Ursula Biemann (editor)

Stuff it

the video essay in the digital age

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Ursula Biemann
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Memory Essays

Nora M. Alter

A mode of audio-visual production called the "essay film" has proliferated in the past decade. This relatively recent genre of film problematizes binary categories of representation, and fuses the two dominant genres of the medium: feature and documentary. Furthermore, the essay film often self-reflexively offers its own film criticism. Like its ancestor, the written essay, it poaches across disciplinary borders, transgresses conceptual and formal norms, and does not follow a clear narrative trajectory. The essay film is rebus-like and hybrid, recalling the operation of memory and dream-work.

What is an essay? Let me briefly present some formulations on the philosophical-literary form. "To essay" means "to assay," "to weigh," as well as "to attempt," suggesting an open-ended, evaluative search. But this objective search is haunted and constrained by the presence of individual subjectivity. (The verb is also linked via the Latin *ex-agere* to *agens*, the word and problem of human agency.) Current use of the word *essay* as a distinct genre can be traced to the sixteenth-century social critic and philosopher Montaigne, whose *Essais* (1580) were to exert a deep influence on the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and on a variety of critics in this tradition (e.g., De Sade, Leopardi, Emerson, Nietzsche, Lukacs, Adorno, Benjamin, Barthes). By "essay," Montaigne meant the testing of ideas, himself, and society. It was a wide-ranging form of cognitive perambulation that reflected upon fundamental questions of life and human frailty, tensions and overlaps between "fact" and "fiction," and their consequences for social order and disorder. Since Montaigne, the essay has retained some of its distinguishing features. Its weapons are humor, irony, satire, paradox; its atmosphere is contradiction and the collision of opposites.

In his 1910 "letter" to Leo Popper entitled "On the Nature and Form of the Essay," Georg Lukacs seeks to legitimate the written essay, which he suggests is "criticism as a form of art."[1] He compares the essay to other forms of literature using the metaphor of "ultra-violet rays" that are refracted through the literary prism.[2] Lukacs characterizes the essay as both "accidental" and "necessary,"[3] a description echoed years later by Adorno in his writings on the essay, where he extolls the characteristics of "luck," "play," and "irrationality."[4] For both Lukacs and Adorno, the essay is fragmentary, wandering, and does not seek to advance truth claims—as would, for instance, the documentary genre in the case of film. Lukacs concludes that the essay is both a work of art, due to what he calls its autonomous, "sovereign" status, and a judgement. Yet, for Lukacs the essential, value-determining thing about an essay is "not the verdict . . . but the process of judging."[5]

Adorno takes up where Lukacs left off and develops further the notion of the essay as a "critique of system" that problematizes the "absolute privilege of method."[6] Thought, he argues, "does not progress in a single direction; instead, the moments are interwoven as in a carpet. The fruitfulness of the thoughts depends on the density of the texture. The thinker does not actually think but rather makes himself an arena for intellectual experience without unraveling it."[7] Furthermore, for Adorno the essay is the consummate site for critique and its only relation to art is that it is in constant pursuit of new forms of presentation. One such innovation has been made by a group of film and video makers who have sought to produce the audiovisual equivalent of the written genre—what critics such as Edward Small have referred to as "direct theory."[8] Small's starting point is the premise that written film theory, while well developed, is fundamentally flawed since words and written texts are by their very nature inadequate to theorize the constituents of a medium that is audio-visual by its very nature. In other words, parallel to August Wilhelm von Schlegel's declaration that a theory about the novel should be a novel, Small believes that a theory of film should be a film. To this end, he proposes that "certain kinds of film and video works constitute a mode of theory, theory direct, without the mediation of a separate semiotic system."[9] Small extends his observations to most experimental avant-garde production, whereas I would link mine specifically to those productions that are essayistic in nature and that take *critique* as the fundamental force. To quote Adorno once again, the essay is "the critical form par excellence; as immanent critique of intellectual constructions, as a confrontation of what they are with their concept, it is critique of ideology."[10]

