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Moving emotions: affect, the archive and the moving image

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*'I realized in a flash the many existing parallels between history and the photographic media, historical reality and camera reality'.<sup>1</sup>*

From the early twentieth century well into the present, film has been a defining technology of recording and documenting ordinary as well as official events including genres as diverse as newsreel, scientific and travel film and home movies. As Jean-Louis Comolli observes, film cannot be considered outside history: from its beginnings, it has been part 'of history in becoming its visible trace, archive, and spectacle', because from its beginning film 'has been mingling itself in and about everything. There isn't anything that has not been filmed, is not filmable or in the process of being filmed'.<sup>2</sup> These very qualities however also bring into question the nature and historical significance of its archival trace. From its beginnings, the moving image has qualified the archive with a distinctive form of documenting that is characterized by its formal features of movement, repetition and duration, epitomizing the modernist 'contradictory desire of archiving presence'.<sup>3</sup> Whilst film as a time-based medium offers us a record of contingency by capturing the fleeting moment, duration is also an internal constitutive component of the frame, which is formally malleable through montage as well as endlessly repeatable. Film's double entanglement with time thus generates the unstable temporality of the filmic archival trace that can be defined as a present-past that mediates contingency and its virtual *re-presentation*: 'what film archives' – as Mary-Ann Doane argues – '[...] is first and foremost a "lost" experience of time as presence, as immersion'.<sup>4</sup> The moving image, in other words, has provided the archive with a trace that

oscillates between the frame as a fragment of lost presence and its contextual construction, between contingency and its narrative possibilities as re-presentation. In this sense, the moving image has ideally underscored the modernist resistance towards the totalizing principle of the archive, anticipating the late twentieth-century critique that increasingly construes it in terms of internal gaps, absence and amnesia.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, film threatens the archive with the danger of preserving too much, encumbering it with ‘noise’.<sup>6</sup> Supposedly inconsequential for history, since imbued with the pervasiveness of ordinary experiences or attitudes, such ‘noise’ is indicative of traces that resist signification and ‘mean subversively more than we might intend or wish – or subversively less’.<sup>7</sup> These traces, moreover, no matter how insignificant, can also leave behind a trail that produces ‘opaque zones’ in which atmospheres, mentalities and emotional currencies manifest as ways of seeing, framing and recording.<sup>8</sup> This raises the question of what ensues from the noise of the archive, from the forgotten traces of film footage? How can we read and what can we garner from filmic footage whose indexical connections have been lost?

Artistic practices based on archival film by anonymous or amateur cameramen, and found or discarded footage, whether dealing with public events or private life, offer us ways to address these questions and consider the significance of the moving image beyond its documentary possibilities in terms of affect.<sup>9</sup> It is not the indexical content of the images themselves – their direct references to events, places and people – which is often elusive, but rather the procedural features of the shot that provide us with a means of abstracting the affective forms of ordinary encounters evincing the feeling of experience from the minutiae of commonplace actions, environments or gestures. Hence, paraphrasing Dominick LaCapra, the moving image adds to the archive in terms of memory as its point of contact with experience by establishing resonances between what, following Siegfried Kracauer, quoted above, we refer to as ‘historical reality’ and ‘camera reality’.<sup>10</sup> An investigation of the

moving image as an archival trace thus contributes to the debate around the significance of memory for history by engaging with affect – which as Brian Massumi argues always carries a political valence<sup>11</sup> – as it manifests through gestures, gazes, postures or attitudes as they mutate and disperse overtime. Film, in its most basic form, records the transience of ordinary experience through its quintessential medial qualities of movement and duration and conveys an internal gaze towards historical events which is characteristic of memory’s perpetuation of the past.<sup>12</sup> In this sense, the moving image registers an intention of recollection, opening an entry point into an understanding of emotion as enacted practice.<sup>13</sup> Emotion, in this context, is a transversal dimension steeped into the historical specificity of the act of filming that however also circulates and ricochets in and across time as the present-past of the moving image. It involves the affect that imbues the act of filming as well as the emotions captured by the camera on celluloid and the feelings that we experience in watching those images of the past in the present. A consideration of the filmic archival trace thus pertains not only to a history of the medium, but also, and more pertinently for our discussion, to one of emotion.

In particular it suggests the twofold relation that binds the expression and medial representation of affective forms of the past and their readings. A formal investigation of archival film footage offers to historical analysis a way to abstract affect as an active practice that defines both the shaping of ‘historical reality’ and its mediated re-presentation as ‘camera reality’.

