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Media Archaeology

Approaches, Applications,
and Implications

Edited by

Erkki Huhtamo and Jussi Parikka

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14. Strachey, "'Thinking' Machine."

15. Of course, for many works of digital literature it is a challenge to get access to the data. While Strachey, like most computer scientists, published an account of his project's processes, it is rare to publish a project's complete data. In this case, the relevant papers of Strachey's at the Oxford Bodleian Library were consulted. These contain a complete program listing for the generator, from which its data were extracted (folders C 34 and C 35, box MS. Eng. misc. b. 259). Unfortunately, most early work in the digital arts was not so scrupulously preserved. The importance of preservation issues for digital literature, combined with some practical suggestions for current authors, is the subject of Nick Montfort and Noah Wardrip-Fruin's *Acid-Free Bits: Recommendations for Long-Lasting Electronic Literature*, 2004, Electronic Literature Organization, www.eliterature.org/pad/afb.html.

16. This chapter is not alone in making these comparisons: both Link and I made them in 2006. Noah Wardrip-Fruin, "Expressive Processing: On Process-Intensive Literature and Digital Media" (PhD diss., Brown University, 2006); Link, "There Must Be an Angel."

17. Raymond Queneau, *Cent mille milliards de poèmes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1961).

18. Quoted in Jean Lescure, "A Brief History of the Oulipo," in *Oulipo: A Primer of Potential Literature*, ed. Warren F. Motte (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 32.

19. Harry Mathews and Alastair Brotchie, eds., *Oulipo Compendium* (London: Atlas Press, 1998), 129.

20. Given that each love letter contains five sentences, each of one of the two types, one can add together the number of possibilities for each of the two sentence types and then take the resulting number to the fifth power in order to determine the number of possibilities for the main body of the letter (leaving aside the letter's opening and closing words). I calculate this to be 753,018,753,081,800,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000—a number much greater than one hundred thousand billion.

21. Stephen J. Ramsay, "Algorithmic Criticism" (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2003), 54.

22. Chris Crawford, "Process Intensity," *Journal of Computer Game Design* 1, no. 5 (1987), www.erasmatazz.com/page78/page31/page229/page241/ProcessIntensity.html.

23. Strachey, "'Thinking' Machine," 27.

24. Ibid., 28.

25. Christopher Strachey, "Logical or Non-mathematical Programmes," in *ACM '52: Proceedings of the 1952 ACM National Meeting* (Toronto) (New York: ACM Press, 1952), 49.

26. Link, "There Must Be an Angel," 25.

27. Leonard Stern, "A Brief History of Mad Libs," 2001, www.penguinputnam.com/static/packages/us/yreaders/madlibs/history.html.

28. Marc Böhlen, "Amy and Klara," in *Proceedings of ISEA 2006 Symposium / Zero One San Jose*, ed. Steve Deitz (2006), http://isea2006.sjsu.edu/content/view/261/49/.

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30. Udanax.com and Project Xanadu, "Xanadu Secrets Become Udanax Open-Source," 1999, www.udanax.com/; Steven J. DeRose, "Fress: The File Retrieval and Editing System," 2003, www.derose.net/steve/writings/whitepapers/fress.html.

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Afterword

Media Archaeology and Re-presencing the Past

Vivian Sobchack

What may be called "presence" ("the unrepresented way the past is present in the present") is at least as important as "meaning."

—EELCO RUNIA, "PRESENCE"

Archaeologists should unite in a defense of things, a defense of those subaltern members of the collective that have been silenced and "othered" by . . . imperialist social and humanist discourse. . . . This story is not narrated . . . , but comes to us as silent, tangible, visible and brute material remains.

—BJØRNAR OLSEN, "MATERIAL CULTURE AFTER TEXT: RE-MEMBERING THINGS"

Both of these epigraphs, the first taken from a groundbreaking theoretical essay by a Dutch philosopher of history and the second from a "manifesto" by a Norwegian archaeologist, strike me as particularly relevant to the task of making sense of "media archaeology," however heterogeneous and literally unruly this undisciplined discipline might be. Much like the far-ranging essays in this volume, both epigraphs are dramatic articulations of a fairly recent, decidedly materialist, and generally antinarrative and antihermeneutic discourse focused on the conditions under which the absent past can be said to have "presence" in the present.[1] Thus this discourse is also concerned with the conditions for—and effects of—both "immediacy" and "mediation," even as it has not directly addressed the various entities and forms specifically designated as "media." As I will argue, this discourse of presence (a "presence in absence") and its particular concern with the past and the conditions under which it can be re-presenced (as well as historiographically communicated) are central to media archaeology. What, however, in the context of this discourse is meant by the term *presence?*

