

# Starry Skies and Frozen Lakes: Alexander Kluge's Digital Constellations\*

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*Film, Literature, and TV*

Since its beginnings in cinema and literature, the work of Alexander Kluge has manifested itself in increasingly diverse formats and media environments, including television and, more recently, the digital realm. Kluge's cinematic debut was the 1960 *Brutality in Stone* (*Brutalität in Stein*), co-directed with Peter Schamoni, the first in an extended sequence of short films, most of them executed according to a montage principle in which documentary segments are juxtaposed with static visual material (including illustrations and printed pages) in combination with often asynchronous sound samples and commenting voice-overs. Subsequently, Kluge also began to experiment with longer durations in his cinematic work, starting with *Yesterday Girl* (*Abschied von Gestern*) of 1965, in which he introduced acted sequences that can be read as nuclei for potential filmic plots, though these often unfold only in a fragmented manner. These elements are interspersed with fields of onscreen lettering. Reminiscent of silent film's intertitles, these written-word screen projections provide commentary and punctuation, and have become a visual trademark of his work.

Like his films, Kluge's literary texts emerge from an aesthetic commitment to brevity. His 1962 short-story collection *Lebensläufe* (*Case Histories*) was the first in what has become a sequence of volumes constructed out of brief core components and presented in sequential, non-narrative order. Kluge's subsequent literary works include the 2007 *Geschichten vom Kino* (*Cinema Stories*), his chronicle of both the history of cinema and his own history as a filmmaker; and the slender volume *Dezember* (2010), a collaboration with the artist Gerhard Richter, whose photographs of the snowed-in woods surrounding the Swiss Alpine resort town of Sils Maria are juxtaposed with Klugean tales

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1. Dezember 1941: Eissturm an der Front vor Moskau.

Es müßten zwei Armeen in Reserve stehen, sagt Generalfeldmarschall Fedor von Bock, der gegen 17 Uhr mit dem Oberkommando des Heeres telefoniert. An sich brauchen wir, fährt er fort, keine Waffen zur Bekämpfung der Russen, sondern eine Waffe zur Bekämpfung des Wetters. Nichts von diesem Geschehen im Osten ist in den Häusern Deutschlands unmittelbar wahrzunehmen.

Dr.-Ing. Fred Sauer, ehemals Siemens, für die Versuchsabteilung des Heereswaffenamtes tätig, untersucht die Anatomie von Mammuten. Ließ sich aus den kurzen Rümpfen und gedrunghenen Körpern dieser erfahrenen Riesen der Kaltsteppe (die es mit ihren staubigen, immerwährenden, extrem kalten Ostwinden im Jahr 1941 nicht mehr gibt) eine winterfeste Panzerwaffe entwickeln? In den gewaltigen Säulenbeinen, so Fred Sauer, wärmte das sauerstoffhaltige Blut, das aus dem Körper dieser Tiere strömte, das verbrauchte kalte Blut, das zum Körper hinaufstieg. Das war ein Hinweis auf die Möglichkeit, durch doppelte Kreisläufe in den Motoren (einer zur Erwärmung des Gerätes und einer für den Antrieb) eine Aushilfe gegen die Tücke des russischen Winters zu finden. Das Projekt kommt für die Entscheidung in diesem Jahr zu spät.

Der Monat Dezember 1941 war durch Zeitarmut charakterisiert.

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Alexander Kluge and Gerhard Richter.  
Dezember. 2010.

on the themes of winter, stasis, and coldness.<sup>1</sup>

Whereas the rate of Kluge's literary production has steadily increased over the years, in his visual work he has gradually shifted away from classical film production.<sup>2</sup> Coinciding with a reform in the funding of German films in the late 1970s that rendered non-corporate independent cinematic work increasingly difficult to finance, Kluge migrated to electronic equipment (cameras, mixers, etc.) and two new formats: his so-called "minute-films"—short clips often combining historic footage with animated elements and visual manipulations, such as masks, coloring, etc.—and his television features. When *October* dedicated a special issue to his work nearly twenty-five years ago, Kluge had just embarked on this phase of his production.<sup>3</sup> While these

1. Alexander Kluge, *Lebensläufe* (Stuttgart: Goverts, 1962). Translated as *Case Histories* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1988). *Geschichten vom Kino* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2007). Partial translation: *Cinema Stories* (New York: New Directions, 2007). *Alexander Kluge, Gerhard Richter: Dezember* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2010).

