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## Sweeping changes in Eastern Europe: The documentary frame in Gerd Kroske's 'Kehraus' trilogy (1990-2006)

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This essay is motivated by a desire to enliven established notions of documentary cinema. In part a response to the genre's ever-expanding field of operations, the aspiration stems above all from the observation that the indexical and the representational are not enough to account for the work of documentary cinema in the real. This is not to belittle the evidentiary value of documentary films or to undermine the ways in which documentaries contribute to the politics of visibility. Rather, the idea is that actual documentary endeavors call for alternative conceptualisations.

A case in point are longitudinal documentary projects that address change in specific locations or in the lives of given individuals over lengthy time periods. Many longitudinal documentaries chronicle change with indexical transformation markers, such as signs of ageing, but others are much less attached to representing change as a series of identifiable phases in the life of a location or that of an individual. Instead, they are invested in change as it happens. This essay focuses on a longitudinal project that documents the transition period in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Gerd Kroske's *Kehraus* trilogy (1990, 1997, 2006) on street cleaners in the East German city of Leipzig circumvents the indexical chronicle in favour of exploring the enfoldment of the transition period in the lives of three street sweepers.

The difference between chronicling change and documenting how it is lived comes down to the distinction between accumulating evidence and capturing and expressing change as intensity. It has been well-established that longitudinal chronicles draw much of their power from revisiting photographs, scenes, stated opinions, and hopes from previous films. Revisits amounting to reversals and contradictions foreground self-reflexivity and enable a prismatic cumulative effect to take form.[1] Kroske's trilogy draws attention to how the subjects are framed. The three documentaries revisit photographs, scenes, and locations from the previous films, but these are superseded by frames that explore the effect of the transition period on the lives of the sweepers at the moment of filming. Whereas the chronicling function produces an extensive take on given lives and locations, the frame produces an intensive account of how lives are lived and locations inhabited at a given moment in time.

The changes that took place in Eastern Europe after 1989 were in many ways incredibly vast and difficult, but most were far from revolutionary events and abrupt rupture points. Policy reforms and constitutional restructuring had an immense impact on how lives could be lived, but the impact was by no means immediately obvious or, for that matter, visible. Hence, documentary projects that addressed the intricacies of the transition period were faced with capturing change when it was no longer, or not yet, identifiable in visible signs of change.[2] Documentary films such as Kroske's *Kehraus* trilogy had to capture change as it operates on the level of immanent governmentality embodied by the individuals who live it. Here, change as intensity refers to the powers that condition and the potentials that facilitate life during the transition period.

With Kroske's remarkable trilogy of films this essay conceptualises documentary cinema as an 'aesthetics of the frame'. [3] The aim is to show the indistinguishability of aesthetics from the documentary's approach to the real and to demonstrate how the frame taps into reality as an ongoing process. In this context, the essay redirects documentary discourse from 'true representations' to an analysis of how the documentary frame captures and expresses the 'regime of truth' in operation during the transition period. Following Michel Foucault, this entails a focus on both the systems and effects of power in Post-Wall Germany. Above all, and relating to the activation of the aesthetic in documentary cinema, the direction of the essay coincides with Foucault's insistence on the importance of 'knowing that it is possible to constitute a new politics of truth.' [4]

## Aesthetics of the frame

Kroske's trilogy follows Gabi, Stefan, and Henry as they make do through the years. In the first film – *Kehraus (Sweeping, 1990)* – the protagonists sweep the streets of flyers left behind by political rallies. In *Kehrein, Kehraus (Sweep it Up, Swig it Down, 1997)*, they have been replaced by machines and no longer work as sweepers. In *Kehraus, Wieder (Sweep it Up, Again, 2006)*, those who are still alive face endless spirals of bureaucracy in trying to make ends meet. Each film in the trilogy deploys a distinct aesthetics of the frame marked by changes in technology, style, and circumstance. What unites all three films is the interaction between what is seen and stated inside the frame and what is left out. The trilogy underlines the ongoing nature of the transition period through constantly relating the inside to what continues beyond the frame.

