

DIGITAL SOURCE CRITICISM  
in museological contexts.

Dr. Gunther Reisinger | University of Technology | Graz (A)



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## Outline

Introduction

Historical Methodology: Source Criticism

Digital Source Criticism

Theory to Practice: Synchronous Archives

Conclusion

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## Methodology

*Sources contain no authentic factual content but only facts as reported, selected, and handed down-often one-sided, unreliable, and manipulated, at all events, already interpreted.*

Hans Jürgen Goertz

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## **Chains of Validation**

Historically conditioned selection processes (e.g. Book Editing)

## **Source Level**

Texts, objects, or facts from which knowledge of the past can be gained.  
Authentic, trustworthy and „true“.

## **Source criticism**

*The examination of sources with respect to their value and expressive power.*

Hermann Bauer

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## Traditions

*The task of historical criticism can only be to determine in what relation the material, which we intend to use historically, stands to the acts of will about which it informs us.*

Johann Gustav Droysen, 1883

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## **Born analogue - Born digital**

Merging of work and (re)presentation in digital media

Location, Original & Copy

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## Source Interpretation (based on Droysen 1883)

*Critique of genuineness:* Exact examination of the origin.

*Critique of the earlier and later:* Analyses the source according to its chronological layers.

*Critique of correctness:* Quality of “truth” from the viewpoint of the time of its origination.

*Critical ordering:* Collecting and structuring measures

## (Digital) Source Interpretation

### a. Pragmatic interpretation

*Its procedure consists in completing the connections and affinities whose traces it detects in its materials according to those traces, extrapolating the motifs foreshadowed in them. (Droysen 1883)*

### b. Interpreting (media) conditions

*We recover a significant part of the original process when, and to the extent that, we can still demonstrate, on the basis of the material, the conditions that shaped or contributed to shaping the process. (Droysen 1883)*



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## Cultural Supplementations

Source-related *Background Knowledge*

Media competences

Applied Informatics

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## Counter-Induction

*Scientific procedures are not to be understood as closed systems. Rather than only developing hypotheses inductively, it is in certain cases better to proceed counterinductively by developing hypotheses that contradict accredited theories and even confirmed facts.*

Paul Feyerabend

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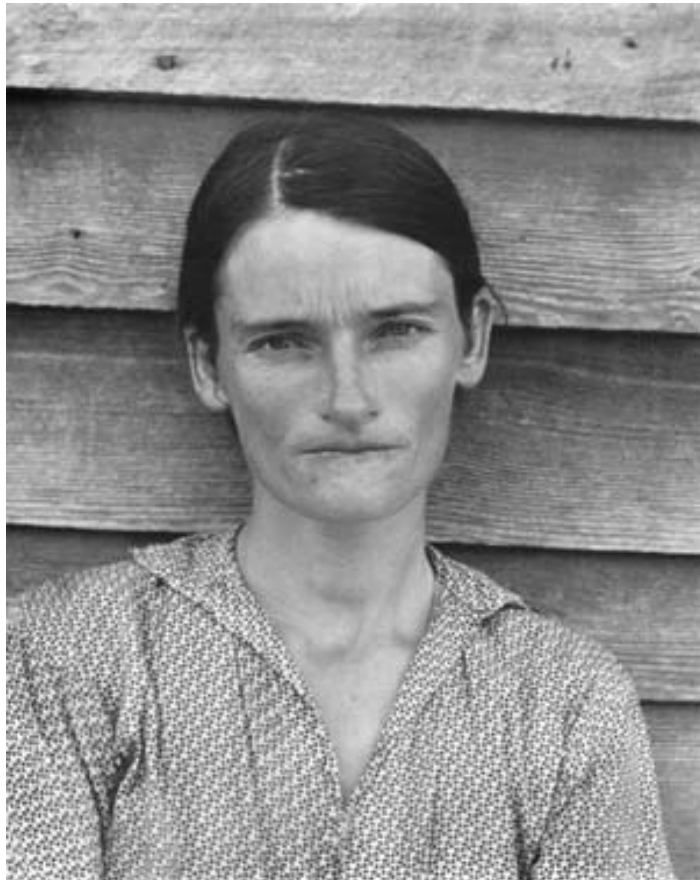
## **Synchrony of Archives**

