

## Michael Baumann, "How it all began"

In intro, it says that the main issue is violence:

Should the state have a monopoly on its use?

Can you imagine a moment in history when such a monopoly worked against democracy?

Boell and Sartre endorsed publication of this book

-- some have gone so far to say that suppression of book

is tantamount to violence. Do you agree? What is real violence?

Go over main points in chronology, pp 12-18

What kind of youth did MB have? What are main elements of his formation?

--worker, rebel, commune, drugs, read bakunin

With whom does he identify? (blacks, jews... thru music, thru exclusion)

Let's lay out a few points of MB's argument from the rest of the book:

31/ some ppl, when pushed to the limit, can only free themselves by irrational, aggressive actions

33/ privileges individual action  
"every slave... that is how the individual terror of the old anarchists can be explained"

here's the crux in which german militants found themselves:

41/ before i get transported to auschwitz, i'd rather shoot first

one thing that only is expressed later in the book is that MB identifies with third world struggle

46/ a little manifesto: struggle doesn't happen in metropolis anymore

55/ refers to fanon

militants trained in jordan

60/ mention of bombing of synagogue in berlin (shalom and napalm)

mb criticizes RAF as too intellectual-- the only shoot out of abstraction (78)

### **Thomas Elsaesser, "Antigone Agonistes"**

what is the Antigone story (Sophocles)?

What's Elsaesser's project at hand here? What's the main concern?

267/ tv show deathgame brought RAF mythology to rest  
it did what neither police state did...  
nor what the films of the 70s managed to do

What is the hot autumn of 1977?

267-68/ timeline

These events brought postwar Germany to crisis...

They revealed how fragile the 'cargo of democracy' was,  
How quickly it could devolve into violence...  
Both state and mass violence.

Who are main protagonists of Deathgame?

269/ Hans-Martin Schleyer and Helmut Schmidt, then a hostage

How is this different to M+J? vT doesn't show side of victim

How are audiences in 70s different from those in 90s and today?

270/ 70s viewers sympathized with RAF, were skeptical of press and state

Read passage on 271. Elsaesser says this isn't a cynical stance. Why not?

Schmidt and his advisors draw a parallel bw 1977 and Stalingrad.

Why is this a problem?

272/\* german govt officials still bound by military codes of Nazi past

where did the young generation of the 70s see the continuity bw the nazi times and postwar germany?

Essentially they equated fascism with capitalism

### **Performativity of RAF**

Elsaesser, too, sees something theatrical in the RAF

--he mentions that the RAF wanted to unmask the hypocrisy of postwar Germany

--he compares them to Hamlet and to Antigone

Elsaesser compares the RAF to several modern art movements. What are they?

--happenings

--fluxus

--graffiti

--situationism

--avantgarde film: battleship potemkin

Also the RAFs actions were so emphatically urban

285/\* they were urban guerillas... they were part of a tendency to see space as a political category

the RAF played upon the inhospitability of modern cities

the RAF erupted into the urban fabric

but Elsaesser makes an important distinction that Lentricchia, for example, does not:

287/\* sees street not as metaphor for the stage

but as synecdoche for urban space

a figure of speech by which a part is put for the whole (as fifty sail for fifty ships), the whole for a part (as society for high society), the species for the genus (as cutthroat for assassin), the

genus for the species (as a creature for a man), or the name of the material for the thing made (as boards for stage)

RAF signals shift in political culture...

From elite politics of stage/parliament/agora

**theater**

To street politics of event/entertainment culture

**media**

Elsaesser sees a love/hate relationship bw RAF and US. What is it?

--against US imperialism

--idolizes US youth/counterculture... macho gangster

the RAF became the german equivalent of pop art

is Elsaesser's question, that "RAF violence was essentially symbolic" just rhetorical?

RAF seemed to attack the space of the spectacle, but it already operated within this space

Let's read a really dense passage together and think about whether 'artist' could be substituted for 'terrorist': 295/ whole last graph

MIT OpenCourseWare  
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

21G.061 Advanced Topics: Plotting Terror in European Culture  
Spring 2004

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.