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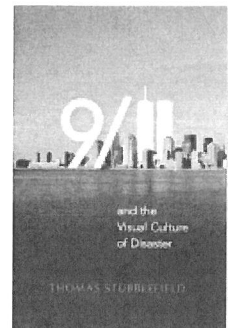
9/11 and the Visual Culture of Disaster

Thomas Stubblefield



Published by Indiana University Press

Stubblefield, T..
9/11 and the Visual Culture of Disaster.
Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014.
Project MUSE., https://muse.jhu.edu/.

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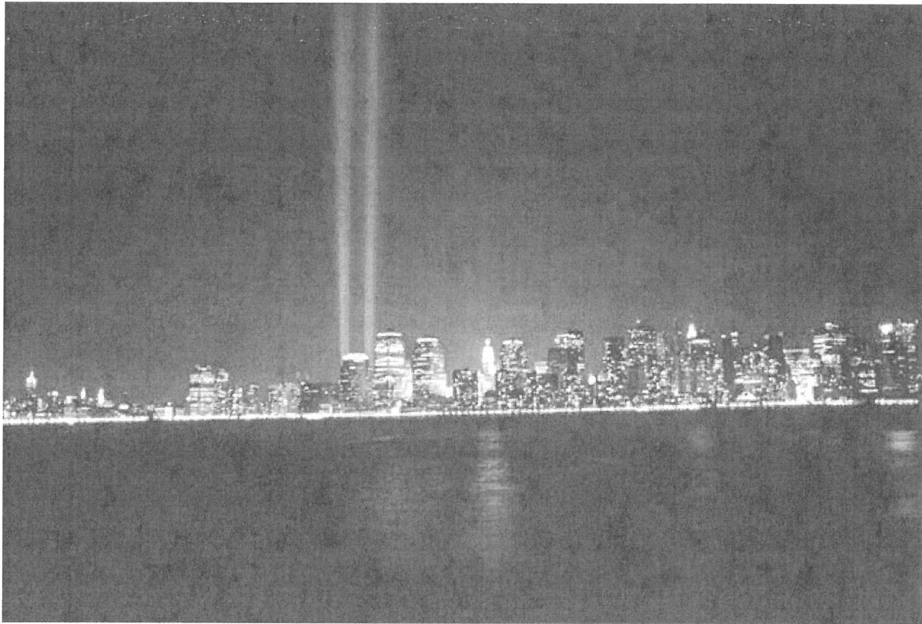
Introduction

SPECTACLE AND ITS OTHER

The collision of the jet passenger planes with the Twin Towers, their subsequent collapse into nothingness, the ominous absence within the smoke-filled skyline, the busy streets of Manhattan turned disaster movie – these scenes were images as much or more than actual events.[1] The hard truth of this realization came less than a week after the attacks when Karlheinz Stockhausen described the disaster as "the greatest work of art that is possible in the whole cosmos" and once again on the eve of the one-year anniversary of 9/11 when Damien Hirst expressed his admiration for the terrorists' ability to create such a "visually stunning" piece of art.[2] With the remains of the dead still being sifted out of the rubble at Ground Zero and the *Tribute in Light* beaming into the night sky as a daily reminder of the horrific events of the day, it was all but impossible to see through the callousness and publicity-driven nature of these remarks at the time. Eventually, however, as references to the Hollywood disaster movie and the rhetoric of the sublime reverberated throughout popular discourse, the realization set in that the eerily photogenic quality of the event was not a coincidence. Rather, as Stockhausen and Hirst suggest, the attack was aimed at and made for the image.

As a result, the disaster appeared tailor-made for a familiar postmodern discourse. In a discussion with Jürgen Habermas held only days after the attack, Jacques Derrida catalyzed this response by noting that the shared interest of "maximum media coverage" between the perpetrators and victims of 9/11 reflected a pervasive desire to "spectacularize the event."[3] Not long after, Samuel Weber diagnosed the "theatricaliza-



0.1. Paul Fusco, *Tribute in Light,* 2002. By permission of Magnum Photos.

tion" of the attack and subsequent retaliation as an escalation in war-as-spectacle, one which shifted the stakes of the conflict from a specific geographical space or national identity to the media itself.[4] Summarizing what has since become a refrain within the scholarship of 9/11, Katalin Orbán describes the disaster as a "constitutively visual event that can (and did) become a real time global media spectacle, where maximum exposure, rather than concealment, ensures terror's success as an act of communication."[5]

While acknowledging the primacy of the image to the event, the enduring association of the disaster with spectacle served to obscure the fact that the experience of 9/11 and its aftermath was one in which absence, erasure, and invisibility dominated the frame in equal measure. Following the logic of implosion rather than explosion, the World Trade Center withheld its contents from view as it fell; its stories "pancaked" on top of one another rather than turning themselves inside out. With the vast majority of the dead dying behind the curtain wall of the towers' facades, "the most photographed disaster in history" failed to yield a single noteworthy image of carnage.[6] This absence within the

spectacular image of the event was carried over into the visual culture that followed. Indeed, from the phantom presence of the *Tribute in Light* to Art Spiegelman's nearly blank *New Yorker* cover to the erasure of the Twin Towers from television shows and feature films to the monumental voids of Michael Arad's 9/11 memorial, the empty image came to function in the aftermath as a kind of visual shorthand for the events of that day.

