Research in Film and History

Digital Digging:

Traces, Gazes, and the Archival In-Between

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The Archival In-Between (Evelyn Kreutzer, Noga Stiassny, 2021)

"The Archival In-Between" received an honorable mention in the Video Essay competition at the Adelio Ferrero Festival, Italy, 2021 and several nominations in the BFI Sight & Sound "Best video essays of 2021" list.

To dwell means to leave traces
Walter Benjamin, 1935

Introduction

Almost eight decades after the end of World War II, we are still confronted with many traces of the Nazis' atrocities: spatial, material, mental, and many more. Yet, perhaps more so than any other kind of trace of the Nazi era, it is the (audio)visual ones that shape our present-day memory and imagination of the Holocaust the most. Taking into account the evasive and fragmentary character of Holocaust memory, realised through the travel of memories (as well as their related practices) "across time and space, across social, linguistic and political borders,"[1] it seems that visual traces of that past are in a state of constant change and motion. The fact that, by its lexical definition, trace functions both as a verb and a noun further indicates its inherent fluidity. Nonetheless, one might conceptualize the trace as the interplay between an 'early' subject and a 'later' indexical object (both the visual product and the object it depicts), which is linked to the practices of searching, following, and potentially finding (which always occurs in retrospect). In other words, the trace resides between carrier/media object and reception and spectatorship. It mediates between these states, carrying within it a message from the past to the present spectator (to some extent, it is reminiscent of the ruin in Walter Benjamin's work). Of course, the production context of a given visual artifact (such as a film) of the Holocaust influences the way we gaze at the history which it depicts and/or from which it stems, and indeed few pieces of existing archival footage were made by victims (e.g. the Sonderkommando photographs).[2] Nonetheless, the vast majority of archival Holocaust footage we know today was either produced as part of Nazi propaganda efforts or stems from the liberation of the camps, and thus always operates in a 'grey area' of spectatorship: we look at an event that is not mediated from the position of the victim, including in images, from which the latter looks back at us. This confluence of gazes appears even more complicated when taking into consideration that in the postwar years, archival images provoked and absorbed further gazes, namely through their visual integration, re-editing, re-

enactments, representations, and/or re-imaginations in retrospective documentary and fiction films, as well as in other visual artworks, thus associating the gaze of later artists and viewers (including those born after the Holocaust). This illustrates the central premise of our paper: gazes are traces within and outside an archival image, which not only present multiple perspectives but also provoke an examination of the multiple layers of trace formations they evoke and inhabit. Following this premise, we use the video essay as both a digital 'digging tool' and a locus to explore the convergence of the 'gaze-trace', in the process opening new in-between spaces for reflection on mnemonic processes that actively and passively participate and shape our 'ways of seeing' (audiovisual) history.

The video essay takes as its starting point an iconic piece of archival footage from the Soviet liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1945, which recorded former inmates as they marched in the space in between two barbed-wire fences— a physical and symbolic liminal space which during the Holocaust the inmates could not be. Via voice-over rendition, we juxtapose this iconic archival trace of the Holocaust with Robert Jan van Pelt's description of a simulation 'exercise' of gazing and being gazed at through and from this double barbed-wire fence that he has conducted with students and teachers during their visits to Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum. The exercise urges the visitors to adopt a "reversed gaze" as a means "to unsettle the visitors in their tourist status—to introduce, through this unfamiliar circumstance of sharing another person's gaze, the possibility of shame, fear, or self-doubt; a possibility inherent to being a traveler or explorer."[3] Van Pelt's text, which in- and of itself presents a collage of literary and scholarly citations, frames the video and appears in several fragments, which themselves open another (formal) in-between space. We ask to see in these words no more than an invitation placed before the spectator to independently reflect upon the ways in which she gazes at familiar archival footage that has undergone a process of temporal and spatial alienation and how she feels when doing so. In this we aim to challenge conventions inscribed in acts of gazing at the past. Without historical and/or archival contextualization, the past would stay a "foreign country" for the contemporary viewer/visitor, as famously argued by David Lowenthal.[4] Thus, contrasting a simulated with an archival gaze, the video then explores, manipulates, juxtaposes, and superimposes a range of archival films from the Nazi era (*Wochenschau* footage of the April boycott and the book burnings at Bebelplatz in 1933; Reinhard Wiener's amateur film of the mass executions in Libau/Liepaja in 1941; and footage of mass deportations of Jews in Budapest in 1944), as well as a number of later documentary films that engage with Holocaust memory and/or archival concerns (Alain Resnais' NUIT ET BROUILLARD (France, 1955) and TOUTE LA MÉMOIRE DU MONDE (France, 1956), Claude Lanzmann's SHOAH (France, 1985), and Yael Hersonski's A FILM UNFINISHED (Israel/Germany, 2010)). This visual encounter enables us—and the spectator—to explore the potential of in-betweenness in a larger historical, cultural, phenomenological, and ethical stance rooted in film-theoretical concerns about the gazes provoked by and implied in archival and iconic footage.

