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The Global Phenomenon of "Humanizing" Terrorism in Literature and Cinema

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Abstract: In her paper "The Global Phenomenon of 'Humanizing' Terrorism in Literature and Cinema" Elaine Martin presents -- following a discussion of two early examples, Schiller's *The Robbers* and Heinrich von Kleist's *Michael Kohlhaas* (1810) -- an analysis of several contemporary works that model different ways of representing terrorism: Heinrich Böll's *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum* (1975) and its 1976 filmic adaptation by Volker Schlöndorff, Doris Lessing's *The Good Terrorist* (1985), Santosh Sivan's film *The Terrorist* (1999), and Tom Tykwer's film *Heaven* (2002). Edward Said provided a critique of the battle against terrorism, saying that it is selective ("we" are never terrorists; "they" always are) and that it attempts to obliterate history and temporality by isolating the enemy from time, from causality, and from prior action ("The Essential Terrorist"). Provocatively, literary texts and films about terrorism have repeatedly broken these official taboos by locating terrorist figures and terrorist acts within an interlocking grid of time, causality, and history. This is true of models as early as Schiller's 1781 *The Robbers* as well as many twentieth- and twenty-first-century works. This extensive temporal span is paralleled by a similarly broad geographical span, in that works on terrorism that challenge the official/governmental interpretation of the phenomenon come from virtually every continent.

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The Global Phenomenon of "Humanizing" Terrorism in Literature and Cinema

Writing about the events of 11 September 2001, Haruo Shirane concluded: "It is not enough to condemn and fight terrorism: we must understand its causes" (513). In the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks, however, this was not an acceptable thought. Any effort to understand, explain, or investigate the cause of the attacks was perceived as an attempt at justification. Providing a reason for the attacks transformed them into the acts of rational people, and it was preferable to view the perpetrators as madmen operating in an irrational world. In his essay "The Essential Terrorist" Edward Said addresses this same topic but from a somewhat different perspective. He provides a critique of the ideological and cultural battle against terrorism, citing two problems with it: "first, its selectivity ('we' are never terrorists no matter what we may have done; 'they' always are and always will be), and second, its wholesale attempt to obliterate history, and indeed temporality itself. For the main thing is to isolate your enemy from time, from causality, from prior action, and thereby to portray him or her as ontologically and gratuitously interested in wreaking havoc for its own sake" (154). Literary texts and films with terrorist themes have trod precisely into the fraught area of investigating causes and have broken all the taboos put forth by the official battle against terrorism by locating their terrorist subjects within an interlocking grid of time, causality, and history. This is true not only of contemporary texts and films, but perhaps surprisingly, also of some of the earliest Western examples.

Scholars on terrorism and literature, such as Margaret Scanlan, have located the roots of twentieth- and twenty-first century terrorist literature in the works of Dostoevsky (*The Possessed* 1871), James (*The Princess Casamassima* 1886), and Conrad (*The Secret Agent* 1907; *Under Western Eyes* 1910), who were writing in the forty-year period between 1870 and World War I. But one can also go back to what Scanlan calls "the romantic model of revolution, in which strong-willed individuals pit themselves against authority" (*Plotting Terror* 7). These Romantic works, such as Friedrich Schiller's *The Robbers* (1781) and Heinrich von Kleist's "Michael Kohlhaas" (1810) are particularly interesting in light of their affinity with an unusual phenomenon, succinctly summarized by Doris Lessing in the title of her 1985 novel *The Good Terrorist*. This seeming oxymoron points to a complex psychological phenomenon as well as the salient role of literature and film in representing and even mediating terrorism. One thinks here especially of the role of television and other journalistic media in "creating" terrorism through sensationalized reporting. In any number of authors from Schiller, Kleist, and Dostoevsky through Mary McCarthy, Doris Lessing, and Friedrich Dürrenmatt, to Salman Rushdie, Don DeLillo, and J.M. Coetzee -- and to filmmakers like Volker Schlöndorff and Margarethe von Trotta of the New German Cinema -- there seems to be a single project: to contextualize terrorists and terrorism temporally, causally, and historically. In its opposition to the officially promulgated "ideological and cultural battle against terrorism" cited by Said, literature and films thus play a revolutionary role seemingly aiding and abetting terrorism by explaining/rationalizing/legitimizing it and by "humanizing" terrorist figures.

