Echoes from the Archive: Retrieving and Re-viewing Cinematic Remnants of the Nazi Past

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Film footage made in the Third Reich and since found in the archive has recently provoked new forms of cinematic engagement with the incriminating images that often emphasize the perpetrator's perspective on historic events. Georges Didi-Huberman calls these visual remnants of the Nazi past "ill seen images"; "ill seen" because they have been "poorly described, poorly captioned, poorly classed, poorly reproduced, poorly used" by historians as well as filmmakers.[1] In the case of archive films that remain from the Nazi period we are left with footage that is, for the most part, fragmentary and that has sometimes been edited in only rudimentary ways.[2] Yet, even these fragments are significant beyond their status as documents or iconic images: their particular perspectives, framing, and production context mean they have certain cinematic qualities. In order to understand them properly, then, we need to "read" them as cinematic remnants, especially where they have been used in subsequent film projects precisely for their cinematic qualities.

In his study on the sources of Holocaust research, Raul Hilberg addresses photographs and films only in passing, but nonetheless points out the particular value of visual materials, which he describes as "'action' films and photographs." Referring to well known archive films from the Third Reich, he notes the important information they reveal: "a ghetto from the entrances guarded by police to bodies on the sidewalk inside, or . . . a group of Jews boarding a deportation train."[3] Photography and film are ambivalent sources, however. They have the potential to reveal marginal and sometimes even accidental details that would not otherwise be shown or perceived. But just as they present things that happened in front of the camera, they also exclude other things that were not depicted. Even if the material was not edited and presented to the public, the perspective and framing of the shots taken still produce a particular meaning. Indeed every photographic or cinematic source can be "read" and will "tell" us something about the context in which it was made, even though there are often manifold and contradictory ways to interpret

these visual remnants.[4] Made in a particular context for a particular reason, this archive material opens only a limited and often distorted view on historical events and so requires supplementation. This means combining sources, a practice that Didi-Huberman calls "interpretative montage," which involves intertwining memories, topographical knowledge, contemporary as well as retrospective testimonies, and historical documents.[5] Quoting Clement Cheroux, he appeals for "a genuine archaeology of photographic documents," which can be achieved by "examining the conditions of their creation, by studying their documentary content, and by questioning their use."[6]

This essay will discuss three films that retrieve and examine archival footage from the Nazi period in an attempt to develop strategies that undo or counteract the perpetrator gaze inscribed in these images. *A Film Unfinished* (Israel/Germany 2010) by Israeli filmmaker Yael Hersonski investigates the remnants of infamous film footage shot by German cameramen in the Warsaw Ghetto. In an attempt to understand the disturbing archival material, Hersonski juxtaposes it with other written sources and testimonies. In *Aufschub* (Respite, Germany/South Korea 2007), German filmmaker Harun Farocki recovers moving images from the Jewish transit camp in Westerbork. Evoking echoes of the past, Farocki frames the images with intertitles and thus initiates a process of re-reading. These two films are indicative of a recent turn to archive footage, but East German filmmakers Walter Heynowski and Gerhard Scheumann had developed a similar project already in 1988. In *Die Lüge und der Tod* (The Deceivers and the Dead, GDR 1988), they contextualize and examine two films they discovered in a local archive in Stuttgart depicting anti-Jewish measures in southern Germany shortly before the majority of the Jewish population was deported to the death camps in the East. In what follows, I will analyze these examples, showing how they frame, interrogate, and contextualize "original" footage to reflect critically on archive films and their relation to the Nazi past they claim to document.

Repositioning the Archive

In a culture of Holocaust memory that is increasingly visually dominated, the relationship between past and present is configured through the constant interplay of appearance and disappearance.[7] On the one hand, images from the past circulate in various audiovisual media, especially television documentaries; they are constantly repeated and therefore often transformed into visual icons of historic events.[8] On the other hand, lesser-known images are buried in archives and only occasionally recovered and saved from oblivion.

Thus, the archive becomes increasingly significant for Holocaust memory, not only as the source of those historical images used and reused

in film and television, but also as a particular place of preservation and as a specific mode of accessing the past. For historians as well as filmmakers, the archive has traditionally been an invaluable source of new knowledge and previously unseen images. But in recent years, archive footage as it appears in *other* films has become the starting point for re-viewing historical images (one of the most recent examples, besides the films discussed here, being *Night Will Fall* [UK, 2014, dir. André Singer]). In such projects, the relationship between past and present, material remnants and retrospective examination, gains particular prominence, causing us, as Sylvie Lindeperg claims, to reconsider how films evoke the past and to reconfigure it from the perspective of the present.[9]

