

ARTICLE

Reflections on the
New Dimensions in Testimony
Project
PAST PRESENT AND
BROAD PRESENT

SABRINA COSTA BRAGA
Universidade Federal de Goiás
Goiânia | Goiás | Brazil
sabinacostabraga94@gmail.com
orcid.org/0000-0001-9164-7560

The *New Dimensions in Testimony* project integrates advanced filming and voice recognition techniques to present the possibility of interacting, in natural language, with the hologram of a Holocaust survivor who may no longer be alive. This article is an attempt to organize reflections around the initial estrangement caused by the contact with the holograms. For this, I mobilize notions such as of presence, broad present and presentism in order to think of holograms as a temporally non-belonging element, an excess of both past and present.

Holograms – Presence – Broad Present – Presentism

ARTIGO

Reflexões sobre o Projeto
New Dimensions In Testimony
PASSADO PRESENTE E
PRESENTE AMPLIADO

SABRINA COSTA BRAGA
Universidade Federal de Goiás
Goiânia | Goiás | Brazil
sabinacostabraga94@gmail.com
orcid.org/0000-0001-9164-7560

O projeto *New Dimensions in Testimony* integrou técnicas avançadas de filmagem e reconhecimento de voz a fim de apresentar a possibilidade de interação, em linguagem natural, com o holograma de um sobrevivente do Holocausto que pode não estar mais vivo. Este artigo é uma tentativa de organização de reflexões em torno do estranhamento inicial causado pelo contato com o projeto. Para isso, mobilizo as noções de presença, presente amplo e presentismo para pensar os hologramas como um elemento temporalmente não pertencente, um excesso tanto de passado quanto de presente.

Hologramas – Presença – Presente amplo – Presentismo

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: HISTORY? MEMORY?

More than two decades ago, Dominick LaCapra (1998, 12) had already noted that the growing interest in the Shoah testimonies was due to the advanced age of the survivors and the feeling that “living memory” would soon become a thing of the past. Especially since the Eichmann Trial, as I have argued (Braga 2022, 65-77), the testimonies of survivors emerged as a privileged way to apprehend the unimaginable content of the traumatic past. Memory began to occupy an increasingly broad space in historiography, but also in parallel with it — with regard to the place of catastrophe in the public sphere and the formation of national identities in the post-war period. The *USC Shoah Foundation* (formerly called *Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation*) was conceived by Steven Spielberg after the filming of *Schindler's List* (1993) with the aim of collecting as many survivor stories as possible. The Institute currently has more than 55.000 video testimonials in 43 different languages with an average duration of two hours each. When commenting on the foundation's massive undertaking, François Hartog (2011, 207-208) drew attention to the fact that this attribution of pedagogical value to memory leads it to go from the witness to the spectator without the intermediary of the historian in an attempt to make the reality of a past present through the mediation of the virtual.

A few years after Hartog's comment, the *USC Shoah Foundation* launched a new project applying digital technologies with the purpose of contributing to the Holocaust learning process through the possibility of interaction. Possibly the most incisive answer to what to do when there are no more survivors, *New Dimensions in Testimony* is a holographic project that integrates advanced filmmaking techniques and speech recognition software to create what has been called an “interactive biography”. For this interaction to happen, testimonies of survivors are recorded in a green fabric room surrounded by cameras and adequate lighting to capture a 3D image. Anita Lasker Wallfisch, one of the survivors participating in the project, answered 1250 questions in five days of recording in order to compose these later conversations in natural language with a holographic display that did not require the use of 3D glasses. According to Stephen Smith (2014), director of the foundation, *New Dimensions in Testimony* “has irreversibly changed oral history”.