In what follows, we shall discuss the video work, *Electric Fragments* (2002-2005), by artists and filmmakers Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi, which consists of the remediation of short, found films by unknown cameramen that could be considered ‘noise’ in the archive.<sup>14</sup> Their practice is indicative of a formal investigation of the filmic archival trace which is relevant for a broader understanding of the ways in which the moving image ‘frames’ affect. The article contextualizes Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi’s remediation of

archival film footage and further examines one of the short films, ‘*Fragment 2 – Vietnam*’, in order to reflect on the historical significance of the filmic archival trace in terms of memory and of its metonymic capacity to evoke presence as affect. Within this context, the article argues for the critical significance of emotion in shaping how we read and construe the past in the present, and further positions the possibility of a transmission of feeling that is contingent upon an interrogation of the affective forms of the present as much as of the past.

*Electric Fragments: the ‘noise’ of the archive*

Throughout a career spanning over forty years, Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi have consistently used archival film footage (from the beginnings of cinema to 1978) to address historical subjects – including the First World War, the Armenian genocide, fascism, colonialism and imperialism.<sup>15</sup> Whilst their artistic approach is steeped in the history of filmmaking, their concern is not with the past but rather the present, with the activation of the ‘opaque zones’ in cinematic traces in order to make them a viable means for a contemporary reading of the past in the present. This is achieved through a remediation of the original film footage in which, characteristically, the artists extend its duration by re-photographing and re-assembling each frame to slow down its movement. They also enlarge, tint, invert or replicate some of the frames to draw attention to their internal composition, texture and luminosity and to the most minute details within them, whether a gesture, an expression or the natural features of a landscape. As a result, the slowed down frames fragment into details: as Kracauer comments about photography, ‘[i]f one can no longer encounter the grandmother in the photograph, the image taken from the family album disintegrates into its particulars’.<sup>16</sup> These particulars within each single shot (i.e. light-contrast, scale and camera angle; objects, gestures or expressions) and across frames contain the internal sensory qualities of the shot itself and are indicative of its internal formal organization that, far from neutral, helps to construct points

of views on experience. The focus on composition and detail thus highlights the modes of engagement of the camera lens with the subject matter, and hence the visual and structural patterns through which, in the case of *Electric Fragments*, the anonymous eye behind the camera frames and records its encounter with ‘the other’.

*Electric Fragments* consists of five films of different duration developed between 2002-2005. *Fragments 1-3* were presented as a video work at the exhibition *Experiments with Truth* at the Fabric Workshop and Museum in Philadelphia in 2004 and further included in international retrospectives of the artists’ work. *Electric Fragments* includes found film footage and home movies by anonymous amateur filmmakers from the 1940s to the 1970s, and collectively can be regarded as a heterogeneous palimpsest of ‘representations of the other’ across diverse places and times – from post-war Italy to colonial Vietnam and Senegal.<sup>17</sup> These private films have been acquired by the artists from disparate sources that discarded them because of no immediate archival relevance. To some extent, these images are precursors of those that today populate social media repositories, such as Instagram, Facebook or Vimeo. Whilst their *commonplaceness* may qualify them as trivial, their contact with experience offers us a glimpse into the overlooked, mostly forgotten affective qualities of the past, as movement, gesture or expression.

*Fragment 1 – Rom (Men)* (2002, 13’) documents a Sunday visit by a group of middle class people in the late 1940s to a camp on Lake Garda or Lake Como in Northern Italy where a group of Rom people lived. The film shows the well-heeled visitors, one of whom is presumably the filmmaker, as they walk about the camp, both curious and self-righteous. Persecuted during the Second World War, Rom returned to Italy in the post-war period. The camera lens shows a baby wrapped in a blanket lying on the ground, protected from the sun by a man’s hat; the face of a man smiling uneasily; a girl dancing; a stray dog. These images intersect shots of two couples with a school-age girl visiting the camp. A man wears a still-

camera around his neck, and one can presume that the unknown filmmaker is the other man in the party. Whilst it is not possible to know whether the group visited the camp intentionally or by chance, the home movie calls into question what we see in this “snapshot” of household *exotica* that displaces simplistic relations of closeness and distance, bonhomie, condescendence and uneasiness. The frames which focus on the face of the Rom man display his discomfort in front of the camera. The slowed-down images evince the nervousness of his smile as he looks away and then back to the camera. The man’s face is isolated, condensing in his expression the affective exchange that occurs between the controlling amenability of who is filming and the unease of whom is filmed. As Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi observe, ‘the 8mm camera records exoticism on home ground. Diversity is always exotic’.<sup>18</sup> However, what makes the home movie significant for the artists is the resonance of the images with the onset in Italy in early 2000 of anti-racism and anti-immigrant politics supported by the Northern League, a political party that has one of its strongholds in the region where the film was shot.<sup>19</sup> The short film also evokes today’s scenarios of refugees’ camps and contemporary mediated constructions of otherness moving beyond the episodic specificity of the footage to hint to broader transitional associations between the “lost presence” with which the filmic archival trace is imbued and its readings in the present. The uneasiness that the images project translates into the awkwardness of a recognizable situation whose familiarity renders it eminently uncomfortable.

