The Art of the Archive: Uses of the Past in the German Essay Film

by

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Professor Anton Kaes, Chair
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Abstract

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This dissertation tracks the changing conception of the archive in film and media art. It examines filmmakers who reflect upon the historicity of cinema in their work and use the archive as a model for creating their essay films, video essays and installations. The four filmmakers whose work is under examination—Alexander Kluge, Hartmut Bitomsky, Harun Farocki and Hito Steyerl—have each played an instrumental role in the development of the film industry in postwar and contemporary Germany. Considered in a constellation with one another, they cover an important period of German—and global—media history, in which the forms of moving images and their mode of exhibition have diversified. New archival sources and media technology expanded the possibilities for these filmmakers to explore the contents of the German cinematographic archive and to integrate moving images from previous sources into their works. Taking their cue from Walter Benjamin's concept of history and his practices of citation, these filmmakers use montage to put films from the past into constellation with present-day film and media. Their montages unearth aspects of earlier films that were not visible in their original context and they reveal the shifting configurations between past and present in film history, illustrating the need for a non-linear film historiography.

In these works, film history and the cinematographic archive become a site of potentiality that offers alternative paths for film in the art gallery and museum, and on the Internet. Their works collectively demonstrate how essayistic practices have expanded from the essay film of *auteur* cinema to the video and digital essay of media artists featured in art installations and on the Internet. The evolution of these essayistic practices testifies to the essay's continued ability to function as a form that runs against the grain of commercial production. If, as some theorists argue, the bureaucratic documentation of the archive is now the primary force through which biopolitics renders life deathlike, then the archival practices exhibited by these filmmakers not only illustrate how the past might gain a functional, creative use for the present, but they also provide an example for ways in which the archive might be employed against existing forms of control. Their works illustrate the need for increased access to the archive and a democratization of who has the authority to investigate its contents and document its histories today.

To my parents

Contents

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Note:

Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

Introduction
The Art of the Archive: Uses of the Past in the German Essay Film

At a time when our present-day media landscape is rapidly changing, the film *Dreams Rewired* (*Mobilisierung der Träume*, 2015) probes early cinema for evidence that sheds light on how our media history has evolved.[1] More of a media archaeological investigation than a documentary, the film is comprised solely of footage from earlier films and focuses on their depiction of past forms of media such as the telegraph and the gramophone. *Dreams Rewired* aims to discern whether time and technological advancements enable us to understand better the media we have left behind and, conversely, to appreciate how these older forms of media might help us comprehend new media. The film's investigation into the cinematographic archive unearths the rhetorical strategies that have been used in media histories to frame our understanding of how and why certain technologies have evolved, and others were abandoned. Its investigation finds that some of our concerns surrounding surveillance, constant connectivity, and the predictive power of media are not new to the digital age, but rather emerged following the invention of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century communication technologies. Other aspects of our media history only become visible now in hindsight; *Dreams Rewired*'s footage of early telegraph operators at work and of female film editors cutting film strips, for instance, illuminates the role that women played in the facilitation of media technology and innovation, a role that is often absent from media histories.

This dissertation examines four filmmakers and media artists who reflect on the history of cinema and the medium of film by incorporating past films and other materials from the German cinematographic archive directly into their works. Hartmut Bitomsky, Alexander Kluge, Harun Farocki, and Hito Steyerl began to reflect on the medium of film and to engage with the cinematographic archive following the advent of video technology and digital media. As media technological developments increase the access to and ease of reusing archival images, these filmmakers and video essayists turned to the archive to investigate existing film historiographical practices and to formulate their own histories and counter-histories of German cinema and its relationship to German history. Through close analysis of their works, I trace the movement of these archive-critical practices from film to video, from the space of the cinema to the art gallery, and on to digital platforms. I show that their works resituate pre-existing footage in ways that are paradigmatic for avant-garde filmmakers' reflection on the relationship between film and history. These filmmakers and media artists turn to the archive to perform critical histories of how German cinema has been put to use serving particular narratives and interpretations of history. Their montages, which often juxtapose archival visual material from documentary and fictional sources with their own filmed material, shed light on counter arguments and alternatives to the dominant narratives of German (cinematic) history. Montage is thus used to reframe past images so that they run against the grain of their original context of use. As a result, these films and media art reveal that the cinematographic archive is a

[1] The film was directed by Manu Luksch, Martin Reinhart, and Thomas Tode and is a co-production of Austria, Germany and the United Kingdom.

rhetorical space and demonstrate that the archive is not necessarily a site of fixed interpretations, but one of creative possibilities.

In their repurposing of past images, these filmmakers and media artists register the ways in which the conception of the archive was shifting in the late 1970s and early 80s, and how it continues to evolve to this day. In 1979 Jean-François Lyotard announced that in postmodernity, we are no longer able to regard history as one or a series of "grand narratives."[2] Lyotard's diagnosis was followed by an increasing awareness among other philosophers and scholars that a Hegelian notion of history, an idea of history as a metaphysical narrative of progress towards the realization of mankind's destiny and human freedom, was no longer a viable paradigm. If we think of the archive not as a physical site but rather, following Michel Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge*, as a discursive space that determines what can be said about the past, then the ways in which the archive is as much a space of power as it is of collective memory become clearer. As a cultural construct created for a specific purpose, the archive reflects the people who control what is deemed worthy of preservation, as well as their personal biases and oversights. It determines the knowledge society possesses of the past. Thus to control the archive is to have the power to influence a society's historical understanding of itself. These postmodern developments called into question whether any physical trace of history could be found in the archive or whether, instead, the objects in the archive have become ghost-like, as Jacques Derrida argued.[3]

In its early days, film was believed to be a new medium of historical experience.[4] As an instrument of recording and storage, film seemed able to preserve and transmit knowledge regarding social, cultural, and political practices, and modes of aesthetic representation for future generations in ways that exceeded the capacities of other media. Postmodernism would undermine this belief by spurring the recognition that images are constitutive of historical experience rather than simply representative of it. If we no longer consider the archive, and by extension the film archive, as the site of history or repository of historical evidence, then what does it contain? Barbara Biesecker argues that we now have the opportunity to understand the archive in a new way. We can examine the archive's rhetoric, with the understanding that the contents of the archive are rhetorical elements that have been used to put forth particular narratives of history. The loss of the "historicity of the archive" opens up new opportunities for scholarship:

> Out of the deconstruction of the material presence of the past and, thus, in relation to what the archive cannot *authenticate* absolutely but can (be made to) *authorize*

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[2] Lyotard's original French-language book, *La condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir*, was translated into English five years later as *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington, et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

[3] See Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[4] For early German theoretical texts on film as a medium of historical experience and calls for a German film archive, see Chapter 3, "The Time Machine," in *The Promise of Cinema: German Film Theory 1907-1933*, ed. Anton Kaes, Nicholas Baer, and Michael Cowan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 74-107.

> nonetheless, issues an invitation to write rhetorical histories of archives, which is to say, critical histories of the situated and strategic uses to which archives have been put.[5]

The films analyzed in this project write rhetorical histories of the cinematographic archive in this manner, critically unearthing how moving images have been put to use in particular film historical narratives and interpretations of German history. They also use the materials of the archive to illuminate forgotten or missing narratives. Once the languages of the archive become clearer, they can be assembled to create narratives that bring to light these forgotten histories and objects.

In contrast to the *objet trouvé* of surrealism and later uses of orphaned found materials in avant-garde art movements, the archival research conducted by these filmmakers is used to select deliberately materials that are often from recognizable films or previous contexts of use. They examine how these films or images were used to support certain beliefs or narratives in German history and in so doing they perform a form of ideology critique. These politically-engaged critical histories of the German cinematographic archive necessarily took the form of what would come to be called the "essay film," an experimental genre of cinema that emerged in post-war Europe, and later, after the rise of digital technology, the "video essay." Although film, as an inherently reproducible medium, was always capable of being copied and reused, video technology made it possible to transfer film to VHS and other formats quickly and easily so that certain films from earlier periods were rediscovered and the German cinematographic archive became more accessible.[6] This shift enabled film history to become material for use in new works, and it gave rise to the wide-spread reuse of pre-existing materials that characterizes digital multimedia production today.

The period covered in this work begins with the essay film of the late seventies and early eighties. The introduction of digital video technology led to the fear that analogue film production would be replaced by television and digital media and spurred essay filmmakers to reflect on cinema's history. This examination continues onward to track the evolution of the essay film into the video essay as commercial video cameras lowered barriers to entry for young filmmakers and led to a more diverse and larger number of video artists experimenting with the essay genre. The explosion of television and video production, compounded by the rise of the Internet, led film enthusiasts to fear that film's one-hundredth birthday in 1995 would mark the beginning of the end. My investigation considers how these filmmakers reflect on the changing role of film vis-à-vis other media and follows the movement of their essayistic practices between film, video and other digital forms. As their films and media art demonstrate, essayistic practices and the interrogation of the German cinematographic archive's images have not disappeared. Instead, the modes and spaces of exhibition of these works has diversified, from the cinema to the art gallery and the Internet. What began as practice rooted in a specific genre and mode of exhibition has blossomed into new forms in conjunction with evolving media technologies.

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[5] Barbara A. Biesecker, "Of Historicity, Rhetoric: The Archive as Scene of Invention," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 9, no. 1 (2006): 130, emphasis original.

[6] These technological developments also allowed people to watch current and past films on their television at home. Barabara Klinger's *Beyond the Multiplex: Cinema, New Technologies, and the Home* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006) discusses the evolution of home-viewing practices from the mid-1980s onwards.

Although the genre of the essay film emerged in the postwar period, the filmmakers and media artists under study have much in common with earlier avant-garde filmmaking. As Nora Alter has argued, the postwar New German Cinema (*Neuer Deutscher Film*) was in many ways "genealogically linked to the violently interrupted project of the historical avant-garde."[7] The filmmakers I examine, some of whom belonged to New German Cinema, extend this genealogy further into the present. Others have contended that the roots of postwar film culture and film studies can be found in the Weimar Republic and its development of concepts like abstraction and montage, the relationship between film and history, and the belief that film is an epistemological medium.[8] All of these ideas were revisited by filmmakers and theorists that I discuss. The films I analyze draw theoretically upon the compilation films made during the Weimar period and on film theoretical texts from cinema's early period. By examining these essayistic film practices through the lens of their refunctioning of past films, the genealogy that I trace in my dissertation links the project of the pre-WWII avant-garde to New German Cinema, while also extending it beyond the postwar period to argue that contemporary media artists and video essayists who continue to work on this project as they confront a new media landscape.[9]

The four filmmakers whose work I discuss in the following chapters have each played an instrumental role in the development of the film industry in postwar and contemporary Germany. As editors and contributors to the influential journal *Filmkritik* beginning in the mid-1970s, Farocki and Bitomsky spearheaded debates surrounding the need for a new German film as television and video technology challenged the dominance of the cinema. Steyerl's writings on digital media envision a future for German cinema in the digital age and with a global audience. Each of these filmmakers invested in the training of later generations of German filmmakers and media artists. In the 1960s Kluge helped found the short-lived Ulm Institute for Filmmaking (*Institut für Filmgestaltung Ulm*, 1960-1968). In 1966 Farocki and Bitomsky were in the first cohort of the newly-founded German Film and Television Academy in Berlin (*Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie Berlin*), where they both later served as instructors and Bitomsky as director from 2006 to 2009. Steyerl is currently a professor of New Media Art at the University of the Arts (*Universität der Künste*) in Berlin.

Alexander Kluge, born in 1932 in the Eastern German city of Halberstadt, was originally trained as a lawyer. While completing his degree in law from the Goethe University of

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[7] Nora M. Alter, *Projecting History: German Nonfiction Cinema, 1967-2000* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 9.

[8] See Malte Hagener, "Transnationale Vorhut. Einflüsse von Avantgarde und Filmkultur der Weimarer Republik auf die frühe Filmwissenschaft," in *Wie der Film unsterblich wurde. Vorakademische Filmwissenschaft in Deutschland*, ed. Rolf Aurich and Ralph Forster (Munich: edition text + kritik, 2015), 276-281, and in particular pages 276-77. Hagener's book, *Moving Forward, Looking Back: The European Avant-Garde and the Invention of Film Culture, 1919-1939* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), also discusses the legacy of the avant-garde in the development and acceptance of the genre of documentary film, in cementing government support for the European cinema, in the development of film theory and the founding of film studies as a discipline, and in the general cultural significance of film as an art-form.

[9] By tracing the roots of the postwar film industry back to the film experiments of the Weimar republic, this project is in dialogue with Udi Greenberg's *The Weimar Century: German Émigrés and the Ideological Foundations of the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014). Greenberg argues that Germany's postwar reconstruction was shaped by the Weimar Republic's experiments with democracy.

Frankfurt am Main, Kluge met Theodor Adorno and served as a legal counsel for the Institute for Social Research. The critical theory of the Frankfurt School would greatly influence Kluge's subsequent literary and filmic work. After completing his degree in 1956, Kluge began to write short stories. During this time, Adorno introduced Kluge to Fritz Lang. Kluge worked as an assistant for Lang on his film, *The Tiger of Eschnapur* (*Der Tiger von Eschnapur*, 1959), which aroused his interest in filmmaking. Kluge's first short film with Peter Schamoni, *Brutality in Stone* (*Brutalität in Stein*), was completed in 1961. Kluge's first collection of stories, *Case Histories* (*Lebensläufe*), was published in 1962, the same year that the Oberhausen Manifesto was signed. Kluge was one of the architects of the Oberhausen Manifesto, legislation that provided federal funding for films and ensured airtime on privately-owned channels for publicly-funded television programs. Kluge received significant international attention with his first feature film, *Yesterday Girl* (*Abschied von Gestern*, 1966) which won a Silver Lion at the Venice Film Festival. While continuing to make films and work for television, Kluge also continued to write. Apart from his works of fiction, Kluge engaged in an intense intellectual collaboration with the philosopher Oskar Negt that resulted in several publications of social criticism.[10]

Hartmut Bitomsky was born in 1942 in Bremen and began his studies at the Free University of Berlin in 1962 before transferring to the German Film and Television Academy in Berlin in 1966 where he became friends with Harun Farocki. In 1968, both Bitomsky and Farocki were kicked out of the Film and Television Academy for occupying the school and renaming it the Dziga Vertov Academy in protest. From 1968 onward—through this period of intense political commitment in Germany and throughout the world—Bitomsky and Farocki would collaborate on a number of films and works for television, while also working together as editors of and contributors to *Filmkritik*.[11] During the 1980s, Bitomsky pursued his own projects and began to work almost exclusively with pre-existing materials. Outside of his "Germany Trilogy," which I discuss below, many of his films and research projects examined Hollywood-style filmmaking and other aspects of United States culture. He lived in the United States and taught at the California Institute of the Arts in the 1990s before returning to Berlin to direct the German Film and Television Academy.

Farocki was born in 1944 in the city Neutitschein in the Sudetenland, today the city of Nový Jičín in the Czech Republic. His career traversed a similar path to Bitomsky's. Both filmmakers produced a number of works for television in lieu of using public funding to support their independent projects. Although he did make several feature films, Farocki's works were largely non-narrative essay films. Like Bitomsky, Farocki lived and worked in the United States, teaching from 1993 to 1999 at the University of California, Berkeley. As television commissions disappeared and were replaced with requests for film and video installations, Farocki increasingly created works intended for the art gallery and museum. At times he recycled materials shot for other projects and at others created installations expressly for major

[10] These co-authored publications include *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere* (*Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung. Zur Organisationsanalyse von bürgerlicher und proletarischer Öffentlichkeit*, 1972) and *History and Obstinacy* (*Geschichte und Eigensinn*, 1993).

[11] These works include *The Division of All Days* (*Die Teilung aller Tage*, 1970), *Something Self Explanatory (15x)* (*Eine Sache, die sich versteht (15x)*, 1971), *Someday you will love me too: About the Meaning of Dimestore Novels* (*Einmal wirst auch Du mich lieben. Über die Bedeutung von Heftromanen*, 1973), among others.

art festivals, including *documenta*. In addition to Berkeley, Farocki taught at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna as well as the German Film and Television Academy. As an instructor in Berlin, Farocki influenced the generation of filmmakers known as the "Berlin School," in particular the filmmaker Christian Petzold, who were students of his at the Film and Television Academy. Farocki died unexpectedly in Berlin in 2014.

Farocki's work was also influential for Hito Steyerl's later career. Born in 1966 in Munich, Steyerl completed her doctorate in Philosophy at the University of Vienna and studied cinematography at the Academy of Visual Arts in Japan and the University of Television and Film (*Hochschule für Fernsehen und Film*) in Munich. In contrast to the previous three filmmakers, Steyerl began her career working with video instead of celluloid film. From the start her works were also geared towards the art world. From 2004 onwards Steyerl's video essays were quickly exhibited in museums and at a number of biennials. Three of her pieces were featured at *documenta 12—Lovely Andrea* (2007), *Journal No. 1—An Artist's Impression* (2007) and *Red Alert* (2007)—along with Farocki's installation *Deep Play* (2007). Steyerl's immersive installation, *Factory of the Sun*, premiered at the German pavilion of the Venice Biennale in 2015. Her works moved from more traditional video essays to multi-channel digital installations and multimedia sculptural installations. In addition to her work as a visual artist and educator, Steyerl published a number of essays and lectures on the function of art in our age of digital globalization. Like Kluge, Bitomsky and Farocki, Steyerl has a career that encompasses several roles. Her profession is best described using a multi-hyphenate: she is an artist-academic-theorist.

Studying these four filmmakers allows us to understand the changing media political landscape in postwar and contemporary Germany. Though Kluge, Farocki, and Bitomsky are all loosely associated with the postwar movement of New German Cinema, Bitomsky and Farocki belong to a generation after Kluge's, with different goals and desires for a new German film. Steyerl and her contemporaries inherited the gains, as well as the unfulfilled hopes, of New German Cinema and its affiliates. Farocki and Steyerl's careers, in particular, illustrate how the video essay and essayistic media art function at art exhibitions, film festivals, and in museums. Farocki, whose father immigrated to Germany from India, and Steyerl, who has Japanese ancestry, are both representative of Germany's changing cultural identity in the postwar period. They also reflect on German society in an era of mass migration, globalization, and European integration in some of their video essays and installations. Considered in a constellation with one another, these four filmmakers cover an important period of German—and global—media history, in which the forms of moving images and their mode of exhibition have diversified. Their works collectively demonstrate how essayistic practices have evolved from the essay film of *auteur* cinema, to the video and digital essay of media artists featured in art installations and on the Internet.

Changing Theories of the Archive

This project is in dialogue with scholarship on postwar and contemporary German cinema, theories of the archive in literary and cultural studies, and archival-based practices in the history of art. When I use the term cinematographic archive I mean to refer to everything from the films, theoretical texts, filmic and proto-filmic technology, and to all discourses

surrounding the cinema that have been preserved in official and informal archives, in accepted and forgotten narratives of film history. If, as Jacques Derrida argued in his seminal text on the archive, "Archivization produces as much as it records the event," then the filmmakers whom I discuss seek to reveal how particular interpretations of events were produced.[12] If we think of the medium of film as a kind of archive, each film can be understood as containing multiple other possible films, which could have and could still be made by utilizing the images in a different way. The filmmakers whose work I examine go to the films stored in the archive and seek to illustrate other possible uses of these pre-existing images. This attitude toward the archive—this belief that it could have been otherwise rather than Leopold von Ranke's "wie es eigentlich gewesen"—is the same approach these filmmakers take to archival images and film footage. As illustrated by one of the most famous essay films, Jean-Luc Godard's *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, in which he explores the cinema's role in the atrocities of the Second World War through the use of popular films as found footage, these filmmakers take clips from other films out of their original context and "mak[e] with them the films they [the original directors] didn't make."[13]

As is well known, the conception of the archive is a recurring concern in German thought that emerged long before the medium of film. While the formulation of state archives originally represented a means to construct narrative histories for German historicists like Ranke and Johann Gustav Droysen, nineteenth-century historicism was met with twentieth-century endeavors that sought to question established archival practices and the belief in the viability of historical progress and linear narratives of history. Sven Spieker argues that art practice from Dadaist montage to late-twentieth-century avant-garde art installations reacted to the previous century's festishization of the archive, their meticulous forms of preservation and objectification of historical progress. By incorporating daily materials and discarded objects in their montage, Dada artists commented on the archive's power to turn garbage into historical documents simply through their inclusion in the archive. These works also shed light on the problematic selection process of the archive: "when an archive has to collect everything, because every object may become useful in the future, it will soon succumb to entropy and chaos."[14]

Reusing filmic material from a previous context of use also has its roots in the Weimar Republic. In his essay, "The Weekly Newsreel," cultural critic Siegfried Kracauer described a radical film compiled entirely from previously-shot newsreel footage. This compilation film, Ernst Angel and Albrecht Viktor Blum's *Report of the times—Face of the times* (*Zeitbericht—Zeitgesicht*, 1928), re-edited this footage shot by the major film studios into montages that told a very different narrative than that of the original newsreels. The film and the film society out of which it arose—the *Volksverband für Filmkunst*[15] (*People's Association for Film Art*)—offered a

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[12] *Archive Fever*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 17.

[13] Jacques Rancière, *Film Fables*, trans. Emiliano Battista (Oxford: Berg, 2006), 171.

[14] Sven Spieker, *The Big Archive: Art from Bureaucracy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), xiii.

[15] The *Volksverband für Filmkunst* was a film society that aimed to organize leftist artists, intellectuals, and politically-engaged individuals in support of a political cinema and film community in opposition to mainstream German cinema. To this end, the collective also founded the film journal *Film und Volk*. The society's first president was Heinrich Mann and its members included filmmakers, theorists, journalists, and artists such as Béla Balázs, G. W. Pabst, Erwin Piscator, Franz Höllering, Karl Freund, Käthe Kollwitz, and Edmund Meisel. *Zeitbericht—Zeitgesicht* was

glimpse at how experimental editing techniques and previously-shot footage could be utilized for revealing, rather than obscuring, the mutability of the current social and economic order. Though it was quickly censored by the Film Review Office, Kracauer hailed the film's achievement:

> Not long ago, a radical film society, which has since disbanded, made an attempt to use archival material to put together a newsreel that really penetrated into our circumstances. It was subjected to censorship and lived only a short life. In any case, this experiment teaches us that simply by arranging the standard newsreel differently, one can make it more incisive. […] There is still a lot of material to film in Germany, and the audience would probably have no objection to learning a little, every now and then, about the human or inhuman circumstances in which we live.[16]

In contrast to the weekly newsreels which serve the interests of the industry that created them, *Report of the times—Face of the times* brought to light aspects of current socioeconomic circumstances that were captured in the newsreel footage but had either been obscured by the original editing of the images or had laid unused in the studio's archive of footage.[17]

Report of the times—Face of the times prompted film theoretical reflections about the need for a proletarian newsreel and a cinema created for and by the masses.[18] At the first meeting of the *Volksverband für Filmkunst* in Berlin, film critic and theorist Béla Balázs gave a lecture in which he argued that while film production remained firmly in the control of major film studios, the medium of film had the ability to betray the people who control it. Film, as a medium that emerged out of capitalism, contained within it capitalism's inner contradictions. Film's indexical quality, its ability to capture reality, also meant it inadvertently recorded both the negative and positive conditions of life under capitalism. Thus, Balázs concluded that "Film, the only art that capitalism ever created on its own, is the only art that—even at its most sophisticated—cannot be made into a cultural privilege of the upper class."[19]

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to be shown at the first meeting of the film society but it was censored. See Heinrich Mann's address from this inaugural meeting: "Film und Volk," *Film und Volk: Zeitschrift des Volksverbandes für Filmkunst,* no. 2 (April 1928): 4–6.

[16] Siegfried Kracauer, "The Weekly Newsreel," in *The Promise of Cinema*, 72. Original article from October 1931, "Die Filmwochenschau," is reprinted in Siegfried Kracauer, *Werke* Vol. 5.3: Essays, Feuilletons, Rezensionen, ed. Inka Mülder-Bach (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2011), 553-55.

[17] In addition to newsreels, major film studios created *Kulturfilme* (cultural films) and *Querschnittfilme* (cross-section films) out of the footage in the newsreel archives but these were didactic, documentary-style films that, like newsreels, were not intended to be subversive or political.

[18] The *Volksverband für Filmkunst*'s journal, *Film und Volk,* featured articles that discussed the possibilities of film beyond a medium of entertainment; see, for example, Willi Münzenberg's text on the political implications of revolutionary film propaganda in "Film und Propaganda," *Film und Volk* 2, nos. 9–10 (November 1929): 5–6. G.W. Pabst, a member of the *Volksverband für Filmkunst* also wrote on film's revolutionary possibilities in "Film und Gesinnung," in *Der Film und seine Welt: Reichsfilmblatt-Almanach 1933*, ed. Felix Henseleit (Berlin: Photokino, 1933), 98–99. In 1930 *Film und Volk* merged with the theater journal *Arbeiterbühne,* becoming *Arbeiterbühne und Film*. In one of the early issues, there was again a plea for proletarian newsreels: A.A., "Weltfilm-Bericht," *Arbeiterbühne und Film* 6 (June 1930): 22. Albrecht Viktor Blum, the director of *Zeitbericht—Zeitgesicht* would go on to direct seven Weltfilm newsreels in 1930.

[19] Béla Balázs, "Film Works For Us!," in *The Promise of Cinema*, 362. Original article published as "Der Film arbeitet für uns!," *Film und Volk: Zeitschrift des Volksverbandes für Filmkunst* 1 (March 1928): 6–8.

Report of the times—Face of the times furthermore illuminated a promise of the then-relatively-new medium of film: film possessed the ability to record and produce knowledge, to penetrate into the circumstances of modern life, and to reveal to the viewer aspects of life not within reach of human perception.[20] Montage plays an integral role in film's capacity to reveal elements of reality; editing can be employed in order to obscure the truth, as in the studio-produced newsreels, just as it can be utilized as a tool for knowledge production. By illustrating how different techniques of montage and arrangements of images bring forth new meaning, *Report of the times—Face of the times*, along with Soviet montage films shown at this time, occasioned film theoretical discussions regarding the political nature of montage techniques and socially conscious theories of montage.[21] The fact that Blum's film illustrated the variability of one of the medium's most important aspects—montage and film editing—prompted film theorists at the time to rethink other properties of film that had heretofore seemed fixed. The political implications of this, as Kracauer argued in an earlier essay titled "Photography," is that film, like photography, has the "capacity to stir up the elements of nature" and to "combin[e] parts and segments to create strange constructs."[22] Film might awaken in its viewers a consciousness of "the provisional status of all given configurations."[23] Film could produce knowledge about alternate possibilities and different paths forward and it is this promise of montage, its potential to serve as a tool for ideology critique, that the filmmakers I examine in this dissertation seek to realize.

The modernist critique of the methods and materials of official archives finds resonance in trends in contemporary art, in which historical and archival materials again become source material for aesthetic production.[24] Hal Foster refers to this trend as contemporary art's "archival impulse."[25] Artists draw upon both the material and the logic of the archive to create their own informal archives. This trend picks up aspects of the utopian modernist project that seek to connect those materials which seem to resist connection, "to transform the no-place of the archive into the no-place of a utopia."[26] What separates this contemporary production from pre- and postwar efforts, is that these works treat the space of the archive as a "construction site" rather than an "excavation site." Foster argues that this change "suggests a shift away from a melancholic culture that views the historical as little more than the traumatic."[27] The repurposing of archival footage that I discuss in the chapters that follow is also indicative of this

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[20] These discussions anticipated Walter Benjamin's concept of the "optical unconscious," photography and film's ability to enable the human senses to see far more than it could without the aid of technology.

[21] From 1926 to 1931 the film distribution company Prometheus Film imported Russian montage films and as a leftist production company supported the development of proletarian cinema in Weimar Germany.

[22] Siegfried Kracauer, "Photography," in *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, ed. and trans. Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 62.

[23] Ibid.

[24] In her book, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), Diana Taylor discusses how performance-based arts that engage with cultural memory offers different perspectives on history and cultural identity than the written archive.

[25] "An Archival Impulse," *October* 110 (Autumn 2004): 5.

[26] Ibid, 22.

[27] Ibid.

shift described by Foster, from thinking of history as a space to be excavated to regarding it as a repository of materials that can be constructed into new narratives and archives.

While early twentieth-century artistic practices critiqued the methods and institution of the archive, during this period scholars attempted to create their own unofficial archives and collections of materials that challenged the narratives and organization of existing archives. Some of the best known include Aby Warburg's collection of photographs of art objects and their symbolic images in *Mnemosyne Atlas*; Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project*, a textual and photographic archive that investigated nineteenth-century Paris city life; and Albert Kahn's *The Archives of the Planet*, which used film and photography to document the world and its cultures. These multimedia archives are collections with a specialized focus, organized analytically rather than chronologically. They draw from materials included in official archives, while also looking to the ruins of modernity and everyday life for alternative organizing principles of historical experience.[28] Warburg's juxtaposition of images from artworks from different times and styles established new connections between works not normally considered in conjunction with one another in traditional art historical narratives.[29] Kahn had the utopian hope that his archive of photographs and films depicting scientific and technological innovations, featured in the Paris *Exposition Universelle* of 1900, might play a role in preventing future wars by illustrating the common humanity of man.[30] His decision to document everyday life alongside historically significant movements served as an additional challenge to the hierarchical historiographic methods of the archive.[31]

Benjamin's unfinished *Arcades Project* employed a mode of citation that is perhaps the most important precursor for the citation practices employed in the films and media art by Bitomsky, Kluge, Farocki and Steyerl that I examine. Benjamin's materialist philosophy of history is a philosophy composed primarily of citations. This philosophy of history, as Susan Buck-Morss argues, was constructed out "of the historical material itself, the outdated remains of those nineteenth-century buildings, technologies, and commodities that were the precursors of his own era."[32] Benjamin believed that his archival project had to allow the materials to speak for themselves. He sought to form constellations between the heterogenous citations and documents using montage. Rather than try to structure the materials based on his own analysis or commentary, Benjamin wrote that "this work has to develop to the highest degree the art of citing without quotation marks. Its theory is intimately related to that of montage."[33] Although

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[28] As I discuss in the following chapters, each of these filmmakers take an interest in *Schrott* and the detritus of media technological innovations. Their meditations on discarded materials and means of recycling them function as investigations into film's possible futures.

[29] On the *Mnemosyne Atlas* project, see Philippe-Alain Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion*, trans. Sophie Hawkes (New York: Zone Books, 2004).

[30] For more on Kahn's archive see Jay Winter, "1900: The Face of Humanity and Visions of Peace," in *Dreams of Peace and Freedom: Utopian Moments in the Twentieth-Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 11-47.

[31] See Paula Amad, *Counter-Archive: Film, the Everyday, and Albert Kahn's Archives de la planéte* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

[32] *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 3.

[33] Konvolut [N1, 10] in *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 458.

Theodor Adorno was a notable critic of this approach of "pure montage,"[34] Benjamin believed that the implicit connections and relationship between the cited archival material and his current day would create a context through which the reader could understand the import of the documents from which he cited:

> The events surrounding the historian, and in which he himself takes part, will underlie his presentation in the form of a text written in invisible ink. The history which he lays before the reader comprises, as it were, the citations occurring in this text, and it is only these citations that occur in a manner legible to all. To write history thus means to *cite* history. It belongs to the concept of citation, however, that the historical object in each case is torn from its context.[35]

While Benjamin's conception of the archive and the role of the historian is in part indicative of the changing notions of philosophies of history from his time, his conception of historiography and the role of the historian is idiosyncratic. His belief, that the materials of the archive can speak for themselves and that the constellation between the past and the present illuminates the heretofore invisible historical context, was a radical, non-linear mode of historiography compared to nineteenth-century German historicism.

Central to my argument is the claim that the filmmakers I examine in this dissertation take inspiration from Benjamin's project, method of citation, and his practice of montage.[36] They adapt his historiographical practice of citation for the cinema and compose a montage that juxtaposes film citations with a heterogenous mix of other visual material. In the context of these films, the "invisible ink" of the contemporary historical concerns surrounding the filmmakers manifests itself in various ways: through the constellation of montage, the juxtaposition of the voiceover with its accompanying images, or in the intertitles and written text inserted onto and in between moving images. These filmmakers and media artists also draw from other Weimar-era thinkers in their treatment of this archival materials. At times their

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[34] For Adorno, the act of interpretation and the inclusion of theoretical thoughts was essential for making clear the significance of his wealth of quoted materials. "This is explained in part by the (for me, already problematic) idea which is formulated explicitly in one place, of the work as pure "montage," that is, created from a juxtaposition of quotations so that the theory springs out of it without having to be inserted as interpretation." Letter from Adorno to Max Horkheimer, May 9, 1949. Printed in Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften,* vol. V: *Das Passagen-Werk,* ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1982), 1072. English translation taken from Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*, 73.

[35] Konvolut [N11, 3] in *The Arcades Project*, 476, emphasis original.

[36] By this I mean to suggest that each of these filmmakers were familiar with Benjamin's writings and, even before his collected works were published in Germany (the first volume of which was published in 1972; the *Arcades Project* not until 1982), that his approaches to history and to film were present in the intellectual milieu of postwar and post-1968 Germany. Through his friendship with Adorno, we may assume that Kluge was exposed to Benjamin's work early on. Already in 1964, Kluge cited Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in his article, "Die Utopie Film," *Merkur* 201 (December 1964): 1135-46. Bitomsky references Benjamin repeatedly in his issue of *Filmkritik* devoted to early cinema, "Das Goldene Zeitalter der Kinematographie." *Filmkritik* 20, no. 9 (September 1976): 393-459. Farocki cites indirectly Benjamin's "Theses on History" in the issue of *Filmkritik* devoted to his film *Zwischen zwei Kriegen* (1978): Farocki, "Nicht nur die Zeit, auch die Erinnerung steht stille," *Filmkritik* no. 263 (November 1978): 569-606. The reference is on page 569, as Farocki discusses his reaction to coming across the *Kursbuch* essay by Alfred Sohn-Rethel. Steyerl references Benjamin's notion of history throughout her dissertation, *Die Farbe der Wahrheit: Dokumentarismen im Kunstfeld* (Vienna: Turia + Kant, 2008).

citation practices adapt Bertolt Brecht's notion of estrangement and Siegfried Kracauer's socially conscious film criticism in order to perform ideology critique.

Drawing on current theories of the archive and the changing conception of the archive after the advent of digital technology, I argue that these films are indicative of a shift from the traditional notion of the archive as a concrete, physical site to a new notion of the archive, in which it is a condition and practice of knowledge and argumentation. The invention and availability of video technology represented another evolution in archival culture as the archive became increasingly accessible to filmmakers and other users engaging with the video and digital archive. As documents became easier to access, reproduce, share, and move into new spaces, the cinematographic archive became increasingly welcoming to users, moving the archive from a closed institution to one of open access. Today the archive is becoming less a space of power as its gatekeepers and barriers to access dissolve. Now, as we know, it is increasingly open to all who possess the tools and digital technology to access the archive.

Digital technology enables participants to both access materials from and contribute information and data to the digital archive. New forms of aesthetic production have emerged: video and digital technology have aided in the production of found footage films and other forms of video remixing and mash-ups, which edit and recombine preexisting elements from the archive using digital editing software.[37] Thus filmmakers today also perform the narrative practices of the archive, illustrating how the materials can be combined into a variety of arrangements and making clear how the narratives of the archive are one among many different possible narratives.[38] These practices of accessing and contributing to the digital archive demonstrate how the digital archive is increasingly thought of as a database rather than a repository of historical documents. In this new conception of the archive as database open to creative use, the distinction between past and present, historical documents and contemporary interventions, becomes less rigid.

Media theorist Wolfgang Ernst makes the bold claim that in the digital age, in many ways the archive has become obsolete. His argument is that the digital archive is no longer dedicated to memory as the basis for historical knowledge, but instead to the purely technical practice of data storage.[39] The archive is now a metaphor used to describe all possible forms of storage and memory in the digital age, rather than to refer to a concrete place and set of practices. The cinematographic archive is by no means an organized database, despite efforts to digitize its holdings. It is fragmentary and, in contrast to print archives, harder to navigate. Even as films are digitized it is harder to create indexes to describe, search for, and sort through

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[37] For detailed discussions of remix culture and video and digital mashups, see: *Sampling Media*, ed. David Laberman and Laurel Westrup (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Eduardo Navas, *Remix Theory: The Aesthetics of Sampling* (Vienna: Springer Verlag, 2012); Lawrence Lessig, *Remix: Making Art and Commerce Thrive in the Hybrid Economy* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008). For the transition from the video to digital essay, see Ursula Biemann, ed., *Stuff It: The Video Essay in the Digital Age* (Zurich: Edition Voldemeer, 2003).

[38] These practices did not start with the digital age, as evidenced by the films discussed in the following chapters. Video artists created subversive works using found footage. See Jonathan McIntosh, "A history of subversive remix video before YouTube: Thirty political video mashups made between World War II and 2005," *Transformative Works and Cultures*, no. 9 (2012), http://journal.transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/article/view/371/299.

[39] For a collection of Ernst's work in English translation, with a particular focus on his theory of the archive, see Wolfgang Ernst, *Digital Memory and the Archive*, ed. Jussi Parikka (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

what is contained in the film archive using the language of moving images rather than identifying information about a film's origins and plot.[40] The fragmentary nature of this archive has perhaps encouraged filmmakers to treat the digital cinematographic archive as an image bank. As Ernst suggested, the aesthetics of the multimedia archive have transformed from one of fixed order to one of permanent reconfigurability.[41] The filmmakers discussed in this investigation recycle elements from the cinematographic archive as single images separate from their original narrative. By placing these moving images into a new constellation, these films highlight the potential of these images to form many different narratives. They also reveal the non-hierarchical, non-linear language of the cinematographic archive that can be used to produce a multi-layered experience of time and space.

Found Footage, the Essay Film, and the Video Essay

This project examines the key role that found footage practices play in postwar and contemporary German cinema and film theory, as articulated in the genre of the essay film and the video essay. While the essay film emerged as a vehicle for film-theoretical and film-historical explorations in Germany beginning in the 1960s, the practice of recycling pre-existing footage has a long tradition.[42] The appropriation of historical film footage and the editing together of footage from various sources harks back to the first film exhibitions and to the development of the newsreel and found footage has been associated with avant-garde filmmaking from the 1930s onwards. The term "found footage" is used to refer to footage that was originally shot for one purpose, before it was later discovered and reused in a new context within a wholly different film. Though "found footage" implies that the footage was discarded or forgotten over time, and later "found" by another filmmaker, any footage that was shot in a particular context and for a specific purpose and which is later used in a different film is considered to be found footage. Historical footage and recognizable feature films can also be treated as found footage within another film. These images may be largely unchanged from their original use, but it is common that found footage is transformed in some way, be it through editing, tinting, cropping, or other forms of manipulation. Found footage can constitute only a small portion of a film, or a found footage film can refer to a film that is entirely composed of found images.

In his 1994 book *Recycled Images*, William Wees sought to distinguish the different uses of found footage in films by separating films that employ found footage tactics into three genres: compilation, collage, and appropriation films. Building off of Jay Leyda's characterization of compilation films in *Films Beget Films*, Wees defined compilation films as those which may "reinterpret images taken from film and television archives, but generally

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[40] The need for an archive of moving images with medium-specific search terms and indices was called for by Wolfgang Ernst and Harun Farocki in "Towards an Archive for Visual Concepts," in *Harun Farocki: Working on the Sightlines*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 204), 261-86.

[41] See, for example, Wolfgang Ernst, "Archives in Transition: Dynamic Media Memories," in *Digital Memory and the Archive*.

[42] For a comprehensive account of the history of working with found and archival footage in film and media art, with an emphasis on German film and media history, see Christa Blümlinger, *Kino aus zweiter Hand: Zur Ästhetik materieller Aneignung im Film und in der Medienkunst* (Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 2009).

speaking, they do not challenge the representational nature of the images themselves."[43] Whereas compilation films contain images within a specific historical context, appropriation films feature images taken out of their original context as "simulacra produced by postmodernist 'superficiality'."[44] In contrast, Wees argues that collage films "dislodge images from their original contexts" while they also "actively promot[e] an analytical and critical attitude towards those images and their uses within the institutions of cinema and television."[45] Even as the image is recontextualized, the original modes of production, distribution and reception of the materials are not lost when they are placed into a montage in collage films. The defining feature of a collage film "is the decision to invest found footage with meanings unintended by its original makers and unrecognized in its original contexts of presentation and reception."[46]

How the viewer understands the relationship between the found footage and the film as a whole has political and historiographical implications. Found footage can be employed as historical evidence—to bring the past closer—or it can be appropriated in a critical manner, prompting the viewer to question its veracity. Film scholar Jaimie Baron coined the term "the archive effect" to refer to the ways in which the viewer receives and processes found footage within a film. For Baron, this is fundamentally an experience of reception: "the viewer of a given film perceives certain documents within that film as coming from another, previous—and primary—context of use or intended use."[47] Thus the constitutive trope of the archival footage is irony because the archive effect requires that when the viewer experiences found footage they register the multiple contexts of reception and meaning within the footage. At times, Baron argues, the archive effect is employed in order to register the presence of the archive and of history while simultaneously pointing to its absence and to the difficulty of accessing the past as time progresses. While Baron borrow Wees' term "appropriation films" to refer to films that use found footage in this manner, her definition does not map directly onto Wees' characterization. The films Baron describes employ a set of practices that correspond to different aspects of the genres of found footage films as defined by Wees. In the materials under examination in Baron's study and in this dissertation, these practices of citation are not characterized by the irony of postmodern pastiche or empty inhabitation; instead they are attempts to draw critical attention to the images that are recycled and their previous contexts of use.

Since found footage requires the viewer to navigate the different temporal registers and multiple meanings, Steve F. Anderson argues that any choice to reuse an image from a previous context almost always implicitly creates a historiographical argument.[48] Found footage awakens in the viewer an awareness of the latent potential within all images to be placed into new constellations, inscribed with new meaning, and used to critique the way they were used to

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[43] William C. Wees, *Recycled Images: The Art and Politics of Found Footage Films* (New York City: Anthology Film Archives, 1993), 36.
[44] Ibid, 45.
[45] Ibid, 47.
[46] Ibid, 48.
[47] Jaimie Baron, *The Archive Effect: Found Footage and the Audiovisual Experience of History* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 7.
[48] See *Technologies of History: Visual Media and the Eccentricity of the Past* (Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 2011), 70-74.

support the narrative articulated by their previous context. Found footage prompts us to interrogate how filmed images and their apparently indexical relationship to the world can be used to reinforce or contest historical narratives. If found footage is employed in a way that subverts the ontological certainty of the image, it can be used as a tool to call attention to and subvert the conventions of genre films such as the documentary, which require the viewer's belief in their truth content. If the use of found footage necessarily prompts the viewer to interrogate the film and the images it contains, found footage practices find their greatest expression in the essay film, with its self-reflexive renegotiation of the aesthetic rules and strategies of film. In the context of an essay film, found footage can function as a powerful tool in the service of the film's larger argument or realm of exploration.

As the distinction between uses of found footage become increasingly blurred in contemporary media art practices, Catherine Russell argues that we are in need of an alternative means of characterizing uses of found and archival footage today. Like Baron, in her study of found footage practices in film and media art, Russell proposes we instead conceptualize the use of archival materials as a mode of moving image art that transcends genres. She suggests the term "archiveology" to characterize contemporary archival-based media art and earlier found footage filmmaking: "Archiveology refers to the reuse, recycling, appropriation, and borrowing of archival material that filmmakers have been doing for decades, in found-footage filmmaking, compilation films, and collage and essay modes."[49] These practices utilize past images in a deliberate way, one that is associated with curation, criticism, and the practice of researching images in the archive. According to her model, which is inspired by Benjamin's archival practices, the archive is the mode of transmission and the data bank used in these practices. Archiveology juxtaposes diverse images in order to produce knowledge about the images' original context and use in a manner similar to Wees' notion of collage films. By understanding archiveology as a practice rather than a genre, Russell's definition allows room for it to overlap with the genre of the essay film and other essayistic practices that engage with found footage. She differentiates archiveology from found footage practices in the essay film by arguing that it involves an engagement with public rather than personal memory. Many definitions of the essay film, as I discuss below, argue that the genre encompasses both the subjective perspective of the filmmaker as well as public memory.