At one extreme, *presence* is defined as the *literal* transhistorical (yet not ahistorical) transference or relay of metonymic and material fragments or traces of the past through time to the "here and now"—where and when these can be activated and thus realized once again in our practical, operative, and sensual engagement with them.[2] Not to be confused with a "naïve realism," this sense of presence emerges from the epistemological and sensual specifics (both material and structural) that are entailed not in theoretical or interpretive discourse but in operative (and necessarily corporeal) *practice* and *knowledge*—that is, in "performative act[s] of knowing, which [focus] on 'what is done' rather than on what is represented."[3] This view of presence certainly informs much of media archaeology. Indeed, many of the essays in this volume are concerned not only with the recovery and description of previously neglected or marginalized media-historical artifacts but also with the "techno-historical event" (the epistemic and sensual conditions called into being) that each of these artifacts inaugurates through a transhistorical *operative practice.* This view also grounds the importance to most media archaeologists of handling, measuring, collecting, and focusing on these historical remainders primarily in the Heideggerian terms of *techne,* which in its own right, is a "revealing" that not only "brings forth" but also *makes present.*[4] Indeed, this literal as well as philosophical view of the presence of the past in the here and now connects what appear as quite disparate media-archaeological projects: for example, delineating the practical domestic use of a Japanese "Baby Talkie" optical toy or describing the deep physical and structural operations that reveal an old phonograph (or modern computer) as itself archaeologist and *archon*—insofar as the specific technology "exercis[es] the power of . . . procedure and precedence" and thus establishes the epistemic conditions "for the operation of a system," for seeing and knowing.[5]

At the other extreme, *presence* is defined as a consequential but *illusory* (and elusive) *effect.*[6] Reminiscent in function of Roland Barthes's *punctum,* the fragment or trace pierces an *uncanny* hole in quotidian temporality (and comprehension) not only by suddenly "being there" by virtue of being noticed but also, upon inspection, by radically and retrospectively challenging and changing the accepted order of things.[7] In the case of media archaeology, an overlooked media artifact (whether realized or only imagined and/or schematized) seems, at once, both familiar and strange. Thus its suddenly "being here" (and, all along, having "been there") produces a "presence effect" that is capable of overturning the premises (and comprehension) of established media hierarchies and media histories. Indeed, many of the essays in this volume are inaugurated by some uncanny—and punctual—experience of re-cognition. This is not only re-cognition of some marginalized or unrealized technical device that ruptures the continuities and teleologies of media history but also re-cognition of the transhistorical and topical presence "all along" of, for example, the discursive conjunction of media with the literal figuration of tiny people, or the sudden re-cognition that what was previously dismissed as machinic "noise" or computer "artifact" (a startling term in this context) and once regarded as disruptive of media is actually a systemic element of it.

It is precisely this awareness of a different and disruptive kind of presence in the present—a metonymic "presence in absence" whether considered "real" or an "effect"—that has generated increasing dissatisfaction with what the philosopher of history Eelco Runia sees as the smothering *metaphoricity* or substitutive function of interpretive and explanatory historical narrative (or, as he puts it, historical "representationalism"). Indeed, though to varying degrees, this dissatisfaction with "representationalism" is where media archaeology and the essays in this volume part ways from the dominant philosophy and interpretive methodologies of film, television, and media studies; cultural studies; and new historicism. Thus, although it shares certain family features and foci with these disciplinary areas, and although it cannot avoid entering the "hermeneutic circle" (at the very least to even entertain an initially surprising object as related to media), media archaeology, like the discourse of presence, is generally *antihermeneutic* in orientation. It prefers to avoid or defer interpretive analyses and explanations as well as the kind of teleological emplotments demanded by realist historical representation, which attempts to fill in the absences of the past with coherent—and metaphorical—narratives that substitute for their loss.