Jaimie Baron describes films that gather and use archival footage as "appropriation films": marked by a "sense of 'foundness'" they evoke a particular "archive effect."[10] But by turning to the archive, filmmakers refer not only to the past (when acts of preserving are initiated), but also to the future (the accumulative "becoming" of new visual archives through the preservation and distribution of the material in their films). Their work thus resonates with Jacques Derrida's understanding of the archive, according to which the archive is not "a concept dealing with the past that might *already* be at our disposal or not at our disposal, *an archivable concept of the archive*."[11] The archive signals instead a constant processing and reprocessing of the remnants of the past in new, present configurations: it becomes "a question of the future, the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow."[12] The temporality of the films discussed in this essay is complex: they return to archive material, reanimating it in the present for the future, and as such, might be termed echo-films. For Lindeperg, the idea of an echo indicates the duration between the past and its evocation in the present; it shifts our focus from the question of the representation of the past to its mediation.[13] This signals the particular cinematic operations that characterize echo-films: as Brad Prager notes, archive footage and other sources "interact and speak to another, fashioning an echo chamber of cinema historical contexts."[14]

In responding to the archive and taking it as a point of departure for recovering forgotten or only partially known visual documents, echo-films enter into a dialogue with the present and, by re-mediating the archival materials, preserve them for the future. The archive films are not only presented as remaining fragments, but also framed with additional material from different sources; they therefore not only store (and, often for the first time, publicly show) the archive footage, they also create an echoing effect that makes the silent images "speak." In his critical reading of images from the Holocaust, Didi-Huberman describes several useful techniques for approaching such remnants of the past. He calls on us to "doubt images"[15] and suggests a "kind of visual criticism" that consists of

"tighten[ing] our point of view" to reinterpret insignificant traces, as well as "widen[ing] our point of view" to see new relations.[16] Since "archival documents never allow us to see an 'absolute',"[17] only a strategically selected view, this footage, as well as its use in later films, require critical investigation. Following Didi-Huberman, we might ask several questions: why was the footage made and what was it intended for? Was it ever used and what does it tell us about the context in which it was made? Furthermore, the perspective from which this footage has been examined subsequently is also at stake: why has the footage been recovered from the archives and reviewed in the present? What drives contemporary filmmakers to visit the cinematic archives of the Holocaust? And how can these remnants be examined, read, and remembered through specifically cinematic operations?

Remembering the Archive

In 2007, the Israeli filmmaker Yael Hersonski discovered a film previously unknown to her. Shot by German cameramen in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1942, it was clearly made for propaganda purposes. It was never shown to the public, but the fact it was still kept in the archives makes it a kind of deferred visual memory. The footage was not used as it was intended by the Nazi filmmakers, however, that is, to preserve a defamatory Nazi image of Jews for later times, but rather in post-war documentaries to depict the suffering of European Jewry.

After the film was shot, the footage was stored in the Reich's Film Archive, where it survived the war and became part of the East German State Film Archive. Only in the 1950s was the ghetto footage found and identified. The material was presented, presumably for the first time, in the documentary feature *Du und mancher Kamerad* (You and Some of Your Comrades, GDR, 1956) by the dedicated socialist filmmakers Andrew and Annelie Thorndike. Through a compilation of archival footage, they unmasked German militarism and imperialism in order to legitimize the GDR's "better Germany." Moreover, by setting the footage to Jewish prayer music, they established a particular way of reusing this Nazi film, transforming propaganda images into documents of Nazi cruelty. Erwin Leiser, a German-Jewish emigrant who had escaped from Berlin to Sweden in 1938, approached the footage from the ghetto in a similar manner. His documentary *Den blodiga tiden* (released in English as *Mein Kampf*, Sweden 1960) introduces the German propaganda material with dissonant music, which contrasts with the predominantly reportage character of his film. When the narrator reveals the origin of the images, the seemingly objective perspective of the commentary changes, shifting the film's focus from the historical developments to the specific status of the compiled footage as archival document. Some researchers see the footage

as the result of Goebbels's plan, noted in his diary on April 27, 1942, to have the deportations of German Jews to the ghettos filmed for the purpose of educating the German people in the future.[18]

A Film Unfinished departs from this unclear production history and searches for what is missing. "What do these images really show, and what they do not show?," Hersonski asks in her commentary in the very first minutes of the film, while a trolley with film cans is pushed down a dark hallway and the films are threaded through a projector. When the filmmaker first encountered the material, her intention was to fill a gap in her own family archive, since her grandmother, who had managed to escape the Warsaw Ghetto, would not talk about her experiences.[19] Thus, for Hersonski, the journey into the archive became an expedition into "great lacunae."[20] The opening of her film echoes this experience, as the camera makes a quick descent into the basement of an archive. Then different time layers literally merge when this shot dissolves into a similarly shifting camera movement taken from black-and-white footage depicting the former GDR's film archive. The opening sequence thereby also highlights how Hersonski returns to this well-known footage from the perspective of the third generation. In addition it seems to symbolize the belated—and unintended—availability of the East German archive (although most of the material had already been shown in different contexts). Indeed, even though the footage had been used before, Hersonski's opening evokes the archival images as if they are appearing on screen for the first time; as scratched and spectral echoes from the past.