Against this visual examination, whereas the video essay focuses on the 'gaze-trace' from a poetic, reflective point of view, this paper lays the foundations for the theoretical and ethical considerations that led us in the creative process. We reflect on our poetic videographic mode of digitally 'digging' in between images, in between the archival films and frames in particular, as a method that, while not attempting to provide concrete answers or definitions, recognizes the importance of challenging and problematizing (counter-)practices of (counter-)gazing, thus shedding light on the possibilities to (re-)access the past in audiovisual form. Accordingly, in what follows, we review the current scholarly debate about the trace within the context of the visual heritage of the Holocaust. After exploring the different voices and revisiting the notion of the trace, we examine the possibility of approaching the concept of the gaze as a unique manifestation of the trace that best demonstrates the in-between state of mnemonic traces in a larger sense.

(Audio)visual Traces

The photographic image has long been fundamentally linked to the notion of the trace, in ontological discourses on photography, as well as within art-historical and cultural traditions of interpretation. As such, many scholars of the twentieth century have evoked multidimensional relations between film, memory, and temporality. Similarly to photography, film's ontology has centered on issues of indexicality—the analog photographic image as a direct material trace of a moment in the past, which thus holds

documentary and preservative (or archival) potential to capture moments in time. André Bazin understood the photographic index as an overcoming of death (illustrated in his embalment metaphor),[5] while Barthes gestured towards a confrontation with death in the concept of the "Ça a été"/"That-has-been" (the ambivalence of an overlap of multiple temporal planes in a single photographic image),[6] yet neither of them fully accounts for film's specific temporality and movement.

Because of film's clear, isolated duration, its fragmentation into a standardized number of frames per second, and its mechanical apparatus, Mary Ann Doane connects the emergence of cinema to the Benjaminian notion of modernity's shock factor, which turns impressions into empty events ('Erlebnisse') rather than full experiences ('Erfahrungen'). According to Doane, the sense of time as increasingly a "surface phenomenon, which the modern subject must ceaselessly attempt to repossess through its multifarious representations," provoked an opposite fascination in modernity that emphasized the contingent, the ephemeral, and the factor of chance.[7] Both of these modalities, that of standardization and externalization on the one hand and that of the ephemeral and unpredictable on the other, find expression in the photographic image, which represents temporality by either freezing (photography) or performing (film) it, and yet because of its indexicality always maintains an association with contingency and the invisible in the visible (as theorized by Benjamin as 'optical unconscious'[8] and, in the case of photography, by Barthes as 'punctum'[9]). Doane notes the ambiguity that comes out of cinema's dual status as indexical record and performance of presence as follows:

> *Film seems to respond to the dilemma of the representability of time with an easy affirmation. The indexicality of the cinematic sign appears as the guarantee of its status as a record of a temporality outside itself ... Yet this archival artifact becomes strangely immaterial; existing nowhere but in its screening for a spectator in the present ... What is archived, then, would be the experience of presence. But it is the disjunctiveness of a presence relived, of a presence haunted by historicity ... The act of filming transforms the contingent into an event characterized by its very filmability, reducing its contingency.*[10]

For Doane, the prevalence of and fascination with (real or re-enacted) death in early film (such as the execution films of Edison and Porter) imbues cinema with an 'eventness', in which "dead time" (such as in between film rolls or shots) is not a by-product of an event's structure but becomes "the condition of a conceptualization of the 'event'."[11], rendering death "a kind of cinematic Ur-event."[12] This eventness poses a major medium-specific difference between the ways in which death and atrocities, such as those of the Holocaust, continue to register in the still photograph as opposed to the moving image. Both can trigger the imaginary confrontation with death as Barthes describes it: I'm seeing a person who will soon be dead.[13] Yet film can show that same person in motion (in 'aliveness') and replay atrocities, including the moment of death, in actual succession, such as in Reinhard Wiener's execution footage on which we draw in the video essay. This amateur footage, shot by German Kriegsmarine sergeant Reinhard Wiener, depicts the execution of groups of Jewish men by the Einsatzgruppe in Liepaja (Latvia), with soldiers and local civilians standing around and looking at the 'spectacle' of the victims transitioning from 'being alive' to 'being dead'. We consciously omit that part of the frame which shows the victims in the moment of their death. Instead, we zoom in on the margins of the frame—the bystanders, whose unempathetic gazes turn death into amusement, as well as a tail-wagging dog, who emerges as a secondary Barthesian 'punctum'. Of course, this haunting, confrontational effect of the footage is particularly striking, layered, and momentous in the context of the Holocaust because it connects to numerous further and larger historical, political, individual, and collective acts of confrontation. Representations of death and atrocities in film might not just be considered the medium's "Ur-event," but on a larger scale as an illustration of film's ontological and remaining "Ersatz-[substitute] performance" of life's contingency into a single, atomized event— a performance that can only ever be a fragmented and isolated event/experience that is incapable of testifying to the Holocaust as a whole, and thus is always already inscribed with a post-traumatic drive to repeat and with its own 'failure' or death.

