



## Übersicht über die Filme, die während der Ausstellung gezeigt werden

### „Jak walczy z brudem“, („Wie man den Dreck bekämpft“)

Stummfilm, schwarz-weiß, Polen ca. 1934, 7 Minuten

Inhalt: Der Film zeigt die Arbeit einer Gruppe von Ärzten und Sanitätern, die bei der polnischen Landbevölkerung eine Aufklärungskampagne über Hygienemaßnahmen und Fleckfieberprophylaxe durchführen. Der Film wurde durch das polnische Arbeits- und Sozialministerium veranlaßt. Der Arzt, der in der letzten Szene des Films eine Impfung durchführt, ist möglicherweise Ludwik Fleck (Aussage von O. Balinska).

Wir danken **Ulf Schmidt**, dass er uns den Film für die Vorführungen überlassen hat.

### „Science Fiction – No Final Truth: Ludwik Fleck“

Fernsehfilm, Yorkshire Television 1992, Spielfilm, Farbe, 25 Minuten (engl.)

Inhalt: Beitrag über die Erkenntnistheorie und Biographie Ludwik Flecks, wobei sich der Film auf die Tätigkeit Flecks als Häftlingsarzt im Konzentrationslager Buchenwald beschränkt.

Wir danken **Thomas Schnelle**, dass er uns den Film zur Verfügung gestellt hat.

### „La jetée“ – cine-roman

Chris. Marker 1962, Spielfilm, schwarz-weiß, 28 Minuten (franz.)

Inhalt: Inhaltsangabe und englische Übersetzung des Films finden sich in diesem Heft, ebenso ein Aufsatz von Jean-Louis Schefer: „On La Jeteé“ (engl.)

### „Bilder der Welt und Inschrift des Krieges“

Harun Farocki 1988, Dokumentarfilm, Farbe, 75 Minuten (dt.)

Inhalt: Inhaltsangabe und Kommentare zum Film finden sich in diesem Heft.

Wir danken **Christine Hanke** und **Judith Keilbach**, die uns bei der Beschaffung des Films behilflich waren.

Informationen über die Filme finden sich auch in dem Preprint: ...was überhaupt möglich ist – Zugänge zum Leben und Denken Ludwik Flecks im Labor der Moderne (Materialien zu einer Ausstellung)

# La Jetée's Script.

Part of the [Chris Marker World Wide Web Site](#).

Written by [Adrian Miles](#).

This script is reproduced from:

This is the story of a man, marked by an image from his childhood. The violent scene that upsets him, and whose meaning he was to grasp only years later, happened on the main jetty at Orly, the Paris airport, sometime before the outbreak of World War III.

Orly, Sunday. Parents used to take their children there to watch the departing planes.

On this particular Sunday, the child whose story we are telling was bound to remember the frozen sun, the setting at the end of the jetty, and a woman's face.

Nothing sorts out memories from ordinary moments. Later on they do claim remembrance when they show their scars. That face he had seen was to be the only peacetime image to survive the war. Had he really seen it? Or had he invented that tender moment to prop up the madness to come?

The sudden roar, the woman's gesture, the crumpling body, and the cries of the crowd on the jetty blurred by fear.

Later, he knew he had seen a man die.

And sometime after came the destruction of Paris.

Many died. Some believed themselves to be victors. Others were taken prisoner. The survivors

Above ground, Paris, as most of the world, was uninhabitable, riddled with radioactivity.

The victors stood guard over an empire of rats.

The prisoners were subjected to experiments, apparently of great concern to those who conducted them.

The outcome was a disappointment for some - death for others - and for others yet, madness.

One day they came to select a new guinea pig from among the prisoners.

He was the man whose story we are telling.

He was frightened. He had heard about the Head Experimenter. He was prepared to meet Dr. Frankenstein, or the Mad Scientist. Instead, he met a reasonable man who explained calmly that the human race was doomed. Space was off-limits. The only hope for survival lay in Time. A loophole in Time, and then maybe it would be possible to reach food, medicine, sources of energy.

This was the aim of the experiments: to send emissaries into Time, to summon the Past and Future to

the aid of the Present.

But the human mind balked at the idea. To wake up in another age meant to be born again as an adult. The shock would be too great.

Having only sent lifeless or insentient bodies through different zones of Time, the inventors were now concentrating on men given to very strong mental images. If they were able to conceive or dream another time, perhaps they would be able to live in it.

The camp police spied even on dreams.

This man was selected from among a thousand for his obsession with an image from the past.

Nothing else, at first, but stripping out the present, and its racks.

They begin again.

The man doesn't die, nor does he go mad. He suffers.

They continue.

On the tenth day, images begin to ooze, like confessions.

A peacetime morning. A peacetime bedroom, a real bedroom. Real children. Real birds. Real cats. Real graves.

On the sixteenth day he is on the jetty at Orly. Empty.

Sometimes he recaptures a day of happiness, though different.

A face of happiness, though different.

Ruins.

A girl who could be the one he seeks. He passes her on the jetty. She smiles at him from an automobile. Other images appear, merge, in that museum, which is perhaps that of his memory.

On the thirtieth day, the meeting takes place. Now he is sure he recognizes her. In fact, it is the only thing he is sure of, in the middle of this dateless world that at first stuns him with its affluence. Around him, only fabulous materials: glass, plastic, terry cloth. When he recovers from his trance, the woman has gone.

The experimenters tighten their control. They send him back out on the trail. Time rolls back again, the moment returns.

This time he is close to her, he speaks to her. She welcomes him without surprise. They are without memories, without plans. Time builds itself painlessly around them. Their only landmarks are the flavor of the moment they are living and the markings on the walls.

She asks him about his necklace, the combat necklace he wore at the start of the war that is yet to come. He invents an explanation.