Figure 1: Interview with Anita Lasker Wallfisch for the project *New Dimensions in Testimony*
Source: USC Shoah Foundation. Accessed at: <https://sfi.usc.edu/news/2015/09/10073-anita-lasker-wallfisch-records-interview-new-dimensions-testimony>



Figure 2: Talk with the hologram of Pinchas Gutter
Source: USC Shoah Foundation. Accessed at: https://ict.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/New-Dimensions-in-Testimony_Overview.pdf

I wonder, however, whether such a project can, in fact, be taken as history. If so, history would be a kind of repetition of the past in the present, rather than a narrative about the past — inevitably permeated by present issues. So, would interactive biography in the form of a hologram come instead closer to memory? The testimonies of survivors are certainly an act of memory, specifically of a traumatic memory whose manifestation is diverse and in its own temporality. Memory is alive. This statement can be clarified with testimonies recorded by the *USC Shoah Foundation* with survivors at different times in their

lives¹: even if the same questions are asked, over the years the answers will be different. This is because gaps will be filled in by imagination, because the testimonies will be informed by other testimonies or by new discoveries about the different aspects of the Shoah, and also because people end up giving an account of contemporary issues even when dealing with a past that is increasingly further away. Aleida Assmann (2011, 115-117) uses the Freudian notion of *Nachträglichkeit* to point out that, in memory, there is an irrecoverable loss and a supplementary recreation, that is, perceptions are interpreted only in the act of remembering, which is not reconstitution but rewrite. If memory poses questions for history precisely because it refers to problems that are still alive — a past that has not passed —, as LaCapra (1998) argues, the interaction with a person who no longer lives would not short-circuit this logic?

Anyone can talk in English to a Holocaust survivor on the computer at home. In this case, there will not be a hologram *per se*, as in the *Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center*, but an image on a neutral background that answers questions from the voice recognition or transcription feature. There is, on the website of the *USC Shoah Foundation*, a brief biography of each of the survivors available in the project, as well as guidelines that indicate how the interaction should be conducted. Indications range from the general “ask meaningful questions” to orientations to make sure the microphone is on. I chose to interact with the representation of Max Eisen, an Auschwitz survivor who lost his entire family in the *Lager* and, in 2014, testified at the trial of the ninety-year-old former SS member Reinhold Hanning. My initial feeling was one of discomfort, as if I were somehow disrespecting that person by talking to the hologram in such a careless way, aiming not to know more about its history, but to test and judge the technology that placed him before me. The range of questions that can be answered accurately is astonishing, but not to the point of making it look like a real conversation: often the answers are exhaustingly long; it is not possible to refer to a previously asked question; questions often need to be reformulated; and as the operation takes place from keywords, a specific question can receive a very general answer, or one that does not actually answer it. For example, if the word “food” is mentioned, it will be recognized and the answer given will be about food in concentration camps, even if that was not the question. What I concluded is that holograms do answer questions, but those questions are not necessarily ours. Eisen passed away in July of this year, an information I already had before the interaction. At a certain point, I asked something I knew could not be answered: I asked if he was still alive (*are you still alive?*) to which he replied as if I had asked how he managed to survive (*how are you still alive?*).

¹ For example, the inaugural participant of the *New Dimensions in Testimony* project, Pinchas Gutter, was previously recorded in 1995 (two hours), in 2014 to be transformed into a hologram, and again in 2017 (three hours).

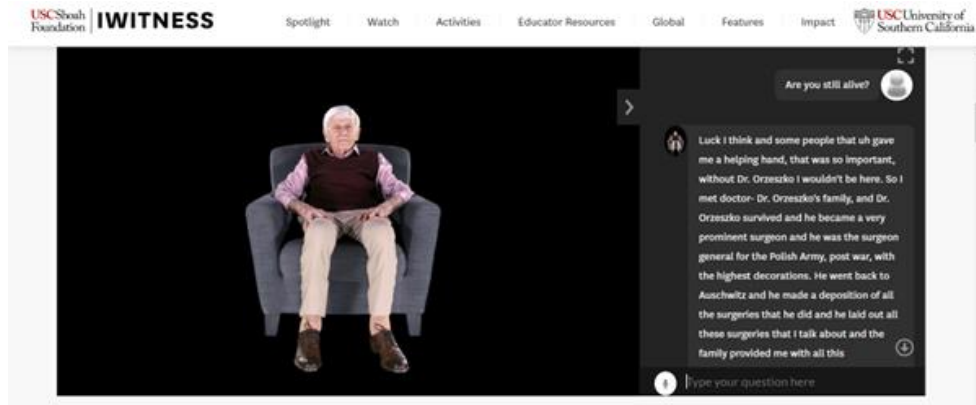


Figure 3: Talk with Max Eisen
 Source: USC Shoah Foundation. Accessed at:
<https://iwtiness.usc.edu/dit/maxeisen#haveaconversation>