While representations of death in an indexical image always bear the confrontation with the Barthesian "Ça a été"/"That-has-been," it is film's 'eventness', the unfolding of death and atrocities in their processual

temporality, which differentiates it from still photography. This unbearable relentlessness can elicit a spectator (as well as videomaker) in the digital age to pause, isolate frames, trace individual moments, motives, and gestures, and turn this unfolding into tangible still images, into photographic fragments which no longer conceive history as a flows or series of events in the Benjaminan sense, yet nonetheless constructs a cinematic sequence. Laura Mulvey therefore re-considers the ontologies of both photography and film in light of the changes that new digital technologies impose onto cinematic time, affect, and indexicality:

> New moving image technologies, the electronic and the digital, paradoxically allow an easy return to the hidden stillness of the film frame. This stillness is, of course, an illusion. It is not the actual frame, as stilled for the twenty-fourth of a second in front of the lens; it is not the chemically produced image of celluloid. But the frozen frame restores to the moving image the heavy presence of passing time and of the mortality that Bazin and Barthes associate with the still photograph.[14]

In a similar spirit, our video essay evokes a collage of visual fragments and traces that echoes the intersecting and overlapping temporal and spatial implications of the photographic image, as well as "travelling memory."[15] Through the "reuse, recycling, appropriation, and borrowing of archival material," the video essay then engages in what Catherine Russell has termed "archiveology." She argues that

> [t]he film archive is no longer simply a place where films are preserved and stored but has been transformed, expanded, and rethought as an 'image bank' from which collective memories can be retrieved. The archive as a mode of transmission offers a unique means of displaying and accessing historical memory, with significant implications for the ways that we imagine cultural history.[16]

The video essay as an archiveological tool might further be thought of as enacting the notions of repetition and exteriority that are central to Jacques Derrida's archive theory: "There is no archive without a place of consignation, without a technique of repetition, and without a certain exteriority. No archive without outside."[17] He further describes the archive as "neither present nor absent 'in the flesh,' neither visible nor invisible, a trace always referring to another whose eyes can never be met."[18] With this in mind, our video essay follows a multi-layered and -directional media-archaeological approach that uses and digs into audiovisual media as a method of both historiographic interrogation, and poetic reflection. In so doing, it highlights and meanders in-between archival presences and absences, insides and outsides, and curates its own collage of images and sounds (the video itself) and of the sources it draws on (the selection of films and texts to which it refers beyond the individual fragments it presents). At the same time, by virtue of its digital form and distribution, the video suggests a counterpoint to Derrida's claim that by collecting objects for preservation, archives also remove them from their present circulation. This form of digital digging thus offers a phenomenological and archaeological (archiveological) "meta methodology" through which the videomaker can engage with the archival material in an immediate, almost tactile way, and in turn convey that experience through the same images and sounds to the video essay spectator—performing, in a way, the 'agency' of the digital[19] in favor of coherent narrative (meta)histories.[20]

Essentially, the archival image plays a crucial role in the circulation of visual traces from the Holocaust. However, quite commonly, such images are perceived as authentic representations of the event. The ability of the archival image—whether it was taken by Nazi cameramen or cameramen from the liberating units—to depict the atrocities of the Holocaust, and thus to 'truly' show what the Holocaust looked like, is limited.[21] Nonetheless, raw and edited footage from the war period and its aftermath has been screened in war crime tribunals or edited into newsreels as early as the 1940s and appropriated into countless post-war documentaries, feature films, and artworks (both directly and indirectly). An early example is Alain Resnais' famous NUIT ET BROUILLARD (1956). In contrast to TOUTE LA MÉMOIRE, Resnais' essay film about the French national library (but actually about collective memory and crisis in the post-war moment) from the same year, NUIT ET BROUILLARD draws on archival material (both still and moving images), including most horrific, explicit images of corpses in the concentration camps, and pairs it with original footage shots of the former sites of atrocities. Supported by the travel of memories from the Holocaust across space and time, images of and from the Holocaust have constantly migrated between various media carriers.[22] These, in many cases iconic, images are often perceived as the manifestation of