Initially Hersonski thought that this footage, although disturbing, might be the missing link in her grandmother's incomplete testimony. Coming face-to-face with the film material from the ghetto, she experienced the "capacity of the image in cinema to testify."[21] This capacity relates to the cinema as a place for gaining access to the past through the projection of its visual remnants, as well as its ability to make visible hidden or overlooked aspects. In Hersonski's mind, the "recorded image with the totality of its elements holds a certain duality that emanates from the doubleness of the gaze. On the one hand, every image is produced by the person who conceives it; and on the other hand you have the camera, the mechanism, which simply records. Some things are registered in spite of the author's intention."[22] Thus, following Hilberg's understanding of cinema's capacity for revealing marginal and sometimes even accidental details,[23] Hersonski applies particular cinematic, technical as well as mechanical, operations in order to carve out revealing moments. She intervenes in the running projection of the images, assembles different material sources, and uses techniques such as slow motion in order to destabilize the common framing of the iconic images.[24] "It was like taking a scalpel and slowly and gently cutting through the skin that covered them. I wanted to reopen the image to all its possibilities."[25]

Whilst such cinematic operations made it possible to excavate the layers of the original film's fabrication, they were not able to reveal the experiences of the people depicted beyond the silent visibility of the images. So Hersonski "completed" the mute images by adding sound: "The lack of soundtrack opened a slot for my intervention. I wanted the soundtrack to be this additional dimension. . . . I wanted to produce an entire world of sound that is not woven into the images but hovers over them."[26] The new "sound-frame" was supposed to function as a "magnifying glass" to "see" what the images themselves were hiding.[27] This additional sound-frame contains various levels. First, Hersonski added noise and ambient street sounds, underscoring the images' character as documentary. Second, she offset the visual archive with other, (non-visual) audio sources. Excerpts from contemporary diaries, such as writings by the Warsaw Jewish Council President Adam Czerniaków or from the secret records of Emanuel Ringelblum, present a perspective that contradicts the evidence of the moving images, thereby providing an auditory counterweight to the visually powerful remnants of Nazi propaganda.[28] In Hersonski's words, they appear "like history's frozen shadows"[29] that confront the silent visual remnants of the past. With this juxtaposition of two opposing "memories" and two different ways of recording (film vs. writing) Hersonski's techniques correspond to Didi-Huberman's "interpretative montage." The written sources reveal the staged character of the original film footage whilst also drawing our attention to the victims' perspective and the humiliating conditions in the ghetto.

Nevertheless, *A Film Unfinished* still privileges the visible, the act of seeing, over the tension between conflicting perspectives. Hersonski continues to search for a "truth" hidden in the footage: as well as those moments of interpretative montage that tighten but also extend our view (beyond what can be seen in any literal sense), she also includes film footage made at screenings of the material. These screenings not only project the archive film in the cinema space, thereby transferring it to the present, they also produce a witnessing audience who perform an act of seeing. For Jeannette Catsoulis, *A Film Unfinished* "is really an exploration of watching—or, more precisely, of the difference between watching and seeing."[30] In her review, she explicitly relates this notion to the sequences that show survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto watching the original footage in a cinema while Hersonski's camera focuses on their reactions. The survivors thereby become the medium through which the contemporary viewer encounters the past. But as the projected images flicker on the faces of the survivors, this experimental arrangement also results in a shift in focus. We begin to search for a deeper truth in the faces of the survivors, for a trace of trauma that could shed light on the disturbing images from the archive. However, as historian Dirk Rupnow remarks, this gaze risks becoming voyeuristic.[31] Thus, although *A Film Unfinished* tries to

establish a connection between the gazes of the people in the footage and the spectating witnesses through the logic of shot and reverse shot, differences and frictions remain.[32] The doubled spectatorship and the troubling position of the witnesses make clear what Brad Prager identifies as the general "problem of comprehension" raised by the ghetto films, namely, the limitations of a contemporary perspective on the cinematic remnants of the past: as Prager asks, "how much of this [archive] footage is visible to us now?"[33]

Prager is, therefore, right to emphasize that in *A Film Unfinished,* "memory is given priority over history."[34] Hersonski's echoing of the unfinished ghetto film from 1942 departs from the archive, which fails to tell her what she wants to know, in order to assemble traces from the past and activate a process of memory that is supposed to fill its gaps. Ultimately, however, in its investigation of a disturbing past, *A Film Unfinished* remains ambiguous, revealing the provisional and incomplete character of its cinematic operations. Both Hersonski's film and the archived footage remain unfinished.