The films that I analyze in this project lie at the nexus of the archival-based critical projects described by Russell as "archiveology," and the genre and practices of essayistic film and media art. The essay film stems from the venerated tradition of the literary essay and, loosely defined, the genre includes films that articulate an argument or stage a personal investigation of some kind. In its film and video form, the essay performs the encounter between the private subjectivity of the filmmaker and the larger public sphere. The essay films, video essays, and essayistic media art that I examine span a series of important developments that occurred within global film production and consumption, including the gradual shift from film to video to digital media, film's migration from the cinema to the gallery and the museum,

[49] Catherine Russell, "Paris 1900: Archiveology and the Compilation Film," in *New Silent Cinema*, ed. Paul Flaig and Katherine Groo (New York and London: Routledge, 2016), 65. Russell gives a lengthier definition of and introduction to archiveology in the first chapter of her book, *Archiveology: Walter Benjamin and Archival Film Practices* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 11-34.

and the premature pronouncement of film's impending death that began to sound around its 100th birthday. The works that I discuss attest to the continued relevance of found footage and pre-existing materials in film and media art, as well as of essayistic practices in film and digital media, today.

Though essayistic practices have taken a variety of forms across different media, they are united in their radically heterogeneous, often non-traditional subject matter. Utilizing images, voiceover, intertitles, and music, the essay film is playful, open-ended, and fragmentary. It is also transgressive, drawing on techniques from narrative cinema, documentaries, and avant-garde filmmaking within a single film without abiding by the rules of these genres. The essay film presents itself as a radical alternative to the mainstream. In his discussion of arguably the first essay film, Chris Marker's 1958 *Letters from Siberia*, film theorist André Bazin defined the primary material of the essay film as the dialectical relationship it creates between text and image. Bazin referred to this as "horizontal montage," a style of montage in which the images not only refer to or interact with the images that precede or follow them, but also with the text delivered in the voiceover or visually displayed alongside the images.[50] Bazin's preliminary definition has been nuanced over time, but this notion of the essay film as fundamentally an interaction between text and image remains widely agreed upon. While some critics argue a strong authorial voice and subjective perspective is a necessary characteristic, and others contend the essay film operates on multiple discursive levels—including between the personal subjectivity of the filmmaker and that of the spectator—the scholarship is united in the claim that the essay film is an oppositional genre that interrogates forms of ideology.[51]

The essay film emerged out of discussions regarding the power of film to act—in the words of film critic and director Alexandre Astruc—as "filmed philosophy." If the camera of an auteur filmmaker could function as a hybrid between a camera and a pen, a *camera-stylo*, then films could engage with philosophical reflection as does a literary essay.[52] For artist and filmmaker Hans Richter, the first to coin the term *Filmessay* in 1940, the genre was to be a new type of documentary film that could "render visible" imperceptible problems, thought, and ideas.[53] Years later these early definitions still largely stand; in her recent work, Nora Alter defines the essay film by its ability to use the dialectical contradictions it creates between text and image to "loosen habitual connections and produce surprising new meanings." [54] These characterizations of the essay film make explicit how the genre has developed in close

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[50] André Bazin, "Lettre de Sibérie," *France Observateur*, October 30, 1958, 22.

[51] For the relevant literature on the genre of the essay film, see Paul Arthur, "Essay Questions from Alain Resnais to Michael Moore," *Film Comment* 39 (Jan./Feb. 2003): 58-62; Nora Alter, "Translating the Essay into Film and Installation," *Journal of Visual Culture* 6 (2007): 44-57; Timothy Corrigan, *The Essay Film: From Montaigne, After Marker* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Phillip Lopate, "In Search of the Centaur: The Essay-Film," *The Threepenny Review* 48 (1992): 19-22; and Laura Rascaroli, *The Personal Camera: Subjective Cinema and the Essay Film* (London; New York: Wallflower Press, 2009).

[52] See Alexandre Astruc, "The Birth of a New Avant-Garde: La Caméra-Stylo," in *The New Wave: Critical Landmarks*, ed. Peter Graham (New York: Double Day, 1968), 31-38.

[53] "Der Filmessay: Eine neue Form des Dokumentarfilms" in *Schreiben Bilder Sprechen: Texte zum essayistischen Film*, ed. Christa Blümlinger and Constantin Wulff (Vienna: Sonderzahl, 1992), 197.

[54] Alter, "Translating the Essay into Film and Installation," 48.

connection with theoretical writings, in particular with the work of the Frankfurt School. Most film historian and critics' characterizations of the essay film continue to draw upon Adorno's definition of the modern literary essay. For Adorno, the essay is "a constructed juxtaposition of elements […] composed of tensions which, as it were, have been brought to a standstill."[55] This ability to freeze and make visible the fragmentary nature of the modern world is the essay's affinity with the visual image. The critical power of the essay is, for Adorno, that it "shakes off the illusion of a simple, basically logical world that so perfectly suits the defense of the status quo" and in doing so, makes something "visible in the object which it is orthodoxy's secret purpose to keep invisible."[56] Thus, the essay is a heretical genre insofar as it is able to reveal the contradictions hidden within generally accepted doctrines and practices.

While the foundations of the essay film can be traced back to the filmic experiments of avant-garde filmmakers during the 1920s such as Dziga Vertov or Hans Richter, a time during which the genres of fiction and documentary film were becoming more clearly defined, the first essay film would not be made until the late 1950s. Favorable institutional circumstances in Western Europe enabled their production. In the mid-forties and fifties in France, and then starting in the sixties in Germany, federal and local governments introduced grants and other sources of funding for independent filmmakers, fostering autonomy and creativity, and supporting the development of non-commercial cinema.[57] In France, the *nouvelle vague* emerged, an auterist, anti-establishment cinema of filmmakers such as Chris Marker, Alain Resnais and Jean-Luc Godard. In West Germany, the postwar film journal *Filmkritik* revisited the legacy of Siegfried Kracauer and his notion of film criticism as socially conscious, ideology criticism. The New German Cinema followed, with filmmakers such as Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Wim Wenders, Volker Schlöndorff, Werner Herzog, and Margarethe von Trotta achieving international recognition. Kluge, Farocki, and Bitomsky, among others, found inspiration in the writings of Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, and other Frankfurt School theorists. New modes of understanding history offered by Michel Foucault, the *Annales* school of historiography, post-structuralist philosophy, and postcolonial theory also influenced later essay filmmakers. Digital media technology, which lowered barriers to entry for filmmakers and video artists by making it easier and cheaper to film and edit, increasing the number and diversity of video essayists. Digital image and editing technologies has now brought some of the aesthetic strategies of the video essay, including its hypertextual and multi-perspectival nature, to mainstream commercial digital video production on the Internet.

The Art of the Archive

The first chapter examines how Hartmut Bitomsky laid some of the theoretical foundations upon which his contemporaries and later filmmakers and media artists would approach the reuse of materials from the German cinematographic archive. I start with his writing for the influential West German film journal, *Filmkritik*, during the 1970s and early 80s, in which he presented materials from his archival explorations as well as his approach to German film history. I discuss Bitomsky's compilation films from the 1980s and his use of found

[55] Adorno, "The Essay as Form," *New German Critique* 32 (1984): 170.
[56] Ibid: 163 and 171, respectively.
[57] See Rascaroli, *The Personal Camera*, 26, for a more detailed history.

footage in his most recent essay film, *Dust* (*Staub*, 2007). In *Dust*, Bitomsky argues that films, like dust, function as archives that can be accessed again in the present. His "Germany Trilogy," compilation films made out of Nazi footage, examined the archive left behind by the Third Reich. These films include *Images of Germany* (*Deutschlandbilder*, 1983), *Reichsautobahn – Highways to the Reich* (*Reichsautobahn*, 1986) and *The VW Complex* (*Der VW-Komplex*, 1989) These films use the archive to formulate a continuity thesis that argued that much of the legacy of Nazi policies, including their propaganda and aesthetic strategies, was still present in industrial and visual production in postwar Germany.

My second chapter argues that Alexander Kluge used found footage from recognizable sources to reveal how this material was put to use serving particular narratives of history, and how it can then be recycled to construct alternative interpretations of the past. This is evidenced by his use of found footage in his essay films *The Power of Emotion* (*Die Macht der Gefühle*, 1983) and *The Blind Director* (*Der Angriff der Gegenwart auf die übrige Zeit*, 1985). Kluge explores the language of film with respect to other art forms and media, illustrating how film can be broken down into its component images, rearranged into new montages, and put to different rhetorical uses. Kluge employs archival footage to play with cinematic time, increasing and decreasing the speed of the moving images he cites, and illustrating how with the advent of new media, filmmakers can experiment with both time and space, as the language of the film archive becomes increasingly nonhierarchical and nonlinear. His essay films undermine narratives of progress and a sense of forward-moving, linear temporality. In addition to his films, I examine Kluge's more recent work for television and his media group dctp.tv's Website, which features segments from his previous works and functions as a digital archive.

The third chapter focuses on the ways in which Harun Farocki cites film history in his video essays and essayistic film installations through the use of found footage. Farocki employs found footage in order to construct an epistemology of gestures and body movements, and to examine the language of silent cinema and the conveying of meaning through camera editing that was lost with the advent of sound film. Farocki's "Archive of Filmic Expressions" ("Archiv filmischer Ausdrücke") is a main focus of the chapter. This archive's contributions include *Workers Leaving the Factory* (*Arbeiter verlassen die Fabrik*, 1995), *The Expression of Hands* (*Der Ausdruck der Hände*, 1997), and *Prison Images* (*Gefängnisbilder*, 2000). I also discuss his film installations *On Construction in Griffith's Film* (*Zur Bauweise des Films bei Griffith*, 2006) and *In-formation* (*Aufstellung*, 2005), among others. Farocki explores how certain images re-surface continually throughout film history and become a rhetorical figure that can highlight aspects of human life that were previously obscured or have since been forgotten.

The final chapter argues that Hito Steyerl's video essays and media art are representative of the forms that the digital multimedia essay takes today. I analyze her early video essays, including *The Empty Center* (*Die leere Mitte*, 1998), *November* (2004) and *Lovely Andrea* (2007), as well as two of her more recent single-channel video installations, *In Free Fall* (2010) and *Adorno's Grey* (2012). I focus on the montages these works construct out of recognizable, pre-existing footage and contemporary images. Steyerl often directly superimposes two images in a style of montage that seeks to create the kind of irruptive force of the dialectical image described by Walter Benjamin, in which as the past collides with the present it suddenly illuminates both past and present in a wholly new light. Found footage

from the past, when inserted next to contemporary footage, makes clear some aspect of both images that was not previously visible. Steyerl uses archival footage to reveal the hidden political and cultural borders that divide our modern spaces, to examine the global circulation of images and how the transition from film to digital media accelerates these movements, to trace the relationship between image production and technologies of state violence and control, and to illustrate the subjective nature of the cinematographic archive. In addition to their employment of found footage, these video essays and video installations explore the legacy of Weimar-era visual culture and thought and the extent to which this inheritance only becomes clear in light of the present.

In this dissertation several lines of inquiry intersect that are often kept separate from one another in the study of German visual culture. These fields of research include the study of early and silent cinema, avant-garde and auteur cinema, new media studies and remix culture, archive theory and historiography, and media epistemology and found footage practices. The archival footage practices in the films I analyze are similarly diverse; from explorations of emotions and gestures, to spatial and cultural boundaries, these films appropriate images in order to produce a critical history of the rhetoric of the German cinematographic archive. While these filmmakers engage with found footage to different ends in their films, they are nonetheless united in their shared use of essayistic film techniques and their examination of film's relationship to the archive and to history. Their films contribute to the larger tradition of essay films, video essays, and media art practices that first emerged in Western Europe and are now practiced more globally. They shed light on the current status of film and digital media in the twenty-first century, its growing status as a tool of contemporary art practices, and its changing aesthetic autonomy.[58] The works by these filmmakers are illustrative of the role of moving images in the gallery space and show how essayistic practices have shifted from film to video technology, and from the cinema to television, the museum and even the Internet.[59] If newer forms of media—television, the Internet, computer games—have begun displacing the storytelling function of the cinema, then it seems that the art gallery became a space in which to reflect upon the now "old" medium of film.[60] These works are indicative of the diverse uses of moving images and the heterogenous forms that essayistic media art takes today.

As my project illustrates, the film archive is not the dusty, often inaccessible storage space the print archive once seemed to be. Ultimately, it is not even merely a storage site for

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[58] For more on the aesthetics of the cinema in media art installations, see Juliane Rebentisch, *Aesthetics of Installation Art*, trans. Daniel Hendrickson, et al. (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012) and Erika Balsom, *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013).

[59] For more on film's return to the gallery space, see also Erika Balsom, "A Cinema in the Gallery, a Cinema in Ruins," *Screen* 50, no. 4 (Winter 2009): 411-27. On digital uses of found footage, see Domietta Torlasco, *The Heretical Archive: Digital Memory at the End of Film* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

[60] In his article "Media Archaeology as Symptom," Thomas Elsaesser argues that new media may have freed the cinema from its ideological servitude, rather than rendered it obsolete: "for much of its history, the cinema has not only served as the prime storytelling medium of the twentieth century, but also greatly accelerated the mobility and circulation of images as pictures of the world, and thereby aided the commodity status of objects as images and images as objects. These (ideological) functions, however, have now largely been taken over by different media configurations (television, the Internet) and the respective institutions and corporate entities that control and own them." *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 14, no. 2 (2016): 205.

material objects. The digital turn has changed the materiality and accessibility of the German cinematographic archive. This shift in media technology and archival practice enabled the practices of montage and use of pre-existing materials that is at the heart of the films, video essays and installation pieces I examine. These works and their use of found footage suggest that the archive may be more interesting and fruitful for intellectual inquiry than for attempts that try to determine film history and make claims about what *really* happened. It is how these films and the archive itself are later *used* and appropriated that is more consequential. The filmmakers, the essay films discussed in this project, and their method of citation of archival materials engage with film history and rework it through the lens of the present. When they adopt different elements from the archive and include them in their own works, they shake them free of their original context, revealing how the archival materials were employed to create a version of history, and how they can shed light on other, alternative narratives. As I will argue, the film archive is a space for disrupting the canonical narratives of the history, and perhaps even reimagining the future, of cinema itself. It is this complex and productive vision of the archive that I explore in the pages that follow.

Chapter One
Film Experiments: Hartmut Bitomsky's Video Essays and *Filmkritik* Writings

Modernity in the Archive

Filmmaker and critic Hartmut Bitomsky was a contributor and editor of the influential West German film journal *Filmkritik*.[61] Published from 1957 until 1984, *Filmkritik* was a major voice in the debates surrounding the need for a new German film and film culture in the postwar period. In the same way that the student movement of 1968 led to significant changes in organizations throughout West Germany, *Filmkritik* went through a period of upheaval around this time as the original founding members of the journal gradually left and were replaced by a new, younger guard of filmmakers and theorists. Bitomsky and Harun Farocki, Bitomsky's frequent early collaborator, were members of this generation of *Filmkritik* writers who edited the journal during its last ten years. Although both generations of editors were dedicated to renewing and growing local cinema and film culture, they approached this goal in different ways. The founding editors and contributors advocated for funding for filmmakers, as well as an increase in exhibition spaces and in film preservation. After some of these goals were addressed by the mid 1970s, the newer generation of editors expanded the journal's focus by including more film theoretical texts and archival material from past films. Bitomsky was one of the most significant contributors to report on his archival investigations and reprint archival images and text in *Filmkritik*.

In a text titled "Modern Images," Bitomsky described the experience of watching two early films by Louis Lumière over eighty years after they were made.[62] Bitomsky offered the reader his impression that these early filmic images are missing; the original objects captured on film seemed to have slowly withdrawn from the high-contrast copy-of-a-copy that he watched in the archive:

> Nothing encourages more the impression that they are missing than the condition of these old films. Copies of copies; the shades of gray dropped out; the hazy outlines that fibrously extend beyond objects; […] the gradation is so severe and high-contrast that the images occasionally appear to be as close an approximation of binary coding as possible. [63]

One of the Lumière films Bitomsky watched, *Boat Leaving the Port* (*Barque sortant du port*, 1895), depicts three men setting out to sea in a small vessel. Bitomsky described how the boat eases out into open waters when, suddenly, a large wave pushes the boat out to sea. The sailors hurriedly attempt to change their course as the film concludes. Although it is less than a minute

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[61] Bitomsky first wrote for the journal in 1970 and became an editor in 1974.

[62] Louis and his brother Auguste Lumière are regarded as the first filmmakers in history. They invented and patented the cinematograph and held their first screenings of moving pictures in 1895.

[63] "Moderne Bilder," *Filmkritik* 25 (November-December 1981): 541. Original German: "Nichts bestärkt den Eindruck des Verschollenen mehr als der Zustand der alten Filme. Kopien von Kopien; die Graustufen sind herausgefallen; faserig strahlen die Konturen über die Gegenstände hinaus; [...] die Gradation ist so hart und kontrastreich, daß die Bilder mitunter wie eine größtmögliche Annäherung an eine binäre Codierung zu sein scheinen."

long, Bitomsky mulled over the various ways this film can be interpreted. Is it an actuality film that depicts a slice of real life or can we read this as an early fiction film of men setting off on a mythic quest to discover new lands? Bitomsky found the film's ability to straddle different discourses striking. The film speaks to the lack of distinction between fiction and documentary in early cinema and to debates that continue today regarding whether or not cinema's primary function should be to depict reality. Bitomsky's reference to binary coding evokes the way that video and sound is now stored on computers, CDs and DVDs using binary code.

At first glance it appears that the cinematographic archive contains dusty, damaged documents of film's history. Bitomsky's experience in the archive reveals that these films contain knowledge that still has critical import today. By treating the archive as a space of overlapping narratives that speak to both past and present, Bitomsky drew inspiration from the writing of Walter Benjamin. Benjamin's work with archival materials is perhaps best exemplified by his unfinished *Arcades Project* (*Das Passagenwerk*), in which he examined city life in nineteenth-century Paris by creating a montage of various materials, including hundreds of quotations.[64] Benjamin commented directly on some of the citations while others stand on their own. At times quotes from different sources are juxtaposed with one another in a collage. Benjamin's assemblage of citations allows the many voices of the archive to be heard—to overlap, contradict and illuminate one another—so that the roots of modernity begins to emerge from his examination of the Paris arcades. It is Benjamin's style of collage that Bitomsky attempts to emulate in his investigations into the German cinematographic archive. In his writing for *Filmkritik* and the video essays that are analyzed in this chapter, Bitomsky created montages of citations drawn from the archive—written quotes and filmic citations— that aim to illuminate how the various discourses within the archive might produce knowledge about the past and the present state of German cinema.

The archive preserves records of that which occurred, the official narratives of the past, and traces of what could have but did not transpire. In a text titled "Dirty Laundry" ("Schmutzige Wäsche"), which accompanied his film on the German film production company Ufa (*Die Ufa*, 1992), Bitomsky discussed the intrigues, failures, and behind-the-scenes accounts he found in the Ufa archive. Bitomsky was interested in how the archive documents Ufa's transformation from an independent studio into the propaganda factory of the Third Reich. In addition to realized film projects, he examined proposals for films that would never come to fruition. One such film was to be a sound remake of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* with Jean Cocteau in the role of the somnambulist Cesare. Bitomsky marveled at this road not taken: "But who would have thought that the path from Caligari to Hitler also went past Cocteau—certainly no straight path, it was twisted and not to be traversed, yet still led there; the tracks can be found in the Ufa files."[65] Records of what films could have been made were just as important for Bitomsky as what films were produced because these paths not taken also contain knowledge

[64] First published in 1982, Benjamin worked on the project between 1927 and 1940.

[65] Hartmut Bitomsky, "Schmutzige Wäsche," in *Kinowahrheit*, ed. Ilka Schaarschmidt (Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 2003), 39. Originally published in *Die Ufa 1917-1945: das deutsche Bilderimperium*, no. 11, ed. Rainer Rother (Berlin: Deutsches Historisches Museum, 1992): 10-14. "Aber wer hätte gedacht, daß der Weg von Caligari zu Hitler auch an Cocteau vorbeiführte – kein gerader Weg freilich, er war krumm und nicht zu gehen, und führte doch dahin, in den Ufa-Akten kann man die Spuren lesen."

about Ufa. Forgotten or abandoned projects have the potential to shed light on possible futures or alternate routes for German cinema.

Bitomsky's reuse of materials from the German cinematographic archive is indicative of how the archive was becoming increasingly accessible starting in the late 1960s. He belongs to a small group of postwar filmmakers who worked directly with the filmic legacy of the Third Reich, one of the least accessible parts of the German cinematographic archive.[66] The three films in Bitomsky's *Germany Trilogy* are comprised mostly of citations taken from the Nazi films.[67] Immediately after the war the Nazi cinematographic archive was quarantined and access to these films was limited. They could only be screened in educational contexts and accompanied by sanctioned pedagogical materials. Educators and historians were slowly granted access to the Nazi archive, followed by filmmakers and critics like Bitomsky who were allowed to watch and sample from these films.[68] Bitomsky's reuse of images from the Nazi cinematographic archive took a radically different approach to these films than traditional educational presentations of Nazi cinema. He called into question the extent to which these films are documents solely of fascism. Instead, Bitomsky argued in his films that Nazi cinema contains knowledge about German cinema as a whole. The films of his *Germany Trilogy* construct the argument that the cinema of the Third Reich was embedded in systems of capitalist production and exploitation which persist to this day. Thus, any attempt to examine or come to terms with Nazi film history must also confront the postwar and contemporary German film industry.

In the pages that follow, I discuss Bitomsky's video essays and film historical writing that create montages of citations from the German cinematographic archive. Bitomsky's *Germany Trilogy* and his citations from the Nazi cinematographic archive comprise a significant portion of my analysis. In addition to this trilogy, I consider two of Bitomsky's later films, *B-52* (2001) and *Dust* (*Staub*, 2007) and examine how the advent of digital media further increased Bitomsky's access to the digital cinematographic archive. I argue that this prompted Bitomsky to use digital tools to reflect on the future of cinema and practices of reusing pre-existing materials. I begin the chapter by discussing Bitomsky's writing for the West German journal *Filmkritik*, where he presented collages of archival materials from the research he conducted into early cinema and the cinema of the Third Reich. This research would later result in the compilation films made for television *The Golden Age of Cinematography* (*Das goldene Zeitalter der Kinematographie*, 1976) and *Pictures of Germany* (*Deutschlandbilder*, 1983). Bitomsky's work for *Filmkritik* and his early film theoretical reflections laid the foundations for the practices of citation and montage employed by Alexander Kluge, Harun Farocki, and Hito Steyerl, which I will discuss in the chapters that follow. Bitomsky's work marks the early stages of a set of

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[66] Some notable filmmakers whose films did directly engage with the Third Reich include Hans Jürgen Syberberg and Alexander Kluge. I discuss two such films—Syberberg's *Hitler, Ein Film aus Deutschland* and Kluge's *Brutalität aus Stein* in more detail below. *Brutalität aus Stein*, like Bitomsky's "German Trilogy" are part of a small number of films that feature citations from Nazi films. Kluge's film cites a Nazi *Kulturfilm* and archival audio recordings.

[67] Bitomsky did not officially name these films his "Deutsche Trilogie," but they are commonly referred to as part of a trilogy now.

[68] *Filmkritik* strongly advocated for increased access to Nazi cinema and reported on the Nazi film retrospectives that were shown. See, for example, the following articles: Enno Patalas, "Zeigt Nazifilme!," *Filmkritik* 7, no. 9 (September 1963); Dietrich Kuhlbrodt, Und morgen Veit Harlan?," *Filmkritik* 8, no. 8 (August 1964); or Helmut Regel, "Zur Topographie des NS-Film," *Filmkritik* 10, no. 1 (January 1966).

artistic practices that continue to be employed by experimental filmmakers and media artists in film installations. These contemporary practices have their origins in the avant-garde experimentation with the fragmentary narratives of the archive that took the form of essay films and video essays from the 1970s to the early 1990s. Kluge began to experiment with film citations and archival materials shortly before Bitomsky's collages of archival materials and citations appeared in *Filmkritik*. However, Bitomsky's writings provided a clear theoretical articulation of the aims of this kind of citation and research, and thus I will examine his work before turning to Kluge in Chapter Two. Farocki, who was Bitomsky's contemporary and an early filmmaking partner, will be the focus of Chapter Three.

The Prescience of the Early Cinematographic Archive

Bitomsky wrote the introduction to the 1972 reprint of Béla Balázs' *The Spirit of Film* (*Der Geist des Films*, 1930). In this text he argued that the act of engaging with Balázs' film-theoretical book forty years later altered the original text. Bitomsky imagined that the film theory presented in the book has transformed over time as our understanding of the medium also evolved: "our reading must change the text, which has stood still, because film has changed."[69] Balázs' book, written before the rise of Hollywood, did not anticipate its coming influence. Balázs was similarly unaware of the coming rise of fascism in Europe and the uses to which the cinema would be put by the Nazis. In light of these developments, we read Balázs' words differently but they still contain something of use for us today. In order to reveal how the text still speaks to the present, Bitomsky put *The Spirit of Film* into conversation with other voices. He inserted long quotes set in bold font from contemporary philosophers and media theorists such as Michel Foucault, Umberto Eco, Claude Lévi-Strauss and Pierre Bourdieu. By creating a collage with these citations and quotes from Balázs' texts, Bitomsky put Balázs in conversation with current media theory. Bitomsky also brought in quotes from Balázs' contemporaries as well as later theorists and critics, including members of the founding generation of *Filmkritik*.[70] Bitomsky contended that the import of Balasz' text for the present becomes clear through the juxtaposition of past and present:

> A text is obsolete at the time when we are no longer able to extract anything from it. There are things, which one must say over and over because they have remained true. And then there are things, which one must repeat in order to discover problems: not the old ones, but new ones.[71]

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[69] Hartmut Bitomsky, "Der Abstand des Lesers zum Text und der Abstand des Textes zum Film," Introduction to Béla Balázs, *Der Geist des Films* (Frankfurt am Main: Makol Verlag, 1972), 12. "…unsere Lektüre muß den Text, der ja stehengeblieben ist, verändern, weil sich der Film geändert hat."

[70] Bitomsky includes quotes from Balázs' contemporaries Sergei Eisenstein, Walter Benjamin, and Siegfried Kracauer, in addition to more contemporary writers like André Bazin, Frieda Grafe, Ulrich Gregor and Enno Patalas. Grafe, Gregor and Patalas were some of the founding members of *Filmkritik*.

[71] Bitomsky, "Der Abstand des Lesers zum Text und der Abstand des Textes zum Film," 7. "Ein Text ist dann veraltet, wenn wir ihm nichts mehr zu entnehmen vermögen. Es gibt Sachen, die man immer wieder sagen muß, weil sie wahrgeblieben sind. Und dann gibt es Sachen, die man wiederholen muß, um Probleme wieder zu entdecken: nicht die vergangenen, sondern die neuen."

In *Filmkritik*, Bitomsky would demonstrate how this hope, that an examination of past film theory might shed light on possibilities for the future of cinema, might be realized through archival research and practices of citation.

In "The Golden Age of Cinematography," published in *Filmkritik* in 1976, Bitomsky examined the discourses of early cinema by creating a collage of archival visual and written materials.[72] The issue is an assemblage of different elements: quotations taken from print publications, archival images, descriptions of films, and commentary that is to be attributed to Bitomsky. These materials are not organized chronologically, but rather according to reoccurring motifs or themes that often span disparate discussions of media, different time periods, and a variety of films. The writings selected by Bitomsky highlight the ways in which early film theory did not treat the new medium of film as solely a form of entertainment, but instead regarded film through the lens of many different discourses. These early theorists approached film as a medium of modernity, in all its political, economic, educational, industrial, and aesthetic facets. Film seemed to hold the potential to bring people together as a democratizing force, to be able to embody and register the rapid changes that characterized modernity, and to represent the culmination of all of the innovations of the 19th century. Early cinema and the theoretical texts that engaged with it were characterized by rich speculation about what cinema represented and what it could possibly mean in the future.

In addition to its status as an emblem of modern technology and urban life, this issue of *Filmkritik* examined how the cinema was intertwined with other institutions of emerging modernity such as world's fairs. One of the first texts in the issue is an excerpt discussing the Paris World's Fair of 1900. The text describes the experience of a moving panorama, or a *stéréorama mouvant*, which simulated a trip around the world. Spectators boarded a boat on a moving platform that moved back and forth to simulate movement. Two rotating panoramas mounted on cylinders on either side of the boat unfurled to depict the coastline and scenery of the 'journey.' Fans blew engine smoke and sea air to complete the sensory experience of sea travel.[73] In the description cited in *Filmkritik*, the observer explains the simulation as if it were real: "At the moment of departure the sun rose and we followed its path as it illuminated the various regions and cities of Algeria: we arrived in Algiers as the sun set."[74] The first description of this famous panorama is followed by a description of the very first photographic image, a daguerreotype from 1838. The prominent position of these two examples of nineteenth-century visual culture, makes it clear that Bitomsky placed the new medium of film into a genealogy with these existing forms of visual culture not commonly associated with the

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[72] The materials were gathered as a part of the research Bitomsky conducted for a television program on Westdeutscher Rundfunk with the same title as the issue: "Das Heft ist aus dem Material und der Zuarbeit für eine Folge von 3 Sendungen im 3. Programm des Westdeutschen Fernsehens entstanden." "Das goldene Zeitalter der Kinematographie," *Filmkritik* 20, no. 9 (September 1976): 393.

[73] For a longer description of the panorama see Stephan Oettermann's *The Panorama: History of a Mass Medium* (New York: Zone Books, 1997) and Rhonda Garelick, "*Bayadères*, *Stéréorama*, and *Vahat-Loukoum*: Technological Realism in the Age of Empire," in *Spectacles of Realism: Gender, Body, Genre*, ed. Margaret Cohen and Christopher Prendergast (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 294-319.

[74] "Das goldene Zeitalter der Kinematographie," 394. "Im Augenblick der Abfahrt ging die Sonne auf und man verfolgte sie in ihrem Lauf, wie sie über die verschiedenen Gegenden und Städte Algiers leuchtete: mit Sonnenuntergang kam man in Algier an."

cinema at the time. Rather than regard film as a radically new media, locating it within established forms of visual culture makes clear how the cinema adapted strategies from other media-technological phenomena.

While Bitomsky wondered at the many discourses of early cinema, he also turned a critical eye on the new medium and the uses to which it was put. He examined how the cinematograph, following the imaginary journeys of the panorama, was used as a tool of mobilization and of forging national identity. In a text titled "Baedeker," which refers to a publishing company of popular travel guides, Bitomsky describes how the cinematograph followed the paths cleared by war and imperialism throughout the world, producing visual spectacles of far-away places for the cinema.[75] The next citations in this collage are drawn from texts that discuss the images of Africa brought back by the Pathé brothers. Film was able to bridge the large distances between Europe and its colonies, making the world suddenly seem smaller. Bitomsky quotes Kracauer here: "the world made pilgrimage to the great exposition and learned to recognize itself."[76] At this time, film was also used to promote racist images and stereotypes and to aid in colonial plundering. In the middle of a cluster of articles regarding the Paris World's Fair that discuss how Europe was bettering its colonial subjects, Bitomsky inserted two striking images that subvert this message. The first is a painting of an acrobat. He holds a ladder in his mouth while a small child who is dressed as an ape is climbing up the ladder. Although the image's original context is not given, the setting and costumes suggest that this is a racist caricature. The second image features a group of astronomers staring into a gigantic telescope. These men, wearing wizard-like clothing, seem to be searching for the indecipherable sky for information. Together these two images provide a counter argument to the text. These images critique the ways in which colonial movements aimed to conquer land and people. The world's fair and contemporary visual culture registered and reinforced this political imperialism by turning the world into something to be exported and consumed for pleasure. This constellation of image and text also sets up the aims of colonialism as unattainable: the astronomers are dwarfed by the sky that seems unreachable and unconquerable.

Bitomsky's assemblage of film historical materials attempts to help this archive come to life and to encourage the various materials to begin to speak to one another. He characterizes the act of engaging with the past as a form of archaeological work. Underneath a quote from Michel Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* (*L'archéologie du savoir*, 1969) comes text that can only be attributed to Bitomsky: "To watch old films again is first and foremost an archaeological endeavor. Archaeological endeavors are less a theory than they are an attitude towards the world."[77] For Bitomsky, film is similarly archival: "an archive of images, histories, places and

[75] Ibid, 425.

[76] Ibid, 427. Quoted from Kracauer's book *Jacques Offenbach und das Paris seiner Zeit*. "…wallfahrte die Welt zur Ausstellung und lernte sich hier als Welt erkennen." English translation taken from *Jacques Offenbach and the Paris of His Time*, trans. Gwenda David, et al. (New York: Zone Books, 2002), 314.

[77] "Das goldene Zeitalter der Kinematographie," 395. "Die alten Filme wieder sehen ist vor allem eine archäologische Arbeit. Archäologische Arbeit ist weniger Theorie, vielmehr Haltung, der Welt gegenüber."

ideas of those people who produced the culture of the 19th century."[78] Drawing on the work of Foucault as well as film theorists André Bazin, Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer, Bitomsky's issue of *Filmkritik* mimics the diverse approaches with which these various theorists discussed film. By citing original texts, assembling them into a collage with visual material, and providing minimal explication, Bitomsky approached early film with the same openness that early film theorists and historians employed when they encountered the new medium.

Bitomsky recognized that early cinema was not yet dominated by narrative form, a fact that would become an important part of later film historiographies. When he published this issue of *Filmkritik*, most accounts of film history treated the cinema as a medium of entertainment. Bitomsky's historiographical collage focuses on early, non-narrative cinema and all the discourses surrounding it that suggest film was more than just a spectacle or narrative form. This recognition that film's narrative use was one of many discourses in early cinema would come to be widely accepted in film history. The cinema's early years were eventually divided into different periods. Pre-1907 films, referred to by Tom Gunning as "the cinema of attractions," are mostly nonnarrative works featuring special effects or some sort of novelty. These films break many of the rules we commonly associate with filmmaking today.[79] The period of roughly 1908 to 1917 is considered a transitional period of experimentation in which both narrative and nonnarrative films were common. Contrary to earlier accounts of film history, narrative films, which we associate with Hollywood filmmaking, would only become the dominant form after this point. The archival research by Bitomsky, and later by film historian Tom Gunning, shed light on materials that contradicted linear narratives of film history that focus on film's narrative form. When these materials are reexamined, they can be used to put forth new histories of the cinema. These multiple histories illuminate potential alternate futures for film: if early cinema had various paths that it could have followed other than the one that led to narrative cinema, then modern film might still find ways to explore the roads not taken.

Germany's Images and Its Archives

Learning from the past, and the ability to re-contextualize the past through the lens of the present, is predicated on access to these films. Bitomsky's critical examination of the Nazi cinematographic archive began in 1982, when he examined Nazi *Kulturfilme* for the German television network WDR. This work resulted in the three films that make up his *Germany Trilogy*: *Images of Germany* (*Deutschlandbilder*, 1982), *Reichsautobahn – Highways to the Reich* (*Reichsautobahn*, 1986) and *The VW Complex* (*Der VW Komplex*, 1989). Whereas *Images of Germany* examines a wide cross-section of *Kulturfilme*, *Reichsautobahn* focuses on the campaign for

[78] Ibid, 401. "Der Kinematograph ist vor allem ein Archiv verschiedener, eigenständiger Erfindungen." Der Film ist "ein Archiv von Bildern, Geschichten, Orten und Vorstellungen von Menschen, welche die Kultur im 19. Jahrhundert herausgebracht hatte."

[79] Tom Gunning characterizes the "cinema of attractions" as films which responds to the shocks of modern life as characterized by Walter Benjamin among others. These films feature a combination of the following characteristics: "direct confrontation of the audience, brevity of film subjects, a fascination with speed and surprising special effects, a display of novelties, and a lack of sustained temporal and narrative development." Gunning, "Modernity and Cinema: A Culture of Shocks and Flows," in *Cinema and Modernity*, ed. Murray Pomerance (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 306.

building the German Autobahn under the Third Reich, and *VW Complex* explores the history of the Volkswagen automotive plant in Wolfsburg. Bitomsky re-contextualized moving and still images from Nazi *Kulturfilme* by placing them in dialogue with contemporary images. In different ways, each of the films seeks to illustrate how the Nazi aesthetic regime, which had not been fully understood or acknowledged at the time, still exerts influence over postwar German culture.

Bitomsky argued that an engagement with Nazi cinema cannot be done by only examining feature films. In order to understand the cinema of the Third Reich, one must examine the records of the past and visions of the future that are staged in *Kulturfilme*. This genre of documentary short films was shown in the cinemas before feature films. While in the Weimar period they served a primarily educational function, in the Nazi-era *Kulturfilme* were meant to function as complements to the ideology disseminated in the feature films. Bitomsky argued that *Kulturfilme* are as important for understanding Nazi cinema as the propagandistic feature films: "What the entertainment films might have lacked in primary Nazi ideology was more than made up for by *Kulturfilme*. The features may well have shown revues and romances, but culture films assumed the political burden."[80] Retrospectives of Nazi cinema in the postwar period focused primarily on Nazi feature filmmaking. Bitomsky's video essays examine the ideological labor performed by the less visible *Kulturfilme*. His *Germany Trilogy* attempts to make visible the hermeneutic position of the historian, archivist and filmmaker who later uses these films in processes of meaning creation and knowledge production. It is through the exercise of assembling different pieces into a whole, of shifting them around and reassembling them into a new constellation, that Bitomsky could make certain narratives, motifs and continuities in these films clear. In his *Germany Trilogy*, Bitomsky performed his archival labor on screen in shots that show him shifting through archival documents and film stills before he re-contextualized these materials.

Scholars of the cinema of the Third Reich stress the influential contribution made by film in the National Socialist regime.[81] The entire Third Reich has been interpreted as a visual or cinematic experience, as suggested by the title of Hans Jürgen Syberberg's film, *Hitler, A Film From Germany* (*Hitler, ein Film aus Deutschland*, 1977).[82] The role that film played in Nazi propaganda and in articulating the world view of the Third Reich was recognized by the occupying forces following the war. The Allied forces, who stopped all film production in Germany for a year following the war, took control of the local film industry and helped found the self-organized film inspection system of the FSK (*Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle der Filmwirtschaft* or Voluntary Self Control of the Movie Industry). The FSK devised a metric by which to

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[80] "Der Kotflügel eines Mercedes-Benz. Nazikulturfilme, Teil I. Filme von 1933 bis 1938," *Filmkritik* 27, no. 10 (October 1983): 445. English translation is taken from Eric Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and its Afterlife* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 21.

[81] See for example: Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion*, 1. "Audiovisual machinery played a crucial role in National Socialist designs for living, in radical attempts to control human activity and dominate the physical world."

[82] Rentschler argues that film was used "to map the universe in accordance with party designs, to provide a comprehensive lexical guide to the past and present, to account for all signs of life from the smallest atom to the mightiest being." Ibid, 16.

determine whether to allow films made during the Nazi period to be publicly screened.[83] The Allies eventually gave control of the German cinematographic archive to the Federal Republic of Germany in 1953. Later this archive, including Nazi propaganda films, was entrusted to the Murnau-Stiftung, which was founded in 1966. The Murnau-Stiftung examined films from the Nazi-era and determined which films were reserved from public exhibition and commercial use due to their propagandistic and racist nature or their glorification of war. These films were categorized as *Vorbehaltsfilme*, which roughly translates to "reserved films." The Murnau-Stiftung, which formulated the list of *Vorbehaltsfilme*, determined whether these films could be shown in educational contexts and with accompanying explanatory materials, or whether they should never be publicly exhibited. Those films in the Nazi cinematographic archive that were not categorized as a *Vorbehaltsfilm* were accessible to the public. Thus, certain Nazi-era feature films were never addressed as Nazi films and were exhibited without restrictions after the war.[84]

Bitomsky was not the first filmmaker to examine the legacy of Nazi cinema. The film *Brutality in Stone* (*Brutalität in Stein*, 1961), by Alexander Kluge and Peter Schamoni, was an important precursor to Bitomsky's *Germany Trilogy*. Kluge and Schamoni included direct citations in their film of the Nazi party rally grounds in Nuremberg, the architectural visions of Nazi city planners, and the concentration camp Auschwitz. In contrast to Bitomsky's essay films, *Brutality in Stone* seems to parody the genre of the *Kulturfilm* by employing and exaggerating some of its narratives strategies. The film begins with citations from Kurt Rupli's *Kulturfilm*, *Das Wort aus Stein* (*The Word of Stone*, 1939), and juxtaposes the film's images of Nuremberg's *Zeppelinfeld* with contemporary images of the decayed remains of ruins, rocks and building material. The Nazi's architectural fantasies are contrasted with what remains of these structures in 1961.[85] If *Brutality in Stone* reacts to a present that seems to deny the past, it seeks to counteract this amnesia by forcefully juxtaposing past delusions and present decay.[86] Over twenty years later, Bitomsky's films attest to the fact that Germans have still not recognized how or why they were seduced by the positive image of Nazism presented in the films of the Third Reich. In order to stop repeating the mistakes of the past, Bitomsky argued that the public must critically examine why the cinema of the Third Reich was such an effective propaganda tool and recognize that aesthetic strategies from this period are still being used by the contemporary German culture industry.

Bitomsky put forth the provocative thesis in *Images of Germany* (*Deutschlandbilder*) that the images produced by the Third Reich should not be understood as Nazi images or documents of a singular period of German history. Although the film is comprised of montages of citations from Nazi *Kulturfilme*, Bitomsky claimed these images are products of a German

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[83] Erich Pommer, the former Ufa director and later Film Director in the American occupation zone, helped found the FSK.

[84] Hollywood feature films, as well as favorite films from the Nazi era, were more popular with post-war filmgoers than contemporary ruble films. Eric Rentschler, *The Use and Abuse of Cinema: German Legacies from the Weimar Era to the Present* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 136.

[85] *Kulturfilme* often depicted plans for future Nazi cities including Albert Speer's city designs.

[86] Rentschler argues that the film is a response of sorts to Theodor Adorno's 1959 radio address, "Was bedeutet: Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit?" ("What does Coming to Terms with the Past Mean?") and an attempt to confront the past through forceful juxtaposition. *The Use and Abuse of Cinema*, 141.

culture industry that both pre-dates and survives the Third Reich. In the film, the culture industry, a term coined by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, is depicted as equal parts cultural and industrial production. The industry of the culture industry is made literal through montage sequences of factories, machines, and industrial labor. These images are placed into montage with citations from *Kulturfilme* that were intended to produce a mass culture in line with the Third Reich's worldview. These montages attempt to translate Adorno and Horkheimer's written characterization of the culture industry into visual form. Furthermore, *Images of Germany* examines the German culture industry in order to articulate a continuity thesis, one that argues that the Nazis built upon an existing culture industry and drew from the techniques of avant-garde filmmaking in their *Kulturfilme*.

Written by Bitomsky and shot in collaboration with Heiner Mühlenbrock, *Images of Germany* opens with a montage of short film sequences punctuated by intertitles: first, the word "Images," then "Germany." As the film's title is shown, we hear the film's voiceover state: "You believe in Germany and images. You have a flood of images. Images of Germany."[87] This flood of images is not just any set of images but those that help us to understand how our notion of Germany has been conceived. The montages of citations hail from over thirty *Kulturfilme*, with multiple citations from each year of the Third Reich. The films are ordered chronologically and at times their titles are shown on screen or given in the voiceover. Intertitles announce the year in which the films premiered before we are shown the montages. In these sequences, we see various images of men and women at work and at leisure, doing sports and outdoor physical activities, and laboring in agricultural and industrial production.[88] Bitomsky brings to the fore a fundamental tension within these images: despite the fact that they might seem to be documentary images, they are carefully crafted propaganda that exclude as much of reality as they depict. Many of the film's montage sequences examine the contradictions within the Third Reich's worldview.

It becomes quickly apparent in the film that Bitomsky does not regard the Third Reich as a distinct period within German film history. Following the opening sequence of the film, we are shown endless piles of film stills. As the camera pans across them, the film's voiceover proclaims that there has been no radical disavowal of the Nazi's fascist aesthetic regime:

> How can we talk about these images? After the war there was no overthrow of images (*Bildersturz*) in which films were destroyed in an act of primal outrage. The films were confiscated and that is something different. They were kept under lock and key in a museum of history. One had to pay a ransom for them in order to show them, and one could only get them out if the context [of exhibition] carefully rendered them innocuous.[89]

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[87] The film's voiceover is read by Jons Dengler. Original German: "Sie glauben an Deutschland und Bilder. Sie haben eine Flucht von Bilder. Deutschlandbilder."