In addition to the prevalence of absence as a visual motif, the wake of 9/11 also saw an existential absence of images, which shaped the discourse and memory of the event in powerful ways. While Hollywood's unofficial ban on representations of the disaster is perhaps the most well-known example of this phenomenon, the art world would also reproduce this invisibility through a disconcerting reticence which has only recently been rescinded. More overt instances of negation were on display outside of the museum as works such as Eric Fischl's *Tumbling Woman* and Sharon Paz's *Falling* were quickly removed after backlash from the media and residents of New York. These localized instances of censorship echo the resurgence of iconoclasm on the global stage as spectacular images of erasure (the dynamiting of the Bamiyan Buddha, the strategic falling of the statue of Saddam Hussein in Firdos Square by the U.S. military, and even the destruction of the World Trade Center itself) were utilized as weapons in the larger battle for and within the image. Whether through the presentation of absence within the frame or through the eradication of images at the hands of censorship or iconoclasm, everywhere the image seemed to echo the empty hole in the Manhattan skyline.

This book centers on the paradox of the visual culture of 9/11, which both foregrounds the image and the visual experience in general and at the same time steeps the events of that day in absence, erasure, and invisibility. While invisibility is conventionally perceived in terms of the substrate or precession of a sign, Jacques Rancière suggests a less neutral status by insisting that absence be understood as a product of the image's coming into being. For this reason, analysis must begin not with the familiar historical question of what kinds of events elude representation, but rather, "Under what conditions might it be said that certain events cannot be represented?"[7] Following this logic, a central

0.2. Sharon Paz, *Falling,* 2001. Window Project, Jamaica Center for the Arts, New York.

thesis of this project is that media and the images they produce articulate not only presence but also the conditions of their own invisibility. In certain cases, they even actively structure their own disappearance. As such, absence functions not as negativity but as a particular mode of presence which shapes experience and official histories in often dramatic fashion.

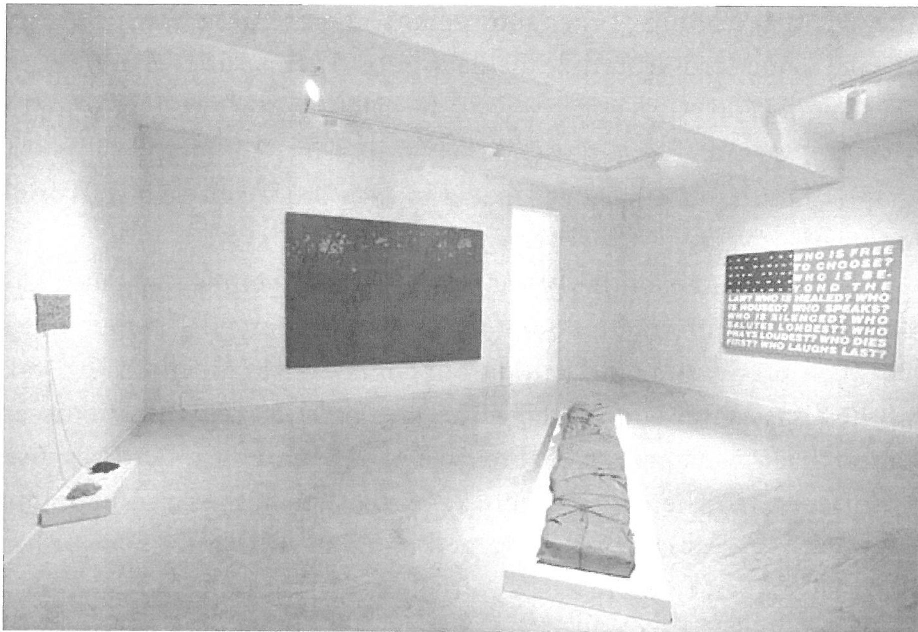
Pursuing these configurations of invisibility and erasure across the media of photography, film, monuments, graphic novels, and digital media reveals these spaces to be a site of conflict in the wake of the disaster. From the deployment of the codified trope of the "unrepresentable" in the 9/11 monument to the unique mode of vision offered to the analog photographer, the presence of absence proves capable of reaffirming national identity and even implicitly laying the groundwork for the impending invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. At the same time, these configurations offer an outside to the dominant image of the event by conjuring conflicting relations of spectatorship, as in the recurring image of the empty city in post-9/11 popular culture, or unraveling the stability of subjectivity via the curious descent of the anonymous falling body in Richard Drew's iconic photograph.