The philosophical underpinnings of this "humanization-of-terrorism" discussion range from Walter Benjamin's theory of history as a state of siege to Albert Camus's belief that revolt is an essential dimension of human existence and Julia Kristeva's postulate that only the confrontation of "an obstacle, prohibition, authority, or law . . . allows us to realize ourselves as autonomous and free" (420). To illustrate the ramifications of these principles I have selected a few representative works; several factors dictated my choices of these works. Primarily, I wanted to demonstrate both the temporal and geographical range of the "humanization" phenomenon, thus suggesting a universality that invites further examination. A preponderance of my examples comes, however, from European literatures and cinemas because it is the body of works with which I am most familiar. The ubiquity of the humanization of terrorists/terrorist acts in literary and cinematic works leads to the question: why? While this question informs the entirety of the ensuing discussion, a formal response is best left until the conclu-

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sion, at which point we will have the advantage of numerous cases in point. The various texts and films chosen also suggest a number of themes and subgenres among works on terrorism. The Schiller and Kleist texts exemplify a rupture of the social contract between individual and community as do Heinrich Böll's *Katharina Blum*, Margarethe von Trotta's *Christa Klages*, and Tom Tykwer's *Heaven* as well. Santosh Sivan introduces, in his film *The Terrorist*, the suicide bomber subgenre, to which Hany Abu-Assad's *Paradise Now*, Joseph Castelo's *The War Within*, and John Updike's *Terrorist* also belong. Another subgenre would be the hostage-taking narrative represented in works such as Ann Patchett's *Bel Canto*, Bruno Barreto's *Four Days in September*, and Marco Bellochio's *Good Morning Night*.

I discuss briefly two early examples -- the Schiller and Kleist texts mentioned above -- to demonstrate the historical sweep of the phenomenon. I then move to several core works from different countries -- in this case taken from Germany, the UK, and India -- which exemplify the geographical span of this contextualizing/humanizing process as well. The examples I have chosen in this second, more contemporary group (with reference to other related works) span a thirty-year period in three increments of about a decade each: 1975, 1985, and 1999-2002. Heinrich Böll's story *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum* appeared in (then West) Germany in 1975, followed immediately by Völker Schlöndorff's now famous filming of the work. Böll's subtitle tellingly reads: "Wie Gewalt enstehen und wohin sie führen kann" ("How violence can be spawned and where it can lead"; unless indicated otherwise, all translations from the German are mine). Both the novel and the film explore the terrorist aspects of the media, specifically the tabloid press and how a non-violent woman is driven to commit murder. This phenomenon of women who turn violent in the name of a good cause is labeled by the title of English author, Doris Lessing's novel *The Good Terrorist*. Seemingly an oxymoron, this term describes a new phenomenon in which the terrorist protagonist -- here an overweight thirty-six year old named Alice, who mothers the other terrorists in her cell -- is humanized, made comprehensible, and thereby rendered harmless. A little over a decade later Indian director Santosh Sivan picks up this theme in his film *The Terrorist* (1999), exploring the detailed process by which a young woman becomes a suicide bomber -- a process that seduces the viewer into a voyeuristic, identificatory role, in which she/he undergoes simultaneously the transformation into a terrorist. German director Tom Tykwer's 2002 film *Heaven*, similar to Böll's *Katharina Blum*, presents a female terrorist who begins as a law abiding citizen but is driven to extreme action out of desperation. Her violent act (a bombing) is delineated carefully according to historical, causal, and temporal considerations, and an open-ended final scene denies the viewer closure, and instead engages one directly in a project of completing the film. Not only do these examples show the temporal and spatial range of the phenomenon, they also reflect a variety of genres used to explore terrorism: these examples are taken from literature (plays, novels, novellas) and from cinema (auteur films as well as literary adaptations, both with documentary elements) -- all of which have their own literary/cinematic conventions as well as shared thematic material. The works' objectives, along with numerous other examples from countries as diverse as Sri Lanka (Michale Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*), Peru (Ann Patchett's *Bel Canto*), Brazil (Bruno Barreto's *Four Days in September*), and Palestine (Hany Abu-Assad's *Paradise Now* or Yasmina Khadra's *The Attack*), include humanizing the terrorists themselves and contextualizing individual acts of violence. These objectives are achieved in a number of sometimes overlapping ways. First, many of the texts and films are based on real historical events, a fact which renders the protagonists more believable in their extremism. Second, almost all of the works center on a single person, and that person is portrayed as conflicted. Third, in the films, the terrorists are invariably young and attractive, as is true of the literary works as well with the notable exception of Lessing's *The Good Terrorist* where 36-year old Alice is described as "a fattish clumsy girl" (10). Fourth, many of the protagonists turn to terrorism only as the result of being wronged or of being expelled from a social group such as the family or community or out of desperation (all else has failed). In some cases the good terrorist is set off by a bad terrorist foil, who subtly points up his underlying folk hero status. The good terrorist often begins with an admirable motivation but suffers from a kind of fatal flaw that ensures ultimate defeat. Fifth, the per-

