What's Past is Prologue: Filming Fascism and the Family in Japan and West Germany in the 1970s

Jillian Helena Vasko

A Thesis
in
The Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Master of Arts (Film Studies) at

Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

August 2017

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

School of Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

By: Jillian Vasko

Entitled: What's Past is Prologue: Filming Fascism and the Family in Japan and West Germany in the 1970s

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (Film Studies)

complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the final Examining Committee:

Marc Steinberg Chair
Chair's name

Kay Dickinson Examiner

Examiner's name

Yuriko Furuhata Examiner

Examiner's name

Joshua Neves Supervisor

Supervisor's name

Approved by 1 SEP Marc Steinberg

Chair of Department or Graduate Program Director

August 30th 2017 Rebecca Taylor Duclos

Dean of Faculty

Abstract:

This thesis theorizes the correlation between national historical trauma in Japan and West Germany, and the excessive, gendered and often sexualized violence inflicted upon and by women protagonists in films emerging from these nations in the 1970s. The thesis provides a comparative analysis of two films which investigate the origins of 'fascism' in their nation through the allegory of the female protagonist and her relationship to the institution of the family: Toshiya Fujita's 1973 *Lady Snowblood* (*Shurayukihime*) and Rainer Werner Fassbinder's 1974 film *Martha*. This thesis puts the film's conclusions regarding the origins of fascism in their nation in relation to the historiographical discourses emerging in the post-war period, to examine how these films participate in the project of rebuilding the nation and national identity in the wake of the enduring traumas of the Second World War. Whereas in *Lady Snowblood*, 'fascism' is depicted as a foreign product imported from the West in the Meiji period (1868-1912), diametrically opposed to the Neo-Confucian politics governing family and state in Japan's isolationist Edo period, (1603-1868). Contrastingly, in *Martha,* 'fascism' is a fundamentally domestic affair.

Acknowledgments

I first and foremost wish to acknowledge that this thesis was written and produced by an uninvited guest on unceded Kanien'kehá:ka territory. I would like to further recognize that it is stored and transmitted through physical and digital infrastructures that are also built and housed upon unceded indigenous lands.

I would like to thank my family, without whose perpetual love and support I could not and would not have been able to complete this project. To my father, Tim Vasko, who has worked diligently his entire adult life to provide for our family, and yet who has never been too busy to offer encouragement, perspective, and advice, no matter the hour of the day. To my mother, Joanne, who introduced me to the world of art, cinema, and feminism at a tender age, and whose kindness and calm have kept me going in my most turbulent times. To my big brother Timmy, who has served as my foremost inspiration both as an individual and an academic, and without whose sage wisdom, love, and devotion, I would truly be lost. To my little sisters, Maia, Sophia, and Keira, who motivate me to continue striving, and who bring immeasurable joy and meaning into my life. To my Grandpa Joe, whose late night film and history trivia helped sparked a lifelong passion, and whose quiet love and pride have filled my heart for many years. To Carlos, my non-human companion, whose stubborn love always kept my arms warm while writing.

I would further like to thank the friends I am lucky enough to call my friends, who have listened to me rant, rail, and weep as I refused to go gently into this writing process. Thank you for your ears and shoulders. Thank you for forcing me to take breaks to see the sun. Thank you for reminding me that my productivity is not an indication of my value as a person. To Marley, Hillary, Nigel, and Henrika, my Montréal family. To Mara, Becky, Kyla, Kristi, and Mel, my colleagues who have so generously provided emotional support, technical advice, and most importantly, comedic relief, during the most dismal times. To Cecelia, who might just be the only one who gets it. To Simone, whose strength and resilience heartens me.

Finally, I would like to offer my gratitude to the faculty of the Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema, and to the many administrative and other staff without whom we could not produce our work. Thank you to my supervisor Joshua Neves, without whose gentle guidance, patience, and advice, my project could not have reified. To Kay Dickinson, whose steadfast ally-ship helped to renew my faith in academia when things were very grim. To Marc Steinberg, for his timely reminders and keeping us all on track. And finally, to Ara Osterweil, my mentor, whose counsel, creativity, and friendship, have helped to fortify and propel me these last few years.

Table of Contents:

Chapter One

A Structure of Imperial Feeling: German-Japanese Entanglements in the 20th Century

"The national past was one of the causalities in the countries defeated in World War II. Both in Germany and Japan, in the moment of surrender, the hitherto hegemonic interpretations of history lost most of their validity. In this void, the quest for representation of the past that both made sense of the "dark years" of fascism and was compatible with a brighter democratic future figured among the central concerns in the postwar decades."

- Sebastian Conrad, *The Quest for the Lost Nation*

"Woman, then, stands in patriarchal culture as a signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of a woman, still tied to her place as the bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning."

- Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"

This thesis theorizes the correlation between national historical trauma in Japan and West Germany, and the excessive, gendered and often sexualized violence inflicted upon and by women protagonists in films emerging from these nations in the 1970s. The cinematic output of both nations in the 1970s features numerous examples of films that fit the above criteria. In the 1960s in Japan, the loosely defined genre of the *pinku eiga* (pink film) emerged on the underground and Art House circuits and quickly gained a prominence that it maintains today.[1] In the hands of filmmakers such as Wakamatsu Koji, Oshima Nagisa and Adachi Masao, 1960s-era *pinku eiga* featured political plots coupled gratuitous and often violent sex or rape scenes (i.e. *Sex Jack, Sing a Song of Sex, AKA: Serial Killer*). This *pairing of* sex and violence was in partial

[1] For example, taking 2003 as a sample year, Jasper Sharp notes in his book *Behind the Pink Curtain: The Complete History of Japanese Sex Cinema*, "89 out of 287 domestically produced films that screened in Japanese cinema fell into this category, with a further 60 or so re-titled releases of older pink films," (9). Furthermore, in 2016, to mark the 45th anniversary of the genre, Japanese film studio *Nikkatsu* invited 5 contemporary Japanese directors (Hideo Nakata, Akihiko Shiota, Kazuya Shiraishi, Sion Sono and Isao Yukisada) to revive the studio's particular take on the *pinku film*, known as the *Roman Porno*.

response to the economic imperatives wrought by the increasing market-share of television (Furuhata 88) in the 1960s. By the 1970s, the formerly radical genre had largely been consolidated and co-opted by major studios such as *Nikkatsu* and *Toei*, and re-formatted for larger, popular audiences. In 1962 in West Germany, a group of 26 filmmakers signed the Oberhausen Manifesto, declaring "Papa's Kinema ist Tot!" (Papa's Cinema is Dead!). They were referred to as the New German Cinema (*Das Neue Deutsche Kino*), and quickly gained attention in the art international circuit. Filmmakers such as Volker Schlöndorff, Margarethe von Trotta and Rainer Werner Fassbinder similarly coupled political plots in women-centered films with elements of sexual intrigue and violence (i.e. *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum,* and Fassbinder's BRD Trilogy). By the early 1970s, the West German genre was likewise impacted by the economic climate. Due to restricted state funding and a lack of broad, commercial success, New German Cinema projects started to receive funding from the "Television Film Agreement" in which film grants were distributed in exchange for broadcast rights for national TV stations in the BRD (Shattuc 51). Accordingly, in the 1970s the formerly radical group had to learn to temper its political critique so as to fall in line with the dictates of state-funded television stations.

The films I have chosen to analyze this correlation, Toshiya Fujita's (1932-1997) *Lady Snowblood* (*Shurayukihime,* 1973) and Rainer Werner Fassbinder's (1945-1982) *Martha* (1974), were selected for their compelling stylistic, thematic, and historical correspondences. To begin, both films negotiate national history and investigate the origins of 'fascism' in the nation, through a female protagonist and her relationship to the institution of the family. In *Lady Snowblood*, 'fascism' is depicted as a foreign product imported from the West in the Meiji period (1868- 1912), diametrically opposed to the Neo-Confucian politics governing family and state in

Japan's isolationist Edo period, (1603-1868). Contrastingly, in *Martha,* 'fascism' is a fundamentally domestic and contemporary affair. Fassbinder's film functions similarly to Jean Renoir's comedy of manners *The Rules of the Game*, by prophetically showcasing how the patriarchal and oppressive politics within the French aristocracy readied the ground for collaboration with the Nazi regime during the Second World War. In Fassbinder's melodrama-cum-comedy of manners, the director demonstrates how the interpersonal dynamics within bourgeois social institutions such as the family enabled and perpetuated the horrific banalities of 'fascism' long after the war.

Throughout this thesis I apply the term 'fascism' to describe the political regimes and ideologies that dominated Germany and Japan during the 1930s and 1940s, however I recognize that scholars have long debated whether this is an appropriate moniker in the Japanese context. As Alan Tansman writes in the introduction to the volume of essays *The Culture of Japanese Fascism,* at varying points in its history, both pre and post-war, and depending on who you ask, Japan has been alternately considered 'fascist' and not. At issue in particular for scholars such as Kevin M. Doak, who contributes to the volume, are the facts that, "Japan never experienced an overthrow of the monarchical constitutional order established in the late 19th century," (Tansman 31) and the historical relationship between the Japanese people and their Emperor, which predates the rise of militarism and expansionist foreign policy in the late 19th century in the nation. The question could be debated indefinitely. However, research such as that of Richard Torrance demonstrates that, "by the time of the invasion of Manchuria in 1931, the terms *fascism (fuashizumu), fascist (fuassho), and fascistization (fuasshoka)* had already been in circulation and were 'supported by a body of political theory that seemed to correspond to Japan's social, political, and cultural realities,'" (Tansman 2). Indeed, intellectuals living during the period such

as Marxist philosopher Tosaka Jun (1900-1945), were already penning essays about the phenomenon as early as 1937, when he released his essay "Against the Nazi Control of the Arts" (Tansman 3). Furthermore, events such as Japan's joining of the Anti-Comintern pact of 1936 with Italy and Germany; their participation in the Tripartrite Pact of 1940; and overall, the total mobilization of the government towards to create the 'Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere' threw ruthless tactics on the Asian continent, provide solid evidence towards a reading of Japan in the 1930s and 1940s as a fascist nation.

In my endeavor to address and highlight the issue of whether the term 'fascism' is the appropriate one to apply to the Japanese ideology and political regime of the 1930s and 1940s, it has become clear just how amorphous the concept 'fascism' itself is. As Rey Chow notes in the introduction to her 1995 essay 'The Fascist Longing in our Midst', the word has become banal in its near universal application as a denunciation to "what is deemed questionable and unacceptable" (23). Etymologically, we can trace the origins of the term 'fascism' to the Italian word 'fascio' derived from the latin 'fasces' which referred to a bundle of rods. The term 'fascio' was used in Italy to describe smaller political syndicates and groups prior to the First World War. Originally a rather neutral term, it developed ultra nationalist, militarist connotations based on the trajectory of Benito Mussolini's political movement, which first emerged as the *Fasci Rivoluzionari d'Azione Internazionalista* in 1914 (Gregor, 195). The term was thus originally a colloquialism. As an ideology, fascism was first formally developed in Mussollini's *The Fascist Manifesto* in 1919, later, in 1932 in the *Doctrine of Fascism,* and again after Hitler's influence, in 1938, Mussolini addressed *The Fascist Manifesto of Race*.

'Fascism' is defined here as a temporally specific cluster of tendencies and goals in domestic and foreign policy, predicated on a chauvinistic ideology, propagated and administered

through all levels of government in Germany and Japan during the 1930s and 1940s, until the regimes' defeat and surrender at the close of the Second World War.[2] The 'fascist' ideology was one that mandated the aggressive, militaristic pursuit of new "living space" outside the nation for a citizenship defined by a uniform, 'pure' ethnic national culture.

The second point of comparison is that *Lady Snowblood* and *Martha* each categorically reject realism in favor of a central stylistic excess, diffused throughout the performance style of the actors, the mise-en-scene, the cinematography, editing, and within the narrative itself. A major component of excess is the films' stylistic and thematic application of longstanding nationalistic and nostalgic genres. In this thesis, I demonstrate how the themes and styles of these genres are exploited in my selected films both for their affective power, and their ironic, subversive political potential.

In *Martha,* the film's "new comedy" plot, and idyllic provincial mise-en-scene are resonant of the West German *heimat* film (homeland film). As Anton Kaes' demonstrates in his book *From Hitler to Heimat,* the *heimat* genre had been a popular form since the late nineteenth century in Germany, when the industrial revolution was uprooting traditional provincial ways of life. In the context of National Socialism, *heimat* became a "synonym for race (blood) and territory (soil), a deadly combination that led to the exile or annihilation of anyone who did not 'belong,'" (165). Under Hitler, "*Heimat* meant the murderous exclusion of everything 'un-German,'" (ibid). In the 1970s "political concern for the environment, and a renewed interest in the private and subjective, sphere," led to, "a Renaissance of feeling for the *Heimat*," (167). Indeed, this renaissance of feeling was even evinced by the erotica popular in West Germany during the period. An article from German news publication *Spiegel* from March of 2013 notes

[2] I limit my definition of 'fascism' for my purposes here to Germany and Japan, although there were other fascist nations in this and other periods, that is beyond the scope of this project.

how the soft-core, Alpine-set "lederhosen films" of Franz Marischka, such as, *"Liebesgrüße aus der Lederhos'n,"* or *"From Lederhosen with Love,"* quickly became top box office fare in the 1970s. Marischka's alpine erotica, "attracted more viewers than any other film that year in Germany-- and kicked off a film series that would rake in some 12 million deutsche marks (roughly €6 million)," (Kringiel http://www.spiegel.de/). Based on the genre's application under National Socialism, its revival in the post-war period, first in the 1950s, and then again in the 1970s, became a cause for concern among the Left. Indeed, the signers of the Oberhausen Manifesto directly criticized the resurgence of the genre and its directors, the majority of whom had begun filmmaking under the Goebbels run UFA studios. The reappearance of the genre was just one example of the ongoing legacy of fascism in West Germany, the revelation of which Fassbinder's cinematic oeuvre, and the New German Cinema more generally, insistently brought to the fore.

Lady Snowblood is similarly bound up in a nostalgic, generic return to the past, in this case, the *Meiji* era. Interviews with the author of the original *manga,* Kazuo Koike, and the film's screenwriter, Norio Osada, reveal that constructing a politicized rendering of Japan's national history, in particular the transition from feudalism to authoritarian government, were central goals of both the graphic and cinematic versions of the narrative. *Lady Snowblood* unites several longstanding national genres with more contemporary cinematic modes. It is at once a *jidaigeki eiga* (period film); a *ronin* eiga (samurai film); a *chanbara eiga* (sword film), and a *pinku eiga* (pink film). At the same time, its source text is a *gekiga manga* (a comic book targeted towards young adult readers), a genre which features "gritty stories" that college students and laborers found "common ground in" (Cavanaugh 205) In the context of the late 1960s, *manga* were adopted by "disaffected young adults," such as those at the forefront of the

student protest movement, who were drawn to the medium to satisfy childhood nostalgia and also, “as a rejection of bourgeois society and its acquiescence to American political and cultural dominance,” (Ibid).

While both *Lady Snowblood* and *Martha* are marked by stylistic excess and motifs drawn from nationalistic genres, I argue that their application in the films serves dichotomous purposes. In *Lady Snowblood,* the pre-Modern past is romanticized and politicized. In one of the opening lines of the film, Yuki wanders among splendiferous wild flowers while the narrator refers wistfully to the, “300 years of peace under Tokugawa Rule,” that preceded the current situation in which, “prattle about ‘civilization’ and ‘western thought has seemingly taken root in people’s minds’”(Figure 1). The narrator continues “yet factions of former clans still vie for power, and greedy conglomerates abound, as do dishonest merchants, officials who care only about getting rich, and countless men and women living lives of debauchery. Meanwhile, the common people struggle in poverty, their cries unheard by heaven”. In the film, I argue stylistic excess functions to create an action packed spectacle out of national politics and history. A beautiful, violent, sword-bearing demigod stands at the center of what is essentially a history lesson on Japan’s transition from feudalism and isolationism in the Tokugawa era, to modernism and internationalism in the Meiji era. Accordingly, I argue the major-studio produced film’s fusion of Neo-Confucian politics and historical didacticism, with sex, blood and rock and roll, was both a stylistic and economic move, designed to draw audiences in and make the film more palatable for broad appeal.

In Fassbinder however, performative and stylistic excess functions to denaturalize the family home and bourgeois German politics. By rendering an otherwise typical marriage in such lurid terms, Fassbinder sought to make strange the familiar. In his Artaudian turn, Fassbinder

puts the spectator at the center of the violent family circus, as the politics of respectability are taken to such extremes that they deny all common sense. This is Fassbinder's political didacticism at its most pragmatic, as the very subjects he spotlights would certainly watch this made for television film in the domestic space of the family home. By rendering the dangers of the patriarchal institution of marriage in such hyperbolic terms, I argue Fassbinder hoped to shock his audience out of complacency in the midst of a re-armed, economically powerful, and increasingly oppressive BRD.[3]

Thirdly, each film allegorizes national history through a traumatized woman living in conditions of extreme duress, and boasts a narrative structure organized around highly stylized eruptions of gendered violence played out upon her body. The protagonist of *Lady Snowblood* is an *asura*, a Buddhist demigod whose sole purpose in life is to exact bloody revenge by killing those responsible for the murder of her father and brother, and rape of her mother. Correspondingly, *Martha's* title character is ensnared in a sadomasochistic relationship with a fascistic, abusive husband. Fourth, as I have discussed, each film thematically and aesthetically exploits longstanding nationalistic genres mobilizing both their nostalgic affective power, and their satirical potential. Finally, and most significantly for my purposes, both films emerge roughly 30 years after the end of the Second World War in societies that were both the foremost perpetrators and some of the most profound victims of the atrocities of the era.

These profound similarities set the stage for my comparative analysis of *Lady Snowblood* and *Martha,* in which I explore the films as discursive events that negotiate, thematize, and intervene in the representation of their nation's fraught history through the institution of the

[3] BRD (*Bundesrepublik Deutschland)* was an unofficial abbreviation for West Germany (The Federal Republic of Germany) in the Cold War era.

family.[4] Their interventions are accomplished through a combination of stylistic excess, the figure of the traumatized/traumatizing female protagonist and her relation to her family, and the exploration of contemporaneous political issues through the application of foundational national genres popular before and during the Second World War.

In both films, the specter of the national past is mobilized by filmmakers to explore historical periods that continue to profoundly impact the society of their day. In *Lady Snowblood* the allegorical return to the past examines the roots of modernization, imperialism, and Western cultural and political hegemony in Japanese society, in the wake of the post-war American occupation. In *Martha* the national genre of the *heimat* film is mobilized to critique the correspondences between contemporary bourgeois society and the xenophobic and patriotic tendencies that led to the rise of National Socialism.

The critical component of these films' uses of excess for my purposes is the violence inflicted upon, in the case of *Martha* and by, in the case of *Lady Snowblood,* the female protagonist. As feminist film scholars have long demonstrated, starting from Laura Mulvey's groundbreaking 1975 essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, the female body has been the perennial onscreen site/sight through which gendered regimes of power, articulated through the act of looking/being looked at, have been constituted and organized. Indeed, as Susan E. Linville argues in her book *Feminism Film Fascism,* male practitioners of the New German Cinema frequently allegorized German history through the figure of the female protagonist. For example, in Fassbinder's *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979), the first of his BRD trilogy, the title character Maria's life trajectory follows that of West Germany itself throughout the first decades

[4] Both films are also adaptations of popular literary forms. *Lady Snowblood* originated as a serialized *manga* in a soft-core Adult magazine called *Weekly Playboy (Shūkan Pureibōi). Martha* is based on a short-story, *For the Rest of Her Life* (1925) by pulp-fiction author Cornell Woolrich, whose stories have formed the source material for many of Alfred Hitchcock's most beloved films, such as *Rear Window* (1954).

of the post-war period-- emerging from the rubble, skillfully and opportunistically maneuvering its way to unfathomable riches. Meanwhile, other New German Cinema films, "metaphorize[d] fascism as secretly female- and not patriarchal after all," (Linville, 2). In *Lady Snowblood* the national past is similarly allegorized through the female protagonist, as Yuki seeks to honor her mother's quest for vengeance against the criminals who harmed both her and the nation. Other post-war Japanese films such as Akira Kurosawa's *No Regrets for Our Youth* similarly allegorize national history through the female protagonist, while the *pinku eiga* as a genre occasionally did the same. My thesis explores the politics of this allegorizing tendency, emphasizing the forms of excess my selected films represent as a significant intervention in this practice.

In both of my selected films, male directors inscribed their renderings of national history upon the tablet of female bodies. However, at the same time, these films center women's issues such as rape and violence against women, and picture female protagonists as masters of their own and their nations destinies. Whereas in *Lady Snowblood*, Fujita condemns rape and demonstrates how a woman could uphold bushido code dictates and honor the family as proudly as any son, Fassbinder's feminist politics lie in his sincere albeit excessive indictment of domestic violence and gas lighting.[5] While the film implicates Martha in her own suffering, presenting issues which need to be considered in a feminist framework, it nevertheless demonstrates how abusive socialization functions to make women refuse their own perception to fall in line with the dominant patriarchal will.

Meta- Theoretical Implications

The study of non-Western national cinemas by Western scholars raises a variety of epistemological and ethical issues that must be foregrounded if there is to be any attempt to

[5] Indeed, in the interview with the screenwriter and original author of the manga, the authors discuss how this was a political reversal of the typical use of female characters in Japanese cinema, who were most often seen as passive love interests and not often as virile warriors.

avoid what Gayatri Spivak has labeled the "neocolonial anti-colonialism" intrinsic to many transnational methodologies (Yoshimoto 257). Of course, the concept of 'national cinema' is itself a problematic, as it presumes that nation states are coherent, stable entities with unified self-evident histories (Yoshimoto 242). While the pursuit of any theoretical project, as Mahsa Salazkina points out, involves, "a certain colonialist impulse to stake claim to an object, to give it meaning, to re-appropriate it from its "natural" context to the newly created theoretical one," the study of the Non-West by the West reifies this colonial impulse in its particularly intellectually and ethically perilous potentialities (331).

As both Salazkhina and Yoshimoto indicate, neoliberal imperatives and Orientalist academic traditions within the University, and the socioeconomic structures that govern it, continue to relegate scholarship surrounding non-Western cinema to the realms of area studies and specialized knowledge, forever subsuming all that does not originate in the constructed "West" in a Self/Other dichotomy. This configuration maintains Western hegemony via the exclusion of non-Western films and theories, aside from in areas of "specialized knowledge", thus universalizing, canonizing, and prioritizing the study of materials originating in the West in the ostensibly "neutral" transmission of Film and Media studies. Occasionally, well-intentioned attempts are made to broaden a course's corpus so as to include a cursory overview of 'world' cinema. Typically, this equates to a token film taken from what is perceived as the non-West standing in for an entire sphere of "global cinema". Following the traditional "diffusion model" of world cinema, the text is examined solely from the perspective of Western film theory and theorists, placed in relation to this constructed other, and thus becomes metonymic in its representation of both the specific national or regional culture from whence it emerges, and the global cinema culture at large that it now bears the burden of representing.

The lack of availability of translations of non-Western film theory underlines this problem and is itself both a symptom and catalyst of the ongoing Self/Other dichotomization problematic within transnational cinema studies, as both Yoshimoto and Salazkhina point out. However, this paucity of sources must not be understood as "the uniqueness of the conceptual apparatus of Eurocentric academy," but instead as, "the result of institutional practices of gate-keeping in the academy," based on "structures of exclusion governing the notion of what qualifies as important theoretical scholarly work," (Salazhkina 336-337). In the historical construction of world cinema studies as an academic field of inquiry media texts that are not Western are perennially contained within a hermeneutic which can only yield meaning as difference, opposition, or other form of reflection however distorted, of artistic ideals originating from Western cultural hegemony. As Yoshimoto makes clear in his essay "The Difficulty of Being Radical," the division of labor in cinema studies departments and the presentation of non-Western, "uncannily mirrors the geopolitical configuration and division of a contemporary postcolonial world order," in which the "ideological picture of a postcolonial world situation [is] constructed by Western post-industrial nations," (257). Accordingly, there are well-founded doubts predicated on these meta-theoretical implications about the possibility of producing any meaningful or intellectually rigorous transnational media scholarship, particularly when it is from a Western perspective discussing the "non-West". Proponents of postcolonial and subaltern critique have championed this position in particular.