If the intention was, in fact, to make present the reality of a past through the virtual, the result of the project does not come closer to memory than any other type of testimony. On the contrary, while previously recorded testimonies – including those from the *USC Shoah Foundation* itself – were intended to document the story of the survivors in a way that left them free to speak for themselves, the recording for the holographic project was subordinated to many more technical issues. In April of this year, during the INTH Conference (*International Network for Theory of History*) held in Puebla, Lars Deile pointed to the problem of authorship raised from the holograms. After all, the answers must be formulated in a way that involves the simulated impression of authenticity and immediacy, which would make the true authors of these stories, their witnesses, invisible. Are we, then, facing a change in what has been called “the era of the witness” (Wieviorka 2006) — characterized by the enlargement of the place of testimony, its departure from the archive to the media? A change that presupposes not the silence of the latency moment that preceded the 1970s, but an erasure by the deliberate use of the image and representation of a survivor who does not have much time to live?

For Deile, the issue of authorship violates fundamental principles of the historical profession and, to illustrate this statement, he resorts to Benjamin’s first thesis (2012, 9) on history: the automaton built in such a way that a puppet seems to be able to win all chess games, but that is actually controlled by a hunchbacked dwarf. An apparent history that conceals their philosophical presumptions and ideological interests is far from a new or unique problem exclusive of holograms. Still, holograms, in particular, are exemplary of how the urgency of technological development anticipates the historian’s mediation while failing to prevent the end of living memory. The survivor is converted into a controlled puppet. But in the service of what?

PRESENTISM AND BROAD PRESENT
a case of temporal occupation

Hartog's book, released in 2003, on regimes of historicity proved to be capable of providing a vocabulary and categories of great impact. The work received a lot of attention and also a lot of criticism. Hartog (2013) presents a hypothesis (that of presentism) and an instrument (the regime of historicity). In a recently published book chapter, Hartog (2022) reaffirms that the diagnosis of the present moment as presentism² was the result of the necessary distance taken to compare the present and the past, focusing on moments of crisis. What he claims, therefore, is that we have moved from a configuration in which the future was the dominant category to a new one that delegates that role to the present. While the 19th century was largely futuristic, placing the notions of progress, acceleration and modernization at the forefront, the Second World War established a crisis in the future that was unveiled later, from the 1970s onwards. The urgency with which new technologies are developed multiplies the possibilities of exploring what is convenient to call "real time" and, therefore, it becomes increasingly necessary to be more and more in tune with time itself and to live in this time: a present time that fades away in the moment while expanding in the directions of the past and the future (Hartog 2022, 17-18).

Runia (2006) attributes to what he calls "need for presence" the expansion of the place of memory in historical studies, the clamor for the duty to remember, and the increase in the number of museums and other commemorative spaces. On the other hand, Hartog (2022, 18) puts it on the account of presentism. Presentism abandons history in favor of an instrumentalized and monumentalized memory, extending the present towards the past by evoking specific moments of that past, when the only opening to the future indicates, rather, a reiteration: "never again". In opposition to the history of the winners, memory made room for the forgotten, the victims. For him, facing a "past that does not pass" is also a way of facing a cannibal present. To refer to the past of the great catastrophes of humanity, in particular the Shoah, as "the past that does not pass" is to make a dangerous reference to which Rousso also resorted. For Rousso (2016, 221-222), the past that does not pass is the bearer of a unique regime of historicity capable of making us artificially contemporary with the sufferings inflicted on an entire collectivity in a way that recaptures an old debate between the supporters of memory and supporters of the oblivion, privileging the former. After all, the event (genocide) is insurmountable. In another moment, Rousso (2020, 71-78) places the Shoah — the landmark of the worst thing that has been committed in recent history in Europe — as a marker of this European identity. For that, he applies the concept of negative memory. A negative memory encompasses European national memory as constructed on the surface of its tragedies and marks memory's shift from patriotic to victimhood. The question is to what extent this negative