the historical event to such an extent that we can already speak of a "travelling memory film" genre[23] and "migrating image" films.[24] Consequently, the visual heritage left by the war period to current generation(s) has been in great part mnemonically shaped by the lens-based formats of Nazi photography and the many visual records taken by Allied filmmakers and photographers during and immediately following the liberation of occupied Europe (alongside recorded testimonies of Holocaust survivors).

Over the years, a considerable amount has been published on notions of the trace with respect to the visual image in Holocaust heritage, but to this date research has tended to focus on the trace either as an object and/or a site on screen (e.g., shoes, suitcases, heaps of clothes, abandoned places), or in relation to the technical production of the photographic image. German art historian Peter Geimer asserts that this "undead paradigm" of the "material link between object and image as the essence of photography," which has expanded to include filmographic- and digital images, has been adopted and rejected again and again over the years by various scholars.[25] Yet there is a key problem within this ongoing debate: despite recognising the manipulative capability of images, much of the literature approaches images as preserving real traces of the world—whether these are material or representational. In Geimer's view, and "especially against the background of an art-historical and cultural tradition of interpretation that has developed its methods above all through the analysis of intentional, composed, and 'meaningful' pictures," a critical question remains: "what place will the study of images concede to contingency, to the unforeseeable event, to that which is unsusceptible to being composed—that is, the trace?"[26] With regards to the moving image— in particular films from and about the Holocaust era—one might argue that to ignore the capability of such footage to act as images that host and evoke multiple layers of archival traces and yet nonetheless can potentially be manipulated, means to exclude their performative capability to function as historical agents that require contextualisation. This premise has not only theoretical, but also concrete implications for the creation, narration, and imagination of memories. It also affects and is itself affected by the ways visual artists and filmmakers appropriate, refer to, and work with archival footage that depicts the Holocaust after the fact.

While it is possible to identify visual traces of the Holocaust in the work of many filmmakers, the massive presence of such images within our contemporary culture often serves as a catalyst for certain artists to embark on a filmographic journey in search of 'new' traces from the war period.[27] Using their cameras to unveil, (re)contextualise, and confront the many visible or suppressed, hidden, forgotten, and/or manipulated traces of the war period, visual artists and filmmakers have already contributed their part to the growing cinematic Holocaust archives, and continue to do so.[28] One of the most prominent examples of such a filmographic trace-searching journey is Claude Lanzmann's documentary SHOAH (1985). Lanzmann, who famously rejected using archival footage for this film, explored the paradigm of the trace by recording various testimonies of Holocaust survivors, eye witnesses, and perpetrators, partly amidst the remains of the former Nazi camps in Eastern Europe. The iconic images of mass graves, heaps of belongings, and human remains, are replaced by testimonies and extensive shots of the former atrocity sites as they look decades later. As such, the post-war vistas encapsulate the 'past landscapes' within them and function as spatial traces[29] that seek to show us something that is no longer visible and yet (despite its 'invisibility') is nevertheless still 'there'.[30] Many visual artists and filmmakers have taken the opposite approach and turned to archival footage as the material, indexical, historical trace of the Holocaust. Israeli director Yael Hersonski's A FILM UNFINISHED (2010), for example, is based predominantly on archival sources. Focusing on the Warsaw Ghetto film produced by the Nazis in May 1942, shortly before sending most of the ghetto's Jewish residents to Treblinka, the film returns to the archives in order to 'trace the traces' of this iconic piece of film. Weaving together archival footage previously unknown to the general public and further historical documents, testimonies, and recorded conversations with survivors who were confronted with what the filmmaker had dug out, the film reveals how footage that many had considered to be an authentic historical record of life in the Warsaw Ghetto for decades was in fact an unfinished film commissioned, staged, and produced by the Nazis for propaganda purposes.[31]