In her 2000 *Wiener Vorlesung,* Ruth Klüger, author of the memoir *Weiter Leben,* proposes a theory of writing Holocaust literature that combines both fact and fiction and locates its discourse in the interstices between the two.[11] The result is a hybrid product "where we cannot really distinguish between the two and confuse fact and fiction."[12] Holocaust literature, she argues, is by its very nature subject to interpretation and accordingly departs from historical facts. Moreover, the complex and often self-protective nature of memory further complicates any clear "historical" rendition. Although Klüger refers specifically to Holocaust literature, I would like to extend the parameters of her argument to include other attempts to represent traumatic events in history. Furthermore, while Klüger primarily treats literature, her argument could just as adequately be applied to the visual arts and film. Indeed, the strategy of combining both fact and fiction in a single form bears a strong affinity with the audio-visual essay.

Let us recall that the essay film emerged during a period of historical crisis. The genre was first conceptualized in April 1940 by avant-garde filmmaker Hans Richter. The latter was at the time in exile in Basel, though about to be deported back to Germany. Under these conditions, Richter wrote a short essay entitled "Der Filmessay: Eine neue Form des Dokumentarfilms" (The Film Essay: A New Form of Documentary Film).[13] The pioneering text proposes a new genre of film that enables the filmmaker to make the "invisible" world of thoughts and ideas visible on the screen. Unlike the documentary film that presents facts and information, the essay film produces complex thought—reflections that are not necessarily bound to reality, but can also be contradictory, irrational, and

fantastic. The essay film, the author argues, allows the filmmaker to transgress the rules and parameters of the traditional documentary practice, granting the imagination with all its artistic potentiality free reign. As Richter puts it:

> In diesem Bemühen, die unsichtbare Welt der Vorstellungen, Gedanken und Ideen sichtbar zu machen, kann der essayistische Film aus einem unvergleichlich größeren Reservoir von Ausdrucksmitteln schöpfen als der reine Dokumentarfilm. Denn da man im Filmessay an die Wiedergabe der äußeren Erscheinungen oder an eine chronologische Folge nicht gebunden ist, sondern im Gegenteil das Anschauungsmaterial überall herbeiziehen muss, so kann man frei in Raum und Zeit springen: von der objektiven Wiedergabe beispielsweise zur phantastischen Allegorie, von dieser zur Spielszene; man kann tote wie lebendige, künstliche wie natürliche Dinge abbilden, alles verwenden, was es gibt und was sich erfinden lässt – wenn es nur als Argument für die Sichtbarmachung des Grundgedankens dienen kann."[14]

Richter does not explicitly link the essay film with history in his writing. However, the essay films he was to make subsequently, such as *Dreams that Money Can Buy* (1947), *Chess Sonata* (1957), or *Dadascope* (1963), attempt in their own way, and to greater or lesser effect, to represent specific historical moments, or periods.

Nearly forty years later, when filmmaker Alexander Kluge was faced with the difficulty of responding to the horror of the German Autumn of 1977, he picked up where Richter left off. More specifically, Kluge resorted to what was then an innovative strategy of deliberately mixing fact and fiction in a single film. The result was the remarkable 1978 omnibus production *Deutschland im Herbst*. Kluge argued that the interplay between fiction and non-fiction corresponded to the "coexistence of fact and desire in the human mind," and that only such a slippery form could adequately produce a counter public sphere to that inculcated by the State and the press.[15] This strategy is in part similar to that of Rosellini, who also explored the possibility of placing fictional characters within a historically grounded space, thereby placing both the "real" and the imaginary in the same filmic frame. And as we will see later, Rosellini is an important figure for Eisenberg. At around the same time as Kluge, Hans Jürgen Syberberg confronted a similar dilemma, though in his case it was of how to produce a film about Hitler. Syberberg, too, decided in favor of an essayistic form for his epic, *Hitler: Ein Film aus Deutschland* (1977), which relied heavily on dramatic forms of play, fantasy, puppetry and the like to render the personage of Hitler.[16] What both films try to circumvent is a roadblock called history, which has been reinforced by both collective and personal memory. Since film, video or literature is the work of re-presentation, veracity is an impossibility for a number of reasons. These include the reality of a temporal and spatial lag between the events, for often they took place years earlier and in another place. Or, as Chris Marker quoting Boris Souvarine describes it in the CD-ROM *Immemory* (1997): "L'histoire est quelque chose qui n'as pas eu lieu, raconté par quelqu'un qui n'était pas là."[17] One way to get around the historical roadblock is to make a detour through fiction. Such a path does not presume historical truth, though it neverthe-

