

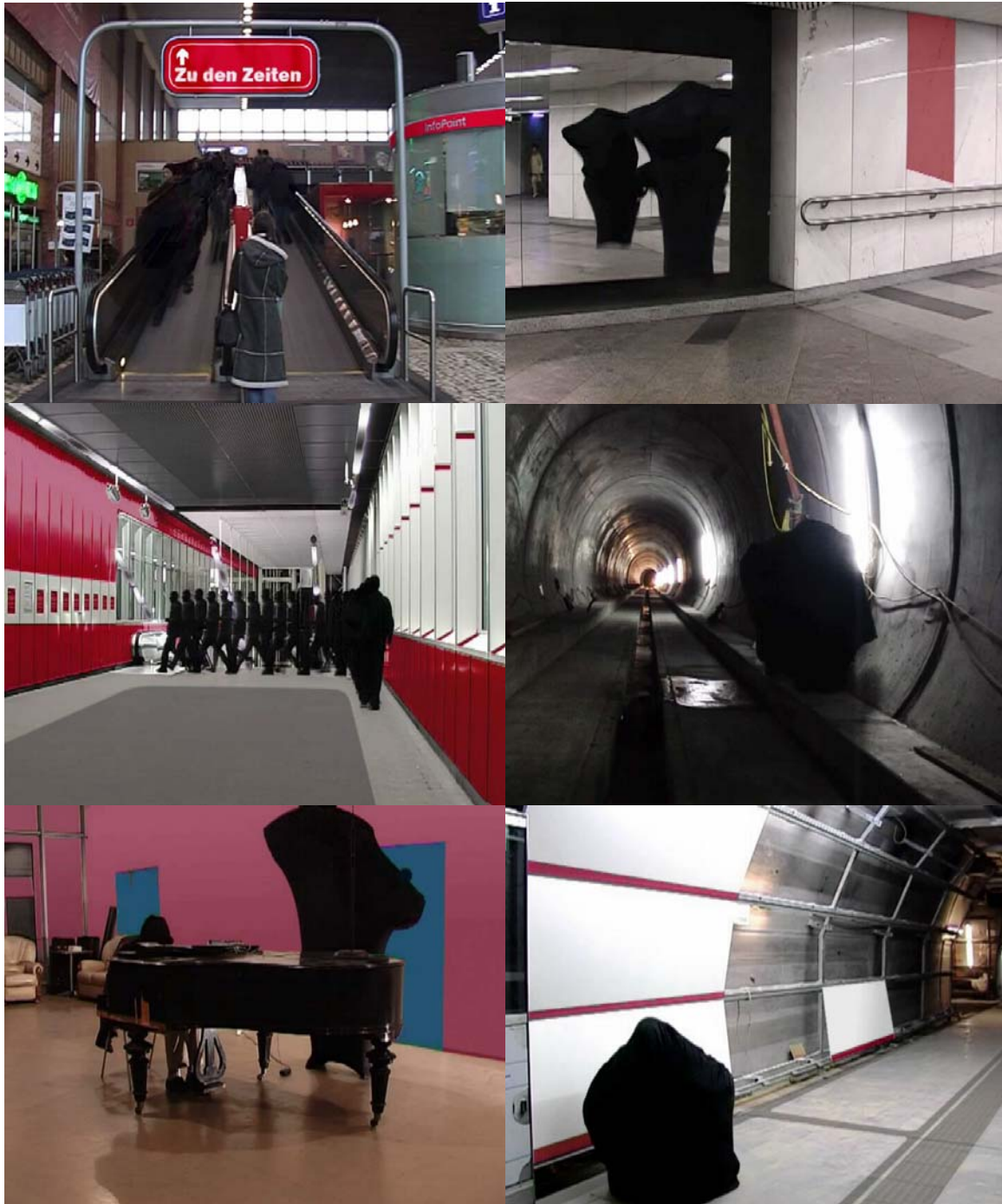
EMOTION IN DER FORM DES ZEIT-BILDES

A FORMAL APPROACH TO UNCONSCIOUS EMOTIONS IN TIME-BASED ARTS.