By working with and recontextualizing the archival footage as a material trace of a manipulated visual event, Hersonski's film reveals (archival) films as "ambivalent sources" (a sentiment that echoes Lanzmann's hesitancy).[32] Such ambivalent, in part complicit, sources have not only been preserved in fragments[33] but

can also change their status over time, despite and because of their role in shaping and re-shaping our visual memory of the Holocaust.[34] The change of status of archival sources resonates with Benjamin's warning against the "illiteracy of the future," which "will be ignorance not of reading or writing, but of photography" as it demands decipherment.[35] Drawing on Benjamin's Theorie der Spur ("Theory of the Traces"), Carlo Salzani points to the close connection that exists between the writing of Benjamin about the photographer and the historian, who both share the need to adopt a 'detective persona'. If, according to Benjamin, the photographer—and today the videomaker who engages with audiovisual history—"needs to reveal guilt and to point out the guilty in his pictures," then the historian-detective is obliged to search traces of a crime and "to discover the murderer."[36] This act further highlights the fluid status of any given archival footage.

In his detailed examination of archival footage produced by German cameramen during the war, with special focus given to Wiener's execution footage, Ebbrecht-Hartmann argues that the status and character of specific archival films is not fixed but rather can—and often does—change over time. Taking into consideration the relations forged between content, form, and context in respect to the specifics of the moving-image medium, and at the same time analysing potential traces inscribed within the footage/image itself, Ebbrecht-Hartmann suggests three dimensions of archival footage from the Holocaust: trophy, evidence, and document. He further demonstrates the ways in which an object that was once perceived as a trophy (personal or as part of institutionalised propaganda) can easily be transformed over the years into so-called 'authentic evidence' and thereafter into a historical document. The various 'incarnations' of the footage are dependent on the use and appropriation of the footage and therefore require an analysis of the context in which it was historically produced, as well as its later circulation and the specific conditions in which it was used, appropriated, viewed, and maintained in the archives.[37] Thus, whereas the literal document saved in the archive can be viewed as constituting trace which operates as "a new connector between [the] temporal perspectives,"[38] the remediation and constant migration of images of and from the Holocaust—archival images in particular—complicate any linear relationship between past and present. These images "disappeared at a certain point in history" and reappear "much later, at a moment when, perhaps, it is not expected."[39] The return of such images, their "survival" (as Didi-Huberman calls it, based on Aby Warburg's work on the 'Nachleben' [afterlife, surviving] of images) locates them between symptom and phantom as a "specific expression of the trace."[40]

Resonating with the technical aspects of moving-image production on the one hand and the phenomenological aspects of their eventness on the other, the afterlife of (archival) images that depict the atrocities of the Holocaust therefore challenges all models of continuity. It 'locks' such images in an 'impure duration', that is, in the "still poorly defined limbo of a 'collective memory'."[41] As a result, traces of the past appear in the materiality of the footage, in its visual content, in the archive, and finally within the spectator's imagination. The spectator relies on visual conventions, familiar images, and evocative images in order to interpret the footage, but in doing so she might overlook that the images she sees are fragmentary, selective, and manipulated. This is where the videomaker-detective enters, who, by using digital videographic methods for both historiographic interrogation and poetic reflection, can highlight the traces found within and outside the frame. She can further encourage the spectator to challenge her own imagination in the process by reminding her of the possibility that images that participate in forming individual and collective postmemories[42] are actually fragmentary traces that require decipherment. In this vein, despite the differences between Lanzmann's and Hersonski's approaches to archival footage, one can argue that they both share the same impulse to work with traces as mnemonic aids that might grant some access to the traumatic event for later viewers—symptoms and phantoms that are caught in the haunting limbo of (visual) Holocaust memory. At the same time, by virtue of being part of the growing cinematic Holocaust archive(s) in their own right, they also participate in the production of new traces for the next generations of visual artists and filmmakers. This is one of the reasons why our video essay remixes excerpts from both Lanzmann's and Hersonski's films (among others).