In this regard, aligning metaphor and metonymy with representation and presence, Runia writes: "Presence is not the result of metaphorically stuffing up absences with everything you can lay your hands on. It can best be kindled by metonymically presenting absences."[8] And he continues: "The things that stick do so because they do not connect to something already in the mind. . . . Metaphors provide intellectual entertainment on the level of logos, but . . . metonymies strike home at the level of pathos."[9] This is pathos, however, not as some naive form of affect; rather, it is akin to what Giuliana Bruno has called "e-motion"—through her hyphenation emphasizing a form of dynamic transport and historical transitivity that enables something of the real to touch and move us.[10]

Indeed, it is only through confrontation with a historical metonymy, Runia argues, that we may get a "glimpse of the numinosity of history" that "ultimately throw[s] us back on ourselves."[11] This "numinosity"—as presence or presence effect—is thus experienced (and written) as a revelation, not of the transcendental, but of the transcendent: that is, of a *historicality* that spans the division of past, present, and future, not only revealing the past as in some way always present but also revealing the present and future as in some way already past.[12] Hence media archaeologists who focus on such historical metonymies as an extremely rare and custom-made British Grand Bi-Unial Magic Lantern from the 1890s and those who focus on such historical metonymies as current computer code (or

the currents that make up computer code) are not so different as they might first appear. Indeed, the experience of presence or presence effect—the numinosity or "aura" of historicality, of presence in absence and absence in presence—is valued by both.

For those media archaeologists to whom the presence of the past emerges (in part) in the here and now through actual engagement with a historical "original" (if never with an "origin"), presence is numinous or auratic much in the manner of Walter Benjamin's description of "aura" as the numinosity attached to one's *existential encounter* with the *singularity* of a work of art (here, the odd or rare historical artifact, fragment, or trace).[13] Presence, however, is also numinous for those media archaeologists who regard it only as an effect—much in the manner of Samuel Weber's elaboration of "aura" as "*the singular leave-taking of the singular,* whose singularity is no longer that of an original moment but of its *posthumous aftershock.*"[14] Although the metonymic fragments and traces of the past do not transport the past directly to the present, in their presence they do numinously reverberate with its absence. Thus, at both ends of the discourse of presence—real, if partial, presence or illusory presence effect, existential encounter or its posthumous aftershock—the previously overlooked and unthought metonymic fragment or trace provokes intense awareness not only of an irrecoverable larger absence (conceived as "the past") but also of an existentially present "otherness" (recognized as a difference located in, yet distinguishable and distant from, the order of things that constitutes the everyday world we live intimately as "the present").

For Runia, then, as well as for media archaeologists, "Presence—being in touch with reality—is . . . just as basic as meaning. Whereas meaning may be said to be the *connotative* side of . . . consciousness, of life, presence is the *denotative* side."[15] Thus, in relation to historiography, "presence resides in the denotative region of language, . . . in the things a story has to present in order to present a story," rather than in the story itself. Nonetheless, connotation and meaning tend to dominate most historical and historiographic practice: that is, although "the denotative level of historiography is sometimes *mentioned,* . . . it is the level of what historians do with what they present that always steals the show."[16] Presence, then, emerges not at the level of narrative and meaning but in meticulous *description,* which is, as potentially endless, always metonymically partial and open—and prior to the summary comprehension accomplished first by naming and then by interpretation.

Practically, of course, communicating presence through language will always entail some degree of connotation and interpretation. Thus, historiographically speaking, the best one can hope for is, as Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht suggests, "an oscillation between presence effects and meaning effects."[17] Philosophically and methodologically, however, the desire for presence (as well as its actual upsurge

in the process of research) calls forth a new kind of methodology—and a new kind of historiography. Empirical and materialist, emphasizing qualitative and often quantitative description, this new methodology emphasizes the "thinginess" of things and entails not interpretive "reading" or cultural "analysis" but closely looking at and, when possible, touching, operating, and performing the object of study. Historiography is also transformed—conceived and written (to use Hayden White's useful distinction) not in *narrativized* acts of *interpretation* that impose a comprehensive vision on the world but rather in *narrated* acts of discovery and description that open up our senses as well as our intellect to the world—and, particularly, to its constant discontinuities, its always marvelous "otherness" from the way we would think it.[18] In sum, the desire for presence and the historiographic strategies (both methodological and discursive) that accompany it account in great part not only for the emergence of certain kinds of counterhistories (here I think of the quantitative work of *Annalistes* such as Fernand Braudel or of the antihermeneutic and hypertextual, albeit not textualist, work on the year 1926 by Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht) but also for the increase of more recent denotative rather than connotative histories: material histories, structural histories, what we might call forensic histories—and, indeed, the histories and transhistories wrought (and writ) by media archaeology.[19]