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spective from which the terrorism is described or portrayed is always that of an insider, which enhances insight into motivation. Sixth, the description or portrayal of brutality or murder is generally circumscribed and if represented at all is indirect. And finally, in a significant number of cases, the terrorist regrets his or her actions, experiences doubts, and may even repent.

I turn now to the various works that I have selected as examples of my points, beginning with Friedrich Schiller's late-eighteenth-century play. Schiller's Karl von Moor, the leader of the robber band in *Die Räuber* (1781, *The Robbers*), constitutes one of the earliest examples of the sympathetic terrorist. Already in the cast of characters the members of the gang are listed as "Libertiner, nachher Banditen" (libertines, later bandits). They begin merely as wild young men -- Karl is a student -- who like to carouse. Only after Karl is betrayed by his brother and seemingly rejected by his father -- cast out from the family bonds -- does he embrace the life of the robber band. Even then he has scruples -- killing wicked men in one attack but refusing to engage in plundering. The foil, the amoral Spiegelberg (reflected in the name "Spiegel" or mirror) shows up Karl's intact sense of morality. His remorse and repentance at the end of the play effectively undercut his earlier rejection of the restrictive bourgeois Weltanschauung. "Oh what a fool that I was," Karl says at the end of the final scene, before turning himself over to the authorities, "to suppose that I could make the world a fairer place through terror, and uphold the cause of justice through lawlessness. I called it revenge and right -- I took it upon myself, O Providence, to smooth the jagged edges of your sword and make good your partiality -- but -- oh, childish vanity -- here I stand at the limit of a life of horror, and see now with weeping and gnashing of teeth, that *two men such as I would destroy the whole moral order of creation*" (Schiller 296; emphasis in the original). As one might expect of an eighteenth-century work that challenges the underlying structure of society, law and order are reinstated at the end, and the iconoclast pays for his violent rebellion with his life.

Published about twenty years after Schiller's play, Heinrich von Kleist's novella *Michael Kohlhaas*, based on a true story from the mid-sixteenth century, exhibits significant parallels with *The Robbers*. The protagonist, a horsetrader this time instead of a member of the nobility, has been wronged, is given no satisfaction in the legal system, and takes the law into his own hands. In exacting revenge, he terrorizes the entire populace of Saxony in eastern Germany. Once again we have the foil of a bad terrorist, Nagelschmidt, who unlike Kohlhaas, has no cause other than to rob and plunder. Although Kohlhaas's revenge is extreme, his cause is just, and he is perceived by the people as a folk hero, not a criminal. Kleist agonizingly draws out the causality aspect as Kohlhaas exhausts every legal avenue. By the time he turns to terror, the reader is completely engaged in his struggle and inclined to accept the necessity of the ensuing violence. In 1969 Volker Schlöndorff filmed Kleist's novella, adding the subtitle "Der Rebell" (The Rebel), which anticipates the director's focus in the film. The rebellious acts, especially those of a violent, terrorist bent, are emphasized, and some are even added to the original story. Schlöndorff aims at a synchronic rather than diachronic contextualization of the story. The opening credits are shot over documentary footage of numerous student riots and violent demonstrations around the world in the late 1960s -- contemporaneous with the shooting of the film, thus linking Kohlhaas's rebellion in both time and space to a more extensive framework. When the city of Wittenberg is going up in flames, we hear, anachronistically, rock music. And Schlöndorff humanizes his terrorist, his Robin-Hood-run-amok, by emphasizing domestic scenes -- Kohlhaas *en famille* -- even creating new scenes of intimacy between Kohlhaas and his wife. Whereas the novella ends with Kohlhaas dying but his two sons being taken into the nobility, the film concludes with the freeing of his two contested horses. In the novella his terrorism and his personal sacrifice have borne fruit for the next generation. *Michael Kohlhaas -- der Rebell* is one of the few examples with graphic violence. Conservative reviewers accused Schlöndorff of "fashionable sadism" and "directorial excess" (Moeller and Lellis 56).