While these fears are obviously grounded in material realities and are predicated on tangible and violent historical errors in scholarship, Salazkhina reminds us, "…cinema belongs to certain circulatory networks. This circulation does not occur in some ideal present; rather, it always carries in its train the multiple presents of the global moment and the multiple presents of

the colonial past" (342). As such, this circulation involves the academic spheres in which cinema is analyzed, studied, and reproduced in intellectual frameworks that go on to inform any texts future. What both Salazkhina and Yoshimoto emphasize is that the institutions that study films, just as much as the films themselves exist must be understood diachronically and in their mutual relationality.

In order to present a path forward for transnational studies Salazkhina employs the concept of the 'contact zone' first coined by literary theorist Mary Louise Pratt. In her formative book *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Pratt defines the contact zone as "the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality and intractable conflict." These are zones which are, "interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounter," which "emphasize how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other," (6-7).

In my thesis, I seek to intervene in this traditional geographic stratification of spheres in Film Studies by producing a thesis that thematizes a connection across two regions that in our discipline are not typically paired. Accordingly, I seek to explore the contact zone between Japan and Germany that was hugely influenced but in no way diminished by the nations' mutual defeat and surrender at the conclusion of the Second World War. This introduction provides a review of the historical events and cultural phenomena that I argue shapes this contact zone. These various relations might be understood through Rey Chow's concept of "entanglement," presented in her book *Entanglements, or Transmedial Thinking about Capture.*

As Chow writes, the concept of, "entanglement" is put forth, "to suggest a topological looping together that is at the same time an enmeshment of topics… a tangle, of things held

together or laid over another in nearness and in likeness," as well as to, "to ask if entanglement could not also be a figure for meetings that are not necessarily defined by proximity or affinity," (2). Accordingly, "one outcome of entangled relationships then, would be the fuzzing up of conventional classificatory categories due to the collapse of neatly maintained epistemic borders," (Ibid). Partaking of this logic of entanglement, my thesis seeks to explore the, " state of an intermixing, of a diminution of distances among phenomena that used to belong in separate orders of things," across Germany and Japan, which, "necessitates nothing short of a recalculation and redistribution of the normatized intelligibility of the world, including a realignment of the grids, sets, and slots, that allow for such intelligibility in the first place," across traditionally opposed spheres (Chow 11).

Historiographical Considerations

The intimacy and significance of the relationship between Germany and Japan since they first came into official diplomatic contact around 1860 continues to be a topic of debate amongst historians and scholars of international relations. While there is no doubt a contact zone has existed since the establishment of bilateral relations between Tokyo and Berlin in 1861, when Count Friedrich Albrecht zu Eulenburg concluded the first treaty between the nations, competing narratives cast the relationship in contrasting lights. [6]

Recent polls of Germans demonstrate that today, the nation looks upon Japan positively, as a major economic partner and ally in battling climate change.[7] Similarly, historian Takenaka Toru in his chapter "The Myth of the Familiar Germany: German Japanese Relationships in the

[6] Official diplomatic contact was established between the two states as a part of Prussia's Eulenburg mission, which aimed to establish diplomatic relations with Japan, China, and what was contemporaneously known as Siam (Saaler 37).
[7] (engl.), PR Newswire. "Germans Still Have a Positive Image of Japan." *Wallstreet-online.de*. Wallstreet Online Deutschland, 02 Nov. 2012. Web. 06 Nov. 2016.

Meiji Period Reexamined," writes that "Germany is among the most popular countries with the Japanese," which "simply put, nearly everyone likes," (19). Toru contrasts this positive attitude towards Germany with Japanese attitudes towards Americans, which is marked by a profound ambivalence in which it is no rarity to find, "coexistence of love and hatred for the United States in the same person" (Ibid). However, Toru cautions that this fact often leads to the false assumption that, "the Japanese fondness for Germany results from a continuously close relationship between both countries throughout modern history," (Ibid).

Indeed, a widely maintained narrative suggests that there has been a strong tie between the two countries, particularly during the Meiji Restoration era (1868-1912) which is often considered the "golden age of German Japanese relations," (Ibid). However, recent historiographical work has demonstrated that despite Germany and Japan's similar domestic and international goals and preoccupations during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, "there were few points of contact between the two inward looking nations" until the latter half of the era (Toru 20). Furthermore, there exist questions about the degree of solidarity between the two nations even during the Second World War, when perceptions of their partnership took on the most profound significance (Cho, Roberts, Spang 1).

Accordingly, a minority of historians reject, "the idea of a significant cooperation between the two nations" (Cho, Roberts, Spang 1). Their doubts are predicated on significant diplomatic breaches and competing interests that have occurred between the two nations up to and during the Second World War. Potential for conflict and mutual resentment has existed since the first bilateral treaty signed between the two nations in 1861, which historians Christian W. Spang and Rolf Harald Wippich argue is an example of the "previous unequal treaties which the Shogunate had been forced to conclude with Western powers after the opening of the country in

1853-4" (1). Throughout the late 19th and early 20th century, key events such as the Triple Intervention in 1895, the Japanese takeover of the German leasehold in Chinese Shadong Province (Qiagdao) in 1914, and the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939 which overrode the terms of the Anti-Comintern Pact that Japan and Germany signed in 1936 are cited to support this notion (Cho, Roberts, Spang 1).

The latter of these events facilitates questions about the degree of solidarity that existed among the Axis powers during the Second World War, and the extent to which the alliance was exaggerated for propagandistic purposes by both sides of the conflict, the Alliance and Axis powers (Ibid). In their chapter "German Japanese Relations from Meiji to Heisei" scholars Joanne Miyang Cho, Lee M. Roberts and Christian W. Spang argue that the aftermath of WW1 and its, "threefold confrontation between democracies, militarist/fascist countries, and communism played an important role," in setting the stage for German Japanese cooperation in the first half of the 20th century. Although this alliance collapsed in the immediate aftermath of the war at the Potsdam conference of 1945, commonalities in experience between the two nations' both before and after the dramatic conclusion of the Second World War cannot be denied.

As Cho, Roberts and Spang point out, both Germany and Japan followed similar trajectories through the late 19th and early 20th century. This started with their development of modern nation states with some, albeit limited, democratic features around 1870; their relatively belated imperial endeavors that begin in the late 19th century; their compulsion to dominate their neighboring states, and of course, their twinned experiences of defeat, surrender, and occupation following the Second World War. Similarly, Sebastian Conrad argues in *The Quest for the Lost Nation: Writing History in Germany and Japan in the American Century*, that the two nations

were united in their experiences of defeat, surrender, the truncation of their national territory, and their experience of American-dominated occupation and political re-education (3).

Conrad writes how in this context excessive national pride and hegemonic interpretations of history were abandoned in the Germany and Japan, while national historians sought to locate a representation of the past that could deal with the "dark past of the fascism and the bright democratic future," (ibid). Indeed, as Cho, Roberts and Spang demonstrate, both nations had to come to terms with their history of imperialist violence abroad. One material and immediate way this imperative was reflected was in the International Military Tribunals that both Germany and Japan were tried before, which featured approximately equivalent interpretations of international law (Cho, Roberts, Spang 2). Furthermore, as both Cho, Spang and Roberts and Conrad demonstrate, the two nations followed similar trajectories under American occupation: de-and-re-militarization, staggering economic success, and American cultural hegemony.

Historians in both Japan and West Germany regarded the Nazi era and corresponding defeat in WW2 as a "catastrophe" and sought to understand its origins. As Conrad notes:

> "it is striking that the explanatory method that found the greatest acceptance in both West Germany and Japan was based on a correlation of national character with national socialism and/or fascism. Thus to many commentators, the recent past appeared as the product of a cultural substance—or, conversely, as the contamination of the very substance 'from the outside.' From this perspective, either totalitarianism was already present, as a sort of bacillus in German and Japanese culture, or else it appeared as the result of a cultural import. Only a return to the original and pure traditions of the nation, then, promised a fundamental 'overcoming' of this past," (88).

As demonstrated by Conrad in Japan following the war, ultra nationalism and imperialism were seen as a reaction to the humiliating experience of subordination to the West beginning with the unequal treaties of the 1800s. As Conrad argues, in the years following the "reverse-course" policy implemented in Japan and West Germany Marxist historians defined

Japan as, “a country occupied by its enemy,” and, “restrictions on its freedom [were] in turn linked to the ‘unequal treaties’ Japan had been forced to conclude under the threat of military force in the mid-nineteenth century,” (87).

In German, a majority of historians including Gerhard Ritter believed that, “the German people had arrived at the absolute low point of its fate,” and saw their role as historians in ensuring “people did not abandon all hope” (Conrad 86). In Japan however, in the early post-war years “Marxist linked their criticism with hopes for profound reforms of Japanese society,” and as such, Japanese communists enjoyed a brief flirtation with the American Occupiers in the immediate post-war period. Yet by the outbreak of the Korean War, Japanese Marxists could no longer view “the social reforms of the occupying power as the moment of revolutionary transformation,” (Conrad 85).

By the 1950s, in Japan the dominant interpretation of the end of the war was that it had brought upon a period of occupation and occupation by the Americans. While this feeling of being an occupied nation was less profound in West Germany, historians such as Peter Rassow and Friedrich Meinecke nevertheless commented on the “age of external foreign rule,” (Conrad 86). This is significant for when we consider what exactly the terms “*katastrophe*” or in Japanese *kurai tanima* (dark valley) employed by West German and Japanese historians referred to. Conrad argues that the term, “did not in the first place refer to the vanquished dictatorship and its inhuman crimes, but rather to military defeat and occupation by a foreign power,” (87).

German Japanese Film Relations

German and Japanese film relations leading up to and during the Second World War were somewhat asymmetrical. While the Japanese film industry regularly imported, exhibited and

expressed admiration for German-made films, the German film industry seemingly had little interest, despite offers and limited experiments, in significant cinematic collaboration with the Japanese. Although there were efforts spearheaded by one Japanese man, Nagamasa Kawakita, to increase cross-cultural participation in terms of co-productions, exhibitions and film exchanges, the German propaganda machine had other priorities.

Germany and Japan formalized their political allegiance with the 1936 Comintern Pact, however, "neither UFA nor any other German film company regarded the Japanese market as a field of expansion worth pursuing" (Hansen 187). This sentiment extended to Joseph Goebbels, the German propaganda minister. Goebbels made clear Germany's international cultural aspirations in a speech on 28th Feb 1942, in which he asserted that the modern mass media technologies of film and radio would take on even greater significance after the war, at which point he predicted the world would be divided into spheres of influence. However Germany's ambitions did not include the Asian continent and its outlying territories, despite the explicitly stated goal to "give film a purpose and a mission, and then conquer the world with it too." While UFA and Goebbels were aware that Japan was expanding its cultural influence alongside its political and military might in East Asia and China, this led to neither intervention nor concern. A UFA employee stationed in Tokyo, Johannes Barthes, warned officials that the Japanese had gained such profound traction in these areas that, "without or against the Japanese film industry, there is nothing with regard to film anybody can do in East Asia anymore," and yet the UFA board remained unmoved (Hansen 188).

Japan boasted a robust film industry before and after the war. Major studios such as Toho, Shochiku and Nikkatsu released more than 500 years annually (more than even Hollywood in this period), mostly romanticizing the feudal Japan's samurais. These films were

shown across the country's theatres, which by 1933 numbered more than 1000. Most theatres were associated with and owned by the film studios and as such had little freedom in terms of what they chose to screen. In fact, only 47 out of the country's 1000+ theatres exhibited foreign features. Despite this, imported films had a profound impact on the nation, as evinced by the vast amounts of critiques, reviews, and other written material available in Japanese film magazines and newspapers of the time. As Janine Hansen notes, Japanese critics "often cited foreign films to lament the shortcomings of the Japanese product, and filmmakers sometimes used foreign Avant Garde films as foils for their own work," (189). As Hansen argues, "newspapers and film magazines featured a heated debate on the subject of how to get the national movie output onto Western screens and how to make Japanese films compatible with the world market-- a debate that do to do with as much as national pride with economic ambitions," (189). Indeed, Japanese cinema's relationship to the Western cinema had been a dominant concern since the beginnings of film production in the nation. This is in large part due to Japanese cinema's dramatic precursors Kabuki and Shinpa theatre, the longstanding figure of the Benshi, and the "pure cinema movement" which characterized the early years of cinematic output in both Japan and Western European nations.

Although the pre-war period saw a greater number of Western, including German, productions shown in Japan than Japanese productions shown in the West, the film import business was not simple. This was in part due to the rise of sound-cinema or "the talkies", which created a language barrier to overcome, and in part due to economic sanctions necessitated by Japan's ongoing conflict with China. By the 1930s the big six Hollywood studios had established offices in Tokyo ready with American staff to promote their films and keep an eye on local markets. In fact, until 1936, American films constituted a 12% market share in Japan's film

industry, while the European's controlled 3% annually. In 1937, wartime economic pressures led to a ban on all US films due to economic restrictions, however in the years after the ban the American market-share largely recovered. After the events of Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7th 1941, US films were once more restricted from entering the nation and due to obstructions to the Trans-Siberian shipping route, European foreign films failed to make it into the nation as well (Hansen Ibid).

Nagamasa Kawakita and his wife Kashiko were the visionaries responsible for attempting to encourage more significant relations between the two national film industries. Kawakita, in his capacity as owner and founder of *Towa Shoji Goshi Kaisha*, a film import company that brought many European films to Japan, sought to both produce domestic films that would be popular in the European markets, and to initiate opportunities for co-productions between the two nations. Kawakita visited Berlin's UFA offices annually to bring back both feature films and *kulturefilm,* documentary and popular science shorts that preceded features, to Japan. During his 1934 visit, he proposed founding of German-Japanese production company to UFA, and offered $1 million Reichmarks to fund it. UFA's board was not interested, and instead chose to focus on expansion the European markets (Hansen 189-192).

The 1930s saw the release of the first German-Japanese co-production in cinematic history with a high-budget film titled *Atarashiki Tsuchi ("The New Earth").* The film's premier was a grand occasion—in attendance were both high-ranking diplomats from around the globe and members of the Japanese Imperial family. The film also enjoyed a glamorous Berlin premier with Joseph Goebbels in attendance. Despite the increasingly significant political relations between the two nations that the film reflected, the nations had just signed the Anti Comintern Pact 3 months prior, its two co-directors, German 3 and Japanese, Itami Mansaku, did not enjoy

a harmonious working relationship. Arnold Fanck, the film's German director, is often credited as the inventor of the Weimar Mountain film (Bergfilm), "a genre about mountaineering that celebrates the mystique of the Alps" that would come to define German popular culture under the Nazi Regime (Hansen 185). Beyond this aesthetic legacy, Fanck had close personal ties to the Nazi party--many of his early films starred Leni Riefenstahl, who would later ascend to the position of Hitler's favorite director with the release of her legendary documentary *The Triumph of the Will* (1935) *(*Hansen 186*).* Fanck's penchant for naturalism led his early films to break with the traditional studio based production in favor of on location expeditions. These proved to be both expensive and dangerous, and as such, he had difficulty finding financing later in his career. He had not shot a film in a year when he was offered the job as co-director of *The New Earth* by producer, Nagamasa Kawakita. Kawakita was the head of a film import company Towa Shoji that brought Western films including many from Germany, to Japan. These imports were popular fare in Japan, and Kawakita sought to make this admiration mutual. He aimed to export, "a true masterpiece that would open the eyes of the Western audiences to the beauty of movies made in Japan." After the failure of a previous attempt with his film *Nippon* (1929) that was mocked in major capitals such as Paris and Berlin, Kawakita sought the help of a Fanck, who he hoped would provide the script and direction necessary to appeal to a European audience. As Kawakita further endeavored to showcase the majestic beauty of the Japanese landscape to entice audiences, Fanck's "trademark... spectacular outdoor shooting" style developed during his risky mountaineering productions was a natural fit.

Indeed, the hopes for Fanck's influence in the Japanese film world extended beyond a single production. As Janine Hansen writes in her essay on what she terms the "Japanese-German Misalliance" that characterized the production of *Atarashiki Tsuchi,* Fanck's arrival in

Japan was hailed by the papers as, “a major event for the whole of the Japanese film world” (Hansen 187). Journalists like the film’s producer Kawakita hoped that Fanck’s European style would influence domestic Japanese directors and enable them to produce what was colloquially known as the “*kokusai eiga*, an international film that would please Japanese and foreign audiences” (Ibid). As Hansen argues, “even before *Atarashiki Tsuchi* actually came into existence, the private undertaking of Kawakita and Fanck had taken on the character of a symbolic link between Japan and Germany in the eyes of the public, a view that both Fanck and Kawakita actively promoted,” (Ibid). The film’s plot emphasized both geopolitical expansion and racial purity that the fascist movement in both Japan and Germany demanded. Focusing on a Japanese rendering of the nationalistic German concept *Volk Ohne Raum* “people without space” which had resonance in the small island nation as well.

The New Earth (*Atarashiki Tsuchi),* tells the story of a young German educated Japanese man who must overcome his inappropriate desire for a white woman in order to serve his nation and family. After returning from his European education and becoming acquainted with the Western concepts of free will and individualism, Teruo (Kosugi Isamu) refuses to follow his prescribed path and marry the woman, Mitsuko (Hara Setsuko) his family expects. After meeting Gerda (Ruth Eweler), a “pure, chaste and race conscious Nazi woman” and journalist traveling to Japan on the ship bringing him home, Teruo becomes enamored with her and refuses to follow his prescribed path. However, Gerda, being a good Nazi, refuses his advances and redirects him towards a racially appropriate love interest, whom he saves at the last minute from an attempted suicide. Ultimately, the future and racial purity of the family, and by extension, the nation are secured when Teruo marries Mitsuko. Fulfilling the Nazi fantasy, they and their new child travel to Manchuria to settle new land.

The film was not well received by critics in Japan, although the film enjoyed box office success. In Germany however, the film received high praise by the press, as ordered by Goebbels, who in private shared the opinion that it should be "cut rigorously," (Hansen 190).

Historical Background

Following the division of Germany after the Potsdam conference in the summer of 1945 and the establishment of the BRD (*Bundesrepublik Deutschland* or Federal Republic of Germany) in 1949, the ongoing participation of former Nazis in national politics was a persistent fact of life. In 1949, Konrad Adenauer was elected as the first chancellor of the newly divided nation, and in his 14 years at this post he categorically failed to purge former Nazis from the government. At times this meant allowing them to retain their past positions, at others, this entailed to promoting them to new ones (Fulbrook 153). In Japan as in Germany, the continuity of figures between the wartime regime and the new ostensibly democratic government was almost immediate. On May 22nd of 1946 Shigeru Yoshida became the 45th prime minister of Japan. He had been a munitions minister under the imperial government and was elected in the "first election under universal suffrage" which produced "a reactionary cabinet" composed of conservative wartime personalities (Dower 67).[8]

The nominal end of the Allied Occupation of Japan and West Germany in 1952 and 1955 respectively saw the remilitarization of both nations, rapid economic growth, and the return of many wartime fascists purged in the immediate aftermath of WW2 to posts in the government and cultural industries. I employ the term 'nominal' to acknowledge that although Japan and the

[8] Two weeks after the unconditional surrender of Japan in August of 1945, Prince Higashikuni's government "demanded critical reflection on the part of the Japanese people… under the slogan 'collective confession of 100 million' (*ichioku sōzange)*" (Ibid). As such it was made explicit that "the Japanese people as a whole were to assume responsibility for the past—a responsibility from which only the Tennō was excepted," (Ibid). However, "this postulate was diametrically counter to the demands voiced by the political opposition," who believed "the people were not to be blamed for what had happened, but rather the Tennō," (Ibid).

United States ratified San Francisco Peace Treaty in April of 1952, as Dower notes, "the Americans retained exceptional extraterritorial rights, and the number of military installations they demanded was far in excess of what anyone had anticipated." For example, Hanson Baldwin, "the oracular military commentator for the New York Times accurately pronounced this inauguration of, 'a period when Japan is free, yet not free,'" (553). Similarly, in West Germany despite the fact that a treaty granting full sovereignty was ratified on May 5 1955, the actual terms of said sovereignty were hotly contested, particularly as they were predicated on West Germany's re-armament, the ongoing military presence of the United States, and the country's active participation in NATO (Fulbrook 151).

By 1966, Kurt Georg Kiesinger, a card-carrying member of the Nazi party during the Third Reich, was elected chancellor of West Germany. This ignited a sense of rage and virulent protest amongst the left that would only grow throughout the decade, as the ascension of a former Nazi to the highest political office in the state was seen as a profound demonstration of the failures of denazification (Fulbrook 168). The failures of denazification were more than evident before Kiesinger became Chancellor. Although 53 000 civil servants were removed from their posts immediately after the war, by 1951 many had been reinstated with full pensions. Furthermore, West Germany's first Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer had no issue including former Nazis in his political cabinet, despite controversy. For example, former SS-member Oberlander was named Minister of Refugees, and Hans Globke, the "author of the official commentary on the Nuremberg Race Laws of 1935," became Adenauer's chief aide (Fulbrook 158).

In Japan, a similar event occurred a decade earlier when in February 1957 Nobusuke Kishi, a self-declared National Socialist during the war, was elected Prime Minister (Gordon

334).[9] After the Second World War, Kishi had been tried at the International Military Tribunal of the Far East as a Class-A War criminal (Dower 453). During the war, Kishi had been a brutal colonial administrator in the puppet-state Manchukuo in charge of commerce and trade, and was "accused of… being responsible for the enslavement of untold thousands of Chinese as forced laborers," (Dower 454). He was also a high-ranking General in Prime Minister Tojo's cabinet and in fact co-signed the 1941 Declaration of War against the United States (Schaller 1995). Accordingly, Kishi's post-war political career was nothing short of extraordinary, and demonstrated to many Japanese the hypocrisy of the United States, ready to collaborate with the right-wing, imperial government they had defeated and purged less than ten years prior. Despite having spent the years from 1945-1948 in Sugamo prison, by 1957 Kishi was invited to the U.S. where he, "addressed both Houses of Congress, [threw] out the first pitch at a New York Yankees baseball game, and joined Eisenhower in a round of golf at an otherwise racially segregated country club," (Schaller 1995).

Kishi's political rehabilitation was part of a strategy developed by American diplomat George Kennan, the author of the "long telegram" which first introduced the Cold War strategy of "containment". As a part of the plan to block the spread of Soviet influence, as Secretary of State James Forrestal put it, "real security against communism required the 'restoration of commerce, trade and business' worldwide," which meant putting "Japan, Germany and other affiliates of the Axis back to work," (Schaller 1995). Accordingly, Kennan suggested to President Harry Truman that, "Japan must be redeveloped as the "cornerstone of a Pacific Security system," and, "be made internally stable, amenable to American leadership, and

[9] In Japan as in Germany, the continuity of figures between the wartime regime and the new ostensibly democratic government was almost immediate. On May 22nd of 1946 Shigeru Yoshida became the 45th prime minister of Japan. He had been a munitions minister under the imperial government and was elected in the "first election under universal suffrage" which produced "a reactionary cabinet" composed of conservative wartime personalities (Dower 67).

industrially revived," (Schaller 1995).

To accomplish these goals, partially dictated by the Marshall Plan, by the end of 1948, "the United States ended war crimes trials, abandoned plans to break up the *zaibatsu,* and stopped the flow of reparations to Japan's wartime victims." [10] Meanwhile, "Washington encouraged the Japanese government to rein in organized labor," (Schaller 1995). The new priorities of the Occupation, to ""crank up" Japan's economy by imposing central planning designed to maximize export production at the expense of domestic consumption…through the creation of powerful government planning and trade ministries," led directly to Kishi's release from prison, as the new policies "resembled many of Kishi's wartime economic control measures," (Ibid).

Kishi ultimately was forced from office in 1960 when massive protests erupted over the revised terms of the U.S.-Japanese security treaty, known in English as the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan, and in Japanese, *Anpo Jōyaku*, or simply *Anpo* (Standish 2011 38). The first iteration of this document had been signed alongside the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951 and ratified in 1952, and, "provided for U.S. military bases in Japan and the continued presence of American troops, as well as the right for the U.S. to intervene in internal disturbances," (Sasaki-Uemura 15).

The treaty was immensely unpopular and three days after it came into effect on May 1st 1952, the day of May Day protests worldwide, approximately four hundred thousand protestors arrived at the Meiji shrine and "vocally endorsed such resolutions as 'Oppose rearmament- Fight for the independence of the race!'" and "'Go Home Yankees!'" (Dower 554). The protestors had been barred from demonstrating in the Imperial Plaza, the traditional site of protest, by the

[10] The term *zaibatsu* refers to the Japanese oligopoly of business conglomerates with vast holdings in the industrial and financial industries (Dower 82)

Yoshida government, which went so far as to defy a court order nullifying the ban. The plaza had been referred to as the "people's plaza" since demonstrations which occurred there in 1946. By the end of what came to be known as the "Bloody May Day" an angry contingent of "perhaps ten thousand people in all, led by radical associations of Communists, Koreans, and students," stormed the plaza (Dower 555). They were met with violence, tear gas, and bullets from the police (Ibid). In the clash, more than 800 police were injured and twice as many protestors; two people died; three GIs were thrown into a moat and stoned; and dozens of American vehicles were overturned and torched.