As I have already argued, the metalevel grounding of media archaeology in all its diversity is located in a desire for, and belief in, the possibility of historical presence as summarized above. I have also pointed to several consequences (both philosophical and methodological) entailed in this grounding principle. Indeed, I have suggested that media archaeology and the essays in this volume, being informed by the desire for presence share certain "family" features that bring them together into a heterogeneous coherence that is as spatialized as it is ideational, a coherence that, in its literal relation of "co" and "here," constitutes a commonly shared philosophical *habitus* that can also accommodate a certain amount of internal difference. These family features, most of them already mentioned, include a valorization of media in their concrete particularity rather than as a set of abstractions; media as material and structures (in their broadest and most dynamic sense) rather than as subaltern "stuff" subject (and subjected) to theory or metaphysics; media practice and performance as a corporeal, instrumental, and epistemic method productively equal to methods of distanced analysis; description of media's materials, forms, structures, and operations rather than the interpretation of media content or social effects; media's formal and epistemic variety rather than their remedial similitudes; and, finally (at least in this litany), media, in their multiplicity, rupturing historical continuity and teleologies rather than supporting them.

So what does media archaeology "add up to"? What might be said of its "deep structure" in toto and in the end? Perhaps these questions should not

be asked at all, given media archaeology's value as an undisciplined discipline that assiduously avoids any kind of comprehensive interpretation or totalizing theory. Nonetheless, the editors of this volume have requested not only that I ask them but also that I attempt to answer them. So, in conclusion (and with a great sense of irony), I want to turn to Hayden White's *Metahistory* to look at the "historical Imagination" of media archaeology (and the essays in this volume) as a synoptic whole.[20] As such, media archaeology narrates itself as a particular kind of history that, despite its surface avoidance of narrativization, nonetheless is—at a deep-structural level—emplotted and formally argued and has ideological implications.

Emplotment, or what *kind* of overall history is being told (whether diachronic or synchronic, whether narrating structural transformation or continuity) results, for White, in varying "explanatory affects": the history as a whole, and in its deep structure, as Romantic, Satiric, Comic, or Tragic (with some, but not all, of these potentially functioning adjectivally in relation to the others). Although I am certain that many media archaeologists, given their empiricism and materialism, will bristle at the thought, it seems to me the archetypal emplotment of media archaeology is decidedly *Romantic*. Romance is fundamentally a drama of resurrection, recuperation, and redemption (in this context, it seems not coincidental that White mentions the legend of the search for the Holy Grail—a mediating religious artifact that, like historical media artifacts, embodies the virtual in the substantial and a "presence in absence"). The Romance is also a drama, to quote White, "of the ultimate transcendence of man over the world in which he was imprisoned by the Fall . . . and the dark force of death."[21] To a certain degree, then, we might see all historians and historiography as Romantic insofar as their primary aim is to transcend human mortality through resurrecting, recuperating, and redeeming "the past" by either, like Jules Michelet, breathing in the dust of the dead or, like E. P. Thompson, resurrecting and writing the voices of the English poor.

In its historical materialism, its antihermeneutic bent, its insistence on media variety, specificity, and difference, and its primary grounding in the possibility of the "presence" of the past in the present, media archaeology's emplotment seems to me particularly Romantic—although, as Seinfeld might say in ironic recuperation, "Not that there's anything wrong with that." Indeed, given our age of skepticism and irony, a Romantic worldview is generally regarded as not only naive but potentially dangerous—hence those media archaeologists who qualify the "reality" of historical presence in the present as a presence "effect." Nonetheless, these media archaeologists are still Romantics—albeit also self-satirists. Indeed, White writes that although he cannot imagine a Romantic Satire, he can "legitimately imagine a Satirical Romance," meaning by that term "a form of representation intended to expose from an Ironic standpoint, the fatuity of a Romantic concep-

tion of the world"—in this case, the fatuity of a Romantic conception of "real" presence still held, at least in part, yet also in part disavowed. That is, even those media archaeologists who qualify "presence" as merely an "effect" are having their cake, if not eating it too.