In theorisations of fiction film, the outside of the frame has among other things been mobilised in its capacity to extend narrative space and incite imagination of what *could be* beyond the bounds of the visible.[5] In the documentary, on the other hand, the frame functions as a limit that asserts continuation. André Bazin's description of the two-directional dynamic of the frame is productive in unpacking the inside-outside operations of the documentary frame. In his reflection on (documentary) films about painting, Bazin addresses the accusations of infidelity these films sometimes encounter. Films such as Alain Resnais and Robert Hessens's *Guernica* (1950) or Resnais's *Van Gogh* (1948) have been deemed not to be true to the original paintings they depict. These allegations, Bazin contends, miss the unique aesthetic symbiosis of painting and cinema. He argues that successful films about painting do not treat the works of a painter as an already formulated ensemble. Rather, films like *Van Gogh* replace the original works with an abstraction 'over which the camera has wandered as freely as in any ordinary documentary'.[6] These abstractions are paintings once removed from the original – pictorial spaces that in becoming cinematic circumvent claims of betrayal. Instead, cinema gives them 'a new form of existence'.[7]

What is particularly noteworthy in Bazin's exposition is the aesthetic dynamic he detects in the entanglement of the pictorial frame and the cinematic screen. Bazin notes that the frame of a painting detaches the pictorial from natural space by offering 'a contemplative area opening solely onto the interior of the painting'.[8] The edges of a screen, on the other hand, are the outer limits of a mask (*cache*) that shows only a fragment of reality. Whereas the pictorial frame turns inwards, 'what the screen shows us seems to be part

of something prolonged indefinitely into the universe'.[9] In other words, cinema offers works of art as newly relational in natural space in a world that lies beyond the edges of the screen on all sides.

The double bind of centripetal and centrifugal limits Bazin detects has significant effects. The tension between the inward-looking tendency of the picture frame and the outbound propensity of cinema transposes the function of film from representing an already formulated object to giving it a new form of life. In Bazin's phenomenology, this amounts to cinema being 'in the process of saving' painting.[10] Although I do not share Bazin's redemptive tone, I find the aesthetic dynamic he fashions with the frame particularly useful for a consideration of documentary cinema. The separate tasks Bazin assigns to the picture frame and the screen exist simultaneously in the documentary frame. Documentary frames centre attention to the visible and the audible – hence the oft-cited missions of *increasing visibility* and *giving a voice* – but they also always relate to that which cannot be seen or said, or even known. Documentary frames remind us that the real is not limited to what is perceivable within the frame.[11]

In addition to establishing a dynamic limit between the inside of the frame and the out-of-field, the frame also operates as a territory. This function bears on the relationship of content and expression in the image. Whereas indexical postulations of the documentary presume that content is pre-formed for the documentary to convey, the territorial function suggests that content takes form in relation to the frame.[12] This reorients the documentary from evidentiary operations to actualisation. However, the actualisation of content in relation to the frame does not imply that the frame fully determines what content will turn out to be. Rather, the idea is that content and expression are autonomous, yet in reciprocal presupposition, and the frame is the in-between plane that occasions their reciprocity. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari name this relationality a 'double articulation'.[13] It is not a relationship of physical or semiotic correspondence, but one of mutual 'thickening' where both content and expression gain consistency in a process of actualisation.

The double articulation of content and expression implies that both are prone to perpetual variation. In the language of the documentary, this translates to content that is in flux and that escapes rational verification. This poses a problem for the documentary's representational impetus, which operates through discursive modalities that make meaning out of a reality that is, precisely, verifiable through indexical images. The aesthetics of the frame and

its territorial function offer an alternative approach that draws on the mutual actualisation of content and expression at the moment of filming.[14]

In this approach, it is important to note, the real is considered expressive in itself.[15] The actualisation of content in the documentary relates to reality possessing its own form and substance that actualise into content through the work of the frame. According to Deleuze and Guattari, this has to do with the real being composed of both actual and virtual qualities. They maintain that all actual forms are as immediately virtual as they are actual.[16] Actual bodies and objects are implicated in an ever-varying movement of virtual differentiation that exceeds given actual forms. They maintain the pull of difference in their being, making actual forms 'the now of our becoming'.[17]

