

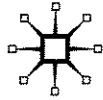
# The City and the Moving Image

Urban Projections

Edited by

Richard Koeck and Les Roberts

palgrave  
macmillan



Introduction, selection and editorial matter © Richard Koeck and Les Roberts 2010  
Preface © Julia Hallam and Robert Kronenburg 2010  
Individual chapters © Contributors 2010

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No portion of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, Saffron House, 6–10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS.

Any person who does any unauthorized act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

The authors have asserted their rights to be identified as the authors of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First published 2010 by  
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN 978-0-230-24338-5 hardback

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The city and moving image: urban projections/edited by Richard Koeck, Les Roberts.  
p. cm.

ISBN 978-0-230-24338-5 (hardback)

1. Cities and towns in motion pictures. 2. Architecture in motion pictures.  
3. Motion pictures and architecture. 4. Motion pictures—History—20th century. 5. Documentary films—History—20th century 6. Actualities (Motion pictures)—History and criticism. I. Koeck, Richard, 1969– II. Roberts, Les, 1966–  
PN1995.9.C513C58 2010

791.43'6358209732—dc22  
2010027526

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1  
19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10

Printed and bound in Great Britain by  
CPI Antony Rowe, Chippenham and Eastbourne

# Contents

<i>List of Figures and Table</i>	vii
<i>Preface</i>	ix
<i>Julia Hallam and Robert Kronenburg</i>	
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xi
<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	xii
Introduction: Projecting the Urban <i>Richard Koeck and Les Roberts</i>	1
<b>Part I Projecting the City: Place, Space and Identity</b>	<b>19</b>
1 'Old World Traditions ... and Modernity' in Cunard's Transatlantic Films, c. 1920–35: Making Connections between Early Promotional Films and Urban Change <i>Heather Norris Nicholson</i>	21
2 Nice: Virtual City <i>Isabelle McNeill</i>	36
3 Visions of Community: The Postwar Housing Problem in Sponsored and Amateur Films <i>Ryan Shand</i>	50
4 'City of Change and Challenge': The Cine-Societies' Response to the Redevelopment of Liverpool in the 1960s <i>Julia Hallam</i>	69
<b>Part II Of Time and the City: Landscapes of Memory and Absence</b>	<b>89</b>
5 Towards a History of Empty Spaces <i>Charlotte Brunsdon</i>	91
6 Tacita Dean's Optics of Refusal <i>Tara McDowell</i>	104
7 Searching for the City: Cinema and the Critique of Urban Space in the Films of Keiller, Cohen, and Steinmetz and Chanan <i>Ian Robinson</i>	114
8 A Tale of Two Cities: Dachau and KZ Munich <i>Alan Marcus</i>	125

- Gilloch, G. (2007). 'Urban Optics: Film, Phantasmagoria and the City in Benjamin and Kracauer', *New Formations*, 61 (Summer 2007): 115–31.
- Kracauer, S. (1995). *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, ed. and trans. Thomas Y Levin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).
- Kracauer, S. (1997). *Theory of Film: the Redemption of Physical Reality* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).
- Lefebvre, H. (1971). *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, trans. Sacha Rabinovitch (New York: Harper & Row).
- Lefebvre, H. (1991a). *Critique of Everyday Life Vol.1*, trans. John Moore (London: Verso).
- Lefebvre, H. (1991b). *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell).
- Lefebvre, H. (1996). 'Right to the City', in *Writings on Cities*, ed. and trans. Koffman and E. Lebas (Oxford: Blackwell), pp. 61–181.
- Lefebvre, H. (2003). *The Urban Revolution* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).
- Massey, D. (1994). *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press).
- Nichols, B. (2001). *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press).
- Shields, R. (2006), 'The Virtuality of Urban Culture: Blanks, Dark Moments and Blind Fields', available at [http://spaceandculturereadinggroup.googlepages.com/edmonton\\_pics](http://spaceandculturereadinggroup.googlepages.com/edmonton_pics), accessed 17 December.

### Filmography

- London*, Dir. Patrick Keiller. UK, 1994.
- Chain*, Dir. Jem Cohen. US, 2004.
- Detroit: Ruin of a City*, Dir. George Steinmetz and Michael Chanan. UK, 2006.

## 8

### A Tale of Two Cities: Dachau and KZ Munich

Alan Marcus

A stream. A clubhouse. A witness. Theodore Pais never crossed a stream called the Wurm canal to play a round of golf, or enjoy the local Bavarian cuisine available to members and their guests in the dining room of *Golfclub Dachau*. A temporal demarcation and physical border separated him from what is now the club's par four, fourth hole. The Wurm canal is a line, a thread that links a paradigmatic site of death and brutality with the boundary of a site of leisure. The quiet waters of the Wurm canal pass birch trees on one side and barbed wire on the other. Crossing it marks the threshold for 800,000 visitors and tourists who traverse the canal to enter the Nazis' first state concentration camp.