Re-reading the Archive

In contrast to Hersonski's assembling of different sources, voices, and images, Harun Farocki's silent film *Aufschub* is based on total restriction, limited as it is to one source and to visual material.[35] Broken up only by sparse contextualizing intertitles, Farocki replays archive footage made in 1944 at Westerbork, a transit camp in the Netherlands for Jewish and Sinti prisoners. These images appear uncannily familiar and at the same time strange. Limiting himself to the camp footage, Farocki produces an arrangement that Lindeperg describes as "at once minimalist, modest and subtle," and which enables him "to place the ambivalence of the sequences at the center of his reflection, less in order to reduce this ambivalence than to become increasingly conscious of it, to measure and displace its effects."[36] His approach is not so much about revealing the historical context hidden behind the images allegedly made for propaganda purposes, but about excavating different patterns of meaning that produce the unsettling effect of simultaneous familiarity and alienation.

In fact, the footage used by Farocki was, at least in part, well known. Through its frequent repetition in numerous documentaries and television reports, an extract showing a deportation train departing from Westerbork had already been made a metonymic and iconic substitute for the transports to the Death Camps. One of the first people to use this sequence was Alain Resnais, who discovered the film in a Dutch archive while researching for his film *Nuit et brouillard* (Night and Fog, France, 1955).[37] Resnais included in the film one of the most memorable parts of the archive material, which shows a platform, hurrying people, bundles of

luggage, policemen, dogs, soldiers, and finally the departing train. Shown almost without comment and accompanied only by instrumental music by Hanns Eisler, the images have fundamentally shaped the visual representation of the deportations.

Although this short extract has become a visual icon of the Holocaust, many more film fragments were preserved in the archive. In contrast to other visual remnants of the Nazi past, such as the footage from Warsaw, this film was shot by a Jewish prisoner. In May 1944, Rudolf Breslauer began recording life in the camp with a 16mm film camera. The professional photographer from Munich had escaped with his family from Germany to the Netherlands, but was arrested there and taken to Westerbork. Only a few months after he shot his film, he was deported to Auschwitz, where he was murdered.[38] But the status of the film footage remains ambivalent because Breslauer did not make this film voluntarily, nor did he shoot it in secret. The filming was conducted openly and visibly, upon the order of the German camp commander Albert Konrad Gemmeker.[39] Thus we can trace two gazes in the footage, that of the perpetrators and that of the victims. This creates a certain tension that reveals "the ambivalence of the images' production and the strange atmosphere of tranquility recorded in the scenes."[40] Viewed retrospectively, this ambivalence is intensified, even giving the material a new significance. As Thomas Elsaesser notes, "Gemmeker had his work documented because he was proud of it; today, however, the same footage is considered a document of German fanaticism and barbarity."[41]

In Farocki's revisiting of the archive, the images become the subject of discussion and interpretation; he reprocesses the material to make it readable in new and different ways. Farocki is interested in this material precisely because it is, like the ghetto footage in Hersonski's film and as Sven Kramer emphasizes, unfinished: "In this film about an incomplete film, Farocki draws attention to the images themselves and to reiteration, or the rereading and interpretation at *Respite*'s [*Aufschub*'s] conceptual center."[42] Here, and in contrast to Hersonski's approach, the cinematic remnants are not used as evidence, but to study traces, patterns, and structures.[43]

At the 2005 conference "Auszug aus dem Lager," Farocki asked how this particular visual legacy can be used responsibly: "Wie kann man die Opfer zeigen, ohne ihnen mit den Bildern ihres leidvollen Sterbens und Todes noch einmal Gewalt anzutun?" (How can you show the victims without assaulting them again by showing the images of their suffering and death?).[44] In considering this question, Farocki also used the word that would later become the title of his film about Westerbork: Aufschub (respite).[45] This term refers to two aspects: postponement of death through the suspension of deportation, and postponement of the present through cinematic extension of time. This double reference is also

reflected in the footage: it figures as a remnant from the archive that preserved the memory of the dead, and as evidence of the efficiency of the forced labor in the camp (which was supposed to prolong its existence and therefore defer its liquidation). Thus, Farocki's approach links two different layers of meaning and combines both historiographical and cinematic modes of re-viewing the material through repetition.

Aufschub opens with the extracts already familiar from *Nuit et brouillard* and other documentary films, the arrival of an empty train at Westerbork station, thus introducing a central motif that is already present in the original material. Breslauer repeatedly includes shots of trains and uses tracking shots (taken partly from moving trains) on several occasions. Yet, again, the train is an ambiguous image. In a historiographical sense, it refers to the centrality of the deportations to the "Final Solution," but it also evokes memories of a canonical sequence from early cinema, the famous short film by the Lumière brothers that depicts an incoming train at La Ciotat station. Thus, a film-historical aspect is inscribed into Farocki's use of the archival material, which is intensified by his decision to assemble the footage into a silent film. This form combines several references to "silence": *Aufschub* recalls the mode of perception of early (silent) cinema, but it also refers to the silence of the archive, in which the visual remnants of the past are stored; it echoes the silence that remains following the mass murder of the Holocaust; and finally it undoes the dominant mode in which such footage is used to treat the subject, for example in television documentaries, thus releasing archive images from canonical audio-visual-compilations.