As Dower notes, "Bloody May Day branded the image of a divided country on the national consciousness," (Ibid). The San Francisco Peace Treaty became a topic of national division again before ten years had past. From the spring of 1959 to the fall of 1960, "an estimated sixteen million Japanese engaged in protests… more than ten million people signed petitions against the treaty's renewal, some six million laborers engaged in sympathy strikes, and hundreds of thousands of citizens marched in the streets of Tokyo and other cities around the country," (Sasaki-Uemura 16). Kishi responded by enlisting the police to, "expel opposition party members from the parliament and forcibly ratify the treaty," thus transforming, "a limited diplomatic controversy into a general crisis of democracy," (Ibid).[11]

As opposition movements such as the *Anpo* Struggle made clear, a key issue surrounding the renewed sovereignty of Japan as well as in West Germany was that of remilitarization. West Germans wary of repeating the atrocities of the past adopted an attitude of, "'*ohne-mich'*… literally 'without me' or 'count me out' in relation to rearmament," (Fulbrook 151). Similarly, in Japan, "the establishment of a Japanese military capability with the euphemistically called

[11] Although the opposition failed in their goal of having the treaty rescinded, the fact that Kishi resigned led historian Ienaga Saburo to note, "it was one of the few instances in modern Japanese history where a popular movement directly toppled an authoritarian regime," (Sasaki-Uemura 17).

Security Forces in 1950 (and their expansion in 1952, and 1954) created a very real sense that Japanese society was once again being subsumed within a military-industrial complex with imperial ambitions… only this time it was being externally, rather than internally, orchestrated," (Standish 2011 39).

The 1970s in West Germany and Japan were a time marked by a climate of radical left-wing protest in response to the failures of denazification or *tsuiho* (purges), the resurgence of the military-industrial complex, and the developments of the Cold War. In Japan, the legacy of 1968's *Zenkyoto* student movement and the corresponding government crackdown on civilian freedoms under the "university management laws," bred apathy among some, but increased radicalism of those already bordering on the extreme (Eiji 4). This was the case on the political right and left in Japan. In 1970, right-wing novelist Yukio Mishima and his small paramilitary *Tate no Kai* (The Shield Society) attempted a coup d'état at the headquarters of the Self-Defense Forces. Mishima had arranged publicity for the event, in which he and another member of the Shield society staged a ritual suicide in the name of patriotism for the awaiting cameras below (Furuhata 88). On the radical left, there was the Yogodo Hijacking of 1970, in which nine members of the Japanese Communist League, the precursor to the Red Army Faction, held hostage 129 people and re-routed a plane to North Korea (Janke 171). In 1972, the *Asama-Sanso* incident occurred in 1972, when armed members of the United Red Army occupied a resort lodge and held hostage the inn-keeper's wife for 10 days. The incident ultimately ended in a brutal 10 hour stand off with the police.

Correspondingly, in West Germany the 1970s were a turbulent time rife with hijackings, bombings, and kidnappings undertaken by the various generations of the Red Army Faction, the first of which had been forged in the fires of the student protest movement of 1968. As in Japan,

the West German government responded to civil disobedience through the implementation of draconian legislation. In 1968, West Germany instituted the *Notstandsgesetzgebung* (Emergency Laws) (Fulbrook 214). From that day on the government continued to implement policies that severely restricted freedom of speech and civil liberties, while they increased the authority of the police and the level of surveillance throughout the nation. In 1972, Willy Brandt introduced the *Berufsverbot* (roughly translated as 'professional ban'), a law which forbade anyone who had been ever been documented demonstrating against the government from employment in a federal government position.

This legislation was a part of what was known as the *Tendenzuwende* (the change of tendency) that saw the reversal of Brandt's government's formerly liberal policies towards the student protest movement (Shattuc 51). By the mid 1970s, it was widely acknowledged that the Red Army Faction terrorists and anyone remotely suspected to be affiliated with their activities were serving longer sentences than former NSDAP members had after the Second World War. Indeed, with the introduction of the *Berufsverbot,* civilians who demonstrated against the supposedly democratic government were more strictly prevented than former NSDAP members from obtaining employment in the public service (Fulbrook 239).

With this political context in mind, it is significant to consider that both films were accessible to broad domestic audiences. *Lady Snowblood* was produced and distributed by major studios, *Tokyo Eiga* and *Toho* respectively, and as such would have reached a wide audience in its theatrical exposition. *Martha* was produced, funded, and broadcast by West German public television, as was be the case for many films of directed by members of the New German Cinema since the "Film Television Agreement" signed between West German TV and the Government Film Office in 1974 (Shattuc 51). Speaking about the possibilities of television,

Fassbinder said in a 1971 interview, "'only with television things are different: you find a truly diverse audience there. And I think television is, at the moment, the best way to communicate something to people,'(Gr**ö**hler 1971)," (Prager 87).

By the 1970s in both West Germany and Japan, a nostalgic return to the past had permeated popular culture in both sincere and ironic guises. In Japan, popular genre films in the *chanbara* (samurai/sword fighting) tradition set during the Tokugawa era dominated popular box offices of the 1960s and early 1970s. In West Germany, alpine-set *Heimat* films saw a resurgence in popularity. Yet at the same time both nations were experiencing terrorist activity perpetrated by youth on the extreme right and left, confronting the legacy of defeat, occupation, and re-integration into the U.S. dominated capitalist international system.

My thesis situates my selected films in the context of this political radicalism and nationalistic nostalgia. In my chapter focalizing *Lady Snowblood,* I will demonstrate how Fujita's film excessively and spectacularly romanticized the national past through the application of philosophies and aesthetics from a bygone era to critique the Western Hegemony and military-industrial complex impacting the nation. In the following chapter, I will place *Lady Snowblood*'s critique of the Western influence that the film allegorically blames for the rise of fascism and imperialism in the nation in relation to Fassbinder's film *Martha*. In *Martha*, Fassbinder refuses to participate in a nostalgic return to the past, instead indicting this type of sentimental attachment to cultural traditions and social institutions for naturalizing the fascist politics, which he argues, dominate the nation up to the present day.

I situate my films interpretations of the origins of fascism within the historiographical discourses emerging in the post-war period after the war. In so doing, I question how popular culture participated in the political project of re-inventing the nation in the wake of defeat,

surrender, and the truncation of national history. Ultimately my thesis asks these questions within a feminist framework, as the films I have chosen to analyze this correlation insist, through their embodiment of national history in a female protagonist, that the personal is inherently political. Indeed, in both chapters I foreground how national concepts and philosophies fundamental to the culture of West Germany and Japan such as the *Heimat* and Neo-Confucianism respectively, picture the individual always already in relation to the nation and family.

Chapter 2

The Deep Seated Grudge: *Lady Snowblood,* Western Hegemony and the Re-Invention of Tradition

> *"The slogan 'democracy', which, properly speaking, merited one's wholehearted support: I saw it as nothing but hollow cant, and I was unable to suppress the feeling that it was simply the flipside of wartime militarism."* [12]
>
> - Saburō Ienaga, *Japan's past Japan's Future: One Historian's Odyssey*

> *"The Japanese nation has once again become a suppressed nation. And this time the suppression is not as gentle as before, but rather is the result of colonial dominance of imperialism at the highest level."*[13]
>
> *-Rekishigaku Kenkyūkai, Taiheō sensō shi*

> *"In Japan, the connection between a person and his… ie [household] is at the same time the link between the individual and the nation. Today, if we probe a little, we realize that the faithful subjects and loyal retainers of history are our ancestors, and we are aware, not just vaguely but in a concrete way, of the intentions of our ancestors. The awareness that our ancestors have lived and served under the imperial family for thousands of generations forms the surest basis for the feelings of loyalty and patriotism (chūkun aiko kushin). If the ie were to disappear, it might even be difficult to explain to ourselves why we should be Japanese. As our individualism flourished, we would come to view our history no differently from the way we view that of foreign countries."* [14]
>
> *-Yanagita Kunio*

In Japan as in Germany, in the decades following the close of the Second World War articulations of national history were heavily politicized and policed. Competing ideologies reified through the institutions of American-occupied and the post-occupation nations determined the shape and character of representations of national history. This chapter details how Toshiya Fujita's 1973 film *Lady Snowblood (Shurayuki-hime)* participated in emergent discourses on national history through its exploration of contemporaneous issues such as

[12] Quoted in *Politics, Porn, Protest* on page 39 (Ienaga: 2001: 127, translated by Richard H. Minear)
[13] Quoted in Sebastian Conrad's *The Quest for the Lost Nation* on page 87.
[14] Quoted in Isolde Standish's *A New History of Japanese Cinema* "from a speech made by Yanagita Kunio to the Greater Japan Agricultural Association in 1906, quoted in and translated by Irokawa 1985:288).

Western hegemony, imperialism, capitalism and the military-industrial complex via historical events 100 years in the past. *Lady Snowblood* tells the story of *Shurayukihime* (Lady Snowblood)[15], an *asura* demon whose beauty belies her vicious rage. Yuki, as she is referred to in the film, was born to fulfill her mother Sayo's dying vendetta by murdering those responsible for the violent crimes inflicted upon her, her husband, and their son. This tale of bloody vengeance is set against the backdrop of Japan's transition from three centuries of what is diegetically referred to as "peaceful" isolation under the Tokugawa Shogunate in the Edo period (1603-1868) into modernism and the Meiji era (1868-1912).

Due to its narrative action, rendering of history, and industrial and aesthetic legacy, I contend that *Lady Snowblood* is a singularly important cinematic event that expertly condenses the sociopolitical tensions that permeated Post-War Japanese society. In order to situate my analysis of the film, this chapter will review key events in modern Japanese history, emphasizing the rise of Western influence, the hypocrisies of the Allied occupation, and its continuities with the wartime regime. To contextualize *Lady Snowblood* within a broader national and film industrial history of Japan, I additionally provide a brief summary of the development of the studio system, its relationship to organized labour and Left-wing politics, and how it helped catalyze the "political avant-garde filmmaking movement," that emerged in the 1960s and set the stage for the cycle of violent and women-centered films with which *Lady Snowblood* aligns.[16] This historical overview will situate the film within a genealogy of political Japanese cinema that thematizes national history through the figure of female protagonist-- a tendency that in part led

[15] The title is a pun on Snow White, as told by author of the original manga, Kazuo Koike in "A Beautiful Demon: Kazuo Koike on Lady Snowblood." Interview. *A Beautiful Demon: Kazuo Koike on Lady Snowblood*. Criterion Collection. DVD.

[16] Film scholar Yuriko Furuhata eschews the term "New Wave" in favor of "political avant-garde," as she notes the former fails to, "acknowledge the permeability between commercial and underground filmmaking" (3). This permeability between the two ostensibly opposed spheres is central to the argument this chapter makes with regards to the significance of the film *Lady Snowblood,* a film that confounds such simple categorization.

to the development of the genre of the *pinku eiga* (pink-film) in the socioeconomic context of the 1960s.[17]

This chapter considers *Lady Snowblood* in light of both domestic and global cinematic trends definitive of the era: the rise of stylistically excessive, exploitation-style cinema; permeable boundaries between art, political and pornographic films; and the use of allegory to critique contemporaneous ideological and political life. These trends correspond to socioeconomic shifts that were reshaping daily life and patterns of media consumption in Japan and internationally such as the relaxation of cinematic censorship codes; the rise of television; the Cold War; and the climate of student unrest and left-wing radical protest.

At once a *jidaigeki eiga* (period film); a *chanbara* (sword fighting) and *ronin eiga* (samurai film); a *yakuza (*gangster film*)* and a *pinku eiga* (pink film), *Lady Snowblood* formally and thematically encapsulates and interrogates a hundred years of Japanese cinema and history. In valorizing the moral code and culture from a bygone era, *Lady Snowblood* participates in a process of cultural self-reinvention that Japan was undergoing in the decades after the war. Through its reading of national history, and emphasis on traditional Japanese aesthetics and philosophies, the film constructs and portrays a particular type of Japanese national identity based around the dictates of the Neo-Confucian samurai *bushido* code. Ultimately, this chapter demonstrates how *Lady Snowblood* functions as a form of subversive Marxist history that posits a direct link from the origins of nationhood and capitalism in the Meiji period to the rise of fascism, private property, imperialism, and Western hegemony in the 20th century.

National Self-Reinvention

[17] See for an early example, Akira Kurosawa's *No Regrets for Our Youth (1946)*

As German historiographer Sebastian Conrad demonstrates in his book, *The Quest for the Lost Nation: Writing History in Germany and Japan in the American Century,* the Occupation authorities in Japan as in West Germany wasted no time in systematically "limiting the range of possible statements about the past," (80). Their interventions in the representation of national history took three major forms in the immediate post-war years: the war crimes tribunals in Nuremberg and Tokyo; social reforms including American interventions in the writing of Post-War democratic Constitutions in Japan in 1946 and later in the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949; and more concretely, through censorship policies, denazification and purges (*tsuihō*). The latter of these interventions, denazification and purges (*tsuihō),* particularly in the university and culture industries functionally, "defined a negative canon of 'undesirable interpretations' that thenceforth limited the range of interpretational approaches," (Ibid).

Within this context, in Japan as in West Germany post-war historians sought "an interpretation of the past that both made sense of the 'dark years' of fascism and was compatible with a brighter democratic future," (Conrad 3). In his chapter "The Nation as Victim" Conrad traces the dominant interpretations of national history that arose out of Japan and West Germany in the post-war period. In Japan as in the BRD, the fascist period was largely regarded as a a disaster. While there could be no doubt that National Socialism had plunged both nations into what was in Japan referred to as a "dark valley (*kurai tanima)*" the question was why and how did this happen (Conrad 86)? The central task for historians was accordingly to produce a model that could explain the origins of fascism and preserve the integrity of the nation. The basic model adopted in both nations presented fascism as a cultural phenomenon tied to the rise of modernism, which, depending on the historian and school of thought they advocated, was either a domestic tendency, or an alien entity imported from outside the nation.

In Japan, the latter of these rationales proved to be the most influential model for explicating the origins of fascism. For example, this was the position championed by the Marxist historian association *Rekishigaku Kenkyūkai* who initially had a brief dalliance with the U.S. occupiers in the immediate post-war years. However, after the outbreak of the war in Korea in 1953, an event which reified the U.S.'s anticommunist policy beyond all doubt, the association responded by publishing a history of the Pacific war that explicitly labeled the *defeat* of the nation in 1945 and corresponding occupation a national "catastrophe" (*hakyoku)*, rather than the war that preceded it (Conrad 87). The *Rekishigaku Kenkyūkai* argued in their 5 volume text that with the defeat, Japan had become nation occupied by a foreign enemy. The association linked the American hegemony the nation was experiencing, "to the 'unequal treaties' Japan had been forced to conclude with the United States under the threat of military force in the mid-nineteenth century (Conrad 87). Similarly, the nationalist historian Sōkichi Tsuda was a proponent of the theory that foreign influence in the Meiji era had imported militarism and imperialism. In a framework resting on the ethnic uniformity of Japan, Tsuda claimed, "homogeneity had also been the reason why Japanese history was not characterized by subjugation and repressive policies, but had progressed in an inherently peaceful fashion" (Conrad 94). He argued that, "as an island people, (*shimaguni*), the Japanese had maintained only limited relations to other peoples and thus had not developed any expansionist tendencies," (Ibid).

This chapter argues that *Lady Snowblood* adopts this logic of invasion for locating the roots of fascism, arguing that it was a Meiji-era import of Modernity and the West. In this chapter, I will elucidate how Fujita's film functions within a Neo-Confucian worldview that ties the fate of the family to that of the nation. In this way, *Lady Snowblood* presents a Manichean universe in which what is morally "good" and "right" for the family is also good and right for the

nation, and vice versa—what causes the family harm correspondingly harms the nation at large. Accordingly in the film, the gang of criminals who rape and murder the protagonist Yuki's mother and family are one and the same as those are responsible for corrupting the nation, swindling villagers, and murdering innocent people with their money making schemes.

As aforementioned, the U.S. occupation authorities institutionalized limits on the kinds of discourses on national history that could emerge. As film scholar Isolde Standish notes, "one of the immediate planks for the Occupation Forces' policy was the removal from public life of people deemed to have been in active support of the war," (2001 174). Interventions in education and entertainment by the occupation authorities were immediate. In Japan, anticipatory dismals in the University sector began as early as 1945. Direct interventions started that year as well, and were aimed at particular institutions considered hotbeds of ultra-nationalism such as *Rikkyō* University and Kyoto University. [18] That said, direct intervention remained the exception. Instead, by 1946, all Japanese universities, under Occupation directives, were asked to establish their own commissions to review professors.[19] These commissions were composed of "scholars with integrity" who were responsible for reviewing and determining "the qualification and further employment of the entire faculty" (Conrad 82). In Japan, a total of 24, 572 professors across all departments were evaluated; yet only 86 (0.3%) were formally dismissed (Ibid).

The Occupation authorities implemented a similar strategy in other sectors that had a hand in managing perceptions of the war. The purges extended to the film industry in which, "the screenplay writers' group, the critics' association, and the newly formed All Japan Film Employees Association (*Nippon Eiga Jūgyōin Kumiam Dōmei)*" were forced to review and

[18] For example, "the supreme representative of nationalist historiography in the post war period and in a way the Japanese counterpart of [infamous Nazi Historian] Walter Frank," Hiraizumi Kiyoshi resigned voluntarily in September of 1945.
[19] This process was repeated in the Western Zones of Germany (Conrad 82)

compile a list of people to be removed from their positions (Ibid). The final "banned persons list" was composed of individuals who had all worked at the executive level between July of 1937 and December of 1941. They were charged with incitement to war (*sensō chōhatsu hanzaisha),* "based on the fact that between the outbreak of the war in china and the end of the Pacific War in 1945 they were in their capacity as managers of film companies or government officials, responsible for national film policy," (Standish 2001 175).

In concert with these purges, a robust censorship apparatus existed which had been set up immediately following the country's defeat and surrender. In 1945 the GHQ (General Headquarters) began imposing censorship procedures that would last until Japan regained sovereignty in 1952. The SCAP (Supreme Command for the Allied Powers) proclaimed, "there shall be an absolute minimum of restrictions on freedom of speech," as long as expression was, "the truth" and did not disrupt "public tranquility." However, in practice censorship was, "extended to every from of media and theatrical expression—newspapers, magazines, trade books as well as textbooks, radio, film and plays," (Dower 406). At the top of the SCAP's post-war agenda was controlling commentary about the war, and educating the "general populace about many aspects of Japanese aggression and atrocity that had been suppressed by their nation's own censorship machinery," (Dower 412).

The SCAP's "sprawling bureaucracy" was known as the Civil Censorship Detachment (CCD) and at its height, employed over 6000 people across Japan.[20] An astonishing amount of material was inspected, and up until 1947 almost all major daily newspapers, and every book and magazine were subject to prepublication censorship.[21] On the list of tabooed subjects was that of

[20] Dower notes that the majority of these people were, "English speaking Japanese nationals who identified and then translated or summarized questionable material before passing it to their superiors," (407).
[21] This amounted to at one point an average monthly volume of, "26 000 issues of newspapers, 3800 news agency publications, 23000 radio scripts, 5700 printed bulletins, 4000 magazine issues and 1800 books and

censorship itself- any public acknowledgement of its existence was strictly forbidden.[22] Despite this shroud of silence, there was much discussion amongst the Japanese as to whether the post-war occupation was less strict than in the decade prior to surrender. As historian John Dower notes, "journalists who had firsthand experience with pre-surrender and post surrender variants of censorship were less sanguine about postwar "freedom" but usually still acknowledged the conqueror's hand was the lighter one," (409).

Censorship policies had important ramifications for the development of the relationship between the Japanese public and the American Occupation forces. For one, "the policy of censoring the existence of censorship itself," in contrast to the former system, "cast a taint of hypocrisy on the Americans," as at least prewar readers were notified of excised materials. During the war, passages that had been removed were indicated, whereas after the war there was no trace of their redaction. Second, as no precise guides were published providing criteria on what was deemed unacceptable, an atmosphere of "disquieting rumors easily spilled over into a pathology of self-censorship," on behalf of those citizens who engaged in any form of public expression (Dower 410). Thirdly, the SCAP's contradictory policies and procedures, at times advocating for freedom of speech and at others, mirroring the pre-war imperial government's campaigns against "dangerous thought," led to a situation in which the Occupation authorities were unable to avoid "simply replacing the propaganda of the vanquished with the victors," (Dower 413).

Thus in the years following the war, what became the "truth" in Japan was dictated in a

---

pamphlets,"(Ibid). In addition to this, "CCD's examiners spot checked an astonishing 330 million pieces of mail and monitored 800 000 private telephone conversations" (ibid). It was not just domestic materials that were censored- foreign materials were subject to review as well, leading to a situation in which, "the vanquished were not allowed to read everything the victors read," (Dower 408).

[22] Significantly, as censorship was never formally publicly acknowledged, "its nominal termination with the dissolution of the CCD which occurred in late 1949 also took place without public notice," (Dower 408).

unilateral, top-down fashion, just as it had been under the war-time regime. Dower notes that, "publishers and broadcasters were required to present accounts of the war prepared within the GHQ," particular as they pertained to the Tokyo Trials (the East Asian war crimes tribunal convened by SCAP under the direction of General MacArthur). Yet "no criticism was permitted of the victorious Allied nations (including, initially, the Soviet Union), nor of the SCAP or its policies." This included "sensitive social issues such as fraternization, prostitution involving occupation forces, or mixed blood children, GI crimes including rape," as well as, "public commentary about the Cold War tensions." Accordingly, the occupation forces ruled for six years with utter impunity, while the Japanese were forced to police their own public expression on the basis of vague, shifting, and often arbitrary commandments (Dower 412).

While censorship apparatus was officially terminated in 1949, a new round of purges, this time targeting the left, supplanted its goals. The Red Purges of the Yoshida government began in the late 1940s and early 1950s. These purges, which initially excluded the media and targeted only, "radicalized employees in the public sector," expanded rapidly with the outbreak of the Korean War in the summer of 1950, spilling over into "the private sector and, among many other fields of activity, swept through publishing and filmmaking, as well as public radio," (Dower 437). As Standish notes, the Red Purges had a profound impact on the film industry, effectively "splitting the Toho studios in half" in the 1940s, while, "the subsequent purge in 1950 resulted in 20 000 employees with suspected left-wing connections losing their jobs," (2011 39).

During the occupation years, the Japanese film industry was subject to strict censorship under the directives of General MacArthur's Supreme Allied Command. As aforementioned, the SCAP immediately established a robust censorship apparatus after arriving on August 27th 1945. Under a month later, the CIE (Civil Information and Education Section) was established and

mandated with, “expediting the establishment of freedom of religious worship; freedom of opinion; speech, press, and assembly by dissemination of democratic ideals and principles through all media of public information,” as well as, “making clear to all levels of the Japanese public the true facts of their defeat, their war guilt, the responsibility of the militarists for the present and future Japanese suffering and deprivation and the reason for the objectives of the military occupation of the allied powers,” (Standish 2005 155).

As historian Hirano Kyoko argues, the CIE followed a “dual policy” on the one hand “encourage[ing] the development of democratic ideals associated with American ‘democracy’” while at the same time, “preventing the media from disseminating anything considered unsuitable or dangerous to the Occupation Government,” (Ibid). On September 22nd 1945, the CIE hosted a meeting with representatives from all major studios to communicate its directives and provide a list of “desirable subjects” for film productions that emphasized the re-establishment of a peaceful society under democratic government.

Later that year, on November 19th the CIE released a list of thirteen prohibited themes that would prevent a films release. These focused on militarism, revenge, chauvinism, suicide, nationalism and feudalism—all topics *Lady Snowblood* thematizes. The CIE saw a main obstacle in the democratization of Japan “an inherent conflict between Japanese Neo-Confucian concepts of loyalty and revenge on the one hand, and the Western derived concepts of the rule of law based on universal principles of good and bad,” (Standish 2005 157). The concepts of revenge and honor were particular issues for the U.S. Occupation forces. Commenting on the themes in Kabuki narratives the American forces said the following:

> “Kabuki theatre is based on feudalistic loyalty, and set faith in revenge. The present world does not accept this morality anymore. The Japanese will never be able to understand the principles of international society insofar as things such as fraud, murders, and betrayals are justified by the principle of revenge, regardless of the law. Western morality is based on

concepts of good and evil, not feudal loyalty. For Japan to participate in international society, the Japanese people must be made to understand the basic political ideals of law and democratic representative government, respect for the individual, respect for national sovereignty, and the spirit of self-government. The entertainment media and press should all be used to teach these ideals," (Standish 2005 157).