BY ANDREAS FRAUNBERGER

ABSTRACT

Starting with a projection of my Video "Zu den Zeiten" [To the times], my presentation dealt about the correspondence of time-based arts and science. I have developed the screened Video during the work on my dissertation, titled "the figuration of the unconscious in avant garde film". Main topic of this scientific work is to analyze works of three Austrian filmmakers Kurt Kren, Peter Tscherkassky and Martin Arnold. These films are analyzed from the perspective of the possibility of expression of the unconscious mind and emotions in film. The Intention of my video "Zu den Zeiten" is to condense scientific results in an aesthetic manner and to refer to the tradition of avant garde film in the video medium. Hence, the main point of my presentation is the application of the metapsychological model of contemporary, evidence based psychoanalytic theory and subsequent theories to the understanding of film and time based media. I introduced and discussed relations between the filmic form and unconscious processes and emotions, applying categories like the symptom, the primary process and various models of repetition in psychoanalysis and film. In my presentation, references to contemporary theories of mind go along with a focus on the political dimension of unconscious emotions in arts. Also I showed up connections between scientific and aesthetic knowledge.



Abbildungen: aus dem Video "Zu den Zeiten" von Andreas Fraunberger

Excerpts of the video are available as online video stream at: <http://www.redindy.com>

KURT KREN AND THE FORMALISM OF THE ABSURD

Kurt Kren is one of the central figures of the avant-garde film movement. He represents a radical, and contentious, artistic approach. His works are characterized by precision as well as an unbending devotion to his ideals. Kren's experimental documentaries about Viennese Actionism go beyond simple pleasantries. Out of this confrontation emerged novel structural films, which would become harbinger for a new way of movie making. His works are characterized by a certain conceptualism. The film *31/75 Asyl* is considered as one of the main representatives of structural film. It consists of a single angle and take. In 21 consecutive days the camera captures pictures, which are filtered through a black mask installed in front of the camera with variable number of holes. On each day different parts of the film picture are illuminated. Peter Weibel coins this methodology 'temporally extended multiple lighting'. As a result, each illumination captures only a small surface. This methodology expresses the temporally oriented visions of Kren. The Film was made in late autumn. Consequently, the pictures can be distinguished by weather changes. In some pictures we can identify a brown summerhouse and in some others the fallen snow on the ground. This technique enables a partial temporal differentiation of each frame. Through a static take a view out of the kitchen window is presented: a road, a fence, trees, and clouds. The chronological Order of objects in a frame is reorganized through modeling within the movie length of 8 minutes and 26 seconds.

The 'multiple illuminations' process of the mix-photography of Francis Galton represents, from the Freudian perspective, an instance of primary function of condensation. Freud's main interest was the cognitive processes of the unconscious mind. From the onset of the psychoanalytic movement there was a close relationship between the role of metaphors in the manifestation of mental processes and film. In the Interpretation of dreams Freud explains the process of condensation through the principles of composite photographs.

Freud was interested in the relationship of presenting common features from different pictures to the condensing function of the unconscious. The point that Freud is a protégé of the cinematographic process presents an important realization for my project. The content of the optical condensation process represents a historical-structural kinship to the Freudian model of the unconscious, where the former can be derived from the latter. To this end, I will rely on meta-psychological principles to analyze film. In *31/75 Asyl* one could also recognize the commonalities of various frames, which are informed by the condensed pictures of the unconscious. This film simulates the unconscious order of the mind at two levels, as Freud postulated it. At the first level, the setting of the film represent the topic model of the mind and hence the 'censor'. This is illustrated through the movie medium, where a mask is inserted in between the theme and the recording material. Furthermore, condensation occurs at the level of censor

