

Feminism, Film, Fascism: Women's Auto/biographical Film in Postwar Germany

Susan E. Linville

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German society's inability and/or refusal to come to terms with its Nazi past has been analyzed in many cultural works, including the well-known books *Society without the Father* and *The Inability to Mourn*. In this pathfinding study, Susan Linville challenges the accepted wisdom of these books by focusing on a cultural realm in which mourning for the Nazi past and opposing the patriarchal and authoritarian nature of postwar German culture are central concerns—namely, women's feminist auto/biographical films of the 1970s and 1980s.

After a broad survey of feminist theory, Linville analyzes five important films that reflect back on the Third Reich through the experiences of women of different ages—Marianne Rosenbaum's *Peppermint Peace*, Helma Sanders-Brahms's *Germany, Pale Mother*, Jutta Brückner's *Hunger Years*, Margarethe von Trotta's *Marianne and Juliane*, and Jeanine Meerapfel's *Malou*. By juxtaposing these films with the accepted theories on German culture, Linville offers a fresh appraisal not only of the films' importance but especially of their challenge to misogynist interpretations of the German failure to grieve for the horrors of its Nazi past.



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