On the other side of the camp lies another border. Alte Römerstrasse is a busy road that runs the length of the camp's walled, barbed wire perimeter, punctuated by guard towers. Thousands of motorists and lorry drivers follow this boundary every day as they make their way into the city of Dachau. Facing the camp is a large industrial site with modern factories and warehouses, featuring local companies such as *LK-Kunststofftechnik* (2009), which specializes in protective coatings for industrial surfaces, offering 'the complete floor solution'. The former concentration camp, which was complicit in 'the Final Solution', is never more visible to the public and the city's 39,000 inhabitants than it is today. Once separated by agricultural land from the 1200-year-old town of Dachau, it is now fully incorporated within the city's postwar built environment. Emblems of modernity adjoin and overlay a traumatic palimpsest. A site that symbolized genocide is now tightly embalmed by the banal and its consequences.

The film *In Place of Death* (2008)<sup>1</sup> raises issues about the conflicting roles of personal and public memory, and debates centred on how society should engage with sites of significance and the survivor's testimony. Theodore Pais was 90-years old when featured as the sole interviewee in the film (Figure 8.1). Recording the interview in his room in a Jewish geriatric care facility in San Francisco, the survivor's account he is able to give is memorable for its cryptic delivery. Due to a stroke suffered the previous year, Mr Pais takes considerable

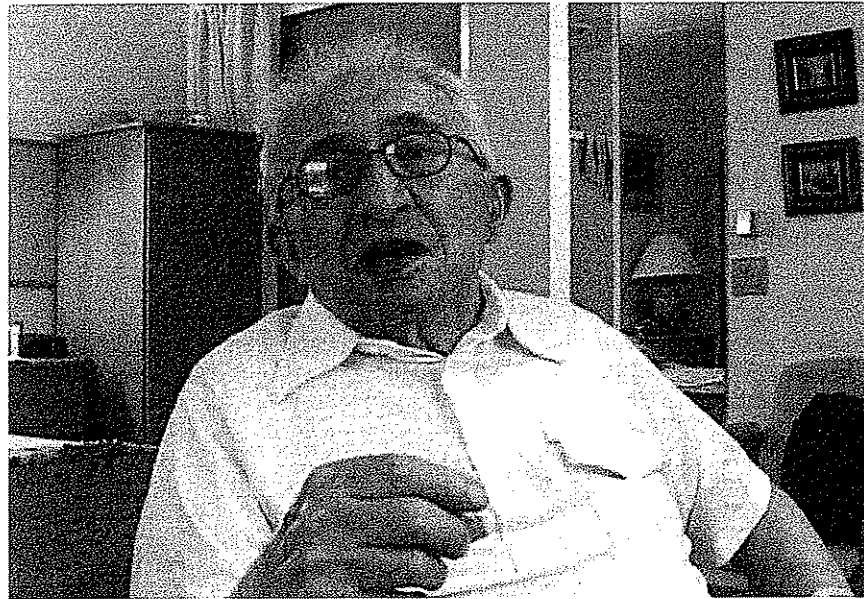


Figure 8.1 Theodore Pais, *In Place of Death* (2008), dir. Alan Marcus.

time to respond to the interviewer's questions, and then does so haltingly with only a few words. His long-term memory is intact; however, the stroke has reduced his level of elucidation. When asked at the outset of the film, 'How did you survive?' he struggles to answer and a minute later responds with the words, 'That's a good question!' In the fragments of speech that follow, the narrative emerges of a man who lost his wife and son during the Holocaust, but who managed to survive the liquidation of the Kovno ghetto in Lithuania and incarceration at Dachau and its Kaufering sub-camp.

Theodore Pais's role in the film and his absence of articulation ultimately operates as a systemic filmic metaphor for the voiceless victims who perished, and those who represent an ever dwindling number of first-hand witnesses to the Holocaust. His testimony is juxtaposed with contemporary observational images of the camp, the town of Dachau and the city of Munich, of which it is a suburb. Without the aid of narration, conventional interviews or archival footage, the viewer is presented with a series of visual engagements that seek to suture the past and present. Scenes of downtown Munich, which is connected by the road, Dachauer Strasse, that serves as an umbilical cord to its infamous northern suburb 16 kms away, repositions the way we view a place called Dachau. On 20 March 1933, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler, as Munich's Acting Chief of Police, used a press conference to announce the opening of KZ Dachau. On the second

day under SS (Schutzstaffel) administration, four Jewish prisoners were led out of the camp and shot 'while trying to escape' (Distel, 2005: 63). If Konzentrationslager (KZ) Dachau were referred to as Konzentrationslager (KZ) München, we would arguably think of cosmopolitan Munich in different terms today. Postwar Munich and its enlarged suburbs form a massive architectural palimpsest, covering over remnants of some 120 sub-camps of KZ Dachau, which were operated throughout the city and its environs.

In addition to its SS-controlled concentration camp for prisoners, the physical footprint of the compound encompassed a much larger area, comprising one of the main administrative headquarters for Himmler's SS in the Third Reich, and serving as an SS training academy. The concentration camp took up less than one-tenth of the overall SS site, though much of the locale is still off-limits as, since 1972, it has served as an operating base for the Bavarian riot police, the Bereitschaftspolizei, and the rest of the former SS grounds are now a golf club. Dachau is a place where inhumane SS 'medical experiments' were conducted and tens of thousands of human beings put to death and many more tortured, beaten and starved. It is on one level a place out of sight. Yet, because of its proximity to the heavily touristed city of Munich, it is easily accessible for a half-day trip on a list of 'top sights' while visiting the Bavarian capital. The catalyst for making the video installation, *Beautiful Dachau* (2006),<sup>2</sup> which the film *In Place of Death* grew out of, was a tourist poster seen on a bus shelter outside the entrance to the former concentration camp, which announced: 'Beautiful Dachau: things to see and do'. A similarly upbeat announcement by a local tour company assures prospective clients that 'each Dachau tour we give outshines the last!' (The Dachau Tour, 2009). The slogan encapsulates a city's challenge of attempting to rebrand itself.