less leads to a representation. The trajectory of this road is not straight, as would for instance be the case in a documentary or narrative story. Rather, it winds in a complicated and at times frustrating and frustrated manner. Indeed, this has been the pattern of many audio visual essays, especially those that attempt somehow to understand the intricately woven processes of history and memory.

Let me now, in the form of an example, turn to an examination of how the formal components of one medium—film—correspond directly to the presentation of History and Memory. The works under consideration will be Daniel Eisenberg's trilogy, or rather cycle of films, *Displaced Person* (1981), *Cooperation of Parts* (1987), and *Persistence* (1997).[18] In these films, Eisenberg, the child of Holocaust survivors, returns to Germany and Poland to try to make sense of a history (at once personal and public) and its manifestation in both the present and the past. His return to Europe, and especially the sites of his ancestry and their annihilation, is by no means unique. However, Eisenberg does it *three* times: in 1981, 1987, and 1997. The resulting films thus produce their own historical trajectory and their own contribution to history. For part of Eisenberg's filmic strategy in *Persistence* was to create or establish filmic documents of the present day which might be used by someone in the future. In other words, just as Eisenberg himself has relied heavily on found footage, there is a self-conscious awareness on his part of producing found objects/footage for future use.

The first in the cycle, *Displaced Person,* is a compilation film comprised entirely of found footage—several memorable sequences come from Ophuls' *The Sorrow and the Pity* (1970). According to Eisenberg, the impetus to make the film suddenly occurred when he saw Ophuls' film:

> As Hitler walked up the steps of La Madeleine I realized that I had stood in that same spot, and read the inscription on the building and sat down there. To consider the fact that during my first trip to Europe, Hitler and I crossed paths in time, really, was a whole metamorphosis of the world in my head; it was a revelation of some kind. Space and time seemed to collapse into one. And I realized, aside from the fact that his political program and history had in fact created my very being, because my parents met in Dachau after the war, there we were crossing paths.[19]

Displaced Person is composed of several interrelated fragments that are repeated numerous times in different arrangements and combinations. The fragments are often interspersed with several seconds of black leader. In between, we see Hitler on a train pulling away from a crowded station as the camera tracks a Red Cross nurse racing after the train, two young blond boys on bicycles, a child washing a doll, children playing in a German town, Hitler arriving in Paris, and a formal dance sequence. The reorganization of the arrangement of the sequences serves to redirect and reorient our relation to the sounds and images, thereby uncovering embedded meanings. Furthermore, Eisenberg manipulates the images with the aid of an optical printer. Thus, for instance, in the sequence with the blond boys, sometimes their bicycles move and the background stays still, and

sometimes the opposite occurs. The effect is to arrest history and development: both the personal and the public. The movement of the boys on bicycles across the screen is abruptly interrupted, and that interruption is constantly repeated and replayed. The characters are not allowed to develop: their progress is halted, unnaturally, and their story is left incomplete. The viewer can only speculate and imagine.

A similar manipulation is at play in the train sequence. The camera focuses on a young woman chasing the train, tracking the movement of her body in slow motion. A close-up of her face reveals the degree of sheer ecstasy and fanatical obsession of her devotion to Hitler. As we realize that the footage is taken by one of Hitler's camera men, the power of the image increases dramatically. The sound track includes Beethoven's Opus 59, as well as a lecture in English delivered by French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss on "The Meeting of Myth and Science." In one of the more poignant points in his lecture, Lévi-Strauss states that "if the same absurdity was bound to reappear over and over again, and another kind of absurdity also to reappear, then there was something which was not absolutely absurd; or else it would not appear."