No less puzzling is *Fragment 3 – Bodies* (2003, 10’). The film records the voyeuristic obsession of the unknown cameraman who secretly filmed women always from behind. Devoid of contextual references and narrative, the found footage foregrounds the relation between the filmmaker and its subject, and that between the former and the viewer – indeed he or she might have been the only person to watch these images and to know about their existence. Whilst we cannot trace their provenance or why they were taken, we are

confronted with the familiar and yet interfering act of filming and the disturbance caused by watching these shadowing frames. Voyeurism thus become a defining feature of the relations between who films and who is filmed, who watches and who is watched – an idea that *Electric Fragments* articulates through its homely and transcultural encounters. According to Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi, ‘Voyeurism [and] sexist images [are] hallmarks of an outlook of unilateral power that can be linked to the racism or exoticism recurrent in this series of films’.<sup>20</sup> By slowing down the speed of the film, the artists’ remediation evinces the intrusive and objectifying power of the film camera with its insistent focus on the backside of women as they are filmed and the exploitative singling out of their buttocks, whilst their faces remain out of frame. The lingering of the camera is imbued with sexual tension as well as a yearning to objectify, to demean and control. At the same time, as we follow the framing of the camera lens, and perceive the physical details of the women filmed, one in particular seems to be the obsessive focus of the filmmaker, we feel the embarrassment, outrage and repulsion that these images might cause to their unaware subjects. The artists’ intervention thus abstracts the circulation of affect between the filmmaker, the subject and us as viewer. Indeed, by locating ‘indeterminacies between artistic control and photographic registration in the source material’, the remediated images are eminently *pensive* in Jacques Rancière’s sense.<sup>21</sup> By extending the duration of the frames, Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi expose the tension between watching and being watched inherent in the processes of recording and projecting with the cinematic apparatus. Thus the viewer is positioned at an affective intersection between the pleasure of watching and the antithetical discomfort of being watched, exposing the residual affect with which these images are imbued.

*Fragment 4 – Asia* (2005, 33’) and *Fragment 5 – Africa* (2005, 30’) further expand on an exploration of transcultural encounters (the subject of *Fragment 2*, discussed in detail below) through a compilation of amateur tourist films from the 1970s that record the ways in



which tourism as a new form of colonialism re-defines representations of the other in countries as diverse as Afghanistan and Senegal. The filmic journey sketches a micro-historical picture of Europe's colonial legacy in the second half of the twentieth century through a collage of places that act as surfaces on which historical patterns of representation are iterated under the new forms of the growing tourist industry's 'folkloric propaganda' before these countries were marred by war and devastation.<sup>22</sup> Through this collage of places, *Fragment 4* and *5* display an 'opaque zone' of expanded temporalities and localities in which the present-past of the images layers perspectives and associations that transmit references, feelings and responses. This, for instance, is evident in *Fragment 5 – Africa* (filmed in Dahomey, Ivory Coast, Senegal) which juxtaposes images showing rural and urban life. The slowed-down film footage is saturated with colour which accentuates the sensuality of the frames, conveying the palpable qualities of materials, whether wood, textile or water, and the atmospheric sensations of heat and brightness. Such sensuality also transfers to the filming of bodies, especially when in movement, exposing the exoticism that imbues the images and simultaneously beguiles and baffles the anonymous filmmaker. As in the case of the other films included in *Electric Fragments*, the protracted duration of remediated frames enables us to deduce the recurrence of camera angles in the construction of scenery or people and the relations that these images bear to well-established cultural practices of representing exotic scenes in painting, photography and film itself and their ideological implications. Such moments include an extended sequence showing a woman running holding a head-basket, and a semi-close-up of another woman sitting displaying her naked breasts as she shies away from the camera, turning her head. In these sequences the anonymous filmmaker uses the common trope of the eroticization of the exotic through the female body. The extended film footage, however, also makes perceptible the development and hence emotional spell of an expression of the people filmed, whether as bemusement, unresponsiveness, quiet awareness

or reticence, thus conveying a glimpse of their responses to the camera. Emotion emerges relationally in the encounter that the camera records and returns to us encoded in the expressivity of a gesture and the affective tone it contains whether as acceptance, amusement or resistance.