² Presentism as a diagnosis and concept takes on different meanings that will not be deepened in this article, but which can be observed, for example, in the recent controversy generated by a very poorly received essay by the president of the *American Historical Association*, James H. Sweet. The essay entitled *Is History History? Identity Politics and Teleologies of the Present* was the subject of numerous criticisms on social media, received comments in response from historians such as Joan Scott, responses from other historian associations, and ended up having an apology from Sweet attached to the original publication.

memory can and should be imposed, how the homage to the victims and the hunt for those responsible can offer some horizon for the new generations.

Rousso referred to Ernst Nolte to address an allegedly harmful memory glut. Within what later became known as *Historikerstreit*, Nolte published, in 1986, an article entitled *Vergangenheit, die nicht vergeben will* (“the past that does not want to pass”) in which, resorting to a revisionist strategy, he relativizes Nazi crimes by transferring the focus to the idea of the struggle of the West against Bolshevism. In this perspective, Auschwitz would be a derivation of the gulags, a reaction, and the Shoah would be a past that condemns the present and tries to take its place. The intention is not to accuse Rousso of relativizing Nazi crimes as Nolte did, but to emphasize that there are also risks in the argument that tries to make a past pass. After all, the traumatic past can, in fact, be a past that does not pass and that one desires to make it pass, but there is no present or future that supports a repressed past. The traumatic past is not a past to be outraged but faced (and worked through). Would holograms be, then, a symptom of that past that does not pass or another attempt to work through the trauma? It is possible to see it from this angle and it is also possible to rule out both options, since, when using technology to create an emotional connection, a repetition is created, but not a repetition in Freudian terms. The repetition that Freud dealt with presupposes a change, both in the form and in the moment of the irruption of the past into the present, while the hologram is constituted as a simulation (as will be argued) even if compared to the undesirable compulsion to repeat, since it is a duplication. Likewise, working-through is a creation, a work defined as a painful and exhausting effort to overcome resistance and release repetitive mechanisms (Freud 2010, 155) that does not, however, take a definitive format. When dealing with digital archives such as the *Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media*, Silveira (2018) argues that the dependence on trauma to conceptualize contemporary historical events makes these archives function as memorials. These memorials relate not to the future, transition or change, but to the present and permanence. The main operator of presentism, according to Hartog (2022, 22), is precisely the digital condition that induces and causes rapid changes in society. This digital condition is determined by a time so short (measured in nanoseconds) that almost disappears and a time so long that escapes representation. The same type of presentism criticized by Hartog and Gumbrecht is retaken by Deile (2022) to point to a kind of temporal occupation characteristic of the desire to occupy voices from the past as memory: we conquer past and present in order to expand our presence, which does not seem enough to us. Increasingly, presentism devours everything according to its rules, limiting the exploitation of the past to the needs of the present (Deile 2022, 60). What he proposes is an “offensive presentism”, a positive occupation of the limits of the present that would not mean an ever-widening present, but a suspension of expansion towards the past and the future and a “permission” for the past to pass by. After all, from this perspective, many forms of memory and commemoration are nothing more than a sanctioned form of invasion that leads people to the illusion that they have learned something from it (Deile 2022, 63). The quest is to give meaning to existence at a time marked by a broad present, of expanding simultaneities (Gumbrecht 2004, 129). Gumbrecht introduces the chronotope of globalized life in the 21st century as something not yet named, but taken by a broad present that is characterized, among other things, by turning thinking and circulating of knowledge synonymous: there is no reason or way to

stop. This broad present raises a special desire for presence (Gumbrecht 2004, 141).