[88] Some of these *Kulturfilme* will be examined by Bitomsky later, and in more detail, in the films *Reichsautobahn* and *VW Complex*.

[89] Original German: "Wie kann man über diese Bilder sprechen? Es hat nach dem Krieg keinen Bildersturz gegeben, der die Filme in einer Akte erster Empörung zerstört hätte. Die Filme wurden konfiziert, und das ist etwas anderes. Sie sind unter Verschluss in einem Museum der Geschichte gefangen gehalten. Man muss sie freikaufen, um sie zeigen zu können und man kriegt sie nur heraus wenn der Kontext sie gewissenhaft unschädlich macht."

By using the term "Bildersturz," Bitomsky referenced iconoclasm, which in a religious context describes the process of rejecting images and aesthetic regimes. Understood literally, the word "Sturz" describes a total rejection or overthrow of images. Rather than refer to religious iconography, Bitomsky turned this term on the Third Reich's images which, he argued, were not rejected after the war but instead taken out of the public realm and inadvertently preserved for the future. By hiding these images in museums or putting them under lock and key in special repositories, there was no space in which the larger public could address these images as propaganda. To use citations from the films selected by Bitomsky in *Images of Germany*, the West Deutscher Rundfunk, who broadcast the film, had to pay to gain access to and to reuse these images.[90] To some degree aesthetic strategies from Nazi propaganda were able to exist in the public sphere after the war because many of these images continued to be uncritically exhibited. When Nazi films were screened only edited portions of the original films were shown, so that their propagandistic power would be lessened. The premise is that if they were introduced as fascist propaganda they would not have the same effect on the viewer that they had during the Third Reich. By screening only parts of Nazi films in an educational context, Bitomsky argued that these films were made to seem harmless. They were treated as historical and separate from contemporary film production.[91] The films were not able to be examined individually nor were these images truly accessible to the public and thus, Bitomsky contended that there was no opportunity to recognize similarities between Nazi propaganda strategies and postwar films.

The films of the Third Reich are of particular importance for understanding this period because they reveal more of the German culture industry and other industries in the Third Reich. As the voiceover states: "The film industry was the only properly functioning industry." The cover of the first issue of *Filmkritik* that accompanies *Images of Germany* features two images that underscores the medium of film's place within the Third Reich's other industrial operations. The cover image is a collage: a man holding a film camera while leaning out of a car window is placed at a diagonal above a closeup image of the front of another car.[92] Film created the illusion of booming industry and sought to pique the public's appetite for consumption. Automobiles were used in the creation of films and, as evidenced by the *Kulturfilme* cited by Bitomsky, cars were also the focus of many films at the time. Despite their role in *Kulturfilme* propaganda, cars were not something the average person could afford. These films offer a picture of how the culture industry worked to craft contradictory images. Bitomsky recognized the roots of capitalist consumption in these images: *Kulturfilme* feature familiar visual tropes of fast cars, modernity, ads for leisure and travel, and the glorification of work. The voiceover explains how this need for speed and a sense of *Fernweh* were connected to the Third Reich's justification for capturing more space.[93] In the montage sequences that Bitomsky created, he highlighted the tension between the two very different tendencies mixed in Nazi ideology and

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[90] Karen Rosenberg, "Mit Avantgarde-Verfahren gegen die Avantgarde der Nazizeit," in *Alles, alles über Deutschland*, ed. Martin Koerber (Berlin: Freunde der deutschen Kinemathek, 1992), 44. "Für die Filmausschnitte mußten sie (oder vielmehr der WDR, in dessen Auftrag der Film entstand) bei der bundeseigenen Transit-Film teuer bezahlen."

[91] "Es muß sichergestellt sein, daß der Kontext und eine gewissenhafte Dosierung sie [die Bilder] unschädlich machen." Bitomsky, "Der Kotflügel eines Mercedes-Benz. Nazikulturfilme, Teil I," 446.

[92] Cover image of "Der Kotflügel eines Mercedes-Benz. Nazikulturfilme, Teil I."

[93] The voiceover states: "Das Fernweh ist mit dem Fremdenhass versöhnt."

visual culture. On the one hand, the "Blut und Boden" ideology praised agricultural production, traditional family values, and small-town life. On the other hand, *Kulturfilme* are evidence of a thriving cult of technology and industrialization.

Images of Germany and the second installation of the *Germany Trilogy*, *Reichsautobahn*, use montages to illustrate the contradictions within the films produced by the Nazi culture industry. Certain reoccurring motifs were used to obscure other images that the Third Reich purposefully concealed.[94] Nazi *Kulturfilme* never featured images of rich people or wealthy factory owners. Although these people lost their individual identity within the Third Reich, this paradoxically allowed them to keep their power after the war.[95] Nazi attempts at obscuring the truth were also at play in films that featured industrial production in the Third Reich. The film *Mensch, so'n Blech* (1938) depicts the processes of sorting garbage and recycling tin. *Images from Germany* includes a citation from the original film: we see old cans recycled and turned into scrap metal so that they can be rendered into new sheets of metal. Scrap metal was an important resource for the armament industry in Nazi Germany and the focus of a number of *Kulturfilme*. By juxtaposing these sequences with footage of soldiers and war, Bitomsky made clear that these films about recycling are obscuring the Nazi armament industry. *Reichsautobahn* uses a similar strategy to examine the "aesthetic of the autobahn."[96] Despite the fact that *Kulturfilme* about the autobahn depict happy, well-treated workers, and promise that the autobahn will be used by the average German, the contemporary footage of interviews with former autobahn workers reveals that it was propaganda.[97] Hitler claimed that the autobahn would never be separated from those who constructed it. In *Reichsautobahn* it becomes clear that autobahn only had military applications. The film relates the development of the autobahn to the airplane industry and the role that aerial travel played in the Nazi's plans for seizing power. After the real purpose of the autobahn is revealed, Bitomsky examines the autobahn as an aesthetic object.[98] All the artworks that depict the autobahn from the time—painting, drawings, photographs, and films—memorialize an image of the autobahn that was never a reality.

Images of Germany constructs a unique postwar continuity thesis. The fact that many Nazi directors, actors and other film workers continued to be active in the West German film industry following the war meant that there was a continuity in the narratives and aesthetic strategies of Nazi cinema well into the postwar period. *Images of Germany* extends this continuity thesis to include the Weimar Republic and argues that strands of the German culture

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[94] Bitomsky argues that "In jedem Schnitt wird ein Bild zum Verschwinden gebracht." Bitomsky, "Der Koflügel eines Mercedes-Benz. Nazikulturfilme, Teil II: Filme von 1939-1945," *Filmkritik* 27, no. 12 (December 1983): 572.

[95] Ibid, 577. "Die deutsche Bourgeoisie hat für ihre Unsichtbarkeit dennoch Tribut zollen müssen. Sie zahlte mit dem Verlust ihrer kulturellen Identität. Der Witz der Geschichte will, daß der Identitätsverlust gerade das ist, was die deutsche Bourgeoisie immer noch am Leben und an der Macht erhält."

[96] Some of the citations are drawn from films that were previously featured in *Images of Germany*.

[97] The interviewees explain that they never used the autobahn themselves. The real conditions of production were rough, and the underpaid workers endured many hardships. One interviewee points out that these films hide the fact that there were major initial construction flaws in the roads. The autobahn was initially far too thin to handle traffic.

[98] "The autobahn was planned as an artistic work of construction and was elevated to an object of art. Did it have any function other than this? Was it a kind of façade with nothing behind it? Just as with every vacuum, that of the autobahn had to filled up with something as well, and here it was with myths, pictures, legends and harassment of tourists and with a crazy economy." Bitomsky, "Reichsautobahn" in *Hartmut Bitomsky: Retrospektive*, ed. Bruno Fischli (Munich: Goethe Institut, 1997), 23.

industry of the 1920s can be recognized in the propaganda industry of Third Reich. The *Kulturfilme* made during the Third Reich were primarily produced by the major film studios and thus these films continued to employ aesthetic strategies and production techniques used in films produced before the Third Reich.[99] In order to make *Kulturfilme* into effective advertising tools, these films borrowed aesthetic strategies from advertising films of the 1920s. In films such as *Mensch, so'n Blech* we see evidence of how these *Kulturfilme* employed montage techniques and shots of industrial production that are reminiscent of the kinds of films shown in the *Wochenschau* of the 1920s.[100] Bitomsky argued that the Nazi's did not indiscriminately borrow from earlier film practices, but instead purposefully copied strategies from avant-garde filmmaking of the twenties. *Images of Germany* examines a sequence from the *Kulturfilm Sport auf dem Panzerschiff 'Deutschland'* (1936) and the voiceover comments that the sequence is reminiscent of *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), the iconic film by Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein.[101] Although the politics of Eisenstein's film were incompatible with Nazi ideology, *Sport auf dem Panzerschiff 'Deutschland'* uses avant-garde aesthetics to articulate Nazi politics. The military functions of sport and exercise are shown while the strict military hierarchy is maintained. The *Kulturfilm* "replaced the rebellion with physical exercise on deck."[102] Bitomsky also names Walter Ruttmann as a major inspiration for Nazi filmmaking and use of montage.[103] The Nazi *Kulturfilm*, *Rüstungsarbeiter*, is used as an example because it has sequences that are reminiscent of the 1920s avant-garde work of Ruttmann.[104] He was one of the most famous avant-garde filmmakers who would go on to work for the Nazis and one of the major avant-garde filmmakers who, in the 1920s, began working with the advertizing industry. By citing Ruttmann's work, Bitomsky invokes the affinity of some reactionary strands of the avant-garde with the culture industry and with Nazism.

The archival and hermeneutic labor that went into the making of *Images of Germany* is depicted on screen. After we are shown film citations from a number of consecutive years, still images from these sequences are re-introduced in a live action sequence. These live action sequences reoccur throughout the film, though no two are ever exactly alike. The first time that we see Bitomsky on screen, the camera is located behind him and we see the back of his head as he holds film stills in his hands. Slowly he is given new film stills by a person located off camera. We see Bitomsky gather the images in a pile, slowly moving one image to the top of the pile, before moving on to the next image. The sequence of film stills does not follow the same

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[99] Bitomsky, "Der Koflügel eines Mercedes-Benz. Nazikulturfilme, Teil I," 445.

[100] These techniques would continue to be used in advertising films of the 1950s as well. Klaus Kreimeier, "*Deutschlandbilder*: ein Imaginärer Indizienprozess," in *Die Wirklichkeit der Bilder: der Filmemacher Hartmut Bitomsky*, ed. Jutta Pirschtat (Essen: edition filmwerkstatt, 1992), 17. "*Mensch, so'n Blech* ist ein glänzend montierter Werbefilm für das Recycling von Leichtmetall, der mit seinem Anspruch 'unterhaltsamer Belehrung' und seiner Schnittechnik die Kontinuität von der bereits 1919 gegründeten Kulturabteilung der Ufa bis zur Wochenschau und den 'Beiprogrammfilmen' der 50er Jahre belegt."

[101] Bitomsky also points out that Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels was a notorious fan of Eisenstein's film.

[102] Bitomsky, "Der Koflügel eines Mercedes-Benz. Nazikulturfilme, Teil I," 457. The film "hat die Rebellion durch Sportübungen an Deck ersetzt."

[103] Ruttmann got his start in the Weimar-era and directed the famous city film, *Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt* (*Berlin: Symphony of a Metropolis*, 1927), among others.

[104] The Nazis famously liked Ruttmann's films and his methods of editing and montage. Bitomsky, "Der Koflügel eines Mercedes-Benz. Nazikulturfilme, Teil I," 457.

chronological order as the montage sequences we saw previously. Instead, Bitomsky shuffles through these film stills, moving forward and backward, so that they are no longer shown in any chronological order. This tactic of rearranging the films stills suggests that, even though the film is organized chronologically, the archive should be examined analytically. Bitomsky's shuffling suggests that these images can continually be rearranged and revisited so that we may, as the voiceover states, keep these images fresh in our minds. The viewer is able to access these images through Bitomsky's interpretative labor and his archival research. At a time in which labor was disappearing from certain automated industrial and technological processes—a theme that is explored in Bitomsky's *VW Complex*—his own archival labor is that much more visible in *Images of Germany*.

Nazi History as German History

Bitomsky continued his disruption of the official narratives crafted by the Nazi culture industry in the final film of his *Germany Trilogy*, *VW Complex* (*VW-Komplex*). The film examines the history of the Volkswagen factory, from its beginnings to Bitomsky's present day. Archival newsreel footage and clips from Nazi *Kulturfilme* are placed in dialogue with contemporary footage of the increasingly automated production cycle of the new VW Golf 2 and the city of Wolfsburg. In the film, the history of the Volkswagen company becomes synonymous with the history of twentieth-century Germany. In some ways *VW Complex* is an extension of Bitomsky's interest in the Third Reich's relationship to the automobile industry that began in *Images of Germany* and *Reichsautobahn*. In *VW Complex* however, Bitomsky's interest in Volkswagen moves beyond the narratives of the Nazi cinematographic archive into an examination of contemporary West Germany and the status of the film industry. *VW Complex* examines the transition from fascism to postwar democracy, the shift from German workers to foreign labor, the changing nature of industrial work, increasing automation, and unemployment, and as a result it illustrates how the history of Volkswagen is inexplicably intertwined with the history of Germany. To quote Bitomsky: "However a VW is put together, what comes out is always the Federal Republic of Germany."[105]

The increasing automation in the VW factory prompted Bitomsky to reflect on the changing conditions of film production as digital media were changing the labor of filmmaking. He discussed how the very first film, Louis Lumière's *Workers Leaving the Factory*, missed the chance to connect industrial labor and film by failing to depict factory work on screen[106]:

> The age of the cinema is also that of the automobile (and both cannot go on as they are). The film [*VW Complex*] deals with the end of the worker's movement and thus also with the end of the industrial age. It deals with this subject without directly discussing it or examining it from the outside: the film is interwoven and intertwined with its subject. At the end of the film, at the end of a shift, we're reminded of Lumière's *Workers Leaving the Factory*. One can see how labor has gradually disappeared from the factory and the

[105] Bitomsky, *Hartmut Bitomsky: Retrospektive*, 27.

[106] This film, as I discuss in Chapter Four, plays a large role in Harun Farocki's meditation on labor and cinema in *Workers Leaving the Factory* (1995).

> workers have disappeared into automated machines. We cannot imagine what else is disappearing along with them.[107]

Bitomsky contends that whenever a film features a factory, the film will not depict the work being done there in any detail. Lumière's *Workers Leaving the Factory* only filmed workers leaving work. It did not show anything about the nature of the work done there. *VW Complex*, however, will indeed show the nature of work in the Volkswagen factory. The voiceover promises that "In *VW-Komplex* the spectators must look at labor, the machines are not turned off. They should not avert their eyes, they should grapple with labor up to their threshold of pain."[108] At a time in which the labor movement was ebbing and human labor was disappearing in the Volkswagen manufacturing practices, Bitomsky again made his own labor visible. We see him in front of the camera sorting through images and we hear his voice in the voiceover and in contemporary interviews. His presence in the film attested to the continued need for the filmmaker archaeologist who must sort through the Nazi cinematographic archive and expend the intellectual labor to investigate its narratives.

In *VW Complex*, Bitomsky included a fictional anecdote related to Volkswagen automobile production that I would argue functions as a description of his archival research. In the voiceover, Bitomsky relates the following story: there is a worker at the factory who secretly takes home a single part every day in the hopes that he can eventually construct his own Volkswagen car. However, when he tries to assemble the parts into a car, what emerges is not an automobile. Instead, each time he finds he has built a gun. This anecdote from *VW Complex* riffs on a scene from Harun Farocki's agit-prop film *Inextinguishable Fire* (*Nicht löschbares Feuer*, 1969). In Farocki's film, it is a man who works in a vacuum factory who secretly takes home parts. No matter how he tries to put together all the pieces, what emerges is a submachine gun and not a vacuum. Farocki's film features two more variations on this story. In the second iteration, the man states that he's a student working in the factory to prove that they are really producing guns to be sold to the Portuguese. When he goes to put the pieces together they always make a vacuum cleaner instead. In the third variation the man is an engineer for the electrical company. He knows the factory workers think they're producing vacuum cleaners and the students believe it is submachine guns. He explains that the vacuum cleaner could become a useful weapon and the submachine gun could become a useful household tool. "What we manufacture," he says, "depends on the workers, students and engineers." Farocki's film implies that cooperation between workers, intellectuals, and scientists is necessary in order to understand and change capitalist modes of production. In the context of Bitomsky's film, this

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[107] Bitomsky, "Der VW Komplex" in *Kinowahrheit*, 230. "Das Zeitalter des Kinos ist auch das des Automobils (mit beiden geht es so nicht recht weiter). Der Film [*VW-Komplex*] handelt vom Ende der Arbeiterbewegung und damit in eins gesetzt, vom Ende des industriellen Zeitalters. Er handelt davon, ohne es zu thematisieren und aus sich herauszustellen: er ist mit dem selbst verwoben und verknüpft. Am Schluß des Films, zum Schichtende, wird an Lumiere erinnert: DIE ARBEITER VERLASSEN DIE FABRIK. Man kann sehen, wie die Arbeit allmählich aus der Fabrik verschwindet und die Arbeiter verschwinden in Maschinen und Automaten. Was damit verschwindet, ist noch gar nicht auszudenken."

[108] Ibid, 216. Original German: "Im *VW-Komplex* müssen die Zuschauer Arbeit anschauen, die Maschinen werden nicht abgestellt. Sie sollen die Augen nicht abwenden, sie sollen sich mit der Arbeit auseinandersetzen, extensiv bis hin zur Schmerzgrenze."

sequence might take on new meaning. We might add the figure of the filmmaker to this list of collaborators. The filmmaker-archaeologist, who is able to access materials from the past, can reassemble them into something different. In his "Germany Trilogy," Bitomsky takes apart official narratives in the cinematographic archive and reassembles them in a way that brings to light new connections and narratives. When Bitomsky reassembles the parts it becomes clear that they construct a very different narrative than the Nazis intended. *VW Complex* similarly argues that if you take apart the Nazi cinematographic archive and reassemble it, you get images of Germany today.

VW Complex employs a similar method of montage as the earlier films in his *Germany Trilogy*. The short sequence that opens *VW Complex* is a montage of archival and contemporary footage that moves freely between footage of various origins and time periods. The viewer first sees a slow pan of an industrial landscape that is revealed to be a junkyard. We then see still medium shots of smashed cars lined up individually and in piles. The film's voiceover comments that we are seeing cars be scrapped.[109] Although industrial equipment moves throughout the junkyard, the scrapped cars lay motionless. We see a crane hone in on a particular car and watch it crumple it as the crane picks it up into the air and puts it on top of a pile of other cars. The voiceover states: "Cars are being scrapped. Future archaeologists will hardly have anything to dig up." The film cuts to archival footage that Bitomsky announces is from the *Automobilausstellung* of 1935. We see Adolf Hitler at the podium during a pause in his speech. The voiceover tells us that he is about to speak about his plans for the company Volkswagen and to give promises about the new "Car for the masses." Bitomsky does not allow Hitler to speak. Instead, he cuts directly from a shot of Hitler taking in a deep breath to contemporary footage. This cut is emblematic for Bitomsky's treatment of materials from the Nazi cinematographic archive. Rather than let them speak alone, he puts them in constellation with more contemporary footage. In *VW Complex*, we see a close-up of a hand sketching a car at the present-day Volkswagen factory as the voiceover tells us that this is where the future is being developed.

By comparing archival with contemporary footage, Bitomsky illustrates the extent to which Volkswagen's production processes have changed and which aspects remain the same. The use of computers and huge machines in contemporary production process at Volkswagen makes it seem as though human labor, increasingly replaced by robots, plays a much smaller role in their production processes. By highlighting similarities between the past and present, *VW Complex* reveals that below the surface much has remained the same. *VW Complex* includes footage from a film that documents the original founding of the Volkswagen factory. The citation depicts how the Nazi swastika was prominently laid in the factory's foundation. The montage cuts to footage from the fifties when the stone was dug up, removed from its original position, and reused in the building of a bridge. Although the symbol of the factory's Nazi founding is less visible, it's still present.[110] While overt references to the Nazi period were moved, they are still built into the company's foundation. There are further traces of the Nazi

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[109] This scene is reminiscent of a very similar scene of a car junkyard in Alexander Kluge's film *Der Angriff der Gegenwart auf die übrige Zeit* (1985), which I discuss in Chapter 2.

[110] "Der Grundstein wurde ins Fundament der Brücke eingemauert […] So ist er nicht mehr sichtbar, aber immer noch da." Bitomsky, "Der VW Komplex," *Kinowahrheit*, 218.

past in the factory and in Wolfsburg today. The film includes citations from *Kulturfilme* about the "Garden City" Volkswagen was planning for its workers. It was a housing development intended to give workers access to nature that was never completed during the war. The housing barracks were built and inhabited by very different groups of people. Concentration camp prisoners were forced to build some of these barracks during the war when the factory was used to house prisoners of war and other forced laborers.[111] After the war, Russian prisoners of war were housed in the barracks. Later, refugees from the former East of Germany and inhabitants of Wolfsburg with no other place to live moved in. Contemporary footage of the barracks reveals that the city now sends Roma and Sinti to live there. The voiceover points out the tall apartment buildings nearby that were built for Italian guest workers. The juxtaposition of archival and contemporary footage of the space illustrates a troubling continuity between the Nazi period and the present. The housing barracks and surrounding area have been home to persecuted groups and other people who were pushed to the margins of German society in both the Nazi-era and in contemporary West Germany.

Bitomsky rejected the position that old films from the archive are "undecipherable moments of a sunken culture." They can still be understood as a part of their "semiological past."[112] These "images are, after all, not identical with their historical context (*Zusammenhang*). It is historical material, which distorts history. The material is not congruent with the history."[113] Bitomsky argued that the images articulate a particular interpretation of history, one that might not accurately reflect or perhaps even obscure the real circumstances: "We know one thing from the film material out of the Third Reich: its images are masks. That which they depict is a masking of precisely that, which is not supposed to be seen."[114] As Bitomsky's *Germany Trilogy* has illustrated, these masks can be reversed, and this process of reversal produces knowledge about the past and the present. For, as Bitomsky argued, "To talk about history is to talk about the present and vice versa. I would cautiously call our history the failed project of the past/history."[115] We can use the archive to bring to light these failed projects. The opportunity to reexamine these remnants from the Third Reich is a chance at turning this dark period of German (film) history into something that might help us to recognize troubling continuities that exist into our present.

Recycling the Archive

Industrial production practices, recycling, and technological obsolescence are the focus of the video essay, *B-52* (2001). What begins as an examination of the plane as a historical,

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[111] 12,000 people were working at the factory during the war, two thirds of which were prisoners of war, forced laborers and concentration camp prisoners. They were kept from the camera and were never documented in *Kulturfilme*.

[112] Bitomsky, *Geliehene Landschaften: Zur Praxis und Theorie des Dokumentarfilms*, ed. Marius Babias (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2012), 219.

[113] Ibid, 211. "Denn gerade diese Bilder sind ja nicht identisch mit ihrem historischen Zusammenhang. Es ist historisches Material, das die Historie entstellt. Das Material ist nicht kongruent mit der Geschichte."

[114] Ibid. "Wir wissen eines von dem Filmmaterial aus dem Dritten Reich: seine Bilder sind Masken. Was sie zeigen, ist eine Maskierung eben dessen, was nicht gesehen werden soll."

[115] Ibid, 192. "Über Geschichte reden heißt über die Gegenwart reden, und umgekehrt. Unsere Geschichte würde ich vorsichtig das fehlgeschlagene Projekt der Vergangenheit/Geschichte nennen."

technological and aesthetic phenomenon ends in a reflection on artistic practices of reuse and recycling. The film examines the historical, political, economic and aesthetic discourses surrounding the B-52 bomber plane now that it is obsolete. After featuring footage of old planes rusting away in junkyards, Bitomsky reflects upon the B-52's legacy with respect to the role it played in the Cold War, the Vietnam War and in the threat of nuclear war. Using archival and contemporary interviews, images from past films, museums and books, the film contrasts the plane today with how it was regarded during its heyday. Each shot of a functioning plane is countered with shots of B-52 planes idling and footage from a junkyard at an Arizona military base of planes being torn apart to be made into scrap metal, a material that was allied with the culture industry in *Images of Germany*.[116] Here scrap metal is taken up by artists who recycle the materials into works of art. When artists recycle B-52 planes into the works of art, the scrap metal becomes almost unrecognizable. These industrial remains are recycled into art in a way that is similar to how Bitomsky reuses and repurposes previously shot material in his films. In both examples, the process of recycling is a creative one in which the parts of the original materials are modified in such a way that they reveal an aspect of the original material that was not visible in its previous form.

In his work journals from this period, Bitomsky illustrated his approach to reuse and transformative citation by reworking other thinkers' approaches to citation. He drew inspiration from Walter Benjamin's writing on citation, Claude Levi-Strauss's conception of a *bricoleur*, and Umberto Eco's discussion of art as recycling. Rather than provide his own definition, Bitomsky's mode of citing these thinkers performs his own practice of recycling. Though he notably never references Bertolt Brecht's concept of *Umfunktionierung* ("refunctioning" or "functional transformation") here, Bitomsky's mode of citation seems like it aims to emulate the practice that Brecht describes as alienating something from its usual context and redeploying it in a critical fashion. [117] Rather than directly cite his interlocutors, Bitomsky re-worked citations from these other thinkers in his writing. In his work journal, he quotes novelist and philosopher Umberto Eco by relating it to his own approach to filmmaking and reuse of archival images: "True creativity is not inventing new things but rather organizing old material in a new way. Indeed, my work increasingly seems to me to draw upon work that was made before me. And of course to pass it on."[118] Put in different words, later in his journal, Bitomsky formulated Eco's argument in the following manner: "Eco says that creativity has more to do with the restructuring (*Weiter-Strukturieren*) of materials that already exist than with the construction of new materials."[119] Bitomsky's definition of recycling is not citation without revision, but rather a creative mode of citation in which the original materials have evolved in a new way. When this concept returns in his work journal significantly later, Bitomsky no longer directly cites Eco but

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[116] Scrap metal, as I will argue in Chapter Two, plays a similarly prominent role in Alexander Kluge's film, *Die Macht der Gefühle*, and in his reflection on film's apparent obsolescence in the face of digital media.

[117] Bitomsky also neglects to reference Guy Debord's concept of *détournment* although Debord would likely be another important interlocutor for Bitomsky.

[118] *Geliehene Landschaften*, 54. "Wahre Kreativität sei nicht, neue Dinge zu erfinden, sondern altes Material neu zu organisieren. Meine Arbeit kommt mir in der Tat immer mehr vor wie ein Anknüpfen an die Arbeit, die vor mit getan wurde. Und sie natürlich weitergeben."

[119] Ibid, 192. "Eco sagt, daß Kreativität mehr mit dem Weiter-Strukturieren von Materialien, die bereits existieren, zu tun hat als mit dem Herstellen von neuen Materialien."

has rendered his inspiration into a declarative statement that provides a clear aesthetic program and relationship between recycling and art: "Art as recycling. Recycling as art: only the ideas compete – the forms change, the material remains the same, the meaning appears and vanishes."[120] When considering a theme to unite a retrospective of his work at the Neuer Berliner Kunstverein in 2010, Bitomsky mulls over the prospect of uniting his entire body of work under the umbrella of "Recycling." In Bitomsky's analysis, his process of filmmaking "repeatedly encounters found footage, archival material, foreign material, therefore mostly historical material."[121] By defining recycling and critical citation as a process of discovering the invisible or overlooked aspects of past materials, Bitomsky delineated his practices of integrating archival images into his own works from postmodern practices of pastiche or citation in which there is no "striving for a break or rupture but instead a cycle in the sense of an unavoidable repetition."[122] This statement by Bitomsky seems to echo one of the criticisms leveled against post-modern recycling and citation, that they do nothing to engage with the image.[123] Bitomsky's aim is to revive a critical, modernist form of citation.

For Bitomsky there seems to be an ethical imperative behind recycling as well. He identified one of the pressing questions of the time as what to do with all of those things that were invented, built and used in the last fifty years. How can they still be used in the future and what should be reused?[124]

> That is the big question here: whether there is something still of use in a recycled piece of military equipment or whether instead it has to simply all be written off. In harsher terms: can something that we, the recent generations, produced, handled and threw away, still be good for something else other than for what it was originally intended? Is there still something to save and then saved? Can the history of the last fifty years still be turned around into something positive?[125]

To pose an answer to these questions, Bitomsky drew inspiration not only from Eco but also Claude Levi-Strauss. Levi-Strauss describes the *Bastler* (French: *bricoleur* or tinkerer) as someone who is able to give things a second life by realizing something within the original object that wasn't fully developed. Bitomsky takes this as the premise for his definition of documentary

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[120] Ibid, 268. "Kunst als Recycling. Recycling als Kunst: nur die Ideen konkurrieren - die Formen ändern sich, der Stoff bleibt derselbe, der Sinn taucht auf und verschwindet."

[121] Ibid, 210. "Mein Filmemachen stößt immer wieder auf Found Footage, Archivalmaterial, Fremdmaterial, also historisches Material zumeist."

[122] Ibid, 398. "An dieser Stelle will ich anmerken, daß ich durchaus einen kritischen Begriff vom Recycling habe. Im Wort ist bereits einen Kreislauf einbeschrieben, und man könnte sagen, daß es deshalb zu der Kategorie der pessimistischen Begriffe gehört. Es wird keine Unterbrechung, kein Abbruch angestrebt, sondern ein Umlauf im Sinne einer unvermeidlichen Wiederholung."

[123] See, for example, Fredric Jameson's critique of postmodernism in *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).

[124] Bitomsky, *Geliehene Landschaften*, 192.

[125] Ibid, 400. "Dies ist hier die große Frage: ob von einem recycleten Kriegsgerät irgendetwas noch von Nutzen sein kann oder ob doch alles einfach abgeschrieben werden muß. Mit schärferen Worten: kann irgendetwas, das wir, die letzten Generationen, hervorgebracht, angefaßt und weggeworfen haben, noch zu etwas anderem taugen als das, wozu es ursprünglich gedacht war? Ist etwas noch aufzuheben und dann aufgehoben? Kann die Geschichte der letzten 50 Jahre noch ins Positive gewendet werden?"

filmmaking as the process of giving people and things a second life in film.[126] Scrap metal and junkyards become a metaphor for history and the materials of the archive. Bitomsky's observations of scavengers in a scrap metal yard in Arizona could easily be used to describe the filmmaker-archaeologist who looks through the cinematographic archive for images that could be useful. Bitomsky argues that "this is the philosophy of these collectors: what once had meaning, can easily attain a second meaning."[127] Regardless of their original context of use, B-52s contain materials that can be reworked into something that is no longer obsolete. The moment during which B-52s in their original form are destroyed, the B-52 as an object and a creation of humans becomes clear for the first time. The human labor that went into producing the machines becomes visible.[128] True recycling for Bitomsky is then "to give things a new form, to assign things a new function, to attach a higher value to things, to provide things with a new position and place of belonging."[129] Bitomsky describes documentary films in similar terms: they "can give things and people a second life, this time in film."[130]

It is important to note here that although Bitomsky used the word "recycling" to describe this practice, in its ideal form this practice is not the same as what we refer to recycling today: the converting of waste materials into something that can be reused. Capitalism thrives on reuse, recycling what is left from the past and squeezing additional use value of out of previously consumed goods and products. Recycling that is in line with capitalist forms of production and consumption is not a critical practice. The sort of recycling that is advocated by Bitomsky aspires to be a practice that goes against the grain of traditional recycling by recycling materials into something that does not have value for and cannot be used by capitalism. Though Bitomsky does not reference Brecht's work directly, the creative practice of recycling that Bitomsky describes aims to isolate some element from the original material that can be used for a function that is entirely different from its original context. A piece of scrap metal from a B-52 plane is refunctioned into an artwork instead of another industrial product or instrument of war. Footage from a Nazi *Kulturfilm* is placed into a new context in film so that it no longer functions as a tool of propaganda and is now a means of producing knowledge about how the culture industry functioned then and now.

From Analog to Digital, From Scrap Metal to Dust

In the prologue to this chapter, I recounted one of Bitomsky's early encounters with the dusty cinematographic archive. Watching two early Lumière films, Bitomsky lamented how their poor condition gave him the impression that the original images were forever lost. In his most recent essay film, dust takes on a new role. It emerges as an archival material that plays an important role in film's preservation and its loss. *Dust* (*Staub*, 2007) examines all the forms and

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[126] Ibid, 192. Bitomsky thinks of himself as a documentary filmmaker and does not use the term essay film or video essay to describe his work.

[127] Bitomsky, *Kinowahrheit,* 238. "Denn das ist die Philosophie dieser Sammler: was einmal eine Bedeutung hatte, kann leicht eine zweite Bedeutung erlangen."

[128] Ibid, 246.

[129] Ibid, 247. "Was Recycling sein müßte: den Dingen eine neue Form geben, den Dingen eine neue Funktion zuweisen, den Dingen einen höheren Wert beimessen, den Dingen eine neue Zugehörigkeit und Stelle beschaffen."

[130] Ibid, 249. "Das ist noch eine Definition des Dokumentarfilms. Er kann den Dingen und den Menschen ein zweites Leben geben, diesmal im Film."

uses of dust. In contrast to the metal waste created by industrial decline or technological obsolescence, dust is produced in and belongs to many different realms of life. It is a physical and organic substance, while also a byproduct of industrial, resource and energy production. It can be regarded as a hygienic or unhygienic, explosive and dangerous to breathe. Despite the industries of dust removal that focus on museums, homes and scientific laboratories, dust often thwarts our attempts to contain or possess it. On one hand, we associate dust with massive destruction and economic depression, while on the other hand, it is a product of our daily lives.[131] Bitomsky interpreted the battle to eliminate household dust as a proxy for the human fight against decay:

> We are fighting against traces of the past of our own bodies here. Dust is that which remains: the dead living in the home, a terrible indicator of absence. Household dust is a mirror of our lives; the materials that comprise our lives, the materials that destroy them.[132]

Dust indicates absence in more than one way: it testifies to living beings who are no longer present and, as a homogenous substance that no longer contains recognizable traces of the living, it points to a loss of individuality that occurs as human traces devolve into dust. In film preservation, dust indicates a similar decomposition and decay of film. Film, even under the best conditions of preservation, will decay. In *Dust*, Bitomsky examines how dust has also played a productive role in the cinema, both on the screen in film narratives and in the production of film stock.

On the surface, Bitomsky's turn to the topic of dust seems to be motivated by the destruction and demolition of two major buildings.[133] Debates about the ecological impact of the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York on September 11th inspired his reflection on dust. Bitomsky cited a newspaper article about the dangerous particles, including asbestos, covering New York City after the World Trade Center's twin towers were destroyed. Much of the industrial remains of the World Trade Center buildings were sold off to other countries to be reused and recycled. The dust created by the terrorist attack, though largely invisible, remained in the city and could not or had not yet been properly eliminated. Bitomsky connected the dust that hangs over New York to a similar situation in Germany. From 1990 to 2003, the Palace of the Republic (*Palast der Republik*) in Berlin, the former seat of the East German parliament, was closed while asbestos was being removed from the building. When the asbestos contamination was resolved, public debate erupted regarding whether the palace should be demolished or preserved as a testament to the German Democratic Republic and German reunification. Despite some public outcry, the decision was made to destroy the palace in November of 2003. Bitomsky read this ruling as an attempt to erase all traces of East Germany from Berlin. However, traces of the Palace of the Republic exist in Berlin in the form

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[131] See Bitomsky, "Dust 9-11" (205) or "Häuslicher Staub" (204) in *Geliehene Landschaften*. For a longer description of each of the 9 aspects of dust, see 190-91.

[132] Ibid, 205. Original German: "Die Vergangenheit des eigenen Körpers, die hier bekämpft wird. Staub ist das, was übrigbleibt: das tote Leben in einem Haus, ein schreckliches Indiz der Abwesenheit. Häuslicher Staub ist ein Spiegel unseres Lebens. Die Materialien, die es aufbauen, die Materialien, die es zerstören."

[133] Though he writes about dust earlier in *Geliehene Landschaften*, Bitomsky does not discuss it as a potential focus for a film project until June of 2003.

of dust particles and in films that feature the building. *Dust* examines some of these documents of the past, including archival footage of the Palace of the Republic during asbestos removal and demolition.[134]

The film aligns dust with two of Bitomsky's key interests: the archive and cinema. It is dust's ability to resist eradication that forms its relationship to the archive. *Dust* includes footage of an interview with a young woman who has a dust collection. She displays her various specimens of dust and describes her attempts to scientifically categorize and organize the different kinds she has accumulated. In Bitomsky's interview with her, dust emerges as a document or record of the past. Each kind of dust contains some traces of the original substances that went into forming it. The film's voiceover states: "The dust in our home is like an archive. A record of what has happened." Dust makes the past tangible and visible. Visibility and dust are linked in myriad other ways. While dust can obscure human vision—as in a dust storm—it also aids in expanding human vision. Referencing the Hubble Space Telescope Institute in Baltimore in his journal, Bitomsky discusses how telescopes are able to recognize masses of planets and clouds of dust from thousands of lightyears away.[135] Dust lies on the threshold between material which is visible and invisible under a microscope.[136] Due to its relationship to vision and visibility, dust becomes tied to the medium of film.

Bitomsky's film is not only a work about dust but the relationship between the cinema and the materiality of dust. Dust has a similar relationship with film as it does with telescopes. Dust is both visible on film and enables film to be visible. Bitomsky opens *Dust* by making this relationship clear. He suggests that it is the role that dust plays in the production and exhibition of film that prompted his interest in this project. The first minutes of the film are comprised of unidentified grainy footage of men on horseback riding through a dust storm. The voiceover that follows this scene discusses the relationship between dust and film:

> Dust is the smallest object a film can deal with. Particles with a diameter of 0.1 millimeters. That is the threshold above which the world becomes visible for the naked eye. Anything smaller is not visible. They speak of a dust grain. They speak of a film grain. It is the smallest visual unit in which the film stock itself becomes visible. Film material is nothing but dust adhered to a transparent film base. Film – that is dust lighting up in the darkness of a movie theater.

Dust emerges as a material that is wholly integral to the analog medium of film; the smallest parts of film and dust are both referred to as "grains" and Bitomsky suggests that this is not an incidental similarity. During this voiceover, we see a person carefully removing dust from a

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[134] In addition to documentary footage of the *Palast der Republik*, Bitomsky includes images of the World Trade Center during and after September 11th, as well as archival footage of the American prairies during the Dust Bowl.

[135] See "Hubble Space Telescope Institute, Baltimore," in *Geliehene Landschaften*, 197-98.

[136] In *Geliehene Landschaften*, Bitomsky continually returns to the question of why he made a film about dust and the fact that he is constantly asked this question: "Zum anderen scheint mir der Gegenstand Staub wie der ultimative Rahmen zu sein, innerhalb dessen sich die menschliche und Naturgeschichte entfalten und die Zustände und Tätigkeiten unseres Handelns und Daseins sich definieren lassen. Denn der Staub ist einerseits eine Schwelle der mikroskopischen Diffusion der Materie, an der sie uns ungestalt und ungestaltbar, ja, nicht entgegentritt, sondern: zu entrinnen scheint, anderseits ist es gerade dieses Aggregat der Materie, aus dem sich der Kosmos formiert auf einem unendlichen Sprungbett" (339).

film camera. It is instrumental in the projection of film and the creation of film stock and yet it should not be on the lens during the act of filming.

Through several citations of past films, Bitomsky puts forth an argument for dust's role in film preservation. The first film citation, shown in the opening minute or so of *Dust*, comes from Viktor Sjöström's silent film *The Wind* (1927).[137] Though it may not be immediately clear to the viewer, this citation of *The Wind* is a copy filmed using a camera. Rather than access a print of the original film, Bitomsky's team watched the film on a flat screen television and, in fact, recorded the film as it played on the screen.[138] By filming a digital copy of a film from a flat screen TV with a camera, Bitomsky automatically reframed and refocused the image. In Bitomsky's citation the camera is zoomed in on a smaller part of the *The Wind*'s frame. Certain aspects of the original image are cut off and the footage is grainy and slightly out of focus.[139] Horseback riders set out amidst the storm, their heads cut off by the frame of Bitomsky's camera which appears to be focused on the lower left corner of the original image. In the original film this image cuts to a long shot as the larger group of riders are shown paused at a distance. In *Dust*, Bitomsky's camera is still focused in on the lower half of the screen during this cut. After the cut, Bitomsky's camera pans slowly upwards and stops when the riders are in the middle of his shot. The rest of the citation taken from *The Wind* continues in this manner. Bitomsky's camera slowly follows the riders while always remaining below the top of the original frame and never allowing the riders' faces to be shown in medium shots. The footage, which depicts a pivotal moment in *The Wind*, no longer seems to be a part of any recognizable narrative in its citation in *Dust*. All that remains in Bitomsky's version are impressionistic glimpses of the fury of the dust storm and the grainy film stock. His citation of the film, however, does highlight what he found striking in the original footage, that the viewer "senses how poor the cohesion is; the group could break apart at any moment. That is what the sandstorm is working on."[140] *Dust* employs this idiosyncratic method of citation on another feature film, John Ford's *Wagon Master* (1950). This repeated method of citation indicates that it is not a practice that stems from necessity or convenience. Instead, it is used to highlight a non-narrative aspect of the original film that was not previously the focus. This practice of citation refunctions the original material so that it depicts the force of the sandstorm instead of the group of people traveling.

In *Dust* there is a final instance of found footage cited by Bitomsky, in which dust is related to the need for and importance of film preservation. In this instance, digital tools are used for supporting rather than replacing analogue film. The interview with the dust collector is

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[137] The provenance of the film is not explicitly stated in the film, *Dust*. It is discussed in Bitomsky's work journal from the period, along with the other film he cites in *Dust*: John Ford's *Wagon Master*. See *Geliehene Landschaften*, 332 for *Wind*, pages 258-60 discuss *Wagon Master*.

[138] "Wir nehmen diese Sequenz von der Flatscreen auf, aber nicht eins zu eins: die Kamera rekadriert das Bild." Ibid, 332. Bitomsky also discusses here whether or not he will use this sequence to open *Dust*. The final version of *Dust* was released in both 35 mm film and Digi Beta Pal, a digital video cassette format often used in television broadcasts, which implies Bitomsky was not working with digital cameras in the filming of *Dust.*

[139] It is unclear whether Bitomsky purposefully renders the image out of focus or whether it is a result of how he filmed the material, or of the condition of the original material to which he had access.

[140] The viewer "spürt, wie gering die Kohäsion ist, die Gruppe kann jederzeit auseinanderbrechen. Das ist es, woran der Sandsturm arbeitet." *Geliehene Landschaften*, 332.

in a montage with grainy footage of a person walking in snow. These images are even more grainy than the other citations and they are almost obscured by the age and the state of decay of the original material. As we see these images, we hear the clattering of a film projector. The voiceover states: "As seen on this 8mm film that was found: when dust lands on a film it becomes active. It eats itself up. First it makes itself visible. Then it makes the picture invisible. And then it eats up the picture. It has its own life." When not accurately protected, dust can also consume film and take away its visibility. Thus, dust is both a creative and destructive force for the medium of film. Although digital media and its effect on documentary filmmaking is a source of concern for Bitomsky, digital technology can also be used to reuse or preserve archival images and films. Rather than replace filmstock, digital media might be used to ensure that these original filmic images do not get lost or consumed by dust and decay. These tools also ensure that these images can be reused for something new, as in Bitomsky's method of citing archival films. In *Dust*, he argues that it is through dust that we can see images on film and it is through film that we can see aspects of life that were otherwise invisible. If that is true than it seems likely that film, like dust, will resist elimination. As I discuss in the following chapters, film will find new creative realms outside of the cinema.

Will dust, and the cinema, endure the advent of digital media? Bitomsky's use of found footage and his focus on the relationship between dust and film suggest that he remains hopeful that film will persist as well. In *Dust*, dust emerges as an eternal remainder. It is a substance that is continually being produced and can never be fully removed. Dust seems to suggest that we might fight a battle against death and decay because humans leave behind dust as evidence of our existence. Although dust seems to promise some kind of persistence, dust is the result of processes of devolution. The traces that remain behind humans in dust contains little evidence of our individuality. However, as Bitomsky's film citations indicate, even if whole films do not survive the processes of aging and devolution, there will be bits and pieces from these films that do survive. These individual sequences and images can be preserved using digital media and might still contain some element that can be refunctioned in a new film. In the next chapter I will examine Alexander Kluge's work with the cinematographic archive. His practice of citing individual images and sequences from past films attests to how the cinematographic archive functions as an image bank of materials that essay filmmakers and video essayists can examine.

