Artificial Intelligence and Anti-Racism as an Activating Pursuit in Archival Moving Image Practice

Introduction

Introduction – Archives and Artificial Intelligence an Anti-Racist Concern

This paper will :

- consider the potential of developing anti-racist datasets by using moving image archives.

- frame this within the context of artistic practice

- explore archival material through an intersectional lens considering situated context.

- relate image to image through a conceptualisation of the nearest neighbour algorithm and the good neighbour law**.**

This paper presentation explores the potential of using moving images as archival data to create anti-racist datasets within a framework of artistic practice.

The paper will examine archival material through an intersectional lens, considering the situated context of the person(s) creating the dataset and the situated context of the material itself, considering the nearest neighbour algorithm and the notion of Aby Warburg's good neighbour law, as different epistemological gazes that can co-constitute a creative anti-racist pursuit.

Race and Representation in Moving Image Archives

A film such as The *Imitation of Life* by Douglas Sirk (1959) and the scholarship around it raise questions pertinent to racial bias and artificial intelligence technologies concerns.

Imitation of Life is a film that adapts a problematic text about the depiction of race, the notion of "passing" as an articulation of anxiety of racial categorisation and the visibility or invisibility of blackness.

The assertion for this paper, is that film as an archival source, with the complexities of its making are a rich source for producing datasets that can be utilised for machine learning, in reflects how for Gebru, the humanities have approaches that can be utilised to tackle problems that are present within computer science and AI in relation to racial bias.

This paper proposes, however that this activity requires a wider set of frameworks in order to construct an anti-racist approach.

Intersectionality and the Situated Gaze with Archives and Images

One of these approaches is that of the intersectionality, using Yuval-Davis' approach to intersectionality, we can explore how the viewer, the data collector, and the programmer contribute to the situated gaze. This perspective allows for a nuanced understanding of how various identities and experiences shape the interpretation and analysis of the material.

> "A situated intersectionality analysis, therefore, avoids both homogenising members of collectivities and differentiating among them along a unidimensional social division, such as class, or gender, or race. Rather, it recognises the more complex and mutually constituted (but not reducible) different facets of hierarchies of power and situated positionings".

Delayed Cinema: A Critical Framework

Mulvey's concept of **Delayed Cinema** offers a critical framework for analyzing the visual language of cinema in the digital contest. By situating cinema within a critical frame, we can question the power dynamics and narratives embedded in the medium. Mulvey's exposition of Imitation of Life, through slowing down the image, stopping and starting, pausing, zooming into the image allowed her to discover the hidden black figures which were for her only visible with this form of examination afforded by digital technologies. This provocation, within the situated intersectional gaze, draws together a number of possible readings, based on the viewer – as is presented in my short, my searching for blackness is a critique of Mulvey's gaze.

Nearest Neighbour, Good Neighbour, Anti-racist Neighbour

Delayed cinema, allowed for the initial framework to select images from which to explore the notion of race further, but also framed within the context now, of what question, what would be the basis for which a dataset would need to be formed. The nearest neigbour algorithm in machine learning looks to classify its objects through proximity.

Warburg's law of the good neighbour

> "The law functioned first as the organizing principle of the Library, determining its layout as well as the expansionist argument of the collections. Each book, and each newly acquired book, should stage a conversation with its neighbor: ask a question, provide an answer."

Articulates a curiosity about the material under view, and implicates the person making the decision within the practice.

Delayed cinema and intersectionality as a critique can widen the scope of what and how and by whom, the classification can take place.

Within the context of my film imitations, images were selected and new images were chosen as part of datasets that reflected my understanding, the directors understanding, the context of film theory.

The example of the funeral scene – images from

Conclusion: Datasets

In the pursuit of an anti-racist – intersectional approach to, creating a dataset utilising film material, what became clear was the shift in the question that could now be articulated, prompted by the search.

The question is whether we can train an algorithm to understand the good neighbour as an anti-racist neighbour contextually or whether the human in the loop does it?

Sources:

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