as well, according to Freud. What the censor allows to emerge from the unconscious system will be available to our consciousness. The condensation of various temporal units represents the second level of the representation of unconscious mind within the technical setting of 31/75 Asyl. Condensation coordinates memories and desires of various temporal origins and proceeds to reorganize them in a new manner. The masked, or censored, parts in Kren's work are of different temporal origins. However, they are put together like pieces of a puzzle generate a condensed time-sculpture. In contrast to dreams, the material of condensation does not consist of the impressions of a whole life lived, such as processing of the secrets of the previous day. Kren consciously chooses forms which summarize the impressions of the same theme in 21 successive days. The point of this is to relay a notion in a compressed manner. Through this, it becomes possible to simulate through the film media, and technique, the temporal functioning of the unconscious along with the process of condensation. For a painter, the fleeting and not directly presentable moments are fascinating. A filmmaker, in contrast, has from the onset the moment and the temporal montage at his disposal. Jacques Aumont writes on this difference: the filmmaker seeks *"simply the ineffable, which is subject to a cumulative and hence a contradictory temporality as if it has lost the most obvious quality of time: its passage"* (Jacques Aumont 2003: 22). The same essential quality of time is also missing in the primary process of condensation: the unconscious representations are rooted in past experiences. Instincts and representations, which have various temporal origins, are dragged into the present in a way that undermines their very temporal order and differentiation. In place of a linear sensory-motor time perception, this process generates through the media of pictures a direct connection between time and thinking. The aesthetics of Kren, therefore, invades a level of reflection, in which our sensory-motor capabilities are required to contemplate that which has been seen. According to Deleuze, this would be the result of a process of crystallization of time: The time is broken into crystal pieces and the movie presents on the screen the consequence of this break. Parts of the pictures remain unilluminated and descend into darkness.

This Mode of Aesthetics I tried to refer to in my video work "Zu den Zeiten". Different moments in Time are condensed to one single frame, whereas parts of the picture remain un-illuminated and therefore express the blind spot of our gaze. Also unconscious motivations of intersubjectivity are expressed by it, as, in some shots, the outlined figure is segmenting into up to 20 different characters in one picture.

The Figure gives an idea of subjectivity and simultaneously rejects it. This gives a certain uncanny emotion to the spectator. As Freud mentioned in his essay "the uncanny", things get scary, when they have certain subject-characteristics but, at the same time, are obviously no subjects.

The contents of the unconscious are processed at the same level of reality as the content of the manifested text, according to Laplanche/Pontalis (Jean Laplanche 1999: 224). I tried to express this

dynamic relationship in my video. Every 'gap' is variously illuminated, through which the temporal order thereof can be distinguished only partially. Whether the pictures are of the past or the present is not determinable. The observer is required to supplement the missing information with the given features. "Zu den Zeiten", consequently, represents the Freudian characteristics of the unconscious: the pictorial representation, the primary process of condensation and novel arrangement of temporality and themes.



Abbildungen: Aus "31/75 Asyl" von Kurt Kren

PETER TSCHERKASSKY – THE CINEMATOGRAPHY OF THE PSYCHE.

The multifaceted works of Peter Tscherkasky are characterized, since his first work at the beginning of the 1980s, by a continuous transformation. This process of change can be best noted in 'Tilogie' (L'Arrivee, 1998; Outer Space, 1999; Dream Works, 2001), which received worldwide acclaim. His short films are characterized by a focus on the relationship of the Ego, desires, and the material, which comprise the typical subject matter of the psychoanalytic theory.

In a conversation with Tscherkasky I found out that he makes a crucial distinction between the order in the optical and the visual. Dream and memory relay pictures out of the inner world of subjectivity. Hence, they are based on the *visual* representation, which cannot be *optically* represented in a direct way. The intention of this film, among others, is to take the optical representation and subsume it under a subjective visual regime through the application of the film processes. One of these transformation techniques is the Flicker film technique, which has been partially adopted from the structural films of Peter Kubelka or Paul Sharits and further developed.

Tscherkassky's Film *Parallel Space: Inter-View* evokes through the technical setting a gaze, which is the object recognition of the individual pictures. Through generation of correlation between the 'Flickers' condensed frames a new sense of meaning emerges. Here, it is not the unconsciousness of the film which becomes manifest. It is more about the position of manifest symbols, which should not be perceived as isolated phenomena but as requirement for the recognition of hidden qualities of an internal unification of separate components. Throughout this process, the optical presentations of the observer are transformed into visual regiments, which require the intellectual participation of the observer. Referring to Bergson, Maurizio Lazzarato follows a similar model in which the optical perceptual model is juxtaposed to simulation technologies: "*technologies that simulate formations, which compete against each other in the process of the subject-constitution*" (Lazzarato 2002: 95).