Like the films cited in *Dust*, past films can be refunctioned and reimagined in new works. As there is less space for film in the cinema and in other digital platforms for moving images, film is increasingly moving into the space of the gallery and the museum. As the following chapters will attest, these new spaces offer innovative possibilities for exhibiting cinema and recontextualizing past films. In his work journal, Bitomsky described unrealized plans for an art installation that was intended to accompany *Dust*. The film installation would have featured footage that was not included in the film as well as a sensory component of wind blowing dust in the space. Bitomsky selected the following motto for the installation: "That which is disappearing must become visible once again."[141] This motto could refer to film just as easily as it might to dust. Film, a medium whose dominance seems to be dwindling relative to other digital media, is becoming visible in novel ways and in new exhibition spaces.

[141] Original German: "Was am Verschwinden ist, muß noch einmal sichtbar werden." Ibid, 337.

Chapter Two
The Language of the Archive: Alexander Kluge's Essay Films and Internet Archive

The Archive as Rhetorical Space

Across the diverse forms of media within which he works, author, filmmaker, television producer and theorist Alexander Kluge assembles a heterogeneous combination of text and images. In his films, this constellation includes voiceover commentary and archival moving images drawn from a variety of original contexts; Kluge mixes genres, drawing from fiction and non-fiction sources. Contemporary media culture has accustomed us to videos that sample from older materials and recycle them in a new audio-visual framework. Working within the paradigm of the essay film, Kluge's work departs from established traditions of found footage and compilation films. Particularly striking is his citation and repurposing of recognizable moving images that hail from a known source rather than of orphaned films or amateur footage. Whereas Hartmut Bitomsky created a continuity thesis between Weimar cinema, the cinema of the Third Reich and postwar German film using montages of materials from the German cinematographic archive, Kluge treats the cinematographic archive as an image bank, a practice that has important ramifications for the aesthetics and politics of working with archival images.[142] The evolution of his archival practices reflects both innovations in media technology that have increased access to and the ease of reusing preexisting materials, and, subsequently, our changing conception of the archive following the rise of digital media. Kluge's work with archival images attests to the archive's shift from a space of preservation and storage to a site of open access.

The ways in which Kluge arranges and modifies archival footage in his films reflect recent discourses on history and the archive in contemporary thought. Whether the archive ever was solely a physical space aimed at preservation or commemoration, or a political or historical space meant for interpretation, it is also a discursive space. Following Michael Foucault, the archive is a space that determines what can be said about the past. As Jacques Derrida argues it is similarly a space, in which events are not simply recorded but rather produced. This understanding of the archive recognizes that the materials in the archive are not merely a representation of historical experience but are instead constitutive of it. In the aftermath of postmodernity and the abandonment of grand historical narratives, the archive is no longer thought to contain documents of History. What then does the archive hold for someone such as Kluge? Barbara Biesecker argues that "the deconstruction of 'fact' or of referential plenitude does not reduce the contents of the archive to 'mere' literature or fiction […] but delivers that content over to us as the elements of rhetoric."[143] Rather than look to the contents of the archive

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[142] Some relevant recent studies on the implications of using archival and found footage in film and video include: Jaimie Baron, *The Archive Effect. Found Footage and the Audiovisual Experience of History*; Steve F. Anderson, *Technologies of History. Visual Media and the Eccentricity of the Past*; and Catherine Russell, *Archiveology: Walter Benjamin and Archival Film Practices*.

[143] Barbara A. Biesecker, "Of Historicity, Rhetoric: The Archive as Scene of Invention," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 9, vol. 1 (2006): 130.

for evidentiary documents, we can examine the rhetorical histories of the archive, "the situated and strategic uses to which the archive has been put."[144] In his citation of archival footage and early cinema, Kluge performs a critical history of the German cinematographic archive as he unearths the rhetorical uses to which these earlier films have been put in narratives of German history and film history. In that sense, Kluge's investigation of film history reveals the German cinematographic archive to be both a rhetorical space, in which narratives of German national and cinematic history are formulated, and he illuminates how German cinema is an archival cinema, one that intersects with, reflects upon, and produces understandings of German history.

While Kluge's earliest films include archival still images, his practice of incorporating moving images as found footage began in the late sixties. In his second feature film, *Artists Under the Big Top: Perplexed* (*Die Artisten in der Zirkuskuppel: ratlos*, 1967), Kluge took isolated scenes from Sergei Eisenstein's film, *October: Ten Days that Shook the World* (1928) and placed them into a montage with other images that appear to be from a previous, though less recognizable, cinematic context, as well as live-action scenes original to the film. Stuart Liebman read Kluge's citation of *October* as "a radical questioning of Eisenstein's cinema and its theoretical rationale."[145] This critique is articulated through Kluge's re-editing of the original footage and his placement of scenes from unrelated sequences next to each other. The causal relationship between Eisenstein's images and the logic of the original film is lost in their re-use as found images. Furthermore, in *Artists Under the Big Top*, the first citation from *October* is followed by a quote from Hegel that puts forth an argument that is the antithesis to the political message crafted in Eisenstein's film. Thus, Kluge not only removed the political meaning that was imbued in the original images, he also used them to present a direct counter argument to Eisenstein's film.

I want to propose an alternative reading of Kluge's use of *October*, one that illustrates how Kluge's citation of Eisenstein's film might be less of a direct response to Eisenstein and his methodology and more an indication of Kluge's changing relationship to the archive and a foreshadowing of his use of the archive's materials in future films. If we regard Kluge's citation of *October* as an investigation into Eisenstein's filmic rhetoric, it appears to be less an elimination of Eisenstein's argument and more a meditation on how the components of Eisenstein's montage might be broken down and reassembled to articulate a different message. Kluge's use of Eisenstein's images illustrates how they do not inherently serve a single narrative. In the pages that follow, I discuss Kluge's later feature films, *The Power of Emotion* (*Die Macht der Gefühle*, 1983) and *The Blind Director* (*Der Angriff der Gegenwart auf die übrige Zeit*, 1985; literally "The Assault of the Present on the Rest of Time"), as well as his television productions with his company dctp and its Internet archive. I examine how Kluge's practices of citation evolved from strategies of rearranging a set of images to a reworking of the images themselves. These later practices emphasize not only how these images can be employed to articulate alternative narratives, but also the role played by the filmmaker-archaeologist who locates these images in the archive and reimagines them. During this period, the German cinematographic

[144] Ibid.

[145] Stuart Liebman, "Why Kluge?," *October* 46 (Autumn 1988): 6.

archive was becoming increasingly open, and access to the archive's films was expanding. Changing media technology further enabled the recycling of archival images by filmmakers. Kluge's films reflect these developments in their investigations into the film-historical arguments and narratives of German history located in the cinematographic archive.

Refunctioning German Myths

The changing media landscape of postwar West Germany plays a narrative role in Kluge's later feature films. In *Artists Under the Big Top*, the protagonist Leni Peickert turns to the field of television after her career in the circus is no longer viable.[146] *The Power of Emotion* and *The Blind Director* examine the so-called "new media" and their relationship to film. Beyond television, these two films are concerned with the rise of computers and other digital media. These new forms of electronic media seem to threaten the popularity of film and the cinema, not to mention the possibility that celluloid film stock would be rendered obsolete by digital images. At the same time, as these films meditate on the changing position of film vis-à-vis new media, they also reflect how these forms of media created new possibilities for the cinema.

The Power of Emotion begins featuring archival footage very early in the film. While there is no information given in the film about the origin of this footage, some scenes are likely identifiable to those familiar with German cinema. One of the longest sequences is a montage of scenes from the second part of Fritz Lang's *Nibelungen* film, *Kriemhild's Revenge* (*Kriemhilds Rache*, 1924). In its reincarnation in *The Power of Emotion*, the battle scene from Lang's film is lifted from its original context and re-edited: the montage lasts only a few minutes and moves quickly from the recognition of mutual betrayal to the outbreak of fighting, from Hagen's murder of Kriemhild's son to Kriemhild exacting revenge on Hagen. Kluge's montage culminates with images of a fire that devours the remaining soldiers who are still fighting in the banquet hall.

The increased speed of the action in the battle scene is not the only method of reshaping Lang's original footage that Kluge employs. The images themselves are manipulated: Kluge colors the footage using a tri-color tint and inserts a double (and, less frequently, a single) iris over almost all shots from *Kriemhild's Revenge*.[147] In *The Power of Emotion*, the double iris is consistently quite large. Kluge does not seem to use the double iris to focus in on a particular part of the image, but instead inserts it as if to place a static frame on top of the footage. The double and single iris give the viewer a sense that they are viewing Lang's film through binoculars or a telescope, as if they are looking at these images from a significant distance. The grainy nature and slight flickering of the footage indicate its age and suggests that we are accessing these images from a temporal, as well as spatial, distance. A further layer of

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[146] The increasing corporatization of mass media, television, and the film industry is one of Kluge's recurring concerns. A few of his collaborative publications from this period include: Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung: zur Organisationsanalyse von bürgerlicher und proletarischer Offentlichkeit,* and Klaus von Bismarck, Günter Gaus, Alexander Kluge and Ferdinand Sieger, *Industrialisierung des Bewußtseins: eine kritische Auseinandersetzung mit den "neuen" Medien*.

[147] An iris was a feature often used in early cinema to slowly fade into or out of a scene, or to simulate a close up by 'zooming in' on an object before cameras were able to zoom.

mediation is added by Kluge's voiceover as he spoils the narrative, foretelling the death of Kriemhild's son before the viewer witnesses the act on the screen.

Kluge noticeably intervenes in the original footage in two other key moments in this montage. The first occurs when Hagen murders the boy. After Kluge announces that the child does not have long to live, the viewer sees Hagen reaching for his sword. As he tries to raise his sword the image freezes, jerking forward slowly as if the original film were caught and the projector could only move the footage in short, sudden movements. As the upward movement of Hagen's sword is segmented into short spasms, the screen flickers in and out until Kluge's voice announces that Hagen has killed the child. The images that follow return to normal speed and we witness the child's murder by Hagen again, but this time the footage plays without pausing or flickering. When Hagen raises his sword once again, it moves smoothly and is poised to strike the child at normal speed. This image is suddenly devoid of both tinting and the double iris: the change seems to signify that we are seeing the original footage without any manipulation. Kluge's voice again narrates the images, stating that Kriemhild, who had Gunther killed, now kills Hagen. The last image is a row of burning shields, with a tri-color tint and double iris.

In this final scene of his *Nibelungen* montage, Kluge altered Lang's original image in yet another manner. The scene of burning shields that ends Kluge's sequence is taken from a later point in *Kriemhild's Revenge*. In the original, the Burgundian soldiers are trying to escape from the fire that Kriemhild had set in the banquet hall, intended to kill all of the soldiers who are still alive. The soldiers attempt to protect themselves from the flames by going to a part of the hall where shields from fallen comrades have been placed. They hide under these and their own shields in an attempt to escape the fire. In Lang's film, the viewer watches as the fire consumes everything, including this last group of survivors. In Kluge's citation of this scene, we see a very different image superimposed over the original: something akin to a giant wave of water rolls over the shields, as if to stifle the fire. This sequence is marked by some of the same editing techniques from earlier in the montage. The forward movement of the wave of water is similarly slowed down into halting movements, the lights flickering as if the images were being reproduced by a malfunctioning projector. The composite image of the wave and the burning shields stays frozen for a moment, lights still flickering, before the film moves on to contemporary footage of a state funeral. By re-assembling the narrative in *Kriemhild's Revenge*, Kluge makes visible film's narrative flexibility and the multitude of possible narratives that are contained within the images that comprise a film. His editing of the footage from *Kriemhild's Revenge* shows how the acts of revenge and murder might have been halted, or even prevented in another iteration.

Kluge's treatment of Lang's *Nibelungen* film as found footage provides a particularly charged example of how Kluge explores the German cinematographic archive to examine the rhetorical uses of the images and narratives it contains. In his book *The Power of Emotion* (*Die Macht der Gefühle*) that accompanies the film, Kluge explained his decision to cite Fritz Lang's film in his own work by recounting a discussion that he had with Lang while Kluge assisted the director during the production of Lang's remake of the Weimar film *The Indian Tomb* (*Das*

Indische Grabmal, 1921).[148] Kluge quotes Lang as having said that he wished someone would attempt to project the second part of his Nibelungen saga, *Kriemhild's Revenge*, onto Cinemascope and re-record it in 35 mm normal format. Lang also wanted the film to be tinted in this reincarnation.[149] Kluge argues that he simply followed Lang's wishes, the result of which is the montage we see in *The Power of Emotion*. However, Kluge's manipulation of the original film goes far beyond what Lang envisioned. By subverting the film's original narrative, Kluge's "restoration" of the film freed it from the ways in which the film was politicized before and during the Nazi period. The medieval tale of the Nibelungs, and Fritz Lang's filmic interpretation in particular, was used to shape a particular historical narrative during the Third Reich. Both Joseph Goebbels and Hitler notoriously admired the film and used the myth to redefine German identity following the First World War. Kriemhild's act of revenge on Hagen for stabbing Siegfried in the back was likened to Germany's need to avenge the betrayal it experienced from its internal enemies.[150] In *The Power of Emotion*, Kluge's act of preventing the film's moments of revenge both highlighted and subverted the film's susceptibility to cooptation and its use in Nazi propaganda rhetoric.

The epic poem *Song of the Nibelungs* (*Nibelungenlied*) has been used to shape German national and cultural identity from the nineteenth century onwards. David J. Levin analyzed two major retellings of the Nibelung myth in the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries: Richard Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* and Fritz Lang's two-part film. Levin argues that Wagner and Lang both use the narrative to stage an "aesthetics of national identity," encoding good and bad political or moral judgements as aesthetic judgments.[151] In Lang's film, this manifests itself in the opposing examples of Siegfried and Hagen so that their fight between good and bad is played out as a conflict between good and bad aesthetic styles. Hagen is an allegory for the manipulative style of Hollywood filmmaking while Siegfried stands in for the German viewing public who are susceptible to Hollywood's narrative strategies and special effects. Thus, when Hagen kills Siegfried, Lang stages a triumph of one mode of viewing over the other. Siegfried's naïve viewing, his susceptibility to the dazzling display of moving images, loses out to Hagen's critical distance.

By reinterpreting the second part of the *Nibelungen* saga, Kluge intervened in the triumph of the first film's battle. In Levin's analysis, Lang's second film did little to influence the triumph of the first as Kriemhild's revenge was not presented as satisfactory:

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[148] Lang remade the original film in two parts: *The Tiger of Bengal* (*Der Tiger von Eschnapur*, 1959) and *The Indian Tomb* (*Das Indische Grabmal*, 1959). One of Kluge's most oft-told anecdotes is how Theodor Adorno facilitated Kluge's introduction to the world of film production by procuring him a position as an assistant to Fritz Lang. As Kluge tells it, Adorno, who was notoriously critical of the medium of film, hoped that Kluge would be cured of his interest in film and return to his first occupation: law. Kluge alludes to Lang's remakes in his book of short stories on the cinema: *Geschichten vom Kino* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2007), 109–18.

[149] Alexander Kluge, *Die Macht der Gefühle* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1984), 170.

[150] Based on pre-Christian Germanic sagas and historic events from the fifth and sixth centuries, the *Nibelungenlied* was most famously appropriated by the Nazis who cast it as a nationalistic myth of German culture. Anton Kaes discusses the re-functionalizing of the myth and of Lang's films by Goebbels and Hitler in *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 63.

[151] David J. Levin, *Richard Wagner, Fritz Lang, and the Nibelungen. The Dramaturgy of Disavowal* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 5.

> [Hagen and Siegfried's] competition allegorizes a larger and still unresolved competition, one that involves the merely implicit question of who controls appearance *in film.* Since the crystal ball was left in Alberich's hands in *Siegfried* and since all of the leading characters except Dietrich von Bern are dead by the conclusion of *Kriemhild's Revenge*, who is left to inherit the crystal ball? It is a question that the film leaves unresolved on the diegetic level; and yet, by implication, Siegfried falls not just at Hagen's hands, but at the hands of his wily proto-cinematic machinations.[152]

By editing and manipulating sequences from the second part of the film saga, Kluge posed an answer to the question of who ultimately wins the competition. Kluge's interventions, his own "cinematic machinations", prevented Hagen from killing Kriemhild's son, the move that would prompt Kriemhild to kill Hagen and, later, for Hildebrandt to kill Kriemhild. If we proceed with Levin's reading of Lang's film, then Kluge's reworking of these images allowed the two different modes of filmmaking to persist rather than stage a battle in which only one can prevail. Kluge also revisited these images more than 60 years after Lang's film debuted. From the point of view of West Germany in the eighties, it is clear that the Hollywood mode of filmmaking did in fact triumph. However, New German Cinema and its heirs, though perhaps never truly challenging conventional cinema, have nonetheless shown that oppositional filmmaking can challenge and exist alongside mainstream cinema.

In each of these examples—in Wagner's opera, Lang's film, in Nazi propaganda—the *Song of the Nibelungs* is put to a particular use, be it as Levin argues, to articulate a particular aesthetic debate, or to fuel anti-Semitic, nationalistic sentiment. In Kluge's reworking of elements of *Kriemhild's Revenge*, he presents his own take on the myth, employing it in service of a different narrative. By including this sequence within a larger montage about war, state violence, child victims, and a state funeral—as I will discuss in more detail below— he brings to the fore how the film and the narrative of *The Song of the Nibelungs* was used to justify state violence and ultimately war. By re-editing and manipulating the original film sequence, Kluge reveals that the cinematic archive is increasingly open to intervention. Whereas previously the cinematic image may have been only controlled by a small group of individuals—the director, editor and those claiming ownership of the film such as the studio, or later, the archive or collector—by the eighties these images were more available to film historians and film enthusiasts. If Lang's film dramatizes the struggle in the 1920s over control of the cinematic image between Germany and Hollywood, in Kluge's film the struggle is about illustrating the uses to which these images were put and democratizing access to the cinematic image.

The opening up of the cinematographic archive is due to a number of different developments: from the emergence of film studies as a discipline, to the increased interest in film history by cinephiles, as well as to technological advancements involved in the preservation and distribution of films. Video technology enabled older films to be broadcast on public television and transferred to electronic form, allowing for viewers to watch, rent, and

[152] Ibid, 140.

record films at home.[153] *The Power of Emotion* was shot in 35 mm and the editing techniques employed by Kluge to cite and manipulate Lang's images seem to be celluloid-based. However, the fact that Kluge had access to a print of Lang's film is indicative of an opening up of the cinematographic archive to filmmakers such as Kluge. While Kluge was making *The Power of Emotion*, the Munich Film Museum was undertaking a restoration of both parts of the *Nibelungen* film.[154] The Murnau-Stiftung, which inherited the rights to Ufa films such as *Kriemhild's Revenge*, thus must have allowed Kluge to cite *Kriemhild's Revenge* in *The Power of Emotion* and likely would have provided him access to the film at the same time as preservation and restoration efforts were in full swing.

The first part of *The Power of Emotion* includes additional archival images that build upon Kluge's investigation into *Kriemhild's Revenge*'s place in the cinematographic archive.[155] In addition to Lang's film, Kluge samples from additional feature films, as well as more contemporary documentary footage. The footage that precedes *Kriemhild's Revenge* includes a hazy scene of war that seems to depict the First World War and more contemporary footage of a dying child lying in a hospital bed covered in burns and bandages. *Kriemhild's Revenge* is followed by footage from a West German state funeral. Kluge did not give identifying details in the film or the book regarding whose funeral the viewer witnesses, however those familiar with the omnibus film *Germany in Autumn* (*Deutschland im Herbst*, 1978) might be reminded here of another funeral scene shot by Kluge. *Germany in Autumn* featured footage from outside of the church where the state funeral of Hanns Martin Schleyer was held.[156] In *The Power of Emotion*, this funeral scene was shot inside St. Paul's Church in Frankfurt during the memorial service for Heinz Herbert Karry.[157] Both men were murdered by the *Rote Armee Faktion* (RAF) terrorist group.

Though the film up until this point contains images from a variety of original sources—fictional and documentary films—and time periods, certain similarities begin to emerge: war, the death of children, murder, the state, its violence and collective mourning. There are references to the First World War, to the Federal Republic of Germany, and to the mythological

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[153] In addition to home video technology, the late 1970s and early 80s saw the invention of laserdiscs and the advent of the Criterion Collection and other subscription services through which film enthusiasts could access important films from film history in their own homes.

[154] The Munich Film Museum released a restored version of Part One in 1975 and Part Two in 1986. The Murnau-Stiftung began another, more comprehensive, restoration project in 2005 that is still in progress. For more on the restoration of Lang's films, see: Anke Wilkening, "Fritz Lang's Die Nibelungen: A Restoration and Preservation Project by Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung, Wiesbaden," *Journal of Film Preservation* 79/80 (2009): 96–98.

[155] In the eponymous book that accompanies the film, Kluge divides *The Power of Emotion* into five sequences. The first is titled "In the Fifth Act." It begins with the film's title card and constitutes the first thirteen and half minutes of the film, including the montage from *Kriemhild's Revenge*.

[156] Schleyer, an industrialist and former SS member, was kidnapped and later killed by the *Rote Armee Faktion* (RAF) terrorist group in 1978. In the speeches and in the sermon that we hear in *Germany in Autumn*, Schleyer is painted as a martyr; his murder by the RAF terrorists effectively eclipsed his past activities in the Hitler Youth and the SS.

[157] Karry was murdered in 1981 and, though his murder has never been solved, affiliates of the RAF claimed responsibility for the attack. A controversial politician and Secretary of Commerce in Frankfurt, Karry was involved in economic and political scandals. He was also a notable proponent of rebuilding the Frankfurt opera house, which was destroyed during WWII. The fact that the reconstructed opera house was built and opened in 1981 looms in the background of *The Power of Emotion*'s investigation of the relationship between the opera as dominant medium of the nineteenth century, and film, the dominant medium of the twentieth.

battles of Medieval German literature. By constructing the montage in this way, Kluge suggests that the violence that we associate with the battlefield or the realm of Medieval sagas, relegated to both the past and to works of fiction, is in fact present in contemporary West Germany and its gestures of ceremonial mourning. Though West German political culture would purport to have transcended the violence of past conflicts, it is still implicated in this brutality. Kluge's footage of Karry's funeral references the RAF's terrorist acts of the sixties and seventies and the West German government's struggles in dealing with the group; it also evokes the government's problems in confronting the legacy of the Nazi past and perceptions of state and police brutality by the student movement and political left.

The role that the cinema and the film industry played in creating and propagating certain narratives becomes clear in the remaining images in this part of the film. The funeral scene is followed by yellow and later blue-tinted footage of a train leaving a train station taken from the film *Morgenrot* (1933), a WWI submarine film set around the year 1916.[158] We hear a voiceover while this footage plays and the book explains that the audio playing is drawn from another film: we hear the actor O.E. Hasse's voice from the Nazi propaganda film *Stukas* (1941) reciting the poem *Death for the Fatherland* (*Der Tod fürs Vaterland*, 1800) by Friedrich Hölderlin. We then see Hasse in *Stukas* wearing the uniform of a Nazi air force doctor. He continues with the poem and initially the footage we see is not tinted or manipulated in any way:

> …to bleed the blood of my heart, for the Fatherland. And heralds of victory come down: We have won the battle! Live on high, O Fatherland, and do not count the Dead! For you, sweet one! not one too many has died…[159]

As Hasse recites the final words, Kluge suddenly tints the footage purple and places an iris framing a close-up of Hasse's face before the screen goes dark. The black screen cuts directly to another short clip from *Morgenrot*. We see the actor Rudolf Forster, who plays a submarine commander, as he says: "Yes, but one always realizes just a minute before the train is leaving that one has forgotten the most important thing of all."[160]

While previous archival footage was culled from films prior to 1930, with these two films Kluge chose moving images that contain elements that signify that they were shot shortly before or during the Nazi-era. In *Stukas*, Hasse's uniform immediately signals to the viewer he is playing a Nazi, and the grainy footage and apparent age of the film suggests that it was made during the Third Reich. The scene from *Morgenrot* is more ambiguous, but Kluge made clear in his book that he reads the film as nationalistic Nazi propaganda in the guise of a feature film, even though it was produced before 1933.[161] *Morgenrot* was completed on the day of Hitler's rise to power and was the first film that Hitler watched as Chancellor of the Reich. Kluge described one of the most famous lines of the film: "We Germans do not understand how to live, but we

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[158] Kluge, *Die Macht der Gefühle*, 170. This scene is also described on page 76.

[159] The English translation of "Der Tod fürs Vaterland" is taken from Jay W. Baird, *To Die for Germany: Heroes in the Nazi Pantheon* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 197. This poem was one of the most often quoted Hölderlin poems in Nazi Germany.

[160] Kluge, *Die Macht der Gefühle*, 77.

[161] Ibid, 170.

know how to die fabulously."[162] He uses this sentence to connect the films *Morgenrot* and *Stukas* by highlighting how both propagate the idea that dying for the state is a glorified death. Kluge's use of the double and single iris thus can be read in a new way, reminiscent of the use of binoculars and telescopes by soldiers in warfare.

Kluge's montage forges a connection between two films that are treated very differently within the German cinematographic archive; by doing so, he questions the principles with which films are categorized and which determine whether the larger public is granted access to them. *Stukas*' status as a Nazi propaganda film meant that in the postwar period it was categorized as a *Vorbehaltsfilm*. These films from the Nazi-era were reserved from public exhibition and commercial use due to their propagandistic and racist nature and their glorification of war. The Murnau-Stiftung, founded in 1966, was left not only to preserve the legacy of Weimar cinema, but given control of Nazi propaganda films from the Allied forces. They formulated the list of *Vorbehaltsfilme* and determined whether these films could be shown in educational contexts and with accompanying explanatory materials. Kluge would thus have needed permission to access and to cite *Stukas* in *The Power of Emotion*.[163] *Morgenrot*, on the other hand, was not a Nazi propaganda film and as such would have been more easily accessible to Kluge. By illustrating the similarities between both films, Kluge points to the fact that this tendency to justify and even popularize state violence using the cinema existed both prior to and during the Third Reich. By censoring one film and not the other, the German cinematographic archive ignores the fact that the cinema was used for propaganda purposes before the Nazi era.

Whereas the Nazi connotations of these two films are more obvious to the viewer, the significance of *Morgenrot*'s scene of the train departing from the station is not communicated in the film. However, in the book, Kluge explained that both films—*Morgenrot* and *Stukas*—debuted at what he sees as turning points in German history. *Morgenrot* premiered just as Hitler came to power, in a sense as the train of the Third Reich was at the station, about to depart on a deadly and dangerous course. But in this moment, at the beginning of the Third Reich, Kluge recognizes that the Holocaust and the Second World War could perhaps have still been prevented if Germany would have exited the metaphorical train that it had boarded.[164] Kluge described a similar metaphorical fork in the road at the time that the film *Stukas* premiered. It was released right after the second phase of the Blitzkrieg, a period in which Kluge argues a majority of people in Germany would have felt happy if peace had been declared, if the war had ended there: "They would have wished that the soldiers return to their wives and children and that everything would continue as we had left it in 1939."[165] Thus for Kluge both films represent moments in which German history approached a fork in the road, periods of time in which a contingent detail might have influenced a future outcome. Both films inadvertently captured turning points in history, not within their narratives, but through the historical

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[162] Ibid.

[163] The Murnau-Stiftung released many of the *Vorbehaltfilme* during the late 70s and early 1980s so that they could be commercially released as educational material. *Stukas* was never commercially released.

[164] Though Kluge does not mention this, today images of trains departing a station must also evoke the Holocaust and the train transports to concentration camps.

[165] Kluge, *Die Macht der Gefühle*, 171.

knowledge Kluge unearthed in the archive regarding the production and exhibition of these films. By overlapping these two films on top of one another, Kluge layers together these two different temporalities and moments in time. In so doing, he illustrates how the cinematographic archive is not only a bank of images but also a space of layered temporality. Kluge mixes together images from different periods—from Nazi propaganda films and Weimar cinema—and from both documentary and fiction films. The fact that this does not hinder Kluge from making a connection between the components of his montage is indicative of the increasingly non-hierarchical language of the cinematographic archive.

The Cinematographic Archive's Founding Myths

The cinematographic archive is also a space containing film historical myths, and Kluge's mashup of a scene from *Morgenrot* and one from *Stukas* includes an implicit nod to another, earlier moment in film history. Kluge explained that he chose the farewell scene from *Morgenrot* because it depicted a train leaving a station, and thus it was both the analogue and opposite of one of his favorite sequences by Louis Lumière: the arrival of a train at a station.[166] Kluge is referring to one of the earliest and most famous scenes in film history: *The Arrival of the Train at La Ciotat* (*L'Arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat,* 1895). He explained that he chose this scene of the *departure* of a train, because he had filmed this famous sequence of the *arrival* of a train many times.[167] This sequence represents more than simply an iconic moment in the history of the cinema: I argue that it is because of the film's place as one of the founding myths of cinema that Kluge refers to the *Arrival of the Train at La Ciotat* in both *The Power of Emotion* and again, two years later, in his film *The Blind Director*.

Film's one-hundredth birthday coincided with a re-interrogation of the medium of film and its place relative to budding forms of new technology. This took place in many forms, including a look back to the mythology of film's early beginnings. *The Power of Emotion* and *The Blind Director* debuted as film was approaching and then reached its ninetieth birthday. *The Blind Director* deals explicitly with the approaching centennial of film and the rise of new media which threatened to render film obsolete. Thus, Kluge's citation of Lumière's film *Arrival of the Train* can be read in part as symptomatic of a larger interest in the mythology of cinema's founding that was already growing in the mid-eighties. However, rather than simply reflect on what this early film has meant for cinema and our understanding of the medium, in both *The Power of Emotion* and *The Blind Director* Kluge explores the role which the film has played in narratives of film history and theory. His citation of *Arrival of the Train* brings to the fore its rhetorical use in the cinematographic archive.

Louis Lumière's film, *Arrival of the Train*, occupies a prominent place in the cinematographic archive because it is featured in one of the most often told stories about early cinema. According to this story, early audiences were terrified in the cinema as they saw the footage of the train arriving, confusing the moving images with reality and believing that a real train was barreling towards them.[168] This tale of cinemagoers unable to differentiate between

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[166] Ibid.

[167] Ibid.

[168] This film is well-known as an urban legend within the history of cinema. According to the myth, when the film was first shown early spectators ran screaming to the back of the cinema, mistaking the train on the screen for a real

real life and the images on the screen serves as proof of the cinema's power as a realistic and an affective medium. Martin Loiperdinger thus argues that the film achieved a mythic status and was told repeatedly because "it figures as *the* founding myth of the medium, testifying to the power of film over its spectators."[169] However, Loiperdinger's archival investigation into the film's reception finds no evidence in the cinematographic archive that corroborates the tale of audiences running from theaters. The myth surrounding *Arrival of the Train* has persisted because it provided evidence of film's uniquely manipulative and affective powers for film historians, scholars, and early proponents of film. In other words, the film was put to use in narratives that argued for film's difference and its importance with respect to other forms of mass entertainment and more traditional forms of art.

When *Arrival of the Train at La Ciotat* reappears in a direct citation in Kluge's *The Blind Director*, the infamous film points to cinema's future rather than its past. At the very end of the film there is a sequence featuring a blind director—a reference to Fritz Lang who lost his sight later in life—who directs his films according to the images he pictures in his head. In the final sequence of Kluge's film, the director becomes lost on a balcony and to pass the time he turns his attention to his inner images. We are subsequently shown these moving images in a point of view shot of the director's inner mind: we see first a split screen. An image of silent film actress Louise Brooks shares the screen with Lumière's film, which is in a circular inset superimposed to the right of the frame. *Arrival of the Train* plays at normal speed next to the still image of Brooks. This is followed by a variation on the first image: the image of Louise Brooks is replaced with an image of the couple from F. W. Murnau's *Sunrise* (1927) embracing as *Arrival of the Train at La Ciotat* remains in an inset on the right of the screen. However, this second time Lumière's film is played backwards; instead of arriving at the station, the train slowly recedes from sight.

By reversing the original footage of a train arriving at a station so that it depicts a train receding from the station, Kluge demonstrates how the Lumière's film can be employed to tell a different narrative. Writing in *Industrialisierung des Bewußtseins*, his collaborative treatise on new media from the same year as *The Blind Director*, Kluge discusses this same sequence. In his mind, he imagines that this iconic work foretells a future of film in which it would no longer be tied to the projector's temporality of 24 frames per second: "[Lumière's] *Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat* describes time as it disappears, thus encouraging our attempts to maintain that, at least internally, the flow of time can be reversed."[170] In *The Power of Emotion*, Kluge mentally reverses the original Lumière film by citing footage of a train's departure that for him represents the analogue and opposite of *Arrival of the Train*. In *The Blind Director*, Kluge is able to imagine the flow of time in reverse by inserting the original footage and playing it backwards. On one hand, the archive facilitates a sense of time travel by allowing the viewer to travel backwards and forwards in time by accessing the films it contains. On the other hand, the opening up of the

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train that was barreling towards them. Whether or not this event occurred, the film has played an important role in discussions about how spectators understood the realistic nature of this new medium.

[169] Martin Loiperdinger, "Lumière's *Arrival of the Train*: Cinema's Founding Myth," *The Moving Image* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 92.

[170] Klaus von Bismarck et. al, *Industrialisierung des Bewußtsein: eine kritische Auseinandersetzung mit den "neuen" Medien*, (Munich: Piper Verlag, 1985), 106-7. The English translation of the quote is taken from Miriam Hansen, "Reinventing the Nickelodeon: Notes on Kluge and Early Cinema," *October* 46 (1988): 186.

archive allows Kluge to realize his plan by taking the footage and playing it in reverse in his citation.

In *The Blind Director*, Kluge's treatment of *Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat* illustrates the changing notion of cinema as new forms of digital media were emerging. From its infancy onwards, film has been understood as an art that captures time. The genre of actualities, as exemplified by the Lumière brothers' extensive catalogue of records of daily life and activities, promised to record and reproduce reality in time. As film historian Mary Ann Doane observes, "Much of the rhetoric accompanying the reception of the earliest films is a sheer celebration of the cinema's ability to represent movement. While photography could fix a moment, the cinema made archivable duration itself."[171] In its final images, *The Blind Director* reacts to the new temporal regime of digital media and its sense of an eternal present tense. As Garrett Stewart argues, the transition from analog to digital cinema resulted in a changing sense of temporality within the medium of film: "Increasingly, the temporal transit (mechanical) of the image, frame by frame, gives way to its temporal transformation (electronic) within the frame."[172] In digital cinema, temporality is freed up so that it becomes a medium itself, a spatio-temporal medium. While on the surface new media seem to signal the end of the older medium of film, in other ways they present film with new modes of aesthetic exploration. New media frees the medium of film to explore different temporal regimes, and perhaps more importantly, it enables the filmmaker to engage with the cinematographic archive in new ways. These archival interventions reflect how the fluid language of the archive continues to evolve with technological innovations.

The Temporality of New Media

The Blind Director is a meditation on what possibilities remain for film after the advent of digital media.[173] In the book that accompanies the film, Kluge wrote that the film aims to "show a snapshot of the classical cinema from the perspective of today."[174] *The Blind Director* examines the threat posed by the newest forms of media, which seem to be able to render film, dominant medium of the twentieth century, obsolete in the twenty-first century. The cinema as a time machine and site of different temporalities—what Kluge refers to as a "Zeitort"—seems doomed for loss. The danger of new media is tied to its presentism. Kluge posited that more than all the other past presents, the current present, with its firm belief that these new forms of technology will replace all older forms of media, seems poised to erase the past entirely. For Kluge, forgetting the past contains an entirely different danger: it eliminates possibilities for the

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[171] *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 22.

[172] Garrett Stewart, *Framed Time: Towards a Postfilmic Cinema* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 2.

[173] Kluge is an ardent believer in the power of the cinema to bring people together. New digital technology, including the computer, seem to threaten to replace the cinema's role as a communal gathering space. On Kluge's belief that the cinema, in its most utopian form, can act as an alternative public sphere, see: "On Film and the Public Sphere," *New German Critique* 24/25 (1981/1982): 206–220.

[174] Alexander Kluge, *Der Angriff der Gegenwart auf die übrige Zeit: Das Drehbuch zum Film* (Frankfurt: Syndikat/EVA, 1985), 12. The English translation is taken from Alexander Kluge, "The Assault of the Present on the Rest of Time," *New German Critique* 49 (1990): 13.

future. Despite the fact that this present seems to have the objective power to dominate the future, *The Blind Director* argues that film is not a medium that is so easily abandoned.

Many of the short sequences that make up *The Blind Director* deal with technological obsolescence and how new media—computers and other technological machines—affect human life. The cinema is not the only realm endangered by new media; new machines are also changing patterns of human labor.[175] A section titled "The Superfluous Ones" ("Die Überflüssige") tells the story of a doctor who becomes superfluous after her practice buys a machine that can do everything she does. After she realizes she's being pushed out of her job, the doctor quits and heads to the cinema. But instead of entering the theater she stands near the entrance watching the crowd, suggesting that film is no longer a medium of escape, that it might somehow also be redundant today. This sequence leads directly into Kluge's exploration into the proposition that film will become something like scrap metal that you discard when it is no longer perceived useful.

Kluge reflected upon the looming one-hundredth anniversary of the invention of the cinema by looking to earlier points in its history. He comments on this anniversary in a voiceover and through his use of archival footage, including audio that reflects on film's fiftieth birthday and images taken from the Ufa film, *The Wonderful Lies of Nina Petrovna* (*Die wunderbare Lüge der Nina Petrowna*, 1929).[176] In this sequence, we first see tinted footage from the film of a soldier kissing the hand of Brigitte Helm, the eponymous main character. At first the footage does not fill up the entire screen. Then, suddenly a second scene fills the bottom half of the screen as one image is placed on top of the other. A voiceover does not explain the moving images that we see but rather discusses the power of cinema now that it has been around for fifty years, saying that the pioneers of film will not be forgotten. This voiceover is not Kluge's familiar voice but seems to be another citation, taken from a documentary on the cinema's fiftieth birthday. When this voiceover is placed in the new context of Kluge's film, this optimistic claim seems less certain.

In the scenes that follow, Kluge continues to cite images from *The Wonderful Lies of Nina Petrovna* as he adds his voiceover to the montage. Kluge states: "From the point of view of the new media, pre-history is superfluous." He continues: "The cinema is also considered superfluous. We're writing ninety years of film history. That is six generations of people." The found footage taken from *The Wonderful Lies of Nina Petrovna* returns as again two different scenes are played on top of one another, images of soldiers and war. Suddenly the scene shifts to three different moving images stacked on top of one another, followed by four. Initially the four different images move at normal speed, before the speed is rapidly increased. At the end of this sequence the four images race along the screen, rendering the four individual images virtually indistinguishable. These stacked scenes from *The Wonderful Lies of Nina Petrovna* cut directly to images of crushed cars in a junk yard. The camera sweeps through the salvage yard,

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[175] In a scene that updates Charlie Chaplin's assembly line in *Modern Times* (1936) for the digital age, we see how computer technology influences the rhythm and movements of a man and his family who must monitor a computer in their home.

[176] In the book that accompanies *Der Angriff der Gegenwart*, Kluge refers to the film as "Die schöne Lüge der Nina Petrowna." The song "Einmal sagt man sich adieu," which was originally composed for *The Wonderful Lies of Nina Petrovna*, is played in *The Power of Emotions* while images of Frankfurt at night are shown.

stopping on a pile of crushed cars stacked on top of one another. This new image provides a direct comparison between the found footage montage and the junked cars; both are crushed and piled atop one, seemingly discarded. By directly comparing the cinema with another modern technology invented very shortly before film, the automobile, Kluge ponders the question of whether film could be rendered obsolete and treated like other forms of technology, which are broken down or thrown away like garbage after they become outdated.[177]

Although the junkyard might seem to represent the final resting place for these cars, *The Blind Director* illuminates how these cars are later reused. Broken down into their component parts, the metal scraps that are salvaged from the cars can be recycled. Something very similar takes place in Kluge's reusing of *The Wonderful Lies of Nina Petrovna* as found footage. Kluge breaks down the original film into its component parts—the individual sequences—and stacks them on top of each other, manipulating the speed of each sequence. The scenes from *The Wonderful Lies of Nina Petrovna* are sped up to the point that the film's original narrative is exploded. The four stacked scenes from the original film form something entirely different than the original: a spectacle of colorful blurs and rhythm of multiple temporalities.[178] Kluge's citation of film history is used here to produce a complex, multi-layered experience of time and space. Rather than be replaced by new media, Kluge suggests through his filmic experiments that new technology can be used to engage with film and the cinematographic archive in new ways. Although *The Blind Director*'s final form is a 35-mm film, Kluge's use of archival footage resembles the avant-garde experiments that used video technology during this time. Whether Kluge used video or digital technology to experiment with this archival footage or whether it was constructed on celluloid, the film reflects how the eighties and nineties saw the birth of remix videos and a reinvigoration of found footage films as new technology made it easier and cheaper for the average person to create and edit their own videos, and to reuse and re-edit existing images.

The Blind Director argues that cinema, like the car industry, adapts to new technology. In the same way that old cars are broken down into scrap metal and the parts and metal used for something new, Kluge integrates segments from past films into his new film. Kluge's practice of incorporating moving images from the cinematographic archive into his works is posited as an alternative to models of industrial production, in which innovation necessarily leads to obsolescence and waste. By recycling rather than discarding previous films, Kluge comes down on the side of film as an art form rather than solely a technological one. Even as video and digital technology continues to allow the cinema to better reproduce reality, Kluge uses technology to instead revisit the cinematographic archive and the narratives it contains. By reintegrating previous material from a pivotal moment in film history—the transition from silent to sound film—Kluge also revisits film historical debates from that time that worried about what the transition to sound film would mean for the status of film as an aesthetic and not a primarily technological medium.

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[177] Obsolete technology is not always thrown away, but in some cases, is picked up, recycled and reprogrammed in media art. See Garnet Hertz and Jussi Parikka, "Zombie Media: Circuit Bending Media Archaeology into an Art Method," *Leonardo* 45/5 (2012): 424–430.

[178] Kluge describes the result of his citation of scenes from *The Wonderful Lies of Nina Petrovna* as "optisch verfremdet," in *Der Angriff der Gegenwart auf die übrige Zeit*, 19.

The Wonderful Lies of Nina Petrovna stands at the precipice of a turning point in the history of film. It was one of the last big budget silent films released by Ufa and produced by Erich Pommer before the studio turned to the production of sound films. The transition to sound film, which threatened to replace silent cinema, prompted film historical and theoretical reflections on the medium and attempts to record the history of film through archives, festivals, and narrative histories.[179] After a screening of early German sound films, Siegfried Kracauer wrote of how he was brought back to the beginnings of film history:

> The presentation of two talking films, which took place yesterday for the first time in Frankfurt, brought the early years of cinematography back to mind. Back then, when one saw strange poses and disjointed fragments portrayed, one did not sense the kind of development of which film art would one day be capable. It is likewise so today.[180]

Although the possibilities for sound film were still unknown, Kracauer argued that film will continue to "push toward the complete representation of human reality."[181] For proponents of cinematic realism the desire to accurately represent and replicate the real world was always the goal of film. As André Bazin later claimed, the inventors of photography and film aimed for "a total and complete representation of reality."[182]

If nineteenth-century experiments with film and photography grew out of a desire for total reproduction, many twentieth-century film theorists argued instead for the aesthetic possibilities of film. Rather than associate it with advances in technology and industry that occurred contemporaneously, they allied film with the fine arts and other artistic media. Avant-garde filmmakers, who had less financial resources to obtain the new technology for sound films, were now at an even greater disadvantage when competing against the major film studios.[183] They also feared that the transition to sound film would result in the undoing of a number of aesthetic developments achieved in silent cinema. For film critic Herbert Jhering, the "talking film is nothing more than reproduced reality," whereas "silent film, with its unique laws, stands alongside reality as something new."[184] Silent film had to overcome its mechanical nature by developing effects that ran counter to its technological and realistic attributes. Sound film seemed poised to undo these artistic developments.