This activation of absence and the tenuous relation to narratives of power that it charted rendered the inner workings of the image temporarily accessible, albeit in often convoluted and/or muted form. Indeed, 9/11 and its wake not only confirmed a formative role of the invisible in spectacular relations, its mutually constitutive relation to the visible, and its openness to reconfiguration via violence, but also placed the reconstitution of this interrelation on display within the visual record itself. As theorist Marie-José Mondzain explains, while the millennial celebration "marked a dominance of the visible and its industries . . . on 11 September 2001, the empire of the visible, the servant of all modern forms of the combined powers of economics and icons, suffered its greatest blow. . . . The visible entered a crisis."[8] Symptomatic of this crisis was the advent of a "visual fast" in which the excess of the visible temporarily gave way to a regime of absence, invisibility, and erasure. This period of iconoclasm, marked by both an absence of the visual and a pervasive visual absence, spanned roughly from the end of live coverage of the event to

the eventual waning of the taboo against representation, which began to take shape across multiple media in 2006. In this window of time, the reconfiguration of spectacle was made visible in the "aftermedia" of the event, those modes of representation (primarily photography, film, and graphic novels, but also mixed media and sculpture) not involved or only indirectly involved in the live presentation of the event.

Representative of this phenomenon is the dilemma that faced Hollywood in the aftermath of 9/11. Because of its extended temporal gap between production and exhibition, commercial cinema in the wake of the disaster was confronted with a host of issues regarding representation that the instantaneity of television news and the internet excused them from. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the handful of films and television shows that contained images of the towers and which were scheduled to be released in the weeks that followed 9/11. Literally overnight, the establishing shots and backgrounds of previously benign scenes became loaded with an unforeseeable significance that made many within the film industry timid about their release. With the removal of the entirety of the New York context still beyond the reach of technology or at least the budget of most dramas and comedies, those films which contained such images were left with a missing signified that seemed as unrepresentable as it was inescapable. With the exception of a few films, the overwhelming response to this dilemma was to digitally remove the towers from the New York skyline. The official explanation for this erasure in films such as *Serendipity, Zoolander, People I Know, Spider-Man,* and others was summarized by Columbia Pictures chair Amy Pascal, who claimed that "the sudden appearance of the World Trade Center in a film is a reminder of the pain and suffering moviegoers are trying to forget."[9] Yet, as these missing scenes were quickly made available online, this "removal" was inevitably incomplete and partial.

While not subject to the same regulation and social taboos as the film industry, the art world tended to internalize the invisibility of the disaster, producing what can only be called a deafening silence in the aftermath of 9/11. Aside from a handful of isolated pieces by Thomas Ruff, Eric Fischl, Carolee Schneeman, Tom Friedman, Thomas Hirschhorn, and Luc Tymans, one is hard pressed to find work that grapples with this monumental event, despite its explicitly visual nature.[10] As MOCA's



0.3. "September 11" show at MoMA PS1, September 11, 2011–January 9, 2012. © Matthew Septimus. Courtesy of MoMA PS1.

chief curator Paul Schimmel explains, this lack of engagement on the part of artists has been reproduced by the institutions of art, which as a whole have all but ignored the subject.[11] Interestingly, the first forays into grappling with this event have almost unanimously relied upon excessively indirect, even cryptic connections. The long awaited "September 11" show at the Museum of Modern Art's PS1 gallery in New York crystallized this logic. Only a single work from the show (Ellsworth Kelly's collage that reimagines Ground Zero as a monochromatic swath of green) directly engages with the event, while the majority not only eschew direct reference but were in fact produced before the disaster occurred. According to curator Peter Eleey, as 9/11 was "made to be used," the banishing of its image from the exhibition serves as a symbolic refusal of the logic of terrorism.

While it is easy to dismiss this reliance upon anachronism as a failure to fully engage with the event, as, for example, critic Hal Foster does, taken in the context of the visual culture of 9/11 as a whole this curatorial strategy might actually reflect something larger about the role of the

image in the aftermath. If one can put aside Eleey's rather idealist if not naive assertions regarding the ability of the museum to somehow disentangle the event from the spectacle of the image, this strategy comes to articulate a powerful vision in which 9/11 serves as its own structuring absence within the visual record of the event and its aftermath.[12] From this standpoint, absence reflects not so much the shortcomings of a politically cautious curator or cultural institution, or the incomprehensibility of the Modernist tradition of the sublime, but rather the power of the missing *as image* within a new regime of the visual. This activated status of absence is made possible by recent revisions to the spectacle at the hands of both new media and the increasingly modulated and diffuse forces of late capitalism which undergird them.