Here, the idea of a world that continues beyond the frame takes the form of the virtual in all actual forms. As the documentary frames actual bodies and objects, it taps into their processes of actualisation and draws out expressions of their becoming. This ontological premise aligns with Bazin's argumentation in his other essay on cinema and painting. In describing the documentation of artistic process in Henri Georges-Clouzot's *The Picasso Mystery* (1956), Bazin contends that the film expresses duration in an unprecedented manner. Through capturing Picasso's work in progress the film gives form to the nascent state of paintings and the suspense involved in artistic creation.[18] Georges-Clouzot bypasses readymade works in favour of their mysterious processes of formation, which Bazin sees as the fundamental cinematic act:

[f]ilm here is not the mere moving photography of an a priori, external reality. It is legitimately and intimately organized in aesthetic symbiosis with the events pictured. [19]

In what follows, I will elaborate on the aesthetics of the frame in Gerd Kroske's trilogy along two lines of inquiry. First, the focus will be on the ways in which the frame challenges established notions of the transition period and how it articulates the relationship of the sweepers to the ongoing reforms. Second, the focus is turned to the ways in which the frame summons reality to actualise. This has particular valence for documentary cinema as it involves a transposition from representing realities that already are to working with realities in the making.

## Activating the outside

In the first instalment of the trilogy Gabi, Stefan, and Henry sweep the streets of Leipzig at night and get paid at the end of the shift. In the second film, they no longer work for the city. Pay per shift has been banned and permanent employment is hard to find and keep. Stefan sells flowers on the street, Henry is in a job creation scheme and Gabi works a few hours on occasion. By the third film Stefan has passed away. Gabi and Henry deal with the effects of the most recent policy reforms on their unemployment and welfare benefits.

*Kehraus* begins with an Allianz für Deutschland rally led by Helmut Kohl.[20] Soon after, scenes of cleaning take precedence over the political demonstration. The camera is mostly still with only the occasional slow pan following the sweepers' movements. The beautifully composed black-and-white images draw the reflection of street lights into the image with the sweepers. The film was shot on 35mm by Sebastian Richter and produced by DEFA's Studio für Dokumentarfilme GmbH in the spring of 1990. Richter shot numerous other films for DEFA and this poetic style is also recognisable in the collaboration between Andreas Voigt, Kroske, and Richter titled *Leipzig im Herbst* (*Leipzig in the Fall*, 1989), a film that depicts the events on the streets of Leipzig during the chaotic autumn months of 1989. In *Leipzig im Herbst*, the black-and-white frames side with long takes and lengthy interview scenes with protestors on the streets. Henry, one of the street cleaners portrayed in *Kehraus* a few months later, sweeps the streets while protesting. In both documentaries the camera participates actively in creating the atmosphere of the moment.

In *Kehraus*, the scenes of cleaning are complemented with frames where the sweepers address the camera directly, either sitting or standing. At all times the camera keeps its distance to the individuals in the frame. The wide angles and scale of the frames bring forth the disillusionment of the sweepers in what has been hailed one of the most influential regime changes in recent European history. The atmosphere borders on expectant and apocalyptic, but the sweepers are captured in positions that speak of distance to the ongoing events, of being relatively equivocal about its immediate impact. In one scene, Stefan verbalises the visual effect by saying in a sarcastic tone that he does not dream because there have already been too many disappointments and things can hardly get any worse than they already are.



Figs 1, 2: Observant bystanders. Frame enlargements courtesy of the filmmaker and absolutMEDIEN.

Here, the frame does not simply channel a reality that is already in place, it participates actively in selecting, weighing, and composing its consistency. Judith Butler explores a related epistemological paradigm in her investigation of images of war. She argues that the waging of war takes place through frames of war: '[t]he frame does not simply exhibit reality, but actively participates in a strategy of containment, selectively producing and enforcing what will count as reality.'<sup>[21]</sup> The frame, in other words, plays a role in how reality comes to be recognised.