As Friedrich Kittler argued, sound film would indeed be "a revolution in film aesthetics."[185] The new technology required a standardization in recording, playback, and frame rate in a way that would change practices of film production, exhibition, and distribution from

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[179] Anton Kaes, Nicholas Baer and Michael Cowan, eds., *The Promise of Cinema*: *German Film Theory, 1907–1933* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 105.

[180] Siegfried Kracauer, "Sound-Image Film: On the Presentation in Frankfurt's Gloria-Palast," in *The Promise of Cinema*, 557. First published as "Tonbildfilm: Zur Vorführung im Frankfurter Gloria-Palast," in *Frankfurter Zeitung*, October 12, 1928.

[181] *Promise of Cinema*, 558.

[182] André Bazin, "The Myth of Total Cinema," in *What Is Cinema?* vol. 1, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 20.

[183] See Alex Strasser, "The End of the Avant-Garde?," in *The Promise of Cinema*, 478-81. On the development of sound film more generally, see "Chapter 17: Sound Waves," in *The Promise of Cinema*.

[184] Herbert Jhering, "The Acoustic Film," in *The Promise of Cinema*, 552. First published as "Der akustische Film," *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, no. 439, September 19, 1922.

[185] Friedrich Kittler, *Optical Media: Berlin Lectures 1999*, trans. Anthony Enns (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2010), 200.

then on. The fear for some at the time was that if film would become solely a technological medium it would lose its status as an art and would be in danger of being completely abandoned. While "art cannot be surpassed," but instead reinvents itself as time progresses, the "tragedy of all technological invention is that it can be surpassed and made obsolete by further technology."[186] While we know with the benefit of time that film was not rendered obsolete in the way that Jhering feared, we recognize a similar fear in *The Blind Director*, that technological advancement might signal eventual obsolescence for the cinema.

It becomes thus clear that Kluge's return to *The Wonderful Lies of Nina Petrovna* is a return to an earlier turning point in the medium's history, which is reminiscent of the historical juncture facing film at the time in which Kluge made *The Blind Director*. In the same way that the modes of production, distribution, and exhibition were transforming with the shift to sound film, they were again at the precipice of radical change with the advent of video and digital technology. Though digital films would not become a reality till much later, the eighties and nineties saw video tape recorders move from the television industry into the home as the exhibition and production of films moved away from public theaters. Kluge's montage of images from *The Wonderful Lies of Nina Petrovna* and his manipulation of the speed of the original footage, illustrates how this new technology does not render current or past films obsolete, but instead enables greater access to and use of the cinematographic archive. Rather than use these technological innovations to increase the cinema's indexicality and its ability to reproduce reality, it can also be employed to play with temporality and execute other avant-garde experiments.

In the intervening years, Kluge began to work television and with digital media, turning the archival-based practices begun in his feature films onto digital forms of media. His citation practices in his feature films thus have implications for the recycling of pre-existing materials in today's digital culture. Kluge's films demonstrate that the cinematographic archive, which is increasingly being digitized, is a dynamic, interactive space. In our digital age, as traditional notions of copyright and ownership are increasingly challenged, Kluge's experiments with pre-existing materials illustrate a way of reusing and interrogating pre-existing materials without erasing authorship.[187] The original context of use and author are paramount to Kluge's archival investigations. His films similarly attest to the continued need for interventions into the digital cinematographic archive as rhetorical space and an increasing democratization of access to these images. Kluge's films demonstrate that access to these materials is a matter of aesthetic and political, as well as historical importance. A sustained and lively engagement with the cinematographic archive ensures that film will live on in new forms and be exhibited in alternative spaces, from television and the art gallery to the Internet. In Kluge's words: "Even if

[186] Jhering, "The Acoustic Film," in *The Promise of Cinema*, 551.

[187] In his studies of Kluge's television productions, Matthias Uecker has argued that Kluge manipulates images from previous contexts of use to erase markers of authorship as a means of evading copyright restrictions that would prevent him from recycling a wide variety of materials. See "'Für Kultur ist es nie zu spät!' – Alexander Kluge's Television Productions," in *'Whose Story?'– Continuities in Contemporary German-language Literature*, ed. Arthur Williams, Stuart Parkes and Julian Preece (Bern: Peter Lang, 1998), 347.

the clattering of the film projectors disappears, there will still be something—I firmly believe—'that functions like cinema.'"[188]

New Media Archives

Kluge's use of found footage and his citation of past films is not limited to his filmic oeuvre. A prolific television producer, Kluge and his media group dctp create short variety shows that are aired on privately-owned television networks in Germany.[189] In a short sequence from one of these television programs, Kluge created an homage to Soviet montage theorist Dziga Vertov's work. In this one-minute-film "For Vertov" ("An Vertov," 1988), Kluge re-edited original images from Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) into a new montage. In Kluge's film the original footage is primarily shown to the viewer with an additional layer of mediation. The re-edited montage of *Man with a Movie Camera* alternates between two positions: the image either fills the entire screen or is played on the screen of a futuristic-looking television. By highlighting his remediation of Vertov's film, Kluge comments on new media and our mediated relationship to film history, and he illustrates how televisual technology can engage with the cinematographic archive.[190]

"For Vertov" begins with a shot of a television set that seems to be both futuristic and dated, a past vision of what televisions might someday look like. A montage of images from *Man with a Movie Camera* plays on the screen to a quick, percussive soundtrack. These black and white images are first positive, then later they are inverted into negative images. After a little less than thirty seconds the montage fills the whole screen and we see the same images of traffic, crowds of people and a close-up of a pair of eyes. The image is inverted again as we see seated spectators in a cinema as a beam of light streams from the projector onto a screen. This full screen image only lasts for approximately ten seconds before it is repeats on the screen of the television. Occasionally bright pink or light blue filters color the black-and-white images on the screen before the whole series of images repeats in full-screen. Then suddenly, the images begin to change less rapidly, and we see a birth scene as a baby is born and its umbilical cord cut off. These images of childbirth repeat on the television screen and the one-minute film ends with a shot of the newborn baby in the arms of a nurse. It is as if Kluge suggests that the viewer is using a digital televisual platform to witness the re-birth of cinema here; film emerged from

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[188] Alexander Kluge, *Cinema Stories* (New York: New Directions, 2007), xi. For the original German, see Kluge, *Geschichten vom Kino*, 9.

[189] Dctp is jointly owned by Kluge, Spiegel-Verlag, and the Japanese advertising agency Dentsu. It was developed out of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kabel- und Satellitenprogramme*, an organisation established by Kluge along with book publishers, film directors, and theater executives as part of an attempt to create space for independent programming and 'older' forms of media within the sphere of commercial television. For a detailed account of the events that led to the establishment of these organizations, see Matthias Uecker, "Prinzip Gegenproduktion: Alexander Kluges 'Development Company for Television Programs (DCTP),'" in Uecker, *Anti-Fernsehen? Alexander Kluges Fernsehproduktionen* (Marburg: Schüren, 2000), 48-63.

[190] Remediation refers to the presentation of one medium in another, such as the depiction of theater or visual art in film, or as in "For Vertov," the presentation of film on television. Remediation may highlight the new medium that is being used to depict the old, as Kluge does, or attempt to erase the difference between the two media. For more on remediation and new media, see Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin's *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999).

the other forms of technology—trains, street cars, automobiles—that are depicted in Vertov's film and it is re-emerging now with the aid of digital technology.

The fact that "For Vertov" switches quickly back and forth between a full screen image that appears unmediated and a clearly mediated television screen is a way in which Kluge indirectly cites Vertov's film. In the penultimate scene of *Man with a Movie Camera*, viewers witness a film being screened for a theater audience. This is the film we saw being created throughout *Man with a Movie Camera*: the raw footage we witnessed the cameraman shoot and saw being edited is shown to us in its final form. In *Man with a Movie Camera*, we first see this image on the screen of a cinema from behind the perspective of the audience before the film within the film fills up the entire screen, in a shot that depicts the perspective of the cinema audience. We cannot forget that a film is being created in Vertov's film because it continually reminds its viewer of the presence of the camera. Kluge's one-minute film seems to aim to make its viewers aware of the screen and other layers of mediation. In contrast to the original film it cites, "For Vertov" highlights the disappearance of traditional modes of cinematic viewing.

Rather than simply cite Vertov's film, Kluge references the tradition of filmmaking and editing Vertov employed. Vertov shot *Man with a Movie Camera* without a script or pre-defined scenario for the film. His aim was to capture reality and then form a film out of the shot footage. The film thematizes this process of creating a film out of shot footage by filming both a cameraman shooting film and a film editor. In *Man with a Movie Camera* we see the real-life editor of the film and Vertov's wife, Elizaveta Svilova, at work. We also see the editing room with the film reels organized on shelves and categorized according to shoot location. These film reels constitute the film's database out of which the final film was created. New media scholar Lev Manovich argues that Vertov's process of filmmaking in *Man with a Movie Camera* by means of a database is an important precursor for digital culture and new media storytelling that also draw from a database to craft their narratives:

> We can think of all the material accumulated during shooting forming a database, especially since the shooting schedule usually does not follow the narrative of the film but is determined by production logistics. During editing, the editor constructs a film narrative out of this database, creating a unique trajectory through the conceptual space of all possible films that could have been constructed. From this perspective, every filmmaker engages with the database-narrative problem in every film, although only a few have done this self-consciously.[191]

Vertov's film is one of the exceptional films that dramatizes the processes of shooting and editing a film, sorting through the database and creating a trajectory for the film, and presenting the film to an audience. *Man with a Movie Camera*'s narrative goes back and forth between these different levels, from the story of the cameraman who films the material for this film, to the footage he captured, and to shots of an audience watching the finished film.

Whereas Vertov drew on a database of footage he shot for the film, Kluge drew on the larger database of the cinematographic archive. Kluge uses it to access Vertov's film so that he could take individual shots and rearrange them to create his own montage. In this respect,

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[191] Lev Manovich, "Database as Symbolic Form," in *Database Aesthetics: Art in the Age of Information Overflow*, ed. Victoria Vesna (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 54.

Kluge, like Vertov, is a filmmaker who constructs his works by drawing on a database and thematizing the archive in his films. Kluge treats the archive not as a set of fixed narratives that cannot be altered, but rather as a database containing multiple possible narratives. Media theorist Wolfgang Ernst has argued that rather than functioning as a space dedicated to memory, the digital archive is a storehouse of information. For Ernst, the

> immense imaginary realm known as the past whose only stable reference-point, the archive, as a bottomless foundation consistently allows its apparent context, given the name of history, to fall back into discrete, isolated units and islands of discourse—a brittleness that we constantly recompose and reconfigurate.[192]

The individual films in the archive and the images they contain function as elements in a database. When someone like Kluge accesses these individual images and places them into a new montage, he is able to construct alternative narratives from these images. The elements of the archive/database can be continually re-formed into different iterations. Jussi Parikka and Paul Caplan characterized this kind of archival thinking in the digital age as something that is characterized by participation and sharing: "We are moving away from the idea of the archive as the other place meant for specialists and the Archivist, to the archive as the common-use-space."[193] Kluge's films and his treatment of archival images as found footage are indicative of a shift from the traditional notion of the archive as a concrete, physical site to a new notion of the archive, in which it is a condition and practice of knowledge in the digital age.

Cinema's response to the threat of digital media has been understood in different ways. As new media seem ready to replace certain functions of the cinema, digital technology simultaneously seems to create new possible uses of film. Reflecting on the current status of cinema, film historian Thomas Elsaesser has argued that new media has freed the cinema from its dominant role as a medium of narratives and storytelling. He referred to this as the cinema's ideological function:

> for much of its history, the cinema has not only served as the prime storytelling medium of the twentieth century, but also greatly accelerated the mobility and circulation of images as pictures of the world, and thereby aided the commodity status of objects as images and images as objects. These (ideological) functions, however, have now largely been taken over by different media configurations (television, the Internet) and the respective institutions and corporate entities that control and own them. It thereby 'frees' the cinema for other purposes and functions, so that its 'obsolescence' may be the more overdetermined, but also the most appropriate name for this 'freedom'—not from practical use, but from ideological servitude.[194]

Elsaesser argued that when the cinema has been freed from its ideological tasks, it is no longer ruled by the logic of historical inevitability or linear narratives. Instead, the cinema turns to the

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[192] Wolfgang Ernst, "Art of the Archive," in *Künstler.Archiv – Neue Werke zu historischen Beständen*, ed. Helen Adkins (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2005), 94.

[193] Jussi Parikka and Paul Caplan, "Digital Common Space: Remixability," in *Digital Public Spaces* (FutureEverything, 2013), 28.

[194] Thomas Elsaesser, "Media Archaeology as Symptom," *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 14, no. 2 (2016): 205.

logic of the database, a logic that media theorist Lev Manovich defined as anti-narrative. The structure of a narrative is replaced with works that function according to digital search techniques and algorithms.[195]

Digital technology enables filmmakers to engage with film history and the cinematographic archive more easily by providing them wider access to the archive and facilitating the incorporation of archival materials into new works. Rather than abandon film, video essayists such as Kluge use digital media to examine film history closely. They use digital tools to repurpose pre-existing images and create knowledge from the cinematographic archive. With the aid of this technology, Kluge began to engage with the cinematographic archive as more than just a space for excavation, for revealing to what uses this material had been put in the past. He started to treat the archive as a construction site, looking for materials to use in his own works and creating his own historical and film historical narratives.[196] Kluge's archival practices and engagement with the archive indicate that it is not only the media he uses to engage with the archive that have changed over time; the archive has also evolved into something new. As we see in digital culture, the archive is increasingly a tool for the production of knowledge. The cinematographic archive, as it transitions from analog to digital, is no different. It remains an important tool for constructing knowledge. Rather than lose its place entirely, film has diversified its uses in the digital age as it continues to be used to re-view, reimagine, and re-contextualize the past.

Information Overload in the Digital Archive

In 2010 Kluge published an e-book titled "Die Entsprechung einer Oase: Essay für die digitale Generation," in which he wrestled with the problem of information overload in today's digital world. Throughout the text, Kluge used various metaphors from nature to refer to how the individual navigates the vast space of the Internet: on the one hand, the Internet is a "desert" filled with tiny particles of sand; on the other hand, it is an "ocean" plagued by "tsunamis of data."[197] Those brave enough to "surf" the Web struggle to stay afloat amidst these giant waves. They are frustrated in their attempt to sift through the individual "grains of sand" in order to gain knowledge from each piece of information. Kluge's characterization of the Internet and the vast accumulation of data it contains is typical. Statements regarding the enormous storehouses of media available today are so common they are becoming trite. Yet these statements have contributed to declarations that human vision and human information processing have become severely limited in our digital age. In the humanities, calls for a new digital humanism are commonplace while we still struggle with whether or not the traditional approaches of the humanities that rely heavily on human faculties, such as close reading and

[195] See, for example, Lev Manovich, "Database as Symbolic Form."

[196] I am consciously using the terms "excavation" and "construction" here to evoke Hal Foster's analysis of the "archival impulse" in the visual arts, and their move to turn "excavation sites" into "construction sites." See Hal Foster, "The Archival Impulse," *October* 110 (2004): 3-22. Kluge is also famous for categorizing his own work as a "Baustelle," or construction site, in which he is constantly digging, excavating, and re-working materials.

[197] He uses similar metaphors in an interview with the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. See Interview with Alexander Kluge. "Gärten anlegen im Daten-Tsunami." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 14 January 2010. http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/debatten/digitales-denken/alexander-kluge-gaerten-anlegen-im-daten-tsunami-1596476.html.

pattern recognition, among others, be incorporated into a digital humanism that uses data analytics to tackle massive reserves of media.

Kluge's metaphorology[198] proposed a provocative answer to one of the most pressing questions facing the humanities: What are we supposed to do with all of this data now at our fingertips? His recent writing and interviews on digital culture, alongside his media group dctp's website (dctp.tv), provide an example of digital scholarship in which the role of the human remains essential. Kluge contended that, rather than creating additional content and eventually drowning in the information flood, scholars and artists should navigate digital culture by working with the storehouse of media within the digital archive to form constellations between pre-existing information. He suggested that the task of the human in the digital age is to develop networks, archives, and other sites to house this information. Thus, Kluge argued that the proliferation of information on the Internet does not lead to the elimination of the need for human faculties, but rather to the production of a different kind of (human) intelligence. He engaged directly with this practice of knowledge production in his use of archival materials in his own works and in the archive that he curates on dctp.tv.

Information overload—and the other names it goes by: information glut, information anxiety, information fatigue—is not a new phenomenon. Kluge's description of the Internet as a tsunami of data may evoke Siegfried Kracauer's 1927 essay on photography and his description of how mechanical reproduction and photographic technology led to what he terms a "blizzard of photographs" and a "flood of photos [that] swee[p] away the dams of memory."[199] In his essay, Kluge points to an earlier historical juncture of information overload: the invention of Gutenberg's printing press and the resultant flood of print materials and pamphlets that bombarded the literate public. Like other technology before and after it—including the telegraph, typewriter, telephone, radio, computer, and the Internet—the flood of texts enabled by the invention of the printing press seemed to place a burden on human communication and to create the perception of information overload. The gap between information and knowledge seems to widen: unable to process the barrage of information, we are unable to turn that information into knowledge. Following Kluge's account, fears of information overload during the early modern period prompted a counter-reaction: the rise of critique and the development of criticism.

Long before Kant wrote his Critiques—though Kant had indeed worried that superficial reading practices would emerge from the abundance of available books—coping strategies for information overload were already being developed. Scholars of information organization and early modern reading and scholarly practices have identified a number of strategies that emerged in order to aid in the sorting and summarizing of information.[200] The development of indexes, bibliographies, encyclopedias, anthologies, digests, and books of quotation all helped

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[198] I use "metaphorology" here in the sense of Bertolt Brecht's use of metaphors that defamiliarize the familiar, rather than Hans Blumenberg theory of metaphors that strive to make the unfamiliar less threatening.

[199] Siegfried Kracauer, "Photography," in *Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, trans. and ed. Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 58.

[200] For a discussion of Kant's conception of philosophy as a counter to superficial reading practices, see Chad Wellmon, *Organizing Enlightenment: Information Overload and the Invention of the Modern Research University* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015).

consolidate information from various disciplines and texts; book reviews summarized longer texts and helped readers to determine what they should and shouldn't read; and footnotes guided readers to specific texts. These mechanisms helped readers to select, summarize, and organize the information they accessed, and they provided shortcuts and methods of filtering through information.[201] Many of these methods are the antecedents of our modern filter and search techniques, just as the digital hyperlink evolved from the print footnote.

Much like the early modern period, when the "perception of an overabundance of books fueled the production of many more books," as Kluge sees it, our contemporary perception of an overabundance of data is fueling the production of even more information.[202] Instead, he suggested the task of the writer and poet—and here I would also add scholars and practitioners in the humanities—in the digital age is to develop networks, archives, and other repositories to house this information: "Today the task of the author and poet is not only to create more content, but also to create vessels for content that are also visible for others."[203] Kluge interpreted our current state of information overload as a challenge to the artist and poet of our time, a "provocation to art" to work with the storehouse of media in the digital archive, sorting through its contents in order to form constellations between pre-existing information, rather than solely creating new content.[204] The poetological task of the digital age is to create constellations and make connections, to turn information into knowledge by crafting narratives or making claims.

In his essay and in interviews Kluge used a variety of productive metaphors for understanding these vessels in various ways: "an oasis," "coral reefs," "groups," "collectives," a "home," "apartment," and "a permanent place." In Kluge's essay these metaphors refer to the creation of small networks and databases, spaces in which a selection of information is put into constellation with other, often unrelated content. Kluge stated that small databases would be useful for featuring literature and pieces of writing on the Internet: "If you can create something there that also speaks to just seven other people and offers them a resting place, then everything else can be ignored, even if only for a certain time."[205] For Kluge, the creation of networks within the larger web of the Internet is a way to create digital subjectivity within the mass of information and data—the "objectivity"—of the Internet.

Kluge argued that the proliferation of information on the Internet does not lead to the elimination of the need for human faculties, but rather strengthens a different kind of (human)

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[201] See Ann Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

[202] Ann Blair, "Reading strategies for coping with information overload, ca.1550-1700," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64, no. 1 (2003): 12.

[203] Alexander Kluge, *Die Entsprechung einer Oase: Essay für die digitale Generation* (Berlin: mikrotext, 2013), E-book edition. "Heute besteht die schriftstellerische und poetische Aufgabe darin, nicht nur mehr Substanz, sondern Gefäße für Substanz zu schaffen, die auch für andere erkennbar sind."

[204] Kluge is not the first or the only media theorist to make this proposition. See Rick Prelinger's manifesto published on his blog *Black Oyster Catcher*, "On the Virtues of Preexisting Material," May 30, 2007, http://blackoystercatcher.blogspot.de/2007/05/on-virtues-of-preexisting-material.html. Prelinger is the founder of the Prelinger Archives and a staunch advocate of open access, publicly accessible digital archives.

[205] Kluge, *Die Entsprechung einer Oase*, n.p. "Wenn man dort etwas entwickelt, das auch nur sieben andere Menschen anspricht und einen Ruhepunkt anbietet, ist das Übrige, wenn auch für eine gewisse Zeit abwählbar."

intelligence, the ability to make connections and form networks. He himself engages directly with this practice of knowledge production in his recycling of archival visual materials in his own works, and in the archive he curates on dctp.tv. The aesthetic practice of creating a network of archival materials put into constellation with one another has played a role in Kluge's work in at least some form from the beginning of his career. His literary and philosophical works engaged with photographs, diagrams, and other visual art from the German archive, and he includes significant recycled material in his films and in his television program—either by reusing footage from his earlier television episodes or manipulating scenes from early films and inserting them within the montage of his televisual and filmic work.[206] Kluge's work with pre-existing materials performs his approach to making networks with nonhierarchical and nonmetric nodes. These networks and his montages create a "Zusammenhang" or a particular intellectual context, which is produced out of the constellation of information. Today the practice of creating a distributed archive is even more relevant for Kluge as he is considering the question of his *Nachlass* both in physical form and online, including his online research collections at Princeton and Cornell.[207]

Kluge's media group's website, dctp.tv, provides an example of how such a network might function on the Internet. "dctp" stands for "Development Company for Television Program" and its website features primarily video content. There is constantly a changing cluster of videos playing "live" on the site, allowing visitors to either watch whatever videos are streaming or to browse through the content.[208] In each corner of the site are four different categories: "Big Themes," "News Workshop," Gardens of Curiosity," and "Partners & Events." Each category then holds a set of rotating clusters of videos gathered around a particular thematic loop ("Themenschleife"). Each collection of short videos may include new videos and/or a mixture of older materials from Kluge's films and television productions. The heterogeneous materials are sometimes directly related to one another on the level of content, while sometimes they are connected only by the fact that they are placed next to one another. An example of one such cluster of videos is the thematic loop titled "One cannot learn not to learn" ("Man kann nicht lernen, nicht zu lernen"), which takes its title from a section of Kluge's 1963 short film *Lehrer im Wandel*. There are sixteen short videos, each around a minute long connected by the topic of education. These include interviews between Kluge and other individuals (academics, public figures, etc.), documentary episodes, footage taken from his television show and from the film *Lehrer im Wandel*. The user can view the clips in whatever order he or she chooses, or the clips can be watched in the order in which they've been arranged. Thus, each thematic loop is like a small network within the larger structure of the website. They each contain a montage or constellation of clips that can be changed and re-

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[206] As Andreas Huyssen has previously argued, "it is the German archive, its structures and its histories, which Kluge draws on in his storytelling." "An Analytic Storyteller in the Course of Time," in *Alexander Kluge: Raw Materials for the Imagination*, ed. Tara Forrest (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012), 275.

[207] The Alexander Kluge Research Collection can be accessed on Princeton's campus at kluge.princeton.edu. Cornell University's website, "Alexander Kluge: Cultural History in Dialogue" is accessible to all at kluge.library.cornell.edu.

[208] Kluge discusses his website and how he envisions users to interact with its resources in an interview with Philipp Ekardt. See "Returns of the Archaic, Reserves for the Future: A Conversation with Alexander Kluge," *October* 138 (2011): 120–32. His intent is that the site should be a space for browsing.

arranged according to the decisions of the user. In short, the digital archive is not only rhizomatic, but also interactive.[209]

In addition to the network of content organized by Kluge and his media group, dctp.tv is also linked to the larger network of the website of the magazine *Der Spiegel*. Readers of the magazine's page can click a link that transports them to Kluge's site and may or may not provide the spark that leads them to engage with and browse through the material hosted on the website. While Kluge believes that digital dialogue and participation has the potential to be radically egalitarian—and Kluge *does* see the Internet as a potential fulfillment of Brecht's radio theory in which everyone can receive and send information over the Internet[210]—the fact that his media group's web page has linked itself to another, admittedly very important site, illustrates a practical way in which a seemingly minor website like dctp.tv might indeed reach a larger audience.

In a network it is not so much the amount or the distribution of information that is decisive, but its degree of interconnectedness. In fact, what influences the ways in which we access, sort and search through the information on the Internet, the quintessential "network of networks," is precisely this kind of interconnectedness. Google is undoubtedly one of the most influential mechanisms for searching and filtering information. Like the early modern print methods of indexes, encyclopedias, and book reviews, Google allows us to search and filter through the massive network of the Internet. In creating their famous Page Rank algorithm, Google's founders, Sergey Brin and Larry Page, believed that each link from one website to another—each hyperlink, the modern form of the footnote—expressed a value in the form of a recommendation; the hyperlinks on a well-connected and highly-valued website hold more weight than hyperlinks connecting to web pages that were less well-connected. Thus, Google created the Page Rank algorithm to model the logic of the footnote; search results are organized according to their connectedness, how often they are cited in digital "footnotes" by other well-regarded sites. By linking dctp's website to *Der Spiegel*'s, Kluge's media group receives a valuable citation and is likelier to be suggested in the search results of someone browsing the Internet.

Ultimately, this practice of linking illustrates a surprising kind of digital agency. Although Google's algorithm now functions without any human computation, it required people to write the algorithm, people to create the content on the Web, people to author hyperlinks, and people to interact with machines. Even on a macro-level, the Web's behavior is influenced by the actions of individual human beings as they consume information, create content and link to other information.[211] Even in our age of powerful algorithms, technologies of the human still form a kind of digital ecology, and human beings are still agents as the authors of hyperlinks. The possibility that small networks and the creation of seemingly minor links

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[209] Dctp.tv is not a participatory website—users cannot add to or edit the materials it contains—but it is interactive insofar as it is structured so that the user can pick and choose with what to engage and in what order to view the materials.

[210] "Jeder Mensch stirbt vierundzwanzig Stunden am Tag," Interview with Alexander Kluge, *The European*, March 8, 2015. http://www.theeuropean.de/alexander-kluge/8886-ueber-das-verhaeltnis-des-menschen-zur-zeit.

[211] See Chad Wellmon's article for a longer discussion of the role that humans play via hyperlinking: "Why Google Isn't Making Us Stupid…or Smart," *The Hedgehog Review* 14, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 66-80.

might influence the huge algorithms and big data which determine both the amount and kind of content we encounter in our digital lives is very real.

In contrast to anti-humanist, trans-humanist, and post-humanist approaches to the digital archive, Kluge's is anthropocentric. The digital "ocean" is still a space for the human. In our digital world, Kluge sees information overload not as a threat but as an opportunity, at once a call to develop new forms of intelligence and an impetus to create art using the content of the Internet and our ability to create networks. Furthermore, his website models an example for scholarship in the digital age. Whereas traditional scholarship places scholars in the role of "content producers," Kluge's insistence that we not create more content in our age of "tsunamis of data" provides an impulse for a different kind of digital scholarship, one that might be more akin to the creation of databases, websites, and networks. His digital practice provides an example for a multimodal, multi-medial scholarship that is only possible through our human capacity to link, form constellations and produce networks. Rather than argue that the human has been lost among the "ocean" of the Internet, Kluge reminds us that we have the ability to create anchors.

Chapter Three
The Cutting Room as Laboratory: Harun Farocki's Essay Films and Installations

The Archive of Moving Images

In Harun Farocki's essay film *Images of the World and the Inscription of War* (*Bilder der Welt und Inschrift des Krieges*, 1988), the opening sequence featuring a Hannover water research laboratory reappears near middle and end of the film. The film also includes a sequence with Farocki shooting footage of this laboratory, although we find out later that Farocki is unsatisfied with his footage. After he tries unsuccessfully to get a particular shot of the laboratory, his team alerts him that the shot he is looking for is in a film archive. Rather than continue to attempt to get the shot himself, Farocki makes the decision to use the archival footage. The film, which is an investigation of how film and photography enable and obscure vision, also thematizes the question of whether there is a need to produce new images if the perfect footage already exists in the archive. While this film was not the first film in which Farocki worked with pre-existing images, it did mark a decisive shift in his filmmaking practices towards working with materials from the German cinematographic archive. Whether the practice initially developed out of convenience or financial necessity, working with found and archival footage, and the conception of the moving image archive, developed into a dominant practice and theme in his essay films and later video installations.[212] Farocki shifted the emphasis from shooting new footage to practices of montage and editing that were used to produce meaning out of pre-existing images. As Farocki later commented about *Images of the World and the Inscription of War*: "We do not have to search for new, unseen images, but we have to work on the already known images in a way that they appear new."[213]

Farocki was not one of the better-known filmmakers of New German Cinema, which included Alexander Kluge. Like Hartmut Bitomsky, Farocki was in the first cohort of students at the newly-founded German Film and Television Academy (*Deutsche Film und Fernsehakademie Berlin*). Farocki and many of his classmates were politically engaged leftists who sympathized with the Red Army Faction (*Rote Armee Faktion*), though they were not members of the militant organization. Farocki's early films reflect his political leanings. Many of these politically-charged films were made collectively, often with Bitomsky. Farocki gained a degree of notoriety through one of these experimental films, *Inextinguishable Fire* (*Nicht löschbares Feuer*, 1968). In the film, Farocki put out a lit cigarette on his arm to demonstrate, to a lesser degree, the effects of napalm burning human skin. Farocki's works were often independently produced without any

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[212] Nora Alter asserts that Farocki was one of the first German filmmakers to have access to a video camera in the 1960s. Though the video camera enabled him initially to make films with a very small budget by shooting primarily new material, these shoots were still expensive, and to some extent his budget restrictions would shift him towards the reuse of pre-existing materials. See Alter, *Projecting History: German Nonfiction Cinema, 1967-2000* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 80.

[213] Harun Farocki quoted in Birgit Maier, "Kriegsinschriften. Harun Farockis Arbeit am Bild," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (Berlin edition), April 18, 2000, BS 5. "Man muss keine neuen, nie gesehenen Bilder suchen, aber man muss die vorhandenen Bilder in einer Weise bearbeiten, dass sie neu werden." English translation taken from *Harun Farocki: Working on the Sight-lines*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004), 268.

public sponsorship, in contrast to New German Cinema's use of government funding to produce films. Farocki used commercial work he made for German television or industry to support his independent works. Parts of his commercial productions were recycled into his essay films and video essays as Farocki made use of his personal archive of moving images.

While many of his early films, including *Images of the World and the Inscription of War*, were shot on 16 mm film, Farocki was an early adopter of video, and shot and worked with both media through the 1980s and 90s. He also produced and worked with materials shot originally for television. Despite the fact that television and video technology were regarded as new media that might threaten to replace the medium of film and the cinema, Farocki approached these new forms of technology with less apprehension than some of his former colleagues at the journal *Filmkritik*.[214] His essay film, *Videograms of a Revolution* (*Videogramme einer Revolution*, 1992), for instance, works solely with video footage. It examines the ability of television to record the major historical events occurring in Europe at the end of the 80s and start of the 90s. Farocki compiled and edited over one hundred hours of amateur video and television news footage of the 1989 Romanian revolution into *Videograms of a Revolution*.[215] The film meditates on television's ability to function as an archive and recorder of events. The film's voiceover links film and history together through the following three statements: "Film has been destined to make history visible." "Film was possible because there was history." "If film is possible, then history too is possible." These statements are striking in part because the film is compiled from video and television footage rather than film. If film renders history possible, as the voiceover attests, how does television record or make visible history? In *Videograms of a Revolution* it becomes clear how television's instantaneous mode of transmission is used to create the impression that we are witnessing history in real time. The affordability of video cameras allowed normal citizens to record events and craft their own narratives of what was occurring in Romania. Video technology gives one the ability to watch and re-watch footage without damaging it or losing any quality. Video technology also preserves footage so that it might be more easily re-examined, cited and re-edited into something new.

Farocki's essay films and video installations can be clustered around several reoccurring themes. Some, like *Videograms of a Revolution*, use the archive as a model for filmmaking. The archive allows Farocki to engage in historical recuperation and critical re-contextualization in his works. Many of his later pieces, including his installations, are self-reflexive and meditate on the notion of cinema in the digital age, what film was, is and might yet be. Some themes remain constant throughout his work, including the problematization of technologies and media of representation and reproduction and the ways in which mass media record and produce interpretations of history.

In this chapter I examine Farocki's "Archive of Filmic Expressions" ("Archiv filmischer Ausdrücke"), which includes the video essays *Workers Leaving the Factory* (*Arbeiter verlassen die Fabrik*, 1995), *The Expression of Hands* (*Der Ausdruck der Hände*, 1997), and *Prison Images* (*Gefängnisbilder*, 2000). I discuss some of his film installations in detail: *Prison Images*'

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[214] Farocki published in *Filmkritik* as early as 1965, he became an editor in 1974 through the demise of the journal in 1984.

[215] Although the film's final cut is a 16mm film, the footage that Farocki edited and compiled into the film was all video.

predecessor, *I Thought I Was Seeing Convicts* (*Ich glaubte Gefangene zu sehen*, 2000), *On Construction of Griffith's Films* (*Zur Bauweise des Films bei Griffith*, 2006) and *In-formation* (*Aufstellung*, 2005). I also explore Farocki's conception of a digital archive of moving images as articulated by his "Archive of Filmic Expressions," his writing with media theorist Wolfgang Ernst, and his collaborative project and encyclopedic Website with Antje Ehmann, "Labour in a Single Shot" ("Eine Einstellung zur Arbeit"), completed shortly before his untimely death in 2014.

While Farocki's move from film and television to installation works was not always motivated by a desire to change his medium—at times it was financially motivated[216]—this movement from the video-essay into the video installation is not incompatible with the genre of the essay film. The impulse to change modes and forms of presentation in and of film is in line with the essay film's experimental and open-ended form. In the new context of exhibition in a museum or art gallery, the video essay and essayistic film installation are able to employ new means to raise some of those questions that have long occupied filmmakers such as Farocki. Installations, with their loops and multi-channel projections, allowed Farocki to play around with the linear progression of images and to expand his practice of montage from a succession of images to a simultaneous, horizontal form of montage. The new spatial construction of images required a new form of spectatorship and brought with it the potential for a new form of critical engagement with his works. Farocki's legacy most clearly continues on in the work of Hito Steyerl, the focus of Chapter Four, in the American Trevor Paglen's media art and Israeli-born Eyal Weizman's forensic architecture. Steyerl, Paglen and Weizman carry on Farocki's interest in the machinic vision of computers and the technologies of surveillance and data information mining of corporations and governments. Although Farocki's attention to machinic vision—from computer games to satellite imagery—will play a minor role in this chapter, I examine the potential part that Farocki envisioned algorithms and computer processing technology might play in digital archives.

Labor on Film, in the Gallery, on the Internet

As film reached its one hundredth birthday in 1995, Farocki completed his video essay *Workers Leaving the Factory*, a film-historical investigation that begins by examining the first film ever exhibited: *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory in Lyon* (*La sortie de l'usine Lumière à Lyon*, 1895). Louis Lumière's forty-five-second-long film depicts workers streaming through two gates out of his family's factory.[217] Farocki is interested in this early film in part because it was the first one ever exhibited. However, he is also curious why, in the hundred years of cinema that this film inaugurated, depictions of the factory have not changed; he argues that we only ever see workers as they leave the factory, never their labor inside of it. Farocki questions why this

[216] Writing his work journal in 2008, Farocki explained: "Until the beginning of the decade, the money I received from art institutions was merely supplementary. Television was my bread and butter, and art was just something extra. In the meantime, television work has fallen off." Harun Farocki, *Weiche Montagen* (Bregenz: Kunsthaus Bregenz, 2011), 144.

[217] There were actually three different versions of this film, shot in March, June and July of 1895. It is thought to be the first film ever projected. Although the film is commonly referred to as the first film ever made as well, there are other actuality films that pre-date this one, including Louis Le Prince's *Roundhay Garden Scene* from 1888, which is thought to be the oldest surviving moving image.

filmic motif, with slight variations, has continually resurfaced. In order to propose an answer to this question, he begins by assembling citations from feature films, documentaries, and newsreel footage that depict workers leaving the factory.[218] There are many recognizable feature films from various periods that are cited, including Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927), Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936), and Michelangelo Antonioni's *Red Desert* (1964). We see Marilyn Monroe being picked up after work by her boyfriend in Fritz Lang's *Clash by Night* (1952) as well as strike breakers outside a factory in Vsevolod Pudovkin's *Deserter* (1933). Farocki also includes a citation from Bitomsky's film *VW Complex* (1989), which was discussed in Chapter One. Some citations are shown repeatedly—Farocki examines *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory in Lyon* several times throughout the film—and others are featured only once.

By placing these various film citations into montages with one another, Farocki makes it clear that this early film evolved into one of the first filmic motifs. *Workers Leaving the Factory* examines this motif throughout film history, building an encyclopedia entry of how the meaning of this seminal shot has shifted over time. In that sense, Farocki takes inspiration from Hans Blumenberg's study of metaphors and attempts a filmic "metaphorology" of workers leaving the factory. Although Farocki professed interest in constructing a *Begriffsgeschichte*, or conceptual history, of this motif, his methodology is drawn from Blumenberg's work.[219] Farocki is not interested in filmic concepts but rather how the motif of workers leaving the factory has been used as a rhetorical figure in the visual language of film.[220] As Farocki says in the voiceover, as a rhetorical figure the motif has been absorbed into various narratives. While on the one hand, it seems like the space outside of the factory "is precisely the right spot to transform an economic struggle into a political one", this rhetorical figure was much more often used in narratives that prevented workers from recognizing their own collectivity.[221] Most films, as Farocki describes, begin when work hours are over. The only way that film really captured factory labor and workers as a collective is in their departure from work. However, their collectivity quickly dissipates as they head away from the factory, dissolving from a cohesive collective into individuals. Farocki asserts that today it is not possible to judge whether someone is coming from work or what their labor is like based on their physical appearance or bodily movements. In a montage, he cites a number of sequences that are each composed of long tracking shots without any cuts. These shots follow the main characters as they leave work, as if emphasizing their growing individuality now that work is over.[222] This filmic motif, as we will see in the film, figured in narratives that were used against the workers, to prevent them

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[218] In his essay "Workers Leaving the Factory," published shortly after the video essay, Farocki discussed how he left out the television archives as well as the archive of film and television advertising from his research. "Workers Leaving the Factory," in *Harun Farocki: Working the Sight-lines*, 237.

[219] In his essay with Wolfgang Ernst, "Towards an Archive for Visual Concepts," Farocki explains that he named his "Archive for Filmic Concepts" after the *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte*, published by the Academy of Sciences and Literature in Mainz. Farocki names Hans Blumenberg's *Begriffsgeschichte* of various metaphors as inspiration for the kind of analysis he wants to do with filmic language. In *Harun Farocki: Working on the Sight-lines*, 273.

[220] For a longer account of Blumenberg's conception of "metaphorology," see his "Prospect for a Theory of Non-conceptuality" in *Shipwreck with Spectator: Paradigm of a Metaphor for Existence* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997).

[221] Farocki, "Workers Leaving the Factory," 240.

[222] These films include *Clash by Night*, Pier Paola Pasolini's *Accatone* (1961) and *Zeche Morgenrot* (1948) shot in Soviet-occupied postwar Germany. He discusses these shots in "Towards an Archive for Visual Concepts," 277-278.

from recognizing their collectivity, and in narratives that helped to perpetuate industrial capitalism. Thus, the moment during which they could have been recognized as a collective, with the power that might convey, was quickly lost.

In *Workers Leaving the Factory*, Farocki adopts an approach to film history that is not chronological or linear. It moves non-linearly through film history and between non-fiction newsreel footage and feature films. In one particular montage, Farocki cuts from newsreel footage of workers marching from the Siemens factory to a Nazi rally in 1934, to a scene from *Metropolis* of workers changing shifts, and then to a sequence from Bitomsky's *VW Complex* of employees departing the VW factory in the 1980s. Farocki comes close to realizing a "vertical" approach to film history as imagined by Enno Patalas, former editor of *Filmkritik*, in his book *History of Film*: "Today a film history would seem desirable to me that would not move chronologically or horizontally but instead vertically, that would look at the events strewn over more than eighty years simultaneously and would uncover its historical layers and their fault lines."[223] One of the reasons that Farocki is able to perform this kind of film-historical investigation is the increasing accessibility of the archive and the affordability of video technology, which allowed him to engage with the material in a very different way than if he were watching it on film in the archive. Farocki used video technology to reexamine these images. After playing the Lumière film on a video monitor for the first time in *Workers Leaving the Factory*, he restarts it and slows down the footage, pausing on a particular frame. This still image, from near the end of the original film, remains frozen on the screen while Farocki discusses how it seems as if something were pulling the workers away from the factory.[224] For Lumière, Farocki argues, the focus was purely on movement, on showing how technology could now enable images to move. In *Workers Leaving the Factory*, video technology and access to the cinematographic archive enables Farocki to focus on what this movement has meant in film history. The video essay reveals that this motif, by showing one kind of movement, is actually hiding another: "the visible movement of people is standing in for the absent and invisible movement of goods, money, and ideas circulating in the industrial sphere."[225]

In contrast to Bitomsky's *VW Complex*, which was interested in the disappearance of labor in the industrial age as machines replace humans in the factory, Farocki is interested in both the aesthetic and political implications of this motif of workers leaving a factory. The aforementioned montage of Nazi newsreel footage from 1934, Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* and Bitomsky's *VW Complex* illustrates this point. The montage includes *Metropolis*' famous sequence of exploited laborers shuffling out of the factory in unison. The uniforms and the workers moving in lockstep during the shift change in *Metropolis* implies their alienated labor and their collectivity, something unfortunately not visible in the real world. Despite the fact that

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[223] Enno Patalas, "Zehn Jahre Später," in Ulrich Gregor and Enno Patalas, *Geschichte des Films*, vol. 2 (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1976), 517. "Wünschenswert erschiene mir heute eine Filmgeschichte, die überhaupt nicht chronologisch, horizontal vorginge, sondern vertikal, die die über achtzig Jahre verstreuten Erscheinungen wie gleichzeitige ansähe und ihre historischen Schichten und deren Verwerfungen aufdeckte."

[224] This close analysis of a single film still is reminiscent of the academic study of film and dissection of individual images and their composition. This fixation on particular images, movements and motifs is also reminiscent of cinephilia. On cinephilia and the fetishization of contingent, marginalized details in cinema, see Christian Keathley's *Cinephilia and History, or The Wind in the Trees* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

[225] Harun Farocki, "Workers Leaving the Factory," 243.

this vision of industrial labor did not exactly become a reality, Farocki argues that the sequence from Lang's film became a "rhetorical figure": "One finds it used in documentaries, in industrial and propaganda films, often with music and/or words as backing, the image being given a textual meaning such as 'the exploited', 'the industrial proletariat', 'the workers of the fist', or 'the society of the masses'."[226] This rhetorical figure is used mostly as a slogan, added on to the beginning or end of films, but not to foster mobilization or change.