POST-SPECTACLE, NEGATIVITY, AND DISASTER

Confronted by both an urgency to make sense of an incomprehensible event and an undeniable affinity between the disaster and familiar discourses of postmodernism and trauma studies, scholarship in the aftermath largely approached September 11 as an illustration of existing theoretical tropes. However, the critical distance of the last decade allows for a more radical and singular method. This entails reversing the causal relations between theory and event so that the disaster is recast as a constellation of immanence which one does not so much bring theory to, but rather allows to disclose new concepts and modes of analysis.[13] This strategy serves to disentangle the visual culture of 9/11 from some of its early conceptual framings and, in the process, resuscitates difficult, ongoing questions regarding the new modes of seeing and representing that the disaster made possible as well as the correlative methods and theories needed to accommodate these assemblages. One such place for reappraisal is the apparent conflict between the visual excess of the disaster and its penchant for images of absence, which from this perspective appears not as an impasse or even an opposition, but rather as an origin or locus for this productive relation.[14] Presenting an image of disaster in which the mutual exclusivity of the visible and its other no longer hold, the visual culture of 9/11 articulates a "spectacle of absence," a fluid constellation in which antispectacular forces do not simply coex-

ist with the dominant image of the event, but exert a formative influence upon and at times even comprise it.

In this environment, the binaries of what might be called "first wave spectacle theory" (Debord's *Society of the Spectacle,* Lefebvre's "spectacle of the street," T. J. Clark's "hierarchy of representations," and, to some degree, Douglas Kellner's "megaspectacles" and "interactive spectacles") inadvertently end up naturalizing and/or pacifying the blank image. At the root of this operation is the inverse relation which theories of spectacle often posit between appearance and invisibility. Exemplifying the latter, Guy Debord describes the violence of spectacle as inseparable from an essential negativity:

> Considered in its own terms, the spectacle is affirmation of appearance and affirmation of all human life, namely social life, as mere appearance. But the critique which reaches the truth of the spectacle exposes it as the visible negation of life, as a negation of life which has become visible.[15]

While suggesting that the invisibility of "life" might be resurrected via critique, Debord nonetheless portrays the invisible's relation to the spectacle as simply the placeholder for that which is sacrificed to the image and as such inevitably represents loss, expenditure, and death. Yet even this presence of absence is concealed in the spectacle. After all, in order for the image to take the place of life it must not simply negate its outside, but negate its own negation. In this way, all aspects of life and indeed reality itself collapse into the image. The discourse of spectacle therefore subjects the invisible to a dual erasure which renders it not only inactive relative to the presence of the visible, but absent at the level of experience. In the context of the disaster, this dynamic led to the recurring association of the presence of absence within the visual record of 9/11 with a failure of representation, the collapse of the dominant image, and, in turn, a new vulnerability in Empire.[16] These formations appeared as hiccups or glitches within the mode of representation or, equally unsatisfying, outright reversals in the power relationships of an otherwise impenetrable spectacle. Approaching these phenomena in terms of a twenty-first-century media ecology suggests that these instances of absence might instead operate as specific constellations within a larger regime of flux and flow rather than as simple negations or noise within the "dominant image."

As operations of the spectacle increasingly move from temporal to spatial registers, representational images to presignifying flux, and material commodities to immaterial becoming, the solidity with which theory once invested this critical rubric of spectacle has broken down in the last several decades. In "Eclipse of the Spectacle," Jonathan Crary chronicles the ways in which Guy Debord's canonical articulation of spectacle is compromised in the late twentieth century by diffuse operations of flow, connection, and immanence. He explains,

> For Debord, writing in 1967, at the last high tide of the "Pax Americana," the auratic presence of the commodity was bound up with the illusion of its utter tangibility. But since that time, we have witnessed the gradual displacement of aura from images of possessible objects to digitized flows of data, to the glow of the VDT and the promise of access embodied there. It is a reversal of the process indicated by Debord, in which the seeming self-sufficiency of the commodity was a "congealment" of forces that were essentially mobile and dynamic. Now, however, with pure flux itself a commodity, a spectacular and "contemplative" relation to objects is undermined and supplanted by new kinds of investments. There is no opposition between the abstraction of money and the apparent materiality of commodities; money and what it can buy are now fundamentally of the same substance. And it is the potential dissolution of any language of the market or of desire into binarized pulses of light or electricity that unhinges the fictive unity of spectacular representation. Figurative images lose their transparence and are consumed as simply one more code.[17]

This "undoing of the spectacular consumption of commodity" that Crary describes means that images "never surpass their functioning as abstract code" and operate instead as strings of representations whose content is the very flow of their own presentation.[18] This condition was in many ways prefigured by the shift in media sequencing from programming toward "flow," an experience which eschews discrete units of consumption in favor of a more generalized experience of immersion. As television networks attempted to capture the attention of their audience for an entire evening, intervals or breaks within programming were gradually smoothed over with commercials. Accordingly, the semi-autonomous units of prior modes of content distribution such as newspapers or theatrical performances broke down as the spectator's experience became an uninterrupted continuity, a field of becoming which was populated by asignifying and prerepresentational intensities as much as or more than content. As the goal in this arrangement is precisely *not* to

watch closely so as to preserve and affirm "the promise of exciting things to come," the audience "watches television" more than a particular program, performance, or image.[19]