### Where tourists gaze

Munich's motto until 2005 was *Weltstadt mit Herz* ('Cosmopolitan city with a heart'). With its contemporary reputation for culture, stately architecture and the annual Oktoberfest, Munich has been transformed in the postwar years from a provincial capital into a tourist Mecca that aspires to be cosmopolitan. On the city of Dachau's official website is depicted a concert orchestra performing in front of an audience, and below is a schedule of concerts and public events (Dachau, 2009). On the English language version of the city website is depicted a large image of the palace Schloss Dachau (ibid.). Below is the banner: 'Dachau: much more than you would expect!' The text follows: 'The Concentration Camp Memorial Site makes Dachau Europe's central place of learning and remembrance'. The placing of Dachau and Europe side by side in the sentence, and stressing the centrality of the town's role within the European project, suggests an overt effort to champion its status as a European site while coupling the notion of remembrance to that of edification. The 'heart' in Munich's former motto, which is echoed in its

current version, *München mag Dich* ('Munich loves you'), finds an artery to Dachau's city website, where the motif of a chocolate heart is prominently displayed on the front page of its English site. The heart contains the phrase: *Dahoam is Dahoam* (Bavarian dialect meaning 'at home is at home') – the title of a popular television series which, the web page informs the reader, is produced in Dachau.

The site's text explains that Dachau 'is also the ideal starting point from which to discover the region's charming countryside'. It affirms that the city merits more than a single visit to the concentration camp, 'thanks to an impressive program of cultural events – ranging from the Dachau Palace Concerts to the Dachau Music Summer and the Traditional Dachau Folk Festival'. Accompanying the text are three images in a row featuring the concentration camp, a concert and the palace. The distinctive Renaissance wooden ceiling in the Schloss banquet hall, reputedly one of the finest ceilings in southern Germany from the period, and the city's postwar urban and cultural renaissance reflect a common theme. Dachau's effort to reposition its image as a European centre for culture, learning and remembrance is cogently foregrounded on its website and supplementary brochures and posters. *Dachau als Künstlerstadt* ('Dachau as City of Artists') is a framing device increasingly used to promote and recontextualize public perceptions of the town (Dupuis-Panther, 2010).

Across the road from KZ Dachau, the SS created an extensive area of cultivated fields and greenhouses, known as 'The Plantation', in which thousands of prisoners worked and died. Heinrich Himmler's scheme was to make Germany independent of imported spices, and to grow herbs and medicinal plants at the Plantation. Since the war, the city has used this section of land as an industrial zone for various commercial enterprises. In 1997, the fast food chain McDonald's opened a restaurant there. The company soon attracted controversy by reportedly placing flyers in the wind-screens of visitors' cars parked at KZ Dachau. The leaflets read 'Welcome to Dachau and welcome to McDonald's', and provided a diagram showing the restaurant's proximity to the camp (Schlosser, 2001: 233). In 1972, the first Olympics to be staged in Germany since Berlin 1936 were held in the city of Munich. McDonald's selected Munich as the location for opening its second European outlet in 1971 to capitalize on the influx of tourists coming to the city for the summer games (the first McDonald's in Europe was opened three months earlier in the Netherlands). McDonald's now has 32 outlets in Munich and two in Dachau – strategically sited for tourist access across from the train station and close to the concentration camp.

A new form of witnessing takes place in KZ Dachau today. Few photographs taken at the time of the camp's operation, from 1933 to 1945, are in common use. Archival photos available on the web consist primarily of images of the stacks of corpses lying in boxcars outside the camp and in the crematorium, and scenes of liberated prisoners. As the film *In Place of Death*

shows, today's witnesses to the site take photos prodigiously (Figure 8.2), smiling in front of the iconic front gate of the Jourhaus entrance, with its slogan, 'Arbeit Macht Frei' (freedom through work), or posing in front of the crematorium's ovens. The new digital age, with its cost-free image creation, has increased the number of photos being taken. In a walk through the camp one is constantly reminded of tourists' aspiration to digitally document, to record, to remember. The film reaffirms that in a place of death, a place which served as a prototype for the other concentration camps which were to be constructed throughout the Reich, some people now stroll with a picnic basket, others walk their dog, many take photos, and some visitors silently ponder what it might have been like to have been held prisoner there.

Because of the camp's spartan appearance – the barracks having been removed in the early-1960s and other buildings, such as the Commandant's villa, later – there is a magnified sense of absence. What is this visible absence? Is it the absence of the urban activity present on the other side of the wall? Or, is it the absence of the site's victims? The space is so vacuous that, even with thousands of visitors a day, there is a palpable void: an emptiness, accompanied by a great silence. As the film reveals, the constant crunch of the crowds' rhythmic walking up the gravel path alongside the quietly flowing Wurm canal evokes a collective invented memory of the sound of the SS guards' jackboots, or of the prisoners in a work party entering the



Figure 8.2 Main gate at Dachau, *In Place of Death* (2008), dir. Alan Marcus.

camp. At key nodes – the main gate and inside the crematorium, many visitors – often youths in school or college groups led by a teacher – jostle and joke with each other. The tempo is one of an outing, an adventure.