The second deep-structural element of the historical imagination that White considers is that of *formal argument*—the principles of discursive combination that explicitly or implicitly express different notions of historical reality and its appropriate historiographic form. Here White differentiates "four paradigms of the form a historical explanation, considered as a discursive argument, may be conceived to take: Formist, Organicist, Mechanistic, and Contextualist."[22] The formal argument of media archaeology is primarily *Formist*—that is, its primary aim is "the identification of the unique characteristics of objects inhabiting the historical field."[23] As Formist, media archaeology can thus be differentiated from the related contemporary discourses of film and media studies and cultural studies, whose formal arguments are primarily Contextualist—that is, focused on synchronic and structural relations among elements of the "spectacle" that constitutes the historical field. (While, at one time, film and media studies also privileged a Formist mode of argument in its discrete and close formal studies of specific films and/or the work of film authors, this mode has been overtaken by and subordinated to Contextualism.)

Like Contextualism, media archaeology avoids the integrative and synthetic principles of Organicism (here Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis* with its microcosmic-macrocosmic relations comes to mind) and the integrative and reductive overarching laws of Mechanism (certainly, here, Marx's *Das Kapital* comes to mind, with its "laws" regarding the relations between economics and social structure). Also like Contextualism, media archaeology is essentially wide and dispersive in scope. That is, all media (broadly conceived as well as "old," "new," and imagined) are grist for their archaeological mill. However, unlike Contextualism, media archaeology's aim is to *dispel* what are seen as similarities among media objects and to also see these objects as potentially *transhistorical*—that is, not necessarily context dependent. Finally, and perhaps most important, rather than generalizing (as I am doing here), and while not completely ignoring context, media archaeology's primary Formist aim (and appeal) is "a depiction of the variety, color, and vividness of the historical field"—this depiction (or denotative description) metonymically bent on evoking what has been emphasized here as a sense of "presence" or, for the reader, "presence effect."

The last of the deep-structural elements of the historical imagination White considers is that of *ideological implication*. He argues that every work of history's "claim to have discerned some kind of formal coherence in the historical record brings with it theories of the nature of the historical world and of historical knowledge itself which have ideological implications for attempts to understand

'the present,' however this 'present' is defined." Thus the choice of—and relations between—a particular mode of emplotment and a particular formal argument have ideological and ethical implications for how "one can legitimately conceive [of] changing that present or . . . maintaining it in its present form indefinitely."[24] At its deep-structural level, then—and irrespective of explicit ideological discourse or the consciously held political beliefs of the historian—each historiographic project is implicated in one of what White identifies as the four basic "metapolitical" positions: Anarchism, Conservatism, Radicalism, and Liberalism. Occupation of these positions entails different conceptions of the need for (and pace of) social change and of the value of present social establishments.

If we understand that, today, history, historical research, and historiography are all entailed and "disciplined" in the social (and sometimes antisocial) professional establishment known as "academia," then it is certainly relevant to ask, What, in this context, is the deep ideological (and ethical) orientation of media archaeology? Here media archaeology is particularly dialectical in its current undisciplined status. That is, on the one hand, it narrates an Anarchism that cares little for the "historical establishment" and, against the latter's structural systemiticity, privileges a heterogeneous "community" of individuals who occupy a common *habitus* by virtue of some shared yet diverse historical interests, beliefs, and practices. On the other hand, it also narrates a Liberalism that is relatively at ease with the historical establishment, and optimistic that it will respond to media archaeology's "adjustments" and "fine-tuning" of that establishment's epistemic premises and practical methods. For White, Anarchism is "inclined toward the essentially empathetic techniques of Romanticism in [its] historical accounts"—whereas Liberalism is inclined to a "rational" view of social change as "most effective when particular parts, rather than *structural relationships,* of the totality are changed."[25] However, whereas White finds there are affinities among Romantic historical emplotment, Formist historical argument, and an Anarchist mode of ideological implication, Liberalism, for him, is most often aligned with Satire and Contextualism. These, however, are just dominant affinities and not necessary combinations that result in a given kind of history. Indeed, White concludes that the most interesting and productive histories are characterized by "a dialectical tension [that] usually arises from an effort to wed a mode of emplotment with a mode of argument or of ideological implication which is inconsonant with it."[26] In closing, then, I would argue that media archaeology—ideologically, and in terms of its liberal alliances and differences from the disciplined disciplines of history, film and media studies, and cultural studies—retains its anarchic status as undisciplined: committed, that is, to a discourse of presence (whether Romantic or Satiric) that poses a major challenge to these disciplines' epistemic norms and established values.