Rather than attempting to construct a storyline out of these heterogeneous filmic fragments, Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi relate them obliquely so they stand both independently and in mutual relation within the palimpsestic structure of the work. The images are like debris, inconspicuous in the ordinariness of the things and events they record; at the same time, they are contingent on experience and on its mode of construction – whether visual, ideological or social – since they partake of, and perhaps in some cases contest, the discourses and institutions that shape culture at any given time. By resisting reconstruction and interpretation, such images can display unacknowledged articulations of the quotidian, what can be ‘casually aperçu’ in the inconspicuousness of a detail, at the margins of a frame or of a close-up as they emerge as forgotten forms of the past.<sup>23</sup> Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi’s approach to the filmic archival trace accesses these forms in the ‘particulars’ into which the images of the past disintegrate when their indexical significance lessens or disappears. Indeed, Kracauer’s parallels between ‘historical reality’ and ‘camera reality’ can be understood in terms of details, of ‘insignificant minutiae’ that the technical apparatus unintentionally registers, which are embedded in the practices of filming and in the aesthetic construction of the image. The fragment thus becomes a formal means to interrogate our present from a distance – a present that, as we shall argue, also involves the ways in which the past ‘is formed’ and ‘keeps forming our eye’ through ‘the unrepresented way the past is present in the here and now’.<sup>24</sup> In claiming a focus on the present through the remediation of archival film footage, Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi partake of a broader questioning of the past as an active force in the present, and hence of a reflection on the

perspectives from which we read and interrogate the past as well as the motivations and contexts that inform our own readings.<sup>25</sup> To history as a discipline this questioning adds an interrogation of experience and its visual representations not as illustration but rather as a vehicle to access the past through its affective resonances in the present.

*Electric Fragments*'s appropriation and representation of private film footage by unknown cameramen who were also likely to be the only consumers of the filmed images in fact calls into question our own positioning as unsolicited viewers: what does it mean to look at these images from a distance? What do they show? What do we fail to see in them? But also, how does what we see in them engage our own preoccupations and reflect the construction of our own gaze? Through the focus on particulars, Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi's remediation establishes an ambiguous, uncanny relationship of recognition and estrangement, of closeness and distance – whether temporal or spatial – between the historical material and our contemporary perspectives on it. The encounter with 'the other' that is the overt subject of *Electric Fragments*, on a subtle level, also denotes the emotional experience of viewing the films. It is constitutive of the dialogue with the past that the images solicit, since they present us with that otherness which is part of ourselves whether in terms of domestic and foreign exoticism or of the 'strange bundle' – to use Julia Kristeva's phrase – of attraction, recognition and disavowal that informs our own constructions of the past and as a consequence of the present.<sup>26</sup> In this sense, *Electric Fragments* exudes the estrangement and disturbance that the past causes in us as a condition that is not extraneous but rather buried in who and what we are, in our own histories, stories and images. As we shall further examine, the artists use the formal replication and repetition that pertain to the moving image to display something that is not entirely dependent on the visible nor reducible to mere indexical representation – something that we shall refer to as the underpinning structures of the images themselves. In so doing, they display particulars that provoke us because they are

familiar and their commonplaceness shows us something that, as Sigmund Freud puts it, 'ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light'.<sup>27</sup> In this displacement and interplay of all too familiar and yet estranged features evinced by the moving image, Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi point to the mnemonic significance of the archival filmic trace and to the possibility of evoking the transitional presence of emotion buried in inconspicuous scenes from the past.

*Fragment 2 Viet-Nam and the 'transfer of presence'*

*Fragment 2 Viet-Nam* (2001, 9') deals with the 'personal memories of colonial Vietnam filmed by a French official at the end of the 1940s'.<sup>28</sup> These visual memories include a young boy running on a country road toward the camera, people walking in the street, a group of friends diving and swimming, a line of young girls dancing in a nightclub, and the like. The internal temporal and spatial references are vague. For the contemporary viewer these images have lost their immediate referents and can only be partially read contextually. What we are left with are the formal features on which the frames are constructed: tonalities of light and shadow, points of view and visual motifs within the frames, the inscription of movement and stillness across contingent shots, and temporal and spatial shifts between sequences. Whilst the semantic and episodic qualities of these filmic memories are difficult to reconstruct narratively, one can nonetheless perceive a sense of lived experience, untangle some of the ambiguities that informed the ways in which the filmmaker related to the subject matter and recognize the mundane forms that colonialism took on within an antithetical fascination with and uneasiness toward exotic and estranging social encounters.