The epistemological work of the frame Butler detects in images of war takes place on two distinct levels: the visual frame selects what is offered for perception and the discursive frame operates on the recognisability of the chosen visibilities and statements. The discursive frame refers to the social and political norms that operate through the visual frame crafting the living



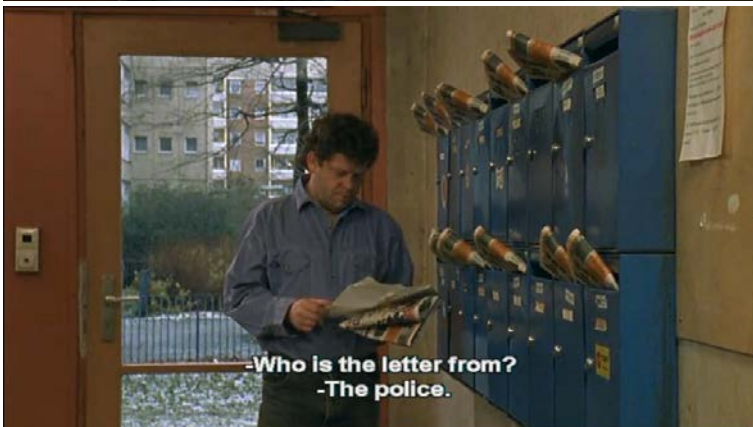
beings framed in the image into recognisable subjects.[22] Frames of war posit some subjects as recognisable whereas others are deemed to be outside the norm of recognisability. Consequently, Butler argues, only some lives are recognised as grievable in instances of war.

In the context of the transition period, Kroske's *Kehraus* trilogy mobilises frames of recognisability through its focus on those at the margins of political reforms. In the first film, the marginalised are in a working relationship with the centre of society, but in the second instalment that connection has been severed. In the third film, the protagonists are far removed from participatory roles in the public sphere. This is particularly important given the Hartz IV reforms implemented in 2005 that essentially cleansed the marginalised from unemployment statistics by combining long-term unemployment remunerations with welfare benefits.[23] In a situation of increasing marginalisation, following Butler, the work of the frame responds to the distribution of recognisability in Post-Wall Germany. The three documentaries challenge the celebratory discourse of the unification – epitomised in the opening scene with Helmut Kohl – through framing the lives of those whose existence becomes ever more precarious during the transition period. In this way, the three documentaries actively question and produce what counts as reality in Post-Wall Germany.

On a general level, then, the documentary trilogy clearly participates in the distribution of recognisability in post-1989 Eastern Europe. However, whereas Butler's argumentation presumes a visual frame that is rather passive and above all determined by discursive frames of another order, Kroske's trilogy activates the *frame as limit* between the sweepers' bodies and the reforms of the transition period. Here, the trilogy moves away from the politics of representation and starts operating in the register of the aesthetics of the frame. Instead of working on the recognisability of given subjects, the frame as limit captures and expresses the becoming of the subjects in given circumstances.

This comes through particularly poignantly in how the trilogy 'stages' the transition period in relation to the sweepers. In *Kehraus*, the sweepers are framed alone as alert bystanders in public spaces. In the portrait-like compositions of the first instalment, the outside of the frame becomes a space of decisions, policies, and reforms that envelops and presses on the sweepers. The sounds of the city and political commotion are located offscreen.

In *Kehrein, Kehraus*, the camera comes closer to its subjects. The film begins with Stefan holding a frame enlargement from the first film and stating that ‘things were much better six years ago.’ The diegetic harmonica score that marks the public space in the first film has become the non-diegetic score of the second film. The second and third films in the trilogy were shot by Dieter Chill and they differ in style from the first instalment. In *Kehrein, Kehraus*, the still compositions and slow pans that observed the street cleaners from a distance in the urban environment have given way to medium close-ups shot in private spaces. The poetic black-and-white frames have been replaced by colour images shot with a Super-16 camera. The camera visits all three protagonists in their lodgings and the filmmaker asks them questions about what life is like in this moment in time. The interviews follow the same strategy used in *Kehraus*, but whereas the filmmaker’s soft voice was barely audible in the first film, his presence is more pronounced in the second.