By citing *VW Complex*, Farocki puts his video essay into constellation with Bitomsky's work. As footage from Bitomsky's film of workers leaving the VW factory is cited, we hear Bitomsky's original voiceover. Bitomsky references Lumière's film as he too points out the fact that the first film ever exhibited recorded workers leaving a factory. After this short sequence from Bitomsky's film the montage cuts again to the Lumière film, making a direct comparison between the footage that Bitomsky shot of workers leaving the VW factory and the earlier film that he references. Farocki begins to narrate the footage, putting his voiceover into constellation with Bitomsky's. Farocki discusses how both the power of the industry and the name of the factory owners is absent from Lumière's film, as well as evidence of the political clout of these workers who could strike. In these images he reads evidence of fear in France at the time that workers might again rebel as they did in 1871. Farocki's montage then cuts to footage of a performance of Bertolt Brecht's play, *The Mother*, which dramatizes the politicization of an unemployed, working-class woman as she joins her son in the Communist Party. We see in this footage the actors standing and singing collectively about their unfulfilled demands that lead to their decision to strike. Unlike the growing awareness that is depicted in Brecht's play, we do not see any politicization occurring in the footage of workers leaving the factory that Farocki cites from Lumière and Bitomsky. In this montage and in the video essay as a whole, Farocki poses the questions of whether film has contributed to this lack of politicization and whether the archive might be used as a tool to reveal what these earlier films obscured. The film-historical evidence presented in Farocki's montages provides a decisive answer to this former question. Although Farocki includes citations from a number of films that depict workers' strikes, he argues that these films dramatize only the exterior of factories as they become battle zones. These films mostly depict strike breakers as class traitors. They also focus on how the number of unemployed will always outnumber those who do have jobs. By keeping the camera away from factories, it allowed industrial production to continue to exploit people without hindrance: "Although many of the worst acts of violence this century – civil wars, world wars, re-education and extermination camps – have been closely linked to the structure of industrial production and to its crises, nevertheless most of these events took place far away from actual factories."[227]

As many scholars have argued, Farocki belongs to a genealogy of filmmakers and filmmaking that traces its origins to Brecht.[228] While Brecht reflected on the ideological implications of Bourgeois theatre, his theoretical writings inspired political filmmakers in the 1960s and 70s as they sought to politicize the cinema. These filmmakers transposed some of

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[226] Ibid, 239.

[227] Ibid, 240-241.

[228] See, for example, Thomas Elsaesser's essay, "Political Filmmaking after Brecht: Farocki, for Example," in *Harun Farocki: Working the Sightlines*, 133-53.

Brecht's approaches to political theater onto the cinema by experimenting with strategies for distancing spectators and reflecting on the politics of representation in cinema. While *Workers Leaving the Factory* does not contain some of the trademarks of Brechtian narrative filmmaking, Farocki's interest in the motif of workers leaving the factory and what it reveals and conceals about factory labor evokes a famous analysis by Brecht of *Neue Sachlichkeit*'s style of photography. Looking at a picture of a factory, Brecht says, does not tell us anything about it:

> the situation is complicated by the fact that less than ever does the mere reflection of reality reveal anything about reality. A photograph of the Krupp works or the AEG tells us next to nothing about these institutions. […] The reification of human relations—the factory, say—means that they are no longer explicit. So something must in fact be *built up*, something artificial, posed.[229]

This form of Brechtian ideology critique—the idea that we must deconstruct the representations that obscure the real—is a move that Farocki takes up in his film. Farocki analyzes these images of workers leaving factories and attempts to get at the reality concealed by them—the labor they do not depict—through montage and by juxtaposing these images with his voiceover text. Farocki believes that Lumière's film captures something real, despite the fact, or precisely because of the fact, that it was staged and missed the opportunity to capture labor: "In the opening sequence of this first film, the cinema's basic stylistic principle is already present. Its signs and meanings are not put into the world, they arise from the real. In the cinema it is as if the world itself wanted to tell us something."[230]

Farocki's ideology critical reading of the movement of workers leaving the factory points to what these films also obscure: the movement of goods and services in capitalism. As such, Farocki reads Lumière's film as a precursor of contemporary surveillance images; in both examples the cameras seek to capture the movement of people. Farocki compares Lumière's static camera, which was fixed on the factory gate, to later surveillance cameras at factories. He returns again in the video essay to Lumière's original film and treats it as surveillance footage aimed at the workers, monitoring their movements and behaviors. In this citation he stops the film and inserts an iris over a particular woman exiting the factory gate. The rest of the image is black except for the iris that isolates her movements. Farocki plays the few seconds of footage, rewinds it and plays it again, showing how this woman pulled down on another woman's skirt. Farocki interprets this as a prank the woman pulled knowing that her colleague would not retaliate because cameras were filming them. Farocki then connects this first camera to surveillance cameras, cameras that "automatically and blindly produce an infinite number of pictures in order to safeguard private property."[231] He also frequently reads the images of factories he cites as reminiscent of barracks or prisons, gesturing towards the subject of his later films and other entries into his "Archive of Filmic Images," *Prison Images* and *I Thought I Was Seeing Convicts*.

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[229] Brecht is referencing here the steel manufacturer and the electric utility. Brecht, quoted in Walter Benjamin, "Little History of Photography," in *Selected Writings*, vol. 2, pt. 2, 1931-1934, ed. Michael W. Jennings et al., trans. Rodney Livingstone et al. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999), 526.
[230] Farocki, "Workers Leaving the Factory," 243.
[231] Ibid, 238.

Due to new technologies of image analysis, these automatic surveillance cameras are beginning to learn to read the images they record. This technology is leading to the development of a new kind of archive for moving images. Farocki argues that:

> A new archive system is thus under way, a future library for moving images, in which one can search for and retrieve elements of pictures. Up to now the dynamic and compositional definitions of a sequence of images – those things which are the decisive factor in the editing process of converting a sequence of images into a film – have not been classified nor included.[232]

Thus, during the development of *Workers Leaving the Factory* Farocki was already thinking about the need for new ways to engage with the digital archive and its increasingly massive library of images. Farocki's interest in the archive began even before 1995: "Ever since video recorders have been available, filmmakers have begun to refer back to film history—it is time for the rise of the lexicon."[233] As he reflected on cinematic history, he simultaneously looked ahead to digital archives.

More than ten years after *Workers Leaving the Factory*, Farocki would revisit this piece and re-fashion it into a video installation. The original thirty-six-minute-long video was first shown in German public television on the channel 3sat. Farocki transformed it into a 12-channel video installation, still thirty-six minutes long, for his exhibition jointly curated with Antje Ehmann in 2006, *Cinema like never before* (*Kino wie noch nie*). The temporal range of Farocki's film citations was expanded for the installation and this is reflected in the modified title of the installation: *Workers Leaving the Factory in Eleven Decades* (*Arbeiter verlassen die Fabrik in elf Jahrzehnten*). Citations from eleven films from as early as 1899 and as recent as 2000 are featured; Farocki was able to include newer films that had been made since 1995, such as Lars von Trier's *Dancer in the Dark* (2000), showing how the motif of workers leaving the factory was still at work in cinema today. In their show *Cinema like never before*, Farocki and Ehmann conceptualized exhibition spaces as "cutting rooms" or "laboratories" for cinema that imagine something beyond the single-screen, space of the cinema: "We want to bring film into the exhibition space, but not to turn the art space into a new cinema. We see it as a cutting room, a laboratory for cinema."[234] The cutting room is the laboratory and the space in which critical assessment is to take place. It is a space for the filmmaker and video essayist's critical reflection and experimentation.

Farocki continued to experiment with exhibiting film and video in galleries and museums through the rest of his career. By transforming *Workers Leaving the Factory* into a multi-channel video installation, Farocki was able to translate the sequential montage of the original film into something spatial. The installation format allowed Farocki to create a multi-screen montage, in which sequences from various moments in film history could play and be examined side-by-side rather than linearly or chronologically. Farocki describes this montage as follows: "Film clips from the past 110 years are shown simultaneously. The succession of

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[232] Ibid.

[233] Ernst and Farocki, "Towards an Archive for Visual Concepts," 280.

[234] Harun Farocki and Antje Ehmann, eds., *Kino wie noch nie* / *Cinema Like Never Before* (Vienna: Generali Foundation; Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2006), 17.

montage allows one shot to replace the next and the message is: this image, not the one before. Simultaneity, on the contrary, expresses: this shot and at the same time this other one."[235] In this form of montage Farocki was even more equipped to create a vertical film-historical investigation in which various moments in film history could be examined simultaneously.

Farocki and Ehmann experimented with the Internet as an exhibition space for cinema as well. In 1995, 2000, and yet again in 2011, they argued that there were very few films that explored and depicted labor. Farocki and Ehmann attempted to rectify this problem by forming their own digital counter-archive of films that do depict labor. They invited film students and video artists in fifteen cities around the world to participate in workshops with them and to create films depicting the forms labor takes today. Farocki and Ehmann asked these filmmakers to produce single-frame shots that were akin to Lumière's brief film. Each film was to be approximately two minutes long and shot in a single take; no cuts or edits were allowed. The films were then collected and uploaded to a Website with the title "Labour in a Single Shot" ("Eine Einstellung zur Arbeit"). A selection of these films was also exhibited in 2015 as an installation at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin. The installation consisted of groups of six films from one city that were shown together on loop on fifteen screens. This format allowed for a kind of simultaneous viewing and montage between and across film loops that was not available on the online platform because multiple hanging screens were visible at a time. In addition, Farocki's installation *Workers Leaving the Factory in Eleven Decades* was included in this larger installation. By including his own video essay in this new context of exhibition, Farocki presented both the problem, that labor has not yet been captured accurately by film, alongside an attempt to remedy this issue. This choice also suggests that the art gallery is not only a laboratory-like cutting room, but also might be a space in which to reflect upon the cinema and to stage interventions into film history. The Internet is another platform through which Farocki and Ehmann attempted to intervene in film history. By creating a Website that functioned as a digital archive, they began to address the need that Farocki identified for new forms of digital archives and tools for navigating them twenty years prior, while completing *Workers Leaving the Factory*.

Film-Historical Investigations from Video Essay to Installation

Farocki's next entries into his "Archive of Filmic Expressions" followed quickly after *Workers Leaving the Factory*. *The Expression of Hands* was shown on German television two years later, and the video essay *Prison Images* and the video installation using the same materials, *I Thought I Was Seeing Convicts*, were completed five years after *Workers Leaving the Factory*. Before turning to these two more recent works, I examine *The Expression of Hands*, which continues employing the methodology Farocki developed in *Workers Leaving the Factory*. *The Expression of Hands* conducts a cinematic "metaphorology" that examines the meaning of close-up shots of hand gestures in through a cross-section of film history, from silent to sound film.

In contrast to *Workers Leaving the Factory*, which examined how the reoccurring motif of workers leaving a factory had not changed throughout film history, *The Expression of Hands* identifies a rupture in the semantics of this motif. In silent cinema, Farocki argues, a close-up of

[235] Ibid, 20.

hands was a shot that was legible to spectators within the larger context of the film. In the citations that Farocki examines, close-ups of hands communicate the same information about a character's actions or motivations articulated by the actor's facial expressions and other bodily gestures. When Farocki examines citations from later sound films, he discovers a disjunct between what hands communicate in close-ups on screen and the other means by which an actor communicates. In the sound film citations, the hands shown in close-up seem cut off from the body to which they belong. The hands act and convey meaning on their own and in a way that is at times at odds with what the rest of the actor's body and gestures communicate. Farocki links this semantic rupture in the motif to something that seemingly occurred outside of the cinema: Taylorism, the scientific management of labor productivity developed in the late nineteenth-century by Frederick W. Taylor. Farocki evokes Taylorism to suggests a parallel between its fragmentation of industrial labor production practices and the standardization of film's narrative and visual languages that occurred after the transition from silent to sound cinema and with the rise of Hollywood-style narrative filmmaking. Taylorism and other theories of scientific management, which did use photographic technology to isolate the movements of the body,[236] were developed before the invention of film but they reached their peak in the 1910s, during the transitional period of cinema that preceded the rise of Hollywood.[237]

Whereas Lumière's *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory in Lyon* served as the original source for the cinematic motif of workers leaving a factory, Farocki was unable to locate a "primal scene" in film history that introduced the original use or meaning of close-ups of hands in cinematic language.[238] Nevertheless, he uses a film citation from a silent film from 1908 as a proxy for a primal scene.[239] In contrast to *Workers Leaving the Factory*, which began by showing and examining Lumière's film before any other examples of the motif, *The Expression of Hands* begins with an example of a sequence with close-ups of a hand that occurred after the standardization of narrative cinema took place. This and most of the other citations in the video essay are used to illustrate how close-ups of hands seem to have lost their original meaning. The citations are played on two video monitors set in front of Farocki. As in *Workers Leaving the Factory*, Farocki includes citations from recognizable feature films, including Alfred Hitchock's *North by Northwest* (1959), *Le Petit Soldat* (1960) by Jean-Luc Godard, and a sequence from *The Beast with Five Fingers* (1946) featuring Peter Lorre as he is choked by a disembodied hand. Luis Buñuel's surrealist silent film, *An Andalusian Dog* (*Un Chien andalou*, 1929), is also cited in the video essay. It seems to serve as an example of the turning point in film history when the motif

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[236] Anson Rabinbach's *The Human Motor: Energy Fatigue and the Origins of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) discusses the use of chronophotography in the development of Taylorism and other theories of scientific management. See, in particular, Chapter Four, "Time and Motion: Etienne-Jules Mary and the Mechanics of the Body," 84-119.

[237] In histories of film, the period of roughly 1908 to 1917 is considered a transitional period of experimentation in which both narrative and nonnarrative films were common. See *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style & Mode of Production to 1960*, eds. David Bordwell, Janet Staiger & Kristin Thompson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

[238] Ernst and Farocki, "Towards an Archive for Visual Concepts," 280.

[239] Farocki never gives the title of this film and it is unclear where or how he gained access to it.

began to lose its coherent meaning.[240] Other prominent citations are drawn from newsreel footage about working conditions in the U.S. and its later reuse in an American WWII propaganda film, as well as a narrative film that features disembodied hands instead of actors with the title *Hands* (*Hände*, 1929).[241] Many of the newsreel sequences demonstrate how hands are employed in the de-skilled labor of assembly-line-style industrial production, in addition to the devastating effects of losing the ability to use one's hands.

In the first sequence that Farocki cites, he illustrates how in narrative cinema, as in Taylorism, hands get separated from the rest of the body, especially from the face. This citation is a scene from *Pick up on South Street* (1953), in which a pickpocket steals from a woman's purse in a crowded train. The sequence cuts from close-ups of the man's hands as they open and reach into the purse to shots of his impassive face. Although in the close-up shot we can see that his hands are clearly active, the shots of his face reveal that his facial expression does not betray what his hands are doing. The man is able to compartmentalize his body in a manner that Farocki implies is reminiscent of how production practices and the bodily movements of workers are compartmentalized in Taylorism. Farocki takes particular interest in how the woman who is being pickpocketed seems to misinterpret the man's behavior entirely. In the citation that Farocki analyzes, she makes eye contact with the pickpocket as he reaches towards her purse. As his hand opens and enters her purse, her mouth also opens. The woman seems to react as if the man is making an erotic gesture, providing Farocki with evidence that his face conveys meaning in a way that is divorced from what his hand gestures signify, and the woman is not able to read his real intentions from his face. It is as if the hands and the face speak two different languages. In the voiceover Farocki details his own trouble with understanding the close-ups in this scene. He proposes various readings of the scene by questioning whether it is the man's hand that opens the woman's mouth as he opens her purse, or whether the woman opens the purse by opening her mouth. Farocki's alternate interpretations of who or what is the actor in the sequence is due to the disjunct between the close-up shots of the pickpocket's hands and his face. These two body parts are visually separated by the film's editing and they convey to the spectator opposing pieces of information, leading Farocki to allege that he is unable to interpret the hand as belonging to a larger subject. In his essay "Towards an Archive for Visual Concepts," Farocki describes the disorientation he feels when watching this scene as arising from a confusion about subject-object relationships: "The subject-object construction is less clear than it is in language; the question remains open: who did what to whom?"[242] Farocki proposes that if we can no longer understand the meaning of a close-up of a hand, this leads to a further misunderstanding of the film and the actions of characters. By opening the film with this citation, it seems clear that this loss of meaning and how it came to be will be the focus of his "metaphorology."

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[240] When the clip from *An Andalusian Dog* is shown, Farocki states in the voiceover that the close-ups of faces in the film drive the narrative more than those of hands. The citation that Farocki includes is a shot of ants crawling out of a man's hand. This shot cuts to a close-up of the man's face and in his voiceover commentary Farocki argues that it is the man's eyes that communicate meaning to the viewer and prompt action in the film.

[241] Farocki refers to this film as *Spiel der Hände* and gives no other identifying information about it when the film is cited other than the fact that it is a film that "wants to tell its story solely through images of hands."

[242] Ernst and Farocki, "Towards an Archive for Visual Concepts," 282.

The second citation in *The Expression of Hands* is the only unambiguous example of when the relationship between hand gestures and the rest of the body was still intact. As becomes evident through this citation from this early silent film, Farocki argues that hand gestures used to stand in relation to the rest of the body in a way that was easily interpretable and as such they were essential to the language of silent cinema. The sequence examined by Farocki depicts a jewelry heist committed by a woman who hides the stolen goods inside of a bar of soap. Farocki is particularly interested in the long close-up shot of her hands as they place and conceal the jewelry in the soap. In this shot, the only close-up in the film, the thief's hands are shown against a black background as if to emphasize the criminal act. After showing the close-up shot of the thief's hands, Farocki rewinds the video back to a point earlier in the film before the theft was committed. He examines the thief's facial expressions and body posture, arguing that even before her crime they convey an "anger or even evil intentions" that is visible to viewers. This analysis is used to suggest that there is not a disjunct between her hands, her other physical expressions and her actions. The viewer of this film in 1908 would thus see a consistency between how the actress behaves throughout the film and the burglary she commits later. At the end of this discussion, Farocki places his hands over the video screen to create a diamond shape over the woman, as if to create a close-up of her. In the voiceover Farocki asserts that contemporary films are fragmentary and that we are not able to understand them, or even this silent film, without the sound and dialogue that frame the narrative. The camera moves back from the video screen on which Farocki is watching the film to a book he holds in his hands: *Gestologie und Filmspielerei* (1927) by Dyk Rudenski.[243] In the voiceover, Farocki contends that in the silent era, as evidenced by this book, there were theories of a universal silent language of gestures and facial expressions used by silent cinema actors. The book discusses a plan for an acting school that would teach all actors this language, a school that never came to fruition. This unrealized plan and the book's theory of a universal language are used as evidence for what was and what might have been. Farocki argues that today, looking at this book is like examining a foreign language or a sign language textbook. The language of silent cinema is a language that we do not understand and one that we would have to learn.

It is not only the advent of the sound era, but also the standardization of film language that accompanied it, which led to the demise of this universal language of gesture. Farocki connects Taylorism to the rise of Hollywood-style narrative cinema by "link[ing] gestures which are symptomatic of Taylorism in work situations—and in the standardization of filmic rules themselves—with the narrative gestures of such films."[244] As he states more than once during footage of a close-up of hands playing the piano from *Hands*, Farocki is interested in the movement economy of labor and of film narration. He uses this statement, as well as the footage from *Hands*, to cement the connection he forges between Taylorism and the standardization of the cinema. It might at first seem strange that the citation he uses in connection with this claim is drawn from a film that is entirely composed of close-ups of hands, but *Hands* is structured

[243] *Gestologie: Abhandlungen über die Physiologie und Psychologie des Ausdrucks* (Berlin: Hoboken-Presse, 1927).
[244] Ernst and Farocki, "Towards an Archive for Visual Concepts," 267.

around a Hollywood-style narrative despite its unlikely protagonists and avant-garde premise.[245]

As the footage from *Hands* plays again, Farocki discusses how in this close-up the camera cuts off the hands from the rest of the person playing the piano. This evidence of narrative cinema severing hands is put into a montage with other instances of hands getting separated from bodies. The montage contains footage from a variety of sources: a newsreel sequence regarding the dangers of industrial labor for hands and another citation featuring veterans who lost their hands during war. One citation seems to be from a documentary that directly addresses Taylorism. We are shown footage of hands at work as the original voiceover discusses how actions that we do during work can be broken down into different functions, including reaching, grasping and carrying. As in the citation with hands playing the piano, Taylorism isolates the movements of hands from the rest of the body. In *The Expression of Hands*, the camera swings from the monitor playing this documentary footage, back to Farocki's hands that again hold the 1927 book on "gesturology." Farocki references the contents of the book once more, explaining that this school for actors would have had its students learn about Taylorism in their third semester.[246] The camera then moves back to the monitor as the footage that dissects the movements hands do during labor plays again. This time, in the voiceover Farocki defines Taylorism. The camera slowly moves from this screen, over the book, to the citation from *Hands*. It is as if the camera begins with Taylorism, the catalyst of change, then moves to what might have been different had silent film actors had a chance to study Taylorism, and finally shifts to what did come to pass, the standardization of film's narrative and visual language as evidenced by *Hands*. As a "metaphorology" of close-up shots of hands, *The Expression of Hands* traces the meaning of this shot within film's visual language over time. Although it seems as if Farocki is interested in exploring further what could have been—the universal language of silent cinema—it is an idea that is only introduced in *The Expression of Hands*. He returned to this idea, however, in later installations as I discuss below.

The spectator, who sees Farocki's hands in *The Expression of Hands* as he navigates between film citations playing on two parallel video monitors, may recognize that Farocki is engaging with these films using new technology.[247] This new technology changes how he physically engages with the materials using his hands and enables him to examine the footage repeatedly and more closely. When he plays the first film citation, Farocki pushes a button to pause the film, then another to rewind it to analyze the sequence again, saying "It's not easy to grasp this sequence of images." Using the verb to grasp ("auffassen") references both the physical act of grasping or touching something with one's hands as well as having the mental capacity to understand something. Although video technology has changed the way he physically engages with these images—if he were analyzing these films in their original

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[245] See Jennifer Wild, "An Artist's Hands: Stella Simon, Modernist Synthesis, and Narrative Resistance," *Framework* 46, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 93-105. Wild argues that while the film uses established narrative modes, despite the fact that it also defamiliarizes them—and might be read as a feminist avant-garde film—because the hands are all easily confused for one another.

[246] Rudenski, *Gestologie*, 50. The course topic is given as "Taylorism and Kinematics (*Bewegungslehre*)."

[247] The fact that Farocki is working between two different video screens also foreshadows his later multi-channel video installations.

analogue material he would have had to use his hands to edit the films and create montages in a different way—it has also enabled him to conduct film-historical investigations and to watch, rewind and re-watch these citations in front of the camera. Despite the fact that we only see Farocki's hands in the video essay, they do not seem to be alienated from his body. It is through his hands that he is able to construct his "metaphorology" of this motif. Although Farocki does not indicate how he gained access to the films he cited in his video essay, when past films were transferred to video technology they became cheaper and easier to access. Whereas the re-watching of past films on film damages the quality of the original material—not to mention the loss in quality that would have occurred if Farocki were to have made film copies of these originals—watching a video repeatedly does not damage the material. Video technology also enables certain functions not available when projecting a film, including the rewind function that Farocki employed to consider certain film citations in reverse.

The Expression of Hands was not Farocki's first work that reflected on how video technology had changed his engagement with film. During the same year that Farocki completed his film *Workers Leaving the Factory*, he produced his first piece that was intended from its inception to be viewed as an installation in a museum. The Museum of Modern Art in Lille invited Farocki to create a piece that reflected generally on his body of work and his artistic practices. This commission resulted in the video installation *Interface*, in which Farocki examined his work space and his methodology of working with pre-existing images in lieu of creating new and original footage. The cutting room is *Interface*'s main site of investigation. The installation examines how films are formally composed and organized through montage and editing using video technology. By setting up a simulation of his work place and creating a dual-channel installation that mirrors the two screens at his work station, Farocki allowed the spectator to watch as watched footage on a screen, pushing buttons to start, stop, rewind and cut sequences. The cutting room, as Farocki would later argue, functions as a laboratory space in which the filmmaker experiments with and critically assesses images.[248] In *Interface*, as later in *The Expression of Hands*, we see Farocki at work in his new video cutting room, working with two monitors at once.

In *Interface*, Farocki incorporates the viewer into his processes of editing and montage in a way that would not have been possible in a single projection film shown in a dark theater. At the beginning of the installation, we see two images of Farocki at work from two slightly different perspectives. The voiceover announces: "The thing is that there are two images seen at the same time, one image in relation to the other." Later in the installation, he describes this as a process of considering whether two images "fit well together which are to appear in sequence in a film." He has to examine these images side by side in order to see what knowledge is revealed through their constellation. When the final product is a single-channel film, these images cannot be simultaneously presented. In the gallery, and in *Interface*, multiple images can comment on one another contemporaneously. In the installation, Farocki goes on to talk about working with film in contrast to video: to edit film you have to make a physical cut into the film strip or sound strip. With video, "you simply copy from one tape to the next, making an imaginary cut and not a real one." On the left screen we see Farocki's hand on top of a computer mouse; on

the right we see both hands engaged in cutting filmstrip. These images switch monitors as Farocki continues to discuss how his hands, which used to be crucial to film editing, are no longer necessary to digital editing. The use of dual monitors allows Farocki to revisit and reread some of his past films and sequences and to reproduce the kind of editing work that must have been undertaken at his desk. On dual screens we see two different sequences from *Workers Leaving the Factory*. Rather than sequentially, we are able to watch them at the same time on two monitors. Although his installation, *Workers Leaving the Factory in Eleven Decades*, would come later, its origins can be traced back to *Interface*, Farocki's first installation.

Despite the fact that Farocki had experimented with the format of video installations prior to creating *The Expression of Hands*, he did not believe that the video essay should have been constructed as a multi-channel installation. Instead, when discussing his "Archive of Filmic Expressions" Farocki made a remarkable comment regarding what he saw as the ideal form of *The Expression of Hands*:

> Since there is no primal scene for hands, like the Lumières' film, I am less able to offer proof and am more obliged to simply make claims. Thus the film seems to have more of a workshop-like quality, offering itself up for view like a run-through on the editing table with running commentary. It would therefore be particularly well suited to presentation on a DVD, where it would be possible to switch from the compilation film with verbal commentary to the filmic examples themselves, as one might do with footnotes in books.[249]

Farocki imagines that the DVD platform would offer the viewer of *The Expression of Hands* the opportunity to conduct their own film-historical investigation by providing them with an appendix that would contain the complete films from which the citations are drawn. While video technology allowed for more stable and accessible storage of past films, DVDs held the possibility for a large increase in storage so that a work like *Expression of Hands* would no longer be limited to shorter citations but could include whole films from film history. The Internet expands this possibility further. DVDs and the Internet might function like databases or smaller versions of the kind of archive that Farocki envisions for his "Archive of Filmic Expressions."

Instead of turning to DVDs, Farocki's next contribution to his archive would take the shape of both a video essay and an installation. Farocki had been accumulating material for the past two years on surveillance images in U.S. malls and prisons for a work for television—what would become *Prison Images*—when he was approached to create a video installation for an exhibition at the Generali Foundation in Vienna. Farocki agreed to produce something using the material he had already collected, resulting in the twenty-five-minute-long two-screen video projection, *I Thought I Was Seeing Convicts*.[250] This was only Farocki's second installation piece, the first of which, *Interface* (*Schnittstelle*, 1995), I discuss below. *I Thought I Was Seeing Convicts* premiered in August of 2000 while *Prison Images*, which was commissioned by German public

[249] Ernst and Farocki, "Towards an Archive for Visual Concepts," 280-281.

[250] In his work journal, Farocki recounted how television work was disappearing at the time and this influenced his decision to agree to create an installation. Farocki, *Weiche Montagen*, 135.

television (ZDF/3sat), was shown later that year.[251] The project elaborated on a statement Farocki made in *Workers Leaving the Factory*, that the cinema was more drawn to prisons and other correctional institutions than it was to the factory. Farocki's evidence for this claim is presented here in both the film and the material featured in the installation: Farocki draws his citations from a number of documentary and feature films, including Robert Bresson's *Pickpocket* (1959) and *A Man Escaped* (1956), and Slatan Dudow's *Destinies of Women* (*Frauenschicksale*, 1952)[252]. In contrast to his earlier contributions to the "Archive of Filmic Expressions," *Prison Images* contains noticeably fewer feature films. Documentary footage, as well as surveillance footage from contemporary U.S. prisons and computerized renditions of prisons and shopping malls, is examined more than past feature films. Farocki's examination of prisons and how these institutions have been featured in film is implicitly Foucauldian, not just in its subject matter but in the ways in which Farocki connects footage of prisons to the surveillance technologies used for monitoring and disciplining people in this institution and in other public spaces.[253] By examining these technologies of vision, Farocki reveals the structures of power and control that use them.

In *Prison Images* and in *I Thought I was Seeing Convicts*, Farocki makes a comparison between shopping malls and prisons, between commercialism, capitalism, and processes of surveillance and control. It is in these works that he begins explicitly to examine the power that is in technologies of image production and the "operational images" that they produce.[254] As defined by Farocki, operational images are images that are automatically captured by machines. These machines seek to capture and examine movement in a different way than early filmmakers who sought to use human vision to record movement on film. *Prison Images* begins with two examples of early documentary footage that depicts adults and children in various correctional institutions. In one film there are prisoners marching around in pairs military-style and, in another, disabled children being led throughout a room by caretakers. Farocki reads these films in a way that is similar to how he understands *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory in Lyon*, as a film with a simple urge to document movement. Through this montage of citations from early documentaries in *Prison Images*, Farocki identifies two kinds of common shots or motifs. The first is the shots that seek to document movement. By filming prisoners marching in a line these films attempted to demonstrate orderliness. The asylums and prisons were meant to resemble the well-ordered military. The other shot that Farocki identifies in these films is the portrait. He creates side-by-side comparisons of prior films that featured close-ups of prisoners'

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[251] Farocki explains that he used the archives in Washington D.C., taking citations of silent films and documentaries that were in the public domain. "Towards an Archive for Visual Concepts," 274.

[252] *Destinies of Women* was also cited in *Workers Leaving the Factory*.

[253] Christa Blümlinger, *Kino aus zweiter Hand: zur Ästhetik materieller Aneignung im Film und in der Medienkunst* (Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 2009), 252. She argues that "als er seine Lektüren von Überwachungsdispositiven keineswegs bloß auf das Gefängnis bezieht, sondern die Analyse von Disziplinarfunktionen auf andere öffentliche Räume erweitert, um etwa auch an der Strukturierung von Sichtbarkeit in Supermärkten ein Dispositiv der Macht abzulesen."

[254] Farocki began to examine post-industrial technologies of vision in a number of films, including *Between Two Wars* (*Zwischen zwei Kriegen*, 1978), *As You See* (*Wie man sieht*, 1986), and *Images of the World and the Inscription of War*. He explores "operational images" in further installations, including *Eye/Machine I-III* (*Auge/Maschine 1-3*, 2000-2003), *Counter Music* (*Gegen-Musik*, 2004), *A Way* (*Ausweg*, 2005), and *Serious Games I-IV* (*Ernste Spiele I-IV*, 2009-2010), among others.

faces that were meant to help the viewer try to understand the people in these institutions. Then Farocki compares this documentary and newsreel footage with surveillance images from US prisons, including surveillance footage from Corcoran Prison, which Farocki examines more than once in *Prison Images*. He explains why these surveillance images are halting and of such low quality: "The surveillance cameras run at reduced speed in order to save on material. In the footage available to us, the intervals were extended so that the movements are jerky and not flowing. The fights in the yard look like something from a cheap computer game."[255] By putting these various images into a montage Farocki suggests that these contemporary surveillance images, even though they were shot by machines, belong in the same genealogy as the documentary films which sought to observe and understand institutionalized people.

There is evidence in *Prison Images* that Farocki has become accustomed to comparing two images simultaneously, as he did in his dual-screen installation *I Thought I was Seeing Convicts*. Very early on in the video essay, when Farocki discusses examples of early documentary footage of prisons, he attempts simultaneously to examine two examples. In order to allow the viewer to compare both of these films directly, to see the similarities that Farocki identifies, he shows both films on the screen at the same time. The citations are inset and at a diagonal from one another; one is in the upper left-hand corner and one is in the bottom right-hand corner. *Prison Images* shifts fluidly between this mode of comparing two citations at once and showing citations in full-screen. Although it is possible to compare multiple images in a single-channel video essay, these citations have to be reduced in size and Farocki seems unable to place them directly side-by-side. In his installation *I Thought I was Seeing Convicts*, Farocki is able to directly juxtapose the analogue images drawn from early documentary and feature films on one screen, with digital images on another screen. These digital images are often operational images, either shot with surveillance footage or images generated by a computer. By juxtaposing analogue images with digital images throughout the entire installation, Farocki is able more thoroughly to build his argument that film is implicated in the processes of surveillance and control to which his operational images gesture.

The montages that Farocki creates suggest that film has played a role in the abstraction of human life that often occurs in operational images. In the installation, images that are taken from computer simulations or models are confronted with "real" images, images taken from surveillance cameras or the documentary and feature films shot by humans. *I Thought I was Seeing Convicts*' montages compare the results of these automatic and manual cameras—machinic vision is compared with the filmic gaze—and the images they capture are revealed to be similar. We are simultaneously shown evidence of prison surveillance on one screen and a data visualization of shoppers' paths through a supermarket on the second screen. There is a similarity drawn between the surveillance images of prison and the computer-generated images of supermarket customers moving through the aisles. We also see that the abstracted renditions of supermarket customers has led to computer-generated images of prisons and prisoners moving throughout the prison. There are also direct comparisons in the installation between how prisoners are searched by guards in prisons, and how airplane passengers' bodies are

[255] Harun Farocki, *Imprint: Writings/Nachdruck: Texte*, ed. Susanne Gaensheimer and Nicolaus Schafhausen (New York: Lukas & Sternberg/Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 2001), 308.

scanned by machines at airports. This direct comparison suggests that there is a similarity between these two searches despite the fact that in the "body search by technical means" the people consent to being searched, and in the searches conducted by prison guards' hands the prisoners' rights are not considered. There is also a montage that directly compares surveillance footage of prison visiting rooms and how these interactions between prisoners and free people were depicted in feature films. At times the two screens in the installations have mirror images, as in surveillance of a murder in a prison courtyard, captured from afar by surveillance cameras at Corcoran prison. Farocki points out that in the prison yard the field of vision of the surveillance cameras coincides with the range the prison guards' guns have to fire into the yard. This mirroring of the same footage on two screens seems to suggest that, in prisons, human life has been reduced to halting movements captured by a surveillance camera. These operational images are not so different from the humans who were reduced to moving dots on a map of a shopping mall or super market.

Both *Prison Images* and *I Thought I was Seeing Convicts* suggest that the cinema is imbricated in the surveillance technologies used in prisons, schools, airports and other public spaces and institutions and in the computerized images used to digitally represent these spaces and the people that navigate them. Rather than approach the dominance of machinic vision and operational images with despair, Farocki believed that we must examine and understand these images on their own terms in order to challenge this new visual paradigm. He also saw the value in these images in their own right, believing that they too belong in an "Archive for Filmic Expressions." Surveillance footage, like that which he examined in *Prison Images*, contains knowledge that Farocki found valuable. In this unexpected place, in surveillance footage that is often discarded and not source material for filmmakers, Farocki was able to identify motifs that he believed contributed to the knowledge in his archive. In his essay, "Towards a Visual Archive for Visual Concepts," he ends with a promise to diversify the canon of filmic images so that they include operational images as well:

> In the brothers Grimm's dictionary of the German language, the majority of quotations are taken from Goethe or Schiller; in the Oxford English Dictionary there are also at least quotations from newspapers. I have already mentioned that textbooks on films usually draw their examples from canonised or sub-canonical sources. I myself have enjoyed a good film education in *cinémathèques*. For this project, however, knowledge will also have to come from the obscure and the nameless in cinema history. I intend to develop definitions like the ones mentioned here, gleaned from sources such as these.[256]

These images captured by machines belong in the "Archive for Filmic Expressions," and Farocki believed that computers and other digital tools could be used to analyze and sort these images as the digital archive's library of images continues to expand.

In "Towards an Archive of Visual Concepts," Farocki discussed the difficulties of navigating the traditional film archive. He recounted his troubles finding intact, undamaged prints, as well as finding films in their original language instead of films dubbed into German. At times these difficulties forced him to chose films to cite based on convenience or chance:

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[256] Ernst and Farocki, "Towards an Archive for Visual Concepts," 283.

> Financial and logistical problems were often decisive factors in the selection of my filmic examples and I ended up using both a great deal of examples from East German films since they were so inexpensive, and many silent films since they are in the public domain in the US.[257]

A digital film archive would make it easier to access and copy past films and Farocki was excited about the possibility that machinic vision might be used to analyze and sort film clips in a new way: "With the new digital techniques of simulation one can now imagine the possibility of reproducing the dynamic element of a given sequence, here the contours of the space in which the scene takes place, there the movements of the camera."[258] Although Farocki doesn't give a ton of practical information about what his archive would look like, media theorist Wolfgang Ernst, with whom Farocki wrote his essay "Towards an Archive for Visual Concepts," gives more of the technical analysis of the possibilities of Farocki's conception of a digital archive. The main advantage for retrieving materials from the archive Ernst sees is that one would not have to categorize the contents of the archive according to its traditional identifying features. This digital image bank or archive

> would not only classify its images according to directors, place and time of shooting, but beyond that: it would systematize sequences of images according to motifs, *topoi* and narrative statements, thus helping to create a culture of visual thinking with a visual grammar, analogous to our linguistic capacities.[259]

This characterization suggests that Farocki's "Archive for Filmic Expressions" would have had much in common with Aby Warburg's visual archive of gestural expressions that could be continually re-arranged and re-configured, his *Mnemosyne Atlas*.[260]

Farocki envisioned that this new form of classification would result in a new method for quoting films: "when in the future one speaks about a film, one does not have to limit oneself to showing merely a short clip as a quotation from this film. What is quoted can be transformed, put in indirect speech, so to speak, as one does when one offers a review or an analysis of a film."[261] Algorithms would analyze individual shots to create indexes for movement within a particular image as well. Ernst contends that Farocki's "Archive for Filmic Expressions" might have taken the form of a CD-ROM. Farocki's untimely death has meant that this project was never realized, whether as a CD-ROM, DVD or Website. However, the video essays and installations that he did produce provide us with examples for the sorts of film historical investigations and the "metaphorology" of filmic motifs that would have filled his "Archive for Filmic Expressions."

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[257] Ibid, 278.

[258] Ibid, 276.

[259] Ibid, 265.

[260] Ernst discusses the similarities with Warburg's archive as well. Ibid, 266-271. There may also be resonances between Farocki's modes of classifying and searching this digital archive and Franco Moretti's conception of "distant reading." See Moretti's collection of essays, *Distant Reading* (London: Verso, 2013).

[261] Ernst and Farocki, "Towards an Archive for Visual Concepts," 265.

Staging (Silent) Film as Installation

As demonstrated by Farocki's earlier installations, including *Interface* and *Workers Leaving the Factory in Eleven Decades*, the format of multi-channel installations allowed Farocki to expand on his practices of montage by enabling multiple images to stand in constellation with one another. The art gallery and museum afforded Farocki new modes with which to represent time and space in the experiments he created in his laboratory-like cutting room. These spaces also changed how spectator's engage with Farocki's work. When an installation is shown in a loop, the spectator can determine when to begin and stop watching and they may create their own "cuts" by suddenly entering and exiting the installation space.[262] When spectators are confronted with two opposing images, as in *Interface*, they must formulate their own montage by choosing which of the images to watch at a time.[263]

Two later installations—*In-formation* and *On Construction of Griffith's Films*—mark a departure from his earlier video essays and installation in that they are silent. Both of these two channel video installations examine pre-existing images: *On Construction of Griffith's Films* uses D. W. Griffith' films to think through contemporary film's moment of media-historical change, while *In-formation* examines the images that circulate within official networks and institutions to facilitate understanding about issues of migration and displacement. *In-formation* places still shots of these materials, which appear to capture infographics featured in newspapers, textbooks, and other official publications about a variety of periods in German history, into a montage presentation that is reminiscent of a slide show. Certain images look like they could be used in a German as a Foreign language class as ideograms meant to be 'universally' understandable. Other infographics resemble those used in newspapers to convey information simply and unambiguously. In *In-formation* these heterogeneous materials appear to tell a visual narrative of the history of migration in Germany. As the slideshow cuts from different time periods and narratives, the installation's montage reveals that many of depictions of people in these infographics are surprisingly similar. Rather than suggest instances of similarity and coherence across historical periods, Farocki's installation calls into question the universal symbols and images often used to depict history and its actors. By consciously playing with the genre of silent cinema, Farocki makes reference to discourses on the universal language of silent cinema and this metaphor's shortcomings.[264]

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[262] As Christa Blümlinger argues in "Incisive Divides and Revolving Images: On the Installation *Schnittstelle*," the fact that the installation is shown in a loop allows, or I would argue even requires, the viewer to 'edit' and 'cut' the film themselves by deciding when to start and stop watching the installation. In *Harun Farocki: Working on the Sightlines*, 66.

[263] Christa Blümlinger, *Kino aus zweiter Hand*, 250. "Indem Farocki den Betrachter mit zwei Videobildern konfrontiert, die entweder parallel oder im rechten Winkel zueinander projiziert werden, setzt er ihn virtuell an die *Schnittstelle* der Bilder, dorthin also, wo eine syntagmatische oder auch paradigmatische Wahl zwischen zwei Möglichkeiten getroffen werden muß."

[264] Farocki's essay film *Respite* (*Aufschub*, 2007) also plays around with the genre of silent cinema and uses archival footage. This film re-edits footage originally shot by Jewish cameraman and concentration camp prisoner Rudolf Breslauer of the Westerbork transit camp in the Netherlands. The unedited footage was shot by order of the SS although it was never edited and only found later. Farocki's film is silent and begins with a black screen and the intertitle "Stummfilm" ("Silent film").

In public discourse on early silent cinema, the metaphor of gesture and facial expressions as a universal language was used by early proponents of film and film theorists to bolster film's legitimacy and to outshine its origin as a form of lower-class mass entertainment.[265] Attempts to legitimize film using the metaphor of universal language went so far as to argue that silent cinema might hold an emancipatory potential for uneducated and working-class immigrants and that it might even be a useful tool for facilitating international reconciliation and understanding between various nations.[266] The metaphor of universal language would be abandoned following the advent of sound film as the actors' movements and physical expression lost importance, something that Farocki explored earlier in *The Expression of Hands*. Despite the metaphor's democratic implications, film scholars today recognize that this metaphor contained within it many of the biases of the ideologies that informed it.[267] *In-formation* challenges us to recognize that the notion of universal imagery within the materials he examines is similarly more complicated than it might initially appear.

In-formation stages the difficulties of engaging with the German archive by conveying in multiple ways the sense that it contains a mass of materials. The almost seventeen-minute-long work contains a steady stream of materials, pausing to allow the viewer to examine each one for approximately five seconds. The quick pace of the film forces the viewer quickly to scan each image before it disappears. It becomes clear as the flow of images progresses that the images themselves are often cropped. Even if viewers are able to take in the whole image in front of them, the installation does not reproduce the entire image or context from which these infographics hail. The camera instead zooms in on parts of maps or on portions of a graph depicting the average incomes of German versus foreign-born workers. The fast pace of the montage and its cropped images illustrate the difficulty of engaging with the archive and gaining any sort of sense of mastery over or overview of its contents. These partial images taken from various narratives in the archive can be framed and re-framed in different ways serving various narratives. In his own words, Farocki called the diagrams featured in the installation

> anachronistic, they hark back to nineteenth century political allegories. Whether pictographs or simple bar or pie charts, their abstractions all display an impotence that is touching. We took examples of diagrams gleaned from newspapers, school text books and official publications and used them to reconstruct the history of migration in the Federal Republic of Germany.[268]

Beyond pointing out the fact that these symbols remain unchanged since the nineteenth century, *In-formation* nuances discourses on the possibility of universal symbols. It examines the

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[265] For more on the metaphor of universal language in silent film discourse, see Miriam Hansen's work, including "Early Silent Cinema: Whose Public Sphere?", *New German Critique* 29 (Spring-Summer 1983): 147-84.

[266] D.W. Griffith, whose films are the subject of Farocki's later installation, was himself a noted proponent of silent cinema's ability to function as a universal language that might foster understanding among all men. See Hansen, "Early Silent Cinema," 149.

[267] In addition to "Early Silent Cinema," see also Miriam Hansen's "Universal Language and Democratic Culture: Myths of Origin in Early American Cinema," in *Myth and Enlightenment in American Literature*, ed. Dieter Miendl and Friedrich W. Horlacher (Erlangen: Erlanger Forschungen, 1985), 321-35; and Tessa Dwyer, "Universally Speaking: *Lost in Translation* & Polyglot Cinema," *Linguistica Antwerpiensia New Series* 4 (2005): 295-310.

[268] Harun Farocki, "In-formation," http://www.harunfarocki.de/installations/2000s/2005/in-formation.html.

idealism behind the hope that certain symbols might be universally intelligible, while also pointing to its impossibility. *In-formation* also suggests that any simple narrative about migration in Germany is impossible.