Hence, one can notice the liveliness of the young child (around three years of age) as he runs toward the camera in the opening sequence of the film. The scene is ambiguous: the boy appears confident, as if he knows or recognizes the person filming, while at the same

time the empty surroundings of the country lane and the lonely presence of the child convey vulnerability which further translates for the viewer in tenderness mixed with uneasiness. In another sequence, one notices the luminosity of the water and the glow of a man's body as he plunges into the sea and wonders about the sensuality of the scene, what it meant for the unknown filmmaker and why it was filmed. The images seem private, imbued with exuberance, enjoyment and a complicity involving overt homosocial inflections. These details are akin to the loose texture of memories whose valence is emotional rather than factual. In another sequence, one is aware of the translucent quality of the tulle of the dresses that girls dancing in a bar wear as well as the contrived emphasis of their hand gestures during the performance of a routine dance. The grainy half-light of the sequence accentuates their sense of enclosure, as the camera moves from the chorus girl to the man watching them, suggesting a closed circuit of gazes within the frame and in relation to the intrusive act of filming itself. This accentuates the exploitative undercurrent of the images and the reality that the film documents. The spectacle alludes to abusive power relations that are sexual as well as colonial. The artists' remediation draws our attention to the forlorn expressions of the dancers, and to the smoky atmosphere of the bar. In contrast with the opening sequence, where the child runs confidently towards the camera suggesting familiarity, here commodification dominates the relation between the act of filming and that of watching (fig. 1). This is ever more evident since the artificiality of the movement of the young dancers is juxtaposed with the flowing motion of the long dark hair of women walking in a square and the ways in which it stands out against the whiteness of their robes in the sequence that follows. The women seem as identical as the gleaming metallic hair-bands pinned at the back of their heads. Fluidity denotes the scene, suggesting its allure, as if the anonymous filmmaker was captivated by street life and its continuous flow of movement, wanting to capture the animated feeling of the place and its relaxed vibrancy.



Figure 1 Yervant Gianinkian and Angela Ricci Lucchi, *Electric Fragment 2 – Viet-Nam, 2001*, film still, © Gianinkian and Ricci Lucchi

The sensory quality of the images is again mnemonic, and relies on the immanence of lived experience as movement and duration. The camera angles and the protraction of the scene are indicative of an intentionality in filming: one can infer the implied pleasure of the cameraman, the hybridity of a gaze that construes and is in turn shaped by the subject it films, whether through a chance encounter or in ordinary moments. Or perhaps we should say gazes. The French official appears in some of the sequences to be looking at the camera and by extension at us, raising the question, who is filming? Who is framing and construing the mnemonic landscape that is the film? A clue can be found in the circulation of desire implicit in the film footage, in particular in some close-ups of a Vietnamese young man who smiles at the film camera. Drawing on Sergei Eisenstein's remarks about the function of the close-up 'to signify, to confer meaning and to designate', Gilles Deleuze observes that 'the affection-image is the close-up, and the close-up is the face'.<sup>29</sup> It is this capacity of the close-up to signify and designate that suggests that the young Vietnamese man could be the other filmmaker, and that his gaze could also contribute to this visual memoir as an active agent in it (fig.2). The footage thus infers a different kind of presence through a shift in points of view and a mediation of experience, which together presuppose a rhizomatic circulation of images

and memories, a transference of perspectives and re-articulation of references within the frame.<sup>30</sup> The ‘other’ is no longer a definite denominator for interpretation, but rather a transitional referent that acquires relative and relational connotations within the film and the transcultural encounters that connote it.



*Figure 2 Yervant Gianinkian and Angela Ricci Lucchi, Electric Fragment 2 – Viet-Nam, 2001, film still, © Gianinkian and Ricci Lucchi*

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In this sense, the filmic trace opens an opaque zone where boundaries of what is filmed (and by extension of what one sees) are porous and oblique. From this zone we can interrogate the diverse emotions that, as these images suggest, varied from joy and friendliness to sadness and misery, as they were framed and recorded, and further question our own assumptions about the past and the ways it affects our own ways of seeing and making meaning. From this zone we can ask where we position ourselves in relation to these fragmentary memories, and also whether what we see betrays the assumptions or biases that inform our own ideas of ‘otherness’ in the present, thus foregrounding an interrogation of the ways in which the past continues to construe experience and its record.