Gaze

As videographic practices work with, work through, and appropriate multiple notions of traces, they form both phenomenological and epistemological links between various (spatio)temporalities—between the appropriation of traces from the past and the creation of new traces for the future. Yet the relationship between the two acts also poses challenges to the study of images with regards to the concept of the gaze as another realization of the trace. Accordingly, just as the trace remains an undying paradigm, so does the concept of the gaze: from the philosophical gaze in the writings of Plato, Socrates, Nietzsche, and Kant to Lacan's psychoanalytical gaze,[43] Sartre's existential gaze,[44] and Benjamin's Angelus Novus, who looks back at history as "one single catastrophe which keeps pilling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet."[45] Scholars and philosophers have been drawn to study the gaze as a medium for communication (or lack thereof) between a spectator and the subject/object being viewed. A central aspect in concepts of the gaze is its potential to enact power relations in society, such as in Michel Foucault's[46] and Edward Said's work.[47] Continued through the 'male gaze' that has dominated the western art history narrative for centuries,[48] the same gaze projects "its fantasy upon the female figure" within cinema, most famously argued by Mulvey.[49] Following Mulvey's analysis of the hetero-masculine voyeuristic gaze in cinema and the extent to which that gaze reinscribes cultural norms, the concept of the gaze continues to be explored in contemporary feminist and postcolonial theory as possessing a potential of resistance to the hegemonic dominant gaze, namely by daring to gaze back. For instance, Jill Soloway proposes to adopt the "female gaze" as a "feeling seeing,"[50] while bell hooks points to the agency of the "oppositional gaze" black female spectators may choose to activate as a form of resistance to their enslavement and racialized representation.[51] Within the context of Holocaust studies specifically, Elizabeth R. Baer traces the imperial German past, finding in it the roots of the "genocidal gaze" that dehumanized Jews during the Holocaust, a gaze tested and also activated during the genocide of the Herero and Nama people in the early twentieth century in German-colonized Africa.[52]

Yet while research on the concept of the gaze has recently gained in importance, most studies have discussed the relationship that exists between images and the gaze "as an external factor,"[53] thereby focusing more "on address, rather than reception."[54] Keeping in mind that while images are always intended to be looked at, "gazes are already in the picture before they fall upon it," Hans Belting claims that gaze is not just about the position of the viewer or the 'painted subject', but is rather found in the constellation between the image, body, and medium, which remains in a constant state of flux:

> The gaze remains neither in the human body nor in the image as artefact, but operates freely and fleetingly in the field between the two. In so doing, it exchanges its original medium, the human body, for the images and the media chosen to portray them, be they painting or photography. In this interplay the gaze has the freedom to perceive the artefacts that we are viewing either as images or, alternatively, also as the products of individual media. Thus it has the freedom to dissolve a liaison that remains opaque within the artefact. It can therefore choose either to ignore or reflect the chosen medium, or else allow itself to be guided by it without awareness. There is no place in this configuration where the gaze is not essential, but nowhere is it possible to assign it a fixed location.[55]

An understanding of images as evolving in the sphere "between transcendence and the visibility of the world" indicates their "in-between character which contributes to the imagination" as a negotiable in-between space in which the gaze takes place. By their visibility, images therefore "constitute the presence of an absence," which not only resonates with the notion of trace but also allows multiple kinds of gazes, even contradictory gazes, to dwell together simultaneously.[56] This multiplicity of gazes is of great importance when studying the archival footage of the Holocaust. It takes into account that the idea of looking always "involves more than one agent, even when one looks at oneself,"[57] and thus confronts us with questions, such as: who gazes at whom? For whose gaze were these images initially intended? How do we, contemporary viewers, gaze at such images today? Can images gaze back at us? Which gaze do we remember, prioritize, or sympathize with? Which gaze is forgotten or left outside the frame?

All of these questions point to the possibility of starting to think of the gaze—or in fact the multiplicity of gazes and their variability—as 'surviving traces' found in an in-between limbo (paraphrasing Didi-Huberman), thereby acting upon what Jaimie Baron refers to as "the layered gaze."[58] This layered gaze(s) is made up of the gaze of the (original) maker, that of the photographed subject(s), as well as that of the postwar filmmaker, the contemporary videomaker and the spectator herself. Moreover, questions of ambivalences and complicity also apply to contemporary film- and videomakers engaging with historically, politically, and ethically problematic material themselves. This multilayeredness can therefore produce ambiguities, ethical distanciations, and reflections, of the past as much as of the present. Accordingly, the archival image operates in an area of in-betweenness that leads to the convergence of the 'gaze-trace', which demands contextualization—as fragments and as a whole; or in video terms: as singular shots and as a sequence of curated images. With this in mind, Baron asserts that remixes and appropriations (or "misuses" in her language) enable "both the partial retention and simultaneous transformation of the meaning of the original document."[59] In a detailed analysis of Hersonski's A FILM UNFINISHED, she echoes Susan Sontag's famous claim about the photographic image as murder[60] and argues that through its "revelatory gaze," the film

> fulfils an ethical imperative to demonstrate that the purported documentary intention to record the 'real' may conceal more devious intentions, the ostensibly professional gaze disguising the propagandistic gaze. Yet nothing is ethically simple. To reuse these images may still seem unethical in relation to the people depicted in the images, most of whom are dead. Many, if not all, of them were coerced into being filmed. Certainly, those whose dead bodies were filmed never had any say in the matter. To look at these images could be considered a further violation of their dignity and humanity. There is often a certain voyeuristic fascination in viewing the bodies of the poor, the starving, the dead, or the soon-to-be-dead ... Yet there also seems to be an ethical imperative to bear witness; to occlude these images would obscure the extent of the horror of what the Nazis did.[61]