Just as the ancient town of Dachau in recent years has attempted to capitalize on the large number of tourists who visit the former concentration camp, extolling its place as ‘a town of culture’ and ‘a place of learning and remembrance’, so too do tour firms which explain that in the Altstadt (Old Town) ‘you may enjoy a quick coffee and some of the best baked goods Dachau has to offer’ (Johns Bavarian Tours, 2009). The principal challenge for the city is not that after visiting the concentration camp tourists may not wish to avail themselves of the city’s trendy cafes and bakeries, but that the main part of town is not easily visible. When exiting the train station and either setting out on the newly signposted ‘path of remembrance’, or taking a special city bus directly to the camp, tourists are confronted with the non-intentional border of Frühlingstrasse and a tributary of the River Amper. The Altstadt, rising up on a hill, is around the corner, just out of view. By one city official’s estimate, only 1 per cent of the visitors to the camp actually visit the town centre (Schneider, 2006). Because this is for many a first and only visit, and they have no collective memory of a historic, picturesque town and former artists’ colony called Dachau, there is little awareness of it. In the public memory, Dachau represents one thing – a place of imprisonment and death.

Crowning the hilltop and its Altstadt of colourful, neat houses and civic buildings, sits Schloss Dachau, the summer palace of the Wittelsbach family who ruled Bavaria from 1180 to 1918. From its balconies one obtains a commanding view of the surrounding city, Munich itself and the nearby countryside. From the train station, where many of the visitors alight, and from the camp, which is located in East Dachau, the Schloss is not readily visible. What it represents as a former seat of aristocratic power, as an elegant Baroque palace in bright yellow hues, and as a tourism venue today for dining and attending summer concerts, stands in sharp contrast to the function of the concrete prison camp. Because the camp is sublimated by the urban fabric, obscured by taller buildings and trees, it too is difficult to see from the palace. The two main built structures in Dachau each serve as symbols of omnipotence. One has been transformed into a site of cultural display. The other has become ‘a site of learning’. Viewing *In Place of Death*, our sight of both is interwoven. The splash of the palace fountains in their graceful formal gardens is intercut with the River Amper flowing through the town, leading to the Wurm canal by the camp. A meandering natural line is traced and constituent parts of the Dachau urban mosaic assembled by montage.

In drawing upon film’s art of juxtaposition, acute comparisons are presented when Theodore Pais recalls that on the train to Dachau people were ‘treated like cattle’, as the film cuts to the interior of a modern train proceeding down the same track; or when he utters ‘Arbeit Macht Frei’

when remembering how he entered the gate, as we see a crowd of youths push in their eagerness to make contact with the same icon and cross the threshold into the camp. In a moment, we witness the unequal differences of engagement with the same sites. When Mr Pais attempts to explain what happened to his wife and son, only being able to stutter, ‘they didn’t make it’, we watch as crowds descend upon the crematorium to snap photos and gaze upon a gruesome past. The power of the moving image is such that it only takes a few words to trigger the viewer’s temporal transgression. Bringing to the film a memory bank of traumatic scenes from archival stills, documentary footage, and popular films such as *Schindler’s List* (1993), the viewer of *In Place of Death* makes the uncomfortable association that despite the wealth of information about the Holocaust and the large number of recorded testimonies, gaps of awareness may frustrate the public memory. The frailty of the survivor witness also underscores the tenuous link between the individualization of memory and its role in making more immediate the enormity of the crime against humanity.

### Urban palimpsests and signposting meaning

On 15 November 1933, months after KZ Dachau was established, Dachau’s historic status as a market town was officially upgraded to that of a city. The decision to rename Dachau’s main street in the Altstadt as Konrad-Adenauer Strasse (formerly Freisinger Strasse) in 1967, which the city hall and other civic buildings, restaurants and hotels are situated on, could be interpreted as an attempt by the city to distance itself from its symbolic involvement with Nazi persecutions and thereby demonstrate its embrace of the country’s new democratic ideals. Adenauer (1876–1967), who studied law and politics in Munich, served as Mayor of Cologne, 1917–33, when he was ousted from power. Twice imprisoned by the Nazis in 1934 and 1944, Konrad Adenauer went on to become the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany from 1949 to 1963. In the 1949 election, Adenauer narrowly beat his opponent, Kurt Schumacher (1895–1952), leader of the Social Democratic Party, who was imprisoned for most of the period 1933–45, including at KZ Dachau. A similar action was later taken in the naming of the street that leads to the entrance of the massive SS compound. In 1965, it was given the name Theodor-Heuss Strasse, after the first President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Theodor Heuss (1884–1963), who held office from 1949 to 1959 and who received his doctorate in Munich in 1905 and was a leader of the Free Democratic Party.