At first glance, recent transformations in media consumption appear to contradict this diagnosis. Platforms such as YouTube, TiVo, and Netflix would seem to reintroduce the very interval that network television sought to efface. These technologies offer the viewer the ability to pause, rewind, or repeat programs according to their own desires and schedules. In conjunction with the mobile device, they even give the user the ability to segment the viewing experience within the context of daily life (we begin the latest episode of *Mad Men* while in the waiting room of the doctor's office, then restart it while in a meeting, and finally catch the end when we return home after work). However, situating this transformation within a larger logic of spatial montage suggests that while these new modes of content delivery may shift the parameters of media consumption from a temporal to a spatial register, they nonetheless preserve, if not perfect, the relations described above.[20] The evolution of the Windows operating system over the past thirty years embodies this familiar narrative. During this time, the platform moved from the layering of multiple windows introduced in version 3.0 to a full-on simultaneity with the recently released Windows 8, which effectively absorbs once-cascading windows into a single graphical user interface (GUI). While Renaissance and baroque painters once utilized the image to showcase the exotic items available for consumption for a newly empowered viewer/consumer, contemporary technologies transform the screen itself into a commodity. Now the pictorial plane itself functions as a kind of virtual "real estate," the term mobile device designers use to refer to the precious screen space of their medium, reminding us that "every small area of the screen [is] a potentially lucrative ad."[21] A similar shift is visible in the post-continuity aesthetics of contemporary film, which juxtaposes and layers spatially and temporally discordant images with little interest in the kind of totality of the twentieth-century filmic diegesis, as well as its pervasive reliance upon compositing and CGI.[22] Like the bitmapped computer display or object-based programming, these latter artifacts simply internalize the logic of flow within the boundaries of the frame itself. The result is a densely layered image

whose extraordinary use of onscreen real estate enacts a kind of digital *horror vacui,* which only confirms Foucault's declaration that the new era be an "epoch of juxtaposition . . . of the side-by-side."[23]

Throughout this evolution from temporal to spatial articulations of flow, the spectator's investment takes place "not into images of actors, but onto the formal management of images."[24] The net effect is that, as Leslie Kan observes, "the televised spectacle ceases to have content."[25] Obviously, media still traffic in actual products, personalities, and events, but this presentation of content is, at times, overwhelmed by the allure of the flux of becoming. In this context, absence, that motif which from the Holocaust to Hiroshima has become something of an official visual language of disaster, loses its negativity. Like McLuhan's light bulb, which contains no content but produces a situation, in the context of 9/11 these relations bestow a unique agency to the image of absence and the absence of images, both of which would structure the experience of the disaster in equally formative fashion relative to the image proper.

In this new role, absence testifies to a larger self-effacing tendency of the spectacle which McKenzie Wark refers to as the "disintegrating spectacle." As the successor to Debord's "integrated spectacle," the disintegrating model is based in, and in fact co-opts, its own capacity for deformation and thereby offers a less Manichean base from which to approach these absences. Its power is, paradoxically, rooted in the ability of dominant image to collapse and de-compose without necessarily losing its hold on the relations which fuel the ascendancy of the visible.[26] In this dynamic model, the equation of the dominant image with excessive presence gives way to a fluid exchange in which the spectacle embraces its own death and rebirth and in so doing dovetails at a structural level with disaster. Following this dynamic through the visual culture of 9/11 and its aftermath expands the discourse of the event beyond what Debord called the spectacle's "affirmation of appearance" into a more formative drama surrounding the image and its entanglement with absence.[27]

ICONOCRACY AND THE INVISIBLE

As the dominance of spectacle theory served to establish an illusory opposition between the frenzy of the visible and the primacy of absence,

the discourse of 9/11 appeared suspended in a dizzying set of contradictions. At the same time Orbán was claiming the event to be driven by "maximum exposure rather than concealment," Nicholas Mirzoeff was proclaiming the end of the "pictorial turn" as the visible, that locus of global power, seemed to take on a new "opacity" that fundamentally "resist[ed] the viewer." Likewise, just as Žižek stressed the spectral, visual nature of the terrorist threat, Marita Sturken described a general "aesthetics of absence" at work within the visual culture of 9/11. Despite the apparent opposition posed by these positions, taken as a whole they nonetheless reveal a crucial structural relation of the disaster. Indeed, read through the work of Mondzain, the interrelation or "economy" between these seemingly incompatible drives form the conditions of possibility for the vivid visual presence and global dominance of the image in the twenty-first century.

