## Prof. Dr. Alfred Toth

## **Transit and Transition**

1. Der nachfolgende Text wurde von mir am 3.12.2007 in den USA für eine (heute nicht mehr existierende) Zeitschrift für Filmtheorie geschrieben. Dabei wurden keine Zitate und Literaturangaben verwendet. Neben meinen eigenen Arbeiten zur Polykontexturalitätstheorie, speziell zur qualitativen mathematischen Kategorientheorie (Diamantentheorie) vgl. Kaehr (2007).

2. Samy Szlingerbaum's "Bruxelles-transit" (1980) must catch our attention not only because this is really a truly unique and outstanding masterpiece, but first because of its title. By definition, people who are in transit are not allowed to leave a certain secure area during their trip. Transits are characterized by corridors: In airports, nobody can make any mistakes. The ways through these transit corridors are well defined. There are guardians standing at each corner, the doors for possible mistaken paths are closed. Also, if you are traveling by train - another example for a corridor -, you cannot leave the train between the point of your departure and the point of your arrival. Transits are thus circles, in the sense of closed lines, although their actual shape may not be round. In three dimensions, a transit can be seen as a torus, which is the topological model for a corridor. So, transits are both: security area and prison. Nobody can from escape torus. а

When you go on a trip, you do not only depart at a certain time and arrive at a certain later time, but it is only in departing that you get a chance to arrive and only in arriving that you got a chance to have departed. Thus, on trips, the time-arrow is not only directed toward the future, but also toward the past at the same time. Therefore, in transits, there are two anti-parallel or anti-dromic time-lines. Such a conception of time cannot be described by classical science, which has of course severe consequences for the metaphysical background of transits: For each decision there is a rejection. And if you make a mistake in your choices at any point of the transit, then this trip mostly turns out into a Trip into the Light - as shown by R.W. Fassbinder in his movie "Despair" (1978).

"Bruxelles-transit" describes the flight of a Jewish family from Poland to Belgium. The title "transit" points towards the fact that this trip does never end. The family stays in transit. As it is shown in the movie, they can never integrate in their new "homeland". They remain strangers amongst strangers. The Yiddish language is also a transit corridor, a mental space of no escape. Watch the scene where the young woman (Hélène Lapiower) goes to the bakery and asks the sales woman to bake their Rugelach. First, she is not understood, then, after she is helped by a French native speaker, her wish is refused. She leaves the store and throws her pastry into a river - another transit corridor. It is this feeling of being a displaced person that is the focus of this movie. The Szlingerbaum family's story serves as paradigm. People who are in transit live in a never-land between the borders. Therefore, transit always implies transition, and not only the transition of borders between Eastern and Western Europe as shown in the movie, but also transition between life and death. Director Szlingerbaum himself could not stand his being in this never-land of transit very long; he passed away in the age of 36.

Literatur

Kaehr, Rudolf, The Book of Diamonds. Glasgow 2007

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