Synchronicity of different source-types in digital media

Control-Group *Net.Art*

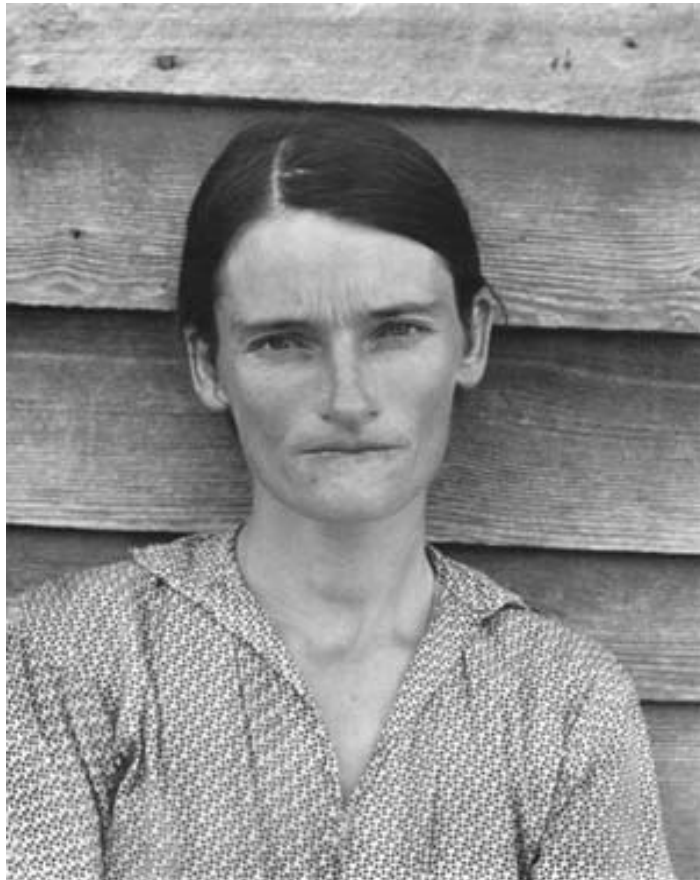
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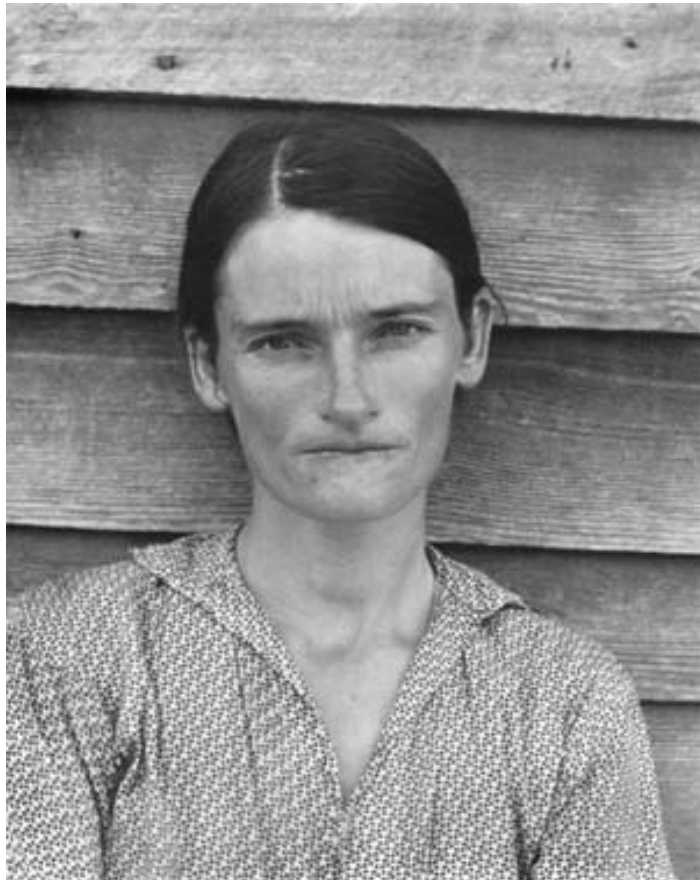
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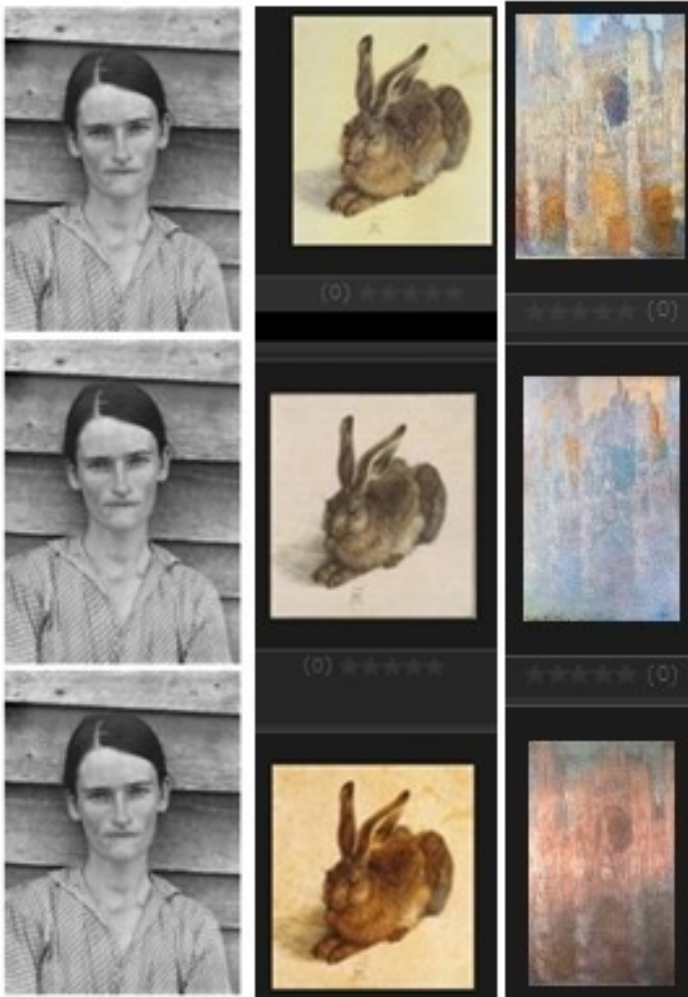
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	KünstlerIn Titel Standort Datierung Bildnachweis Bildrecht Datenbank	<b>Dürer, Albrecht (1473-1528)</b> <b>Hase</b> Wien, öffentliche Sammlungen 1502 Anzelewsky, Dürer, 1980 Werk:   Foto: EasyDB, Universität Bern, Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Bern
	KünstlerIn Titel Standort Datierung Bildnachweis Bildrecht Datenbank	<b>Albrecht Dürer</b> <b>Feldhase. Naturstudie</b> Wien, Albertina, Graphische Sammlung 1502 Evelyn Lehmann, Das große Tierbuch "Tierstück" von Johann Menagerien und einiges mehr, Imhof Verlag, Petersberg Werk:   Foto: ArtICON, Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen
	KünstlerIn Titel Standort Datierung Bildnachweis Bildrecht Datenbank	<b>Dürer, Albrecht</b> <b>Hase</b> Wien, Graphische Sammlung 1502 Werk:   Foto: DiDi - Digitale Diathek, Berlin, Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Berlin