They walk. They look at the trunk of a redwood tree covered with historical dates. She pronounces an English name he doesn't understand. As in a dream, he shows her a point beyond the tree, hears himself say, "This is where I come from ..." - and falls back, exhausted. Then another wave of Time



washes over him. The result of another injection perhaps.

Now she is asleep in the sun. He knows that in this world to which he has just returned for a while, only to be sent back to her, she is dead. She wakes up. He speaks again. Of a truth too fantastic to be believed he retains the essential: an unreachable country, a long way to go. She listens. She doesn't laugh.

Is it the same day? He doesn't know. They shall go on like this, on countless walks in which an unspoken trust, an unadulterated trust will grow between them, without memories or plans. Up to the moment where he feels - ahead of them - a barrier.

And this was the end of the first experiment.

It was the starting point for a whole series of tests, in which he would meet her at different times. Sometimes he finds her in front of their markings. She welcomes him in a simple way. She calls him her Ghost.

One day she seems frightened. One day she leans toward him. As for him, he never knows whether he moves toward her, whether he is driven, whether he has made it up, or whether he is only dreaming.

Around the fiftieth day, they meet in a museum filled with timeless animals. Now the aim is perfectly adjusted. Thrown at the right moment, he may stay there and move without effort.

She too seems tamed. She accepts as a natural phenomenon the ways of this visitor who comes and goes, who exists, talks, laughs with her, stops talking, listens to her, then disappears.

Once back in the experiment room, he knew something was different. The camp leader was there. From the conversation around him, he gathered that after the brilliant results of the tests in the Past, they now meant to ship him into the Future. His excitement made him forget for a moment that the meeting at the museum had been the last.

The Future was better protected than the Past. After more, painful tries, he eventually caught some waves of the world to come. He went through a brand new planet, Paris rebuilt, ten thousand incomprehensible avenues. Others were waiting for him. It was a brief encounter. Obviously, they rejected these scoriae of another time.

He recited his lesson: because humanity had survived, it could not refuse to its own past the means of its survival. This sophism was taken for Fate in disguise.

They gave him a power unit strong enough to put all human industry back into motion, and again the gates of the Future were closed.

Sometime after his return, he was transferred to another part of the camp. He knew that his jailers would not spare him. He had been a tool in their hands, his childhood image had been used as bait to condition him, he had lived up to their expectations, he had played his part. Now he only waited to be liquidated with, somewhere inside him, the memory of a twice-lived fragment of time.

And deep in this limbo, he received a message from the people of the world to come. They too travelled through Time, and more easily. Now they were there, ready to accept him as one of their own. But he had a different request: rather than this pacified future, he wanted to be returned to the world of his childhood, and to this woman who was perhaps waiting for him.

Once again the main jetty at Orly, in the middle of this warm pre-war Sunday afternoon where he could not stay, he thought in a confused way that the child he had been was due to be there too, watching the planes.

But first of all he looked for the woman's face, at the end of the jetty. He ran toward her. And when he recognized the man who had trailed him since the underground camp, he understood there was no way to escape Time, and that this moment he had been granted to watch as a child, which had never ceased to obsess him, was the moment of his own death.

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## On La Jetée

Introduction, by Paul Smith

Text by Jean-Louis Schefer

*The following article is Jean-Louis Schefer's meditation upon Chris Marker's 1962 film, the "photo-roman" La Jetée, and was published for the catalogue of a video exhibition, "Passages of the Image," that toured Europe and the United States in 1991 and 1992.*

*Marker's film, an astonishingly powerful experiment with word and image, is made from a series of stills and a voice-over narration that tells of experiments carried out on a prisoner in the underground camps to which everyone has been forced after the holocaust of World War III. The experiments will purportedly save humanity by sending "emissaries" into both the past and the future to bring back help. The experimental subject (the film suggests this is the narrator himself) is chosen because of his obsessive attachment to an image of the past—a young woman on the quay (la jetée) at Orly Airport when he was young. Under the auspices of the experiment, he reaches the past and spends time with this woman; but he is then brought back by the experimenters and sent to the future. The people of the future offer him refuge with them, but instead he asks them to return him to his past, to the quay at Orly and to the woman—and, as it turns out, to his own death.*

*The arrangement of time in this narrative is what Schefer's essay is largely concerned with—what he calls its tragic syllogism of past, present, and future. That is, Marker's film replicates with almost uncanny clarity the investigations of several of the essays translated here. Specifically, Marker investigates the desire attached to memory; he understands memory as a hope—which necessarily turns out to be an illusion—of returning to a childhood image; and he allegorizes the way in which, as Schefer might say, humanity is tortured in its attachment to the image.*

*There is, then, a certain consonance between the film and Schefer's concerns which he exposes. But Schefer is also interested here in something the film does not say but only enacts: that is, once again, the relation of image to writing, where the character's search for the image of childhood, the impossible secret of "ourselves," the mysterious birth*

*of our subjectivity, is caught somewhere between the novelistic or narrative element of the film and its visual element. The central character is narratively put to death by the conflicting experience of images or by this "tragic syllogism" of time. He is caught in their collision and dies from it, because, as Schefer says, he cannot write these images down.*

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"This is the story of a man marked by an image from his childhood." That's the opening (the first voice) of Chris Marker's film. The phrase broaches a story (the hero will travel in time toward that childhood image); the destruction of cities and the devastation of the earth's surface have threatened the very reality of the present and have thus let loose temporal virtualities normally locked up or held captive in the past (the past consisting only of a series of images that have become autonomous, tied to the living only by some affect or trauma). The fiction of *La Jetée* is thus a certain kind of work—whose object is the film's hero—concerning the paradoxes of memory, concerning the inclusion of the past that lives on within the hero as an image, as a secret that the laboratory experiments in the underground camp will try to make him confess. The realization of the confession comes with the death of the hero himself as he relives a moment of his past, as he meets once again the girl whose image has haunted him.

