

Archives of the Arctic. Ice, Entropy and Memory
Sept. 18-20, 2013
Berlin, Germany

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Ways of Tracking - Disorder of Natural Archives vs. Stringent Mechanisms of Arrangement

Icescapes and archives appear virgin and are thus considered fascinating, inaccessible and alluring, therefore attractive particularly to the male individual. Like archives, ice also seems to wait for discovery and scientific research. Albeit following different processes, both preserve objects and thus serve as a medium of memory. Found remains from arctic expeditions were arranged in institutional archives to be themselves "excavated" by contemporary researches: interested people on a trail of papers, for instance Christoph Ransmayr's protagonist Mazzini. Not only literary characters, but also historical figures, follow the traces of predecessors saved in literary and archival documents. Different ways of tracking, considered as a tactic provoking memory, will be defined during the talk through selected works of Austrian and German literature and Japanese film: Christoph Ransmayr's *Die Schrecken des Eises und der Finsternis* [The terrors of ice and darkness], Ilija Trojanow's *Eistau*, Alfred Andersch's *Hohe Breitengrade oder Nachrichten von der Grenze* and Koreyoshi Kurahara's *Antarctica*.

In these works, relicts of human history found by the protagonists function as triggers of memory but only when related to a certain occasion - the dichotomy nature vs. culture, the glorification of the past, or a spiritual connection. Following questions are - alongside examining the connections between icescapes and archives, as well as reflecting on Michel Foucault's conception of the archive - essential: could ice, in contrast to institutional archives, serve as a place of collective memory? Under which preconditions and by whom are knowledge and memory formed in natural archives? How are these technologies of forming knowledge and memory reflected in the selected works of literature and film?