But silence is also a precondition for the readability of the archival images, which, instead of being accompanied by audio commentary, are "indexed" and paratextually framed by explanatory intertitles. These titles not only provide necessary historical context, they also guide our subsequent viewing—our re-viewing—of the material, helping us to recognize traces preserved in the material. Therefore, the film's title also indicates the necessity of undoing previous knowledge of the Holocaust—"Aufschub" as the deferral of what we think we know already. For this reason Thomas Elsaesser describes the rhetoric of the film as an "epistemology of forgetting": "*Respite* imagines what it must have been like to look at the camp at that moment in time, without the knowledge that hindsight (and scholarly, commemorative or forensic research) has conferred on it since."[46] This "epistemology of forgetting" alienates the viewers' gaze on what seems familiar because of its constant repetition. The interplay of intertitles and footage further creates an unstable narrative that favors certain readings of the material.

As Sven Kramer emphasizes, the main structural principle of *Aufschub* is a "juxtaposition of two or more tendencies that potentially conflict."[47] An example of this can be found in the contradictory temporality of the

footage: its intended use for propaganda (determined by Gemmeker), and the postponement of death (attempted by Breslauer). Farocki then contributes a third temporal layer, that of retrospective re-reading. This includes an aesthetic framing, for instance, by assigning the footage to the genre of industrial film.[48] But he also creates uncanny echoes and resonances between past, present, and future through his framing of the archival images. This is perhaps most obvious in a sequence depicting young Jewish workers in a field. These images are disruptive because, like the earlier depictions of work in the factories, as well as sports and cultural activities, they contradict the viewers' expectations about the camps.[49] Furthermore Farocki intervenes in how these images are perceived by creating a moment of paradoxical temporality. When the footage depicting the young people flickers over the screen, an intertitle links it to the iconography of Zionist films proclaiming the birth of a new, strong, and productive Jew. But, as the camera pans over a group of people resting in the grass, the intertitles also offer a contradictory reading: in retrospect, Farocki suggests, the people on the ground iconographically anticipate the dead in the camps, the destination of the deportation trains from Westerbork. Thus the presence of the screened images, which are decoded as a depiction of a past moment that was preserved for the future, is paratextually framed by a reading that evokes a non-realized possible future and simultaneously indexes what will happen (but was not yet known at the time of filming).

Such moments of disruption are intensified through Farocki's techniques of assembling and repeating parts of the material. Although he places the footage in a certain order and highlights specific aspects (such as labor and the railway), the film's arrangement remains unstable.[50] This effect corresponds to Farocki's approach, which aims not to restore but to re-read the remnants of the past.[51] While Hersonski's film emphasizes the instability and incompleteness of memory, Farocki is interested in a particular technique of re-reading that does not fill the gaps, but engages with the fragile condition of the material and even opens new interpretations. According to Lindeperg, this offers a different way of seeing those depicted in the footage:

> Detached from the intentions of the film, the luminous faces of the persecuted appear before us as revenant images. This spectral effect allows an emotion to surge forth that assures the posthumous victory of these captive men, women and children placed in front of the camera at the whim of their jailor, since time can foil the designs of conquerors, and the image . . . has the power to transform the dead into something eternal.[52]

Thus Farocki's strictly visual approach, as well as his exclusive use of extracts from the original footage, not only retain the traces of the dead but also produce echoes of the past from the fragments that remain.

Re-viewing the Archive

Both these approaches—remembering and re-reading—can be found already in an East German film from 1988, where they were combined to allow the re-viewing of two films from the Nazi past that had been preserved in a local archive. When Walter Heynowski and Gerhard Scheumann presented their film *Die Lüge und der Tod* to their East Berlin audience at a commemoration ceremony for the so-called "Kristallnacht," they were already well-known filmmakers in the GDR. Over a number of decades, they had produced several documentary films on controversial topics, all linked through their investigative approach, reportage style, and strong commitment to the socialist cause. Many of these films, such as *Der lachende Mann* (The Smiling Man, GDR 1966), depict political opponents as particular types of the "class enemy" and use found footage only for illustration or to unmask the protagonist. In *Die Lüge und der Tod,* however, the filmmakers follow a different approach, which responds to the unique character of the footage in question. Robert Michel, a researcher for Heynowski and Scheumann, came upon two film cans in the local archives in Stuttgart with footage that was, in Michel's words, "different."[53] One can contained an edited short film with the title *Lebensmittel-Sonderverkaufsstelle für Juden in der ehem. Gastwirtschaft "Zum Kriegsberg"* (Special Grocery Store for Jews in the Former Restaurant "Zum Kriegsberg"). It showed Jewish citizens with yellow stars buying food. The camera also recorded groceries being delivered to the store. Original intertitles clarify the propagandistic, even anti-Semitic, intention of the film. The second can contained a film in a rough cut without a title or further editing. It shows people, presumably Jews, entering a collection point where they are searched and registered and provided with food. Later, a van picks up their luggage, mostly suitcases with names written on them.[54]