In the wake of presentism, updatism (Araújo; Pereira 2019) also presents itself as an alternative to the modern regime of historicity. Updatism, however, has its emphasis on experiences engendered in digital environments. In this context of speed and acceleration of everyday and cultural processes, the present becomes even more the determinant of the other temporal dimensions: past and future are no more than functions of the present, either by the consumption of memory that ends up taking the form of a displaced product in relation to the past, or by the unbridled consumption of novelties that obstruct the horizon of a true future. Here, future and past are constantly updated in a digitally mediated present. It is in this digital universe that complex simultaneities predominate, so that updatism can be experienced as the conviction that reality can be reproduced. It is by exemplifying a case of loss of digital files that the authors apprehend despair, a “catastrophic loss of hope” in the face of the possibility that “in times of total availability, something could simply disappear” (Araújo; Pereira 2019, 69). Survivors are not simply an archive, but bearers of unique and specific stories and lessons that, like everything else, can disappear. One has to question whether the technological solution can, in fact, offer an alternative to the consequent oblivion of death, after all, technology itself is subject to obsolescence. Technologies are designed so that they will inevitably become incompatible with format updates. Thus, perhaps the only way to preserve and inform about such a historic catastrophe is to reflect on the limitations of transmitting a traumatic memory and, once again, on the limits of representation even in the face of new possibilities.

PRESENCE

the real and the simulated

Gualeni (2015, 43-44) defines simulation as a type of possible digital experience that overcomes the cognitive and interactive limitations inherent to human beings. Simulations are not necessarily related to what is commonly called the “real world”, as experiences in alternative virtual worlds. They can also be used as training technologies, allowing professionals to gain experience without causing harm to other people or equipment. Simulations can enact circumstances that could happen but are no longer possible, such as a conversation with a Holocaust survivor. Regardless of the objective, these first-person simulations explored in new media possibilities aim at the authenticity of an affective experience. Agnew (2022, 263-264) called “digital reenactment” attempts to provide experiences in which people would acquire historical knowledge by (re)experiencing the past, which is based on the idea that the present experience has a metonymic relationship with the past. The reenactment starts from a claim of knowledge based on what can be seen and would work, in this sense, as a temporal parallel not exempt from problems of evidence or interpretation.

Whether understood as digital simulations or digital reconstitutions, it becomes clear that there is a necessary connection between holograms and reality. Unlike other types of simulation, such as some video games, holograms do not seek to enable living in an alternative world, but to temporarily expand a possibility of this world. Gualeni (2015, 53) distinguishes the definitions of worlds and reality, so that it is possible to speak of virtual worlds, but not without questioning the characterization of what is real beyond that which has some “ontological stability” and beyond the description of reality simply as something that is physically present. Returning to Heidegger, the author recalls that the reality recognized by humans as ontologically present is subject to our limitations and does not correspond to the full spectrum of what is real. He proposes reality as an indication of the most basic level of existence, the fundamental background for the perception of phenomena and the development of ontologies. This would allow worlds indexed as real (actual worlds) to be categorized in ontological structures and not simply recognized as potential or possible, enabling the definition of reality as what is immediate (Gualeni 2015, 54).

Kleinberg (2013) calls the use of the notion of presence as a tendency in the philosophy of history a theoretical paradigm. As a theoretical tool, presence serves to understand the ways in which the past literally meets the present in a meaningful and material way. According to Gumbrecht (2015, 9), although our daily and academic attention is focused on interpretation and meaning, the dimension of presence appears as a stubborn insistence. By presence, he meant that which touches us, which has substance. Runia (2006) called the presence of the past as what does not reside in the intended history or metaphorical content of the text, but the way in which the past is present in the present despite the historian’s intentions, transforming itself into a phenomenon as important as that of the meaning in history. What Runia (2006, 26) called the “need for presence” presupposes the search for contact with the reality that is behind the impulse of all forms of commemoration and that does not necessarily seek to stop and preserve time. It arises, however, when there is an urgency to reestablish contact in the face of the imminence of the end of something’s existence. He goes so far as to attribute to this need for presence the boom in studies on memory that preceded the launch of *Les Lieux de Mémoire* (1984) by Pierre Nora. Such a need is a symptom of the determination to explain the problem of continuity and discontinuity in history, or how the past, irretrievably gone, can seem more real than our present (Runia 2006, 3-5). Metonymy serves, then, as an adequate tool to deal with the question of discontinuity and the need for presence, functioning as the trope of presence in absence, a “metaphor for the intertwining of continuity and discontinuity” (Runia 2006, 6)³.