Figs 3, 4: Letters from the authorities. Frame enlargements courtesy of the filmmaker and absolutMEDIEN.

The aesthetics of the frame in *Kehrein, Kehraus* signals the increase in bureaucracy emblematic for the transition period through medium close-ups shot in private spaces. Here, the frame as limit captures and expresses a sense of confinement in a situation where the protagonists are no longer in a position to contribute to society. Instead, they are subjects to orders imposed by the authorities. Thus, the film expresses the paradox of the reunification: on the one hand the welfare system offers housing and upkeep, but on the other hand this is enacted in a way that subjugates the individuals to an almost invisible position within society. This is reflected also in the title of film. Whereas ‘auskehren’ at the root of ‘Kehraus’ means ‘to sweep clean’, ‘einkehren’ which leads to ‘Kehrein’ means to ‘return’ or ‘to step in somewhere’. Thus, the title of the film could be interpreted in terms of the political reforms that sweep the streets clean of the marginalised and put them up in welfare housing. In this way, the documentary comments on the restructuring of economy and labour by capturing and expressing the force of administration on the three protagonists.

## Frames of actualisation

Like its predecessor, *Kehraus, Wieder* begins with segments from the earlier films in the trilogy – this time with the added feature of the director’s voice-over commentary. Speaking over images of the old cleaners’ headquarters that is now Afro Shop, Kroske remarks that he never intended to do a longitudinal series of documentary films but found himself working on yet another film because he was hoping for a happy ending. The making of the third film was initiated in a screening of *Kehrein, Kehraus* and the related realisation that the protagonists were nowhere to be found. Kroske started tracking them down and eventually found Gabi and Henry.

In *Kehraus, Wieder*, the two remaining protagonists, Gabi and Henry, are both unemployed. The camera frames them in their homes and on the occasional outing. What is noteworthy in the scenes shot in their homes is the length of the takes. Whereas the previous sequences shot in private spaces were by no means abrupt, the ones in *Kehraus, Wieder* are even more patient, perhaps in part due by the affordances of the digital camera used to shoot the documentary. Here, too, the camera stays still and frames the protagonists in medium close-ups and medium shots. In the frames, the protagonists offer insight into their lives. While sitting on his computer in the corner of a room,

Henry talks about once being online for 52 hours straight. He then explains the idea of the video game he is currently playing. In the lounge room, he shows off his fan-shirt collection. The television blasts news about the employment scheme reform that is set to penalise the long-term unemployed who are unwilling to work.

The narrative of everyday activities and the resources needed to do them take a different turn in the scenes that focus on Gabi. Kroske notes on the soundtrack that Gabi never liked to talk about herself, and as if to somehow undo that statement the camera frames an open reel audio recorder in front of the old headquarters. On the tape, Gabi talks about aspects in her life that have not been heard in the previous films. There are three particularly important scenes that enhance this sense of the documentary suddenly canvassing new ground. In the first one, early in the documentary, Gabi looks at old photographs and the filmmaker asks her questions about the time her kids were taken away from her. She begins a sentence but then withdraws and says that she does not want to talk about it. The filmmaker asks a slightly different question that gets her talking again, until she repeats her aversion to the topic.

A little later in the film, Kroske interviews Gabi's daughter Caterina and visits the children's home where she spent several years. Sitting on a couch in one of the rooms, she reveals that she was molested by her stepfather for almost 10 years and her mother's response to the situation was dismissive. Caterina broke contact with her mother and the two have reconnected only recently. Toward the end of the film, Caterina visits her mother and they go through the old photographs together. Kroske asks from behind the camera if the two have ever talked about the time they were not in contact. The question induces a silence, a quick glance at one another and finally a jointly articulated 'no'.



Fig. 5: Caterina & Gabi. Frame enlargement courtesy of the filmmaker and absolutMEDIEN.