So it's a science-fictional hypothesis that underpins the organization of this film and, with particular emphases (the distance of the narrator, the modesty of the novelist), regulates the metaphysical problems that are then rapidly elaborated into a science-fictional argument in such a way as to render the paradoxes of lived time with the exteriority of an implacable syllogism. That syllogism is what leads the living human to meet his death, a death whose image is his secret.

But why that hypothesis? The originality of Chris Marker's film obviously resides, as has been regularly demonstrated, in the work of the image itself: a framing of the most obscure zones of memory's fragility and unpredictability; and a montage that replicates gaps in recollection. The image itself constitutes an unusual organization of storyline: Marker invents a type of narration that literature cannot often produce. Literature here appears only in the voice of the narrator-commentator: it borrows its script from the narrative mode of a Kafka.

Beyond its novelistic argument, the film consists in something other than an autobiographical project whose shape it wants to trace. These intimate



recollections, essentially tied to the return of the figure of a childhood love, can only be organized in a science-fictional scenario (the role of that obsessive image is also to denaturalize the fiction): such a scenario constitutes the expansion of the field where the subject of memory, of recollection, of relived affects, is put into an experimental situation. He is the milieu, the strictly individual and lonely guinea pig, of an experiment of which he is both the key and the secret.

I want at least to remark the way this hypothesis works around a "novelistic" autobiographical project within the framework of a science-fictional scenario: the subject of memory is implicated as the place where time itself, in some strange way, gets used up. What constitutes the subject's secret is always the image of a personal event, a mystery of his "self" that's supported and guaranteed by recourse to recollections of a person he once loved. The science-fictional hypothesis contains precisely what one might call the non-Proustian aspect of recollections in the form of images: the real time of the experimental subject isn't constituted in the kind of invisible images (syntheses of smells, sounds, forms, vague affects) that animate Proust's writing and make all his pre-scription seem symbolic, but instead is made up of alien images that frame the subject.

This experimental subject is trapped—as in a labyrinth—in the drama of memory whose whole experience consists in making something his own (in a certain way he dies within himself, by a reconciliation or a coincidence of time and images). The paradox of the experiment (extirpating the subject's intimate images) is the construction of a fiction around the very act of memory: the subject (that is, the nameless hero) is obviously constituted only by those images through which he begins, or leads to term, a kind of transaction, or in the course of which these images become the equivalent of a piece of time—and time becomes the equivalent of the object of the experiment, having no other consistent representation except in those images that retain faces and affects (affects that in a certain way indifferently his objects: in other words, images of the "present" alone, images of the work of destruction, are alive, and fragile). Recurring images are in fact the raw material of temporal "synthesis"—a synthesis which is not quite of the order of truth (nor of verifiability—torture is endless and ineffectual unless it procures the confession of a secret). It's that the subject (I don't know whether to call him the hero or the narrator), confesses, articulates, discovers something that is the constitutive principle of his soul (and no philosophy stops us from imagining this as the producer of synthetic time, an excess).

Also (beyond this demonstrable paradox that's the proper object of

autobiographical rather than novelistic writing), I'm well aware of the actual context for the hypothesis: that is, the invention of the machinery or the narrative motor that starts up the experiment through which the subject (at first believing himself to be constrained) discovers for himself this living object mortally trapped in a coil of time.

That, for those of my generation, is the memory (an imperfect memory, but one that induces the greater part of our sensibility), the memory of or the kind of mnemonic damage caused by the war in our childhood: a primal consciousness of an era of planetary destruction which has lodged a soul within us, like a bullet or a piece of shrapnel that hit us and by chance reached a center where it could live on after having done no more than destroy a town or kill someone other than us.

And yet this paradox (that is to say, this artifice) touches something very profound in us; you see it in Rousseau, in Proust: the frailty of the intimate object, or the frailty of the secret, cleaving the subject (the self) to this tenuous thing that we usually take to be a sign of our unique individuality (and no doubt it is such a sign): our justification and our licence for braving this waning of time (that is, the work itself) always come by way of an insignificant little ritournelle, a tiny machine that repeats our access to childhood.

I can't do a proper account or a real analysis of Chris Marker's photo-novel. I can't exactly decide whether it's a film or the outline for a novel (trapped terribly in that tragic syllogism). The striking thing—or the impeccable thing, perhaps—is that the syllogism which defines this whole theatrical act defers the death of the hero for as long as he can speak, for as long as he can evoke the world of the living, can say his evening prayers: the syllogism of this tragedy is a scenario. That's how I explain to myself—artificially—the material of this narration and the discontinuity in it that gives me the idea of an essentializing selection, exactly; the sketchy, fragmentary aspect of the evocation and of the narrative, the elaboration on pent-up time, rediscovering the characters alive in that antique "place" where images cohabit and commingle.

Can this film possibly substitute for the writing of a novel? To whom to attribute the continuous voice accompanying the images? By whom is this adventure told? A witness, the depersonalized essence of the hero?

An experimenter? Or someone who has absolute knowledge of time, death, and the paradoxes of memory? The narrator or commentator (whoever is describing the whole experiment and its length, and who possesses knowledge of the hero's soul--of the subject of the experiment), the one who speaks in the film, he is not its author, but the author of the novel that the film blows apart, sketches out, jettisons, cuts, and whose substance it reworks. That substance is the secret: the secret that animates the novel's unending quest for that lost face and produces the petrified image that makes the character disappear behind the reality of an experimental subject, this nameless hero who can't survive the conflict of images--who can't, that is, write it down. He himself is an image, precisely the thing that the novel disperses or can never stabilize.

The almost constantly present face of the "hero" nonetheless makes me believe or understand that it is in fact the hero who's speaking and that it is the novelist who comes to describe the world according to his subjective science. Knowledge in process (Condillac's statue worked by way of its details in his memory: mortgaged by memory) is an image of the past (that is, something of the intimate consciousness of time).