NOTES

The epigraphs for this chapter are taken from Eelco Runia, "Presence," *History and Theory* [illegible] (February 2006): 1, and Bjørnar Olsen, "Material Culture after Text: Re-membering Things," *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 36 (2003): 100, quoted in Ewa Domanska, "The Material Presence of the Past," *History and Theory* 45 (October 2000): 34.

1. Although perhaps most associated with historiography, the issue of "presence" spans disciplines. See, for example, the literary theorist and philosopher Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's two (quite different) yet prescient volumes, the hypertextual and "immersive" *In 1926: Living on the Edge of Time* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997) and the more conventionally written *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004). After its publication of Runia's "Presence" in early 2006, *History and Theory*'s next issue focused on the topic; see *History and Theory* 45 (October 2006). Stanford University's Critical Studies in New Media workshop also focused on "presence" during 2006–7, and in May 2007, in association with the Stanford Humanities Center and Lab and the Archaeology Center), it held an interdisciplinary colloquium, "The Politics of Presence." See the homepage of Critical Studies in New Media at http://humanitieslab.stanford.edu/44/Home (accessed July 15, 2009).

2. Although the allotted space for this "Afterword" does not allow me to address directly the essays that make up this anthology, in the context of this particular definition of *presence* I would point out that, opposed as they may superficially appear, Huhtamo's essay on discursive topoi and Ernst's essay on technology as itself archaeological and archival share the premise of a *concrete* transhistorical transference of "presence." Both Ernst's technological artifacts and Huhtamo's topoi are privileged as *sites* of *storage and retrieval.* Indeed, Runia notes that the rhetorical idea of topoi traditionally included both storage and retrieval. As he writes: "For Vico indeed, 'topics' is at least as much about 'finding' as about 'shelving.'" Further, "Vico defines topics as 'the art of finding in anything all that is in it.'" Runia, "Presence," 13.

3. Domanska, "Material Presence," 348.

4. See Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings,* ed. David Farrell Krell, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 287–317. Heidegger writes, "Technology is . . . no mere means. Technology is a way of revealing" (294). And he also connects this revealing power of *techne* with art and *poiesis,* ending with: "Thus questioning, we bear witness to the crisis that in our sheer preoccupation with technology we do not yet experience the coming to presence of technology. . . . Yet the more questioningly we ponder the essence of technology, the more mysterious the essence of art becomes" (317).

5. Carolyn Steedman, "In the Archon's House," in *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 1. In the discussion from which this quotation is drawn, Steedman refers to both Derrida and Foucault and their "intermittent dialogue" on "the archive as a way of seeing, or a way of knowing; the archive as a symbol or form of power" (2).

6. Hayden White says in an interview: "The idea that you could have an experience of a past phenomenon—an experience of the presence of the past—can only be an illusion. It's a contradiction in terms. But you could get the illusion of presence, and this is what [Frank] Ankersmit, I think, has in mind. Ankersmit no longer speaks about having an experience *of* history, but has an experience *about* history, of *historicality* . . . . A museum display [as] an attempt to give an experience *of* history . . . left him kind of cold. A memorial to dead children, he says, was an experience *about* history." Note here the casual yet telling criterion of the illusion's *affect* (it doesn't leave you "cold") as an element of the "presence effect." Hayden White quoted in Erlend Rogne, "The Aim of Interpretation Is to Create Perplexity in the Face of the Real: Hayden White in Conversation with Erlend Rogne," *History and Theory* 48 (February 2009): 73.

7. See Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 42–59. Barthes writes: "However lightning-like it may be, the *punctum* has, more or less potentially, the power of expansion. This power is often metonymic" (45).