It would have been easy enough to assemble the archive footage into another documentary accusing West Germany of continuing anti-Semitism and Fascism. But by the end of the 1980s, the approach towards the Holocaust and the centrality of Jewish victimhood had also changed in the GDR. In 1985, Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* had been broadcast on West German television and, although it was not shown in the GDR—allegedly for financial reasons, Heynowski and Scheumann have said that Lanzmann's film provided important motivation for making *Die Lüge und der Tod*.[55] Whilst *Shoah* might have influenced their approach to the topic in ideological terms, the method used in *Die Lüge und der Tod* seems to be the polar opposite of Lanzmann's, which consciously abstains from using any archival footage and is based almost exclusively on the testimonies of survivors and accounts from bystanders and perpetrators. In contrast, Heynowski and Scheumann only include material from the

archive and do not interview any witnesses to shed light on the events depicted in the footage. Thus, *Die Lüge und der Tod* resembles more the restricted approach of *Aufschub*, and also, in its adaptation of cinematic techniques to re-view and contextualize the material, anticipates elements of Hersonski's method. Already in 1988, then, Heynowski and Scheumann were sensitive to the question of how to use and re-view cinematic remnants from the Nazi past.

As already noted, the filmmakers restrict themselves almost entirely to the original archival material. They add only a few color shots of the film cans they found in the archives, which are intended to serve as an introduction to the "re-screening" of the films, clearly framing the footage as archival. Each film is then shown in its entirety and in its original sequence as it was preserved in the archive. Thus, *Die Lüge und der Tod* itself functions as a transmitter, releasing the film from the archive and distributing it to the public. The original intention of the two films was to produce documents of what the dominant political ideology deemed important local events: they were to be compiled into a film chronicle about Stuttgart during the war and were shot on 16mm by a local film producer, although after the war it was claimed that he did not shoot the second film.[56] We know that the footage of the collection point shows the Killesberg area from where deportations to Riga and other places in "the East" departed in December 1941, and it is assumed that it was shot by members of the Gestapo.[57]

In *Die Lüge und der Tod,* the visual remnants mostly appear silent, again corresponding to the original material from the archive and anticipating Farocki's approach in *Aufschub*. But simultaneously, and anticipating Hersonski's technique, the East German filmmakers also add contextualizing commentary: in a very calm and sober tone, the novelist Stephan Hermlin refers to official documents, reports, and orders related to the incidents.[58] This commentary, which does not paratextually frame the archival images, but rather extends the context beyond the visible, serves as a precondition for reading these disturbing images. While in the grocery film any traces of the fates of the people depicted must be excavated through a counter-reading of its propagandistic intention, in the second film, the footage is so disturbing because nearly everything that might reveal the violent nature of the scene depicted (forcing people to the assembly point, subjecting them to searches) seems to be completely absent.

Thus, after showing each of the films embedded in their own film, Heynowski and Scheumann repeat certain parts and apply particular cinematic techniques to scrutinize the material.[59] Similar to the approaches used later by Hersonski and Farocki, the filmmakers highlight particular people by zooming in on the material and explaining their specific fates in the commentary, or they reveal structures of repression and violence that

the camera operator tried to avoid but were picked up by the camera anyway. The most important source that contradicts and expands on the visuals is the written testimony of a former representative of Stuttgart's Jewish community, recorded in the immediate postwar years and also preserved in the local archive. Assembling disparate materials in this way, their film has a palimpsestic character, which also anticipates the kind of archival approach used by Hersonski.

In the second film, which shows the collection point at Killesberg, the filmmakers similarly focus on the glances toward the camera of those forced to wait for deportation. With the help of slow motion and freeze-frames, Heynowski and Scheumann show how, when the Jewish deportees become aware of the camera, they quickly turn away. These gestures, which oppose the original filmmaker's gaze, indicate the violence underlying the archive footage. In two other instances, the filmmakers use repetition and slow motion to reveal the unintentional visibility of policemen guarding the area, who are otherwise largely absent from the film. Twice they enter the frame (by mistake), after which the camera suddenly pans away.[60]

Die Lüge und der Tod is not only a film commemorating the fate of German Jews facing exclusion, deportation, and extermination, it is also about the accessibility of the past through its archival remnants. The film's title already signals the ambivalence of the cinematic remnants, which are both distorted propaganda footage and visible traces of those who were murdered. The film's composition thus, on the one hand, shows how this footage, having been kept in the archive, can be shown to the public at a later date—in this particular case, for the first time; but on the other, it addresses the question of what this footage actually shows through an analytical excavation of the material along the lines advocated by Didi-Huberman. As an echo-film, *Die Lüge und der Tod* restores traces captured only accidentally by the camera and reveals the intention of the original filmmakers.