Mondzain's genealogy of contemporary media goes back to the iconoclastic controversies of the eighth and ninth centuries when the church was forced to formulate a new doctrine of the image which would both safeguard it from the charge of idolatry and at the same time preserve its proselytizing function. In order to grant the image the power to make manifest an essentially invisible God, mimesis was recast in terms of the Christian concept of incarnation. Summarizing this distinction, Mondzain explains,

> To incarnate is not to imitate, nor is it to reproduce or to simulate. The Christian Messiah is not God's clone. . . . The image is fundamentally unreal; its force resides in its rebellion against becoming substance with its content. To incarnate is to give flesh and not to give body. It is to act in the absence of things. The image gives flesh, that is, carnal visibility to an absence in an irreducible distance from its model.[28]

This "irreducible distance" provides the interval of difference through which the image grants flesh to the invisible while withholding full embodiment. The intertwining of the visible and invisible that the icon enacts presents a model of the image in which the latter appears as the active, primary force behind the visible. This interpenetration is made possible by a duality of the invisible through which the absence of the image takes shape as presence. In contrast to the image's sensual presence, which tends to present a singular noncontradictory aspect, this invisible pres-

ence "addresses itself to the question of being at the very moment where it allows a glimpse of its nonbeing in the luminous flesh of an object."[29] This luminosity of the object is the result of the performativity of the image which animates the stasis of representation in such a way that renders the process of becoming-image synonymous with "shar[ing] space" with God.[30] By way of overseeing this relation, a process that occurs through both discourse and artistic practice, the church's power was galvanized in the icon. As this logic bled into imperial authority, it made possible the kind of globalization of which we are today the inheritors.[31] With the media now assuming this task of managing the interrelation of the visible and the invisible, Mondzain poses the question: is there really a significant difference in "submitting to a church council or to CNN?"[32] Summarizing this affinity, Susan Buck-Morss claims, "Live news is the living body of today's iconocracy. Satellite-video is the world-become-flesh."[33]

While the model of "iconocracy" formulated by the early history of the church provides a crucial prehistory to the contemporary image, Mondzain acknowledges that the relation it manages has shifted. At the core of this distinction is a move from the metaphysically driven model outlined above to what is often portrayed in terms of a "flattening out" of the image. On account of a variety of interrelated forces which include the advent of digital representation, a general move away from "documentary culture," and a skepticism regarding master narratives, images in the contemporary sphere are no longer engaged in re-presenting signifieds in the world, let alone the Absolute. Instead, the image is enmeshed in a horizontal structure of self-referentiality whose relation to the real does not precede or transcend the parameters of representation itself. This seemingly self-sustaining network of images is the basis for global formations of power which, according to Mondzain, employ the logic of the incarnation not necessarily to summon the Divine but to reinforce the hold that these formations have on the visual economy itself. These relations are made legible in the twenty-first-century disaster where the kind of metaphysically charged invisibility discussed above manifests as traumatic "breaks" in representation. It is on these grounds that Baudrillard christens 9/11 as "the first historical spectacle of the death of the image in the image of death," a symbiotic exchange which he refers to as the "spirit of terrorism."[34]

Meaghan Morris's anecdote regarding the loss of signal during an Australian broadcast illustrates the way in which the death of an image and the image of death become interchangeable, resonating with one another in a self-sustaining circuit of exchange. While watching television with her family one Christmas Eve, Morris found the show suddenly cut short by the familiar words, "We interrupt this regularly scheduled program . . ." An anxious news anchor soon appeared and began: "Er . . . um . . . something's happened in Darwin," the capital of Australia's Northern Territory. Viewers anxiously awaited additional information only to find that there was none, at least not until the next morning, when they learned that the city had been hit by a hurricane. In that window of time when the event remained unknown, a panic gripped the viewing audience. Morris describes the onset of her own anxiety in terms of "the mechanization of bodily habituation to crisis [taking] over to see me through."[35]

The instrument of panic was not the cyclone (the signified), but the absence of information, an absence that, in effect, made the entire city of Darwin disappear for a span of twenty-four hours. As the spectacle sustains itself through a proliferation of images, crisis, emergency, and disaster now define themselves as a state without pictures, without reports, without information, a state of silence. This anxiety is reinforced by a history in which nonrepresentation is continually equated with catastrophic violence. In this, the static of the smart bomb camera seems almost a pastiche of the collapsing images from the San Francisco earthquake of 1989 or the Tiananmen Square protests of the same year, where only after media coverage stopped did the killing begin.[36] These precedents reinforce the anxiety of the non-image so that eventually the public comes to conflate real-life tragedies with the loss of the signal – so much so that any image, even one depicting a horrific scene, is preferable to the absence of the image. As Mimi White states, "In a context in which loss of TV signal carries greatest cause for alarm, even images of destruction have the capacity to reassure the viewer that everything is ok."[37] As these scenarios suggest, the negativity of absence is activated in the context of disaster, achieving a presence within the image which, while taking place in a secular context, mimics the structural duality of the invisible that Mondzain ascribes to the icon.