While *In-formation* predominately features documents that are related to postwar German migration, in particular to the influx of so-called "guest workers" from Turkey and Italy that began in the sixties and seventies, a smaller portion of the material is related to the Third Reich. The installation moves seemingly randomly through these various documents. We see maps that illustrate the Nazi's seizure of various lands, others that depict the location of concentration camps and allude to the Holocaust, and, more frequently, maps and infographics regarding the postwar displacement of ethnic Germans out of the Sudetenland and other former German territories in between information about foreigners' migration to Germany. The ways in which displaced people are depicted in these infographics is perplexingly similar: they are rarely more detailed than stick figures. On the one hand, the fact that these infographics look remarkably similar might be alarming for all those who recognize that these moments in history are vastly different. Farocki seems to use these similarities between images to illustrate the collapsing of difference and historical specificity that occurs when the same tropes are used to graphically depict dissimilar historical occurrences. On the other hand, these similarities could be used for an alternative proposition that at least some portion of contemporary displacement might be tied back to Nazi Germany's military actions and genocide decades earlier. In that light, the installation suggests that Germany has a certain responsibility to take in the populations migrating to their country today. By showing that those who were displaced after the war were represented in a manner similar to the way non-German migrants are now represented, Farocki suggests that Germans must recognize—or might even subconsciously already recognize—the similarities between their own citizens who were displaced in the past and those people currently forced to migrate to Germany for various reasons. These multiple interpretations of the installation and the material it cites underscore the difficulties in trying to create simple narratives about migration in Germany.

In-formation implies that there are neither simple narratives nor simple modes of illustrating historical experience. The opening and closing images of the film, which appear to be drawn from a German language textbook, feature simple sentences about entering and exiting rooms underneath images of a stick figure walking into and out of a box. Along with information about a language, foreign language materials contain information about the culture where the language is spoken, whether intentionally or not. These materials are meant to help foreigners learn German and understand German culture. Conversely, infographics in German newspapers regarding Guest workers were, at least to a degree, intended to enable Germans to understand who these "guest workers" were. Thus, these materials are supposed to be used for fostering cultural understanding even if, as the installation suggests, the oversimplification of these images might undermine this purpose. There is a lot of focus in the installation on how people are represented in these infographics; they are almost always depicted without faces or identifying characteristics which erases the real life and the complexities of these people. An infographic on how many prostitutes were under age depicts the prostitutes by using naked mannequins as stand-ins. As the materials increasingly feature materials from and about the Third Reich, it becomes clearer that these simple infographics do not capture the realities of the

Holocaust, the complexity of asylum seekers and guest workers in Germany, or displaced Germans after the war.

In-formation must also be read as a media-historical reflection. By looking back in film history to silent cinema, Farocki reflected upon what this moment in time might illuminate for the present status of the cinema. As Farocki explored in *The Expression of Hands*, certain discourses on early cinema believe silent film could be understood as a universal language. In *In-formation*, he revisited this myth at a time in which the world was becoming increasingly globalized and in need of a means of mutually understandable forms of communication. Furthermore, he turned to silent cinema at a time in which the ways in which viewers engage with film was rapidly changing. *In-formation* and *On Construction of Griffith's Films* were expressly created as installations and they reflect how film and silent cinema were increasingly exhibited in the space of the art gallery and museum.

Farocki continues his reflection on the import of silent cinema for films' current pivotal moment in his installation *On Construction of Griffith's Films*. In the installation, Farocki examines the evolution of Griffith's filmmaking techniques as a proxy for an investigation into the transitional moment that film had been experiencing since the mid-1990s. In contrast to *In-formation*, which engages with silent cinema in more abstract ways, *On Construction of Griffith's Films* takes silent cinema as its primary material and topic of investigation. This silent, nine-minute-long, two-screen installation examines the narrative grammar of two of Griffith' films: *The Lonedale Operator* (1911) and *Intolerance* (1916). It traces the evolution of how Griffith depicted space in film and of the editing techniques he used to convey temporality. These two films straddle different sides of a transitional period in film history. *The Lonedale Operator* is an early silent narrative film in which Griffith did not experiment with the cutting or editing techniques he would later use when editing *Intolerance*. *Intolerance* was made during a period in which more experimentation with editing techniques was occurring despite the fact that classical Hollywood cinema's modes of depicting spatial continuity and temporal linearity were slowly solidifying. Griffith' films, including *Intolerance* and *Birth of a Nation* (1915), were influential to the development of classical Hollywood cinema's narrative and visual style, which was fully formed by 1917.[269] In his installation, Farocki puts this period of change in early film history into dialogue with his current moment, in which digital media and a diversification of platforms on which to engage with the cinema resulted in a movement of film into the gallery space and of filmmakers into the museum.[270]

On Construction of Griffith's Films examines film's transition into classical Hollywood cinema in order to think through how cinema's exhibition in contemporary art spaces influences film's spatial and temporal narrative strategies. Farocki's installation moves chronologically through film history in order to construct its thesis, examining *The Lonedale Operator* first. The opening minutes of the installation feature citations from Griffith' earlier film on the left of two monitors, with explanatory text and the film's original intertitles displayed on

[269] For a film-historical account of the development of the classical style of Hollywood filmmaking see Part Three of *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, 155-240.

[270] The movement of film into the gallery space will be the focus of the epilogue of this dissertation. For an overview of film installations in contemporary art, see for example, Erika Balsom, *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013).

the right screen. The examples from the film function as pieces of evidence to support the claims of the installation's explanatory text. The viewer watches and reads about how *The Lonedale Operator* employed mostly single-shot sequences. The intertitle explain that the film only used cuts between shots in order to show an entirely new space. As long as the film was depicting action within one space, Griffith used a still camera and one long shot to record the sequence. While he examines *The Lonedale Operator* the structure of Farocki's installation mirrors the film's simplicity; film quotes remain on one monitor and text on the other monitor. This structure is akin to a sort of sequential montage on a single screen in which an image is shown, followed by the text of the intertitle. Despite the fact that the installation is comprised of two screens, they are not utilized concurrently but only sequentially during this examination of *The Lonedale Operator*.

As it transfers its focus to *Intolerance*'s use of shot reverse shot techniques, the installation's mode of investigation becomes more complex. Just as Griffith began to experiment with new modes of representing temporality in his later film, Farocki changes the way in which he provides the viewer with film historical evidence. Whereas film quotes were previously only displayed on one monitor, Farocki now uses both monitors to illustrate the technique of shot and counter-shot employed by Griffith to depict dialogue between two characters. A shot from *Intolerance* is shown on the left screen and then the counter-shot is shown immediately afterwards on the right monitor. This process is repeated for other sequences from *Intolerance*. The installation's intertitles discuss the varying camera angles and close-ups that Griffith began to use in *Intolerance* within these shot/counter-shot examples. Farocki argues that Griffith began using these techniques to depict emotional relationships on screen. The shot/counter-shot technique, at times used to depict a conversation that occurred from either side of a door, illustrates both concrete and abstract notions of separation. This separation is both spatial and also temporal as the shot/counter-shot technique stages a dialogue across two spaces over time.

As the installation progresses, Farocki increasingly experiments with the construction of cinematic space in the gallery. This experimentation is possible because a multi-channel film installation allows him to utilize more than one screen at the same time. At the beginning of the installation Farocki uses the two monitors, but one of the screens remains black whenever the other one displays a film quote or intertitle. In the part of the installation that examines *Intolerance*, *On Construction of Griffith's Films* increasingly features film quotes on both screens simultaneously. At times the film quote taken from *Intolerance* is doubled and identical shots are shown side by side on both monitors. This doubling of one shot is followed by two of the corresponding counter-shots, shown on both monitors. While discussing how Griffith' film creates new borders and instances of physical separation through cuts and the depiction of doors that interrupt a conversation, Farocki echoes the parallel worlds created in Griffith's use of shot/counter-shot while moving these parallel worlds onto two side-by-side screens. *Intolerance* constructs space using a mode that is limited to a single-screen film. By translating the film sequence into a multi-channel installation, Farocki spreads cinematic space across multiple screens and expands film's ability to create spaces beyond what was possible in *Intolerance* and in the traditional exhibition of film in the cinema. Farocki's montage is at times contrapuntal, with two competing images.

The spectator of an installation like Farocki's experiences this form of montage differently than does the traditional cinematic spectator. Dual screen installations require the viewer to move between two screens and even to attempt to take in both images at once. They expand the ways in which the two images can stand in relation to one another. This viewing mode encourages the spectator to confront their own viewing position relative to the screens. The spectator is able to freely move around the installation. As a result, there is the potential to undermine the normally passive attitude the spectator has towards film in the cinema. Furthermore, the viewer must connect the two images themselves, to decide when to move from one to the other, giving them the opportunity to engage more critically with the images than in traditional montage. By presenting the viewer with multiple images at the same time, images that are not prioritized over each other but instead co-exist with one another, the installation requires the viewer to consider and make sense of multiple images at once. The greatest potential of such a form of presentation is that it not only defamiliarizes the cinematic means of exhibition, but that "potentially prompts the viewer to engage in a self-reflective, performative, that is, aesthetic relation to the (objects of the) installation as well."[271] Because the moving image in the gallery space isn't tied to any one form of presentation—it could be large or small, one or many screens—it can create new kinds of space that differ from cinematic space. As a result, the cinematographic organization of space becomes one possibility among many ways of representing space.

In *On Construction of Griffith's Films* the focus is solely on early cinema but it illuminates how Farocki used it to navigate another moment of visual upheaval and a moment of change for the medium of film. Farocki looked to the past in order to understand his current moment. His examination of two silent films by Griffith can be read as an investigation into the transition from early cinema to the more classical codes of spectatorship and the narratives that we know from Hollywood cinema. The Griffith films are an example of a period of time in which spectatorship was changing and being codified in a particular way. As film moved into the gallery space, Farocki reflected upon how spectatorship was also changing and shifting from the anonymous but unified mass of the black cube to the more abstracted, disunified spectatorship in the white cube and on digital platforms.[272] His "return to this earlier artistic era illuminates another moment of tremendous visual-historical transformation, apprehending a twenty-first-century world scaffolded by exponentially proliferating global communication and information technologies."[273] In one respect, the multi-channel installation reflects Farocki's editing process and the multimedial nature of modern life in which people are bombarded with multiple images, which they must parse themselves. In another, by moving film into the gallery space, the cinematic installation acts as a "counteragent" to the "mass dissemination and universal availability of film (and, even more so, of video)" by "posit[ing] its singular presentation in the exhibition space."[274] His later installations continued to ponder the question

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[271] Juliane Rebentisch, *Aesthetics of Installation Art*, trans. Daniel Hendrickson with Gerrit Jackson (Berlin: Sternberg, 2012), 180.

[272] See Brianne Cohen's article, "From Silence to Babel: Farocki's Image Infoscape," in *New Silent Cinema*, ed. Paul Flaig and Katherine Groo (New York: Routledge, 2016), 220-242, in particular 221.

[273] Ibid, 222.

[274] Rebentisch, *Aesthetics of Installation Art*, 175.

of how the visualization of information will continue to evolve on a global scale in the digital age and given the increasing use of technologies of surveillance.

The movement into video and film installations allowed Farocki to expand on the work he was doing in his films, from classifying particular image types and motifs, to analyzing and experimenting with pre-existing materials. Installations allowed him to stage his laboratory—from the cutting table to the electronic workstation—in front of the spectator and to invite viewers of his works to participate in his experiments. Farocki's installations, which were usually shown on loop, allowed the viewer to engage in their own practices of watching and re-watching the montages of pre-existing materials—the same practices of viewing and reviewing that we see Farocki do on screen with in his installations—and offered the spectator the opportunity to begin their own film-historical investigation of these materials. Moving into the art world and the white cube allowed him to dissolve linear montage into spatial montage and to change the ways in which spectators perceive the images they examine. Changing the mode of exhibition of his works also allowed Farocki to forge connections with other disciplines, to continue his essayistic practices within a changing media landscape and to reach audiences who were no longer looking just to the cinema for challenging or thought-provoking works of art. The legacy of the experiments conducted by Farocki in his laboratory of the installation space and the new visual paradigm of machinic vision were taken up and explored in new ways by Hito Steyerl's film installations and media art.

Chapter Four
The Subjective Archive: Hito Steyerl's Video Essays and Media Art

The Essay as Digital Form

In an age of big data and small forms, the essay, whether literary, cinematic, or academic, may seem like it belongs to a disappearing genre. According to filmmaker, visual artist and essayist Hito Steyerl, however, the essay has necessarily become a visual, multimedia production in our age of globalized image production and circulation. In contrast to Theodor Adorno's characterization of the written essay as a form that stood in opposition to traditional modes of philosophical and scientific writing, Steyerl contends that the essay now "runs parallel to the post-Fordist coercion of difference, mobility, extreme flexibilization, and distracted modes of attention, whose ideal subjectivity is hybrid and supple."[275] What previously made the genre of the essay film and video essay unique—its varying levels of address and heterogenous elements—now seem to be reflective of contemporary forms of labor and production that have become even more fragmentary and dispersed. While digital media lowered some of the barriers to entry for filmmakers and video artists by making it easier and cheaper to film and edit—and this did increase the number and diversity of video essayists—image and editing technologies brought some of the aesthetic strategies of the video essay, including its hypertextual and multi-perspectival nature, to mainstream digital video production.[276] For Steyerl, however, this does not mean that the essay in all its forms has lost its ability to function as a form that runs against the grain of capitalist production. Contemporary remix culture and the "copy-paste" reproducibility of digital media can be used in ways that enable the essay to continue to produce "alternative forms of vision, knowledge and grounds for discussion."[277] The critical potential of the audiovisual essay is its ability to create a monad between text and images and to play with the modes in which text and image are combined in other more traditional contexts: "The globe-girdling chains of production which characterize capitalist globalization can be reconstructed (or deconstructed) in order to enable alternative, non-commercial forms of communication."[278] The video essay co-exists with and is often dependent upon commercial productions, but it deconstructs mainstream media and constructs something new out of its components.

This chapter focuses on Steyerl's video essays, including *The Empty Center*, *November* and *Lovely Andrea*, and her media art and video installations, in particular *In Free Fall* and *Adorno's Grey*. Even prior to the digital age, Steyerl's video essays were hybrid forms of text and image, a complex address that viewers must process themselves. In line with the tradition of the essay film, her works seek to dissolve both the traditional opposition between documentary and fiction and the conventional assumption about spectators as passive recipients. Steyerl's

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[275] Hito Steyerl, "The Essay as Conformism? Some Notes on Global Image Economies," in *Der Essay Film: Ästhetik und Aktualität*, ed. Sven Kramer and Thomas Tode (Konstanz: UVK, 2011), 101.

[276] For more on the video essay after the advent of digital media, see Ursula Biemann's edited collection of texts by video artists and media theorists, *Stuff It: The Video Essay in the Digital Age*, ed. Ursula Biemann (Zurich: Institute for Theory of Art and Design Zurich, 2003).

[277] Steyerl, "The Essay as Conformism?", 103.

[278] Ibid.

essayistic works and her direct engagement with new forms of visuality brought on by the computer should be read as continuing a mode of inquiry and media production begun by Harun Farocki. Farocki is an important precursor for Steyerl's interest in machinic vision—attempts by corporations and governments to use computers for surveillance, data mining, and forms of control—and her assertation that we must meet computers and information technology on their terms if we are to counteract their effects or compete with paradigm of contemporary visuality that they encourage.

The reuse of pre-existing materials is an aesthetic strategy that has remained constant throughout Steyerl's career. Her modes of citation perform her interpretation of the archive as a subjective space, whether she is working within the German cinematographic archive or the German historical archive. While Steyerl consciously presents the archive as subjectively informed and constructed, her reuse of previous images from the archive can become a documentary strategy. Using archival images to subvert conventional narratives of history, Steyerl evokes the disruptive force that Walter Benjamin saw in them and described in his essay *On the Concept of History*. Benjamin's conception of the dialectical image is that of an image composed through a particular style of montage, an "interruptive" mode of constellation in which the individual elements of the montage do not dissolve into one another but rather remain unreconciled. Benjamin's dialectical image is at the heart of Steyerl's definition of the essay. In contrast to Alexander Kluge's theory of montage, which emphasizes the intervals or dark gaps between two filmic images where viewers insert their imagination and mode of understanding the separate images, Steyerl's montages utilize editing techniques such as superimposition and slow dissolves, forcing the viewer to confront both images at once. The direct juxtaposition of two images produces new knowledge, be it the sudden recognition of similarity or of difference that might unseat existing narratives of conceptions.

The critical force of montage, for Benjamin, Kluge, and Steyerl, depends on the dialectical image. Uniquely, however, Steyerl claims that the juxtaposition of elements also illuminates a certain continuum of reality. Steyerl contends that Benjamin's dialectical image is a form of documentary image, one that reveals a particular, historical-materialist image of history. According to Steyerl, Benjamin's dialectical image "proposes a materialist concept of truth in representation that conveys the constructedness of every depiction together with the impossibility of relativizing truth that nonetheless persists."[279] Photographic media's ability to record reality further strengthens the multimedia essay's documentary qualities. Furthermore, the fact that the modern form of the essay is so imbricated in capitalist systems of production means that these media are also records of surface-level phenomena, of the kind examined in Siegfried Kracauer's media criticism in the Weimar Republic.[280] Steyerl often evokes Kracauer's early work, particularly in her discussion of the modern multimedia essay: "This mode of production also at times benefits a certain superficiality: as Siegfried Kracauer pointed out, the surface offers least resistance because it is least consolidated. Phenomena of the surface can be coupled and uncoupled easily; they are linked to technologies of mass reproduction."[281]

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[279] Hito Steyerl, "Documentarism as Politics of Truth (2003)," in *Jenseits der Repräsentation / Beyond Representation: Essays 1999-2009*, ed. Marius Babias (Cologne: Buchhandlung Walther König, 2016), 183.

[280] As I will also discuss below, Steyerl makes conscious reference to Kracauer's work in her film and media art.

[281] Steyerl, "The Essay as Conformism?", 103.

Kracauer's examination of the ratio of capitalism led him to a phenomenology of the surface and a study of how the surface expressions of photography and film register the material conditions of history. Steyerl's essay films and media art update Kracauer's work for the Internet age, as she performs her own exploration of contemporary culture by reusing footage from commercial films and commodified culture to unleash what knowledge they contain. Like Kracauer before her, she also argues that the only way to disrupt these forms of commercial media production is to locate and intensify the contradictions contained in commodified culture. Her works create montages from citations of past films to challenge the existing narratives within the archive and to bring to light the subjective nature of these stories. Steyerl's practices of citation in *The Empty Center* (*Die leere Mitte*, 1998) begin an examination of the subjective construction of the archive that will continue in her later video essays and media art.

The Layered Archive

Although the title of Steyerl's essay film about architectural space in Berlin after the German reunification might sound like a direct paraphrase of Kluge's negative dialectics of montage, the film explores the wider significance of centers and margins in urban modernity. In particular, *The Empty Center* explores the space and history of Berlin's Potsdamer Platz by juxtaposing contemporary footage of the square with archival images taken from Weimar feature films and documentary footage of pre- and post-wall Berlin.[282] Steyerl assembles these images into a montage that reveals the visible and invisible political, racial and cultural borders that have and continue to crisscross this center of Berlin. By superimposing moving images from disparate moments in Berlin's history upon one another, the film illustrates moments of similarity and coherence. In contrast to a linear, irreversible or homogenous continuum, *The Empty Center* conveys an understanding of history as a discontinuous space. The philosophy of history articulated by the film consciously references Kracauer's writings on film, mass culture, and history. Taking up Kracauer's premise that cultural phenomena express underlying social tendencies and communicate historical knowledge, Steyerl uses current and archival images of Berlin as pieces of historical evidence. She constructs a history of the metropolis of Berlin and the space of Potsdamer Platz, a history that illustrates the ways in which the past is not always past.[283]

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[282] The title of Steyerl's film references debates in re-unified Germany regarding what to do about the empty center of Berlin that began after the wall fell and continue today. On one hand, the notion that Berlin has an "empty center" is an architectural or city planning problem: the historical center of Berlin was destroyed during the war and the wall divided the city so that there were multiple centers of the two Berlins that persist today. On the other hand, critics who refer to Berlin's empty center are referencing what they believe to be its spiritual or cultural lack of a city center. Berlin's empty center was referenced by proponents of the Humboldt Forum and the reconstruction of the Berlin Palace who believed this project would help to fill the empty historical center and give the city a cultural anchor.

[283] Steyerl's video was included in the exhibition titled "Heimat Kunst" that was held at Berlin's Haus der Kulturen der Welt ("House of the World's Cultures") in 2000. This national center for contemporary art exhibitions is located in the Tiergarten, a short distance from Potsdamer Platz, and could be read as a post-war antidote to Haus Vaterland, discussed below, insofar as the Haus der Kulturen der Welt aims to highlight non-European arts and cultures. Steyerl's film could, on the other hand, be interpreted as a critique of spectacles of multiculturalism, including this particular exhibition, "Heimat Kunst."

The first sequence in *The Empty Center* presents one of the film's main contentions: that traces of the past never fully disappear. It opens with a quote from Kracauer's *History, the Last Things Before the Last* (1969): "…establishing [a] tradition of lost causes, giving names to the hitherto unknown."[284] Documentary footage of people chipping away at the Berlin Wall on Potsdamer Platz in 1990 is shown, slowly fades away, and is replaced by an image of the same location from 1997. Although there are no concrete walls any longer, metal fences have sprung up in the same place where the Wall once stood. The vacant space is disappearing as building development begins on the square. In a voiceover, a woman's voice announces that new borders pop up where the old ones have disappeared, and states: "In this EMPTY CENTRE of Berlin, borders and boundaries shift constantly."[285] On Potsdamer Platz, a number of boundaries overlap; the divide between various historical moments and images of this heart of Berlin slide over one another. The film cuts abruptly back to footage of the Berlin wall, closing in on a hole in the wall, through which we can see to the other side of the square as the voiceover declares: "The new centre of Berlin is built on the ruins of the Third Reich's devastation." As the camera peers through the wall, the lines of buildings and everything that can be seen through the fence becomes increasingly blurry. It is as if we can see multiple layers of history on top of one another: the 'new' Potsdamer Platz only partially obscuring the ruins of the Nazi period. The voiceover announces that "While Germany's history follows its course on the death strip, old borders overlap with new ones." Although the idea that history is a palimpsest is an established trope, Steyerl uses filmic techniques to demonstrate how visual media can render visible the traces of the past that remain in a particular space.

This opening sequence introduces one of the film's main aesthetic strategies: the pairing of non-synchronous images and text. For instance, Kracauer's words from the 1960s are paired with two different, and more recent, sequences of Potsdamer Platz; these images are drawn from archival sources, likely news footage, and are interspersed with footage shot by Steyerl on Potsdamer Platz between 1990 and 1998. This disjunction between word and image, and the film's free movement between different eras, suggests that the archive of images of Potsdamer Platz provides disparate historical moments, out of which Steyerl creates a constellation in order to identify similarities. While the materials hail from a variety of sources, by assembling them together into a montage, Steyerl highlights their unlikely parallels. Even though the opening sequence of *The Empty Center* shows people tearing down the Berlin Wall, this is not a film about the tearing down or disappearance of borders. Instead it is about the invisible borders that have emerged since the Wall fell and those that are still in place. The film seeks to illuminate those borders between people that existed long before the Berlin Wall, traces of which can still be found today. Through the use of archival images and filmic editing techniques, Steyerl renders these invisible borders visible.

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[284] The original German quote from the film: "…eine Tradition verlorener Prozesse begründen, dem bislang Namenlosen Namen geben" The longer quote from which this is drawn is as follows: "das Genuine, das in den Zwischenräumen der dogmatisierten Glaubensrichtungen liegt, in den Brennpunkt stellen muß und so eine Tradition verlorener Prozesse begründen, dem bislang Namenlosen Namen geben." Siegfried Kracauer, *Geschichte—Vor den letzten Dingen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971), 247.

[285] The English translations of the voiceover and taken from the film's subtitles.

At a time when boundaries were purportedly disappearing within Germany and across Europe, Steyerl looks at the ways new invisible internal and external boundaries were emerging to replace the loss of earlier physical boundaries. Where are these borders visible? There are traces within the city but it is film which functions as a kind of archive of past borders. Film emerges as another way in which these borders are registered, documented and preserved. The opening voiceover states: "There are many ways to break through a border." One of these ways is by utilizing found footage to make visible the invisible borders, to give a name to something that was not yet named. Through slow dissolves into and out of images, through non-synchronous images and voiceover and through superimposition with two images on top of each other, Steyerl uses the medium of film to articulate the layers of history that still exist and overlap in Berlin. Even as these layers may have disappeared, her slow dissolves (in the place of traditional jump cuts) create a sense of layers, facilitate a sense of overlapping borders, the traces of which are still present, and show how the historical concerns of various eras stand in constellation with one another.

Official archives and narratives of history often give the impression of continuity, that they are presenting a natural, self-evident and transparent order. Rather than focus on individual stories, the archive often features grand narratives and creates a particular historical context that is meant to be all-encompassing. By contrast, *The Empty Center* juxtaposes the fates of individual people with larger historical developments that occurred simultaneously. As in the Kracauer quote that opens the film, Steyerl attempts to give "names to the hitherto unknown." One individual story that structures the film's investigation is that of Bayume Mohammed Hussein who worked as a waiter in Haus Vaterland. A *Vergnügungspalast*, or pleasure palace, Haus Vaterland was located on Potsdamer Platz and built in 1928. Housing numerous restaurants, tearooms, and cafes, it received its nationalistic name during WWI, at a time in which enraged mobs attacked locales with foreign names. As a pleasure house, it was designed to give the impression of bringing the world to Berlin through the cafes and rooms styled to represent the far corners of the earth. The film's voiceover explains that Hussein fought on the German side as part of its colonial forces during WWI and worked in Germany in the early 1930s. However, he lost his passport in 1937 and was arrested for illegal residence after a colleague, who had complained about having to work with people of color, accused him of theft. Hussein's fate, his deportation to a concentration camp where he later died, is interwoven with the story of current-day xenophobia against foreigners in Germany. *The Empty Center* interweaves archival images of Hussein and of Haus Vaterland with footage of interviews with foreign students about life in Berlin after the fall of the Berlin Wall and of protests by a construction workers' union regarding the use of foreign labor. None of these stories are told chronologically but instead are interwoven with one another. Steyerl's montages highlight the non-synchronicity of the archive in which lost causes and forgotten stories from very different periods in time wait to be discovered behind the grand narratives.

If we examine the particular history of Bayume Mohammed Hussein, it provides us with further testimony that the archive often contains overlapping and even contradictory narratives. While these conflicting stories reveal inaccuracies in Steyerl's and other accounts of Hussein's life, their coexistence emphasizes what Hussein's story reveals about Germany's colonial past. The film *Majub's Journey* (*Majubs Reise*, 2013), directed by Eva Knopf, tells a considerably

different narrative of Hussein's life. According to Knopf, Hussein was born Majub bin Adam Mohamed Hussein in Dar es Salaam, then part of German East Africa. He joined the German colonial militia with his father who was an askari and fought as a child soldier against British forces. Hussein later joined the German colonial shipping line, the Deutsche Ost-Afrika-Linie, as a steward, before making his way to Germany and settling in Berlin. After his attempts to gain financial compensation from the German authorities for his and his father's military service failed, he joined pro-colonial touring exhibitions and variety shows and worked as an extra in the film industry, including in films that advocated a return to German colonial territories. In contrast to Steyerl's account, we learn that Hussein was sent to the concentration camp Sachsenhausen, where he died in 1944, after being accused of violating Nazi race laws for his relationship with a white German woman. Thus, missing from *The Empty Center* is Hussein's complex interactions with the German authorities, the interwar pro-colonial movement, and the German film industry. Though *Majub's Journey* contains its own historical errors and omissions in the telling Hussein's story, the film nevertheless puts forth an argument that is fundamentally consistent with Steyerl's.[286] Both films contend that Germany's colonial past is linked to its Nazi history and to the present. In a text that accompanies *The Empty Center*, Steyerl points to the lack of information in the archive regarding post-colonial labor migration and refugee movements. She argues that the absence of knowledge regarding minorities during this period "derives partially from [this kind of historiography's] formal characteristics in that such historiographies form a grid of knowledge which structurally excludes minorities."[287] The fate of individuals whose lives were affected by German colonialism is not always recorded in official archives. Thus, the work of an essay filmmaker such as Steyerl is not only a matter of uncovering forgotten narratives within official archives, but also of attempting to construct a story out of the archive's fragments and of bridging the archive's gaps in knowledge by bringing to light its imperfect narratives.

The Empty Center argues that, despite the fact that Potsdamer Platz has been the backdrop to major historical events, it is the "empty center" of the capital, an overdetermined site associated with vastly different hopes and power structures. It was the old site of the Customs Wall and Hitler's New Reich Chancellery, only to become part of the no-man's-zone of the Berlin Wall. Inextricably connected to debates surrounding German nationalism, it is a site deeply connected to Germany's colonial ambitions. To form a genealogy of these borders and modes of exclusion, *The Empty Center* uses archival footage and contemporary images that are associated with Potsdamer Platz. The film begins its examination of the site with 1743, when Moses Mendelsohn was refused entry through the city's gate near today's Potsdamer Platz because he was Jewish,[288] and it concludes in 1997, as the square is transformed from a home of squatters to the headquarters of major corporations including Daimler Benz. As part of footage

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[286] See Joachim Warmbold's analysis of Knopf's film and its historical inaccuracies in "'Majubs Reise'—From Colony to Concentration Camp. A New Approach at Narrating Germany's Colonial Past?", *Colloquia Germanica* 48, no. 3 (2015): 159-69. Warmbold contrasts *Majub's Reise* with Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst's biography of Mohammed Hussein in *Treu bis in den Tod. Von Deutsch-Ostafrika nach Sachsenhausen—eine Lebensgeschichte* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2007).
[287] Hito Steyerl, "The Empty Center," in *Stuff It*, 48.
[288] At that time Jews were only allowed to enter Berlin through the Rosenthaler Tor (near today's Rosenthaler Platz). Mendelsohn, who was traveling to Berlin from Dessau, is believed to have tried to enter the city through multiple gates before reaching and gaining access through Rosenthaler Tor.

shot by Steyerl in 1990, she interviews an encampment of people occupying Potsdamer Platz immediately after the fall of the Wall. In the interview, the squatters express their desire for this historically loaded place to remain undeveloped by major companies, and hope that the people will have the power to decide what is built upon this space. However, their desire to found a socialist republic in the death strip and thereby to create a new center of Berlin never came to fruition. In the film, the shot of their encampment slowly fades to reveal that this space has become a parking lot. All the traces of the encampment and its utopian dreams are now gone as large multinational corporations would later move into the area in the late 1990s. Even though the major companies would get the last say in the future of the square, Steyerl's film points to the traces of the past that cannot be erased. By using slow fades between two shots of the same space from different times, Steyerl emphasizes how the filmic archive of Potsdamer Platz contains records of both past and present initiatives. The utopian hopes of the squatters are layered over the legacy of the Third Reich and intertwined with the new capitalist heart of West Germany.

Steyerl's filmic techniques convey the film's thesis that the archive contains overlapping layers, materials and historical moments. In addition to the examples of slow fades discussed above, Steyerl employs superimposition in order to render visible for the viewer the complicated history of Haus Vaterland, the place where the Mohammed Hussein allegedly worked in Weimar Berlin.[289] In the film, the building is introduced in a sequence that shifts back and forth between the past and the present. First, there is footage that seems to be taken from inside a museum. We are shown a model of a building as we hear a teacher telling his students that this is a model of new construction on Potsdamer Platz that is meant to resemble Haus Vaterland.[290] This footage of the building model, from the film's present moment, slowly fades into a scene taken from the 1930 Ufa film directed by Hanns Schwarz, *Einbrecher*, which was shot in Haus Vaterland. The two images, one from the present and one from a feature film of the past, are superimposed over one another as the present slowly fades from vision and we can only see footage from *Einbrecher* of Sidney Bechet and an African American jazz band playing in the dancehall (*Palmengarten*) of Haus Vaterland.[291] As we watch a couple dance to the music during this sequence, the voiceover recites words from Friedrich Hollaender's hit jazz song "Ich lass' mir meinen Körper schwarz bepinseln," about getting one's body painted black before traveling to Fiji. Hollaender composed the music for *Einbrecher*, including the racist song we hear recited in the voiceover. However, the citation from *Einbrecher* in *The Empty Center* does not include audio from "Ich lass' mir meinen Körper schwarz bepinseln." By nevertheless reciting the lyrics in the voiceover so that it accompanies this jazz sequence, the film employs the strategy of non-synchronous sound and image to bring the racist undertones in the original footage to the foreground. Steyerl layers together a variety of footage that illustrates how, even

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[289] Tobias Nagl, *Die unheimliche Maschine: Rasse und Repräsentation im Weimarer Kino* (Munich: edition text + kritik, 2009), 733.

[290] The original building of Haus Vaterland was heavily damaged during the war. Although it temporarily reopened in the 1950s, it was later completely torn down in the 1970s.

[291] This band is thought to be the so-called "Black Band" founded by drummer and bandleader Willy Allen who played in the "Wild-West-Bar" of Haus Vaterland starting at the end of the 1920s. Although Allen is not depicted in the film, he contributed to the film's soundtrack. See Nagl, *Die unheimliche Maschine*, 592 and 731.

though Haus Vaterland no longer exists, these films have archived the place it held in Berlin and the role it played in the creation of borders.

The footage in this sequence captures both invisible and visible borders. By placing them into a montage, Steyerl makes visible the layers of history surrounding Potsdamer Platz that are preserved within the archive. Through the juxtaposition of footage taken from *Einbrecher* with the text of Hollaender's song, this montage sequence analyzes Germany's colonial history through the lens of Haus Vaterland. Although Germany was forced to give up its colonial claims after WWI, the old colonial ambitions re-emerge in Haus Vaterland. These colonial desires "are reconstructed as stage decorations – substitutes for the real thing" that take the form of entertainment. *The Empty Center* features two ways in which colonialist fantasies now took the form of songs such as "Ich lass' mir meinen Körper schwarz bepinseln" and through the consumption of Jazz music and the viewing of performances by African American musicians and dancers. The text of Hollaender's song discusses the fantasy of traveling to the colonies and presents an exoticized and sexualized concept of blackness. This song, films like *Einbrecher*, and entertainment spaces like Haus Vaterland, create the illusion of a lack of borders: the world of the colonies appears to be at the colonialist's fingertips. These forms of mass entertainment transmit the false belief that the entire world might be accessed on Potsdamer Platz. The film argues that it is not a coincidence that this illusion emerged at a time in which Germany was internally becoming more hierarchized, and divided, as evidenced by the fate of Bayume Mohammed Hussein.[292] Although the space that Steyerl explores is concentrated around a particular square within Berlin, the film moves through the history of Potsdamer Platz both diachronically and synchronically to reveal patterns and correspondences between different times. By directly layering these filmic, musical and historical references in this scene, and by moving back and forth between various texts and eras, Steyerl makes clear the borders that existed internally between the conception of Germans and non-Germans over the past century are still present in post-wall Berlin.

In her examination of Haus Vaterland, Steyerl invokes Kracauer's work again in order to make the argument that the phenomena registered on film are indeed pieces of historical knowledge. In *The Empty Center*, Steyerl's voiceover quotes Kracauer's analysis of Haus Vaterland in which he compares it to "a face paralyzed with fear," saying that the exotic music hall "embodies the rigid narrowmindedness of the petty bourgeoisie that will soon join the fascists." This quote is taken from a chapter in Kracauer's book *Die Angestellten* (*The Salaried Masses*, 1930) that examines the metaphysical disorientation and precarious financial position of the middle class during the Weimar republic. In the chapter, titled "Asyl für Obdachlose" (Shelter for the homeless), Kracauer discusses Haus Vaterland's relationship to the phenomenon of middle-class "spiritual homelessness." For Kracauer, mass media, sports, and other forms of distraction take the minds of the middle class off of the monotony of their lives and precarity of their jobs without penetrating their homelessness. The mass media prevents them from recognizing the similarities they share with the proletariat by encouraging them to continue to identify as part of the bourgeoisie:

[292] Hollaender himself would incidentally be othered, forced to flee Germany during the Third Reich due to his Jewish heritage.

> 'The mass of salaried employees differ from the worker proletariat in that they are spiritually homeless.' For the time being, they seek refuge in the 'shelter' provided for them by the cultural industry. A few years later the tension between proletarianized existence and bourgeois self-definition will drive them towards the National Socialists.[293]

Kracauer argued that "almost all the [film] industry's products serve to legitimize the existing order, by concealing both its abuses and its foundations. They, too, drug the populace with the pseudo-glamour of counterfeit social heights, just as hypnotists use glittering objects to put their subjects to sleep."[294] In these examples of mass culture, something becomes visible, a kind of social knowledge, that is not communicated in other aspects of modern life. Though popular films helped to breed apathy among the urban middle class and were used to facilitate the drawing of new borders and hierarchies within Germany, Kracauer argued that films can be interpreted by the socially-engaged film critic to shed light on the conditions of modern life.[295]

In his film criticism, Kracauer looked to the surface-level expressions found in films and mass-culture, which were unintentional and uncensored, for evidence of how modern life in the metropolis functioned. In his final book *Theory of Film*, Kracauer argues that

> Film renders visible what we did not, or perhaps even could not, see before its advent. It effectively assists us in discovering the material world with its psycho-physical correspondences. We literally redeem this world from its dormant state, its state of virtual non-existence, by endeavoring to experience it through the camera. And we are free to experience it because we are fragmentized.[296]

One of the redemptive qualities of film is that it has the potential to convey historical knowledge gained through the experience of fundamental discontinuities of history. It is Kracauer's insistence on the "discontinuous and non-homogenous structure of historical space," and film's ability to facilitate historical intelligibility and to enable us to experience history that Steyerl seek to access in her own film.[297] To experience history, for Kracauer, is to recognize a form of knowledge which, until now, has remained unnamed or unrecognized.

In *The Empty Center*, Steyerl cites Kracauer and his approach to film to see whether the promise of early cinema, to be able to make visible the invisible, might still be realized today. Understanding the present, and the historical changes that occurred in Potsdamer Platz after German reunification, requires looking to the past. It is Steyerl's hope that film might be redeemed and used for the breaking down, rather than the constructing of new borders. Against progressive narratives that cite the Fall of the Berlin Wall as another instance of the disappearing of borders within Germany and across the European Union, Steyerl's provocative and thought-provoking film reveals the ways in which this has not been and is not the case now. If the first step to changing course and to eliminating borders is to recognize their

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[293] *The Salaried Masses: Duty and Distraction in Weimar Germany*, trans. Quintin Hoare (New York: Verso, 1998), 6.
[294] Ibid, 94.
[295] See Kracauer's essay "Uber die Aufgabe des Filmkritikers" (1932), translated as "On the Task of the Film Critic," in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, ed. Anton Kaes, et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 634-35.
[296] *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), 300.
[297] D. N. Rodowick, "The Last Things Before the Last: Kracauer and History," *New German Critique* 41 (Spring-Summer 1987): 110.

existence, then Steyerl's film, by illuminating these borders and how they are constructed, holds open space for the possibility for change. "There are always holes in the wall we can slip through, and the unexpected can sneak in," is the quote that ends the film, drawn again from Kracauer's writings. In similar fashion, Steyerl's film holds open the space for something unexpected to slip in.[298] If historical knowledge is made possible through the experience of the discontinuities of history, then *The Empty Center* produces recognition of this disjunction through montage and thus transmits historical knowledge to the spectator. By experiencing historical space as discontinuous and non-homogenous, we acquire an awareness that might allow us the potential for freedom from our traditional notions of history, for a new kind of historical or archival work that avoids systematic thinking and linear narratives.

Artistic Practice in the Digital Age

Although Steyerl's work belongs in a longer tradition of critical theory, it acknowledges the fact that the nature of film and media has radically changed since Kracauer and Benjamin's Weimar-era media-theoretical investigations. What has traditionally been thought of as the cinema has since undergone a massive transformation; digital technology has enabled film to undergo a hybridization across various screens and platforms, the most prevalent of which is now the Internet. In recent media-theoretical texts, Steyerl examines the emergence of networked culture and the Internet from the changed situation of knowledge production today. For Steyerl, contemporary network culture primarily services neoliberal, globalized forms of production, but it can be re-configured to support the genesis of alternate networked forms:

> Networked space is itself a medium, or whatever one might call a medium's promiscuous, posthumous state today. It is a form of life (and death) that contains, sublates and archives all previous forms of media. […] Computation and connectivity permeate matter and render it as raw material for algorithmic prediction, or potentially also as building blocks for alternative networks.[299]

These alternate networks require new modes of engaging with images. Steyerl advocates for a new Marxist, avant-garde manner of interacting with images she calls *circulationism*: "Circulationism is not about the art of making an image, but of postproducing, launching, and accelerating it." [300] In contrast to the circulation of pre-existing images or the production and distribution of new images, circulationism would include the re-working of images that already exist within networked culture. Circulationism would go beyond remediation, or the simple representation of one image or media in another one. Circulationism "if reinvented could also be about short-circuiting existing networks, circumventing and bypassing corporate friendship and hardware monopolies. It could become the art of recoding or rewiring the system by exposing state scopophilia, capital compliance and wholesale surveillance."[301] Like

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[298] The English translation of the original quote: "There are always holes in the wall for us to evade and the improbable to slip in." Kracauer, *History: The Last Things Before the Last* (Princeton: Mark Wiener, 1995), 8.
[299] Hito Steyerl, "Too Much World: Is the Internet Dead?", in *Too Much World*, ed. Nick Aikens (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014), 33-34.
[300] Ibid, 37.
[301] Ibid.

contemporary practices of "sousveillance," in which technologies of surveillance are turned against the authorities that usually control them, Steyerl's circulationism would challenge existing hierarchies, especially in terms of visual information, though it also interrogates the necessity of producing new images at all. In short, a practice such as circulationism, like the contemporary essay, would use the tools of existing monopolistic networks to undermine these same networks and systems. Steyerl again advocates for a practice that seeks to take the contradictions within corporate protocols and intensify them, with the hope that they might reach a breaking point.[302]

Circulationism has further affinities with Steyerl's understanding of the form of the essay: both prioritize the refunctioning of past images. Though Steyerl does not explicitly define the essay in this manner, it is clear from her characterization that the modern essay is a form of media that integrates pre-existing materials.[303] In Steyerl's work and in her definition of the essay, one key way in which the essay seeks to go against the grain of capitalist modes of production and labor is through the reuse of past audiovisual material. While capitalism also thrives on reuse and recycling—finding value in discarded objects or used products—the practice advocated by Steyerl seeks to refunction previous images so that they go against the grain of their original context of use. Furthermore, she attempts to bypass traditional channels when obtaining past films and images. Steyerl provides examples from her own films that illustrate how essays can increasingly challenge traditional notions of authorship and ownership in the digital age through citation. Her first essay film, *The Empty Center*, serves as an example of a more traditional relationship between essay-maker and mainstream media: Steyerl gained access to the film *Einbrecher* through her film school which had taped it when it was broadcast on television; Steyerl asked the copyright holders for permission to reproduce this short segment in her film for non-commercial purposes and received their consent. In her films *November* (2004) and *Lovely Andrea* (2007), the question of who owns the rights to the material she cites is significantly more complicated and subversive.

November and *Lovely Andrea* are both works of mourning. Steyerl mourns the loss of her friend Andrea who was killed fighting with the PKK but whose body was never recovered. The film also laments the loss of control over images in contemporary culture—her friend Andrea's image, as that of a martyr, appears on posters during a pro-Kurdish demonstration in Berlin; a self-consciously staged image is taken of Steyerl holding a poster of Andrea at the rally as if she were there mourning her friend, and this image of Steyerl gets reprinted and circulated as if it were not staged. However, the film's reuse of pre-existing materials reveals a form of agency that is available through the re-claiming of images. In discussions of *November*, Steyerl's citation

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[302] In his review of Steyerl's book *Duty Free Art: Art in the Age of Planetary Civil War*, Hal Foster critiques Steyerl's strategy of attempting to push corporate protocols to the point of dialectical transformation. He writes that "her thinking is less dialectical than paradoxical: rather than intensify contradictions, she likes to collapse them; rather than deconstruct a position, she likes to burst it like a bubble." See Foster, "Smash the Screen," *London Review of Books* 40, no. 7 (5 April 2018): 41.

