kluge may seem to take sides in the debate between Heidegger and Adorno. Although he shares the Frankfurt School's resistance to systemization and clear-cut conceptual thinking (Adorno 336), Kluge manages to highlight the similarities between Adorno and Heidegger. As a consequence of Kluge's fictional (rather than philosophical) enterprise, Heidegger emerges as a philosopher who may in fact be quite compatible with Kluge's own mentor, Adorno. Both are critical of modernity and of the technology involved in the *Blitzkrieg*, as can be seen in a quote from Heidegger's discussion of Hölderlin ("Hölderlins" 59) included in Kluge's text:

Raum und Zeit sind der Rahmenbau für das rechnende, beherrschende Ordnen der Welt, "als Natur und Geschichte"; diese . . . Durchmessung der Welt vollzieht der neuzeitliche Mensch in einer Weise, deren metaphysisches Kennzeichen die neuzeitliche Maschinenteknik ist. Metaphysisch unentschieden bleibt, ob und wie dieser Wille zur planetarischen Ordnung sich selbst eine Grenze setzt. Wenn es im Blick auf diesen Vorgang, der alle Völkerschaften und Nationen des Planeten erfaßt hat, momentweise so aussehen mag, als werde der neuzeitliche Mensch zu einem bloßen planetarischen Abenteurer, so tritt doch zugleich da eine andere und fast gegenteilige Erscheinung in den Vordergrund. Die raumgreifenden Bewegungen stehen im Zusammenhang mit Siedlung und Umsiedlung. Siedeln ist als Gegenbewegung eine Bewegung zur Bindung an einen Platz. (*Chronik* 1: 431)

Kluge's aim is to turn these superficial similarities into a common ground and to combine the scope of Heraclitean thought with avant-garde fragmentation

techniques. Due to the text’s usage of close juxtaposition of citations, the fictional “Heidegger” indeed deflects some of the real Heidegger’s signifiers to incorporate them into Kluge’s utopian project. Especially Heidegger’s etymological reconstruction of “reading” as “sammeln” and “collectioneering” (“zusammenlesen”) figures prominently, because Kluge’s very own artistic strategies rely on such collectioneering but not in the sense that one might collect a stable, authentic origin.

The very attempt to imagine compatibility between Heidegger and Adorno, or even a shared philosophical dialogue on war, is counterfactual and thoroughly utopian, all the more so because Kluge sets himself the task of documenting the harshest of war’s realities and atrocities. Kluge’s aim, as Fredric Jameson describes it, is rather to pull together positively utopian energy from the most catastrophic of both geopolitical and intellectual constellations and discourses: “Kluge’s work (however ironic and formally postmodern) still rehearses the ambiguity of German history as such and scans it for elements productive of a utopian future” (11).

The question is whether this optimism is able to accommodate the intellectual profile of the real Heidegger. In fact, in an interview from 1999 preceding the publication of *Heidegger auf der Krim*, Kluge hinted at the possibility that Heidegger might have given a different face to National Socialism because of his own distinct, intellectual background. Kluge even seems tempted to ponder the idea that Heidegger’s intellectual profile might have turned the Freiburg philosopher into a partisan within the system, that is, a “linker Nationalsozialist” (Kluge and W. Müller). The extent, however, to which Heidegger was amenable (or is made amenable by Kluge) to such retrospective headhunting is questionable (Kluge and Kittler 282). Indeed, the structural homology with the sociological habitus of the careerist Ohlendorf effectively precludes any such optimism.

According to Kluge, the disagreement between Adorno and Heidegger (e.g. over the correct interpretation of Hölderlin’s *Indus* or Asia as either “eigen” or foreign) is not fit for reconciliation, but it has become negotiable. It can be overcome by taking a more transitive outlook, which Kluge (somewhat speculatively) introduces by pointing out a shared wish for rejuvenation. In a final return to the initial topical character, Kluge’s Heidegger ultimately pays a visit to the Crimean Grand Canyon (nowadays a popular tourist attraction) in search of the *vanna molodosti* (*Chronik* 1: 504), the “bath of eternal youth.” Once more, Heidegger can make the trip only because of high-speed technology (“Anfahrt auf Krädern [short for Krafteräder], [...] wie blind,” *Chronik* 1: 503), a characterization that highlights Heidegger’s ignorance about the actual war environment.