As Standish reveals, "the prohibition on the theme of 'revenge'… came to dominate the argument over the prohibition of *jidaigeiki* (period films), in particular the prohibition on sword-fight (*kengeki*) scenes," (ibid.) This background regarding prohibited topics under the Occupation authority sheds light onto how *Lady Snowblood* mobilizes these themes and nationalistic genres as subversive, anti-Western critique. In the film, the primacy of familial bonds and the quest for justice are inextricable from a denunciation of Western imperialism and criminality. Characters are either on the right or the wrong side of history—there is no in between. The murderous gang who destroy Yuki's family are closely associated with the tides of change and the West—first they are responsible for a draft dodging scam, and later, become entrenched in opium smuggling and the arms trade. Meanwhile, Yuki and her network of connections represent and honour customary national traditions, philosophies, and ways of living. As such, *Lady Snowblood* explicitly advances that fascism and imperialism are an import of modernity and the West, which the institution of the family and by extension, the nation, must repel through the reassertion of tradition.

Japanese Film Industrial History

A strong studio system with ties to organized labour had developed early in Japan. In this system's evolution throughout the decades of the 20th century, we can trace the how foundational nationalist genres such as the *jidaigeiki* and *chanbara* that *Lady Snowblood* thematizes were adapted to the new medium and varying sociopolitical contexts. The development of the system and alternating application and rejection of these genres was inseparable from the broader social,

political, and economic shifts occurring at the turn of the 20th century in the nation. In her book *A New History of Japanese Cinema,* Standish divides the development of the studio system into three phases that, "reflect the domination of particular interests between competing groups within the industry," (2005 34). Her periodization begins with the introduction of cinematic technology in the early 1900s, and culminates at the end of Allied occupation in 1952.

The institution of the benshi typifies the first phase Standish identifies, a narrator figure carried over from Japanese theatrical traditions such as the *shinpa* and *kabuki* theatrical modes into cinema. The *benshi* were stars in their own right, who often improvised storylines and were generally charismatic performers integral to the dominant pre-cinematic modes of Japanese entertainment. Their popularity, combined with the the strength of their union, led to the development of a star system in this early period with which the *benshi* both competed and coexisted. This early period saw the rise of star-centered production companies such as *Nikkatsu* in 1912, which specialized in *jidaigeki* (period dramas). The second phase of the studio system developed out of debates with regards to medium specificity centered on the figure of the *benshi* and Japanese cinema's relationship to global cinema. This period was referred to as the *jun'eigageki undo* (Pure Film Movement). Most generally, the movement aimed to revolutionize the production and exhibition practices of the Japanese film industry and, "to establish cinema as an artistic medium in its own right." From an economic point of view, the Pure Film Movement was an, "attempt to curb stars who were seen as being too powerful and therefore too expensive." (Standish 2005 34). This was targeted particularly at the *benshi*, who advocates of the Pure Film Movement saw as a relic of the past, preventing the legitimacy and exportation of Japanese cinema in the international sphere. As Joanne Bernardi describes in *Writing in Light: The Silent Scenario and the Japanese Pure Film Movement,* the movement:

"was a loosely defined discourse based movement comprised of diverse paths leading to a single destination… the realization of a culturally respectable film, endowed with both aesthetic legitimacy and contemporary realism, that theoretically would challenge a mainstream commercial product that had theatrical origins" (22).

Accordingly, this phase in the history of Japanese cinema saw the development of a distinction between "commercial" and "art" cinema that would later set the stage of the ATG (Art Theatre Guild) in the 1960s. From this time, roughly until 1920, "audiences were divided into the 'educated,' who patronized foreign films and spurned local productions," and "women and children, who respectively patronized films from the *shinpa*-melodrama and the *kyugeki/chanbara* (swordplay tradition)" (Standish 2005 65). This dichotomy amongst audiences was mirrored amongst filmmakers, who were similarly divided between those who were influenced by the editing innovations of Western filmmakers such as D.W. Griffith, and those "who were content to stay within the bounds of the existing studio system," (Ibid).

The final phase of the studio system's development began in the late 1920s, and resulted in the, "economic rationalization of the industry along Western contractual lines and the adoption of the 'Hollywood continuity system,'" (Standish 2005 34). This economic rationalization coincided with the rise of sound cinema—an innovation that required "large capital investment" and "encouraged trends towards the establishment of vertical integrated systems in an attempt to control not only production but also distribution," (Ibid). The establishment of the *Toho* Film company, *Lady Snowblood's* distributor, in 1937, and the "dictates of military-centered governments" both during and after the war further reinforced the institutionalization and industrialization of cinema (Standish 2005 34-35).

While the cinema in Japan was the main mode of entertainment and news throughout the 1930s and 1940s, the rise of television in the 1950s irrevocably altered the studio system. In the 1930s, "newsreel theatres specializing in newsreels, short animations and documentary films

flourished," and were produced by national newspapers such as *Asahi, Yomiuri* and *Mainichi*, as well as major film studios such as *Shochiku* (Furuhata 4). By the 1950s, these same newspaper companies had shifted their investment from cinema to television, as "television gradually replaced newsreel theatres as the principal channel of disseminating visual news," (Furuhata 5). Prior to this, "cinema had been the visual medium of actuality," however the "development of news shows on television, along with the postwar restructuring of the film industry with its emphasis on program pictures based on the star system significantly weakened cinema's association with actuality," (Ibid).

Beyond this, the rise of television as a method of entertainment available in the home led to the development of more sensational genres and productions to draw audiences back into the theatres (Standish 92). This led to the rise of the *pinku eiga* film genre in the early 1960s that remains a dominant feature in the popular cinema of Japan. For example, taking 2003 as a sample year, Jasper notes in his book *Behind the Pink Curtain: The Complete History of Japanese Sex Cinema*, "89 out of 287 domestically produced films that screened in Japanese cinema fell into this category, with a further 60 or so re-titled releases of older pink films," (9). Furthermore, in 2016, to mark the 45th anniversary of the genre, Japanese film studio *Nikkatsu* invited 5 contemporary Japanese directors (Hideo Nakata, Akihiko Shiota, Kazuya Shiraishi, Sion Sono and Isao Yukisada) to revive the studio's particular take on the *pinku film*, known as the *Roman Porno*.[23]

[23] As Jasper Sharp notes in his authoritative study on the subject *Behind the Pink Curtain: The Complete History of Japanese Sex Cinema*, "it is often claimed that the label ["Roman Porno"] is a contraction of the words 'Romantic Pornography.' A more convincing explanation is that it was derived from the French term *roman pornographique* or 'pornographic novel' used to describe erotic fictional works ranging from the writings of Marquis de Sade to Pauline Réage *The Story of O (L'histoire O,* 1954) and Anaïs *Nin's Delta of Venus* (1969). This association with the world of European literature, albeit its more carnal side, was intended to lend Nikkatsu's adult output a more highbrow cachet compared with its less reputable rivals in the *eroduction* world. Emulating the standards of the original productions, the directors of the Nikkatsu revival were given limited budgets and just one week to film their completely original 70-80 minute features.

Some scholars such as Sharp contend it is important to recall that *pinku eiga* " is often misused by foreign observers to include any film that features an abundance of sex or nudity, but in its stricter sense, the genre is defined by its means of [independent] production and distribution rather than content," (Sharp 12). However, authors of the book *Japanese Cinema Encyclopedia: The Sex Films (Pinku Eiga)*, Thomas Weisser and Yuko Mihara Weisser offer a more expansive definition of the *pinku eiga* that allows us to consider genre in waves and in different production contexts. Whether we consider its offshoots "true" *pinku eiga*, it is worth considering how the genre's emergence in the early 1960s influenced the development of major studios such as Nikkatsu, who in 1971 abandoned their focus on action films to introduce the *Roman Porno* series in an effort to boost sales. Weisser and Weisser consider the *Roman Porno as* the "second wave" of the *pinku eiga* which they date from 1971-1989. It was during this period that other studios such as Toei introduced their particular line of "sexploitation pictures, retroactively referred to as Pinky Violence," to which *Lady Snowblood* belongs (Sharp 12).

The social, political, and economic ramifications that led to the development of the *pinku eiga* also had a profound influence on the development of Avant-Garde Political filmmaking. This movement was borne of the New Left generation of Japanese student protesters, the "children of television' whose political actions are deeply conditioned by the ubiquitous presence of the news camera" (Furuhata 2). While *Lady Snowblood* does not align totally with this school of filmmaking, I argue it grows directly out of this movement, as its thematic engagement with the past, use of intermedia, and salient political critique, alongside its use of female protagonist and violence.

Post-Occupation Context

As outlined in the introduction, the aftermath of the Second World War saw Japan and West Germany united in experiences of defeat, unconditional surrender, and a complete loss of national sovereignty. Alongside these casualties, both nations suffered devastating blows to their self-image. The Occupation authorities installed in the nations immediately after the cessation of the Second World War guaranteed no political, economic, or social decisions could be made without direct their approval for the duration of the Allied tenure. Within this context, interpretations of the national past also became hotly contested terrain under strict foreign control (Dower 23). From its onset, the American occupation strategically imposed a vision of the war and national history in both Japan and West Germany endowed with the Supreme Authority of the Allied Command (Conrad 4).[24] They accomplished implemented this vision via the war crimes tribunals in Nuremberg and Tokyo; the installation of democratic social reforms; and censorship policies and interventions into the press, education, and entertainment industries. From the day of surrender forward in both nations, "the political and moral discrediting of the fascist and Nazi period was the basic unspoken assumption that structured every debate on the past," (Ibid). A central task for both nations was to find an articulation of national history that could equally contend with the past and propel the nation forward in the new bifurcated geopolitical landscape dominating the globe.

Accordingly, the immediate post-war Occupation agenda for Japan and West Germany concentrated on political re-education, demilitarization, and the establishment of democratic

[24] In immediate aftermath of war, General Macarthur, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers for the duration of the occupation of Japan, was regarded as a sort of "second emperor," and was subject to such adulation that Japanese paper *Jiji Shimpo* warned of the dangers of what they termed "hero worship". The English copy of this issue the publication was removed from circulation on the orders of General Charles Willoughby, head of the Civil Intelligence Section. The incident became known as the "hero worship incident". This event exemplified to many in the Japanese press the "inviolability of the nation's second emperor" as well as the "tightening of occupation controls on critical commentary that could be deemed 'leftist' ore even remotely critical of American policies," and ultimately, came to "symbolize for many the carefully programmed and controlled nature of the democratization agenda." (Dower 405-406).

governments (Schaller 1995). Yet by 1948 the rising tensions of the Cold War and the new American foreign policy of "containment" wrought a dramatic shift in occupation priorities. For example, the initial focus on "democratic re-education" which saw the implementation of democratic institutions such as trade unions, national constitutions, and women's suffrage was exchanged for a "pragmatic economic policy founded on anti-communism," (Conrad 86). In the context of the Cold War's volatile geopolitical alliances, the U.S. post-1948 aimed to mobilize Japan and West Germany as bulwarks against the spread of Soviet influence. To comply with this strategy, the nations were rapidly remilitarized and economically rejuvenated, while right-wing government officials and industrial figures implicated in the wartime regimes were politically recuperated so long as they would bend to the will of the West (Schaller 1995). At the same time, freedom of speech and the organization of labour were restricted as part of the "reverse course," beginning with the ban of the General Strike in Japan in 1947, and culminating in the Red Purges of 1949 (Conrad 86).

In 1951, a general amnesty was implemented on suspected war criminals filling public offices. Many former wartime bureaucrats were recuperated through the Liberal Democratic Party, a right-wing conservative party that stayed in power in Japan for over 40 years following the end of the war. Nobusuke Kishi, whose shocking post-war reversal from war-criminal to prime minister I discussed in the introduction, was at the forefront of this party. Under the party, the Ministry of Finance worked with the central bank, the Bank of Japan, to control interests rates and the quantity of credit. The bank of Japan provided quarterly instructions on the distribution of loans, broken down in sectors, thus allowing the bank to dictate to whom and for what loans could be issued. This is a financial process called 'window guidance'. Under this financial regime, the war economy system was adapted for the production of consumer goods.

The program was enormously successful in raising quality of life for Japanese citizens and the GDP. In 1959 the economy grew by 17%. The Japanese economy soon was second only to the American economy. Although the nation saw a period of great success with this strategy there would later be devastating financial consequences for the nation in the 1990s (Oswald, *Princes of Yen*).

Despite the economic miracle in Japan, there was widespread opposition to the Mutual Security Treaty with the United States. Protests erupted on the day of its ratification May 1st 1952, which would later be referred to as "Bloody May Day," due to the number of injuries sustained by both protestors and police during the event (Dower 555). By the 1960s, the *Anpo* Struggle had become a broad based movement that brought Japan to the brink of revolution. This experience set the stage for the climate of protest that would dominate the late 1960s and 1970s.

Indeed, as Oguma Eiji demonstrates in his article, "Japan's 1968: A Collective Reaction to Rapid Economic Growth in an Age of Turmoil," it was out of the *Anpo* Struggle that the 1968 *Zenkyōtō* (short for zengaku kyōtō kaigi; "All-Campus Joint Struggle Councils") movement emerged. *Zenkyōtō* was a student movement in 1968 and 1969 which saw the occupation of university and high school campuses by students. It began as a movement open to any ideological affiliation which aimed to reform and improve conditions for students on university campuses. However, as the fervor spread, "New Left groups tried to re-construe these local protest groups as part of a nationwide movement with political broader political goals such as opposing the Vietnam War, the US Japan Security Treaty and the conservative government, or fomenting a Marxist revolution," (Oguma 3).

The rapid economic growth that Japan underwent in the 1960s did much to alleviate poverty and therefore, "muted the appeal of Marxism" as did news of the brutal suppression of

the 1956 Hungarian Uprising (Oguma 2). As such, the increasing radicalism of the movement alongside the government's installation of emergency legislation known as the "University Management Law" which granted the police significantly higher authority to, "crack down on campus disturbances" led many students to drop out of the movement. The fervor had waned by 1969. Accordingly, by the 1970s a new period of citizen protest had emerged in Japan, one that was increasingly radicalized and saw less popular support as conditions for the average Japanese citizen improved.

Lady Snowblood **as Pink Film**

In Japan as in West Germany, the ongoing legacy of the fascist period, and a new age of nationalism and imperialism defined by the military-industrial complex became a rallying cry for a generation of youth, artists and activists coming of age in the post-war period. In Japan, this generation, "born around 1930, their youth dominated by the final stages of the war, the deprivations of defeat and the US-led occupation," was often referred to as the generation of burnt-out ruins (*yakeatoha)* (Standish 2011 1). Concerns about the rise of consumer capitalism, American cultural and political hegemony, re-armament, and freedom of thought led individuals on the extreme right and left to engage in highly public, mediatized and often violent protests and acts of resistance in response throughout the ensuing decades. The *Anpo* Struggle surrounding the terms of the Japanese-US security treaty; the *Zenkyoto* student protest movement; the ritual suicide of right wing novelist Yukio Mishima; and the URA (United Red Army) hostage crisis known as the *Asama Sansō* Incident, are just a few prominent examples of the highly public oppositional actions that Japanese citizens on the right and left engaged in throughout the first two decades of the post-war period.

Film scholar Yuriko Furuhata's book, *Cinema of Actuality: Japanese Avant-Garde*

Political filmmaking in the Season of Image Politics, argues that the rise of cinema's political engagement with journalism in the 1960s should be "read against the historical situation of the 1960s, a decade marked by a seemingly endless series of televised assassinations, hijackings, hostage crises, and mass street protests," (5). She notes that in this period that cinema as an apparatus of spectacle, "became a testing ground for the reflexive critique of the media spectacle precisely at this moment in Japan," and traces the development of this tendency through key filmmakers of the period such as Wakamatsu Koji, Oshima Nagisa and Adachi Masao (Ibid). Furuhata's book reveals how the political films of 1960s pervasively mixed fiction and non-fiction, "appropriate[ing] topical journalistic materials or well known media events," (55). [25]

As Furuhata notes, "student revolutionaries were children of the television age who learned to stage their political dissent for the camera," accordingly the period was typified by, "the deepening imbrication of politics and media [which suggested] that the image itself was becoming the very locus of political struggle," (7). While protestors on the right and left learned tactics to spectacularize their struggle for the news cameras, documentarians such as Ogawa Shinsuke and Tsuchimoto Noriaki directly "responded to the demands by student activists and workers to document and support their protest movements," (Furuhata 121).[26] Narrative filmmakers such as Koji Wakamatsu, Masao Adachi, and Nagisa Oshima similarly began incorporating documentary elements surrounding the efforts of students and left-wing protestors into their films. This, coupled with the increasing domination of the television as a mode of

[25] *Lady Snowblood's* director, Toshiya Fujita, also made a documentary during this period, *Document: Nippon Zero Nen* (1968) with assistant director Kazuo Kawabe. The obscure film was produced by Nikkatsu, who Fujita began working for in 1955, and "intertwines three elements: a splintering and radicalizing student uprising, a mobile youth counterculture, and the training of a new recruit in Japan's Self Defense Force," (Hall, http://www.yidff.jp/docbox/20/box20-4-e.html). Hall dubs the film "one of the period's most powerful, albeit questionable, documentaries," due to its combination of documentary elements such as interviews with a student activist who is son of an atomic blast survivor, as well as scripted, dramatized scenes.

[26] Furuhata notes that "student protestors allegedly chose the colors of their ubiquitous construction helmets (worn during protests) based on how they would look on color television" (2).

entertainment, led filmmakers to link topical political themes and documentary elements with sensationalized and often excessively sexualized themes and elements so as to excite and entice audiences back into theatres.

Films such as Wakamatsu's *Sex Jack (Seizoku,* 1970) fused politics with sex, featuring documentary footage of and plots focalizing student protests and revolutionaries, but also rapes and orgies. *Sex Jack* centered on the Yodogo airplane-hijacking incident, in which a group of ultra-left communists defected to North Korea on March 31 1970 (Furuhata 96). The film was shot in June 1970, during the second phase of *Anpo* struggle, a protest movement surrounding the terms of the renewal of the US-Japanese peace treaty.[27] Wakamatsu incorporated documentary footage of the student protestors marching on the day of the treaty's renewal into the fictional film, which focalizes the boredom of the student protestors who while in hiding, repeatedly rape with the same woman.

Following feminist film scholar Saitō Ayako, Furuhata points out that in the films of Wakamatsu, the recurrent images of violated women render the woman's body, "a blank canvas on which to paint vivid pictures of social contradictions." As such, "the women thus occupy the position of the passive object, an inert surface for masculine inscription," (98). Like Wakamatsu's films, *Lady Snowblood* is an example of cinema that fuses sex appeal and politics, embodying its rendering of national history via the figure of the female protagonist. However, is important to note that unlike in many of the more strictly defined *pinku eiga* of the period, in *Lady Snowblood*, violence against women is neither valorized nor sexualized. Instead, it is used as an allegory to indict and condemn Western style imperialism and militarism.

The film in general features no gratuitous nudity, or even scantily clad women, albeit one

[27] The first phase of this struggle happened in May and June of 1960 when, "hundreds of thousands of Japanese across the country took to the streets to protest the revised U.S.-Japanese security treaty," (1 Sasaki-Uemura)

oddly unmotivated scene in which the child Yuki during training sheds her kimono.[28] This is in stark contrast to the original source text manga, which first appeared in *Shueisha* magazine's series *Weekly Playboy*. The manga features a naked Lady Snowblood on nearly every other page. Weisser's book *The Sex Films: Japanese Cinema Encyclopaedia*, discusses how Fujita was able to limit the sexual gratuitousness and nudity of the production so as to make the film more accessible to mainstream audiences (425). That said, the film is typified by a central stylistic excess that is conveyed through its highly stylized cinematography; gorgeous seaside locations; intricate and historically accurate mise-en-scene; exaggerated sound effects; as well as its largely anachronistic soundtrack, which features Kaji herself crooning alongside 60s pop melodies, as well as up-tempo acid jazz. Furthermore, as female-centered action film, *Lady Snowblood* heavily relies on the spectacle of the protagonist Meiko Kaji, by then a well known singer and film star in *pinku eiga* films such as the *Female Convict 701: Scorpion* series for its appeal. Richard Dyer defines the "star image" in his book, *Stars*, as an amalgam composed "of media texts that can be grouped together as *promotion, publicity, films*, and *criticism*" (60). I contend that Kaji's star image, endowed with the specter of her former roles and her musical career, combined with the excessive blood and violence functions to add excitement and intrigue to the film's didactic historical plot. Kaji herself discusses how she was "pigeon-holed" into playing strong female protagonists by the dictates of the studio system. She notes that in the vertically integrated Japanese studio system, "it was a company policy to make an actress into her own image… I was a well received outlaw character, and that's why I appeared again and again in that type," (Desjardins 66). She continues, "I had the image of being a strong woman with both the movie industry and the audiences. And once you have that image, and the *look* that goes with

[28] The scene ends with Yuki licking the blood from a wound she has sustained in her training with Dokai, and accordingly I would argue this nudity is less intended to sexualize the child and more to demonstrate her animality.

it, it is very difficult to get away from it… I still have that image in people's minds, even now [October 1997, when the interview took place]" (Desjardins 67-68).

In *Lady Snowblood,* the violence against women the film focalizes is not the locus of the titillation. Rather, it is the fury and mastery with which Yuki wields her umbrella sword to exact sweet bloody revenge that engages and arouses the audience. Rather than naked female forms, the corporeal spectacle of the film is the glorious destruction of masculine bodies, which erupt like bloody volcanoes at the lightest touch of Yuki's sword (Figure 2). The film is rife with stunning displays of Yuki's body performing unimaginable feats. There is an entire sequence devoted to her training as a child of 8 , in which we see her roll down a steep hill in only a barrel, emerging unscathed; performing arduous physical labor in the fields; and battling a full grown samurai master who is double her height (Figure 3). Later, an adult Yuki stuns the audience not only with her gorgeous kimonos and "face as pretty as a flower," but with her remarkable dexterity with her sword. Throughout the film Yuki is the center of the image—she drives action, and she appears in almost every scene. She is consistently pictured in the outdoors, almost as if she is a part of the national landscape (Figure 4). At every opportunity she is pictured performing advanced acrobatics as she wields her umbrella sword to ward off swarms of countless enemies; denying gravity as she flies through the air; and gracefully exacting the righteous vengeance she so deserves (Figure 5). Throughout her ordeals, Yuki barely speaks—the camera instead dwells upon her expressive face that betrays her deep-seated emotions (Figure 6).

Indeed, the locus of excess in the film comes as a marked departure not only from other *pinku eiga*, but the original source text from which the story arises. For example, in one scene in episode two from the original comic, "Stylish Woman and Umbrella Over Rain of Blood," there is a lesbian sex scene. In the chapter, two nude women perform sexual acts on one another while

displayed on a podium before a male audience in the gambling house where Yuki seeks out the first target on her kill list, Takemura Banzo. However, in the corresponding chapter in the film, there is no such scene. The only female-female contact is a brief discussion between Yuki and Banzo's daughter, Kobue.

In fact, women's' networks of friendship, knowledge and political solidarity are foregrounded throughout the film. While the matriarchal connection between Yuki and her mother Sayo form the central thrust of the film's narrative, and allegorize the Neo-Confucian philosophy, it is the relationships between women in the film that sustain, enable, and propel Yuki through her life and quest for revenge. In an early scene, we witness Sayo give birth to Yuki with the help of a crowd of female prisoners (Figure 7). After her mother's death, a fellow female prisoner, Otora Mikazuki becomes Yuki's caregiver, and upon her release takes her to train with the priest, Dokai. Later, in Tokyo, Yuki stays with another female connection who helps her seek out her remaining enemies. What's more, we see moments of friendship and solidarity between Yuki and Kobue when they discuss Kobue's bamboo wives. In this scene, Kobue gives Yuki a *kanzashi* (hair ornament) she has made. Later, Yuki invites Kobue to Tokyo prior to killing her father. Kobue ultimately seeks her revenge on Yuki and attempts to murder her in the film's final scene. However, as Alicia Kozma notes in an article on pinky violence films, (a derivative form of the *pinku eiga* to which Lady Snowblood belongs) in the genre, "female-on-female violence is ritualistic and is used to maintain the group's structure. It can be used to transition leadership, unite disparate groups or to punish an offense," (42). Accordingly, this violence fits with the film's Neo-Confucian worldview in which filial piety and revenge take center stage. It is implicitly understood by the audience that Yuki understands and even enables Kobue's vengeance by inviting her to Tokyo (Figure 8).