Kleinberg (2013, 10-13) understands the criticism by Gumbrecht, Ankersmit and Runia, among others, of authors integrated into the so-called linguistic turn as a kind of return of the real, going from language to experience in response to a supposed alienation of the past as a consequence of the “culture of interpretation” (Gumbrecht 2004, 7) or the “heyday of metahistoriography” (Runia 2006, 3). This return requires moving away from the infinite interpretations made possible by theory towards a way of relating to the past based on contact, that is, on unmediated access to what one can feel or touch. The paradigm of presence would therefore shape a rejection of the domain of language, an attempt to bring together meaning and reality in a connection

³ Runia considers all historiography essentially metonymic, unlike Hayden White who, according to him, makes an unjustified reduction of the concept (Runia 2006, 29).

focused on materiality and not on textuality. The rise of presence as a historical category can be associated with a desire to keep the past in the present, taking history as an ongoing process while moving away from the notion of a constructed past towards a past that actually exists (Kleinberg 2013, 12). In this way, the desire for presence can be seen as a search for stability. For Runia (2003, 5), what manifests itself in the propensity for commemorations, in memorials, in monuments, in the fascination with memory in general, is not even the search for a meaning, but the desire for presence, to be in contact with the reality (of the past).

Runia (2006, 8) makes a curious parallel between his defense of the attempt to bring the past into the present and the way in which Freud began to approach the past of his patients. Freud, he argues, turned to a radical presentism by stopping addressing the past and exploring symptoms and transference in the psychoanalytic encounter. This change of focus, from the past to the present, would show how it is possible not to start with history and, even so, to culminate in it through aspects of the present that cannot be unveiled without turning to the past. The comparison is interesting as it shows that the past does not simply pass, but returns and shows itself in the present — especially in the case of a traumatic past. There is a past that cannot be remembered at the same time that it cannot be forgotten, therefore, it manifests itself in various ways in the psychoanalytic process. If we consider the past-present relationship in psychoanalysis, however, a presence of the past can be associated much more with the moment of repetition than with the moment of working-through. An experience of a traumatic event, for example, is too absurd a stimulus to be apprehended by the available symbolic mechanisms, that is, there is an impediment to the immediate working-through of an event (Freud 2014, 299), generating a pattern of persistent suffering that can be noticed mainly in dreams and repetitions (reenactments). At the time of treatment, the same symptoms that led the patient to seek help are repeated. It does not expose a new fact, but an old condition that is not simply a “historical matter”, but something current and real, on which it is possible to act through a “return to the past”. The role of the psychoanalyst, in this context, is to make resistance conscious so that the patient can finally fill in the gaps in memory and stop repeating (Freud 2010, 148). The point of estrangement is precisely this: working-through (*Durcharbeitung*) is a form of production of meaning that takes place from the intersection between past and present — since the first step is the awareness of the presence of this past —, but which allows the end of the repetition. Something new is produced that waives the insurgency of that past in the form of a symptom. This production necessarily passes through language. Working-through is a work that requires listening and narration, remembering and transformation.

According to Runia (2014, 126), it is the degree of discontinuity, not the extent of destruction and death, that makes an event traumatic. Thinking of a traumatic event as an event that emerges in disagreement with the world (or the view of this world) from which it derives is closer to the Freudian view of trauma and the reading of historians (such as Saul Friedländer or Dominick LaCapra) who adopted psychoanalytic concepts to deal with the great catastrophes of the 20th century, especially the Shoah. The focus on representation, however, is not well received by Runia (2006, 3) who considers that the debate ends up focusing on words and not on horrors, which would do little to come to terms with a traumatic event, that is, to establish a worldview in which it ceases to be

impossible (Runia 2014, 126). These traumatic events — included in what Runia called sublime events (unpredictable and unimaginable) — generate in us the desire to celebrate, to visit places where everything happened even if we have no personal connection with these events and places. Following his argument, memory is not a distinct approach to history, but commemoration is. When the objective of assimilating the meaning of the past is no longer enough, it is necessary to feel its presence.