2. In addition to his literary works, his writings also comprise a number of volumes accompanying his films, as well as theoretical treatises coauthored with the Marxist philosopher Oskar Negt.

3. "Alexander Kluge: Theoretical Writings, Stories, and an Interview," ed. Stuart Liebman, special issue, *October* 46 (Fall 1988).

features, which are broadcast twice weekly late at night on German commercial networks, occasionally contain documentary montages, textual elements, and music, for the most part they consist of conversations between Kluge—who, while never visible on camera, achieves a heightened aural presence through his insistent questioning from out-of-field—and “experts” of all sorts, from politicians and thinkers to actors and artists. The onscreen image is sometimes altered through a text-field on its lower edge—where titles, comments, and pieces of additional information run from left to right in the style of a news chyron—while the background behind the interviewee, if filmed in a blue box, is often subjected to varying visual alterations and manipulations. The conversational segments are interrupted by fields of lettering and by additional pictorial elements, such as re-filmed book illustrations. Kluge’s programs are marked by a style so divergent from their televisual environment, and so obstinately sustained, that they have achieved instant recognition value, even when encountered in the most fleeting moments of channel surfing.

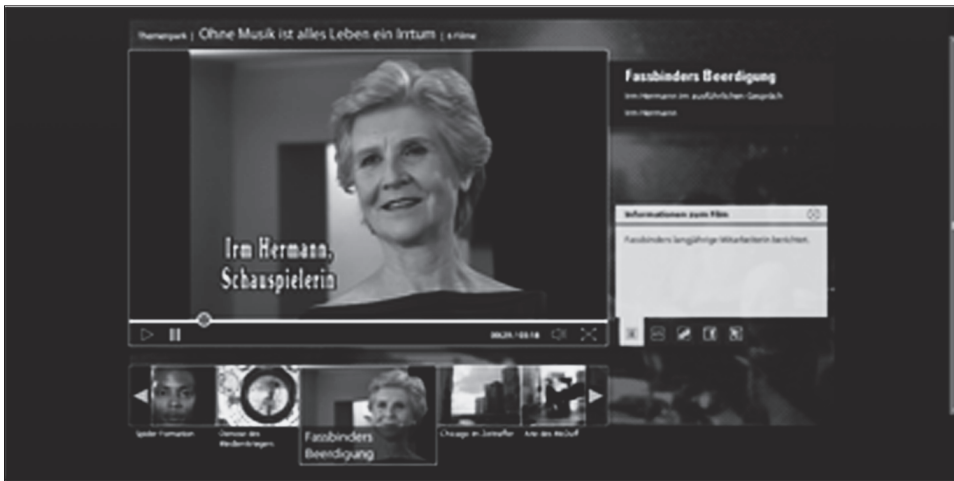
### *Digital Works*

Over the course of the past several years, Kluge has also integrated digital media—DVDs and a Web site—into his work. His television production company maintains an Internet presence, [www.dctp.tv](http://www.dctp.tv), where Kluge recombines selected television features with elements from his analog films, as well as new documentary and animated clips and independent short interviews. These elements are grouped in so-called “thematic loops,” which are partially organized under larger “theme complexes.” If clicked on, a loop appears in the form of a navigable bar that can be scrolled laterally. Above it opens a window where a clip from the selection begins to play. On the navigation bar, the individual elements of a loop are each represented through both a still image and a title. While organized in a bidirectional linear fashion (scrolling is possible left to right), all elements are independently accessible and can be watched in variable order.

Kluge’s use of the DVD started as documentation of his analog and early electronic filmic oeuvre, which he made accessible in 2007 as a single boxed set, followed by another compilation containing a selection of television features.<sup>4</sup> A crucial development occurred in 2008, when Kluge published his first proper production for DVD, *Nachrichten aus der ideologischen Antike* (News from ideological antiquity) (three discs, approximately nine hours), which takes its basic impulse from an investigation into Sergei Eisenstein’s unrealized film about Marx’s *Das Kapital*.<sup>5</sup> The term “published,” with its associations of magazines, newsprint, and book editing, is chosen deliberately: The *Nachrichten* and Kluge’s major subsequent works for DVD have

4. Alexander Kluge, *Sämtliche Kinofilme* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 2007). Alexander Kluge, *Seen sind für Fische Inseln. Fernseharbeiten 1987–2008* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 2009).