Temporal and symbolic dualities are juxtaposed separately and then presented together again through montage. According to Freud, the processes of unconscious mind are timeless:

They are not ordered temporally, are not altered by the passage of time; they have no reference to time at all. Reference to time is bound up, once again, with the work of the system Cs [Consciousness]. (Sigmund Freud: S.E. Vol. 14, 187)

The combination of various moments of different chronological origin into a condensed picture, which is generated through accelerated projection, corresponds to the Freudian secondary process within the topic model of the mind. Here the unconscious representations, which are temporally unrelated to each

other, are condensed and they are treated by the secondary process, where the temporal aspect of the unconscious system functions.

In my Video I also tried to simulate those processes, which, according to Freud, deal with the novel presentation of the temporal relationship of condensation in the secondary process. Here, as well, the observer is addressed as an active decoding participant.



Abbildungen: Aus " *Parallel Space: Inter-View* " von Peter Tscherkassky

THE REPETITION TECHNIQUES OF MARTIN ARNOLDS AS FILM-TIME

In the following section, I will examine the repetition based presentation of the unconscious in films of Martin Arnold. His work *Piece touchee* (1989) was produced by self-built optical printers. Here, an 18 seconds frame of the movie *The Human Jungle* (1954, director: Joseph M. Newman) is analyzed in terms of movements, where short parts that last few single frames are played in fraction of seconds alternatively in forward and rewind manner. This microscopic method examines and interprets the given material in a novel way and enables a new perspective. This provides the opportunity to examine the manifest meaning in terms of latent meaning of the material. Through repetition and the novel arrangement the details gain a life of their own.

Psychoanalysis assumes that the symptoms of the patient repeat themselves in the everyday life of the patient, because an unconscious drive is being repressed continuously. Hence, this repressed drive will manifest itself in different ways in everyday situations instead of being represented in the consciousness. The function of repression is also of great relevance in the modern theories of psychoanalysis, such as that proposed by Howard Shevrin:

As it is true for manifest dreams (and glosses and associations) in relation to the latent dream thoughts they simultaneously disguise and represent, we must remember that symptoms (and conscious explanations) are displacements; thus, they are more consciously acceptable versions of the underlying conflicts, contents, and fantasies that have remained largely unconscious.
(Howard Shevrin 1996: 30)

The repressed drives find substituted expression through displacement, distortion, or suppression. This substituted expression takes the form of a compulsion, which leads to a constant repetition of the symptoms without being noticed by the patient. The analyst becomes aware of this repetitive phenomenon during therapy session and tries subsequently to expose the latent thoughts behind it and to help the patient, find his hidden message.

Arnolds Film *Passage á l'acte* (1993) focuses on the details like a microscope. However, it is not a spatial dimension, which is magnified but the temporal dimension. The methodology used by Arnold to reveal these symptoms is the same used in psychoanalysis to 'work through'. The existing claims and pictures are piece by piece over and over again looked at, through which the internal meaning is revealed, which refers to the functioning of the memory.

The aspects, which in the original footage of my film were not completely symbolized and in the universe of meaning not integrated, have been made for the observer comprehensible through a pulsating rhythm of the picture.

One can encounter repetition in Psychoanalysis twofold: on one side, it compels, under the influence of the unconscious, the subject to wrong actions, such as taking detours during a walk. The relationship of the perception to primary function of condensation is rhythmically organized. However, there is repetitive movement in therapy, where the symptom can be acted against through a repetitive movement. The film techniques of "Zu den Zeiten" rely on those structures of the psychoanalytic methodology as well as the constitution of desire. Consequently, there emerges a justified comparable view between film and theory.



Abbildungen: Aus "Passage à l'acte" von Martin Arnold

REFERENCES

Aumont , Jacques. 2003. Kurt Kren. „Die Denkfähigkeit der Bilder“ in: *Kurt Kren, Das Unbehagen am Film*, ed. Thomas Trummer. Trans. Mehrdad Fahramand and Stefanie Diwischek. Wien: Sonderzahl Verlag.

Freud , Sigmund. Standard Edition [S. E.].

Laplanche, Jean. 1999. “The Unconscious. A Psychoanalytic Study” in *The Unconscious and the Id.*, ed. Laplanche, Jean. London: Rebus.

Lazzarato, Maurizio. Videophilosophie. Berlin: B_Books 2002.

Shevrin , Howard, A. O. 1996. *Conscious And Unconscious Processes. Psychodynamic, Cognitive and Neurophysiological Convergences*. New York: The Guilford Press.