After collaborating with Schlöndorff on *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum* (1975), a film that explores the terrorist aspects of the media, specifically the tabloid press, Margarethe von Trotta made her first independent film, *The Second Awakening of Christa Klages* in 1977, which was at the height

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of political turmoil in Germany. Based on a real incident in München, the protagonist robs a bank with two friends to save a financially endangered kindergarten. The name "Klages" embodies the idea of complaint or accusation against society and its injustices. Unlike Karl Moor and Michael Kohlhaas, Christa has not been wronged, but like them, she has a noble or justified cause. Not only is the causality explored, the bank teller present at the robbery takes upon herself a detective-like reconstruction of Christa's life. This contextualizing work she pursues throughout the film leads directly to the empathetic lie at the conclusion of the film that saves Christa. The medium of film supplements the word with not only images but famously with the sustained and intense gaze that plays an especially important role in this film. Trotta uses numerous close-up shots to emphasize emotions, and to personalize and humanize the terrorists behind the violent acts. This extensive use of close-up and extreme close-up shots is a device that recurs in numerous films about terrorism. Von Trotta pursued additional terrorist subjects in her films *Rosa Luxemburg* and *Marianne und Juliane*, the latter work -- again taken from historical fact -- about the Ensslin sisters one of whom was a member of the Baader-Meinhof terrorist group.

Both von Trotta and Schlöndorff have been interested in the role of the media, beginning with their collaboratively made film *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum* in 1975. Apart from these two filmmakers, even the most progressive voices commenting on the media and terrorism seem not to acknowledge the possibility of terrorism *by* the media. In her essay in *Terrorism, Media, Liberation*, Brigitte Nacos coins the term mass-mediated terrorism, writing: "While the term media terrorism captures terrorists' emphasis on communicating their deeds and causes, it could be misunderstood to mean a compliant role on the part of the media. In order to avoid such a misunderstanding, the term mass-mediated terrorism seems more appropriate, capturing the centrality of communication via the mass media" (188). However, what interested Heinrich Böll -- taken from personal experience -- in his novella *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum*, was state violence/terrorism, represented by the collusion of the police and the media. The publication of the book in 1975 caused an uproar in Germany because it was considered a sympathetic portrayal of a terrorist couple (Katharina Blum and the man she meets at a *Karneval* party, an army deserter), and it appeared at the height of the Baader-Meinhof gang and the terrorist activities of the Rote Armee Fraktion in Germany. Böll was accused of being a sympathizer and he and his extended family were harassed, including a raid on his son's apartment in the middle of the night. Böll is sharply critical of the way in which the tabloid press manipulates language so that through omissions and rearrangements of words, innuendo trumps the truth. He also exposes the brutality of the police as well as a particularly aggressive kind of reporter, in this case named Tötges -- a name associated in German with death ("Tod" death and "töten" to kill), as he "kills" the reputation of the innocent Katharina Blum figuratively and kills her mother literally by sneaking into the intensive care station to interview her. Katharina loses, step by step, everything through the relentless hounding of the press: her job, her apartment, her mother, her anonymity, even her identity. Pushed to the brink, she invites Tötges to her ruined apartment for an "exclusive" interview and shoots him when he suggests they have sex. Underlining the similarity of their world views, both the police chief and the reporter use sexual innuendo as part of their violence toward Katharina, who by contrast looks increasingly like a victim not a perpetrator. Böll said of the novella: "Es gibt in dieser Erzählung nicht einen einzigen Terroristen, auch keine Terroristin; was es allerdings gibt, das sind des Terrorismus *verdächtige*" ("There are no terrorists in this book, male or female, only people accused of terrorism") ("Zehn Jahre später" 139). The work exhibits a number of the above-delineated humanizing factors: based partially in fact, an attractive protagonist, focus on a single person, and the protagonist driven to a violent act out of sheer desperation.