5. Alexander Kluge, *Nachrichten aus der ideologischen Antike. Marx—Eisenstein—Das Kapital*. (Frankfurt am Main: Filmedition Suhrkamp, 2008). Eisenstein’s *Notes for a Film of “Capital,”* translated by Maciej Sliwowski, Jay Leyda, and Annette Michelson, appeared in *October* 2 (Summer 1976), pp. 3–26. See *ibid.*, pp. 27–38, for Michelson’s pioneering essay on Eisenstein’s project, “Reading Eisenstein Reading *Capital*.”



*Kluge. Without Music Life Is a Mistake: Fassbinder's Funeral. c. 2008.*

so far all been distributed through the Suhrkamp publishing house, which is also home to Kluge the literary author and theorist. Through the medium of the DVD, Kluge has thus devised a strategy for commercially mediating his time-based visual work that allows him to bypass the film and television industries—a potential that, as Kluge explains in the interview to follow, may also be offered by online-platforms such as YouTube.

The *Nachrichten*, as well as its successors—*Früchte des Vertrauens* (Fruits of trust, which was occasioned by the financial crisis that broke out in 2008) and *Wer sich traut, reißt die Kälte vom Pferd* (Who dares pulls the cold off its horse), a sister project to Kluge and Richter's book *Dezember*—are clearly recognizable developments of Kluge's earlier analog, televisual, and authorial productions.<sup>6</sup> To varying degrees, the works consist of clips, interviews, segments from Kluge's analog films, and sequences of onscreen lettering extended to unprecedented durations. They most closely resemble Kluge's late works for the cinema (e.g., *The Patriot* [*Die Patriotin*], 1979, and *The Power of Feelings* [*Die Macht der Gefühle*], 1984). These are characterized by picture-book-style montages, which often give the viewer the feeling that she or he is leafing through the pages of a printed and illustrated volume, along with acted scenes and plot fragments. Kluge's DVDs now offer a similar viewing experience, featuring a new type of filmed segment whose design is governed by a commitment to "*ars povertas*," an aesthetic doctrine that renounces artistic splendor, embellishment, and high production

6. Alexander Kluge, *Früchte des Vertrauens* (Frankfurt am Main: Filmedition Suhrkamp, 2009). Also, Kluge, *Wer sich traut, reißt die Kälte vom Pferd. Landschaften mit Eis und Schnee. Stroh im Eis* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2010).

values. These clips often consist of a single static take—one could call them visual sketches—in which the camera catches the simplest of motifs. In the *Wer sich traut* project, for example, one sees a formation of snow; flakes drifting close to the lens with the blurred surface of a frozen lake in the background; and the view of wintry trees from the balcony of Kluge's apartment. Kluge here captures variations on the theme of ice and snow with a matter-of-fact approach that never seeks to derive an aesthetic surplus value from the potentially romantic motif of the beautiful cold. In their unassuming, stripped-down style, these images provide further evidence of Kluge's declared independence from plenitude, constituting instead of sober, visual exemplifications of the concept.

In comparison with Kluge's long films and his television features, the elements of his DVDs are less rigidly coordinated. The films and features follow a linear structure and arrange their individual components in a lineup in which later segments partially refer back to earlier ones. On his DVDs, Kluge seems to have eroded this mode of sequential development in favor of more general groupings, all of which relate to a common topic but none of which depends on being deciphered in a particular order, before or after another chapter. The elements of Kluge's DVDs have thus entered a stage of loose coupling, as it were, an organizational flexibility enhanced by the collections of literary stories that come with each DVD project. These are included as text-files, as well as in accompanying booklets in which the usual information (the list of disc chapters, producers' credits, etc.) is banished to the back. These booklets form an integral part of the DVD works; in the case of the *Wer sich traut* project, the booklet has even been given a proper title—*Stroh im Eis* (Straw in ice)—while the actual disc carries the title



*Kluge. Wer sich traut, reißt die Kälte vom Pferd (Who dares pulls the cold off its horse). 2010.*

*Landschaften mit Eis und Schnee* (Landscapes with ice and snow). Together, they constitute a digital/print diptych that figures under the overarching title *Wer sich traut, reißt die Kälte vom Pferd*.