The girl is protected (the statues, the museum, her slumber) by time. She is the face of time and, above all, the very content of time (its secret, its truth). He, as the subject of time (she is his sovereign), becomes the agent of her quiet truth: the machinery of time puts the hero to death by the coincidence of two images.

But what remains unexplained is how the past itself can be edited into a form: the form of the film itself; more exactly, how can a fiction of the past be edited into something that can represent the past for someone whose experimental life consists in being affected by a form of time as it reconstitutes the fragments of a disappeared world--fragments that make up the suspended life of this subject who is composed entirely by his suffering of time. Time isn't a content, nor a frame; it's no more than an affect, in that it is a consciousness that has become autonomous, become independent of the events that were once its form. Those events have opened up a whole world of sentiments, rather than actions.

It would be absurd and not very useful here to try to demarcate the film's objects, its degrees of reality or expressivity. Yet I feel that by attaching myself to the story I'm neglecting something. The story isn't in fact quite equivalent to the narration, which is made up of particular narrative devices (images and their continuity, the montage

techniques and editing that produce the continuity). Almost the opposite, the story itself, presented in narrative form, partly utilizes that form as a sort of ephemeral theater in which another part--the part that makes this story come alive for me--remains invisible and necessarily deprived of images. This same story (it could be written) without its science-fictional alibi (that is, without its luminous originality as well), where I search for that girl from my own childhood (my life can in a way be said to depend upon her, and yet, when any event from what we call the past is thrown into jeopardy...), this same "written" history will have to work with still another paradox: it is an investigation of faces that have become invisible.

This film, however, is something other than that. The story (which, I tell myself, is what grips me most of all) is perhaps the alibi or the cause of the film's organization and its material, in the same way as a face, a person, or a "type" are actually the cause of a portrait rather than its object.

The extreme emotion of images fading to white, fading to black, constitutes a subvention of the film's material or its narrative mode. The destructible image in the eclipsed world (being reduced to a surface, a shot), this jostled image--all its cuts, angles, and surprises--is for me strangely linked to the whispering sound of the German language (the film's narrative is in French, but the protagonists who speak do so in German; they enunciate the phases of the experiment). Why does the whole secret of the experiment reside in the *Murmeln*, the *Flüstern*, so close to the heart of a remembered *Lied* that speaks falteringly from out of silence? It's easy to imagine that for a long time the war and the experiments on bodies, where humanity becomes laboratory material, were a German thing; to imagine that psychoanalysis, science gone astray and applied in horrible conditions, yet remaining frighteningly human to the last (according to the admirable thinking of Robert Antelme), spoke in the voice of this German language, like the ghostly symptom of Romanticism's sense of our species; and easy to imagine that, once it has interrogated Western culture, it begins its abysmal and violent descent to insinuate itself into the memory of its subjects.

In this score, in the choir whispering this stifled *Lied*, I hear too the heavy dialogue of the devils from the second *Faust*; the young girl of the romantic stage is revived, the eternal mystery of survival to a mad or dead poet; the young girl of ancient Greece in Hegel, who represents both knowledge and the innocence of philosophy; or the woman whom Kierkegaard imagines to know already what Socrates does not. Romanticism has translated Dante so that Beatrice stands for the very insistence of death



because death has become an amorous vocation, and the limits of the world have thus been redefined—and that same century was discovering negativity. So it's from this hell—that is, the place from which, progressively, through jump cuts and flashbacks, memory's event is drawn by the sweetness, the violence, and in any case the capture of recollection (from a time that resists elision because a part of the subject began to be born then)—it's from this experimental terrain (this terrain which consists in a man navigating blindly, struggling along in a body alienated from its own images, in the film version of his unrecognizable life), it's from here that the flower of pure love arises, the object of all of humanity's nostalgia, the memory of a love becoming innocent in the image.

We're fascinated by the destruction of this image that we believe is an essence only because it's so fragile and feeble in its characteristics, and because we believe that our very existence, so dependent upon this reality locked away in the past, is consistent with that image since, in the end, something of ourselves, our soul, or our secret (our intimate time), is affected by its fragility. We're persuaded, equally, that this fiction of a time rolled up in time, preserving the old film of what we once were, we're persuaded that this parenthetical time within time articulates or produces or proves the approach of an ancient death. All I see there is this: images of life sliding, being destroyed, and growing dark within the story that they give rise to. The beauty of this thought: that the experimental subject of memory lives on only in the experiment; he dies from it or can't survive what it has awoken. Just as a face can't survive the notion of resemblance that makes a portrait something other than an idea or something other than the representation of an absent person. A fidelity: sometimes fidelity to the game where someone sits for the painting. But sometimes it's the fleeting fidelity to a destiny in which that game is but a ruse.

## Kommentare zu dem Film ‚Bilder der Welt und Inschrift des Krieges‘ von Harun Farocki

Fluchtpunkt von *Bilder der Welt* ist das Gedankenbild vom blinden Fleck' der Auswerter von amerikanischen Flugaufnahmen, die sich 1944 nur für die industrielle Anlage der IG-Farben, nicht aber für das nahegelegene Konzentrationslager Auschwitz interessierten. Kommentar und Hinweise auf den Luftaufnahmen zeigen, daß erst Jahrzehnte später der CIA entdeckte, was die Alliierten 1944 nicht sehen wollten: daß neben dem industriellen Bombenziel IG-Farben-Werke das KZ Auschwitz abgebildet war. (Einmal blitzt, inmitten dieser nachträglichen Untersuchung, das Bild eines Wellenkanals auf, das bereits am Anfang des Films zu sehen war, erkennbar auf die Bindung des Blicks rekurrierend: denn Blick und Gedanken sind nicht frei, wo Maschinen im Verein mit Wissenschaft und Militär das zu Untersuchende vorgeben). Farocki trifft damit die Essenz der medialen Gewalt, eine 'terroristische Ästhetik' (Paul Virilio) des optischen Reizes, die heute auf den Kontrollbildschirmen wie auch im Fernsehen mit dem eingestandenem Ziel erscheint, so wie zu Kriegszeiten den Beobachter oder Zuseher entweder zum Komplizen oder zum potentiellen Opfer zu machen.