Conclusion

The three echo-films discussed in this essay show distinct attempts to engage with the remnants of the Nazi past stored in the archives. They combine historiographical and archival modes with cinematic approaches in order to re-view the visual echoes from the past and to make the past readable in new ways. On the one hand, Hersonski's *A Film Unfinished* follows a mode of remembrance that assembles different sources, testimonies, and heterogeneous materials in order to fill the void left in the archives. Ultimately, however, this attempt to align the different sources exposes the film's persistently unstable character. Farocki's *Aufschub,* on the other hand, is motivated by an attempt to re-read familiar images from

the Nazi past; it therefore restricts itself almost completely to the material from the archives. But in this process of re-reading, the significance of the images does not emerge as unequivocal; on the contrary, Farocki's approach highlights the ambivalence and tensions that characterize the visual fragments preserved from the Westerbork camp. Finally, *Die Lüge und der Tod* combines both approaches—remembering and re-reading—as well as other techniques, in order to re-view, and thus make accessible in more nuanced ways, the cinematic remnants from the archive.

All three films use repetition to re-view the archival footage and reveal its traces. In so doing, they reveal not only traces of people who were destined to be killed, but also traces of the perpetrators, not intended to be part of these "documents" that were meant to show the seemingly *automatic* efficiency of anti-Jewish measures. These echoes from the archives reveal traces beyond the iconic character of the remnants from the past; following Did-Huberman, they enable us to read "what shows through the gaps" of the visual.[61] This includes, first and foremost, failures and ambiguities, but also what was elided, masked, or not depicted. In reviewing and adding additional layers to the archive remnants, the films discussed here become archives themselves. In this way they contribute to what Derrida described as the futurity of the archive, the developing, processing, and reprocessing of archives to come.

Notes

[1] Georges Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite of All: Four Photographs from Auschwitz*, trans. Shane B. Lillis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 67.

[2] This is of course different with regard to archival material that was already published at that time, that is, newsreel footage or edited propaganda films such as *Triumph des Willens* (Triumph of the Will, Germany 1935, Leni Riefenstahl) or *Der ewige Jude* (The Eternal Jew, Germany 1940, Fritz Hippler).

[3] Raul Hilberg, *Sources of Holocaust Research: An Analysis* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), 15.

[4] Hilberg, *Sources of Holocaust Research*, 15.

[5] Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite of All*, 89.

[6] Clement Cheroux, quoted in Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite of All*, 67.

[7] Tobias Ebbrecht, *Geschichtsbilder im medialen Gedächtnis: Filmische Narrationen des Holocaust* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2011), 42.

[8] Tobias Ebbrecht, "Migrating Images: Iconic Images of the Holocaust and the Representation of War," *Shofar* 28, no. 4 (2010): 86–103.

[9] Sylvie Lindeperg, "Spuren, Dokumente, Monumente: Filmische Verwendungen von Geschichte. Historische Verwendungen des Films," in *Die Gegenwart der Vergangenheit. Dokumentarfilm, Fernsehen und Geschichte*, ed. Eva Hohenberger and Judith Keilbach (Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 2003), 65–81, here 65.

[10] Jaimie Baron, *The Archive Effect: Found Footage and the Audiovisual Experience of History* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 17.

[11] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 36 (emphases in the original).

[12] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 36.

[13] Lindeperg, "Spuren, Dokumente, Monumente," 68. Lindeperg describes as "echo-cinema" fiction films that evoke the past as intertextual pastiche.

[14] Brad Prager, *After the Fact: The Holocaust in Twenty-First Century Documentary Film* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), 190.

[15] Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite of All*, 70.

[16] Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite of All*, 41.

[17] Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite of All*, 82.

[18] Anja Horstmann, "'Judenaufnahmen fürs Archiv': Das dokumentarische Filmmaterial 'Asien in Mitteleuropa,' 1942," *Medaon* 4 (2009): 1–11, here, 1.

[19] Laliv Melamed, "A Film Unraveled: An Interview with Yael Hersonski," *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 26, no. 1 (2013): 9–19, here 10.

[20] Melamed, "A Film Unraveled," 10.

[21] Melamed, "A Film Unraveled," 10.

[22] Melamed, "A Film Unraveled," 10.

[23] Hilberg, *Sources of Holocaust Research*, 15.

[24] Brad Prager, "The Warsaw Ghetto, Seen from the Screening Room: The Images That Dominate *A Film Unfinished*," *New German Critique* 41, no. 3 (2014): 135–57, here, 143.

[25] Melamed, "A Film Unraveled," 12.

[26] Melamed, "A Film Unraveled," 13.

[27] Melamed, "A Film Unraveled," 13.