	KünstlerIn Titel Standort Datierung Bildnachweis Bildrecht Datenbank	<b>Monet, Claude</b> <b>Die Kathedrale von Rouen [Westfassade am Mittag]</b> Köln, Museum für Kunst und Kultur 1894 Gordon/Forge, Monet, Köln 1985, S. 100 Werk:   Foto: HeidICON - Europäische Kunstgeschichte, Universität Karlsruhe, Universitätsbibliothek
	KünstlerIn Titel Standort Datierung Bildnachweis Bildrecht Datenbank	<b>Monet, Claude</b> <b>Die Kathedrale von Rouen im Regen</b> Essen / Museum Folkwang (Aufbewahrungsort) 1894 Gordon/Forge, Monet, Köln 1985, S. 100 Werk:   Foto: HeidICON - Europäische Kunstgeschichte, Universität Karlsruhe, Universitätsbibliothek
	KünstlerIn Titel Standort Datierung Bildnachweis Bildrecht Datenbank	<b>Monet, Claude (1840-1926)</b> <b>Cathédrale de Rouen</b> Belgrad, Narodni Muzej 1893 Wildenstein, Daniel: Monet oder der Impressionismus. Köln: Taschen, 1999 Werk:   Foto: EasyDB, Universität Bern, Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Bern



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## Conclusion

*Alibi-Objects (Martinet)?*

*Semiophors: Signs or Symbols (Pamiuk)?*

*Digital Museology?*

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**Thank you!**