(Christa Blümlinger)

Die Luftaufnahmen der Alliierten halten die Zerstörung fest. Sie dokumentieren die Treffergenauigkeit der Bomben, konservieren Vernichtung. Die Geschichte dieser Bilder von Auschwitz wird erzählt mit vielen anderen Geschichten von Bildern der Welt, vor und nach Auschwitz. Aber alle weisen sie auf jenes Bild, und Auschwitz ist in jedem einzelnen enthalten. Es bildet den Gravitationspunkt für die Schleifen der Filmtelle und zugleich die Projektionsfläche für alle anderen Bilder: Sie tragen die Inschrift des Krieges, der Massenfertigung, des Verfalls der Handarbeit, der Enteignung der menschlichen Sinne und Fähigkeiten. Alfred Kantor war gezwungen zu zeichnen, er zeichnete 'fotografisch' genau, um das Unvorstellbare zuü berliefern. Die Apparatur der Fotografie bildet diese Wirklichkeit nicht ab, das Medium ist selbst Resultat der Abstraktion gegenüber den Menschen, sie bringt eine Fremdheit mit sich, die zerstörerisch ist.

(Jörg Becker, TAZ, 30.01.1989)

Man muß gegen die Bilder ebenso mißtrauisch sein wie gegen die Wörter. Beide werden in Reden und Bedeutungszusammenhängen eingeflochten. Man muß die Praxis eines Bildes untersuchen. Mit welcher Bedeutung und in welcher Kette von Bedeutungen erscheint es? Es gibt keine Literatur ohne Sprachkritik, ohne daß der Autor der vorhandenen Sprache gegenü ber kritisch ist. Ebenso verhält es sich mit Filmen. Man muß keine neuen, nie gesehenen Bilder suchen, aber man muß die vorhandenen Bilder in einer Weise bearbeiten, daß sie neu werden. Da gibt es verschiedene Wege. Mein Weg ist es, nach verschüttetem Sinn zu suchen und den Schutt, der auf den Bildern liegt, wegzuräumen.

(Harun Farocki, 1988)



# Bilder der Welt und Inschrift des Krieges

Film von Harun Farocki

## Stab:

Kamera: Ingo Kratisch

Trick-Kamera: Irina Hoppe

Ton: Klaus Klingler

Mischung: Gerhard Jensen-Nelson

Negativschnitt: Elke Granke

Recherche und Regieassistentz: Michael Trabitzsch

Produktion: Harun Farocki

Mit Mitteln der Kulturellen

Filmförderung NRW

**BRD 1988 16mm, 75 Minuten**

## Inhalt

Eine Frau ist in Auschwitz angekommen. Die Fotografie, die ihr Schönsein bewahrt, ist von der gleichen SS gemacht, die auch das Lager führt -und sie zugrunde richten wird. Wie das zusammenspielt, bewahren und zerstören! Wie mit solchen Bildern umgehen? Wie dieses Foto zeigen und in Anführungsstriche setzen? Ein Essayfilm über die Fotografie und die Verwertung der Bilder. Unter anderem geht es um die Frage, was Auschwitz heute für uns bedeuten kann. Dazu geht der Film zurück bis ins Jahr 1858, als dem Regierungsbauführer Meydenbauer die Idee kam, Gebäude anhand von Fotos auszumessen. Meßbilder für die Denkmalpflege. Meßbilder konnte auch der preußische Kriegsminister brauchen. Was einen Zusammenhang schafft, da Militärs zerstören und Denkmalpfleger bewahren.

Ein Film, der Auseinandergerissenes verbindet, ohne es in eins zu setzen. Es geht um die Frage, wie der Krieg, die Produktion von Bildern und die Industrie zusammenhängen. Ohne mit Weil und Deshalb zu antworten. Ein Film, der Bilder gelten läßt und befragt, aber nicht ausbeutet. In Paßbildern algerischer Frauen entziffert er das Erschrecken, identifiziert zu werden. Ein Film, der sich Auschwitz aus 7000 Metern Höhe nähert und der sich weigert, die Leiden und das Sterben anschaulich zu machen und also zu verkitschen -wie es üblich ist. Der Film verspricht etwas anderes: den Blick des Zuschauers zu binden, ohne ihn zu fesseln und so Gedanken freizusetzen.

**DAS BILD:** Am 4. April starteten amerikanische Flugzeuge in Foggia/Italien und flogen Ziele in Schlesien an. Beim Anflug auf die im Bau befindlichen Anlagen der IG-Farben machten sie ein Bild von Auschwitz. Die Aufnahmen kamen zur Auswertung nach Medmanham in England. Die Auswerter entdeckten die Fabriken; die Todesfabrik Auschwitz entdeckten sie nicht. Sie hatten keinen Auftrag, das Lager zu suchen und also fanden sie es nicht.

## DIE FRAGE:

Auschwitz nicht aus der Luft angegriffen?- Diese Frage richteten jüdische Funktionäre wiederholt an die Alliierten in London und Washington, nachdem die Wahrheit über das Lager auf anderen Wegen ins Ausland gesickert war. Tatsächlich hätte die SS die Krematorien 1944 nicht mehr aufbauen können. Die Alliierten lehnten jedoch ab. Man müsse sich auf den militärischen Sieg über Deutschland konzentrieren.