*Picturing the Constellation*

One of the ways in which Kluge addresses the digital is by figuring it as a constellation, and indeed, the sky with its constellations of stars is a recurrent visual motif in his films and features. Through the concept of the constellation, Kluge pictures the multiplicity of Internet users, the attention that they invest in their online activities, and the unstable interrelation that connects them, and turns them into a dynamic context of individually attending and producing sub-

jects. Kluge also rotates the image, as it were, from a synchronic to a diachronic dimension, declaring that the constellation may also serve to model the historical relation between digital media and the analog and electronic media that preceded them. The constellation thus becomes a structural figure for a relation in time, a media-historiographical model shaped by the epistemological stance that new media do not cancel or supersede old media.

Moreover, beyond this general historiographical perspective, the figure of the constellation can be understood as specifically depicting the temporal signature of Kluge's own work. As such, it relates to one of the fundamental principles according to which Kluge builds a certain subcategory of his images. Ever since the analog celluloid beginnings of his visual oeuvre, his work has encompassed layered, or constellated, image-entities in which re-filmed historic footage is supplemented by and viewed through



*Top: Kluge. Wer sich traut, reißt die Kälte vom Pferd. 2010.*

*Bottom: Kluge. The Blind Director. 2010.*

masking devices and hazes of color. It is a method that constellates old and new elements so as to produce multilayered structures. Another example of such a constellational procedure can be found in the television features, in which Kluge sometimes “places” an interlocutor, originally filmed in a blue box, “in front of” footage shot elsewhere (for example, a hotel in Venice, already filmed by Visconti, or the rotating moon, as filmed in a several-hour take at night). Here, the electronically generated image configures segments of different temporal origins and durations into a spatial arrangement by assigning them the positions of front and back within a picture. Kluge’s viewer sees, for example, German director and artist Christoph Schlingensiefel conversing about the tragedy of *Hamlet*, while “behind” him runs an accelerated, hazy camera recording of Schlingensiefel’s 2001 Zurich staging of Shakespeare’s play where an ensemble of shadow-silhouettes—the actors—circulate through a foggy zone illuminated by irregularly pulsing stage lights. Through such procedures, the figure/ground distinction that structures the image as spatial representation assumes the function of an intra-chronic hiatus.

This constellational layering of onscreen images is further developed by digital media in Kluge’s DVD projects. Whereas Kluge’s earlier films construct multi-strata entities through analog means (for example, by re-filming historic footage through color foils stuck to the camera), the computer now enables Kluge to select cutouts from an electronically recorded Caspar David Friedrich painting—the iconic *Sea of Ice* (circa 1823–24)—and impose them onto a series of photographs of Western cities, various sites around the world, and of icebergs adrift in the Arctic Sea. The result of this conjunction is a visual fiction of the Earth thrown into the stasis of a new ice age, an operation through which human history itself is bracketed as an episode of geo-history, a glimpse of a reverse diluvian



Both images: Kluge. Paraphrase zu einem Bild Caspar David Friedrichs (Paraphrase on a painting by Caspar David Friedrich). 2010.

horizon where the human age does not emerge from the floods but reaches its frozen end.

There is, finally, a way of understanding the constellation as picturing the recombinatory potential that digital media introduce to the history of Kluge's production *in its entirety*. Through its binary base, the DVD, just like the computer, can function as storage for the texts as well as the (originally) analog, electronic, or digital time-based visual works that constitute Kluge's output. By virtue of this quality, digital media offer the possibility of shoring up current and older fragments from different phases of Kluge's work-biography. In this manner, literary stories about the theme of ice and snow can now be juxtaposed with short visual takes on these motifs; or, as Kluge describes below, segments from his 1963 short documentary *Lehrer im Wandel* (Teachers in a time of change) can now be linked to more recent interviews for a program-loop on dctp.tv. Kluge has employed such a method of combinatory re-editing as a principle in constructing his literary works from the beginning of his activity as an author. The digital now allows him to extend its reach into the pictorial dimension.