8. Eelco Runia, "Spots of Time," *History and Theory* 45 (October 2006): 309. Metonymy is of central importance to the discourse of "presence," particularly as developed by Runia ("Presence") to counter what he argues are the *metaphoric substitutions* effected by realist historical narrative to achieve "meaning." That is, realist historical narrative substitutes *as a whole* for the past and proceeds on an underlying claim of *analogy* or *similitude* to it (i.e., this is the same as and/or equal to that by virtue of a metaphysical idea of resemblance). The relational logic of metonymy, however, insofar as it is based on *partiality* (i.e., this is related to that by virtue of existential contiguity, association, or shared attribute rather than resemblance), preserves *difference:* the container is not of the same "stuff" as the contained; the part is not of the same "stuff" as the whole. To further the link between metonymy and "presence," it is also worth emphasizing (as Runia doesn't) the difference between *metonymy* and *synecdoche*. Both are often confused because the relational logic of each is based on partiality. Metonymy differs from synecdoche, however, in that its relation of part to whole is not based, as is synecdoche, on the *abstraction* of the part from an *organic ensemble* or whole (i.e., the acorn for the oak). Rather, metonymy (to quote Paul Ricoeur) "brings together two objects each of which constitutes '*an absolutely separate whole*'" (i.e., the crown for the king). See Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, trans. Robert Czerny, Kathleen McLaughlin, and John Costello (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 56; for discussion of distinctions among metaphor, metonymy, and synecdoche, see 56–58.

9. Runia, "Spots of Time," 313.

10. Giuliana Bruno, *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film* (London: Verso, 2002).

11. Runia, "Spots of Time," 309.

12. An example of what I mean here is an essay I published in 1999 (and written earlier) on a then relatively *new form* of media—QuickTime "movies" made on and for the computer—constituted and constrained by limited computer memory. In the piece, if ironically, I regard both the form and the constraints of these little QuickTime artifacts as *already relegated to the past* insofar as the present was then fixed on achieving the computer memory and speed to allow for "streaming." I was prescient insofar as few (if any) of the works made in this mode remain. See Vivian Sobchack, "Nostalgia for a Digital Object: Regrets on the Quickening of QuickTime," *Millennium Film Journal* 34 (Fall 1999): 4–23, later abridged under the same title in *Future Cinema: The Cinematic Imaginary after Film*, ed. Jeffrey Shaw and Peter Weibel (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 66–73.

13. See Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 217–51. Of particular relevance to media archaeology and its historical objects (which here can be substituted for "the work of art" in the following quote), Benjamin writes: "The uniqueness of a work of art is inseparable from its being embedded in the fabric of tradition. This tradition itself is thoroughly alive and extremely changeable" (223).

14. Samuel Weber, "Mass Mediauras, or: Art, Aura and Media in the Work of Walter Benjamin," in *Mass Mediauras: Form, Technics, Media*, ed. Alan Cholodenko (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 104–5, second instance of emphasis mine.

15. Runia, "Presence," 5, emphasis mine.

16. Runia, "Spots of Time," 315, emphasis mine.

17. Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence*, xv.

18. Hayden White productively distinguishes between "narrativization" and "narrating": "When you impose a narrativized vision of the world on the world, I call it narrativization. . . . Narration is the act of speaking. Any time you speak in the first person about a thing in the world as a third-person mode of existence, you're narrating." Quoted in Rogne, "Aim of Interpretation," 68.

19. The other major academic contributions to the emergence of these new approaches to historiography can be attributed to both cultural studies and the "new historicism." Nonetheless, insofar as both these approaches tend to regard the "world as a text" (i.e., a coherent if complex *symbolic* system) that can be "read" and interpreted, they become precisely what the discourse of "presence" challenges, both epistemologically and for "equal time." Just as important to the emergence of this new discourse has been our increasing relations with the "virtual" and, hence, an increased longing for the "real."

20. Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973). See, particularly, "Introduction: The Poetics of History," 1–31. Although White is dealing with nineteenth-century European historians, he makes the case that the taxonomic method he employs for the "deep structural analysis of the historical imagination" might well be relevant to other periods; furthermore, he limits his taxonomy's relevance to historical narratives only, pointing out that these are particularly constrained—not only by the external constraints dictated by their object of study (past historical events) but also by their purportedly realist representation of these objects (these events happened and in this specific way). See 8 n.

21. Ibid., 9.

22. Ibid., 13.

23. Ibid., 13–14.

24. Ibid., 21.

25. Ibid., 26, 24.

26. Ibid., 29. Given my gloss on the affinities of media archaeology, it is apt in this context that White uses, as a major example in his book, the "inconsonance" of Jules Michelet, "who tried to combine a Romantic emplotment and a Formist argument with an ideology that is explicitly Liberal" (29).