Another European example, but a decade later, Doris Lessing's 1985 book with the provocative title *The Good Terrorist* is a long novel -- long enough to develop her main character in such detail that the reader feels like she/he knows Alice intimately. She comes from a bourgeois London home and exhibits a rather inexplicable need to mother and nurture the other terrorists squatting with her in a

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large, condemned house. Alice spends the entire 375 pages of the novel cooking tea and turning the house into a home. This domesticity does little to prepare the reader for the violent end, in which the group goes out on a major bombing raid that ends badly. The shock factor is reminiscent of films such as *Bonnie and Clyde* or maybe *Thelma and Louise*. Lessing's novel seems to be as much about Alice's intellectual confusion concerning violence as about the terrorist cell itself. Scanlan comments on Alice's identity crisis: "what does the terrorist find in her attic? Why, a New Look dress with gold lace: Alice pulls it over her head, then strips it off angrily, 'as if she had been tempted briefly by the forbidden,' when she begins to feel "that the dress was laying a claim on her" (188). To be not only female, but feminine in the sense of the 1950s, is a temptation Alice represses ruthlessly, a perennial source of guilt: "Here am I, fussing about a house, when they are doing something serious" (88). Defacing property -- painting slogans on walls -- is therefore, Alice's favorite revolutionary activity, scarcely to be distinguished from more private ones, throwing a rock through a window in her father's house or ripping the curtains out of her mother's (*Plotting Terror* 88). The role of clothing may appear frivolous in this example, but it reappears in several other works, especially those in which the terrorist protagonists are female. This is a growing phenomenon, and stands in contrast to most paradigms that equate terrorism with masculinity. Early examples such as Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* (1965) show women committing terrorist acts alongside men, and increasingly we find examples where female figures actually replace the male terrorists. A riveting example is provided by a 2000 Indian film called simply *The Terrorist*. Directed by Santosh Sivan, it is based loosely on the assassination of India's prime minister Rajiv Ghandi, and follows the trajectory of a female suicide bomber through her training to the day of the assassination. Malli, played by Ayesha Sharkar, belongs clearly to the category of "young, attractive terrorist protagonists." We watch her develop from a hardened and brutal executioner to a humanized and sensual mother-to-be. The transformation is effected primarily through flashbacks that both justify the terrorist group's acts but also contextualize her sacrifice with that of her martyred brother, murdered parents, and tortured friends. Like Schlöndorff's *Michael Kohlhaas*, this film does not shy away from the graphic representation of brutality, the violent underbelly of terrorism as it were. Malli volunteers for the assignment and, as a reward, meets with the leader of her movement who tries to firm up her resolve. He is shown only from the back in an intimidating way, his body filling almost the entire screen. We hear his smooth voice and see his hands, as a synecdoche, playing with a Western-style drink (ice cubes in the middle of the jungle!). He is thus represented as a disembodied force. In the style of a *Bildungsroman*, achieved partly through flashbacks, we observe and even to a certain extent participate in Malli's gradual transformation. In a scene reminiscent of Alice and the "gold lace dress" in Lessing's *The Good Terrorist*, Malli tries on feminine clothing that has been issued to her so that she will fit in as a suicide bomber; she preens before a mirror, imitating poses of movie stars in posters on the walls. This is the first time the viewer has seen her in anything other than combat fatigues and it may well be the first time that she has seen her own image in a mirror. Both this film and my last example represent cases of what Nacos in her essay "Mass-Mediated Terrorism in the New World (Dis)Order" calls "expressive terrorism" (191). This refers to a new kind of political violence in which its perpetrators are said to lack clearly defined political ends but "give vent to rage against state power and to feelings of revenge" (Avishai Margalit qtd. in Nacos 191). This extreme "personalizing" of terrorist acts blurs the boundaries between victim and perpetrator, since acts of retribution presuppose an initial wrong that is being avenged.

German director Tom Tykwer, known widely for his innovative 1999 film *Run Lola Run* (*Lola rennt*), made a film about terrorism in 2002. As reviewer Maurice Yacowar notes, "The project gives Polish auteur Krzysztof Kieslowski a voice from beyond the grave -- it's based on the first part of a trilogy he wrote with Krzysztof Piesiewicz. … In Kieslowski's trilogy, the subsequent films were to be titled *Hell* and *Purgatory*" (49). The overt associations attached to expressions such as heaven, hell, and purgatory serve to open up traditional value judgments since in this first film, it is a murder-