By focusing on the optic features of the frame and almost excavating them in the process of remediation, Gianinkian and Ricci Lucchi, as Christa Blümlinger observes about their work, unwrap the archival footage to new forms of legibility by drawing attention to visual and demagogic features within the frame as evinced by the film apparatus.<sup>31</sup> The

artists, according to Blümlinger, excavate a ‘cartography of gestures and filmic movements’ that displays the undercurrent of contents and modes of production ‘of messages and desires’,<sup>32</sup> from which one can abstract emotion as a practice inherent to such cartography. They engage with the affective components of film itself, what we may refer to, in Avery Gordon’s utterance, as ‘a structure of feeling’ that mediates institutional histories and practices with the multifaceted experience of individuals.<sup>33</sup> Such structures are for Gordon ghostly since they are mostly repressed and forgotten in memory and history alike. Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi’s search for the traces of what has been dismissed or forgotten in the fissures and gaps of the archive exploits the malleability of the medium and its recording of duration to evince such structures in the remediation of archival film footage. Such a method exposes the ways in which the moving image encodes the affect of experience as presence and makes us aware of the impact that structures of feeling had and still have in shaping who we are. Such an approach contributes to historiography by providing a framework for rethinking the moving image as an archival trace since it actively engages with the question of its significance, opening up a broader consideration of what the medium affords to history and its relation to memory.

In her analysis of the problems of representation inherent in the historical reading of archival film footage, Jaimie Baron draws on historian Eelco Runia’s understanding of the trope of metonymy in historical narrative as ‘transfer of presence’ to account for the filmic archival trace.<sup>34</sup> Rather than a metaphor which implies ‘transfer of meaning’, the metonym points to the gaps within established narratives and the archive itself, implying the ghostly structures of feeling that emanate from these fissures.<sup>35</sup> According to Baron, archival film footage in general, and found or discarded footage in particular, acts as a metonym. As she puts it, a ‘metonym [is] a partial and “out of place” representation, an associate trace of a past moment. Rather than offering us “meaning”, film archival footage allows for a transfer of and



an affective sense of presence of history'.<sup>36</sup> The affective presence to which Baron refers is both idiosyncratic and rooted in established cultural practices that betray modes of conveying experience pertaining, in Walter Benjamin's sense, 'to the organization of sensory perception', and by extension to individual and collective conscious and unconscious articulations of memory, desire and the imagination.<sup>37</sup> As Runia suggests, the metonym operates with what is implicit in culture and 'cannot be represented' because it is so deeply ingrained as common knowledge so as not to constitute knowledge any longer.<sup>38</sup> By way of substitution of one word with another, the metonym does not erase the missing word but rather points towards the conspicuousness of its absence and enables us to 'make contact with a different level of reality than is vouchsafed by the words in which the text consists'.<sup>39</sup> In this sense the lost indexical traces of the moving image infer embedded constructions of sensory experience and of their emotional inflections through the gestures, expressions and atmospheres as seen and framed by those who were partaking of the moment and imbued the images with their own desires, biases or aspirations. Archival film footage thus expands the dispersal of experience and knowledge that, according to Lauren Berlant, constitutes the realm of the 'social' by enabling the transfer of 'lost' presence as the affective trace of lived experience from one dimension to another.<sup>40</sup> As viewers, we virtually become part of this realm of the social and of its exchanges as the immanence of the past unreels in front of our eyes, calling into question our own gaze and responses. In the process of watching, the social realm of the past intersects with the present through a layering of other images, sensations and emotions: the absences and gaps of the projected film are filled with diffuse connections that pertain not only to a reading of the past but also to its resonances in the present.

The remediation of the historical footage that sits at the margin of the archive can thus destabilize straightforward assumptions about the past and its images through the replication and projection of the temporalities that are the present-past of the images themselves. As the

duration of the moving image exists at the junction of capturing the fleeting presence of a moment past and its endless repeatability in the present, the presence of the past with its forgotten features is returned to us as a displaced double that mobilizes our own knowledge and feeling as spectators, generating resonances that are bound to our own contingency, if not to uncanny familiarities of apparently estranged and estranging images. By untangling the particulars of the structures of feeling that, in the case of *Electric Fragments*, govern the representation of the other in the twentieth century, the archival filmic trace acts as a mirror to one's own time: it shows us the figments of figures, gestures and expressions that are other than ourselves and yet disquietingly close to us, since they erode the margins of difference on which we construe the otherness of the past itself. It is this double exposure of the forgotten forms of the past that renders them viable for an understanding of the present, opening up potential new perspectives through an activation of both memory and the imagination.