Another street abutting the SS camp has been named John F. Kennedy Platz, which overlays its palimpsest identity as the former Reichsschatzminister-Schwarz-Platz, named for the National Treasurer of the Nazi Party, SS-Oberstgruppenführer Franz Xaver Schwarz, who was from Bavaria. It was Schwarz, one of the earliest members of the party, holding membership



No. 6, who arranged the purchase of the building designated for the Nazi Party headquarters in Munich in 1930, Braunes Haus ('Brown House', named after the colour of the uniforms) on Brienner Strasse, just a block away from Dachauer Strasse. John F. Kennedy Platz runs in parallel with the street that follows the perimeter of the SS compound, formerly called Strasse der SS ('Street of the SS'), which still has a row of eight SS residential villas and has since been renamed Strasse der KZ-Opfer ('Street of the KZ Victims'). Also joining this road are streets named after Johann Neumeyer and Julius Kohn, Jewish residents of Dachau who were driven out of their homes on Kristallnacht and who were murdered at Auschwitz and Theresienstadt. Another connecting road is Pastor-Niemöller-Weg. Rev. Martin Niemöller (1892–1984), a former submarine commander in the First World War who was awarded the Iron Cross, later became an anti-Nazi theologian and prominent Lutheran pastor, and was imprisoned at Sachsenhausen and Dachau from 1938 to 1945. Other streets named after Catholic priests imprisoned at Dachau include Pater-Roth Strasse and Bischof-Neuhäusler-Weg. Neuhäusler (1888–1973) was born near Dachau, received his theological training in Munich, and was Canon of the Munich Catholic Cathedral Fathers when the National Socialists came to power in 1933. A street is also named after him in Munich. A number of clergymen who spoke out against the new regime were arrested and brought to Dachau, where they were brutally treated. Some 2771 clergymen, mostly Catholics, were incarcerated at the camp during its operation, of whom at least 1034 died. Curiously, the street named for Father Roth connects with another street named for a communist detainee at the camp, Karl Riemer, on which new apartment buildings have been built which overlook the camp's perimeter fence and 'the bunker', which was a special prison within the prison.

With such steps of naming key city streets after leading figures of the new democratic Germany and other personages associated with democracy and notable victims of Nazism, the town has sought to map over and reorient the public's perception of its political heritage. Particular spatial attention has been directed towards place names in the city's political centre and in the vicinity of the SS camp and compound. Reworking a well-worn proverb, a recent city brochure declares that: 'Many roads lead to Rome. Even more lead to Dachau' (Stadt Dachau, c. 2008). A town whose concentration camp was the destination for incarceration of a broad spectrum of political opponents and others from across the Third Reich and its occupied territories is now being positioned as a cultural and economic hub. The same close urban association that made its proximity to Munich a convenient location for establishing the camp is promoted as a virtue for economic opportunities.

One street that has retained its Third Reich associations is a main boulevard, Sudetenlandstrasse, that runs near the camp through East Dachau. The street was named to commemorate Germany's annexation of Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland under the Munich Agreement in 1938 and

Hitler's policy of *Heim ins Reich* ('Home into the Empire'). Controversies over the way the town should embrace the camp's history have gone through various postwar permutations and complexities. In the 1933 election, 44 per cent nationally voted for the National Socialist German Workers' Union (NSDAP), while they received only 24 per cent of the vote from the citizens of Dachau. Hitler's NSDAP actually came third in the Dachau vote after the Bavarian People's Party (BVP) and the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SDP). One week after the Nazis took control of the Dachau town council, Hans Zauner (1885–1973), who was a member of the Nazi Party, was installed as second vice mayor, a post he held from 1933 to 1945. He was one of the local Nazi officials forced by the US Army, who liberated Dachau, to tour the camp with its piles of corpses (USHMC, 1945; Marcuse, 2001: 80). Yet, in 1952, he was elected by a majority of the populace to serve as head mayor of Dachau, a post he held until 1960. One of the roads in the town is named after him, Bürgermeister-Zauner-Ring. Some authorities' objections to retaining the camp's physical structures and its various components as a lasting reminder and memorial site may have created an environment of conservative resistance and complacency.

Without a visible reminder, public memory is placed in jeopardy. Tensions were such that there were efforts to have the crematoria dismantled in the mid-1950s following debates on the subject in the city council (Marcuse, 2001: 184). The prisoners' barracks were torn down in 1965 and it was not until 1974 that the Dachau Memorial Site was designated as a protected monument. However, that did not prevent the town from demolishing the Commandant's villa in 1987 and authorizing the controversial construction of the 'Roman Grove' apartment complex a few metres from the camp's perimeter fence. One of KZ Dachau's most sadistic camp commandants from 1939 to 1941, SS-Sturmbannführer and Schutzhaftlagerführer Egon Zill, who went on to become commandant at KZ Natzweiler-Struthof and KZ Flossenburg, was sentenced in 1955 at the district court in Munich to life in prison. At Dachau, Zill had carried on in the ruthless tradition established by Theodor Eicke. After having his term reduced to 15 years in 1961, Egon Zill was released on probation in 1963 after serving just eight years. Zill found sufficient support locally that he chose the town of Dachau as a place of retirement, where he lived until his death in 1974.