The ethical implications of re-playing footage of historical atrocities have been of central concern to the making of our own video essay as well. Because it is a (meta-)reflection on memory and archival "in-betweenness"—an inherently ambivalent subject matter—rather than an historiographic account, we decided not to repeat images of executions or of the corpses in the concentration camps, and (via means of sound manipulation) to only give indirect 'voice' to the literal voices of the perpetrators in the Wochenschau footage of the boycott of April 1, 1933 and book burnings on May 10 that same year (the only archival materials in our corpus that include original sound). The documentary films, including Hersonski's, only appear in their visual treatments of archives as well as landscapes as archives of spatial traces. By emphasizing the fragmentary and incomplete nature of these sources, their archival legacies, and both filmic and digital apparati, and by integrating them into a self-reflexive and self-curated collage, we aim to make the familiar strange, to 'reverse our own gaze', and by doing so, to engage with the complexities of our own (individual and collective) roles as spectators.

Conclusion

Considering the fragmentary character of the visual heritage of the Holocaust, we propose to rethink the traces found in and constituted by archival footage from the Nazi era as part of a gaze-trace entity. This convergence of the 'gaze-trace' creates multiple in-between states which we were encouraged to explore and reflect on throughout this paper (i.e., the literal expression of this project) as well as within the video "The Archival In-Between" (i.e., the visual expression of this project). This combination, we hope, stimulate critical thinking not only about how we gaze at the past in the present but also how we curate the visual heritage of the Holocaust as part of a dynamic visual memory culture in a digital age that allows for novel, tactile, archaeological, and expressive encounters with history and memory.

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[1] Astrid Erll, "Travelling Memory," *Parallax* 17, no. 4 (2011): 11.
[2] For further reading on the Sonderkommando photographs and their importance for Holocaust memory, see Georges Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite of All: Four Photographs from Auschwitz* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

³ Robert Jan van Pelt, "Auschwitz and the Architecture of the Reversed Gaze," *E-flux Architecture,* October 2020, https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/monument/351167/auschwitz-and-the-a.... Accessed September 15, 2021.

⁴ David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

⁵ André Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," trans. Hugh Gray, *Film Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (1960): 4–9. https://doi.org/10.2307/1210183.

⁶ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 96.

⁷ Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 9.

⁸ Walter Benjamin, "Little History of Photography" (1931), in *Benjamin, Selected Writings*, vol. 2, part 2, 1931–1934, trans. Rodney Livingstone et al., ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1999), 507–530; Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (with an introduction by Hannah Arendt), ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (Schocken Books: New York,1968), 217–252.

⁹ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 43–46.

¹⁰ Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time*, 23.

¹¹ Ibid., 160.

¹² Ibid., 164.

¹³ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 96.

¹⁴ Laura Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (London: Reaktion, 2006), 66.

¹⁵ Erll, "Travelling Memory."

¹⁶ Catherine Russell, *Archiveology: Walter Benjamin and Archival Film Practices* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2018), 1.

¹⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 11.

¹⁸ Ibid., 84.

¹⁹ Here we mean to evoke a parallel to the notion of the "agency of the machine" in Wolfgang Ernst's media-archaeological terminology, even if our understanding of videographic scholarship does not adhere to the posthumanist connotations of Ernst's media theory. See Wolfgang Ernst, "Let There Be Irony: Cultural History and Media Archaeology in Parallel Lines," *Art History* 28, no. 5 (November): 582–603, 591.

²⁰ See Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).

²¹ Ulrike Weckel, "Liberated on Film: Images and Narratives of Camp Liberation in Historical Footage and Feature Films," *Research in Film and History* 2 (2019): 1–21.

²² Tobias Ebbrecht, "Migrating Images: Iconic Images of the Holocaust and the Representation of War," *Shofar* 28 (4) (2010): 86–103; Erll, "Travelling Memory."

²³ Astrid Erll, "Travelling Memory in European Film: Towards a Morphology of Mnemonic Relationality," *Image [&] Narrative* 18, no. 1 (2017): 5–19.

²⁴ Tobias Ebbrecht, *Geschichtsbilder im medialen Gedächtnis: Filmische Narrationen des Holocaust* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2011); Ebbrecht, "Migrating Images."