[303] To some extent, working with pre-existing materials was already considered a defining feature of the essay. In his "The Essay as Form," Adorno quotes from Georg Lukács' *Soul and Form*, in which Lukács defines the essay as a form that works with pre-existing materials: "The essay is always concerned with something already formed, or at best, with something that has been; it is part of its essence that it does not draw something new out of an empty vacuum, but only gives a new order to such things as once lived." *Soul and Form* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1974), 10.

of Sergei Eisenstein's film *October* is one of the most often referenced scenes. While Eisenstein's film focused on the border-crossing revolution during that month in 1917, Steyerl's voiceover laments that this international solidarity no longer seems possible today:

> November is the time after October, a time when revolution seems to be over, and peripheral struggles have become particular, localist and almost impossible to communicate. In November a new reactionary form of terror has taken over, which abruptly breaks with the tradition of October.[304]

The kind of transnational solidarity depicted in *October* is missing in *November* and Steyerl does not yet seem to know how new forms of resistance will manifest. However, I would argue that both *November*, and later *Lovely Andrea*, reflect a new form of transnational solidarity emerging through networks that evolved to facilitate the sharing and circulating of images across borders. Steyerl's use of pre-existing materials in both films, and the provenance of how she gained access to these earlier films, show that her films are evidence of informal international networks. It is through such networks of people that copies of originals are passed on either by hand or, after the rise of the Internet, through anonymous peer-to-peer sharing networks between unknown cinephiles and digital collectors.

November includes film citations from a number of avant-garde and commercial sources and the materials were collected through non-traditional means. Steyerl received news footage of Andrea in Turkey before her disappearance from a Kurdish satellite television station via a VHS recording of the broadcast. In addition to this footage, the film includes citations from the situationist film *La dialectique peut-elle casser les briques* (*Can Dialectics Break Bricks*, 1973) by Rene Vienet as well as a segment from the Russ Meyer western *Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!* (1965)—which was the model for Steyerl's first film that featured Andrea—and scenes from Bruce Lee's last and unfinished film *Game of Death* (1978). Unable to get access to an original version of *Can Dialectics Break Bricks*, Steyerl managed to find a VHS copy of a copy that made its way to her through an international network of friends and acquaintances. While the original is a 35-mm color film with French subtitles, the copy she received was a black-and-white version dubbed into French with English subtitles. Steyerl had to film this copy of a copy off of a television screen, which means that her faint reflection onto the television screen as she records the material is a carried into her film. The human behind the transmission of these images is faintly visible. In addition to the film's unlikely journey to Steyerl, *Can Dialects Break Bricks* itself is an appropriation of an earlier Hong Kong martial arts film that Vienet treats as found footage and reedits. Thus, this "quote from *Can Dialectics Break Bricks* condenses a richly layered history of translation, alteration, appropriation and recontextualization within the most diverse media economies. It is almost impossible to assign any geographical provenience to this material, let alone authorship."[305] By the time Steyerl was working on her film *Lovely Andrea*, the unofficial network through which she accessed past films had become more anonymized and technologized; most of the archival materials she cited were downloaded via peer-to-peer (P2P) networks. With the advent of DVD technology and websites such as YouTube, these media

[304] Voiceover translation from Hito Steyerl, "*November*: A Film Treatment," *TRANSIT*, no. 1 (2004): n.p.
[305] Steyerl, "The Essay as Conformism?", 105.

economies—and the modes in which audiovisual materials can be accessed and shared—have only become more diverse.

For Steyerl, the evolution of the essay is paralleled by the changing nature of the archive in our global, digital age. Digital technology has increased access to preexisting materials and the ease of working with them, making the contents of the archive more available to many people, not just to essay filmmakers. Steyerl's contention, however, is that it is not only digital technology, but the form of the essay, that has fueled the shifting discourses surrounding copyrights and authorship. The result of using pre-existing materials within capitalist systems of production results is that

> not only image content is being reproduced; above all, so too is the principle of ownership as such, the notion of genealogy, origin, individual authorship and belonging, and consequently also notions of national culture and cultural memory. All of these ideas are reinforced by the standard procedure for exchanging and circulating images.[306]

In contrast, when the classical techniques of the essay are applied to the kind of sampling, editing and compilation practices common to both essays and commercial purposes, they can challenge traditional notions of nation and capital by subverting our concepts of authorship and ownership. These "poor images" and copies of a copy attain a particular political relevance in Steyerl's eyes: they have a certain class connotation; she refers to the compressed, low-resolution image that circulate online on various sites as akin to Marx's "lumpen proletarian."[307] However, in contrast to Marx's analysis of this group, in which he questioned their revolutionary potential and deemed them a potentially dangerous force, Steyerl optimistically argues that this *lumpenproletariat* of the online world, exploited by capitalism, is potentially revolutionary.

The Lifecycle of the Archive

Like *November* and *Lovely Andrea* before it, Steyerl's film installation *In Free Fall* (2010) reflects upon the complex reality of late capitalism and its increasingly global regimes of contemporary image production and circulation. A thirty-minute long single-channel video, *In Free Fall is* divided into three chapters that associate airplane crashes with economic crises: "After the Crash," "Before the Crash" and "Crash." Whereas her earlier two essay films document more personal quests—the search for a lost friend and missing images—*In Free Fall* is a media-theoretical meditation on film's relationship to the social, political and economic issues of its time as well as the changing nature of film after the rise of digitization. *In Free Fall* features montages of citations—integrating footage from past films and quotes from an avant-garde literary theoretical text—that reveal the knowledge held in these past films about social and economic relations. The montages of footage from films that depict airplane crashes (and near misses) reveal how these filmic crashes in fact correspond to real life economic and political crises of their time. These scenes of nosediving airplanes and fiery collisions are translations of the more abstract scenarios of economic downturns or political upheaval. *In Free Fall* also

[306] Ibid, 104.

[307] See Steyerl, "In Defense of the Poor Image," *e-flux,* no. 10 (2009): n.p.

responds to its own present-day economic crisis: the global financial crisis of 2008, whose long-term impact was still unknown at the time the film was completed. The installation examines these past films using a methodology that draws upon immanent critique as practiced by Frankfurt School thinkers such as Kracauer, Benjamin and Adorno. Steyerl treats these films as cultural objects and uses montage to show how this particular genre of films contain certain contradictions that reflect the material conditions of their production and the time in which they were produced.

One of the red threads running throughout the film installation is the lifecycle of a Boeing aircraft within the film industry. *In Free Fall* begins like a post-mortem of a crash, examining the wreckage left behind a crash before going back in time to witness what precipitated it. The film opens with a peculiar scene: a portable DVD player is shown lying on the ground in the foreground with footage of plummeting airplanes and plane crashes on the screen; in the background, we see an airplane junkyard in the middle of the Mojave desert[308]; a crane tears apart a smashed airplane above the images on the DVD player's screen of planes erupting into flames. The installation cuts from this spectacle to a shot of the junkyard owner who explains that planes are stored in the Mojave Desert when the economy is in a downturn and they are not being used in movie production. If they do not make their way into the film industry, these planes are turned into scrap metal and the aluminum is sold off. The scrap aluminum from these planes is still tied, albeit indirectly, to the film industry because, as he explains, it is often sold to Chinese firms who recycle it into DVDs like the one we see playing on the portable player. These DVDs represent the changing mode of production in the film industry (digitization) and the increasingly global mode of consumption by audiences (DVDs). This has also led to a waning of the traditional Hollywood film industry and a subsequent loss of jobs within the industry. The archival footage that we watch playing on the DVD player—of crashes and at times of airline safety videos—is repeated more than once. Like the planes that can be turned into aluminum before being transformed into DVDs, past films can be broken down into particular sequences that can be reused and reexamined as this footage undergoes transformations in its own lifecycle.

Read in this way, *In Free Fall* suggests that the lifecycle of an airplane in the film industry reflects both the film industry's economic prosperity and the broader socioeconomic conditions in which the film was made. These airplanes are implicated in both the past and the future of the film industry, from expensive Hollywood explosions to digital film distribution. As the installation progresses, however, it becomes clearer how crash films like the one playing on the DVD player work through larger economic crises and it is this relationship upon which the installation is most intensely focused. Through montage *In Free Fall* reveals that many of these films stage airplane crashes at a time in which there were other major crises occurring that the films do not directly address. This connection becomes particularly clear in a montage that includes newsreel-like footage of an airplane manufacturing plant and a sequence from Howard

[308] Junkyards are a reoccurring motif within the films analyzed in this dissertation: Bitomsky's film *B-52*, that I discussed in Chapter One, features footage of a B-52 plane graveyard in Arizona; Kluge's film *The Blind Director* includes a sequence shot in a junkyard with discarded cars, which I analyzed in Chapter Two. The plane graveyard that Steyerl visits is near the Mojave airport in California. It may be the same plane "boneyard" featured in Werner Herzog's film *Little Dieter Needs To Fly* (1997).

Hughes' WWI aviation film *Hell's Angels* (1930), showing nosediving pilots and a fiery crash scene.[309] This particular historical moment is not only the height of industrialization but also perhaps the pinnacle of the film industry, which could take huge risks and spend enormous sums of money. In other words, 1930 was a moment in which huge financial risks were taken, the year, as the voiceover reminds us, after the infamous stock market crash of 1929.[310] Thus, in Steyerl's hands, *Hell's Angels* becomes an allegory for the film's contemporary plummeting economy instead of a literal depiction of WWI aviation battles. Although *Hell's Angels* does not make direct reference to the stock market crash, *In Free Fall* brings it to the fore by putting these crash scenes into constellation with the massive financial collapse, showing footage of a nosediving plane as the voiceover remarks on the stock market crash. Additional footage of manufacturing processes in this montage connects industrial production processes, in general, to the tropes of airplanes and crashes. Steyerl juxtaposes *Hell's Angels* and the discussion of the historical moment of 1929 with archival footage from within an airplane manufacturing plant; we see a conveyor belt and factory workers in a production line in the factory, forging the connection between the film and capitalism, airplane crashes and the stock market crash. Further citations from films featuring airplane crashes, including footage from *Speed* (1994) will underscore this connection.

The heterogenous citations and narrative vignettes that comprise *In Free Fall* are loosely connected by another important cultural document from 1929, Sergei Tretyakov's "Biography of the Object." To counter the nineteenth-century bourgeois form of the novel, Tretyakov proposed a revolutionary literary form that was to focus on objects rather than subjects. According to Tretyakov, focusing on an object would reveal information about the people who created it and the social relations that helped form it. Steyerl's voiceover focuses primarily on the relationship Tretyakov proposes between object and subject. In the first section of the installation, "Before the Crash," the voiceover states: "In 1929 Soviet writer Sergej Tretiakov drafts a biography of the object. […] The biography represents a profile of social relations." *In Free Fall* recounts how Tretyakov described the object on the conveyor belt whose biography would indeed reveal something about the material conditions of the people who worked on that conveyor belt. Steyerl mobilizes Tretyakov's theory to argue that films, as objects, contain information about their material conditions and those of their creators that can be discovered through close analysis. *In Free Fall* also uses Tretyakov's proposition to trace the biography of a Boeing airplane, exploring what its biography might illuminate further about the humans that created and used it. In the sequence, Steyerl includes citations from a several films that trace the biography of particular Boeing planes, including *Speed* (1994) and *Operation Thunderbolt* (1977).[311] The Boeing airplane's lifecycle includes the film industry, commercial flight and

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[309] *Hell's Angels* was extremely expensive and dangerous to make. Several pilots died during filming and Hughes himself was badly injured during a very dangerous flight scene.

[310] The installation also claims that 1929 was also the year in which the largest number of airplanes crashed in history.

[311] One is the plane used in the movie *Speed*. *In Free Fall* features footage of the film's famous scene of the runaway train crashing into an airplane. This plane, the film explains, used to be an Israeli air force plane. Following the biography of this particular plane reveals a connection between the film industry and war. The footage from *Speed* is juxtaposed with footage from other commercial films, including *Operation Thunderbolt* (1977), an Israeli film about the attempted hijacking of a plane headed to Israel in 1976 by PLO terrorists (including two Germans). In contrast to *Speed*, *Operation Thunderbolt* does not feature a plane crash since the hostage crisis was neutralized before any

military purposes and the biography of these planes makes clear that film is intrinsically linked with both capitalism and war.

While *In Free Fall* reacts to a recent global economic downturn, the film also registers a pervasive sense of free falling within contemporary culture that extends beyond the financial crisis of 2007 and 2008. In an essay with the same name as the film, Steyerl argues that popular films depicting airplane crashes register something that contemporary philosophers have identified in our current moment: a preoccupation with groundlessness or a sense of free fall. The sense of free fall has its origins in the disappearance of linear perspective and a stable horizon or point of orientation for subjects and objects that occurred earlier. According to Steyerl, the horizon fell away in part because the stability of linear perspective was revealed to be an illusion. In its place, the aerial view emerged as the dominant means of providing a sense of grounding or stability, though it also functioned as an instrument of surveillance and tracking.[312] As Steyerl puts it, the top down nature of the aerial view is a "perfect metonymy for a more general verticalization of class relations in the context of an intensified class war from above—seen through the lenses and on the screens of military, entertainment, and information industries."[313] Like Bruno Latour[314], Steyerl exposes the illusion of the aerial view: "many of the aerial views, 3-D nose-dives, Google Maps, and surveillance panoramas do not actually portray a stable ground. Instead, they create a supposition that it exists in the first place."[315] Similar to Latour's work, Steyerl argues that the aerial view only creates the impression that there is a stable observer and perspective. Thus, the illusion of stability gives way to a sense of groundlessness. In films that feature this sort of free-falling "the perspective of free fall teaches us to consider a social and political dreamscape of radicalized class war from above, one that throws jaw-dropping social inequalities into sharp focus."[316] However, Steyerl sees the potential for the aerial view to undermine itself and to pave the way for a different kind of vision. The aerial view reveals a new way of looking at the relationship between objects and subjects. Here, again, Tretyakov's "Biography of an Object" is relevant for understanding Steyerl's perspective, since his greater hope was that, by understanding the production processes of objects more fully, humans might be better equipped to change inhuman production processes.[317] If we are

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collision occurred, but the film does connect this Boeing plane to a military crisis situation. *Hell's Angels* provide a further insight into the connection between the film and aviation industries with the military industrial complex. Howard Hughes founded an airline company, Trans World Airlines (TWA), after making *Hell's Angels*. *In Free Fall* cites footage of TWA commercials. The Israeli actor who plays a plane historian in *In Free Fall* discusses TWA and Howard Hughes, explaining that TWA sold Boeing 707 planes to Israel who converted them into military air force planes.

[312] This view is the correlate of the phenomenon of free falling and was driven by filmic and photographic montage and other techniques that helped undermine the linear perspective.

[313] Hito Steyerl, "In Free Fall: A Thought Experiment on Vertical Perspective," in *The Wretched Screen* (Berlin: Sternberg, 2012), 26.

[314] In his essay "Anti-zoom," Latour argues that the zoom effect is an illusion within his argument that today we need a new understanding of scale in space and time. The essay is published in Olafur Eliasson's exhibition catalogue, *Contact* (Paris: Flammarion/Foundation Louis Vuitton, 2014), 121-24.

[315] Steyerl, "In Free Fall," 24.

[316] Ibid, 28.

[317] For a discussion of Tretiakov's text, see Devin Fore's introduction on the first two pages of Sergei Tret'iakov, "The Biography of the Object," *October*, no. 118 (2006): 57–62.

able to use the aerial view and a sense of free fall to understand how class relations exist today, then that knowledge aids us in the ongoing process of changing these social relations.

There's a particularly confusing moment in a state of free fall, Steyerl contends, in which it becomes difficult to distinguish between the human subject and the non-human object. The moment of free fall ruptures traditional modes of seeing and understanding and creates an opportunity for the emergence of new perspectives and modes of vision. Steyerl identifies some of these new modes of vision as the new spatial modes of vision of moving images in the gallery space: Multi-screen video installations and projections "create a dynamic viewing space, dispersing perspective and possible points of view. The viewer is no longer unified by such a gaze, but is rather dissociated and overwhelmed, drafted into the production of content."[318] These sorts of spaces do not require or support a unified perspective, viewer or mode of engaging with the materials. While new installation spaces might seem to resemble the groundless abyss of a free fall, Steyerl sees the opportunity for a new kind of representational freedom in which there is still the opportunity for things to be otherwise. Exploring the implications of Tretyakov's assertion that the life of individuals becomes less important than that of objects—namely, that objects and matter live on in different forms in a way that humans are unable—Steyerl creates a playful moment in the film. We see a montage of footage about recycling aluminum shown behind Steyerl as she repeats various statements about how material lives on in various afterlives. In her repetitions she makes a mistake, switching between "The material lives on…" to "the material loves on… the material can live on in other forms!" ("Das Material lebt weiter… Das Material liebt weiter…"). This mistake, "liebt" instead of "lebt," and "love" instead of "live," gives the material object an additional kind of agency. While humans can't live on in other forms, this material can live on and even love in new forms. Steyerl's mistake, whether intentionally playful or not, proposes the idea that the material lives, loves and is a subject in some way, gesturing towards the radical possibilities that might be opened up in this moment of changing perspectives and modes of vision.

The Museum-Factory as Laboratory

In her essay "Is a Museum a Factory?" Steyerl connects the museum, factory and the cinema together as three institutions that have undergone radical transformations over the past century and whose paths have converged in a surprising turn of events. Once a subject of early cinema and the site of political film screenings for laborers, the factory no longer hums with industrial labor. Instead, many abandoned factories are now museums.[319] The cinema has moved from the black box to the white cube and, incidentally, moved back into the space of the museum, which itself has come to re-occupy the old industrial space of the factory. Rather than feature political movies, however, the hybrid film installations featured in museums are very

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[318] Steyerl, "In Free Fall," 27.

[319] In fact, many well-regarded modern art museums are housed in former factories. In her essay Steyerl refers to Rem Koolhaas's Contemporary Art Museum in Riga, formerly a power plant. London's Tate Modern, which used to be a power station, is perhaps the most famous factory-turned-museum. Additional examples include MASS MoCA, the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art; the Center for Art and Media (ZKM) in Karlsruhe, Germany; the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art in the UK; the SantralIstanbul center in Istanbul; and the theater and photography museums in Helsinki's Cable Factory.

different from than those early films screened in factories. Steyerl seeks to determine whether the political charge of socially-engaged cinema spectatorship is missing from both the space of the factory and the kinds of cinema now exhibited there.

Both the cinema and capitalist production have undergone significant changes. As Steyerl argues, the worker "left the factory to reemerge as a spectacle inside it." Years later, workers re-enter a factory of sorts in the form of the museum: "the space they enter is one of cinema and cultural industry, producing emotion and attention."[320] However, there is a difference between the spaces of the black box cinema and film in the white cube. The museum does not dictate how the spectator should experience the work or congregate within the space, since museum visitors can move through the space and experience the film for as long as they want. As a result, the use of moving images in the factory-as-museum is no longer a single channel with a single perspective; this mode of exhibition has been replaced with multi-channel installations that are not necessarily intended to be viewed or experienced in a single sitting, uniform manner or by a particular audience. Many of the controls over the original mode of cinema spectatorship (temporal, spatial, etc.) have been lifted as the spectator is able to, in a way, co-curate the show by creating their own "montage" of pieces of the show by moving through the space according to their own interests.

Steyerl maintains that the cinema as spectacle in the museum produces a new spectator and a new mode of spectatorship. By presuming that many of the shows can often not be totally consumed by a single spectator due to the long lengths of the film installations, these shows necessarily demand a "multiplicity of spectators" because only through a multitude of perspectives and spectators can the entire installation be consumed:

> Cinema inside the museum thus calls for a multiple gaze, which is no longer collective, but common, which is incomplete, but in process, which is distracted and singular, but can be edited into various sequences and combinations. This gaze is no longer the gaze of the individual sovereign master, nor, more precisely, of the self-deluded sovereign [...] It isn't even a product of common labor, but focuses its point of rupture on the paradigm of productivity.[321]

Sometimes there are short films shown on loop that can be consumed entirely (although the spectator might still enter in at any moment during the projection and would not necessarily watch chronologically from start to finish). Other films, such as Douglas Gordon's *24 Hour Psycho* or Christian Marclay's *The Clock* (2010) support Steyerl's comment, since these kinds of films cannot be seen in their entirety during a single visit, and this is a part of the spectator's understanding going in to the screening. These recent film installations undermine linear narratives and the prominence of plot-driven moving images in favor of filmic experiments and new forms of in-person spectatorship—distracted, fleeting, discontinuous, fractured—and they demand a new spectator. In Steyerl's account, the "museum-as-factory and its cinematic politics interpellate this missing, multiple subject. But by displaying its absence and its lack, they simultaneously activate a desire for this subject."[322] Moving images in the museum provide

[320] Steyerl, "Is a Museum a Factory?", in *The Wretched Screen*, 66.
[321] Ibid, 73.
[322] Ibid, 74.

space for a more experimental engagement with cinema. In turn, the museum or white cube becomes a site more like a laboratory in which artists can play around with a new temporal economy, with hybrid forms of address, with multiple screens and modes of viewing a work.[323] Steyerl's own media art and film installations have moved almost exclusively into the laboratory space of the museum and art gallery.

Re-producing the Archive

If the Frankfurt School tended to think, much like the films available at the time, exclusively in black and white, culminating in Adorno's utopia of negative aesthetics in the form of blackness, Steyerl challenges this legacy with the cleverly titled *Adorno's Grey* (2012).[324] Steyerl's film installation examines the end of Adorno's life and teaching career by excavating from the archive the various narratives of this time that survive. One of the most well-known anecdotes concern the incident known as the "Busenaktion", the women who bared their breasts in protest and interrupted what would be Adorno's final lecture in Frankfurt. The film links this final lecture in Frankfurt to the apocryphal story that Adorno had the walls in the lecture hall painted grey because the color aided students' focus and concentration. While different versions of the narrative are discussed in the installation's voiceover—including interviews with philosophy professors who discuss the divide between praxis and theory, philosophy and life—we are shown footage of conservators examining the walls of the lecture hall for this original grey color. When they are unable to locate any evidence that the walls were painted grey, Steyerl asks the team to create a grey swath on the wall. By the end of the installation, it becomes clear that this forensic search for the color grey functions as a vehicle for multiple examinations in the film: the color initially prompts an investigation into what happened during Adorno's last lecture and a revisiting of the estrangement between a philosopher and a movement; in the end grey functions as a rallying point for unearthing the buried histories and, at times, false memories in the archive. By the end of the installation it is clear that the archive is a condition and possibility of knowledge production precisely because it contains both truths, fictions, and various partial truths and fictions that do not add up to a cohesive whole.

Adorno's Grey lays bare the subjective construction of the archive and poses the question of why these stories have persisted. Implicit within this line of questioning is the belief that if certain narratives survive within the archive there must be some truth to them. One of the only tales that can be investigated definitively is the question of whether Adorno did indeed have the walls in his lecture hall painted grey. We hear Steyerl interviewing a man about his recollections of the lecture hall in which Adorno taught at the university in Frankfurt. This former student reaches back into his memories and agrees, that there must indeed have been grey walls in the hall. This eye witness account sets up the expectation that when Steyerl's team

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[323] In discussing Steyerl's essay, "Is a Museum a Factory?", Thomas Elsaesser argues that if the factory provided the "perfect historical framework" for critically engaging with cinema, then the "'museum as factory' [offers] the perfect experimental set-up or laboratory." Elsaesser, "Is Factory a Museum? (2009)," in *Jenseits der Repräsentation / Beyond Representation*, 246.

[324] See Adorno's essay "Black as an Ideal" in *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, trans. by Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: Continuum, 1997), 39-40.

of conservators scrape off the white paint that today covers the walls of the lecture hall, there will be some proof of their former hue. The fact that no such evidence of grey can be found, and that this discovery is made very quickly into the film, might lead one to expect that either this line of inquiry will be quickly abandoned or the film will investigate possible explanations for the missing grey. Although the film might initially be mistaken for a documentary of sorts, it becomes quickly clear that the film openly abandons any such pretensions as Steyerl asks her team of conservators to create the missing grey by scratching the wall in such a way as to create the illusion of a fuzzy grey color. Steyerl films the conservators closely as they scrape off the white paint so that it can be photographed in such a way that the walls appear grey. It does not matter whether or not they truly locate the grey in the film. In fact, it is perhaps even better for Steyerl that the search fails. By not locating the grey, the film is better able to set up its meditation on the archive and the certain oppositions it contains.

The film installation unearths a number of conflicting issues and reveals these oppositions to be false. Though Steyerl plays around with the conventions of documentary films, her film contains several clearly staged moments that reveal it to be an essayistic installation. In addition to creating the grey, Steyerl reveals that she's staged the space of the film and that of the film installation. When we see the lecture hall for the first time in the film, the word "Kapitalismus" (Capitalism) is written across the chalkboard. While the team is later constructing the grey swath on the wall, we are shown footage of Steyerl writing the word on the chalkboard herself, playing with our expectations about how a lecture hall that previously hosted Adorno's critical theory lectures would look today. At the very end of the installation, as white lights illuminate the four walls upon which the film is projected, it becomes clear that the walls which formed the backdrop of the installation are themselves painted grey, meaning that the entire black and white film was tinted grey throughout the entire performance. Despite the fact that the installation makes its staging very clear, it does unearth a number of truths in its clearly subjective meditation.

The opposition between grey and color, which is intrinsically linked to the opposition between philosophy and life, theory and praxis, is revealed to be false as well. In the voiceover, the philosophy professor Nina Power discusses Adorno's reaction to the women's bared breasts. She argues that in many readings of this moment, there is a false opposition between theory and life or theory and the bodily there. Her contention is that Adorno was not likely scared by the physicality of the breasts, but rather surprised by these bared breasts as they stood outside of any of the normal categories: they functioned as a form of protest rather than as sexual or maternal breasts. Another philosophy professor, Peter Osborne, discusses the philosophical import of grey using its function in the preface to Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, in which Hegel associates theory with greyness.[325] But for Adorno it becomes clear that grey is like a stand in for the potential of utopia: "The problem for Adorno is that it must stand in, not as a condition within the present which is a potential, but it must – it stands in in its negativity, so in

[325] The color grey was also famously tied to theory in Goethe's *Faust* by Mephistopheles. Speaking to a student who mistook the demon for a faculty member, Mephistopheles advises him: "Grau, teurer Freund, ist alle Theorie, Und grün des Lebens goldner Baum." ("All theory, my dear boy, is gray, And green the golden tree of life.") English translation from *Faust: A Tragedy*, trans. Martin Greenberg (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2014), 70. Mephistopheles later refers to physics and metaphysics as gray when speaking to Faust.

other words its non-existence, which is its potentiality, not its existence." He connects this to Goethe's theory of color, suggesting Adorno may have thought about it. "Color is kind of a mysterious product of the non-colored, of the grey. […] the greyness of theory have hidden within them the whole spectrum of color."

One of the final images we are shown in the film breaks down this opposition between theory and praxis, grey and color, by providing a humorous example in which one of Adorno's theoretical texts was used very literally in an act of protest and practical action. Steyerl interviews a protestor with the so-called "book bloc" that create giant shields that look like books to use in conflicts with police during protests. The protestor constructed a shield that was made to look like Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*. In the film, the book as a shield is compared to the naked breasts; they are both objects taken from their usual context of use and made to function entirely differently as part of a protest. This protestor discusses how he used the book to break through a police line, only realize that he was one of the only ones to break through the line. His final comment is that he had a weird feeling in that moment. What was he to do? Should he try and break back through the line they just broke through? Should he reverse his progress to reunite with the other? The installation ends on this ambiguous note as the lights come on to reveal the grey colors of the wall in the installation space. Thus, various shades of grey were there all along. The installation suggests that ambiguities can coexist; they do not need to be reconciled. We understand the archive as a space with competing, subjective narratives that contain truths as well as myths but, like the four walls upon which the installation was projected, the archive does not amount to a unified whole space.

As a film installation, *Adorno's Grey* is able to play with certain elements of its exhibition that are not possible in the black cube of the cinema. By projecting the film against four grey slabs propped against the wall at varying angles instead of a traditional flat white screen, Steyerl is able to convey through its mode of exhibition that the archive this installation examines is not a homogenous, objective space. The four slabs, each painted a different color of grey and lain against the wall at a different degree than a right angle, reflect the overlapping narratives the film examines that present various, at times contradictory, perspectives. Film installations present video essayists such as Steyerl with new modes of exhibition and means to engage spectators. I will examine in more detail the growing use of film and video in installation art and discuss how this space of exhibition opens up possibilities for film and video essays in the Epilogue, the concluding section of this project.

Epilogue
Cinema and/in the Gallery

Hal Foster claimed in 2003 that video and film had become the "default media" of contemporary art.[326] However standard it might now seem, film was not always welcome in the art world. Discourses in early cinema had long advocated for film's status as an art and not only as a mass medium, but film would not enter the museum as an artwork on display until the 1960s.[327] These early exhibited works—in particular the so-called "expanded cinema"—were cinematographic installations that had their roots in experimental film.[328] They drew upon earlier experiments with film and photography by the European avant-garde, including examples established by groups such as the Constructivists, the Bauhaus, the Dadaists, and the Surrealists, among others. Practitioners of expanded cinema used film in their installations to challenge existing art practices and institutions by exposing and reflecting upon the "black box" of the cinema and its means of representation and presentation.[329] During the 1960s and 70s, the increasing availability of video technology led to a proliferation of video art both inside and out of the gallery. In installation pieces, early video artists probed the limits of the monitors playing their videos by embedding them within larger sculptural works, creating pieces with multiple monitors and using them as part of larger performance art pieces. Despite the fact that film and video were increasingly exhibited in museums and included in contemporary art exhibitions, in this transitional period they were still often treated differently from more traditional art objects. The introduction of film and video into the German contemporary art exhibition *documenta* illustrates this point: while the exhibition accepted experimental films into its program in 1972, the contributing artists were not listed in the program and the films were screened in entirely separate venues from the rest of *documenta 5*.[330]

The increasing affordability of video cameras and projectors that followed helped to cement video art's place within the museum and art gallery. No longer tied to monitors, video projection opened up new possibilities for larger exhibition spaces and screens, including

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[326] "Roundtable: the projected image in contemporary art," *October* 104 (2003): 93.

[327] While museums did begin preserving film for future generations, their relationship with film was primarily archival. The recognition that film was a medium to be preserved for future generations began when the Museum of Modern Art in New York founded a film department in 1934, the first of its kind world-wide.

[328] On the term, "expanded cinema" see Gene Youngblood's *Expanded Cinema* (New York: Dutton, 1970), the first study to argue that video is an art form.

[329] For more on the "expanded cinema" of the 1960s, see Andrew V. Uroskie, *Between the Black Box and the White Cube: Expanded Cinema and Postwar Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

[330] Founded in 1955 by curator Arnold Bode, *documenta* aimed to reestablish modern art in postwar Germany by featuring works that had been known as "Entartete Kunst" during the Nazi period. Over time, the exhibition shifted its focus to contemporary art. While *documenta 5* featured many contemporary artists who were critical of the institution of the museum, one of its great legacies is that is resulted in wider acceptance of these very same artists and of conceptualist and post-minimalist art into the emerging canon of contemporary art. For an account of how *documenta 5* and other major contemporary art exhibitions shaped the museum's relationship to contemporary art and canon formation, see Charles Green and Anthony Gardner's book, *Biennials, Triennials, and documenta: The Exhibitions That Created Contemporary Art* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016). They argue that *documenta 5* was "the moment when the avant-garde moved into the art museum and fully into the public domain." *Biennials, Triennials, and documenta*, 39.

installations that comprised entire rooms.[331] Advances in reproduction technology made it easier to produce copies of earlier films, allowing the medium of film and film history to become material for installation pieces. Digitization enabled new forms of remediation on DVDs and on the Internet, and further diversified the modes of exhibiting moving images, from monitors, to projection and other screens. Yet this moment of digital popularity was met with the re-introduction of material, celluloid film projects into the museum space. As if the subject of an art world celebration, the previously outdated medium became a frequent tool for cinematographic installations again around its one-hundredth birthday in 1995. Paradoxically, this re-entry into the art world coincided with the exact moment in which new forms of digital media seemed poised to replace film entirely. But this moment was not simply a centennial funeral: rather than commemorate an art that was dying, as many of the filmmakers discussed in this project feared, the re-integration of film into the gallery space demonstrates what film scholar Erika Balsom has called the "new mutability and transportability of moving images after digitization."[332] Makers of moving image art came to see film history as an important extension of their own work. Like the filmmakers and works analyzed in this project, artists at this moment turned back to film history by remaking pre-existing films or by citing these earlier films in their installations. Through this uptake of the medium's history, the exhibition of cinema became a way to examine critically film's present, past, and future.[333]

These investigations resulted in the growing awareness that while new media has led to the increased blurring of boundaries between different forms of media, other boundaries have in turn become increasingly articulated. Balsom has also argued that discourses about media convergence led to a rethinking of the medium-specificity of cinema. Rather than lead to film's disappearance, these discussions fostered an awareness of the cinema's historicity and the multiple forms it has taken.[334] Thus, a monolithic notion of the cinema can be replaced with multiple modes, or as Balsom contends, *dispositifs*. Drawing on the work of Michel Foucault, Balsom defines the *dispositif* of cinema as its historically-specific, "heterogeneous ensemble of material and discursive practices."[335] The *dispositif* of cinema has evolved over time and now includes multiple discursive practices, which include both film and video installations. Furthermore, the cinema has long been regarded as a fluid medium characterized by historical change. Thus, like Balsom we may reject the idea that we are in an era of "post-cinema."[336]

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[331] Installation art as a term was first used in the 1960s to describe how an exhibition was arranged. Claire Bishop provides a history of installation art, as well as a definition of it in *Installation Art: A Critical History* (New York: Routledge, 2005): "in a work of installation art, the space, and the ensemble of elements within it, are regarded in their entirety as a singular entity. Installation art creates a situation into which the viewer physically enters, and insists that you regard this as a singular totality." *Installation Art*, 6.

[332] Erika Balsom, *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013), 11.

[333] Balsom contends that to "exhibit cinema" in the gallery is not just to use film but to "hold it up for examination and investigate its contemporary state by using its past products as raw material." *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art*, 11.

[334] "A Cinema in the Gallery, a Cinema in Ruins," *Screen* 50, no. 4 (Winter 2009): 412. For an extended discussion of the dialectical convergence/medium specificity of cinema in the digital age, see the introduction of Balsom's *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art*.

[335] "A Cinema in the Gallery, a Cinema in Ruins," 414.

[336] Balsom firmly rejects the "term 'post-cinema' in favor of interrogating the interactions between old and new incarnations of an ever-changing entity." *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art*, 16.

These new modes of exhibition do not signal an end of the cinema but rather a new form of it that co-exists alongside earlier practices: "cinema is both an old medium in which one might encounter the redemptive possibilities of the outmoded *and* a new technology that has wrought dramatic changes to the place of the moving image in art and to the spaces of art more generally."[337] Film moving into the gallery and being taken up by artists allows for Balsom a new articulation of the cinema's long-standing status as both "public and historical," and which engages multiple forms of media and genre.[338]

The museum and gallery are not only sites for preservation and display. They allow for new temporalities and ways of engaging the spectator. Film scholar Thomas Elsaesser has, like Balsom, argued that it is through film's seeming obsolescence that we rediscover its prescience. He furthermore contends that this anticipatory quality of film's past resulted in new forms of temporality within the installation. He is particularly interested in the loop, which both creates a new form of temporality and seems to encapsulate formally this look to the past. Rather than solidify the linearity of film's technological progress, film's obsolescence gains an entirely different relationship to the past in the form of the loop. The loop offers the revelation of the medium's own past, which in turn signals and foreshadows the coming of the medium's future.[339] Using techniques of repetition like the loop, or destabilizing traditional temporalities by slowing down moving images or even bringing them to a standstill, allows installations to create forms of temporality that are distinct from traditional cinema.[340] What seems to be at stake in these new temporalities of installation art is the potential for new modes of reception by the spectator. A video installation might be able to create a tension between the temporality of the piece and the temporality of the experience of the piece. By slowing images down, it might present filmmakers with the means of "actively 'resisting' the quick glance and the rapid appropriation by the casual museum visitor."[341]

In cinema's high-art iteration outside of traditional viewing spaces, both media artists and spectators are given more control over their experience of an installation. When museum spectators are able to move around throughout an installation, they assume the capacity of spectator-editor who might start and stop whenever they like, resulting in their own edit of the original piece. Art historian Juliane Rebentisch has argued that cinematographic installations might even lead the spectator to "engage in a self-reflective, performative, that is, *aesthetic* relation to the (objects of the) installation as well."[342] If spectators can move around freely within an installation and have the potential to reflect upon their position in space and their own temporality, there is the potential for the experience of a moving image installation piece to become an aesthetic one. There is then an autonomy in these works that is not available to

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[337] Ibid, 19.

[338] Ibid, 187.

[339] In Elsaesser's words, "obsolescence implies a special relation of past to present that no longer follows the direct linearity of cause and effect, but takes the form of a *loop*, where the present rediscovers a certain past, to which it then attributes the power to shape aspect of the future that are now our present." Thomas Elsaesser, "The Loop of Belatedness: Cinema After Film in the Contemporary Art Gallery," *Senses of Cinema* 86 (March 2018): n.p.

[340] On still images and new media technology, see Laura Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

[341] Elsaesser, "The Loop of Belatedness," n.p.

[342] Juliane Rebentisch, *Aesthetics of Installation Art* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012), 180.

traditional cinema-goers. The illusion of traditional narrative filmmaking has been replaced with a very different experience: film installation "has the potential to become the object of an experience in which various technological and media conditions break free from, and become immune to, their subjection to any ideological function—it has the potential to be art."[343] Multi-channel forms of montage might allow the spectator to become more detached, aware of the apparatus exhibiting cinema; or, on the contrary, multiple screens might create a kind of panoramic spectacle that might be more absorbing than distracting.[344]

Moving image art furthermore holds the potential to inspire spectators' critical reflection not only of their own position, but also of the cinematic apparatus. The question of whether moving image art might, like the expanded cinema before it, challenge us to reflect critically on the cinematic apparatus and on the institution of the museum and the gallery remains open. Art historian Andrew Uroskie argues that

> At its most ambitious, 'post-cinematic' art might be understood as a stratigraphic engagement with this history—making long-sedimented conventions immediate, tangible, and sensuous through a polyphony of spectatorial dislocation. As such, the original promise of the historical expanded cinema is reawakened for a new era.[345]

On one hand, moving images' migration to the art space could be seen as film taking refuge in the privileged and autonomous realm of art, a space that is no longer one of mass culture. However, by moving into the museum, film is put into constellation with the diverse media, disciplines, and discourses that populate the museum. Film and video also challenge established notions in the art world, in particular the idea that works of art are the singular, irreplaceable product of unique authorship and a particular moment in history. In addition to photography and other visual arts such as printmaking, film and video helped to undermine the sense that works of art must be unique.[346]

It is difficult to determine precisely what occurs in moving art installation when the focus is on the spectator's reception of the work. If what is at stake here is the possibility of a critical relation to other moving images in our thoroughly mediated world, then one might argue that film escapes the fragmented nature of digital platforms and digital spectatorship by hiding in the museum. However, spectatorship in an art gallery or museum is potentially fragmented and distracted as well. It is impossible to know whether, despite an artist's intention, a work of moving image media art does inspire a critical relationship to commercial media outside of the gallery. Even within the gallery, films have a variety of contexts of exhibition and at times there are efforts to restrict the spectator's freedom within an installation. What remains possible in the gallery or art museum is the potential for public, and even

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[343] Ibid, 196.

[344] There are, of course, robust debates in art history on the extent to which visual art can make you aware of your own presence and remind you that the observation of works of art is its own kind of theatricality. See, for example, Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

[345] Uroskie, *Between the Black Box and the White Cube*, 238.

[346] While film and video challenged certain notions in the art world and the museum, Rosalind Krauss argued that installation art extends the life of the white cube. See her book, *Under Blue Cup* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011).

collective, reception of works, suggesting that earlier promises of communal cinematic spectatorship need not be entirely forgotten.[347]

By returning to previous films in moving image art including the works examined in this dissertation, these works point to the potential for a return of cinema's status as a shared vernacular or collective cultural memory and the potential for this cultural memory to be used for producing knowledge about the past.[348] Many of these works, even those that are critical of cinema's ideological function, suggest that there is, as Balsom argues, flexibility in cinema's popularity as a language of expression. The exhibition of cinema in the gallery opens up a "room for play" within film's language of expression and its capacity to "become integrated into subjective experience."[349] Whether the collective reception of cinema, as some have argued, held massive emancipatory potential or not, film's return to the gallery space re-animates its ability to be used to disrupt dominant media practices today.[350]

The movement away from the celluloid-medium of film, and the migration of the cinema into the art gallery and onto digital platforms and screens, has led to a reiteration of Andre Bazin's famous question, "What is cinema?" The integration of film into the gallery and museum has changed our conception of cinema. While some advocate for new terms—moving image art is the most widely-used term today—others argue we must maintain the term cinema because it was always and is still an artform that depicts movement.[351] Still others have argued that we need to use screens as an organizing principle because they pre-dated and survived the context of exhibition of the cinema.[352] The diverse use of film and the moving image in contemporary art is a testament to the fact that there are numerous answers to the question of what cinema is now.[353] While film may have always been a heterogenous medium that resisted uniform characterization, its movement into the gallery space has brought this characteristic into sharper relief. Now that moving images are no longer restricted to a single mode of exhibition, it seems that the question is no longer focused on *what* cinema is but *where* it is and

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[347] When she discusses the citation of Hollywood films in new moving image art, Balsom argues that this practice "allows for the formation of a community around such collective recognition, repurposing the shared memory towards knowledge-producing ends." *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art*, 111.

[348] See Miriam Hansen's argument regarding the vernacular modernism of cinema in her article "The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism," *Modernism/modernity* 6, no. 2 (April 1999): 59-72.

[349] As Balsom argues, there might be a "certain 'room for play' is opened that makes use of cinema as a common cultural vernacular and a site at which mass media representations become integrated into subjective experience in a way that might disrupt the dominant order." Balsom, *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art*, 146.

[350] Both Miriam Hansen and Alexander Kluge have famously argued for the utopian potential of the cinema to function as an (alternative) public sphere. For Miriam Hansen's work on early cinema as a public sphere, see "Early Cinema: Whose Public Sphere?", *New German Critique* 29 (Spring-Summer 1983): 147-84. See Kluge's writing on the cinema in general as a public sphere in "On Film and the Public Sphere," *New German Critique* 24/25 (1981-1982): 206-220.

[351] See Tom Gunning, "What Is Cinema?: The Challenge of the Moving Image Past and Future," in *Dreamlands: lmmersive Cinema and Art, 1905-2016*, ed. Chrissie Iles (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016), 140-147.

[352] Giuliana Bruno, "The Screen as Object: Art and the Atmospheres of Projection," in *Dreamlands*, 156-167.

[353] Thus, Erika Balsom argues that these media artists who engage with film and the question of film's ontology are "engaging in film theory through practice." *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art*, 13.

how it travels to particular sites of exhibition.[354] These channels of distribution play a role in how canons are formed and determine which works can be cited or talked about and they must be a continued avenue of future research into moving image art.

There is a striking parallel between how our understanding of cinema has changed and the evolution of our notion of the archive following the advent of digital technology. Video and digital technologies accelerated the migration of film into the gallery and museum and helped to diversify its modes of exhibition. This same technology transformed the German cinematographic archive, increasing the ease with which these filmmakers were able to access and reuse the archive's materials in their own works. Whereas the archive was once a physical site, in the digital age it has become a condition and possibility for knowledge production. Both the archive and the cinema are tied to networks of transmission, circulation, and exhibition that are now primarily digital. Despite the changes brought about by digital technology, the fact that film is a technological and reproducible media is as true now as it was during film's infancy. At the end of the nineteenth century, the reproducibility of film seemed to represent the utopian potential for mass access. Today we are again facing the similar potential for mass access of moving images. Whether some of the unfulfilled promises of the past might still be viable today is unclear. What is clear, however, is that we must look to the networks that transport moving images—both online and off—and to the infrastructures that enable film's distribution and circulation if we want to understand moving image art today and envision its future.

[354] Balsom's study, *After Uniqueness: A History of Film and Video Art in Circulation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), is an example of a history of moving images that examines the channels of distribution and circulation over questions of production and reception.

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