Return to the Past: Film Summary and Meiji History

The Meiji era was a time of massive upheaval and reorganization in all facets of Japanese society. It was during this period that Japan was thrust onto the international stage through the forced signing of what would become known as the "Unequal Treaties" with Western powers. The first of these treaties, The Kanagawa Treaty of 1854, signed between Japan and the United States, was concluded under threat of force. It imposed a "semi-colonial status upon Japan," rendering the nation "politically and economically…subordinate to foreign governments,"(Gordon 50). The Kanagawa Treaty's terms weighed heavily in favor of the United States, and were later extended to European powers of Russia, France, England, and the Netherlands. Historian Andrew Gordon argues it was this "humiliating" encounter with the West that set the stage for the rise of Japanese nationalism (and later fascism), and the conception of a unified Japan—a process explored in *Lady Snowblood* and its sequel *Lady Snowblood: Love Song of Vengeance*.

Lady Snowblood's plot pivots on a real historical event referred diegetically to as the "Blood Tax Riots of 1873". These were a series of 16 riots that occurred between 1873-1874 in response to Japan's first draft ordinance issued by the Grand Council of State. As the narrator of *Lady Snowblood's* tells it, the draft reflected Japan's desire to "build a rich country and strong army," and create "a modern nation to rival Europe and America." The socioeconomic and political restructuring that defined the Meiji era, and which *Lady Snowblood* depicts, began with the abolishment of the *daimyō*, a political establishment in Japan for over 260 years.

The *daimyō* were a class of feudal lords whose authority was second only to the *Shogun* during the Tokugawa *shogunate* (1603-1867). After toppling the Tokugawa *bakufu* in what was known as the "restoration coup", the Meiji government negotiated with the most powerful of the

daimyō, persuading them to voluntarily return their lands to the Emperor in exchange for positions as "domain governors" with healthy salaries. This act of returning land had two functions: it allowed the government to consolidate power through the physical control of territory, and ideologically, it "establish[ed] the principle that all lands and people were subject to the Emperor's rule." Soon after the *daimyō* surrendered their lands, the government further consolidated landholdings by eliminating the 280 existing domains alongside the *daimyōs* last vestiges of authority, in favor of a more manageable 72 "prefectures" which the central government taxed and governed directly (Gordon 63). This move also greatly impacted the samurai, who the *daimyō* traditionally hired to guard their land. As Gordon summarizes:

> "by 1876, less than a decade after the restoration coup, the economic privileges of the samurai were wiped out entirely. The coup leaders expropriated an entire social class, the semi-aristocratic elite from which they came. They met some stiff, violent resistance, but they managed to overcome it. This remarkable change amounted to a social revolution," (66).

The samurai fought to preserve their prominence in the military, however within the conservative leadership, the influence of Yamagata Aritomo, who had spent much time in Europe, eventually prevailed and a policy of universal conscription was announced in 1873. All males age 20 were required to serve 3 years of active duty and remain on reserve for 4 years subsequently. However, as *Lady Snowblood* retells with startling accuracy, the 1873 Draft Ordinance had several exceptions, exempting for example, "house- hold heads, criminals, the physically unfit, students and teachers in many prescribed schools, and government officials." The ordinance, "also allowed people to buy their way out for a huge fee of 270 yen," an enormous sum which, "represented more than the annual wage of a common laborer." Accordingly, "large numbers of people sought to qualify for exemption or somehow scrape together the buyout fee. The army had trouble meeting the quotas for what the government itself

labeled a “blood tax” (following European terminology). This led to the destruction of numerous registration centers in a series of riots, which saw nearly 100,000 people arrested and punished (Gordon 66-67).

In *Lady Snowblood,* it is the chaos wrought by this bourgeois revolution and economic restructuring surrounding the draft that constitutes the central conflict of the film. The film itself is organized in a non-linear narrative across several decades. In a flashback sequence, we watch as a gang of enterprising criminals—Kitahama Okono, Takemura Banzō, Shokei Tokuichi, and Tsukamoto Gishirō -- scam an entire village out of thousands of yen by promising those who pay them a fee will avoid the draft. In order to escape blame, they scapegoat Sayo’s (Yuki’s mother) husband, who is to serve as the new schoolmaster in the village. The gang tells the villagers that the newcomer’s all white outfit indicates he is a government official come to enforce the draft. They brutally murder him and his son in front of Sayo, before taking turns raping her. This rape scene is in no way sexualized. We see the men take turns as Kitaham laughs maniacally in the background. The sound fades out as we hear only the grains of rice spilling out of a bag that has been cut in the scramble, and the rhythmic thumping of the water wheel. This use of sound is significant, as it precludes any interpretation of Sayo’s audible and visible pain as sexual gratification. While close-ups of her face convey her suffering, the audience is forced to experience the rape scene in a contemplative, ambient silence (Figure 9). One of the gangsters, Tokuichi, falls for Sayo and takes her with him to work in his restaurant. After performing her female masquerade and gaining his trust, she later stabs him to death while they are having sex. Sayo is imprisoned for the murder. Once inside, she furiously copulates with any man she can find. Despite the easy opportunity for a gratuitous sex sequence, this scene is actually quite humorous and almost campy. For example, in one of the shots in the quick-fire

montage, Sayo is seen having sex with a priest while he clasps his holy beads and prays. Sayo later explains to her fellow female prisoners that she engaged in so much sex to ensure she was impregnated with a child who could carry out her dying wish and seek vengeance upon the remaining criminals who murdered her husband and son.

Years later, the fully grown Yuki sets out to locate the gang responsible for the loss of her family. She accomplishes this by enlisting the help of a village elder, Matsuemon. She earns Matsuemon's respect after murdering a yakuza boss named Shibayama who threatened the existence of Matsuemon's village as we witness in the film's spectacular sequence in which she is first introduced (Figure 10). In this scene, Yuki walks along a snowy urban landscape. She is clad in a stylish white and yellow butterfly motif kimono, and adorned with a pale purple umbrella that disguises her sword as effectively as her femininity serves to disguise her skill. A rickshaw rounds the corner and Yuki suddenly finds herself under attack by a group of men who are directed to, "kill the bitch" by Shibayama. Yuki effortlessly cartwheels through the air in a slow motion medium shot, landing gracefully on her sandaled feet as she swiftly pulls out her sword and strikes down 6 men in no more than 60 seconds. With all of his henchmen on the ground, their limbs spewing blood every which way, Shibayama, looks up to the camera, which is aligned with Yuki's perspective peering down at the man. He asks her simply, "why?" In one word Yuki articulates the central personal and political philosophy of the film when she replies starkly, "revenge."

Yuki travels to Matsuemon's village seeking help to find her enemies. With the help of his help, she set travels to a seaside village to locate the first target on her death-list, Takemura Banzo. Their battle is played out largely in wide shots that accentuate the backdrop of the roaring ocean surrounded by treacherous cliffs. In this sequence, the film invites us to equate Yuki's

almost preternatural power with the majesty of the landscape-- both are in full display as she strikes down Banzo. Yuki's embodiment of the landscape is evoked through her vertically striped navy blue kimono, which visually integrates her into the sea and sky. In the background, a rocky island stands tall on the horizon, mirroring Yuki's imposing figure as she stands above Banzo. In this scene as throughout the film, Yuki personifies the iconic national landscapes and philosophical traditions that the film romanticizes in its political critique of the West. The villain Yuki destroys, Banzo, is a pathetic, greedy, alcoholic, whose expensive gambling and drinking habit has forced his daughter into prostitution. Banzo is unaware of his daughter's profession until her pimps inform him, mocking his self-centered ignorance of his own daughter's whereabouts. While Yuki throughout the film is the incarnate of traditional Neo-Confucian values such as filial piety, Banzo and the other members of the gang who murder and rape Yuki's family stand in for the perverted, corrupt West. Banzo's immorality is manifest at a bodily level—he is constantly shivering, sweating, and hunched over close to the ground (Figure 11). In the climatic moments before his death, Banzo kneels and begs for his life. Flagrantly defying the dictates of the samurai bushido code, he foregoes all honor and is willing to plead for forgiveness, quite literally on his knees. Yuki takes no pity on the man and wipes him out with one fell swoop of her sword. As the scene concludes, the aquamarine waves are stained red as they wash over Banzo's corpse (Figure 12).

Yuki travels to Tokyo, and shortly after arriving, she discovers that her enemy Tsukamoto Gishirō has already passed away. Enraged, she whips out her sword and slashes the flowers that adorn his grave. A leftist journalist for the paper "The People's Courier", Ryūrei Ashio, witnesses Yuki's outburst and begins to investigate. He trails and confronts her, but she refuses to disclose her story. Undeterred, Ashio continues his investigation and eventually seeks

out Dōkai, the priest who trained Yuki. He reveals her tragic story. Ashio publishes the tale, which is retold in the film using actual frames lifted from the original *Lady Snowblood* manga. When Yuki discovers she has been betrayed, she admonishes Dōkai, who explains his motivation was to lure out her last living enemy, Kitahama Okono. Dōkai says that Ashio is, "a good writer full of hatred for the powers that be," linking the grassroots media Ashio represents to the "truth." This linkage between grassroots leftist media and 'actuality' or 'truth' is reminiscent of the avant-garde political cinema of the 1950s and 1960s that fused documentary footage and fictionalized stories that dominated Japan's art cinema scene as explored in Yuriko Furuhata's book *The Cinema of Actuality*.

Kitihama takes the bait and kidnaps Ashio to lure Yuki to her. Ashio is being tortured at Kitihama's gang headquarters when Yuki arrives. After an epic showdown in which Yuki infiltrates the compound with super-human ability, literally sailing through the air across the buildings, and masterfully wards off swarms of Kitihama's henchmen, Kitihama disappears in the chaos wrought by a sand bomb. Yuki searches the building frantically, only to find Kitihama hanging from a rafter, dead. After a tense moment of contemplation, Yuki, enraged and bitterly disappointed, slices the Kitihama's hanging corpse perfectly in half (Figure 13).

Back at Ashio's apartment, Tsukamoto Gishirō arrives with a gang of thugs. He confronts Ashio about the Lady Snowblood story. In this scene, we learn the Tsukamoto is Ashio's father, and that he faked his own death in a shipwreck to America. He did this to escape the police who were after him for smuggling opium. Tsukamoto gives Ashio a lecture about his newspaper, and the current state of the nation. He delivers a monologue about how he is "playing a role in expanding the empire," through his involvement Japan's arm trade, noting that, "Japan is about to plunge into war. You hear the slogans: 'Rich Country, strong army,' 'Grow the Military.'"

Describing Japan's imperial ambitions abroad, Tsukamoto mocks the greed and self-indulgence of the government located at the Rokumeikan, which he describes as "a symbol of Meiji Era Westernization and European Thought." Indeed, the Rokumeikan was a building designed by prominent Western architect Josiah Conder in the "French Renaissance Style" and was commissioned specifically for the housing of elite foreign guests. The Rokumeikan was known for hosting lavish parties and elaborate meals. As Donald Keene asserts, the building functioned as, "a stage on which Japanese might display to foreigners that, having turned their backs on the antiquated ways of the past, they had become masters of European table manners and the decorum of the ballroom," (392). Tsukamoto continues his diatribe stating:

> "I spend most of my days at the Rokumeikan, where supposedly proposals are advanced to revise our unequal treaties with the West…What really goes on there is nothing but nightly parties for the elite, who indulge their desires and lust for pleasure. But all around them society is changing, and I intend to ride the waves of change, seizing ever more money and power. "Justice," "conscience," and "rebellion," are all well and good, but in the end they're just words here in this filthy hole. Forget your newspapers."

After he leaves, Yuki passes him in a rickshaw on the street. Ashio confesses his filial connection to Tsukamoto to Yuki, as well as the fact that Gishiro is responsible for Kitihama's apparent suicide. He tells her he can no longer write "Lady Snowblood", and as Yuki gazes at him in disbelief, alternating close-ups of her eyes and Ashio's are juxtaposed with rapid cuts to flashbacks of the events which have brought her to this moment: her mother's eyes in the moments after witnessing her husband's murder; the heat leaving her mother's corpse in prison; blood pouring from Kitihama's torso swaying from the rafters; slashing the flowers at Tsukamoto's grave; blood soaked waves crashing over the body of Takemura Banzo.

In the next and penultimate sequence, titled "Chapter 4: The Pleasure Palace, Final Scene of Carnage," Yuki arrives at the Rokumeikan for a Charity Masquerade in a horse drawn carriage driven by Ashio. The interior starkly contrasts with the architecture that has populated the film

up until this point. She is dressed in the butterfly kimono in stark contrast to the rest of the guests, a combination of Europeans and Japanese people, all of whom are adorned in Western clothing while they waltz to classical European standards. The palace itself is rife with symbols of Western influence, from its architecture, to the chandeliers, to the streamers adorned with various national flags that are strung throughout the regal ballroom. It is fitting that the final showdown should occur in this space, with Yuki adorned in traditional Japanese garments facing off against her Western-influenced enemies. After a dramatic battle sequence featuring a decoy Tsukamoto, Yuki gets her revenge against her final living enemy—but not without sacrificing Ashio first. In order to exact her vengeance, she is forced to sacrifice her potential love interest, as Tsukamoto shields his body with his son's. Yuki hesitates but ultimately has no choice but to stab Tsukamoto and Ashio both in order to fulfill her mother's dying wish for vengeance (Figure 14).

In terms of the film's Neo-Confucian politics and ideological stance, this scene is significant for several reasons. First, we see that Ashio is willing to oppose filial obligation to a corrupt parent so as to maintain a sense of moral righteousness. Yet the family/nation is still given prominence over the individual, as we see Yuki sacrifice her potential romantic partner to avenge her mother. As Tsukamoto falls over the balcony, at long last slain, he is foregrounded against a backdrop of American and Japanese flags hanging side by side. As he tumbles over the balcony and falls towards the dance floor below, Tsukamoto pulls down the now blood splattered Japanese flag, while the American flag stays in place. The flag itself is an emblem of Westernization in Japan, and the fact that it is desecrated and dismantled during Yuki's quest for vengeance can be read as a powerful denunciation of Western-influenced nationalism and imperialism.

As I have revealed, *Lady Snowblood's* plot structures the film's critical ideological stance, which directly ties greed and the rise of profiteering to the disruption of not only familial harmony, but national harmony as well. The socioeconomic and political context in which the film emerged, just two years after the renewal of the highly contentious Japanese-U.S. Security Treaty, and after a several decades long battle with Japanese film censors both pre-and-post-war, renders the film's diegetic action highly apposite and political. *Lady Snowblood* presents a Manichean universe in which what is morally "good" and "right" for the family is also good and right for the nation, and vice versa—what causes the family harm correspondingly harms the nation at large.

Chapter 3

Papa ist nie Tot: Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Martha* (1974) and the Perpetual Return of the Vater(land)

"The work of the Bismarck era has been destroyed by our own guilt, and across its ruins we must find our path back to the time of Goethe."

- *Friedrich Meinecke*[29]

"Deep down in its core, National Socialism was in no way an original German growth."

- *Gerhard Ritter*[30]

"What, then, was it that prepared the ground for directors to cut a passage through this 'amnesia' to Nazism and German history as a film subject? One answer, when looking at the films, is that the New German Cinema discovered the past when the filmmakers turned to the home and found fascism around the dinner table..."

- *Thomas Elsaesser*[31]

"Like no other word, 'Heimat' encompasses kitsch sentimentality, false consciousness, and genuine emotional needs."

- *Anton Kaes*[32]

In the previous chapter, I argued that Toshiya Fujita's 1973 film *Lady Snowblood (Shurayukihime)* contributed to emergent discourses on national culture and history by investigating the roots of contemporaneous issues such as Western hegemony, imperialism, capitalism and the military-industrial complex in events 100 years in the past. In that chapter, I argued the film's narrative action, stylistic excess, use of longstanding nationalistic themes, and industrial and aesthetic legacy rendered *Lady Snowblood* a unique cinematic event that crystallized many of the sociopolitical tensions permeating Japanese society in the early 1970s. My chapter elucidated that Fujita's film operates within a Neo-Confucian worldview that ties the fate of the family to that of the nation. Through its reading of national history, and emphasis on traditional Japanese aesthetics and philosophies, the film constructs and portrays a particular type of Japanese national identity based around the dictates of the Neo-Confucian samurai *bushido*

[29] Quoted in Sebastian Conrad's *The Quest for the Lost Nation: Writing History in Germany and Japan in the American Century* page 91.
[30] Quoted in Sebastian Conrad's *The Quest for the Lost Nation: Writing History in Germany and Japan in the American Century* page 94.
[31] Quoted in Thomas Elsaesser's *Fassbinder's Germany: History, Identity, Subject* page 133.
[32] Quoted in Anton Kaes' *From Hitler to Heimat*, page 166.

code. My chapter contextualized *Lady Snowblood*'s model of fascism as Meiji-era import among contemporaneous views on history advanced by historian associations such as the Marxist *Rekishigaku Kenkyūkai,* as well as conservative Nationalist historians such as *Tsuda Sōkichi* (1873-1961) in the decades following the Second World War (Conrad 87).

This chapter provides a comparative analysis of *Lady Snowblood* with Rainer Werner Fassbinder's 1974 made for television film, *Martha.*[33] I selected *Lady Snowblood* and *Martha* for comparison based on their temporal proximity; their embodiment of national history in a female protagonist and the exploration of the origins of fascism through this protagonist's relation to her family and nation; their stylistic, performative, and generic excess; and most significantly, the profound resonances across the historical contexts of the nations from which they emerge. My goal in putting these two films into dialogue is to consider the state of "the contact zone" across West Germany and Japan in the 1970s, and how filmmakers working in this context mobilized genre, nostalgia, stylistic excess, and women protagonists to interrogate the history and culture of their regions.

My thesis ultimately asks how *Lady Snowblood* and *Martha* represent national history and culture in relation to the dominant frameworks through which the origins of fascism were understood in the historical profession in their respective nations throughout the post-war period. Whereas I have demonstrated that *Lady Snowblood* posits that fascism was a foreign import, this chapter argues that *Martha* pictures fascism as a fundamentally domestic affair. This was a particularly salient argument to be making in the context of the Baader-Meinhoff gang terrorism

[33] The film was made for TV due to funding structures in West Germany in the post-war period. Although the film was premiered on television, Fassbinder said in 1975, "[*Martha* is] not a TV film. It was financed and produced by TV, but it can be shown in theatres. It was made as though it were to be shown in theaters, even thought it was only going to be shown on TV,'("A New Realism" 1975:17)" (Prager 93). Fassbinder ended up being right, although the copyright issues discussed in another footnote below initially led to the film remaining undistributed for 23 years before earning its first international theatrical release in 1994 (Prager 92).

that rocked the West German nation throughout the decade. Like Fassbinder and other practitioners of the New German cinema, West German youth and students coming of age after the war refused to accept a utopian return to the past that refused to acknowledge the profound failures of denazification in the present, and corresponding dangers inherent in the nation's future.

Sadomasochism and Gas-lighting as Historical Allegory

Martha is a melodrama that follows the courtship and marriage of a couple residing in the idyllic West German lakeside town of Konstanz in the early 1970s. After the death of her overbearing father on a shared vacation in Rome, the titular character Martha (Margit Carstensen) meets and marries Helmut Salomon (Karlheinz Böhm).[34] Helmut is an abusive, fascistic and wealthy civil engineer who wastes no time manipulating Martha's reality and brutally commandeering her life. The film takes us through a series of vignettes in which we witness Helmut seize control over and rapidly dominate every aspect of Martha's being. He quits her job on her behalf with neither her knowledge nor her consent; he forces her to move from her childhood home without forewarning; he chastises and dictates her taste in music and literature; and he limits her contact with the outside world, eventually cutting off her telephone access and requesting that she never leave the house. Helmut derives his power from Martha's longing for his approval, which as Fassbinder expertly depicts, is a product of and inseparable from the

[34] Margit Carstensen (1940-) was a long time friend and collaborator of Fassbinder's, first becoming acquainted with him through their theatre work in Bremen in the late 1960s. Carstensen appeared and starred in many of the director's most famous films such as *The Bitter Tears of Petra Von Kant* (1972). She was an integral part of Fassbinder's West German 'star system'. Karlheinz Böhm (1928-2014) was new to the Fassbinder universe when he appeared in *Martha*, the first of four Fassbinder features in he would appear: *Effi Briest* (1974); *Fox and his Friends* (1976); and *Mother Kuster's Trip to Heaven* (1975) being the others. It seems certain that Fassbinder selected Böhm for the role of Helmut based on his legacy of appearing as authoritative German cultural icons such as Jakob Grimm and Ludwig Van Beethoven in the Disney films *The Wonderful World of the Brothers Grimm* and *The Magnificent Rebel* (both released in 1962); sadistic criminals such as the serial killer in Michael Powell's now classic *Peeping Tom* (1960); and in 1962, as a high-ranking SS officer in MGM's *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1962) directed by Vincent Minnelli.

terror he strikes in her. Martha eventually comes to the conclusion that she is in mortal peril and attempts to save herself, but in so doing, tragically seals her fate. She is injured in a car crash sustained in her attempt to leave Helmut, whom she believes is trying to kill her. In the film's final sequence, we learn that the crash has left Martha paralyzed from the waist down, and thus that she will be in Helmut's care for the rest of her life.

I argue the film, which is most commonly discussed as a text about sadomasochism, is at the same time a powerful treatise on the concept of gas lighting. 'Gas lighting' is a term that describes a power dynamic in abusive relationships in which one person, using psychological harassment, emotional, and often physical abuse, causes another person to question their own memories, experience of reality and eventually, their sanity.[35] They accomplish this by using their authority to deny and punishing the other person for their subjective interpretation of reality. Throughout the film we witness how Helmut gaslights Martha to gain control over her psyche and mold her into the perfect doting wife. For example, while on their honeymoon in Italy, Helmut tells Martha his favorite dish is pig's kidney in burgundy sauce. Martha is delighted at the coincidence as she tells him he shares the same favorite dish as her father. Much later in the film, Martha excitedly prepares the meal for Helmut to celebrate his arrival home from a business trip. When he sits down to the dinner, he shakes his head with disappointment. Confused, she asks what is wrong. He tells her he is allergic to offal (entrails) and always has been. She protests that he told her this is his favorite dish, but he maintains his claim. He gently tells her she is likely just getting confused, and asks if her father liked the dish. At his suggestion she is visibly relieved, breaking into a wide smile and relaxing her posture. She agrees that she must have been confused (Figure 14).

[35] The term "gas-lighting" owes its popularity to a 1944 filmic adaptation of Patrick Hamilton's 1938 play of the same name *Gas Light.* In the play and film, the main character, Jack Manningham, manipulates his wife Bella by gradually dimming the lights in their home and on the street. He refuses to acknowledge this until she goes insane.

This scene perfectly encapsulates how gas-lighting works. Martha has a memory of an event. Helmut, who also has a claim on that memory, denies and contradicts her recollection. This causes Martha emotional distress, as what she thought was true turns out to be precisely the opposite- her husband's favorite dish turns out to be something he is allergic to. This experience thus leads her to distrust her own memory and perception. Her self-doubt allows Helmut greater control of her, as he not only is able to offer her emotional relief, in this scene by offering a plausible reason for her confusion, he is also able to later deny her interpretations of his behavior as abusive. In this chapter, I contend that Fassbinder mobilizes and deliberately confuses sadomasochism and gas lighting in *Martha* to allegorize the rise of fascism in his nation, illustrating how the interpersonal dynamics endemic to the and broader social structures of the German bourgeoisie presented fertile ground in which fascism could thrive.

That said, the use of domestic violence as a political allegory, and its conflation with sadomasochism poses problems that must be considered within a feminist framework. Martha as a character conforms to the role of the "passive female object" that Laura Mulvey outlines in the groundbreaking 1975 essay, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.*"* In the film, Martha is a signifier onto which Fassbinder, as male director, inscribes his historical allegory. Although she is the protagonist of the film, throughout the narrative Martha's only autonomy lie in her reactions to the brutal patriarchal authorities that dominate her life. These reactions themselves are radically circumscribed by Helmut's manipulation of her reality. While I argue Fassbinder self-reflexively presents Martha's role in the patriarchal systems that govern both her diegetic and extra-diegetic universe as part of his political critique, it is nonetheless important to consider how the film could lend itself to an interpretation that victim blames survivors of domestic violence.