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Extending Runia's analysis, the transfer of presence that ensues from the moving image works on a level of memory and of its relation to what Giambattista Vico calls *inventio*. According to Vico, 'invention' is an aspect of memory in which what is remembered is given 'a new turn' or put 'into proper arrangement and relationship'.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, Runia suggests, 'it is only by reclaiming what we have forgotten, by allowing the presence of the past to take possession of us, that we start to go forward in an unimaginable way'.<sup>42</sup> The emergence of what is liminal to both the archive and memory is seen as bridging the past and the future through the *re-presentation* of what is forgotten: indeed, as Jacques Derrida states, without the spectral element intrinsic to the archive – and the possibilities that it implies – 'there would be neither history, nor tradition nor culture'.<sup>43</sup> According to Derrida,

the technical structure of the *archiving* archive also determines the structure of the *archivable* content even in its very coming into existence and its relationship to the

future. The archivization produces as much as it records the event. This is also our political experience of the so-called new media.<sup>44</sup>

The moving image, as suggested, adds to the archive the ephemeral and evanescent qualities of emotion. The brittle images that the filmic trace returns to us are thus both moving and in movement across places and times and, if pierced through, they are able to uncover structures of perception and representation of the past that can make claims in the present. They evoke the complex emotional patterns that fuelled early-twentieth-century constructions of the other and ourselves from both afar and within. This creates a new experience of the past but also of the present in the circulation and interconnection of temporal and spatial planes, gazes and exposures. *Electric Fragments* testifies to such a circulation, reminding us that aesthetic analysis can foreground productive reflections on images of the past by activating loose and forgotten traces and involving us as spectators in the process of *re-presentation*. Far from stable, this involvement can only be productive if it is also an engagement on our part, as viewers, to recognize the particulars, detect the clues, feel the affect of the past. If the archival filmic trace works on a level of memory in relation to history, then its significance is in offering a means to reflect on the contingency of the past and its forgotten structures of feeling, which continue to affect us in the present.

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<sup>1</sup> Siegfried Kracauer, *History: The Last Thing Before the Last* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 3.

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<sup>2</sup> Jean-Louis Comolli, 'Le Miroir A Deux Faces', in Jean-Louis Comolli and Jacques Rancière, *Arrêt sur Histoire* (Paris: Editions de Centre Pompidou, 1997), pp. 11-45 (13-14), my translation.

<sup>3</sup> Mary-Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 82. See also Thomas Elsaesser, *Film History as Media Archaeology – Tracing Digital Cinema* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), pp. 331-46.

<sup>4</sup> Elsaesser, *Film History*, pp. 221-2. Drawing on Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytical theory, Friedrich Kittler remarks that the novelty of film (or cinematograph) was the ability of storing time in image sequences; in turn, time 'is what determines the limit of the art. [... T]he time of this writing is symbolic (in Lacan's terms). This time memorizes itself in terms of projections and retrievals – like a chain of chains'; Kittler, 'Gramophone, Film, Typewriter', Dorothea von Mücke and Philippe L. Simolon (transl.), *October*, 41 (1987), pp. 101-18 (104). See also Friedrich A. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, Geoffrey Winthrop and Michael Wutz (transl.) (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999); Thomas Elsaesser, 'Freud and the Technical Media: The Enduring Magic of the *Wunderblock*', in Erkki Huhtamo and Jussi Parikka (eds), *Media Archaeology: Approaches, Applications, and Implications* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), pp. 95-115.

<sup>5</sup> Sven Spieker, *The Big Archive: Art from Bureaucracy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), p. 144; see also Charles Merewether, *The Archive, Documents of Contemporary Art* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press and Whitechapel Gallery, 2006); Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time*, p. 65.

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<sup>7</sup> Jaimie Baron, *The Archive Effect: Found Footage and the Audiovisual Experience of History* (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Carlo Ginzburg, 'Introduction', in *Threads and Traces: True, False, Fictive*, Anne C. Tedeschi and John Tedeschi (transl.) (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012), pp. 1-6 (4).

<sup>9</sup> See Baron, *The Archive Effect* for an extensive discussion of remediated and compilation films. See also Caterina Albano, *Memory, Forgetting and the Moving Image* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 145-93; Jeffrey Skoller, *Shadows, Specters, Shards: Making History in the Avant-garde Film* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Rob Yeo, 'Cutting through History: Found Footage in Avant-garde Filmmaking', in Stefano Basilico (ed.), *Cut Film: Film as Found Object in Contemporary Video* (Milwaukee, WI: Milwaukee Art Museum, 2005).

<sup>10</sup> Dominick LaCapra, *History in Transit: Experience, Identity, Critical Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), p. 24.

<sup>11</sup> Brian Massumi, 'Preface', in *Politics of Affect* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), pp. viii-xi.

