

Structures of Feeling (part 2)

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The other structure of feeling I wanted to explore was that of melancholy and nostalgia. Particularly, I'm interested in the relation between nostalgia and labour. Could there be a RMD without the urge to collect and play old video games? As Hu says, "melancholy is something of a perservative." (108) The nostalgic, melancholic desire to play older games is a powerful drive. See the recent (failed) attempts to set up a WoW server that plays as it did before the release of the first expansion ten years ago . This case illustrates the friction between and the desire to experience residual games the regimes of copyright and censorship that codify their use.

In contrast, consider the music genre and aesthetic movement that takes a much more liberal attitude to copyright and creative reassembly: vaporwave. Vaporwave's interest in appropriating the features of older mediums, and its fascination with technical decay and degradation offers a prime example of how new media remediates older media. For example:

- samples of RnB, muzak, and early 80's Japanese electronic music
- digital tracks that reproduce the soft hiss of vinyl, the white noise of television static, or the consonant beeping of a dial-up connection
- simpsonswave that provides a video analogy for vaporwave music with its chroma-keyed mashups of scenes from early Simpsons shows, replete with VHS derived skeuomorphs.

In this sense, vaporwave and associated genres stage what Tung-Hui Hu (building on the work of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok) calls "the phantom-like 'shadow of the lost object'

endures indefinitely, secretly hoping for its resurrection or reincarnation". (Hu 108) Does this resurrection enact an emergent, or actively residual approach? No. if anything, vaporwave's fascination with consumerism and commodity culture only encouraged their rapid assimilation into commercial discourse. MTV and Tumblr both incorporated elements of vaporwave into their brand.

If there is anything resistant to dominant narratives in nostalgia, it is to be found in the creative application of media archaeological techniques. The penultimate chapter of Jussi Parikka's *What is Media Archaeology?* suggests that media archaeology can be applied creatively. This application is focalized in the figure of the T(h)inkerer, a concept he borrows from Huhtamo: "In the age of consumer electronics, the artist can also be seen as an archaeological circuit bender and hacker, thus creating a link between media archaeology and the political agenda of contemporary media production."

This approach to scholarly work addresses Parikka's rejoinder to the bias towards print media in scholarship.

If contemporary media is harder to read, then doing scholarly work on new media requires a new set of skills to decode and operate these forms of technological media. Moreover, In Parikka's analysis of blackbox design he proposes that it's not just hardware that can be bent, but historical archives as well. Is it possible to prevent the inner workings of the RMD from becoming a blackbox itself? How can we make visible the codes and protocols according to which the depot amasses its collection, and how it shares the collection? Can these protocols be bent? For example, how did purchasing Duck Hunt Cartridges for this course affect their market price?

What would depot-bending look like?

- sampling and using game assets?
- running hardware modding tutorials?
- hosting video game sessions?

How the RMD might address the skills needed for these practices? What does the RMD open up, what does it make accessible? How does doing media archaeology relate to sustainable computer practices?

Works Cited

Hu, Tung-Hui. *A Prehistory of the Cloud*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2015. Print.

Parikka, Jussi. *What Is Media Archaeology?* Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2012. Print.