While the effort to identify a common conceptual denominator uniting all the different stories is of course *meant* to be frustrated, some such unity is achieved through the strikingly recurrent motif of *Kälte* as a (largely illusionary) source of purification and rejuvenation. As a signifier, *Kälte* is firmly associated with the Fascist cult of the masculine warrior and strict, immobile segregation; Kluge tries to detect a different take on *Kälte* by reading Adorno’s latest texts against the grain as a biographical quest for rejuvenation (and ultimately as no

less esoteric than some of Heidegger's writing). Coldness, of course, has been attributed to Kluge himself as an alleged adherent of a "cool" documentary and docufictional literature. His attempt at a trans-ideological take on war hinges on a final reappropriation of the signifier of coldness and thus ultimately goes beyond both Adorno's and Heidegger's estimates of the potential of literary discourse. If the semantic complex of coldness loses its rigidity and can be turned into both an evolutionary category with a long history and a transformative literary capacity, it can become a common ground where politically opposing traditions of thought can start a dialogue, which, in the case of Heidegger and Adorno, however, never really took off.

### Conclusion

In the context of the collection *Chronik der Gefühle*, the story collection *Heidegger auf der Krim* serves as a preface to the subsequent re-edition of Kluge's *Schlachtbeschreibung* (*Chronik* 1: 508–793). In the latter's appendix, Kluge legitimizes his decision to reissue and slightly revise *Schlachtbeschreibung* by referring to the philosopher Korsch, who we discussed as playing a key role in Kluge's conversations with Heiner Müller, and his long-term historical perspective (cf. *Chronik* 2: 750–51), which connects Stalingrad to the *Bauernkriege* and even the eponymous Barbarossa. In addition, he subsumes the text under the heading of a larger project informed by a belief in the potential of "Metamorphosen linker Energien" (*Chronik* 2: 988). The arch-father of this project is Heraclitus, who functions as a missing link within the historical constellation, since he was a source of inspiration for both Heidegger and Adorno. Heraclitus surfaces both as a precursor to a unified materialist energy (in political terms) and as an optimist who fuses life and death (on a more personal, autobiographical level). It is the Heraclitus of "Unsterbliche Sterbliche / Sterbliche Unsterbliche / Lebend den Tod der andern / Und das Leben der andern gestorben" (*Chronik* 1: 432).

Even though Kluge's newer writings consist to a considerable extent of a rearrangement of seminal ideas and texts that he had published earlier, the fictionalization achieved through minimal departure from historical facts affords a new dimension in Kluge's work. This hybridity between fact and fiction allows the author to refrain from indulging in depicting perpetrators as weak, all-too-human beings. While structures and organizations certainly have a tendency to act autonomously, Kluge carefully scans responsibilities and options, drawing on long-term resources of resistance against reality that are inscribed into history like fault lines in geographical formations.

Due to the collection's openness to other parts of Kluge's oeuvre and its characteristic breaks and ruptures, the author shows that he is fully aware that the effort to reclaim "geballte linke Energie" and engage in "retroactive head-hunting" is utopian, whereby it needs to be noted that this is a positive term for Kluge. It cannot take the form of a mere rewriting of historical biographies at the level of a dramaturgy of action and suspense (all too common in the popularized *Alltagsgeschichte* of Fascism and war). Biographism would indeed fall short of

both Heidegger’s and Adorno’s accounts of art. The text’s mixture of fact and fiction constitutes a complex negotiation with the trend of using immersive strategies in the representation of history (cf. Jaeger). In fact, the second part of the collection (which could not be dealt with in this essay) filters the historical events even more strongly through the prism of everyday oral storytelling, highly specialized expert discourses, and the uncertain knowledge of urban legends and conspiracy theories (cf. Malkmus). Yet Kluge’s radical juxtaposition of incompatible discourses aims at utopia rather than at satire. Only this combined approach is able to achieve at least some degree of validity in the representation of wartime experiences. The docufiction does not result in intellectual heresy or travesty but in a productive clash between literary and philosophical discourses. When incorporated into their dense string of contexts, discourses, and disciplines, Kluge’s war stories reveal themselves as testing grounds, both for forsaken alliances and for potential, however unlikely, exit strategies. To explore the viability of these options is ultimately the task of the reader, who is called upon to forge the links between those disjointed parts, this debris of textual materials.

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