#### *Paraphrasing the Constellation*

In its diachronic aspect, as the model for a conjunction between the present and a remote past, Kluge's term points to one of its possible origins, namely the concept of the dialectical image as found in the work of Walter Benjamin. For Benjamin, the dialectical image described a constellation between a "now" and a previously obfuscated and forgotten historical moment of the past that are separated by a temporal gap, which is to say that the two points in time are not connected through a linear development.<sup>7</sup> Benjamin found several exemplifications for such a relation: for instance, in the way in which contemporary fashions appropriate and actualize outmoded aesthetics as discontinuous, a movement which he called fashion's tiger's leap into the past; the Surrealists' trophy hunting in the stylistic cosmos of the late nineteenth century, a world of outdated tastes; or the way in which the French Revolutionaries "cited" ancient Rome.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the dialectical image structurally describes a constellation in time in which the disconnected past reenters a present while still articulating the temporal caesura that marked it as a relation across time. And for Benjamin, it proved a structural figuration of the image as such, amounting to a definition of the image *as* constellation. Kluge appropriates this figure in the following conversation as the specific

7. For an attempt at a more detailed analysis of the dialectical image's constellational character, see the present author's "Die Bestimmung der Aufnahme. Licht und Graphie bei Walter Benjamin," in *Benjamin-Studien 2* (Munich: Fink, 2011), pp. 52–56.

8. See Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," in *Selected Writings* vol. IV., eds. Howard Eiland, Michael W. Jennings. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2000) 2003, pp. 389–400; "Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia," in *Selected Writings* vol. II. part 1., eds. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, Gary Smith (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press), pp. 207–21. Here p. 210.



image of stars in a night sky, as an account of the digital, and in so doing he submits it both to a contraction—condensing the term’s history into a picture—and a variation. The variation consists of the term’s application to the field of media technologies, where it now accounts for both the relation between the digital and its technological antecedents and to the relations between various historical strata of visual production as manifest within a single image (historic footage re-recorded and altered). Kluge occasionally refers to this general method of appropriation of preexistent motifs and concepts, which in his work always includes a condensation and at least a slight modification, as a procedure of paraphrase. (For example, in the conversation, he describes his treatment of Eisenstein’s notes as “paraphrases,” and the previously mentioned series of transpositions of ice floes from *The Sea of Ice* carries the title *Paraphrase zu einem Bild Caspar David Friedrichs* (Paraphrase on a painting by Caspar David Friedrich). It should be noted that a paraphrase is also the Klugean image for the constellation that rehearses the older concept of the dialectical image, to which it adds the difference of media-history, as it opens from the standpoint of our digital present.

#### *The Digital as Reconfiguration*

Kluge’s concept of the constellation relates to his conception of the digital as a reconfiguration of its preceding techniques, strategies, types of production, and so forth. The digital enables Kluge to recalibrate, as it were, the activity of montage, which is no longer necessarily tied to the linear temporal unfolding of a film or a literary text. It allows him to re-actualize the relationship of his work to the “primitive diversity” of archaic cinema, as he explains in the conversation. And it gives him the opportunity to readjust the economies of short and long durations in his works. These transformations are not without precedent in his work-biography. In fact, a comparable revision occurred when Kluge integrated the means of the television feature—short programming, brief intertitles, graphic elements, etc.—to further develop the specific relation of short elements and long duration that had characterized his literary works (in which anecdotes/stories make up texts/books) and films (in which short montage-episodes constitute the entire, often quite extended, film and create its “picture-book” style).<sup>9</sup>

Thus, for Kluge, the transition into the digital is not a mere reordering of the elements and formal features that constitute his earlier work. It is also the return to a preceding reconfiguration that took place when he expanded from the systems of literature and film to the system of television. In Kluge’s work, digitalization thus amounts to reconfiguring the very process of reconfiguration, a sort of second-order reordering, by which the activity of assigning a new arrangement to an extant combination turns upon itself. The terminological correlate to this

9. See Miriam Hansen, “Reinventing the Nickelodeon: Notes on Kluge and Early Cinema,” *October* 46 (Fall 1988), pp. 179–98.

movement lies in the re-constellation of the notion of “constellation.” Under digital terms the concept of the constellation articulates the historical difference between separate states of media-technology. But it also enters into a relation—a constellation—with the previous meanings of the term constellation itself, which had carried different implications under analogical terms. These earlier meanings are neither erased nor “corrected” by their digital counterpart, but are rather subjected to a paraphrasing variation.