These sublime events, performed by people, raise questions about who we are, the beings capable of committing such acts. One of Runia's theses (2014, 9) in relation to commemoration is that the more we celebrate "what we did", the more we become people who did not do it. It is possible to think of testimonies in the form of holograms as a face of this need for presence and in opposition to the search for meaning, for understanding what happened. In addition, the project *New Dimensions in Testimony* has a didactic objective: a complete educational material is made available to teachers indicating how to use holograms in the classroom, which means that, in theory, holograms unite the search for the meaning of the past with the need for real contact with that past. The purposes seem, at first, to be found in the old dictum that Auschwitz must not be repeated. Holograms, however, are not a real past that returns or has not passed, but a present simulation in the form of repetition. They can, in fact, stem from a need for presence, from the desire to commemorate a sublime event, but they can also be the very attempt to insert that past into the present. Holograms appear as an educational opportunity, they exist with a clear and pre-established function of ensuring that the suffering tolerated by survivors is not forgotten by generations not contemporary with these survivors and therefore resort to simulation to generate an affective response supposedly more effective than a 2D movie with no possibility of interaction. As Kleinberg notes, presence, as conceived by thinkers such as Runia, Ankersmit, Gumbrecht and Domanska, is focused on the material present, so that presence is always defining absence and never the other way around. Unlike the ahistorical temporality of an analytical setting, where the past manifests itself in the present as an unconscious reenactment, with holograms the past is transposed into the present no matter how much the affects mobilized in the interaction become real.

CONCLUSION

This article is a first draft of an argument in response to a number of necessary reflections that my recent contact with survivor holograms has elicited. The *New Dimensions in Testimony* project undoubtedly raises ethical questions to which I cannot venture an answer yet, but also questions regarding its categorization within the limits of history and its usefulness as a tool for education. Whether in terms of a presence of the past in the present, an invasion of the present in the past, or a new "contemporaneity of the noncontemporaneous", holograms configure an excess. They are certainly a very sophisticated technological resource that seems, however, to owe their existence more to possibility than to necessity. It is now clear that it is possible to preserve a survivor's memories in a way that can be interacted with in the future, but it is debatable whether this new format generates an emotional reaction or a didactic possibility in anything superior to other forms of contact with testimonies.

On the *USC Shoah Foundation* website, a 2015 essay describes that of the hundreds of students and attendees of the *Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center* who participated in the pilot demonstration of the holograms, many reported the experience as engaging and powerful. They also reported that they felt more comfortable asking questions to the virtual Pinchas than to a real survivor (Anita... 2022). Now, would not such a statement debunk the alleged objective of making the past present through the virtual? Or even to generate a more empathetic response? Certainly, Gumbrecht and Runia did not have in mind the possibility of interacting with someone who survived the Holocaust but is no longer alive when they defended “presence”. Holograms are a kind of presence, as well as a result of the yearning for some presence when the historical narrative no longer seems to be enough. This search for presence can be attributed to the exhaustion of past possibilities in the face of a broad present. I highlight, however, not so much the origin or the cause, but the radicalization of the non-belonging of the past as a presence in holographic form. The stories told by holograms can be repeated, but never changed: the answers given will always be the same.