0.4. Still from the World Series Broadcast during the earthquake of 1989.

These images without content confound conventional analysis as they convey a highly contingent and historically specific epistemology rather than re-present per se. However, as the primary role of the image in Mondzain's theory is "the incarnation of a duality," it is the very coming into being or the making-contact-with of an image that takes precedence over its narrative or symbolic elements. This means that what is typically read in terms of propaganda, i.e., the indoctrination of a people by a given set of beliefs typically assumed to be embedded in the message of the image, is for Mondzain secondary to a more foundational aspect of visual presence, the very process of becoming-image itself.[38] As a result, the critical project must center on the management of the duality of the visible and its other, a strategy particularly apropos to the context of disaster which is often denoted by a sudden precariousness of the image.

This relation is succinctly illustrated by Art Spiegelman's iconic cover for the September 24, 2001, issue of the *New Yorker,* one of the first commemorative images to find its way into the public sphere after 9/11. The design presents what at first glance seems to be a black, monochromatic cover without detail. Only with a subtle shift of light does the faint impression of the now-missing towers appear within the emptiness. In this, the processes of memory are made manifest in the subtle interplay between presence and absence, allowing the image's coming into being to be placed on view. The image "takes shape" in a dual sense, becoming both the instantiation of an outside which summons the terror of the event and the reaffirmation of presence through which the symbolic order is reinstated. In this ghostly image, the interplay between visible and invisible dramatizes both the crisis of representation spawned by the event and the reconstitution of the image that would take place after.

Commenting on Spiegelman's subsequent graphic novel, *In the Shadow of No Towers,* Marianne Hirsch points out the way in which so many of the motifs of the work "architecturally mirror the structure of the towers and thereby allow . . . us to keep them in view even as they collapse in front of our eyes, again and again."[39] Some months later, a similar logic would manifest within the New York skyline itself. On March 11, 2002, eighty-eight search lights filled the night sky with an immaterial presence that commemorated if not resurrected the suddenly sacred structure.[40] This relatively short-lived performance in turn prefigured the permanent memorial that would eventually be constructed at Ground Zero. Michael Arad's *Reflecting Absence* presents the "footprint" of the towers as empty plots which the visitor interacts with from the intimacy of an underground corridor. According to Arad, the intent of the memorial is to "to make visible what is absent. The primary responsibility we have is to those we lost that day."[41] Throughout the visual culture of 9/11, the towers seem to dramatize a making visible with each appearance, an action that engages with and springs from an enduring absence.

TOWARD A VISUAL STUDIES OF THE INVISIBLE

This project attempts to stake out a middle ground in reference to a series of polarities which comprise the discourse of 9/11. In the aftermath

of the disaster, the European response, represented primarily by the 9/11 Verso series of works by Baudrillard, Žižek, and Virilio, deployed a familiar theoretical discourse of spectacle and the Lacanian real in order to diagnose the event as a wound to the symbolic order.[42] On the heels of these works, American scholarship sought to eschew abstractions in favor of personal experience, foregrounding the familiar critical lenses of trauma studies (E. Ann Kaplan's *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature,* or the early anthology *Trauma at Home: After 9/11,* edited by Judith Greenberg) and cultural studies (Marita Sturken's *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero*). In step with larger pedagogical divisions between these groups, this latter body of work was formulated as a conscious rebuttal to what Kaplan referred to as the "very abstract and theoretical approach" of scholars on the other side of the Atlantic.[43] Through these early exchanges, a division was established in the aftermath of the event that to a large extent continues to persist in the scholarship on 9/11 to this day. Because of this opposition, the productive relation of theory to *specific* images, motifs, and visual experiences, as well as the necessity of historicizing the iconographic and theoretical assemblages within the visual culture of 9/11, have often been left out of the discussion.

Using visual studies as an arbiter between these two camps, this project attempts to open the discourse of 9/11 and, more generally, the visual culture of disaster to these blind spots. While integrating the theories of Kittler, Flusser, Barthes, Deleuze, Freud, and others, the work heeds the warnings of Kaplan, who cautions against "overstat[ing] the political/psychic symbolism" and in turn viewing the event from "a distant intellectual perspective."[44] Accordingly, the investigations of this project are focused on precise objects of inquiry and are historicized via iconology and discourse analysis. For example, the motif of the empty city which figured prominently in film and photography after 9/11 is situated in relation to Cold War disaster films; the image of falling bodies is contextualized within the pervasive myth of suicide leapers after the stock market crash of 1929; and the post-9/11 monument is read in terms of a codified visual trope of absence that originates in post–World War II Germany. While attempting to add specificity to the early deployments

of theory, this project also implicitly calls attention to the shortcomings of the American perspectives, pointing out, for example, the lack of engagement with digital photography in trauma studies and the problems of the humanist base of cultural studies, both of which I suggest benefit from an encounter with poststructuralism, theories of autopoiesis, and the "inhuman turn."