Made six years later, *Cooperation of Parts,* as the title suggests, alludes both to Eisenberg's own sense of fragmentation as it addresses his relationship to the Germany and Poland of his parents as well as to a formal strategy of filmmaking. The film opens with footage taken by Eisenberg at a contemporary European train station (Calais and the Gare de Lyon). However, the voice-over (Eisenberg's own) paradoxically announces:

> Here is the oldest picture I've managed to obtain . . . . It's a picture of a young woman parting with friends at a railway station in Germany. There's no platform next to the train (the image on the screen negates this statement) . . . . She's wearing dark sunglasses. Her hair is long and pinned in back . . . . We know that her two friends would finally arrive in the U.S. sometime in early 1949. So the photograph must be from the summer of 1948. She was trying to convince her own husband to emigrate to the U.S. as well.

By juxtaposing images from 1987 Germany onto a verbal narrative that describes an unseen photo from a Germany of the forties, Eisenberg relates the past to the present, and imbricates, in a manner that recalls the surrealist methodology of Walter Benjamin, the present with the past through the interplay between the visual and audial registers. But there is more. Indeed, the described photograph of his mother, as well as one of his father taken while in a Soviet Labor camp, also stand as signs for when a visual history of Eisenberg's family begins. The family is only allowed to be

> Daniel Eisenberg, *Displaced Person,* 11 min., 1981.

> Ibid.

> Daniel Eisenberg, *Cooperation of Parts,* 42 min., 1987.


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perceived visually intact as an image once the war is over—no other visual trace exists. Thus Eisenberg takes on the challenge of creating a personal visual text in which no personal images remain.

During the next forty minutes of *Cooperation of Parts,* Eisenberg's camera seeks to find traces of the past. This occurs not only in long tracking shots of Auschwitz, Dachau, and the Jewish cemetery in Warsaw, but also in the architecture of Berlin. As the camera moves across the architectural landscape, Eisenberg pauses to reflect on images, uttering "True . . . False . . . False . . . True . . . ." For the past is articulated specifically in the traces of mortars, bombings, bullets, and in the ruins of buildings. Needless to say, this is a past not yet glossed over and "reconstructed" for Western eyes. The last shot in this sequence is of the Sacré-Cœur in Paris. Within the flow of images, the effect is startling and brings to our attention how our own conclusions are already embedded in any representation. In the film, Eisenberg also finds the courtyard of the apartment complex in Poland where his mother spent her childhood years. There, he captures young Polish children and an elderly woman who, perhaps because of the harsh economic circumstances in Poland in the 1980s, *visually* resonate with how characters in the context in which his mother grew up might have appeared forty years ago. Indeed, it is precisely in the former East, where "cosmetic surgery" has not yet been performed to erase all scars of the war, that Eisenberg's camera finds uncanny markers. These he weaves into the fabric of his memory. As in a traditional essay film, the verbal track is dominated by the reading of philosophical proverbs and aphorisms, some of which are repeated at regular intervals. Importantly, many of these pronouncements are not in any obvious way keyed to the images displayed. Rather, they hang in the silence, unmoored—e.g. "Misfortune makes and breaks you," "The splinter in your eye is the best magnifying glass." and "The longest road is from the mother to the front door." In the case of the latter, the phrase is first said orally, later it is written and finally it appears as a filmed image of Eisenberg's mother's actual front door.[20] The film ends with the following words printed across the screen: "Going down that street ten thousand times in a lifetime . . . or perhaps never at all . . . ."