A brochure prepared by Dachau's Economic Development Department, aimed at the international business community (the brochure is published in English), stresses the city's homogenous population, noting that 'according to research carried out by experts at the Berlin Institute for Population and Development, "the local population is incredibly stable" ... In other words: people living in Dachau tomorrow can expect the same types of neighbours and same living conditions they are enjoying today' (Stadt Dachau, c. 2008). As if to underscore the point, the text is accompanied by images of 23 individuals representing local people from Dachau. Fourteen of

them have blonde hair, and all six of the children in the pictures are blonde, evoking the former societal goal of *Volksgemeinschaft*. A place name that was synonymous with death is now trumpeted as a homogenous place of rebirth, with the brochure noting that between 1996 and 2006 the city experienced a population growth of 9.5 per cent (*ibid.*). The brochure's authors make the implication that this growth is not due to an influx of foreigners, but rather to the continued presence of individuals of a similar ethnic and cultural background.

### Witnessing and the visuo-haptic memory response

In what may be one of the final Nazi war crime trials, John Demjanjuk, a Ukrainian-born member of the SS, appeared before a court in Munich on 30 November 2009 to face charges of complicity in the deaths of 28,000 Jews while working as a guard at the Sobibor extermination camp in Poland. The accused is 89 years old and was wheeled into the courtroom by medics, strapped to a stretcher and surrounded by police and photojournalists. There are reportedly now no living witnesses to identify him, though two camp survivors will testify about the conditions at Sobibor. As with Theodore Pais, what happens to our understanding of past traumatic events when there are no more witnesses to offer their accounts? Will prosecuting an old man in Munich – the birthplace of the Nazi Party and a symbolic city whose sub-camps operated under the umbrella of KZ Dachau – stimulate a rejuvenated public memory of the atrocities committed under the Third Reich? Demjanjuk's appearance provides an instant reminder that the past is not the past, but a feature of the present. That bridging of time is a key objective of the film *In Time of Place*, in its attempts to use signifiers through manipulation of sound, shot selection and juxtaposition to convey the historical resonance and relevance of past traumatic events.

When the visitor walks with others along the prescribed gravel path beside the Wurm canal to the entrance of the Dachau camp and hears the sound of crunching footsteps in unison, it may serve to trigger and reinvent the received public memory of prisoners or SS guards making the same sound on the same path years earlier. As the spectator views this scene in the film *In Place of Death*, the act may also trigger a similar mimetic memory. The film's methodology features a fixed camera frame, with no pans or tilts. Most of the shots are firmly hand held, with barely perceptible movement, as if to suggest the spectator's own breathing presence viewing a scene. Long takes are used, straight cuts and no special effects wipes, and a lack of music and narration. Taken collectively, these stylistics give the impression of reduced intervention, thereby augmenting, emphasizing and validating the spectator's visuo-haptic response to the scene. The documentation of repetitious actions through montage further imprints the received memory and its temporal significance. Generating a visuo-haptic memory response throughout

the film is critical to the work's reception. The term *visuo-haptic memory* is applied in neurophysiology to describe learned behaviour associated with object recognition and usage. Visuo-haptic perception is also used to refer to the integration between visual and tactile signals and their reception. In film, extensive discussion of cinema's haptic sensory properties has been presented in studies such as Burch (1990), Lant (1995), and Marks (2000; 2002), and the haptic relationship explored between film and architecture in texts such as Bruno's key work *Atlas of Emotion* (2002).

There was much controversy when the original 'Arbeit Macht Frei' sign above the gate at Auschwitz was stolen on 18 December 2009 (BBC, 2009). At Dachau, the most direct haptic engagement visitors have with the camp is when they take the decision to either grasp and push open the heavy, iron 'Arbeit Macht Frei' entrance gate in the Jourhaus, or avoid touching it. In a single gesture they initiate their association with a profound collective public memory. In the act, time is transgressed and a bond forged to the received memory of a series of historical traumatic events that characterized the imprisonment, torture and death of millions of human beings. Though the camp was responsible for the death of some 30,000–50,000 individuals, because it was the Nazis' first concentration camp and its name widely known and publicized, the camp's iconic gate serves as an international emblem of Nazi terror and genocide. Documenting the diversity of visitor activity at the gate is a running motif in the film. Incarceration versus liberation, played out again and again. The repetition reaffirms the stature of the gate as the camp's primary orifice, and its associated stature. The visitor's freedom of movement reinforces the contemporary context of undisputed liberty. No guard or curator is on hand to document the visitor's access or departure. Once having stepped across the threshold, the visitor and spectator enter a liminal space, made explicit by the lack of delineated paths across the massive Appelplatz, the prisoners' roll call square covered in gravel, which extends on the other side of the gate. Voices dissipate and the crowds are minimized by the vast scale of the camp's vacuous expanse.

The role of diegetic sound in the film plays an important function in stimulating a haptic response. In particular, the repetitious use of sound, whether the ubiquitous clicking of tourists' digital cameras or the sound of walking on gravel up to and across the camp, produces an echoic memory, whereby an auditory mental echo is briefly maintained. The echoic affect bridges shots and through its repetitious application also inflects a blurring of temporal contexts. The filmmaker's intention is to accentuate cinematic properties of the visuo-haptic memory response to firmly situate the spectator within the scene and enhance the permeability of the fourth wall, in order to both fix and transgress time. This relationship is given additional breadth through the interventions of the survivor's tale, characterized by its few spoken words, prefaced and given stature by a lengthy pause where speech is not forthcoming. The sense of expectation and anticipation creates



a dynamic in which the spectator fills the auditory void with their own imagined response. When the survivor's short answer does finally come, it either confirms the participant-spectator's intuitive response, or provides an element of surprise and shock. In each case, the words suture and descriptively link the next scene.