*The Potencies of Storing*

This reconfiguring activity is to no small extent enabled by the augmented powers and altered possibilities of storing that digitalization puts into effect. Kluge’s work makes use of these transformations in the recording of visual and textual information on the basis of a binary code. This allows Kluge to assemble the various formats he works in within the context of a single medium, such as the DVD. In this sense, the DVD allows for a miniature representation of all the various media in which Kluge is active: film, television, and literature—to which is added the digital format that functions both as storage for the aforementioned forms of artistic articulation and as a new medium used by Kluge in its own right.<sup>10</sup>

The second quality of digital storage that Kluge takes advantage of derives from what could be considered, at least from the recipient’s perspective, a kind of latency. None of the individual elements contained on a disc are present to the eye of the recipient in the manner that printed pages in a book, or still frames on a printed strip of celluloid, are visible. In the latter cases, units of visual information may be “jumped,” by browsing a volume or by fast-forwarding a film in the projector, but these acts of accelerated movement through a medium are categorically different from skipping a track on a DVD or going through a set of icons that represent text files on a screen. On a DVD, the act of reception involves a retrieval of elements from a state of latency. This selective actualization constitutes another type of constellating activity, a mode of deciphering an artwork that is shaped by the type of storing specific to the digital. In the case of Kluge’s DVDs and Web site, the elements of this correlating retrieval can belong to his current output, but they may just as well consist of older—now digitally re-stored—work-segments. Each of these acts of correlation thus potentially amounts to a constellating of elements from the present and the past. Instead of defining digitalization historically and temporally as a radical break or a categorical rupture with a preexistent analog and non-digital electronic order, Kluge’s work thus makes use of the digital as the realm for such temporal conjunctions.

10. In organizational terms, one major threshold divides the general combination possibilities on Kluge’s discs. The choice between the selection menu for texts and the one for time-based visual works forms the DVD’s highest structuring partition. Put in more concrete terms: portions of writing may occur within a trajectory of clips as onscreen lettering or as filmed or photographed printed pages, but there is no direct access from this essentially pictorial segment of the DVD to those sections where Kluge’s literary stories are saved as text files in PDF format.

The temporal vector of Kluge's work, however, is oriented not just towards reconfiguring a relation to the past but also towards the future. As Kluge explains in the subsequent interview, the digital offers unprecedented storage capacities, which he exploits with the full knowledge that the recorded work will never be exhaustively retrieved in any single act of viewing or reading. The constellational character of reception, enabled by digital information's latent exuberance, thus responds to a type of work whose definite formal articulation becomes less and less a matter of the artist/author's or the public's present. Instead, the work is as much addressed to an uncertain future—whose indefinite futurity enters the body of the work itself, which never fully constitutes itself for a single viewer or reader. Kluge's image for this partial future-directedness in the conversation is that of a raft—a maritime vessel of comparative simplicity that the artist sets in motion in the hope that future audiences will encounter it one day and unload its aesthetic freight. These qualities are tied to a transformation in the character of the artwork itself, which, at least in Kluge's interpretation, takes on the structure of storage.

*Three Negative Definitions of a  
Klugean Approach to the Digital*

The way in which Kluge does *not* address the digital is, finally, just as instructive as the way in which he does. Three examples may demonstrate this.

Remarkably absent from Kluge's analysis is an emphasis on simultaneity, a Virilioan dromological perspective of acceleration and synchronization.<sup>11</sup> (Indeed, Kluge already thematized and rejected this possibility in his 1985 film *Der Angriff der Gegenwart auf die übrige Zeit* (The assault of the present on the rest of time—distributed internationally under the title *The Blind Director*), which in part deals with the disappearance of cinema and the emergence of such electronic media as television and computerization.) While Kluge certainly underlines the all-encompassing character of the Internet, in his perspective this quality leads to a deregulation, not a synchronization, of temporal orders. The result is a mode of reception that is characterized by a new level of differentiation and accuracy with which people “appropriate” time. In turn, it becomes mandatory for artworks and texts to readjust their temporal economies if they are to persist in the digital realm.