This set of scenes in *Kehraus, Wieder* is significant because it pushes a previously non-existent relationality to actualise. From the moment of Gabi's refusal to speak, the documentary frame looks for ways to bring the two women closer together without forcing either one to speak of things they do not want to address. This is obviously not to say that the documentary somehow solves the underlying trauma and puts reconciliation in its place. What is at stake is the frame's capacity to foster a new relationality between the two – one that actualises in the joint shrug to the filmmaker's question.

This coincides with a transition from frames of recognition to frames of actualisation. The former, as Butler defines them and as I have operationalised them above, suppose that the outside of the frame determines what we see and apprehend in the frame. Discourses, political situations, social histories, and technologies play a part in how frames make certain realities recognisable over others. Butler notes that the powers of determination can be questioned – particularly as images circulate and land in new contexts – but even in these new contexts, the outside keeps its grasp on the inside of the image albeit in a new way. Frames of actualisation postulate a different relationship to the outside. Here, the outside is a site of potential.

According to Elizabeth Grosz, and her reading of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, the frame territorialises the becoming of the earth. Speaking of architecture as the primordial art form, Grosz notes that the architectonic frame presses against the earth and 'tames' its becoming. This, she contends, intensifies the virtual qualities of the earth into sensations that, as they break

through the bounds of the frame, impose themselves on the living as affectations.[24] There are two implications for frames of actualisation in Grosz' argument. First, she draws attention to the 'outside' of all actual forms. This is the plane of virtual becoming that cuts transversally across all actual beings – human and animal alike. In documentary terms, as frames 'press against' the real, they capture its lively becoming. Second, the territorialising function of the frame intensifies the becoming of the real into sensations that are then released back to a world that continues beyond the frame. The created sensations are a kind of an overflow that works on living beings beyond the bounds of a film.[25] As the documentary frame territorialises the bodies of living beings, it captures the potential of their becoming and expresses it as a sensation that breaks through the bounds of the frame.

The frames of actualisation that push gently against the precarious realities of Gabi and Caterina tap into their respective processes of moving beyond the actualities they once occupied. The frames do not force them or take them by the hand, but let them find their words and direction in the space demarcated by the film. The documentary, in a sense, gives them a platform to find a mutual plane of communication and the shrug and smile they share in response to Kroske's question is the actualisation of that work. This may not qualify as a happy ending in the strict sense of the term, but it nevertheless underlines the actualising capacity of the frame.

Another example of the actualising work of the frame continues the theme of norms and policies working on the bodies of the street cleaners. Stefan and his on-off girlfriend Marlen are no longer alive, but *Kehraus, Wieder* dedicates a lot of screen time to their lives, revisiting old photographs and clips from the previous films and interviewing officials, acquaintances, and family about their fate. Their absent voices and bodies have been replaced by coroner's reports, welfare files, and descriptions of therapy sessions.



Figs 6, 7: Stefan explained. Frame enlargements courtesy of the filmmaker and absolutMEDIEN.

The scenes that focus on Stefan fill the frame with numerical qualities. A welfare worker goes through his file in an archive room and explains how they helped Stefan manage his checks. In the following scene, a pathologist goes through the report of his death and states that when Stefan was found, he had already been dead for months, his remnants weighing a mere 20 kilograms. In the final scene of the film, a cemetery worker points the filmmaker to the location of Stefan's urn at a public cemetery. First offering a rough sketch of his resting place, the official then takes out her measuring stick and locates the urn at the precision of a few centimetres. The camera zooms in on the green grass in an attempt to capture Stefan for the last time. The grass fills the frame, and its gentle movement in the wind overflows the final stillness of Stefan's death.

After his passing, Stefan is more systematically positioned within society than he ever was when he was alive. Systemic calculations, weight measurements, and files indicating his allowances take over the space he once inhabited inside the frame. It is as if the policies, norms, and reforms (that were depicted at a distance from the sweepers' bodies in the first film and then as a somewhat more persistent power in the second instalment) were now utterly and thoroughly within the frame – indeed the very content of the third film in the trilogy. As *Kehraus, Wieder* frames the descriptions of Stefan's being and location, it gives a form to his passing. The scenes shot at the welfare archive, the morgue, and the cemetery articulate his life as one forever bound to regulations he did not adjust to. In framing the system that worked on Stefan, the documentary creates a sensation of a life that can break through the limits imposed on it only in death. Here, following Jacques Aumont, the outside of the frame is simultaneously a site of potential and that of fading away, emergence, and death.[26]