At the heart of the issue is that at times Martha occupies an ambivalent position with regards to her own subjugation, which allows the audience to read her as a masochist rather than a victim. At certain points in the narrative, it seems Martha is actively seeking and finding pleasure in the abuse that she is subjected to. For example, in one scene early in their courtship, Helmut asks Martha whether she is a virgin, and if she thinks she is charming and beautiful. They are standing outside on the front lawn of a grand manor during a dinner party. Martha faces the camera, standing in one place for the duration of the scene, while Helmut sidles around her, surveying her from every angle as he interrogates her. Martha's mother spies on the pair in the background, but only Helmut is aware of her presence. Martha chastises Helmut for asking about her virginity, but smiles in response to the question of whether she thinks she is attractive and charming. She says that she does "a little". To this, Helmut immediately responds that he does not. Standing back to observe her, Helmut notes that she is too thin and that, "when one looks at you, they can almost feel your bones." He then tells her he "has the impression" that her body stinks. In response, she smiles glowingly, throws her head back in laughter, and twirls around to face him. He violently kisses her. Before we get a chance to read her reaction to this dramatic embrace, a disturbance breaks up the scene (Figure 15).

In another early scene, Martha and Helmut are at a carnival. Despite Martha's protests and fear, Helmut forces her to ride a rollercoaster. She is visibly terrified throughout the duration of the ride, while Helmut, evidently enjoying himself, smiles widely. As they exit, Martha gets sick. Helmut tells Martha he wants to marry her while she is still wiping her vomit from her mouth. Martha thanks him profusely and accepts his offer. While she sheds tears of joy, he turns away from her emotionlessly (Figure 16).

Martha's ambivalence to this type of abusive treatment is central to the political message of the film, as she embodies the position of the German people, who at first embraced and then condemned the horrors of the Nazi regime. However, Fassbinder's conflation of sadomasochism and domestic violence, when read solely at the level of the relationship, implies that abused women take pleasure in, and on some level are responsible for their own abuse. While I argue the film deliberately confuses sadomasochism and gas-lighting, mobilizing Martha's initial ambivalence and ultimate tragic annihilation as an illustration of the perils of courting this kind of sadism, I feel it is essential to draw a distinction between the two terms. Whereas in a sadomasochist relationship there is an implicit level of consent and mutual pleasure on behalf of both parties involved, gas-lighting is a method of abuse and manipulation reduces a person to a delusional state in which they are essentially no longer autonomous, and thus unable to consent.

While I insist upon this distinction in real life, in Fassbinder's fictive universe, the proximity between sadomasochism and domestic abuse functions as an indictment of the institution of marriage and the bourgeois German family at large. *Martha* explores how the patriarchal politics of marriage and the family home lend to the socialization and normalization of sadomasochistic behavior and gas lighting, allegorizing the fascist ideology of self-sacrifice for the *Vaterland*. Indeed, in a 1977 interview the director states, "'I made [*Martha*] to show a marriage as clearly as possible as a sadomasochistic relationship, because the more crassly you show that, the more married people have a chance to identify with your characters,'" (Prager 88). The strength of the film's critique lies precisely in its depiction of the socialized behaviors and institutions that conspire to confound Martha's sense of reality, and thus keep her locked in a cycle of abuse.

For example, in another scene, Martha meets her sister, Marianne, for a lakeside lunch. They discuss their mother's mental state, their sister Ilse's forthcoming marriage, and Martha confesses she has rejected a marriage proposal from her boss at the National Library. Marianne says she is dumb for refusing the proposal, and gives her some advice for maintaining a happy marriage. She says she used to openly disagree with her husband whenever their opinions did not align, but now she just agrees with everything he says. When Martha protests, her sister assures her, "when it comes to the crunch, I get my way. And Edgar doesn't even notice it… Okay, so it's dishonest. But it's more peaceful and you need fewer tranquilizers," (Figure 17). This seemingly insignificant comment is in fact essential to understanding Fassbinder's critique of Germany as advanced in this film. Indeed, we see the detrimental effects of Marianne's advice as Martha becomes locked in a vicious cycle in which she tries and fails to please and appease her husband, while maintaining some semblance of her own autonomy. Like a quintessential tragic figure, each failed attempt to appease the dictatorial Helmut ensnares Martha further in her Sisyphean task.

By the time he made *Martha,* Fassbinder had already produced several films thematizing sadomasochism— perhaps most notably *The Bitter Tears of Petra Von Kant* (1972), also starring Martha's lead, Margit Carstensen.[36] Yet *Martha* stands apart at this point in Fassbinder's oeuvre, as its portrayal of sadomasochism veers into the territory of mortal danger, rather than merely psychological abuse as is the case in *Petra Von Kant*. In *Martha,* Fassbinder portrays Helmut's cruelty and Martha's pain is in such visceral terms that it can almost be experienced in the body of the audience.

[36] Later in his career, in the wake of the suicide of his former lover Armin Meyer, Fassbinder made his most profound treatment of the topic sadomasochism, *In a Year of 13 Moons* (1978). In the film, the protagonist undergoes a gender transition and sex-change operation in an attempt to the capture the affections of a heterosexual man with whom she had fallen in love. The film dramatizes the consequences of Elvira, formerly Erwin's, sacrifice, and ends with her suicide after her lover has left her and her cries for help have been ignored.

For example, in one scene Martha and Helmut retire to the pool while on their Italian honeymoon. Helmut instructs Martha not to apply sunscreen as he thinks she is too pale. He tells her he wants her to be brown and says the sun is not hot, so she will be fine without protection. She complies and lies down to relax, soon falling asleep. In a close up, Helmut watches as she drifts into a slumber, his face tense with emotion. In the next shot Martha is sunburnt to an astonishing crimson hue, lying naked on a snowy white hotel bed. Helmut stands above her, and tells her she fell asleep in the sun. This is one of many moments where gas lighting is conveyed to the audience through the use of dramatic irony, as we know Helmut watched her burn to a crisp. Martha's lobster colored skin contrasts painfully with the sections of her skin that were protected from the sun by her bathing suit, and the white sheets. Helmut runs a hand over her belly, and we cut to a shot of Martha's face contorted, wincing in evident and audible pain. A close-up shot in which Martha's torso occupies the entire frame follows, and Helmut's grabs greedily at her fiery red skin, his fingers leaving white pressure trails behind them. Martha's distress, which she expresses in guttural "Nos" only encourage Helmut, who is clearly turned on by her agony. He climbs on top of her naked body still fully clothed. You can almost feel the rough fabric of his clothing on her tender skin as we hear another muffled "no," amongst her groans. The camera pans away from the scene and the shot transitions, but it is evident he is going to rape her (Figure 18).

There are several other instances of rape throughout the film, and like that which I have described above, they are presented unambiguously. Through Martha's reactions to Helmut's aggression, Fassbinder makes clear that this is pure violence, and in no way consensual sex. What's more, Fassbinder takes great care to present the broad network of social relations and institutions that functionally collude in Martha's abuse and gas-lighting. In several instances

Martha tentatively attempts to disclose the sexual violence and emotional abuse she has been subjected to, but her friends and family normalize and excuse Helmut's behavior.

In one such scene, she chats with her sister Marianne, and attempts to disclose the abuse. The sisters are sitting in a rowboat anchored to the shore, framed by weeping willows. The boat sways rhythmically with the gentle waves as Marianne sketches in the steer. The calm, idealized outdoor setting and wide landscape shot contrasts with the claustrophobic treatment of Martha in her and Helmut's home, where he is most commonly pictured surrounded and obscured by the many houseplants and ornate furniture that populate the space (Figure 19). After a long period of isolation in the domicile, this peaceful, open setting mirrors Martha's evident relief to be away from the oppressive dynamics of the house. In conversation with her sister, Martha struggles to describe how Helmut is manipulating her. She repeats that he is strange several times, but cannot find the words to articulate her feelings beyond this. She manages to note that he is 'violent' in their lovemaking, and shows her sister a bloody red bite mark on her neck to illustrate. We have seen Martha mull over this mark in the mirror in an earlier scenes. Her sister looks at this mark, and takes it to mean he is simply "unrestrained in his lovemaking". Martha repeats the word 'unrestrained,' and accepts her sister's interpretation with relief. Martha trusts her sister's authority as she has been married for several years, and has given her insight into the inner workings of the institutions in the past (Figure 20).

Concomitant to these social structures that normalize the abusive behavior, alcohol and drug addiction are foregrounded throughout the film. Several characters, most notably Martha's mother, excessively abuse prescription drugs and alcohol in an effort to sedate themselves from emotional impact of abusive patriarchal behavior (Figure 21). Martha's mother tries to kill herself several times via overdose throughout the film, and eventually is institutionalized. The

emphasis on addiction harkens back to the widespread use of prescription amphetamines during the Nazi era.[37]

In embodying and allegorizing the perils of appeasing a brutal dictator so as to maintain domestic harmony through the experiences of Martha, Fassbinder makes a poignant statement about the past, and present, and future of his nation. While politicians, historians and more conservative elements of West German society sought to elide fascism as a foreign import in the wake of the war, and return to the supposedly untainted cultural origins of the nation, Fassbinder made a film that literally shows how "fascism around the dinner table" pervaded the typical West German family home in the 1970s. The excessive cinematography and performance style that typifies the film is central to his critique. Rather than present a naturalistic portrait of a typical German couple, Fassbinder in his Artaudian mode, paints the 'reality' of fascism in the family in such brutal and garish hues one could never mistake it for a photograph.[38] Through his excessive portrayal of domestic life, Fassbinder insists that incidents that might otherwise be taken for granted as simply the status quo instead evoke the visceral shock their oppressive politics warrant.

[37] It has been broadly documented that civilians and others used amphetamines extensively throughout the years of Hitler's regime. For example, Stephen Snelders and Toine Pieters describe how, "in the cultural and political climate of the Third Reich, it appears that doctors must have considered the benefits of a new drug, not only for individuals but for society as well. Here we have a regime and ideology, which exhorted all individuals to maximise their efforts. In a climate of threatening war with other European powers, Pervitin [an amphetamine] was introduced, as hope for a lasting peace was shattered by Hitler's expansion into Czechoslovakia. And here we have a drug that, compared to caffeine, was a stimulant that appeared to have less negative effects on physical function," (691).

[38] The term "Artaudian" is a reference to the playwright Antonin Artaud, whose writings on the theatre greatly influenced both Fassbinder's theatrical and cinematic productions. Artaud advocated for what he labeled "the cinema of cruelty" in his work *The Theatre and its Double.* In his manifesto of the same name, Artaud outlines the various ways that the audience of the theatre could be shocked out of their complacency while watching theatrical productions through an onslaught of sound, color and other effects that would literally surround them. This was a political gesture that would denaturalize bourgeois politics of the theatre and force the audience to unleash their subconscious emotions. I argue that Fassbinder employs an Artaudian style in *Martha* (and in many of his other films) for precisely the same purpose- to shock the bourgeois television audience that his film was presented out of naturalizing the cruel patriarchal politics of the family home.

The foregone chapter has revealed how *Lady Snowblood* reflected and negotiated a discourse on Japanese history advanced by both conservative and Marxist historians in the socio-political context of the 1970s. This chapter will contextualize how Fassbinder's film functions as a critique of the discourses on history advanced by authoritative West German historians such as Friedrich Meinecke (1862-1954) and Gerhard Ritter (1888-1967), and the oppressive politics of the BRD government.

The Origins and Meaning of 'Catastrophe'

As I elucidated in the introduction to this thesis, historians in both Japan and West Germany regarded the Nazi era and corresponding defeat in WW2 as a "catastrophe" and sought to understand its origins. German Historiographer Sebastian Conrad writes that the most common model through which fascism was understood in both nations was, "based on a correlation of national character with national socialism and/or fascism," which saw the phenomenon, "as the product of cultural substance—or, conversely, as the contamination of the very substance 'from the outside,'" (88). Accordingly, historians after the War in West Germany and Japan concluded that, " either totalitarianism was already present, as a sort of bacillus in German and Japanese culture, or else it appeared as a result of cultural import," (Ibid). As I argue throughout this thesis, my selected film participate in this project by issuing their own readings of the origins of fascism in the 1970s.

Conrad notes that it is readily discernible based on statements made by historians that the notion of "catastrophe" in Japan and West Germany referred in the first sense to the, "military defeat and occupation by a foreign power," undergone by the nations rather than, "the vanquished dictatorship and its inhuman crimes," (Conrad 87). Thus while locating the origins of

fascism was necessary for a process of what was in German studies referred to as *vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past), for historians it was "military occupation, territorial losses, and the loss of national integrity" that the divided nation had to wrestle with more so than the horrors of the Holocaust (Ibid).[39]

By the late 1960s, a new 'catastrophe' struck a cord with a younger, less conservative generation of Germans. On June 2nd 1967, a plain clothes police officer shot and killed student protester Benno Ohnesorg during a demonstration against the visiting Shah of Iran. Following the event, the student protest movement that had been escalating since the election of former card carrying Nazi, Kurt Kiesinger to the position of Chancellor in 1966, rapidly intensified (Fulbrook 237). Ohnesorg's death exemplified the profound failures of denazification of the Adenauer era.[40] The event was the catalyst that sparked the emergence of the urban guerilla collective of young, educated, West-German leftists, who formally inaugurated themselves on June 5th, 1970 as the Red Army Faction (Fulbrook 238). In the RAF's manifesto, the group swore they would take action against the institutions and people they deemed responsible for upholding the Nazi state. They vowed, "not talk about armed propaganda," but instead to actually "do it" (Varon 21).[41] They did not disappoint in this matter. By 1974, the year of *Martha'*s release, the terrorist

[39] A compound word developed in German Studies in the post war period which translates roughly to "coming to terms with the past," (Elsaesser 2014 4).

[40] Konrad Adenauer was the first chancellor of the BRD, elected in 1949. He served in this role for 14 years, in which he failed to purge former Nazi's from the government-- at times allowing them to retain their former positions, at others, promoting them to new ones (Fulbrook 153). Fassbinder was highly critical of Adenauer's government, and took him to task for reversing his position on West German re-armament in 1955 in his film *The Marriage of Maria Braun*. That film is the first of Fassbinder's BRD Trilogy literally embodies the rise of West Germany from the rubble in the immediate post-war period through the life of his films' titular characters, *Maria Braun* (1979), *Veronika Voss* (1982), and *Lola* (1981). In *Maria Braun*'s dramatic final moments, the radio transmission of West Germany's 1955 world cup win in which the sports announcer ecstatically declares the nation is "*Welt Meister*" (world master) is layered over Adenauer's announcement that the BRD will join NATO and thus re-arm. This is meant to contrast with the film's opening moment's, which feature Adenauer giving a speech announcing the nation will never rearm.

[41] As I discuss in my undergraduate thesis, *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce: A Critical Exploration of Vergangenheitsbewältigung and Red Army Faction Terrorism in Rainer Werner Fassbinder's Fabulated Second World*, Fassbinder made two films about the various generations of the Baader-Meinhoff gang terrorists, *Mother*

activity of the Red Army Faction had precipitated a national crisis. The government responded by passing draconian legislation restricting civil liberties, increasing government power and police surveillance of the state, and punishing anyone documented protesting against the state by limiting their employment opportunities in a 1972 *Berufsverbot* (professional ban) law known as the *Radikalenerlass* (Anti-Radical Decree), (Fulbrook 214).[42] By 1977, three years after *Martha's* release, the BRD was in a state of utter disarray (Fulbrook 238).[43]

In this socio-political context, the practitioners of the New German Cinema participated in a process of national self re-invention, often interrogating the origins and ongoing legacy of fascism. Filmmakers negotiated and made claims about national history through their productions, and in varying contexts were censored, and supported by the apparatuses of the

---

Kuster's Goes to Heaven (1975) and *The Third Generation* (1978). In that thesis, I argued Fassbinder's generic turn from tragedy to comedy in the interval between the two films reflects the fact that in the four years between the release of *Mother Kusters Goes to Heaven* and *The Third Generation*, Fassbinder had lost all hope in political filmmaking, spectatorship, and activism in general. In *Mother Kuster's Trip to Heaven* we witness the reappearance of the featured couple in *Martha* (1974) (Margrit Carstensen and Karlheinz Böhm) and their complete and comic reversal in political allegiances and demeanor. First appearing as fascistic sadomasochists in *Martha,* Carstensen and Böhm are reborn in *Mother Kusters* as apparently sympathetic, and very rich communists. I argue that Fassbinder's reversal of these two figures from fascists to communists functions as critique of the shallow politics of the radical Left in West Germany. While *Mother Kusters'* initiates this critique, it is nevertheless a tragedy that ennobles its titular character and her albeit failed attempts to take political action, much like *Martha*. However by the time he made *The Third Generation,* Fassbinder had no hope left, and thus used this film to demonstrate how the third generation of Baader-Meinhoff terrorists who ostensibly sought to critique and destroy the police state and fascism in West Germany, in fact enabled and justified the government's oppressive measures.

[42] The Nazis had issued similar professional bans targeting Jewish people, political dissidents and artists during their reign in the nation, in legislation such as the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 and the subsequent *verordnungen (*regulations) related to the *Reichsbürgergesetz* which divided the nation into two classes of citizens, predicated on their 'racial' background (Fulbrook 73).

[43] The summer and fall of 1977 was referred to as "German Autumn," which was the most intense period of Red Army Faction terrorist activity. The action began on July 30th, 1977, when the RAF member and goddaughter of Jurgen Ponto, a banker and industrialist, murdered the man in his Frankfurt home (Fulbrook 238). The next months ensued through a concerted series of attacks on people and institutions the RAF deemed to be perpetuating the fascist state. The action reached a peak when a Lufthansa plane, *Landshut* was hijacked and its passengers taken hostage on October 13th (Fulbrook 238). Police eventually rescued the plane October 18th, and the three founding members of the RAF who were serving time in the maximum security Stammheim prison were 'found' dead in their cells the next day under extremely suspicious circumstances. Due to various restrictions on the prisoners, there was virtually no way they could have committed suicide in the ways that were reported. The conservative press depicted the Stammheim deaths as a collective suicide prompted by the failed hijacking. The RAF retaliated for what they saw as the murder by killing Hanns Martin Schleyer, a former SS member who served a prominent role in industry and business both before and after the Second World War. His body was found abandoned in the trunk of a car on October 19th (Fulbrook 239).

state. While many of the films produced by the signers of the Oberhausen Manifesto achieved international critical acclaim with their productions, they failed to achieve commercial success, and thus remained dependent on state funding, contrary to the demands of the manifesto itself (Knight 93).

In the historical discipline and in the field of cultural production, we can locate in the decades following the war in both West Germany and Japan varying efforts to locate the origins of fascism and "return to the original and pure traditions of the nation…[which] promised a fundamental a 'overcoming' of this past," (Conrad 88). Whereas *Lady Snowblood* firmly falls in line with attempts to overcome the past through the re-assertion of ostensibly untainted cultural traditions, *Martha* does the exact opposite. Instead, *Martha* directly intervenes in the climate of nostalgia for the lost nation that characterized West Germany in the 1970s, forcefully demonstrating through the experiences of its titular protagonist how fascism emerged from and persists in the exaltation of German cultural traditions and the politics of the bourgeois family.

Modernity and its Discontents

In West Germany, as in Japan, historians searching for the seeds of the 'catastrophe' found them firmly rooted in Modernity, and the nation's encounter with the "outside". As *Lady Snowblood* demonstrates, in Japan, it was the transition from feudalism to modernism and the "humiliating encounter" borne of the forced signing of Unequal Treaties with Western Powers that helped nationalism and militarism to flourish alongside the nation's newfound imperial ambitions. West German historians similarly pointed to developments of the modern age as they strove to understand and justify the recent past. Across the discipline, West German historians in the immediate post-war years exhibited, "a profound resentment toward the Modern era," (91).

While conservative and liberal historians largely blamed the "double revolutions" of the French and Industrial variety for introducing the seeds of fascism into the nation, historians working in a Catholic framework emphasized the moral vacuum that was left in this "century without God," (Conrad 93).

In West Germany a resentment of modernity was part and parcel of the aforementioned, "tendency to view the nation's cultural traditions as a refuge untouched by the shocks of war and National Socialism,"(Conrad 91). Fears were widespread about the consequences of the industrial revolution, the development of "mass society," and the loss of tradition. Accordingly, historians such as Friedrich Meinecke, who Conrad describes as both liberal and anti-Semitic, argued, "the only hope of 'renewal' [after] 1945 rested on the reassertion of cultural achievements of the past," that predated the chaos wrought by the double revolutions that inaugurated the modern age (Conrad 91). Meinecke's, "nostalgic longing for a cultural homecoming…" suggested that, "the collapse into barbarism could be traced only to external influences," (Conrad 92). Indeed, in Meinecke's authoritative 1946 treatise *German Catastrophe,* he posits a genealogical link between the development of National Socialism and what he terms "the two waves of the age," the French Revolution and the industrial revolution (Conrad 85).[44] For Meinecke, it was the inherent antagonism between the politics of socialism and those of nationalism that led to National Socialism, which was ultimately a "failed attempt to overcome this fundamental dichotomy of Modernity," (Conrad 85).

While Meinecke did acknowledge some guilt of the German people in the development of National Socialism, as indicated in the quote cited at the prologue of this chapter, he was not alone in his desire to locate the fountainhead of National Socialism outside the German nation

[44] As Conrad notes, "[Meinecke's] book was incidentally received with great interest in Japan and was published there in translation in 1951," (85).

and cultural sphere. Gerhard Ritter, a conservative historian, also passed blame to the French Revolution for, "decisively [loosening] up the firm soil of European political traditions," (Conrad 92). In Ritter's 1948 book *Europe and the German Question,* he posits that the two major factors at play in the development of National Socialism were secularization and the rise of democratic politics. For Ritter, democracy bore the seeds of totalitarianism, for in a democracy, "the will of the people is sovereign, incontestable, and thus total," (Conrad 93).

These frameworks located the origins of fascism temporally and geographically outside the nation, and employ the metaphor of invasion to describe its arrival in Germany. In the historical profession, fascism was painstakingly painted as a product of modernity, which was a product of the French and Industrial revolutions. Even racism had French origins for historians such as Ritter, who blamed "the Frenchman Gobineau" for introducing racial supremacy to the Germans. Besides, Ritter reminded his readers, Hitler was an Austrian, and was to blame entirely for anti-Semitism, which he claimed had no "politically significant role in Germany before 1914," (Conrad 94). Instead, Hitler imported anti-Semitism, "from the festering ethnic chaos of the Danube region," (Ibid). No matter where historians located the "bacillus" that was fascism, the necessity of such a task lie in its potential to envision a future and sense of self-identity for the nation. The trauma of defeat, loss of sovereignty and national division readied the ground for a romanticization of the pre-Hitler past which Fassbinder satirizes in *Martha.*

Re-Inventing Tradition

For historians such as Meinecke and Ritter, the only solution to propel the nation forward was a "cultural re-awakening," a sort of Prussian renaissance that would help the German people

find their, “path back to the time of Goethe,” (Conrad 91). Accordingly, Meinecke wanted to see the implementation of a cultural community, “in every German city and large town,” under the name, “the Goethe Community,” (Ibid). Yet although Meinecke suggests this return to purportedly untainted cultural origins of the nation could somehow be curative in the years following the horrors of the Nazi regime, the Third Reich itself had promoted German cultural and language programs almost identical to those that he suggests, as a central part of their racial propaganda.

In 1912, historian Karl Lamprecht introduced the concept of *auswartige Kulturpolitik* (cultural diplomacy) as, “an alternative to aggressive Wilhelmine power politics which had resulted in a growing diplomatic isolation of the Reich,” (Michels 207). After the nation was devastated by the First World War and utterly depleted by the reparations demanded in Treaty of Versailles, *auswartige Kulturpolitik* was mobilized as, “a lever to extend German influence now that the Reich had lost the traditional assets with which it exercised power within the international system: a strong economy, a large army and reliable allies,” (Ibid). Accordingly, in the 1920s, a “systematic, state-funded *auswartige Kulturpolitik* emerged,” with many of its associated institutions still promoting German culture and language abroad to this day. For example, the *Deutsch Akademie* was founded in Munich in 1925, and today persists as under the new title of *The Goethe Institut*.

