This paper will consider the performance of care in the 2012 feature, Barbara, by leading Berlin School director, Christian Petzold. It will be seen as an example of the particular kind of measured, attentive filmmaking that has become the hallmark of the Berlin School. Set in and around a provincial hospital in the GDR of 1980, the film explores the possibility of a viable ethics of care in personal behaviour when subject to the biopolitical ‘care’ of the state. The paper will centre on a scene in which Rembrandt’s The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Nicolaes Tulp is subjected to diagnosis, apparently as an allegory of a just praxis of care.

Andrew Webber is Professor of Modern German and Comparative Culture in the Department of German and Dutch at the University of Cambridge. Prof Webber undertakes research in German and Austrian culture in the modern period, with special interests in narrative writing, film, and cultural theory and analysis. Much of his published work, including the book The Doppelgänger: Double Visions in German Literature (Oxford, 1996), is concerned with issues of identity, both personal and social. He has an active interest in psychoanalysis and in theories of gender and sexuality, with many publications in these areas. He has also published a translation of the ‘Schreber Case’ for the new Penguin edition of the works of Freud. His work also embraces comparative perspectives, and his book The European Avant-Garde 1900-1940 appeared in the Polity Press Cultural History of Literature series in 2004. Much of his most recent work has been concerned with urban space, and in particular Berlin. From 2004-2007 he held a Major Research Fellowship from the Leverhulme Trust to work on the city, and the resulting book, Berlin in the Twentieth Century: A Cultural Topography was published by Cambridge University Press in 2008. This has led to a more general interest in questions of identity and territory in contemporary German-language culture. He is also currently Principal Investigator for a major AHRC-funded project to produce digital critical editions of key works by Arthur Schnitzler.

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