## DIE GESCHICHTE:

Rudolf Vrba und Alfred Wetzler. Sie schrieben einen genauen Bericht über das Lager. Drei Exemplare ihres Zeugnisses wurden abgesandt: eines erreichte London und Washington, ein anderes ging an den päpstlichen Nuntius. Jetzt war die Wahrheit über das Todeslager weitergegeben, - aber Auschwitz wurde nicht bombardiert. Der Bericht -das Foto -die Frage: In dem Film von Harun Farocki ergeben sie eine Geschichte, die vor Auschwitz begann und nach Auschwitz nicht endete. Nichts ist zynischer als die Wirklichkeit: Im Lager war es jedem Häftling strengstens verboten zu fotografieren. Die SS aber fotografierte: Sie machte Aufnahmen von der "Selektion". Alfred Kantor, ein Häftling, zeichnete das Lager so exakt wie ein Foto. Er tat dies, um eine Wirklichkeit zu überliefern, die die Grenze des Vorstellbaren unendlich überschritten hatte. Die Aufzeichnung des Undenkbaren ist so unpersönlich, als wären es nicht mehr Menschen, die an diesem Ort vernichtet wurden. Hilflös stehen wir vor einer Realität, die so jenseits des Menschen ist, daß sie ihren adäquaten Ausdruck in einem Foto findet, das aufgenommen aus 7.000 Metern Höhe, die Schlange vor der Gaskammer als Häufung winziger Punkte, als statistische Daten registriert. Die SS fotografierte: Sie wollte im Detail dokumentieren, wie sie Millionen Menschen vernichtete, ohne Spuren zu hinterlassen. In irgendeiner furchtbaren Zukunft hätte sie die Bilder präsentiert, um zu zeigen, was wirklich geschah. Was wirklich geschah, wollte Alfred Kantor überliefern, der zeichnete, um den Fotoapparat zu ersetzen. Die Häftlinge wollten ein Bild nach außen bringen - die SS machte Bilder im Innern dieser Hölle. Nichts ist grausamer als diese Simultaneität: das Bestreben, die Wirklichkeit im Bild festzuhalten. Das ist, sagt Harun Farocki, die Wahrheit der Bilder. Darum tragen sie die Inschrift des Krieges. Das Foto dokumentiert die Zerstörung, und die fotografische Wahrnehmung liegt immer in dem schwer bestimmbaren Raum zwischen Aufbewahren und Vernichten. Bis einmal beide Pole in eins zusammenschließen: in das Bild von Auschwitz,



aufgenommen aus 7000 Metern Höhe. Und die Insassen des Lagers, die den Flieger hörten, wünschten, er möge Zerstörung über diese Stätte des Todes bringen. Diese Geschichte erzählt Harun Farocki. Er erzählt sie, indem er viele andere Geschichten und Bilder zeigt. Die Geschichte des Meißbildes, das entwickelt wurde, um Bauwerke, z.B. eine Artilleriestellung, anhand von Fotos ermessen zu können. Die Geschichte einer Metalldrückerei, die Suchscheinwerfer produzierte für die fotografische Aufhellung des Himmels. Und zuletzt sehen wir: Alle diese Geschichten tragen die Inschrift des Krieges. "Texte aus dem Schneidetisch, nicht Schnitte aus der Schreibmaschine"

#### **Gespräch mit Harun Farocki:**

In "Etwas wird sichtbar" sagt Robert: Man muß alles verbinden. Das ist auch die Methode des Films. Beschreibt dieser Satz auch "Bilder der Welt und Inschrift des Krieges"?

H.F.: Ja, das ist fast wie bei einem Domino-Spiel. Man probiert die Wertigkeiten. Verbinden heißt dabei natürlich nicht, alles einzuebrennen, sondern, daß man eine Spannung zwischen den Verschiedensten Dingen sucht oder findet. In "Wie man sieht" habe ich sehr weit auseinanderliegende Dinge in Verbindung gebracht: z.B. die Bedeutung der Weggabelung und die Geburt der Rechenmaschine aus dem Geist der Weberei. In diesem Film nun liegen die Gegenstände nicht so weit voneinander entfernt. Die Spannung soll sich eher aus der Weise aufbauen, in der sie aufeinander bezogen werden. "Bilder der Welt -Inschrift des Krieges" hat einen übersichtlichen Bauplan, in dem sich bestimmte Themen wiederholen.

H.F.: Der Film hat eine rhythmische Komposition. Er geht nicht von A zu B oder Z; er durchläuft Schleifen. Die Dinge, die erscheinen, kommen verändert immer wieder an verschiedenen Stellen vor. In anderer Umgebung und von anderer Seite. Das gilt nicht nur für die Themen, das gilt auch für die Bilder.

In deinen Filmen wird die Macht des Augenscheins stets gebrochen, die Bilder werden entschlüsselt und gelesen. Warum muß man den Bildern mißtrauen?

H.F.: Man muß gegen Bilder ebenso mißtrauisch sein wie gegen die Wörter. Es gibt keine Literatur ohne Sprachkritik, ohne daß der Autor der vorhandenen Sprache gegenüber kritisch ist. Ebenso ist es bei Filmen. Man muß keine neuen, nie gesehenen Bilder suchen, aber man muß die vorhandenen Bilder in einer Weise bearbeiten, daß sie neu werden. Da gibt es verschiedene Wege. Mein Weg ist es, nach verschüttetem Sinn zu suchen und den Schutt, der auf den Bildern liegt, wegzuräumen. Ich versuche dabei nicht, dem Film Ideen beizugeben; ich versuche, in Film zu

denken, damit die Ideen aus der filmischen Artikulation kommen. So wie es ein Unterschied ist, ob man in einer Sprache denkt und spricht oder ob man das Gedachte in eine andere Sprache übersetzt. Ganz wörtlich habe ich dabei die Texte aus dem Schneidetisch und nicht die Schnitte aus der Schreibmaschine.