REFERENCES

- ANITA Lasker Wallfisch Records Interview for New Dimensions in Testimony. *USC Shoah Foundation*, 25 set. 2015. Disponível em: <https://sf.usc.edu/news/2015/09/10073-anita-lasker-wallfisch-records-interview-new-dimensions-testimony>. Accessed in: 14 set. 2022.
- AGNEW, Vanessa. Lines of sight: The historical certitude of digital reenactment. In: SIMON, Zoltán Boldizsár; DEILE, Lars (Ed). *Historical Understanding: Past, Present and Future*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022.
- ARAÚJO, Valdeí Lopes de; PEREIRA, Mateus Henrique de Faria. *Atualismo 1.0: como a ideia de atualização mudou o século XXI*. Vitória: Editora Milfontes, 2019.
- ASSMANN, Aleida. *Espaços da recordação: formas e transformações da memória cultural*. Tradução de Paulo Soethe. Campinas: Editora Unicamp, 2011.
- BENJAMIN, Walter. *O anjo da história*. Tradução de João Barrento. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2012.
- BRAGA, Sabrina Costa. *O paradigma da Shoah e a historiografia: memória e testemunho sob a ótica do trauma*. 2022. 175f. Tese (Doutorado em História) – Programa de Pós-Graduação em História, Universidade Federal de Goiás, Goiás, 2022.
- DEILE, Lars. Favoring an offensive presentism. In: SIMON, Zoltán Boldizsár; DEILE, Lars (Ed). *Historical Understanding: Past, Present and Future*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022.
- FREUD, Sigmund. *Conferências introdutórias à psicanálise (1916-1917)*. Obras completas. Tradução de Sérgio Tellaroli. v. 13. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2014.
- FREUD, Sigmund. *Observações psicanalíticas sobre um caso de paranoia relatado em autobiografia (“o caso Schreber”), Artigos sobre técnica e outros textos (1911-1913)*. Obras completas. Tradução de Paulo César de Souza. v. 10. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2010.
- GHOSH, Ranjan; KLEINBERG, Ethan (Ed). *Presence: Philosophy, History, and Cultural Theory for the Twenty-First Century*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013.
- GUALENI, Stefano. *Virtual Worlds as Philosophical Tools: How to Philosophize with a Digital Hammer*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- GUMBRECHT, Hans. *Depois de 1945: latência como origem do presente*. Tradução de Ana Isabel Soares. São Paulo, Editora da Unesp, 2014.

- GUMBRECHT, Hans. *Nosso amplo presente: o tempo e a cultura contemporânea*. Tradução de Na Isabel Soares. São Paulo: Editora Unesp, 2015.
- GUMBRECHT, Hans. *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004.
- HARTOG, François. *Evidência da História. O que os historiadores veem*. Tradução de Guilherme João de Freitas Teixeira. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2011.
- HARTOG, François. *Regimes de historicidade: presentismo e experiências do tempo*. Belo Horizonte: Editora Autêntica, 2013.
- HARTOG, François. The texture of the presente. In: SIMON, Zoltán Boldizsár; DEILE, Lars (Ed). *Historical Understanding: Past, Present and Future*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022.
- KLEINBERG, Ethan. Presence in Absentia. In: GHOSH, Ranjan; KLEINBERG, Ethan. *Presence: Philosophy, History, and Cultural Theory for the Twenty- First Century*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013.
- LACAPRA, Dominick. *History and Memory after Auschwitz*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998.
- ROUSSO, Henry. *A última catástrofe: a história, o presente, o contemporâneo*. Tradução de Fernando Coelho e Fabricio Coelho. Rio de Janeiro: FGV Editora, 2016.
- RUNIA, Eelco. *Moved by the Past: Discontinuity and Historical Mutation*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.
- RUNIA, Eelco. *Presence*. *History and Theory*, v. 45, n. 1, 2006, p. 1-29.
- SILVEIRA, Pedro Telles da. From Instant History to the Infinite Archive: Digital Archiving, Memory and the Practical Past at the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media. *Historein*, v. 17.2, 2018.
- SIMON, Zoltán Boldizsár; DEILE, Lars (Ed). *Historical Understanding: Past, Present and Future*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022.
- SMITH, Stephen. Oral History Turns Holographic. *USC Dornsife*, 28 mar. 2014. Disponível em: <https://dornsife.usc.edu/cagr-news/news/2014/03/4013-oral-history-turns-holographic>. Acesso em: 23 ago. 2022.
- WIEVIORKA, Annette. *The era of the witness*. Translated by Jared Stark. New York: Cornell University Press, 2006.

*Reflections on the
New Dimensions in Testimony Project
Past Present and Broad Present*

Artigo recebido em 15/09/2022 • Aceito em 30/11/2022

DOI | doi.org/10.5216/rth.v25i2.74066

Revista de Teoria da História | issn 2175-5892



Este é um artigo de acesso livre distribuído nos termos da licença *Creative Commons Attribution*, que permite uso irrestrito, distribuição e reprodução em qualquer meio, desde que o trabalho original seja citado de modo apropriado