Secondly, Kluge proves immune to the connectivity myth, which holds that the transformative potential, and often also the political hopes, of the rising network society will emerge from within the communicative activity of exchange alone. Kluge, by contrast, does not conceive of the digital commons as a public sphere constituted through mere interaction in networks. Rather, his notion of the public sphere

11. See, for example, the chapter “The Perspective of Real Time” in Paul Virilio's book *Open Sky*, where he lays out his “dromological” position that the “regimes of temporality” put in place by information technologies lead to an exclusion of “temporal exteriority” in favor of a creation of the “instant of instantaneous telecommunications,” an event that Virilio otherwise refers to as “the accident of the present.” Paul Virilio, *Open Sky* (London: Verso, 2008), pp. 22–34. The first two citations are on p. 22 and p. 25; the third on p. 14.

remains tied to the idea of a large-scale projection, an abundant visibility of the image, which lies beyond or before the network, and around which the community of viewers/onlookers gather and exchange their thoughts and feelings.

Finally, Kluge does not deduce the primacy of smooth compositing from the possibilities of the digital, as others have done, i.e., he does not equate the emergence of an informational infrastructure for artworks with the end of the disjunctive aesthetics of montage.<sup>12</sup> On the contrary, Kluge dialectically recognizes a renewed urgency for montage techniques in digital environments, insisting that montage does not merely amount to the articulation of an aesthetics of disruption; rather, this discontinuity, through the immobilization of the flux of sensory impressions, serves to generate suspended moments of reflection, as if a viewer had briefly paused on a walk through the woods to let her gaze wander across a thicket of bare stems and branches. In Kluge's terms: instead of facilitating the flow of images, montage creates frozen lakes that need to be looked at in a quiet state of mind. In this sense, the landscapes with ice and snow that we see in Kluge's most recent DVD—the visual recordings of flakes drifting, of footprints in wintry fields, of a pair of boots set against frozen grass, of a sunset on the polar circle—are also meta-images depicting, in the brief duration their maker has allowed them, a reflective stillness, islands of quiet observation with which Kluge seeks to freeze over the pressures of a merely reactive attentiveness exerted on audiences present and future.

#### *How to Access the Works of Alexander Kluge*

The vast majority of Alexander Kluge's literary and theoretical works have appeared in German with the Suhrkamp publishing house. A few older titles are still in print (*Part-time Work of a Domestic Slave* [*Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*]), others have been republished in new editions (*Der Luftangriff auf Halberstadt am 8. April 1945* [The air raid on Halberstadt, April 8, 1945]; *Lebensläufe*). The monumental two-volume *Chronik der Gefühle* (Chronicle of feelings), originally published in 2000, consists of a near complete reissuing of every literary text that Kluge had written up to that point. In line with his general artistic program, the individual items in the *Chronik* have been partially subjected to slight variations as compared to the original versions. English translations of a number of Kluge's canonical literary texts exist (*Case Histories*, *Battle*, *Learning Processes with a Deadly Outcome*), although the English editions sometimes only render selections from the original collections (e.g., *Cinema Stories*).

Kluge's analog and electronic works for the cinema are all included in the

12. See, for example, Lev Manovich: *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001), pp. 136–45. Tom Conley describes a similar figure in Jacques Rancière's interpretation of Godard's video and television works, in which Rancière recognizes a farewell to an artistic program of dissensus and antagonism, and the emergence of a neo-symbolist aesthetics of mystery and fusion. Tom Conley, "Cinema and its Discontents: Jacques Rancière and Film Theory," in *SubStance*, vol. 34, no. 3 (2005), pp. 96–106.

DVD boxed set *Sämtliche Kinofilme* (Complete works for the cinema), available through the German media publisher Zweitausendeins, which also issued the boxed set *Seen sind für Fische Inseln. Fernseharbeiten 1987–2008* (To fish, lakes are islands: works for television 1987–2008), which contains a fourteen-disc selection of Kluge's features for television. Both sets include subtitling options in English, French, Spanish, Chinese, and Russian. Kluge's three DVD films to date (*Nachrichten aus der ideologischen Antike*; *Früchte des Vertrauens*; *Wer sich traut, reißt die Kälte vom Pferd*) have all appeared with Suhrkamp's new film edition and are not subtitled. The theme loops in which Kluge organizes his online work are at [www.dctp.tv/#/themen/themenschleifen](http://www.dctp.tv/#/themen/themenschleifen).

In collaboration with Kluge, the German department at Princeton University has established the Alexander Kluge Research Collection, comprising digitized versions of his writings, films, and videos, as well as scholarly literature on his work. Access is available on the Princeton campus, and detailed information can be found at [www.princeton.edu/german/kluge](http://www.princeton.edu/german/kluge).