Der Film spielt mit Parallelen; z.B. der zwischen der Haltung des SS-Mannes, der die Schönheit der Gefangenen fotografisch einfängt und dem Meißbildverfahren, das dazu taugt, Bauwerke, für den Fall der Zerstörung, rekonstruieren zu können. So gelingt eine Vergegenwärtigung des Vergangenen.

H.F.: Man muß es sich so vergegenwärtigen: Hannah Arendt fand Eichmann lächerlich, sie mußte über ihn lachen. Die Leute heute, die die Massenvernichtungswaffen gebaut haben und die jetzt an SDI arbeiten, sind nicht einmal Ideologen wie Eichmann. Sie sind nicht einmal lächerlich. An uns richtet sich die Frage, warum wir nichts gegen die Vernichtungswaffen tun, die es heute in unserer nächsten Nähe gibt. Damals wurde Auschwitz nicht bombardiert, es wurde nicht gehandelt, wo handeln wir heute nicht? Die Amerikaner sagten, sie müßten zuerst den Krieg gegen die Nazis gewinnen. Wir handeln wie die Amerikaner 1944: Wir brauchen unsere Kraft für etwas anderes. Für was?  
(Interview: Stefan Reinecke)

#### **Sehen und aufklären**

Harun Farockis Essayfilm "Bilder der Welt und Inschrift des Krieges" ...Im Glücksfall heißt dieser Regisseur Harun Farocki und kann sich dieser Logik so lustvoll und klug, so subversiv wie dezidiert bedienen, daß die Strukturen der (Film)-Illusion sichtbar werden, ohne die raffinierte, halbdokumentarische, essayistische Struktur seines eigenen Films gesprengt und etwa dem "unfilmischen" nur kommentierenden Wort die Arbeit an und mit den Bildern überantwortet würde... Farockis Arbeit ist eine komplizierte Umgehung der Simulation: Sie zielt auf die Reflexion der Simulation. Farockis "Macht" beruht dabei auf der Kenntnis scheinbar akausaler und disparater historischer Ereignisse und Überlieferungen, die er miteinander in Verbindung bringt, ohne sie deshalb gleichzusetzen. Mittel dieser zwanglosen und doch zum Denken in Gegensätzen zwingenden Filmästhetik ist eine äußerst skrupellose Montagetechnik. Die Bilder selbst: Vor-Bilder, Zwischen-Bilder zunächst. Eine Skizze von Dürer, in der sich zur Erläuterung des Sehvorgangs in einem Auge Strahlen bündeln. Die Gesichter algerischer Frauen, die 1960 zum ersten Mal, zudem ohne Schleier, fotografiert wurden. Die Innenräume einer Kunstakademie, in der unterschiedliche Ansichten eines Aktmodells entstehen. Das Antlitz einer Frau, das sich beständig verändert, weil es nach dem schablonen- und collagenartigen Verfahren einer Täterbeschreibung zum Phantombild wird, in dem sich Bruchstücke anderer Frauengesichter überlagern. Die



Gemeinsamkeit dieser Bilder: Sie tehen in einer Assoziationskette, deren Verlauf im Kopf des Betrachters Fragen nach dem Verlust der Intimität, des Ausgeliefertseins an den Erfassungsdienst der Kamera, der vergeblichen Illusion von Identität nach sich zieht. Das Fremde und Vereinzelte der Bilder: Sie entwinden sich der eindeutigen Einordnung. Es gilt, die isolierten Assoziations- und Argumentationsstränge dieser bildlichen "Richt-Linien" des Films zu sehen, bevor sie sich im Auge zu einem Gesamteindruck des Films bündeln. "Aufklärung", so der Kommentar " ist ein Wort aus der Geistesgeschichte". Und ein wenig päter: "Aufklärung ist ein Wort aus der Militärsprache. Oder der Sprache der Polizei. "Von der zerstörerischen Ambivalenz, die ein Wort entfalten kann, ind auch die Bilder betroffen. Der Ort, an dem für Farocki die Inschrift des Krieges in den Bildern der Welt sichtbar wird, ist Auschwitz. Sein Film zeigt drei Bildebenen von Auschwitz. Drei extreme Standorte, von denen aus und aus denen sich die Struktur der Grausamkeit ablesen läßt. Da ist die Photographie eines SS-Mannes, der eine Frau auf dem Weg ins Lager aufgenommen hat. Die Kamera des SS-Mannes hat eine Frau fixiert, die ermordet werden wird. Dann sind da die Zeichnungen von Alfred Kantor, der Auschwitz überlebte und "naturgetreu" rekonstruierte. Wenn die Wege der Photographie so leicht zur Mittäterschaft führen wie zur Zeugenschaft, was bleibt den Opfern? Die Simulation einer höllischen Simulation. In Auschwitz war die Gaskammer als Duschaum eingerichtet, die Wagen, in denen Zyklon B antransportiert wurde, trugen die Zeichen des Roten Kreuzes. Kein Zeichen, kein Wort, kein Bild, auf das Verlaß ist. Aus einem dritten Blickwinkel sieht man Auschwitz aus der Draufsicht. Aus 7000 Meter Höhe nehmen sich die Deportierten vor den Krematorien wie eine Blutspur aus. "Die Photographie, die das bewahrt, und die Bombe, die zerstört, das drängt im Zweiten Weltkrieg zusammen. "Aber die Bombe fiel nicht auf Auschwitz. Die Luftaufnahmen der Alliierten entstanden nur durch ein Versehen. Weil die Besatzung das Gelände der IG Farben aufspüren wollte und nicht das Lager, fand sie es auch nicht. Auch später, als zwei Augenzeugen entkommen konnten und die Alliierten verständigten, wurde das KZ nicht bombardiert. Seit dem 4. April 1944 hatten die Alliierten ein Bild von Auschwitz. Aber sie machten sich keins von den Qualen der Verschleppten. Heike Kühn in Frankfurter Rundschau 13.5.89

[zurück zur Übersicht](#)

## Bilder der Welt und Inschrift des Krieges

by Allan James Thomas



Allan James Thomas teaches Documentary Film Theory and Digital Media at RMIT University, and is currently completing a PhD at La Trobe University on the non-significational content of film, focusing mainly on the writing of Gilles Deleuze.