KZ Dachau is a traumatized space. Its terror iconography of barbed wire, guard towers, walls, cells and crematoria reinforce its former function and legacy. By avoiding the use of overt informative and emotional guides and signposts, such as narration and music, the film foregrounds a sense of absence. In the physical absence of victims and perpetrators, the spectator is left with other tangible reminders. KZ Dachau has a 'clean camp' appearance, where the barracks are missing and only gravel and stone foundations indicate where the prisoners slept in overcrowded conditions and where SS doctors conducted their experiments on hapless victims. Throughout the film, visitors are seen wandering across the camp's open spaces in search of explanation. Their meandering gait is reflected in the film's stochastic montage, its anti or non-narrative structure placing the viewer on an unpredictable path offering a palette of options. The jarring visual and aural components, which juxtapose town traffic noise with the calm of the Wurm canal's waters, the sound of a fly investigating a flower, and the explosive shouts of students at the camp's entrance, or camera sounds in the crematorium, displace the viewer's initial attempts to decipher cogent meaning from the scenes.

In the 30-minute classic documentary film on the Nazis' concentration camp system and the Final Solution *Nuit et Brouillard* (1955), directed by Alain Resnais, Jean Cayrol's poetic and explicit script, Michel Bouquet's delivery of the narration and Hanns Eisler's nimble and provocative music underscore the film's display of irony and tragedy. Contemporary shots of the physical remnants of Auschwitz-Birkenau, aided by the use of archival footage, is given explosive and directed meaning through its juxtaposition with the narration and music. There is rarely a moment in the film when the spectator is left unsure of how to interpret the narrative presentation. In contrast, with the absence of music and verbal explanation in *In Place of Death*, the spectator is systemically encouraged to rely more heavily on their multi-modal sensory acuity. As with many of the tourists seen in the film visiting KZ Dachau, who rely on visuo-haptic responses to the camp's iconography to form their impressions, so too do the film's viewers. Applying the proposed theory of cinematic visuo-haptic memory response to the film's methodology gives expression to its diversity of meaning and the means for situating the spectator's responses. Film's unique ability to foster this form of experience was indicated by Walter Benjamin (1968: 236), who observed that cinema could 'reveal entirely new structural formations of the subject'.

Given that most of today's visitors to the site and spectators of the film have no first-hand experience of the historical period in which Dachau was

operational as a concentration camp, what is the nature of the memory triggered by the visuo-haptic experiential response? Landsberg (2004: 2) utilizes the term 'prosthetic memory' to describe the 'interface between a person and a historical narrative about the past', in which the subject does not just 'apprehend a historical narrative but takes on a more personal, deeply felt memory of a past event through which he or she did not live'. A similar approach, though without the use of a survivor's testimony, has been employed in three other films of identical length treating sites of significance associated with the Holocaust and Diaspora, including: *The Ghetto* (2009), set in Venice; *The Cemetery* (2010), made in the former Jewish quarter in Prague; and *The Memorial* (2010), filmed in Boston at the New England Holocaust Memorial site. The films comprise the *In Time of Place* research project (Marcus, 2010). In *The Ghetto*, the narrative adopts an even greater stochastic approach to that employed in the Dachau film. Underlying scenes of banal interactions in a familiar and colourful setting presents substrata of absence, trauma and death, which are only revealed as the film ends.

As in dramatic films, documentaries tend to present 'a linear and moral story', aiming to 'give us direct access to history' (Rosenstone, 2006: 17). The rationale and justification for these goals are clear. Mainstream documentary follows similar and long-standing dramatic narrative conventions and tropes of heroes and victims, conflict and resolution, in an effort to establish a persuasive point of view and to create an emotional bond with the viewer. The challenge is that following such accepted practice limits the flexibility of viewer response and interpretation. Film at its most effective is a form of manipulation – the question is one of transparency and intent. When director Leni Riefenstahl was asked by the author who were the influences behind her approach to making her classic documentary *Triumph des Willens* (1935), which features an inventive use of montage, she responded that she had none (Marcus, 2004: 81). When asked if the opening sequence in which Adolf Hitler's plane emerges from the clouds to land at the Nuremberg airport was an effort to deify the *Führer* as a saviour figure, she objected strongly to the interpretation and went on to explain that the film was simply a 'record of reality' (ibid.: 79, 82). Yet, this film, through its widespread dissemination and continued use on film and history courses, demonstrates the potency of its presentation of a new political movement by employing a highly refined form of artistry and filmic construction. By using selective framing and dramatic narrative structure, few aspects of the film are left to 'reality'. The film *In Place of Death* attempts to convey a set of ideas in a more subtle manner. By using observational techniques, long takes and eschewing conventions on use of music, narration or narrative form and casting, the film sets itself in opposition to documentary norms associated with historical film. It seeks to offer the viewer a less overtly signposted scenario in order that they might find traces of the past and their contemporary contextualization even more revelatory and pertinent when subjected to analysis.