## To begin again

The work of the frame in Kroske's trilogy captures and expresses the changes that take place in the relationship between the subjects and their surroundings over nearly two decades in Post-Wall Leipzig. From the observant bystanders of the first film to the neatly categorised, cremated corpse of the last film, the frame evokes the impact of the social, political, and material processes on the bodies of the protagonists. The respective aesthetics of the frame in each instalment address the lives of the protagonists in relation to the changing environment to the effect that it is precisely this changing relationality that sticks from the trilogy.

Although the *Kehraus* films follow the protagonists through the years and address issues typical for the chronicle, the motive of a cumulative narrative arc has been replaced by what the filmmaker describes as a desire for a happy ending. In the present context, the quest for a happy ending translates to a series of films shot at irregular intervals where each instalment *begins again*. [27] The stylistically and technologically variant frames of the three documentaries respond to the transition period by establishing its parameters anew every time. [28]

In Kroske's trilogy, this is enhanced through sonic frames at the beginning of each film. *Kehraus* opens with a scene where a man playing a waltz on a



harmonica descends the stairs to Leipzig's central railway station. This is followed by a cut to the title of the film and a shot of a bus stop on a busy street. The harmonica score is still audible but its source has become acousmatic and not clearly locatable in the offscreen space. *Kehrein, Kehraus* opens with a scene of the central station being remodelled. This is followed by the protagonists' brief accounts of the changes that have taken place in their lives. Gabi is the last to speak in medium close-up, and towards the end of her account the harmonica score from the first film starts playing. The music continues over images of a rundown cinema and fragments from *Kehraus*. The score is still acousmatic but this time it is non-diegetic without the prospect of its source becoming visible.[29] This is taken a step further in *Kehraus, Wieder*, where a different waltz played on a guitar over images of the sweepers' old headquarters sets the scene yet again. As the first score travels from onscreen to offscreen and then to the non-diegetic realm, and the second waltz plays on the diegetic and non-diegetic memories of the first, each sonic frame undoes its previous articulation while acknowledging its own future re-framings.

Beginning again foregrounds the 'perpetual breakage'[30] in frames of recognition and the pull of difference in frames of actualisation. Butler contends that although the discursive norms implemented through the frame seek to determine the inside of the frame – the apprehension of content – this is never thoroughly possible, because 'something exceeds the frame that troubles our sense of reality'.[31] The frame never quite contains the scene it seeks to display. 'Troubling', however, is not the equivalent of feeling that what one sees and hears is *untrue*, but more akin to a sensation that there is more to what one is given.

With the activation of the outside, the documentary frame begins approaching the processual qualities of the real. When the documentary frame meets reality in its ongoing, emergent state, it captures and expresses its becoming as a sensation that keeps acting even after the film comes to an end. What rings true in documentary cinema is what continues beyond the frame.

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## Author

Ilona Hongisto is Lecturer in Media Studies at Macquarie University, Sydney, and Honorary Fellow at the Victorian College of the Arts, the University of Melbourne. She works across screen studies, media theory and political philosophy, and specialises in documentary cinema. Her most recent work focuses on fabulation in post-Soviet Eastern European documentary cinema. Hongisto has published widely on questions concerning the documentary; including the monograph *Soul of the Documentary: Framing, Expression, Ethics* (Amsterdam University Press, 2015) and peer-reviewed articles in such journals as *Studies in Documentary Film*, *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema*, *Cultural Studies Review*, and *Transformations*.