Ten years later, Eisenberg would once again go "down that street." To make *Persistence*, he returns to Berlin, and to the camps, drawn now by a reunified Germany. More so than in *Cooperation of Parts, Persistence* conveys a sense of the filmmaker as subject. Now, not only is his voice recognizable, but Eisenberg also allows his image to appear on screen. The film opens with a lengthy shot of the angel on top of the Siegessäule, with an effect of wind (representative of history) blowing across its body in an exaggerated fashion. Eisenberg here directly refers with an intertitle to Benjamin's *Angelus Novus* (the angel of history), an image that will serve as the film's overarching trope of victory and catastrophe. Indeed, the film attempts to show the continuous and discontinuous threads of history. The opening credits announce the title *Persistence*, described as a film in twenty-four absences/presences. The film's first sequence features extraordinary footage of a destroyed, bombed-out Berlin. The footage is remarkable not only because of the proximity of the camera (despite its aerial position), but also because of its use of color stock. This is an utter anomaly. Typically, documentary footage of the War and its aftermath is in black and white. Such

footage provides a necessary distance, placing the events firmly in the past. By contrast, the color footage shocks, bringing the scenes depicted into the present. (The footage was obtained by Eisenberg from the U.S. military, whose propaganda division was given stock of new color film with which to document the success of U.S. Airforce raids in 1945.) The next sequence, in black and white, depicts a young boy wandering amidst the rubble and ruins of Berlin. The scene is immediately recognizable. It comes from Rosselini's famous 1947 film, *Germany Year Zero*, a fictional narrative filmed primarily on location in postwar Berlin. Clearly, this film's place in film history is one of the central reasons why Eisenberg cites from it. But just as important is the manner in which *Germany Year Zero* mixes the real with the imagined. This culminates in a highly vexed relationship between the personal and the historical.

Persistence is primarily about Berlin. The film features an overt curiosity as well as an underlying anxiety regarding the reemergence of Berlin as a capital city. For Eisenberg, Berlin functions as a site that transmits the trauma of the Holocaust. Only in Berlin can the traumatic events of the mid-century be represented and reenacted. The reconstruction of the city today is uncanny, for it visually and audially recalls the rebuilding of Berlin forty years ago. Thematically, many issues resurface that had been buried. Freud wrote in his 1919 essay, "The Uncanny," that a typical uncanny effect is "produced when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced, as when something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality."[21] Eisenberg's filmic production seems to realize such an imaginary something. His confrontation, however, is with someone else's reality—a reality that belonged to his parents. Yet, it has persisted in his imagination and has almost become real for him as well. Thus, after visiting the medical experimentation block of Sachsenhausen where his mother was imprisoned, Eisenberg's voice-over reads a letter he has written to his mother. In the letter he tells her that he does not want to know the details of what she experienced. Complete knowledge is no longer necessary, for it is now felt to be superfluous and obscene. Rather, Eisenberg opts for a filmic strategy marked by absences, focusing instead on what is left unsaid and unrepresented.

Eisenberg's filmic project creates a history of the intermixing of audial and visual fragments from the past and the present. These pieces repeat and resurface throughout the film following a musical structure of variations arranged by Eisenberg. This fragmentary incompletedness stands in sharp contrast to the popular, seamless reconstructions available for mass consumption. As Eisenberg explains, "I am very interested in the idea of fragments, and the way fragments are pieced together."[22] His interest in fragmentation goes beyond an interrupted family history and extends to aesthetic production in general because "it's been part of art-making and aesthetics for a long time in this century . . . . And fragments sometime have a way of reflecting or breaking things apart."

But, one might legitimately ask, why film? Why is Eisenberg adamant that this trilogy could only have been conceived and executed in film? Why would the use of video, for instance, have been inconceivable? In part, answers to these questions relate to the fact that the medium of film was