Since its founding, the *DA* has had a long history within the realm of German cultural diplomacy. The promotion of German language abroad was presented by one of the *DA’s* founders in 1930, Franz Thierfelder, as a remedy to Germany’s difficulties, “exporting a uniform cultural image which could be easily recognized by foreigners,” as he claimed Germany was, “too young a nation and culturally too diverse,” (Michels 209). Accordingly, in 1932 the *Goethe*

Institut was established as a division of the *Deutsch Akademie,* serving as a training facility for "foreign Germanists in Munich and developing teaching material for German as a foreign language," (Michel 219). It also marked, "Munich's contribution to the commemoration of the centenary of the death of Germany's greatest poet," (Michels 219). From its origins, the *DA* served to advance Germany's foreign policy goals through language promotion and the exaltation of German cultural icons. Its' founders believed, "the language of Goethe and Schiller would not only be the international means of communication of the future, but that it was also the very essence of German identity and therefore a perfect means to introduce foreigners to German thinking," (Michels 208).

Under Hitler, the *Deutsch Akademie* became the "biggest cultural propaganda institution of the Third Reich with more than 250 language schools in Europe," (Michels 219). Indeed, after the war, the *DA* was the exclusive "cultural organization to be officially dissolved by the Allies in 1945 as a Nazi institution," (Ibid). As Mary Fulbrook notes, "the Nazis propagated not a coherent doctrine or body of systematically interrelated ideas, but rather a vaguer world-view made up of a number of prejudices," centered around, "radical anti-Semitism…. and [Hitler's] desire for mastery of Europe and creation of 'living space' (*lebensraum)* for the 'Aryan' Germans," (44). Accordingly they, "promoted a vision of a harmonious national community (*Volkgemeinschaft)* which would be racially pure (cleansed of the 'pollution' of Jews, hereditary degenerates, and other supposedly racially or biologically inferior types)," (Fulbrook 44). During the Nazi-era, the *DA* was re-organized to fit roughly along these ideological lines, shifting its emphasis on language as the means of national cultural cohesion, to race (Michels 219). After a six year period of inactivity, the *Deutsch Akademie* was re-established in 1951 under the name the *Goethe Institut*. Today this remains the name under which it operates its 159 branches, across

98 countries, today.[45]

With this the history of the *DA in* mind, it is curious that Meinecke, who was 84 years old in 1946, would fail to acknowledge that a system of institutionalized cultural promotion such as that which he suggests already had existed in Germany for two decades. What's more, Meinecke does not acknowledge that Nazi propaganda itself had appropriated Goethe, himself a Prussian militarist and statesmen, presenting him as "a model citizen under the national socialist concept of the state" (Vazsonyi 95). Goethe was an appealing figure for Nazi "blood and soil" ideology, as his, "beliefs as well as his role in Weimar as subject [*Untertan*] and civil servant [*beamter*]," demonstrated that he was above all, "a servant of his state, a subject of his people," (Ibid). Furthermore, Goethe's, "antipathy for the French Revolution and its pernicious effects were trumpeted to prove that Goethe had early on opposed the world of liberal and ultimate decadent ideology," (Ibid).[46] As should be clear, the cultural renewal that Meinecke argues for in the immediate wake of the war deviated very little from the type of cultural propaganda advanced by the Nazi regime.

Examining the various ways that German political movements have deployed *auswartige Kulturpolitik,* we can locate a parallel across its use by the government after the World Wars. As aforementioned, in the interval between the Wars, cultural diplomacy was used to exert German influence abroad when other more aggressive means such as economic prosperity and military

[45] Despite this long connection to the *DA*, on the *Goethe Institut's* present website, there are repeated references to the institution being 60 years old. Indeed, the English version of the website provides no historical background for the institution at all. On the German version of the webpage however, there is a timeline that marks the founding year of the institution as 1951. There is the briefest reference to the institutions connection to *Deutsch Akademie*, which the webpage mentions was founded in 1925. Otherwise, the timeline elides the present-day institution's heritage as the offspring of what was under the Nazi regime.

[46] It is interesting to note that Goethe was a figure variously appropriated by the ultra right and ultra left. Whereas the above demonstrates how the Nazis mobilized Goethe as a representative of their racist ideology, figures such as Georg Lukacs attempted to rescue Goethe's legacy from this entanglement as demonstrated by Nicholas Vazsonyi in his book Lukács Reads Goethe: From Aestheticism to Stalinism.

might were not available. During the war, the Nazis mobilized cultural institutes such as the *DA* to advance racist propaganda and further foreign policy goals centered around *lebensraum* (living space*)*. At the same time, the Nazis celebrated German cultural icons such as Goethe and appropriated his writings to fit their propaganda. After the Second World War, in which Germany's reputation was tarnished beyond repair, there were nevertheless renewed efforts to exalt the nation's culture and indeed, extend its influence abroad when these same means, economic and military power, were not available. In times of strife and times of abundance, Germany has consistently mobilized national culture for political goals both domestically and abroad. As I have demonstrated, despite the socio-economic context, the means and ends of *auswartige Kulturpolitik* have varied little in the German nation.

In the context of the economic miracle or '*wirtschaftwunder*' that lasted roughly from 1950-1961, and rearmament or '*wiederbewaffnung*' (1955), the BRD's particular flavor of *auswartige Kulturpolitik* could no longer be seen as naïve or innocuous. The exaltation of German culture, in the context of a re-armed Germany with a strong economy, coupled with the rise of the police state and the continuation of many former Nazis in the government and business world, led to a situation in which the nation seemed perilously close to its National Socialist past.

In *Martha,* Fassbinder dramatizes this tendency to romanticize the cultural past and forget its nefarious legacy within older generations of West Germans who had lived through the war. Throughout the film we witness how the of archetypes of patriarchal authority such as fathers, husbands, doctors, and bosses and more conservative generations of West German citizens live there lives still based around fascist politics derived from German cultural traditions.

The fact that these scenes take place in the domestic space demonstrates how oppressive politics permeate the family home so as to function as casual dinner banter in West German society.

In one key scene, Martha attends a dinner party for the wedding celebration of her sister Ilse. All the guests sit on one side of a long table, and the shot is reminiscent of Leonardo Da Vinci's *The Last Supper* (Figure . The room is the very picture of bourgeois decadence. It is overflowing with exotic flowers, the guests don tuxedos and gowns, and the settings are so extravagant that they often obscure the guests faces. The camera slowly pans across the table as the talk turns to child-rearing when Ilse says her new-husband, Dr. Herbert Salomon, does not want children. Herbert replies that it is not that he doesn't want children, but that he's afraid to raise them. Martha's mother asserts, "I'm sorry, but children need love and a firm hand, that's all,". This is another poignant moment of dramatic irony, as this scene directly follows an episode in the family home in which we witness first hand how abusive Martha's mother is.

This earlier scene takes place when Martha arrives home to find her drunken mother cradling a bottle, and abusing her prescribed tranquilizers. She has drawn a moustache and devil horns on a photo of her late husband. Martha confronts her about her alcohol consumption, which she thinks is a new habit based on the fact that her father would never allow it. At this, her mother scoffs and mocks Martha. She calls her a "stupid bitch" and tells her she has been drinking to cope with her marriage for 20 years. When Martha tells her mother she has just rejected a marriage proposal, she maniacally laughs and tells her, "you're a horrible old spinster. You revolt me." Martha smiles and walks out of the room, shutting the door behind her. The next shot brings us to the dinner party.

Back at the aforementioned dinner party, a man agrees with Martha's mother and continues, "adults just have to pass on their experience and not leave it all to the state." Another

male dinner guest proudly quotes Goethe, stating "'one could give birth to properly brought up children, if the parents were properly brought up.'" The next man concurs, "Hear hear, all this talk of freedom. Life's not free." Herbert agrees, noting, "that's all very true, we were brought up strictly, and it didn't harm us. Nevertheless…." he trails off in a moment of hesitation. Yet another male party-goer interrupts this train of thought, "no 'nevertheless'. Don't be fooled by newfangled ideas. Moral laws are not a matter of fashion." The fact that we cannot see the men's faces who are spouted these views functions to demonstrate that they were so commonplace that they were not individual opinions but so ubiquitous and dominant they could be found in the mouths of any man of similar stature in the nation at the time (Figure 23).

In this scene, Fassbinder demonstrates how fascist politics are rooted through the family and quite literally genetically passed down through the various generations of the German bourgeoisie. All of the dinner guests would have been alive during the war. Martha, her sister, and her sister's husband, Herbert Salomon, are in their 30s, and thus would have been raised by parents that were likely members of the Nazi party. The fact that the film takes place in the 1970s, yet features a mise-en-scene and characters spouting philosophy that belonged to an era supposedly long past forms a central thrust of Fassbinder's critique.

The Resurgence of the Heimat

Beyond the political correspondences between the war and post-war period, West German society at large certainly demonstrated a 'nostalgic longing' for a culture and past seemingly lost in the war. One way this was evident was through the revival of the popular of the

Heimat (homeland) genre in cinema, which originated in the 1940s. The genre regained prominence in the 1950s, when West Germans were reeling from the effects of the war—mainly, mass displacement and defeat. It saw another resurgence in the 1970s, in the climate of radical left-wing protest and concerns about the impacts of industrialization on the environment. By the mid 1970s, the genre was so popular it even inspired soft-core pornographic spinoffs in the "lederhosen porn" films of Franz Marischka.

The *Heimat* as a concept and as an aesthetic genre has a long history in Germany, dating back to the movement of the same name that emerged in the 1890s (Kaes 165). The *Heimat* movement, similar to the romanticism movement in England, was a reaction to the rapid industrialization and corresponding migration to the city known in German as the *Landflucht* (flight from the land) that was uprooting traditional rural life. As such, this "anti-modern, anti-urban," movement mourned and named what was lost in the shift from rural to city living—a provincial, bucolic life built around networks of kinship (Ibid).

Heimat literature emerged as a response to the nostalgic longing many exhibited for their lost childhood, family, and identity, which the term had come to represent. *Heimat* is essentially a mythic German prelapsarian state that, "refers to everything not distant and foreign," conjuring up for its wide audience, "a rural, archaic image of the German Reich and German community…[that] promised order, permanence, and national pride," (Ibid). The term quickly gained currency under the Nazi regime, as it fit readily within the concepts of racially exclusive *lebensraum* (living space) and *Volkgemeinschaft* (harmonious national community). During the Nazi years, *Heimat* film became "an arch-German film genre, with all its negative connotations: national chauvinism, "blood and soil" ideology, and overwrought emotionalism," (Kaes 15). The major motifs of the Heimat such as "love of hearth and home [and] hatred of anything foreign or

urban—were easily assimilated in to the fascist 'blood and soil' literature of the National socialists," (Kaes 166).

After the Second World War, "the concept of the Heimat acquired new meaning…when millions of Germans had been displaced from their homeland," (Kaes 166). In the 1950s more than 300 Heimat films were made which, "portrayed Germany as a rural, provincial homeland with which all Germans could identify…concentrated on German landscapes… untainted, politically naïve innocent naïve Germans, and on regional dress, speech, and music," (166). Many West Germans embraced these films as the unique "product of a typical German tradition," (Ibid). Others, such as the signers of the Oberhausen Manifesto objected to the genre's heritage to the 1930s' mountain films, which similarly idealized nature, and " glorified rural life as the mystical embodiment of German blood and German soil," (Kaes 15). Further justifying this critique was the fact that many of directors responsible for these 1950s *Heimat* productions such as Hans Deppe, Paul May and Rolf Hansen were filmmakers who had worked in the Goebbels run UFA studios, a major Nazi propaganda machine in the 1930s and 1940s (Ibid). The Oberhausen manifesto was written in direct response to the popular resurgence of this genre, when they declared *Papa's kino ist Tot* (Father's cinema is dead). The filmmakers saw the genre's, "cliché-ridden, Agfa-colored images of German forests, landscapes and customs of happiness and security," as, "deceitful movie kitsch," (Ibid).

While much of the New German cinema was stylized in opposition to the narrative and aesthetic dictates of the *heimat*, in *Martha* Fassbinder appropriates elements of the genre. Yet rather than present a utopian *Heimat* untainted by fascism, he demonstrates how the concept itself is saturated in Nazi politics in the context of the 1970s.

Film Analysis

Martha, begins with a symbolic death in Italy. Martha and her cold, domineering father, whom she nevertheless adores, are vacationing in Rome. In front of the Spanish Steps, Martha's father says he is feeling unwell. She offers her arm to support him up the staircase, but he admonishes her for always wanting to touch him, and pulls away. After a few steps, he clutches his chest, and collapses on the iconic stairs, dead. This opening scene can be read as an allusion to the Hitler's death in the Second World War. Martha's father stands in for the national German father-- the Nazis and earlier right-wing nationalists during the Bismarck era referred to Germany as the 'fatherland' or *Vaterland,* as Anna Wierzbicka reveals in her book, *Understanding Cultures Through Their Key Words: English, Russian, Polish, German, and Japanese*.

Wierzbicka traces the origins of the term from its, "ritual military formulae involving *Vaterland*, such as the nineteenth-century Prussian formula '*Für König und Vaterland,'[*for king and country]*"* up to*, "*the Nazi formula "*Fur Fuhrer and Vaterland*"…[that] highlights the unspoken link between what people WANT to do for the *Vaterland* and what they SHOULD or HAVE to do for it," (168). Indeed as Wierzbicka demonstrates: "*Vaterland* is associated with boundless duty and service. The metaphor of 'sonhood' is particularly characteristic in this regard: the Vaterland is not so much the country *of* one's father… as the country which *is* symbolically, one's and one's nation's, father, a father whom one must love, revere, serve, and obey," (167). This ambivalent relationship to the authority of the father is a defining theme throughout *Martha*, as we struggle to understand whether her actions are motivated by fear, or masochistic pleasure.

A crowd of hippies that Martha's father had criticized moments prior, wondering aloud why "they [presumably the Italian authorities] allow it [the hippies to congregate on the steps]," swarm around the fallen patriarch. In the chaos, Martha realizes she has lost her purse and begins to sob. It is striking that this loss seems to move her more than the death of her father. In a close-up, a white, masculine, manicured hand grasps the missing clutch, which indicates it is being stolen. We learn later that the bag is full of money that Martha's father had given her to hold. Without money and in an unfamiliar land Martha is helpless. The money that would have enabled her autonomy is immediately transferred to another man.[47]

At this moment, economically devastated and defenseless, Martha mirrors the position of the German people in the time between the transfer of authority from the Fuhrer, to the occupation authorities of the Americans and other allied powers. Instead of being empowered by the death of a dictator, the German nation was once again indentured to a patriarchal authority. Martha's position embodies immediate post-war impressions held by some West German Historians such as Peter Rassow and Friedrich Meinecke. Rassow wrote of surviving the "transfer from the Nazi occupation to that of the Americans," while Meinecke described the end of the "age of inner foreign rule," and entrance into the age of, "external foreign rule," (Conrad 87).

Martha arrives at the German Embassy, where she first encounters the man who will later become her husband, Helmut Salomon. In a dramatic 720-degree camera movement, the two pass each other in a disorienting, highly choreographed loop. This convoluted introduction to the couple sets the stage for their torturous relationship in which true desires and motivations remain unclear.

[47] Brad Prager in his article "A Challenge, Maybe the Greatest for a Filmmaker," quotes Christian Braad-Thomsen, who argues, "'the bag is a vagina symbol and the fact that it is stolen at the moment her father dies signals that Martha's sexuality is now being stolen or confiscated forever,' (Thomsen 2004:157)."

At the Embassy Martha informs her Mother of her father's death, make arrangements for the return of his body to Germany, and smokes her first cigarette. When asked her full name and address, Martha responds, "Martha Heyer, 21 Douglas Sirk Avenue, Konstanz, Germany." [48] In classic Fassbinder style, these names are glaring cinephilic references to famous melodrama actress Martha Hyer, as well as Fassbinder's favorite director, friend, and eventual collaborator, one of Hollywood's most well-known German émigrés, Douglas Sirk. Martha tells the embassy employee that her father strictly forbade her to smoke, and seems to ravish her small act of rebellion as she lights up a cigarette. Indeed, Martha's emotional state is difficult to discern here. While she is presumably distraught at the sudden and unexpected death of her Father, Martha's behavior at the embassy indicates otherwise. She is talkative and animated throughout the scene.

Martha and her father's body arrive back in their picturesque hometown of Konstanz by rail. The town, sitting on the shore of Lake Constance and the Swiss border, makes for an ideal *Heimat* film location, as it is at once mountainous, provincial, and spectacularly beautiful. Fassbinder takes ample advantage of the attractive setting throughout the film. The pleasantly

[48] Fassbinder was known for heavily citing and documenting the manifold influences for his films. From classical art, to literature, psychoanalysis, and cinema both of the 'highest' and 'lowest' varieties, his oeuvre is typified by panoply of references. Incongruously, when *Martha* first premiered on television, the director came under fire for not citing its apparent source-text, Cornell Woolrich's short story "For the Rest of her Life" (1948). While Fassbinder maintained he never read the text, stating " I have tried to talk myself into the notion that at some point I possibly read the other story. On the other hand, it is a story that could have occurred to me as well," (*es [ist] Geschichte, die mir auch hatte einfallen konnen)* (Fischer 2004: 542).." the film was amended to state in its opening credits it was adapted from themes of Woolrich's story (Prager 92). Prager attributes this situation to a lapse and memory and follows Carl Jung's recuperation of Nietzsche, whose writings were scrutinized for apparently plagiarizing ideas from Justinus Kerner's *Blatter aus Prevost.* Jung argues of Nietzsche that, "the work of genius… fetches up distant fragments in order to build them into new and meaningful structure," (Jung 1970:105). The term for this is cryptomnesia, a phenomenon which occurs when someone forgets the origin of an idea or thought they've encountered previously and mistakenly comes to believe it is original and their own. Prager advances that this is the most likely cause of this odd situation, and argues compellingly that there's no reason to believe Fassbinder intentionally hid his sources, as he had never done so in the past nor would he in the future. Prager further reveals that Woolrich's short stories were often adapted for the screen by directors that influenced Fassbinder in general, and in *Martha* in particular, such as Francoise Truffaut who adapted Woolrich's story *The Bride Wore Black*, and Alfred Hitchcock, whose film *Rear Window* (1954) was based on Woolrich's story "It had to be Murder". *Martha* borrows heavily and indeed seems to be in direct dialogue with Hithcock's *Marnie* (1964), as demonstrated by Prager's close reading. It is interesting to note that Fassbinder would go on to make a film on the topic of cryptomnesia in 1976, *Satan's Brew*.

sunny exteriors in which the film's most significant conversations take place between Martha and her sister Marianne, contrast with the dark, oppressive atmosphere inside the family homes. Martha's Mother and two sisters, Marianne and Ilse greet them at the station, dressed in black mourning clothes. After a dramatic outburst, her mother blames Martha for her father's heart attack, stating that she has always caused him more worry than her other sisters, and asking why she couldn't be more like them.

It is understood later in the film that Martha's reluctance to marry is the cause of her mother's resentment and her father's purported worry. It is the parental wish that Martha be contained under an appropriate patriarchal authority—as an adult, her desire to remain attached to her father, or refusal to attach to an appropriate patriarchal authority is seen as pathological. This sheds light on Martha's father's resistance when she attempts to help him up the steps in Italy.

After several scenes depicting their courtship, Helmut and Martha inform Martha's mother of their impending marriage. She protests, before conceding to let Martha to have it her way. She empties an entire pill bottle into a glass of water and swallows it all in one gulp, immediately falling to the ground. Martha runs to call the doctor, and Helmut stops her. She attempts to empathize with this confusing action, asking if he thinks her mother has a right to die. He kisses her violently and she resists. He warns her never to resist again when he wants to make love to her. Martha, in tears, falls to the ground. Her mother and her are prostrate on the floor, mother in the foreground, daughter in the back. Their physical symmetry illustrates their sociopolitical correspondences, both women, subject to the abusive treatment of their fascistic husbands. Helmut calls Dr. Hanff and arranges for Mrs. Heyer to be admitted to a psychiatric hospital. He asks Martha, "do you really think I would let your mother die?" and accuses her of

imagining it, and says it is obviously her wish. This is another instance of gas-lighting. Helmut denies Martha's interpretation of reality. Although he clearly hesitates and attempts to rape her before even calling the hospital for her overdosing mother, Helmut immediately denies Martha's experience and implants an alternate interpretation of his behavior, which renders her rather than him the villain.

In the next scene we learn Martha and Helmut have married as they drive through the rain in the car. Martha says how nice it is to be alone with him, and gushes about their upcoming honeymoon to Italy. She says she is so happy she could cry. Helmut says nothing, and when she asks him if he is happy, he says is, but he does not have to convince himself. Again, Helmut is gas-lighting Martha, denying her interpretation of his sullenness and instead causing her to doubt her own behavior and perceptions.

Another such scene shows the couple honeymooning in Italy, Martha arrives at breakfast, famished and smiling. She says she is so hungry could eat ten eggs and coffee. Helmut informs her that these choices unhealthy and that he has ordered tea and cornflakes. When she lights a cigarette, and Helmut tells her it's not good to smoke before breakfast. As we have seen, Martha took up smoking in the wake of her father's death as a small act of rebellion. Here the transfer of patriarchal authority through the institution of marriage is made explicit, as Martha once again denies her own desires to obey a man. Martha attempts to make the best of the situation, saying it's good someone is looking out for her health. As they talk, Helmut describes his travels abroad, and notes that the worst part of traveling is dealing with foreign customs and food. Helmut's virulent hatred for anything non-German further aligns him with xenophobic fascist politics. Later, Helmut's adulation of German cultural traditions is conveyed through the

furnishings in the home he and Martha share, and the music and literature preferences he violently insists his wife adopt.

Another glaring link to Hitler comes when the couple arrives back in Konstanz and Helmut informs Martha they will not be living in her family home. Instead, he has rented a home from Colonel Olbricht. Martha protests, "but Helmut, a murder was committed in that house," and he says that's why it's cheaper. He asks if she is afraid, and she cries saying she will miss her family home. She was happy there, and had memories of her childhood. Helmut says, "we want to make a new start, a completely new life, don't we?". This is a deeply ironic moment, as Colonel Olbricht was a high-ranking general in the Third Reich, and the leader of Operation Valkyrie, a failed plan to assassinate Hitler when it became clear his leadership was costing Germany the war. Thus the new start that Helmut suggests is literally a return to the fascist past in the domestic space of the home. This exaggerated correspondence between Helmut and Hitler is typical of Fassbinder, who constantly endeavored to invoke the specter of the Fuhrer and his haunting presence in the hearts and minds of the modern day BRD through his films. For example, in his beloved 1974 film *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* which depicts the unlikely love story between an Algerian *gasterbeiter* (guest worker) Ali (El Hedi-Ben Salem) and an elderly woman Emmi (Brigitte Mira), after the couple are wed, they share their celebratory dinner eat at Hilter's favorite restaurant.

Once in the privacy of the home, Helmut begins more forcefully exerting control over every aspect of Martha's life. He manipulates her emotions, getting her to vie for his affections by constantly withholding them. Her taste in music, the literature she reads, where she smokes is all up for discussion and instruction. She attempts to please him with a new hairdo, which he mocks mercilessly. After a fight in which Helmut is enraged that Martha has not read an

exceptionally dull book on concrete as he had requested, he leaves the house for days without a word. Martha is an emotional wreck, and calls his brother to try and find him. She sets a date to see her friend Mr.Kaiser moments before a man arrives to cut off her telephone access. She begs him not too and he refuses, saying he received an urgent order from her husband that morning. She pretends she had forgotten and makes a flimsy excuse, clearly terrified.

Martha goes to meet Mr.Kaiser. While they talk in the park, Martha sees Helmut and the man who disconnected their telephone shake hands. Helmut walks away and Martha chases after him, but he eludes her. Next, she confronts the man who cut off her telephone. He denies that he has ever met her and says she must be mistaking him for someone else. Again, this is a clear instance of gas-lighting, made more terrifying by the fact that the conspiracy now involves another person. Helmut returns later that day, much to Martha's relief. After he departs for his next business trip, Martha dutifully memorizes entire passages from the concrete book, which she proudly recites for him upon his return. Soon after winning his approval with this performance, Helmut asks Martha not to leave the house any longer. He says he loves her so dearly, the thought that she could be unfaithful would be his death. After some persuasion, she agrees.