*Bilder der Welt und Inschrift des Krieges (Images of the World and the Inscription of War, 1988 W. Germany 75mins)*

Source: ACMI/NLA Prod, Dir, Scr: Harun Farocki Phot: Ingo Kratisch

With: Cynthia Beatt

Most discussion of documentary film tends to be organised around the concept of indexicality; that the image has a direct, physical connection to the reality it represents, in the same way a footprint in the sand is a trace of the physicality of the foot that imprints itself upon that sand. The documentary image is thus theorised as a doubling of the thing itself, a doubling of reality. As a result, the questions that are then asked of the documentary image tend to focus on *how* that reality is represented, how it is told, shown, examined. Even in those documentaries that reflexively interrogate their own representation of reality, the issue tends to remain how and to what extent our relationship to that originary reality is mediated by that image. For Harun Farocki, however, this relationship demands to be re-read entirely.

This necessity of *reading* the image lies at the core of *Bilder der Welt und Inschrift des Krieges*. Here, the image is not the visible trace of an originary reality so much as it is something legible, something which must be *read* as much as it is seen, or even in order that it be seen. Moreover, the legibility of this image is intimately linked to the erasure, forgetting or destruction of 'its' object: it is intimately and necessarily a form of violence upon the world, its destruction as much as its doubling. The translated title of Farocki's film gives this to us explicitly; 'Images of the World and the Inscription of War'.

There is a clear resonance between *Bilder der Welt* and the writing of Paul Virilio, in particular *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*. (1) Virilio draws out the links between cinema as an organisation of perception and the role of changing technologies of perception in the organisation of war. Put simply, you can only kill what you can see: "For men at war, the function of the weapon is the function of the eye." (2) Etienne-Jules Marey's chronophotographic rifle (which featured a revolving unit that could take a series of photographs, designed to enable the photographer to follow and capture objects moving through space) is in this context



both a precursor of the cinema and a direct descendent of the multi-chambered Colt revolver. The technology of the image and the technology of death operate under the same principles; the light which exposes the photographic image is equally the light which exposes the target: the visibility of the image is a precondition of war.

However, the image is not simply a precondition of violence; it is, Farocki suggests, a violence in and of itself. "A photographic image is a cut, a section through the bundle of light rays reflected off objects in a circumscribed space." (3) The violence of this cut is the image's extraction of the thing as *data*, a series of points of dark and light to be read, to be analysed, thus producing the thing as an object, a function, a tool. *Bilder der Welt* returns repeatedly to the role of the image in transforming phenomena into data; the analysis of the movement of water in an artificial wave tank, photographic scale measurement, image processing, military aerial reconnaissance, police identikit portraits, architectural modelling. The data thus extracted replaces the thing, the phenomena itself with something more malleable, more productive, more comprehensible. And yet this comprehension of the object is tied directly to its destruction, even where it is conceived as a protective measure (Farocki's privileged example is the use of photographic scale measurement to document heritage buildings, but the archiving of the DNA of endangered species is an equally appropriate example – possessing the species as data, as DNA, facilitates its destruction since it can theoretically be resurrected at any time, thus removing the imperative to prevent its extinction in the first place).

Farocki's film work (which began in West Germany in 1966, and continues today) is often aligned with the essay-film tradition exemplified by the work of Chris Marker. Certainly, *Bilder der Welt* and *San Soleil/Sunless* (1982) have their similarities; the deployment of diverse and apparently fragmentary images, a narration which interrogates as much as it explains or describes those images, a constant circling back and repetition, re-reading or re-writing of the image. The idea of the 'essay' film has a specific resonance for Farocki's work, however, inasmuch as it explicitly points to the notion of the filmic image as a form of writing or inscription, and thus of violence. At one point in *Bilder der Welt* he shows us an image from the train platform at Auschwitz, taken as a transport of Jewish victims are being unloaded by SS men by the light of many spotlights, and asks "First thought: why all these spotlights? Is a film being shot?" What is preserved, inscribed, in this image is destruction itself, a destruction more vast than any image can show. It cannot be seen in the image, and thus it must be *read* in it, and nevertheless in this reading it is destroyed, thematised, produced as an object of knowledge. What is essayed in Farocki's work, in his images, then is this: that the image is disastrous, in Blanchot's sense it "...ruins everything, all the while leaving everything intact"; preservation as destruction, preservation of destruction, erasing itself in its own writing. (4)

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*Endnotes:*

1. Paul Virilio, *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*, trans. Patrick Camille (London & New York: Verso, 1989). ▲
2. Virilio 20. ▲
3. Harun Farocki, "Reality Would Have to Begin," trans. Marek Wieczorek, with Thomas Keenan and Thomas Y. Levin, *Human Rights Project*,

<http://www.bard.edu/hrp/keenam/farocki.htm>. Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2002.  
First published as "Die Wirklichkeit hätte zu beginnen," in Bernd Busch, Udo Liebelt, and Werner Oeder, eds., *Fotovision: Projekt Fotografie nach 150 Jahren* (Hannover: Sprengel Museum, 1988) 119-125. ▲

4. Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln & London: U of Nebraska P, 1995) 1. ▲

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### **Bilder der Welt und Inschrift des Krieges (Interview Heike Kühn)**

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<http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/01/19/cteq/bilder.html>