current during the time period addressed by Eisenberg's cycle. In other words, he seeks a historical veracity that is not mediated by the introduction of a contemporary medium such as videotape. Although Eisenberg's project is a type of historical reconstruction that acknowledges the degree to which it is influenced by the present, he insists on using material (film footage) that has durability and stands as evidence. The footage from German newsreels, from US bombers, from Rosselini's film, and from Eisenberg's own camera, all share a common trait: they are all made in the material form of celluloid. As such, the differences between the film fragments, whether initially intended as documentary or fiction, propaganda or information, designed for private or public consumption, all achieve an equivalence in their status as witness and evidence. As mentioned earlier, Eisenberg's own films will enter into this cycle of history and contribute to these documents. The importance of using film in the 1990s thus achieves another relevance, for it also self-reflexively points to films' passing as a medium of documentation. For if the second World War was witnessed in celluloid, today's wars are documented electronically. Furthermore, the diverse nature of the filmic extracts attests to the amount of work that Eisenberg had to go through in order to find and assemble the footage which he ultimately used. This difficult task is not to be discounted, for it parallels Eisenberg's role as a researcher seeking to uncover and patch together pieces of a hidden history—one whose immediate access has been blocked. Each visit to the archive thus constitutes the meanderings of an essayist who must weave together many different and disparate threads—some of fact and some of fiction.

The traditional editing process was central to Eisenberg's decision to employ the medium of film. Film editing relies heavily on memory—it becomes necessary to keep a whole project in one's head. This in turn is related to the thematics of Eisenberg's films, which, as I have already suggested, are about the construction of history, memory and forgetting. History and memory are necessarily incomplete and full of gaps, lapses, and absences, and Eisenberg's films are marked by these characteristics. Bits of filmic evidence are put together, forming a Benjaminian mosaic where the truth only appears as flashes in the cuts between the fragments. The process resonates with the experience of a subject trying to reconstruct a memory that s/he did not experience directly. The person is a secondary witness of a trauma, parallel to the experience of a film spectator. The trauma is experienced as what Abraham and Torok have described as "transgenerational memory," meaning that the trauma has been unconsciously transmitted from one generation to the next.[23] In *Cooperation of Parts*, Eisenberg's voice-over reveals the resonance of the trauma: "I wind up asking the same question my mother asks, 'Why me?' It was through her, not through her conscious intention, that these things passed. Like a shock wave felt through several generations." Here it is important to remember that a trauma can only be recalled indirectly through fetishistic strategies. The fetish in this case resides in the fascination that films and photographs as pieces of evidence from a previous time produce. It is as if, by examining these remnants, we could somehow uncover the truth of what happened. Eisenberg's fetishistic insistence on the filmic medium thus encodes material conditions of displacement, rupture, and loss in the very form of the work.

If there has been a gradual shift in the positioning of the spectator as witness vis-à-vis the historical events depicted, Chris Marker's CD-ROM project *Immemory* transforms the viewer's relationship even more dramatically.[24] The piece cannot be accessed without an active and persistent viewer. The CD-ROM positions the participant as a co-writer of history, similar to the protagonist in Marker's earlier film, *Level 5* (1996), who seeks to uncover a hidden history.

Immemory cannot be taken as a pure autobiographical essay any more than can a museum or a library. For although it constitutes Marker's personal archive, the narrative that is woven, the paths that are followed, and the amount of time spent working with the CD-ROM, are all up to the viewer. Throughout the CD-ROM, the latter is given choices of where to click and what routes to follow. For example, the first screen presents several possibilities: War, Film, Photography, Poetry, Museums, and Voyages. If we choose photography we again have several choices: China, Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, Bosnia, World War II and the like. Click on Cuba and there unfolds (at a speed determined by the viewer) a series of images of Cuba in the thirties. Musical and film extracts can also be accessed. A cartoon cat appears and announces that twenty-seven years have passed, and a newsreel of Fidel Castro giving a speech appears on the monitor. The images are more often accompanied by written texts. Some of these are from literary sources, while others are reproduced telegrams and postcards addressed to Marker.

To navigate through the entire CD-ROM takes hours, and a different voyage is undertaken each time. Thus the history changes each time, depending on where the viewer decides to go. And although the images and texts have been installed by someone else, their ultimate arrangement is left up to the viewer. However, like a deck of cards, after the play is over it is reshuffled and nothing remains of the past game except the viewer's personal memory of the experience. Heavily indebted to Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, each click produces a madeleine that sends the reader into a another long series of meditations.