²⁵ Peter Geimer, "Image as Trace: Speculations about an Undead Paradigm," trans. Kata Gellen, *differences* 18, no. 1 (2007): 7–28, https://doi.org/10.1215/10407391-2006-021.

²⁶ Geimer, "Image as Trace," 24.

²⁷ Noga Stiassny, "Travelling Landscapes and the Potential of Artscapes," *Memory Studies Journal* (October 26, 2021), https://doi.org/10.1177/17506980211045599.

²⁸ Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann, "Preserving Memory or Fabricating the Past? How Films Constitute Cinematic Archives of the Holocaust," *Cinéma & Cie* 15, no. 24 (2015): 33–47. In this context it is also possible to talk about the use of such footage by those who seek to present a revisionist approach to the Holocaust through the establishment of countercinematic archives; in this article we avoid this discourse so as to avoid giving any legitimacy to such neo-Nazi propaganda.

²⁹ Margaret Olin, "Lanzmann's Shoah and the Topography of the Holocaust Film," *Representations* 57 (Winter 1997): 1–23.

³⁰ Georges Didi-Huberman, "The Site, despite Everything," in *Claude Lanzmann's Shoah: Key Essays*, ed. Stuart Liebman (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 113–123.

³¹ One should note that Hersonski was not the first person to reveal the propagandistic function of the Warsaw ghetto footage. Some scholars and critics have actually lamented that she neglects the fact that historians and filmmakers had contextualized the material accurately. See Dirk Rupnow, "Die Spuren nationalsozialistischer Gedächtnispolitik und unser Umgang mit den Bildern der Täter. Ein Beitrag zu Yael Hersonskis 'A Film Unfinished'/'Geheimsache Ghettofilm'," *Zeitgeschichte-online*, 2010. https://zeitgeschichte-online.de/film/diespuren-nationalsozialistischer.... Accessed 19 September 2021; Ebbrecht-Hartmann, "Preserving Memory or Fabricating the Past"; Ebbrecht-Hartmann, "Standhalten im Bilde? Die 'Kunst der Kunstlosigkeit' und der filmische Umgang mit den Bildern des Grauens [Withstanding within the Image? The 'Art of Artlessness' and the cinematic use of Atrocity Pictures]," *sans phrase* 2 (Spring 2013), 50–64; and Ebbrecht-Hartmann, "Echoes from the Archive: Retrieving and Reviewing Cinematic Remnants of the Nazi Past," in *Edinburgh German Yearbook 9: Archive and Memory in German Literature and Visual Culture*, ed. Dora Osborne (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2015), 123–139. For further information on the Warsaw ghetto footage, see also Anja Horstmann, "Das Filmfragment 'Ghetto' – erzwungene Realität und vorgeformte Bilder," in *Dossier, Geheimsache Ghettofilm*, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2013. https://www.bpb.de/geschichte/nationalsozialismus/geheimsacheghettofilm.... Accessed 18 September 2021.

³² Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann, "Trophy, Evidence, Document: Appropriating an Archive Film from Liepaja, 1941," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 36, no. 4 (2016). http://doi.org/10.1080/01439685.2016.1157286.

³³ Eva Strusková, "Ghetto Theresienstadt 1942. The Message of the Film Fragments," *Journal of Film Preservation* 79–80, no. 4 (2009): 60–79.

³⁴ Ebbrecht-Hartmann, "Trophy, Evidence, Document."

³⁵ Benjamin, "Little History of Photography," 527.

³⁶ Carlo Salzani, "The City as Crime Scene: Walter Benjamin and the Traces of the Detective," *New German Critique* 100 (Arendt, Adorno, New York, and Los Angeles) (Winter, 2007), 186–187.

³⁷ Ebbrecht-Hartmann, "Trophy, Evidence, Document."

³⁸ Paul Ricoeur, "Archives, Documents, Traces," in Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. III, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University Press, 1988), 66.

³⁹ Georges Didi-Huberman, *The Surviving Image: Phantoms of Time and Time of Phantoms. Aby Warburg's History of Art* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017), 36–37.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 32.

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[48] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1972).
[49] Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16, no. 3 (1 October 1975): 6-18.
[50] Jill Soloway, "The Female Gaze" (TIFF: Master Class – Jill Soloway), *Topple Productions,* September 11, 2016, https://www.toppleproductions.com/the-female-gaze. Accessed: September 15, 2021. See also: "Jill Soloway, The Female Gaze, 2016," *Art School Portal,* https://artschoolportal.com/2017/12/jill-soloway-on-the-female-gaze-201.... Accessed: September 15, 2021.
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[57] Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking*, 103.
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[59] Ibid., 6.
[60] Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), 13.
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