She adopts a cat after Helmut tells her they cannot have a child as based on her genes it would obviously be "demented". When Helmut discovers the creature in the home, he confronts Martha while holding the poor animal by the neck. As the black cat wriggles and yowls in obvious pain, Martha pleads and begs him to let her keep the animal for companionship. Although he agrees, in the next scene she finds it dead. Helmut rapes Martha in front of the animal's corpse while she weeps on the floor (Figure). During this and other disturbing instances of abuse and violence, sentimental classical music plays extra-diegetically. It is

tempting to describe the music as in contrast to the atmosphere of the scene. However, the selection it is a concerto by famed composer Johanne Brahms (1833-1897), one of the composers that Hitler promoted through the *Reichsmusikkammer*, a Nazi cultural institution that promoted German music as a part of the regime's "master race" propaganda. Accordingly, like the dark mahogany furniture, classical art and overall architectural style of the mansion Helmut and Martha share, this music evokes the cultural past while revealing how its politics permeate the present.

After days of isolated tedium, Martha goes out to see Mr.Kaiser at a Bavarian beer hall. She tells him about the cat, insisting that Helmut must have killed it. As with her earlier attempts at disclosing of her experiences of abuse, she is brushed off. Mr. Kaiser simply responds to her fear that her husband has murdered her pet that, "the strangest things happen with animals." The entire scene is depicted through a colored glass window. Martha and Mr. Kaiser sit inside the beer hall at a table, and the window framing functions to remind us, like the many spying onlookers throughout the film, that someone is always watching.[49] As Martha becomes more upset, she shows Mr.Kaiser a bloody toothmark left by Helmut. Mr.Kaiser tells her that she must be careful, as her husband is a sadist, but this only serves to provoke her more. As she admonishes him, refusing to accept this interpretation, and he in turns tells her to quiet down, the camera pans across the room to a group of leder-hosen clad men, intently listening (Figure 25).

Upon returning home, Martha finds Helmut waiting for her on the stairs. She shrieks, shocked and terrified to find him waiting there. He is eerily pleasant, and says she must be especially loving to him today. He says he has a present for her in the bedroom. Martha interprets this as a death threat. Significantly, from this point forward, the film reverses its earlier

[49] For example, Martha's mother watches on as Helmut and Martha share their first kiss. In the carnival scene in which Helmut proposes to Martha, Martha's sister Ilse and Helmut's brother Dr.Saloman can be seen spying in the background.

use of dramatic irony. Whereas in the pig's kidney scene we knew that Martha was being manipulated, but she could not tell. In this scene and for the rest of the film however, we are suddenly forced to share Martha's perspective, as we honestly cannot tell whether Helmut intends to kill her. We have witnessed how severely he has punished Martha for even the slightest transgressions, for instance not listening to the music or reading the books he suggests, in the past. And we suspect that he is capable of killing small animals. Accordingly, Martha's interpretation seems quite likely (Figure 26).

Distraught, Martha flees the home and arrives at Mr.Kaiser's apartment. She is inconsolably crying. Upon hearing footsteps approaching from the stairs, Martha shrieks wildly, thinking they belong to Helmut. Mr. Kaiser slaps her to calm her down as an old man observes in the background. Kaiser takes Martha for a drive, but she is convinced the car following behind them is Helmut chasing them. The car is the same, and a shot-reverse-shot pattern, roughly following Martha's perspective as she looks out the window, renders it unclear whether or not she is right. Frantically, Martha implores Mr.Kaiser to drive faster and faster. She pulls at the steering wheel in her frenzy and the rolls off the road. In a long shot, picturing the crash and the road behind, Kaiser's body lies on the hillside as a man pulls over and exits his car. His form is blurry in the distance, but as he moves forward it becomes clear that he is not Helmut. Up until this point, neither the audience nor Martha could tell.

In the next scene, Martha is lying in a hospital bed flanked by a nurse and her brother in-law Dr. Salomon. He tells her that Kaiser is dead, and she has been paralyzed from the waist down. She says with her hands she can manage, and smiles. When the doctor reminds her that Helmut would never abandon her, and that she will be in his care for the rest of her life, she

screams and flails until she is given a shot to sedate her. As she calms down, the sentimental Brahms' tune we heard earlier fades in to the scene.

In the film's final scene, Martha and Helmut are pictured in a metal elevator that occupies the entire frame. The Brahms' concerto sails in the background Martha sits in her wheel chair, staring straight ahead towards the camera. Upon her face she wears a taut smile. Helmut is behind her, holding the handles, wearing a matching expression. The first metal door closes behind them as they stand as motionless as wax figures. Moments later, the second door closes, slowly sealing them in the metal box as if it were a sarcophagus.

This claustrophobic final scene demonstrates beyond all doubt the dangers of courting a dictator. Just as literary scholar Peter Szondi argues of classical Greek tragic figures, Martha meets her, "demise along the very path [she] took to escape that demise" (59). As such, her fate can only be escaped by this "unity of salvation and annihilation" that we encounter in this final scene (59). In Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex,* Oedipus attempts to deny his fate and through this denial, guarantees it. For Martha, and by extension, the German nation at large, it is no different. Martha's desperate attempts to maintain harmony in her marriage enable her husband to demand more and more. In the context of 1970s West Germany, this overview of the politics of appeasement is not limited to the marital realm. As I have demonstrated, *Martha* mobilizes the institution of the family to make its critique of the ongoing legacy of fascism, positing the origins of the "catastrophe" can be traced back to the marital bed in the family home. In the film, Fassbinder demonstrates how the patriarchal politics governing bourgeois and aristocratic social institutions such as the family readily enable the conditions necessary for the horrors of fascism to thrive. This chapter has revealed that in *Martha*, the titular protagonist is a tragic figure whose naïve, ambivalent, and dangerous attempts to appease her dictatorial and abusive father and then

husband leads to her inevitable destruction. In this way, Martha allegorizes the position of the German people both on the eve of war and in the post-war period, willing to turn a blind eye to cruelty so as to maintain domestic harmony and material abundance.

Conclusion

Domestic Violence: Feminism, Film and Fascism in the 1970s

This thesis has chipped at away at a tiny sliver of the robust contact zone that exists across Japan and Germany. Taking the early 1970s as a starting point, a period during which both nations experienced a great period of left-wing civil unrest, I explored how two films: *Lady*

Snowblood and *Martha,* allegorized national history through the figure of a female protagonist and her relationship to their family. The films' renderings of national history, in particular their exploration of the roots of fascism, were considered in relation to the dominant discourses emerging from the historical profession in the post-war period. In the years following 1945, interpretations of the national past in West Germany and Japan sought to help repair the lost nation. In both West Germany and Japan, an interpretation of the past gained currency across various schools of thought that understood fascism through the logic of invasion. In each, historians traced fascism's origins back to Modernity, and the nations' encounter with the outside. In West Germany, historians such as Gerhard Ritter and Friedrich Meinecke blamed the French and Industrial revolutions for sowing the seeds of National Socialism in the nation. In Japan, it was the humiliating encounter with the West, when the nation first opened to foreign influence under threat of force with the Unequal Treaties of the 1860s that was blamed for the rise of the military industrial complex and imperial ambitions in East Asia.

In the introduction, I provided an overview of the historical and cultural resonances across Japan and Germany throughout the 19th and 20th century. Adopting the logic of entanglement as articulated by Rey Chow, I argued that due to their historical correspondences but geographic distance, there existed a neglected contact zone across West Germany and Japan in the field of cinema studies. Situating my project within the field of academic production, I sought to disrupt the traditional bifurcation of "East and West" endemic to English language media studies and explore the new forms of knowledge that might emerge from a relatively unconventional pairing of national film cultures.

In the second chapter, I traced how Toshiya Fujita's 1973 film *Lady Snowbloood* participated in a process of cultural self-reinvention that romanticized the past and critiqued the

present through an overview of the rise of Western hegemony in the Meiji period. The film, which partakes of the nationalistic *jidaigeiki* and *chanbara* genres, replicates a world-view based around the dictates of the samurai bushido code. I contextualized *Lady Snowblood* within a historical, historiographical, and film-industrial survey of the nation in the 20th century. Through a close-reading of the text itself, I demonstrated that *Lady Snowblood* espouses a neo-Confucian worldview in which the fate and honor of one family is tied to that of the nation. As I argue, throughout the film, only by upholding traditional philosophies and values such as filial piety and revenge can the nation and family be avenged.

In my third chapter, I trace how Fassbinder allegorized the current political situation and the national fascist past through the concepts of sadomasochism and gas-lighting. In the film, the titular character Martha stands in for the nation as she attempts to maneuver her way through an abusive relationship with a ruthless dictator, only to meet a tragic, inescapable end. I position Fassbinder's notion of the perpetually returning father/fuhrer in relation to the views of authoritative historians who went to great lengths to locate the roots of fascism outside the German nation. In my chapter, I trace the development of the nostalgic national genre of the *Heimat* concept throughout the 19th and 20th century. Only by understanding the history of regional and cultural exaltation of which the *Heimat* takes place can we understand Fassbinder's critique in *Martha.* I argue that the film renders interpersonal dynamics of bourgeois domestic life in such excessive terms so as to make strange the familiar. Fassbinder's application of the *Heimat* is excessive in the sense of grotesque, as it was intended to shock and subvert the romanticization of the past, functioning as a weapon against excessive sentimentality that was affecting the nation in the period.

Accordingly, a comparative analysis of the two films reveals that while they take similar

aesthetic and narrative approaches to negotiate national history, their motivations and conclusions could not be more polarized. Each film allegorizes the national past, embodying it in a woman's experiences of violence. Similarly, each film is bound up in an excessive application of nationalistic genres that predate cinema in the nation—the *jidaigeiki* and *chanbara* in *Lady Snowblood* and *Heimat* in *Martha*. Yet while *Lady Snowblood* romanticizes the national past, and mobilizes its ideology as a weapon against the future, in *Martha*, the ideology of the national past is the weapon against which the present must be defended.

Bibliography:

Artaud, Antonin. *The Theater and its Double*. Vol. 127. New York: Grove Press, 1958.

Berghahn, Klaus L., and Jost Hermand. *Goethe in German-Jewish Culture*. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2001. Print.

The Bitter Tears of Petra Von Kant. Dir. Rainer Werner Fassbinder. West Germany. Filmverlag der Autoren, 1972.

Bernardi, Joanne. *Writing in Light: the Silent Scenario and the Japanese Pure Film*

Movement. Detroit: Wayne State U Press, 2001. Print.

Cavanaugh, Carole. "Eroticism in Two Dimensions: Shinoda Masahiro's Double Suicide." *Japanese Cinema: Texts and Contexts*. London and New York: Routledge: Taylor and Francis Group, 2007. 205-18. Print.

Cho, Joanne Miyang, Lee M. Roberts, and Christian W. Spang. *Transnational Encounters between Germany and Japan: Perceptions of Partnership in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. Print.

Chow, Rey. *Entanglements: or Transmedial Thinking about Capture*. Durham and London: Duke U Press, 2012. Print.

Chow, Rey . "The Fascist Longing in our Midst." *Ariel*, vol. 26, no. 1, 1995, pp. 23–50.

Conrad, Sebastian. *The Quest for the Lost Nation: Writing History in Germany and Japan in the American Century*. Berkeley: U of California, 2010. Print.

Desjardins, Chris. *Outlaw Masters of Japanese film*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2005. Print.

Dower, John W. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2000. Print.

Dyer, Richard. *Stars*. New Ed. London: British Film Institute, 1998.

Elsaesser, Thomas. *Fassbinder's Germany: History Identity Subject*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996.

Fulbrook, Mary. *A History of Germany, 1918-2008: The Divided Nation*. Third ed. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. Print.

Furuhata, Yuriko. *Cinema of Actuality: Japanese Avant-Garde Filmmaking in the Season of Image Politics*. Durham: Duke U Press, 2013. Print.

Galbraith, Stuart. *The Toho Studios Story: a History and Complete Filmography*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2008. Print.

Gregor, A. James. *Young Mussolini and the Intellectual Origins of Fascism*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1979.

Gordon, Andrew. *A Modern History of Japan: from Tokugawa times to the Present*. New York: Oxford U Press, 2014. Print.

Hansen, Janine. "Celluloid Competition: German-Japanese Film Relations, 1929-1945." *Cinema and the Swastika: The International Expansion of Third Reich Cinema*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, NY, 2007, pp. 187–198.

Janke, Peter. "The Japanese Red Army." *Terrorism and Democracy: Some Contemporary Cases*. 1st ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992. 170-85. Print.

Keene, Donald. *Emperor of Japan: Meiji and his world, 1852-1912*. New York: Columbia U Press, 2009. Print.

Kringiel, Danny. "Lowbrow in High Places: When Lederhosen Porn Was King - SPIEGEL ONLINE - International." *SPIEGEL ONLINE*. SPIEGEL ONLINE, 15 Mar. 2013. Web. 1 Nov. 2016.

Knight, Julia. *New German cinema: Images of a Generation*. London: Wallflower, 2004. Print.

Koike, Kazuo. "A Beautiful Demon: Kazuo Koike on Lady Snowblood." Interview. *A Beautiful Demon: Kazuo Koike on Lady Snowblood*. Criterion Collection. DVD.

Kozma, Alicia. "Pinky Violence: Shock, Awe and the Exploitation of Sexual Liberation." *Journal of Japanese and Korean Cinema Journal of Japanese and Korean Cinema* 3.1 (2012): 37-44. Web.

Lady Snowblood (*Shurayukihime)*. Dir. Toshiya Fujita. Japan. Tokyo Eiga, 1973.

Lola. Dir. Rainer Werner Fassbinder. West Germany. Rialto Film. 1981.

Linville, Susan E. *Feminism, Film, Fascism: Women's Auto/Biographical Film in Postwar Germany*. Austin: U of Texas, 1998. Print.

Martha. Dir. Rainer Werner Fassbinder. West Germany. Westdeustcher Rundfunk, 1974.

The Marriage of Maria Braun. Dir. Rainer Werner Fassbinder. West Germany. Albatros Filmproduktion, Westdeustcher Rundfunk. 1979.

Michels, Eckard. "Deutsch als Weltsprache? Franz Thierfelder, the Deutsche Akademie in Munich and the Promotion of the German Language Abroad, 1923-1945." *German History* 22.2 (2004): 206-28. Web.

Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1989. 14-26.

The New Earth (Atarashiki Tsuchi). Dir. Arnold Fanck, Mansaku Itami. Germany and Japan. T&K Telefilm. 1937.

Oguma, Eiji. " Japan's 1968: A Collective Reaction to Rapid Economic Growth in an Age of Turmoil." Trans. Stephen Poland, Nick Kapur and Samuel Melissa. *The Asia Pacific Journal* 1st ser. 13.12 (2015): 1-24. Web.

Osada, Norio. "Killer Construction: Norio Osada on Lady Snowblood." Interview. *Killer Construction: Norio Osada on Lady Snowblood*. Criterion Collection. DVD.

Phillips, Alastair, and Julian Stringer. *Japanese Cinema: Texts and Contexts*. London: Routledge, 2007. Print.

Prager, Brad. "A Challenge, Maybe the Greatest for a Filmmaker." *German Television: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives*. Vol. 19. New York- Oxford: Berghran , 2016. 87-110. Print.

Princes of Yen: Central Bank Truth Documentary. Dir. Michael Oswald. By Rainer Werner. Queuepolitely, 2014. DVD.

Sasaki-Uemura, Wesley Makoto. *Organizing the Spontaneous: Citizen Protest in Postwar Japan*. Honolulu: U of Hawai'i Press, 2001. Print.

Schaller, Michael. *America's Favorite War Criminal: Kishi Nobusuke and the Transformation of U.S.-Japan Relations* . Working paper no. 11. N.p.: Japan Policy Research Institute, 1995. Print.

Severns, Karen. "Nikkatsu Roman Porno Reboot Project." *The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan*. The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan, 26 Aug. 2016. Web. 22 Jan. 2017.

Sharp, Jasper. *Behind the Pink Curtain: The Complete History of Japanese Sex Cinema*. Godalming, Surrey: FAB, 2008. Print.

Shattuc, Jane. *Television, Tabloids, and Tears: Fassbinder and Popular Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

Snelders, S., and T. Pieters. "Speed in the Third Reich: Metamphetamine (Pervitin) Use and a Drug History From Below." *Social History of Medicine* 24.3 (2011): 686-99. Web.

Standish, Isolde. *A New History of Japanese Cinema: A Century of Narrative Film*. New York: Continuum, 2005. Print.

Standish, Isolde. *Politics, Porn and Protest: Japanese Avant-Garde Cinema in the 1960s and 1970s*. New York: Continuum International Pub. Group, 2011. Print.

Steiner, George. "Tragedy, Pure and Simple." *Tragedy and the Tragic: Greek Theatre and Beyond*. Comp. M. S. Silk. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996. 534-46.

Szondi, Peter. "Oedipus Rex." *An Essay on the Tragic*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2002. 59-63.

Tansman, Alan. *The Culture of Japanese Fascism*. Durham, Duke University Press, 2009.

The Third Generation. Dir. Rainer Werner Fassbinder. West Germany. New York Films, 1979.

Thomsen, Christian Braad. *Fassbinder: the Life and Work of a Provocative Genius*. Faber & Faber, 1997.

Varon, Jeremy. *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies*. Berkeley: University of California, 2004.

Vazsonyi, Nicholas. *Lukács Reads Goethe: from Aestheticism to Stalinism*. Columbia (Mo.): Camden House, 1997. Print.

Veronika Voss. Dir. Rainer Werner Fassbinder. West Germany. Rialto Film. 1982

Weisser, Thomas, and Yuko Mihara. Weisser. *Japanese Cinema Encyclopedia: The Sex Films*. Miami, FL: Vital , 1998. Print.

Wierzbicka, Anna. *Understanding Cultures through their Key Words English, Russian, Polish, German, and Japanese*. New York: Oxford U Press, 1997. Print.

Williams, Linda. "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess." *Film Quarterly* 44.4 (1991): 2-13. *University of California Press Digital Publishing*. Web.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4


小松方正
松崎真
長谷川弘
黒木進
高木均
Duty and feeling

Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 7

Figure 8

Figure 9

Figure 10


Revenge.

Figure 11

Figure 12

Figure 13

Figure 14

Figure 15


I'm sorry, Martha.
Did you forget I'm allergic to offal?
There's no need to cry, no need at all.


Yes, it was Father's favourite dish.
Let's go in the kitchen
and cook something quickly.

Figure 16


And I have the impression your body smells.

Figure 17

Figure 18


I've learnt to always agree
with what my husband says,
Dishonest? Okay, so it's dishonest,


but it's more peaceful,
and you need fewer sedatives.

Figure 19

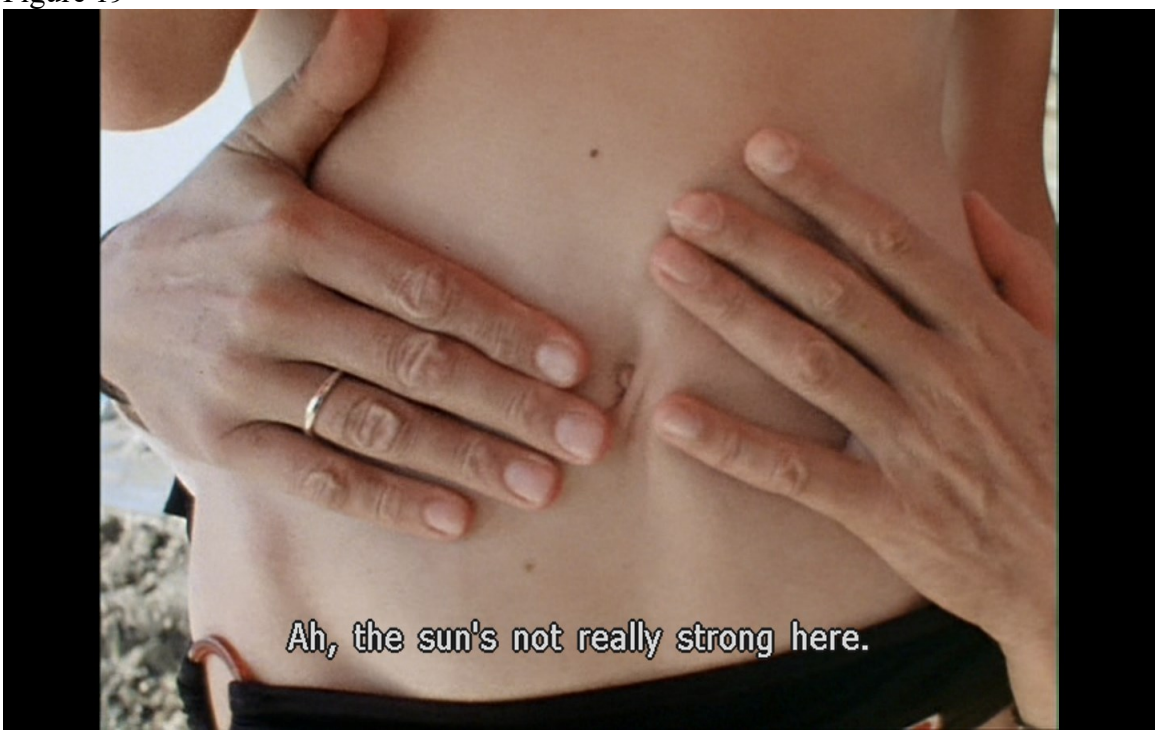

Figure 20

Figure 21


How do you like married life?
it's hard to say. It's just so different.


I can't think of anything when you ask.
I don't want to say he frightens me,


You're afraid? Why?


I can't describe it.

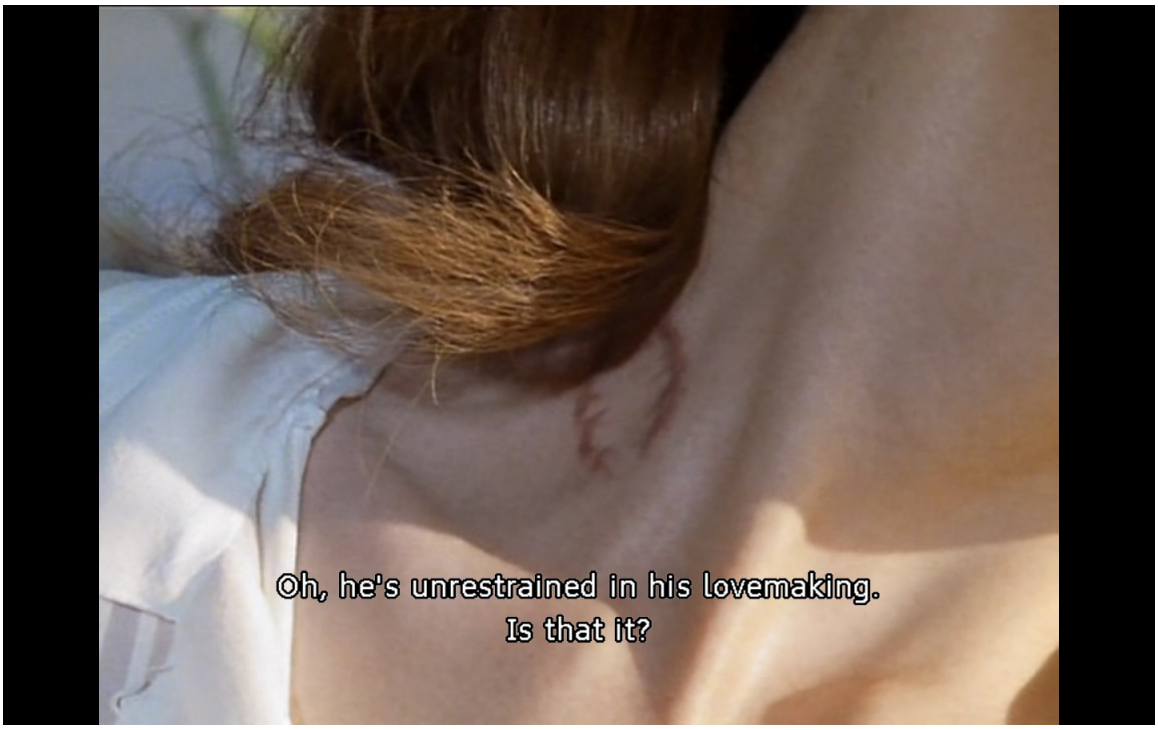
Oh, he's unrestrained in his lovemaking.
Is that it?

Figure 22

Figure 23

Figure 24


Hear, hear. All this talk of freedom.
Life's not free.
Moral laws are not a matter of fashion.


That's all very true
and we were all brought up strictly...

Figure 25

Figure 26

Figure 27


You've been out, Martha.
You promised me you wouldn't leave the house.

Figure 28


He's following us.
He said his car had broken down.
He's coming! Don't slow down!
Don't let him catch me!


Drive faster!

Figure 29