<sup>12</sup> Enzo Traverso, *Le passé: modes d'emploi. Histoire, mémoire, politique* (Paris: La fabrique éditions, 2005), p. 26.

<sup>13</sup> Monique Scheer, 'Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and Is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuan Approach to Understanding Emotion', *History and Theory* 51:2 (2012), pp. 193-220.

<sup>14</sup> Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi, *Electric Fragments* (2001-2005), video work.

<sup>15</sup> See Robert Lumley, *Entering the Frame: Cinema and History in the Films of Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2011); Albano, *Memory, Forgetting and the Moving Image*, pp. 161-72.

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<sup>16</sup> Siefried Kracauer, 'Photography', in Thomas Y. Levin (ed. and transl.), *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 47-63 (55).

<sup>17</sup> Mark Nash, 'Experiments with Truth: The Documentary Turn', in Mark Nash in collaboration with David Scofidio (ed.), *Experiments with Truth*, exhibition catalogue (Philadelphia: Fabric Workshop and Museum), pp. 15-21 (17-18); Lumley, *Entering the Frame*, pp. 119-21. The exhibition *Experiments with Truth* also included *New Caledonia* (2004), which focuses on the colonial legacy of France and the South Pacific.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Lumley, *Entering the Frame*, p. 119.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>21</sup> Arine Kirstein Høgel, 'Re-routing the Image: The Use of Haptic Interventions in Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi's Work', in *Found Footage Magazine*, 3 (March 2017), pp. 38-44; The 'pensive image', also quoted in Høgel, is denoted by 'the circulation between the subject, the photographer, of the intentional and unintentional, the location and the known and the unknown, the expressed and unexpressed, the present and the past'. Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, Gregory Elliott (trans.) (London: Verso, 2009), p. 115.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>23</sup> Kracauer, *History*, p. 216.

<sup>24</sup> Eelco Runia, *Moved by the Past: Discontinuity and Historical Mutation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), pp. 144-57 (147-8).

<sup>25</sup> Carlo Ginsburg, 'Preface to 2013 edition', in *Clues, Myths and the Historical Method*, John and Anne C. Tedeschi (transl.) (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2013), pp. vii-xiii. For a discussion of remediation and memory see Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, 'Introduction: Cultural Memory and its Dynamics', in Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (ed.) *Mediation*,

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*Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2009), pp. 1-11; Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture*, Sara B. Young (transl.) (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), pp. 140-43.

<sup>26</sup> Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, Leon Roudiez (transl.) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 181.

<sup>27</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny', in James Strachey (ed. and transl.), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works by Sigmund Freud*, vol. XVII (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis: 1985 [1919]), pp. 219-56 (225).

<sup>28</sup> Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi, *Electric Fragments – 2 Vietnam* (2001), inter-title.

<sup>29</sup> Sergei Eisenstein, 'Dickens, Griffith and the Film Today', in Jay Leyda (ed. and transl.), *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1963 [1929]), pp. 195-255 (238); Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Moving Image*, Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (transl.) (London: Athlone Press, 1986), p. 87.

<sup>30</sup> See Astrid Erll, 'Travelling Memory', *Parallax*, 17:4 (2011), pp. 4-18; Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); Michael Rothberg, 'Introduction: Between Memory and Memory: From Lieux de Mémoire to Noeuds de Mémoire', in Michael Rothberg, Debarati Sanyal and Max Silverman (eds), *Noeuds de mémoire: Multidirectional Memory in Postwar French and Francophone Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 3-12; Lucy Bond and Jessica Rapson (eds), *The Transcultural Turn: Interrogating Memory between the Borders* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014).

<sup>31</sup> Christa Blümlinger, 'Cartografia dei gesti', in Andrea Lissoni and Chiara Bertola (eds), *Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi: Non Non Non*, Quaderno Hangar Bicocca n. 1 exhibition catalogue (Milano: Hangar Bicocca, 2012), pp. 31-33 (32).

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 32, my translation.

<sup>33</sup> Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), p. 18.

<sup>34</sup> Baron, *The Archive Effect*, p. 123. Eelco Runia, 'Presence', *History and Theory*, 45:1 (2006), pp. 1-29 (17-19).

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>37</sup> Miriam Bratu Hansen, *Cinema and Experience: Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012), pp. xvii, 79.

<sup>38</sup> Runia, *Moved by the Past*, p. 147.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 152.

<sup>40</sup> Lauren Berlant, 'Thinking about Feeling Historical', *Emotion, Space and Society*, 1 (2008), pp. 4-9.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Runia, *Moved by the Past*, p. 156.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 156.

<sup>43</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, Eric Prenowitz (transl.) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 61, 67.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 17.