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## Notes

- [1] See Kilborn 2010; Miller Skillander & Fowler 2015; Bruzzi 2007.
- [2] For a more expansive take on Post-Wall documentary films immediately after the turn, see Silberman 1994.
- [3] This is a concept I began developing in Hongisto 2015 and have elaborated on also in Tiainen & Kontturi & Hongisto 2015 and Hongisto 2016.
- [4] Foucault 1979, p. 47.
- [5] On the frame in the cinema, see for example Aumont 1989; Bonitzer 1982; Villain 1985; for a historical theorisation of the frame in the visual arts and new media, see Friedberg 2006.
- [6] Bazin 2005, p. 166.
- [7] Ibid., p. 168.
- [8] Ibid., p. 166.
- [9] Ibid.
- [10] Ibid.
- [11] Hongisto 2015, p. 12.
- [12] This presumption relies on the physical connection indexical images retain to the external world. For a thorough exposition of the evidentiary function in documentary cinema, see Nichols 2008, p. 29, passim.
- [13] Deleuze & Guattari 1987, pp. 502-503. Deleuze & Guattari draw double articulation from the Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev, who insists on the distinction and mutual presupposition of content and expression. Working with Hjelmslev, they enact a transition from Saussure's semiotic model

of the signifier and the signified, and move on to suggest that content has its own substance and form and expression has its own form and content. *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44, 108.

- [14] A similar proposition has been put forward in the realm of architecture, where Bernard Cache has insisted on the autonomy of the frame from its content. According to Cache, architecture introduces intervals in a territory in order to construct frames of probability. One never knows how the intervals marked off by the frame will be filled – a church can become a market; a school can become a hospital – and hence the frame only suggests probability. Cache 1995, p. 28, 56.
- [15] Related positions can be found in new materialist postulations that emphasise the ‘exhibiting agency’ of matter and the ‘lively powers of material formations’. See Coole & Frost 2010, p. 7; Bennett 2010, p. vi.
- [16] Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. xvii, 99; Deleuze & Guattari 1994, pp. 117-133.
- [17] Deleuze & Guattari 1994, p. 112.
- [18] Bazin 1997, pp. 214-215.
- [19] *Ibid.*, p. 216.
- [20] The Alliance for Germany was an opposition coalition in East Germany that formed an interim-government until the unification. It consisted of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), Democratic Awakening (DA), and German Social Union (DSU).
- [21] Butler 2010, p. xiii.
- [22] *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- [23] The third film was shot after the fourth stage of the reforms was implemented in 2005. Hartz IV reforms cleansed unemployment statistics by connecting long-term unemployment with welfare benefits to the effect that the term ‘Hartz IV’ now denotes the class of non-working poor in everyday parlance.
- [24] Grosz 2008, pp. 10-17.
- [25] The sociologist Michel Callon identifies a similar dual operation of the frame in his discussion of economic externalities. Callon speaks of externalities as fundamental to the existence of markets and notes that the continuous emergence and re-emergence of markets requires a keen eye on the managing of externalities. He identifies both negative and positive externalities, and notes that there are approaches in economics that either try to contain overflows by framing them or that consider overflows as the norm and framing the result of a fragile and costly construction. See Callon 1998, pp. 248-255. Erving Goffman’s frame analysis is equally noteworthy in this regard, as he too deploys a two-directional movement in and out of the frame in the organisation of experience. See Goffman 1986, pp. 1-20.
- [26] Aumont 1989, p. 30.
- [27] Irregular intervals are typical in German longitudinal documentaries. Other examples are Volker Koepp’s *Wittstock* cycle (1977-1997) that consists of seven films and the 20 films in Winfried and Barbara Junge’s epic saga *The Children of Golzow* (1961-2007). The asymmetrical intervals in these projects foreground key events in the lives of the protagonists – whereas for example Michael Apted’s *Seven Up!* (1964-2012) often has to just refer to significant life turns in the interviews due to its predetermined shooting intervals.
- [28] Nora Alter speaks of the technological variation in longitudinal documentaries in terms of the chronicling function. She notes that Winfried and Barbara Junge’s epic saga *The Children of Golzow* (1961-2007) is not only a historical chronicle of an East German village and its inhabitants, but also a chronicle of cinema itself. Alter 2002, p. 199.
- [29] Michel Chion notes that the possible revelation of a sound’s source – particularly that of the voice – entertains attraction in cinema. Chion 1999, p. 23.
- [30] Butler 2010, p. 10.
- [31] *Ibid.*, p. 9.