## Acknowledgements

The author would like to acknowledge funding received from the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland in support of the In Time of Place research project.

## Notes

1. *In Place of Death* is one of a series of films made within the *In Time of Place* research project which looks at sites associated with Jewish identity and the Holocaust. Invited screenings of *In Place of Death* (2008, 30 minutes, directed by Alan Marcus) include: Edinburgh College of Art Symposium (March, 2008), City in Film conference, Liverpool University (March, 2008), Cinema and Architecture Symposium, Haifa, Israel (June, 2008), Cultural Memory conference, University of Kent, Canterbury (September, 2008), Narrascope workshop, University of Cambridge (September, 2008), Visible Memories conference, Syracuse University, NY (October, 2008), Manchester Architectural Research Centre (November, 2008), University of Derby (November, 2008), University of Manchester (November, 2008), The Irish Film Institute, Dublin (March, 2009), three screenings at the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities, the School of Architecture and the School of Divinity at the University of Cambridge (March, 2010). Available at: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/timeofplace/>.
2. Invited screenings of *Beautiful Dachau* (2006, 30 minutes, directed by Alan Marcus) include: TRANS exhibition and conference, University of Wisconsin, Madison (October, 2006), University of Manchester (October, 2006), Constructions of Conflict conference, University of Wales, Swansea (October, 2007), Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania (November, 2007), Brown University, Rhode Island (November, 2007), Princeton University (November, 2007), and Harvard University (November, 2007). Available at: [http://www.abdn.ac.uk/timeofplace/video\\_installation.php](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/timeofplace/video_installation.php).

## Bibliography

- BBC News. (2009). 'Auschwitz death camp sign stolen'. Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/8420053.stm>, accessed 19 December.
- Benjamin, W. (1968). *Illuminations*, trans. by H. Zohn (New York: Schocken Books).
- Bruno, G. (2002). *Atlas of Emotion* (New York: Verso).
- Burch, N. (1990). *Life to those Shadows* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Dachau (2009). City of Dachau official website. Available at: <http://www.dachau.de/>, accessed 12 September.
- Dachau Tour, The (2009). Available at: <http://www.dachautour.com>, accessed 29 November.
- Distel, B., G. Hammermann, S. Zámecnik, J. Zarusky and Z. Zofka (eds) (2005). *The Dachau Concentration Camp, 1933 to 1945* (Dachau: Comité International de Dachau).
- Dupuis-Panther, F. (2010). 'Dachau Gemäldegalerie Dachau', *Schwarzaufweiss Das Reisemagazin*. Available at: <http://www.schwarzaufweiss.de/deutschland/dachau/gemaeldegalerie.htm#sammlung>, accessed 2 March.
- Johns Bavarian Tours (2009). Available at: <http://www.johns-bavarian-tours.com/>, accessed 29 November.

- Landsberg, A. (2004). *Prosthetic Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press).
- Lant, A. (1995). 'Haptical Cinema', *October*, 74 (Fall): 45–73.
- LK-Kunststofftechnik GmbH (2009). Available at: <http://www.lk-kunststofftechnik.de>, accessed 29 November.
- Marcus, A. (2004). 'Reappraising Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*', *Film Studies*, 4 (Summer): 75–86.
- Marcus, A. (2010). *In Time of Place* research project web site. Available at: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/timeofplace/>, accessed 1 March.
- Marcuse, H. (2001). *Legacies of Dachau* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Marks, L. (2000). *The Skin of the Film* (Durham: Duke University Press).
- Marks, L. (2002). *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).
- Rosenstone, R. (2006). *History on Film, Film on History* (London: Pearson).
- Schlosser, E. (2001). *Fast Food Nation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin).
- Schneider, T. (2006). Personal communication with the author, 18 April.
- Stadt Dachau (c. 2008). *Here. Now. Dachau* (Dachau, Stadt Dachau Economic Development Department). Available at: <http://www.dachau.com/en/data/image/image-broschure-dachau-en.pdf>, accessed 4 November.
- USHMC (United States Holocaust Museum Collection) (1945). 'Photograph of Pile of Deceased Prisoners in the Dachau Concentration Camp', 30 April 1945. Available at: [http://resources.ushmm.org/inquiry/uia\\_doc.php/photos/12396?hr=null](http://resources.ushmm.org/inquiry/uia_doc.php/photos/12396?hr=null), accessed 7 March.

## Filmography

- Beautiful Dachau* (2006). Directed by Alan Marcus (UK: Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology, University of Manchester).
- In Place of Death* (2008). Directed by Alan Marcus (UK: In Time of Place).
- Nuit et Brouillard* (1955). Directed by Alain Resnais (France: Argos Films).
- Schindler's List* (1993). Directed by Steven Spielberg (US: Universal Pictures).
- The Cemetery* (2010). Directed by Alan Marcus (UK: In Time of Place).
- The Ghetto* (2009). Directed by Alan Marcus (UK: In Time of Place).
- The Memorial* (2010). Directed by Alan Marcus (UK: In Time of Place).
- Triumph des Willens* (1935). Directed by Leni Riefenstahl (Germany: Leni Riefenstahl Produktions).