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er/terrorist who is associated with heaven. Set in Italy, *Heaven* opens with a helicopter training session in a simulator followed by images of a young woman, Phillipa Paccard, packing up a bomb. The helicopter will not be needed again until the last, fantastic scene, another variation on *Thelma and Louise*, when the helicopter ascends into infinity. But the bomb will be put to use right away. Like the actresses in *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum* and *The Terrorist*, Cate Blanchett, who plays Phillipa Paccard, is young and attractive; her sensitivity is emphasized through repeated extreme close-up shots emphasizing expressive eyes and trembling lips. As Katharina Blum, she is suspected by the police of belonging to a terrorist group and she is treated in a similarly rough manner during interrogation. In fact, she was trying to murder a drug dealer, an act that nudges her toward the realm of folk hero. She is however, horrified, to learn that she not only failed but also killed four innocent people, including two children, in an elevator (the bomb was inadvertently moved after she placed it). As in *Katharina Blum*, the police are corrupt, in this case being on the take with the drug dealer. Phillipa forms an unlikely alliance with a young, uncorrupted, sympathetic police officer (conveniently named Filippo), who ingeniously springs her from jail; they shave their heads thus furthering the oneness of their identity and go on the lam. Her violent act is carefully contextualized according to historical, causal, and temporal considerations throughout the film, and an open-ended final scene denies the viewer closure; instead one finds oneself engaged directly in a project of imaginatively completing the film.

A final element that links these literary and filmic explorations of terrorism is what Scanlan calls "a shared anxiety about the efficacy, the power and clarity, of language" ("Language & Politics" 3). Richard Rubenstein, in *Alchemists of Revolution: Terrorism in the Modern World*, argues similarly that terrorism has its roots in despair about language. "Rubenstein argues that most terrorists start out attempting to communicate their programs in speeches and manifestos. Yet when their words go unheeded, they turn to actions meant to speak louder" (232). Alex Schmid and Janny de Graaf second this view, writing: "Terrorism, by using violence against one victim, seeks to persuade others. The immediate victim is merely instrumental, the skin of a drum beaten to achieve a calculated impact on a wider audience. As such, an act of terrorism is in reality an act of communication. For the terrorist the message matters, not the victim" (14). This anxiety of communication, and especially an awareness of the inadequacy and fallibility of speech logically ties terrorism to literature and terrorists to authors in a unique bond. Howard Lay, in an essay on French anarchists in 1894, writes: "There was no ignoring anarchist terrorism in fin-de-siècle Paris. It had made its presence felt repeatedly between 1892 and 1894 with a succession of bombings and an estimable quotient of violence, destruction, and bloodshed. It had also established itself as a rudimentary mode of communication, an inchoate language through which a stalwart revolutionary subculture sought simultaneously to speak and to act, or more precisely, to speak by acting" (80). The works cited in this essay all exhibit aspects of this phenomenon in which the protagonist moves from a state of disenfranchisement and silence to one in which s/he commits violence in order to be heard. Works such as Böll's *Katharina Blum* particularly probe the role of the media in helping to *create* terrorism. If so-called hard news in the media was able to segue into infotainment, then perhaps it was inevitable that terrorism would find its way into popular culture. The violent aspects were quickly absorbed into feature-length films (*United 93*, *Syriana*, *The Twin Towers*) and made-for-television movies (*Sleeper Cell*); a proposal has even been floated for a sitcom called *The Cell*, in which the terrorists fall in love with US-American culture including bowling and fast food. These cases are mentioned as yet another example of how terrorists can be humanized. But viewers and readers connect with terrorists and terrorist acts on another level as well. Is it not possible that many people believe that there might be some justification to certain terrorists' causes? Certainly these factors help explain why cultural artifacts -- books and films -- that represent terrorism humanize and contextualize both terrorists and terrorist acts. Much as with the films of Third Cinema, literature helps give a voice to multiple perspectives rather than only the official one, in this case the counterterrorist rhetoric of the state.

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Additionally, the contemporary frame of reference -- violence and terrorism throughout the world -- makes us care especially about these already compelling stories, several of which such as *Michael Kohlhaas*, *Christa Klages*, and *The Terrorist* are based in historical events. Wolf Donner, in his review of the film *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum*, personalizes the viewer's role: Katharina Blum "imparts to us immediately the two depressing truths of her story: first, the same could happen to each of us, with the same brutal logic, leaving us equally as hurt, destroyed, and defenseless; secondly, violence as counter-violence arises in this way, pushed against the wall to this degree, one must defend one-self and has no choice but to turn radical" (qtd. in Moeller and Lellis 135). These works introduce important ethical issues to the discourse of terrorism and simultaneously offer a caveat, a warning to those of us who believe ourselves to be immune. They also comment on the intellectual response to violence and terrorism; in that these works directly challenge official / governmental responses to terrorism by insisting upon context, they constitute a kind of revolution, or even terrorist practice, in themselves, echoing Lenin's remark that "terrorism is the violence of intellectuals" (Scanlan, *Plotting Terror* 76).

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