Marker's digitalized audio-visual montage thus produces infinite possibilities and results in a work in which the spectator co-directs, edits, and arranges the text.[25] Marker thus pushes the viewer to create new texts rather than to merely consume histories. In turn, the work will always remain open, never complete. For in typical essayistic fashion, the viewer's role will always-already be that of continuing the work, perpetually constructing new narrative trajectories and creative possibilities.

Essay films have been sporadically produced for at least seventy years. Recently, however, both their theorization and their production have increased to the point where now the essay film or video is commonly acknowledged as a full-fledged peer of the narrative and documentary genres. While film essays were relatively infrequent in the 60s and 70s, this in-between genre proliferated during the 90s. Today, it seems that essay films are everywhere. Indeed, I would even go so far as to argue that Gilles Deleuze's division of twentieth century cinema into the movement-image (pre-WWII) and the time-image (post-WWII) should be expanded to include the essay film (post the collapse of the

Soviet Union).[26] This highly theoretical and self-reflexive cinema has increasingly come to assume the critical function of the written film theory essay.

I would like to thank Dan Eisenberg for the use of images, Alex Alberro for his insightful and helpful comments on the text, and Ursula Biemann for her persistence.

1 Georg Lukacs, "On the Nature and Form of the Essay: A Letter to Leo Popper [1910]," *Soul and Form* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1978), p. 2.

2 Ibid., p. 7.

3 Ibid., p. 9.

4 Theodor W. Adorno, "The Essay as Form [1954–58]," *Notes to Literature,* vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. 3–23.

5 Georg Lukacs, "On the Nature and Form of the Essay," p. 18

6 Theodor W. Adorno, "The Essay as Form," p. 9.

7 Ibid., p. 13. Here we need only recall the audiovisual density of recent productions by Jean-Luc Godard such as *Allemagne 90 neuf zéro* or *Histoire(s) du cinéma*.

8 Edward S. Small, *Direct Theory: Experimental Film/Video as Major Genre* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994).

9 Ibid., p. 11.

10 Theodor W. Adorno, "The Essay as Form," p. 20.

11 The speech has been published as Ruth Klüger, *Dichter und Historiker: Fakten und Fiktionen* (Wien: Picus, 2000).

12 Ibid., p. 42.

13 Hans Richter, "Der Filmessay: Eine neue Form des Dokumentarfilms [1940]," in Christa Blümlinger / Constatin Wulff (eds.), *Schreiben Bilder Sprechen: Texte zum essayistischen Film* (Wien: Sonderzahl, 1992), pp. 195–198.

14 Ibid., p. 198.

15 Alexander Kluge as cited by Miriam Hansen in "Cooperative Auteur Cinema and the Oppositional Public Sphere: Alexander Kluge's Contribution to *Germany in Autumn*," *New German Critique* 24–25 (Fall–Winter 1981–82), pp. 36–56; here p. 49 .

16 For an excellent analysis of Syberberg's film see Anton Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

17 "History is something which didn't take place, told by someone who wasn't there."

18 Eisenberg refers to these films as part of a cycle rather than a trilogy. Daniel Eisenberg in conversation with the author (March 22, 2003).

19 Daniel Eisenberg in "Daniel Eisenberg im Gespräch mit Alf Bold," *Kinemathek* 29 (January 1992), pp. 4–17; here p. 7.

20 Daniel Eisenberg in conversation with the author (March 22, 2003).

21 "The 'Uncanny' [1919]," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. XVII (1917–1919), ed. by James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953–73), p. 244.

22 "Daniel Eisenberg im Gespräch mit Alf Bold," p. 8.

23 Nicolas Abraham / Maria Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

24 **For two insightful treatments of *Immemory*, see Laurent Roth / Raymond Bellour, *Qu'est-ce qu'une Madeleine?: A propos du CD-ROM Immemory de Chris Marker* (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1997).**

25 **This methodology is entirely in keeping with Marker's anti-auteurist manner of working, typified by his tendency to credit himself merely as editor and not as director.**

26 **See Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986); and *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).**