[28] During the time of the Warsaw Ghetto Emanuel Ringelblum initiated a secret archive intended to preserve records of significant events as well as everyday life under German occupation. Contributors from manifold social, religious, and political perspectives turned the archive that was supposed to preserve memory for a future after the defeat of Nazism into a many-voiced mosaic of Jewish suffering and Jewish attempts at survival. See Samuel D. Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History. Rediscovering a Hidden Archive from the Warsaw Ghetto* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

[29] Melamed, "A Film Unraveled," 14.

[30] Jeannette Catsoulis, "An Israeli finds new meanings in a Nazi film," *The New York Times*, August 17, 2010, accessed March 22, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/18/movies/18unfinished.html?_r=0.

[31] 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*, October 2010, accessed March 22, 2015, http://www.zeitgeschichte-online.de/film/

die-spuren-nationalsozialistischer-gedaechtnispolitik-und-unser-umgang-mit-den-bildern-der.

[32] Prager, "The Warsaw Ghetto," 148.

[33] Prager, "The Warsaw Ghetto," 155.

[34] Prager, "The Warsaw Ghetto," 138.

[35] Sven Kramer, "Reiterative Reading: Harun Farocki's Approach to the Footage from Westerbork Transit Camp," *New German Critique* 41, no. 3 (2014): 35–55, here 37.

[36] Sylvie Lindeperg, "Suspended Lives, Revenant Images: On Harun Farocki's Film *Respite*," in *Harun Farocki: Against What? Against Whom?*, ed. Antje Ehmann and Kodwo Eshun (London: Koenig Books, 2009), 31.

[37] Sylvie Lindeperg, *"Nacht und Nebel": Ein Film in der Geschichte* (Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 2007), 77.

[38] Tobias Ebbrecht, "Vom Erscheinen und Verschwinden: Transtextuelle Erinnerung jenseits der Nachbildungen des Holocaust," in *Mediale Transformationen des Holocaust*, ed. Ursula von Keitz and Thomas Weber (Berlin: Avinus, 2013), 119–39, here 125.

[39] Lindeperg, "*Nacht und Nebel*," 79.

[40] Lindeperg, "Suspended Lives," 29.

[41] Thomas Elsaesser, *German Cinema: Terror and Trauma: Cultural Memory since 1945* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 163–64.

[42] Kramer, "Reiterative Reading," 38.

[43] Harun Farocki, "'Bilder wie eine Flaschenpost': Der Filmemacher Harun Farocki über das KZ Westerbork," *die tageszeitung*, February 1, 2008, accessed March 22, 2015, http://www.taz.de/!19513/.

[44] Harun Farocki, "Die Bilder sollen gegen sich selbst aussagen," in *Auszug aus dem Lager: Zur Überwindung des modernen Raumparadigmas in der politischen Philosophie*, ed. Ludger Schwarte (Bielefeld: transcript, 2007), 295–311, here 295.

[45] Farocki, "Die Bilder sollen gegen sich selbst aussagen," 308.

[46] Elsaesser, *German Cinema*, 248; 251.

[47] Kramer, "Reiterative Reading," 42.

[48] Elsaesser, *German Cinema*, 253.

[49] The footage was thus often related to the films recorded in the Theresienstadt Ghetto. Those projects from 1942 and 1944 also included prisoners who contributed to the filming (see Lindeperg, "Suspended Lives," 31).

[50] Kramer, "Reiterative Reading," 43.

[51] Kramer, "Reiterative Reading," 46.

[52] Lindeperg, "Suspended Lives," 34.

[53] Robert Michel, "Die Lüge und der Tod," *Sonntag* 47 (1988): 7.

[54] Tobias Ebbrecht, "'Für die Kriegszeit bezeichnende Vorgänge': Zwei Filme über die Ausgrenzung und Deportation der Juden in Stuttgart 1941," *Filmblatt* 44 (2011–12): 55–67.

[55] Claudia Böttcher and Corinna Schier, "'Die Mörder sind unter Euch?!': Walter Heynowskis und Gerhard Scheumanns Auseinandersetzung mit dem Nationalsozialismus Ende der 1980er Jahre," in *DDR erinnern, vergessen: Das visuelle Gedächtnis des Dokumentarfilms*, ed. Tobias Ebbrecht et al. (Marburg: Schüren, 2009), 194–214, here 204.

[56] Ebbrecht, "Vom Erscheinen und Verschwinden," 130.

[57] Ebbrecht, "Vom Erscheinen und Verschwinden," 128–29.

[58] Tobias Ebbrecht, "Jenseits der Grünanlagen: Dokumentarische Arbeiten zu Judentum, Novemberpogrom und Holocaust in der Schlussphase der DDR," *Filmblatt* 44 (2011–12): 119–35, here 131.

[59] Ebbrecht, "Jenseits der Grünanlagen," 133.

[60] Ebbrecht, "Vom Erscheinen und Verschwinden," 130.

[61] Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite of All*, 84.