This balancing act is made possible by conceiving of the visual experience broadly, approaching photography, film, graphic novels, monuments, and new media not simply in terms of the purely symbolic, but as constructions of vision. While this approach is a by-now-familiar one, several caveats should be made with regard to the kind of visual studies that this project aligns itself with. The first of these is evident in the sheer irony of a project which utilizes *visual* studies as means to engage and analyze the *in*visible. As W. J. T. Mitchell points out, the field has a penchant for being easily seduced by grand pronouncements of a "visual turn." This affirmation of a "hegemony of the visible" is problematic as it overlooks the role of extravisual sensorial experiences such as the haptic or aural, the enduring presence of text within contemporary culture, and the historical resonance of such pronouncements with a recurring anxiety regarding the image which goes back at least to the classical world. In this spirit of questioning the absolutism of such grand statements, this project posits the visual as at least partially the product of an encounter with its other. Indeed, the following chapters will suggest that, in the case of 9/11, it is this encounter which to a large extent makes possible the disaster as a legible, historical event.

The second stipulation concerns the place of materiality in the experience and, indeed, the construction of vision. Despite early anxieties regarding the "disappearance of the object" at the hands of an eyecentric model, visual studies has proven more than amenable to the close study of images and their formal properties. Whitney Davis succinctly summarizes the circular relation that recent revisions to the field have come to articulate between objects and visuality. In *A General Theory of Visual Culture,* he both portrays the material surface of visual culture as the creative product of "the period eye" which apprehends them, and at the same time acknowledges these surfaces as themselves accumulations of layers of acculturation which oversee what becomes visible. The

interrelation of these two dynamics occurs via a "feedback loop . . . [a] complex relay or recursion of vision into visuality and vice versa."[45] Placing the eye within such "feedback loops" necessarily involves shedding, whenever possible, the idea of a singular model of vision, and with it the notion of the "privileged spectator" that often populated early forays into visual studies.[46] Instead, this dynamic interaction suggests a model of what Nicholas Mirzoeff calls intervisuality, the simultaneous display and interaction of a variety of modes of visuality."[47] As these modes of seeing coexist in fragile formations rather than seamless or totalizing constructs in the context of 9/11, these instances of absence and erasure come to mark a site of conflict in which images, modes of seeing, embedded histories, and hybrid media circulate. It is this formative drama that occupies this project.

Chapter 1, "From Latent to Live: Disaster Photography after the Digital Turn," considers the unique position of the photographer as of 2001, the first year that digital cameras outsold their analog counterparts. While trauma studies has established an enduring connection between the delayed temporality of the camera and the psychic processes of deferral, these relations were thrown into contention by the instantaneity of the digital format. At the same time, the actual experience of photographers "on the ground" suggests that this familiar narrative of digitization was incomplete or partial, as the "most photographed disaster in history" was just as often captured in celluloid as in binary code. This chapter considers the ways in which this hybrid medium of photography produced new modes of non-seeing in the context of the disaster, especially in relation to the analog film camera.[48]

Perhaps the most memorable image of 9/11, aside from that of the collision of the passenger jets with the towers, is the *Falling Man* photograph by Richard Drew. Chapter 2, "Origins of Affect: The Falling Body and Other Symptoms of Cinema," attempts to position this image in the context of a history of the representation of falling bodies so as to grapple with an enduring paradox. Despite its disproportionate representation in popular culture, jumping from tall buildings has never been a statistically significant form of suicide.[49] Why is it, then, that the image of the suicide leap figures so prominently in film, photography, and other visual media of the last century when its actual occurrence

is such a rare event? From where does the kind of grand cinematic leap originate if not from reality? In order to pursue the origin of this charge, this chapter extracts a structural affinity between the representation of falling in psychoanalysis (primarily Freud and Winnicott) and the cinema, so as to better understand the unique articulation of the fall that surfaces in the visual culture of 9/11.

In the aftermath of 9/11, the motif of the empty city in film and photography operated as a means to indirectly engage with an event that seemed otherwise off limits. Chapter 3, "Remembering-Images: Empty Cities, Machinic Vision, and the Post-9/11 Imaginary," engages with this phenomenon by contextualizing these images within a larger historical narrative. Whereas in Cold War cinema the paradox of witnessing a world without humans is utilized to issue a powerful clarion call to its viewers regarding the endgame of nuclear war, in the context of 9/11 these same relations are inscribed within more timely debates regarding the autonomy of media. Drawing from this iconography of emptiness, these images infuse the destructive violence of the disaster with anxieties regarding the "obsolescence" of the human in the face of increasingly self-sustaining audiovisual systems. Exemplary of this dynamic are the photographs of empty cities by Thomas Struth and Michael Wesely in which the prospect of a world without people is presented not as a prophecy or a threat but rather as the underlying condition of contemporary "mediality" and its undercurrents of surveillance and military force.

Almost immediately, the targeting of the World Trade Center was attributed to its status as a "monument" to capitalism. While the association of the towers with excessive commercialism has been with the site since its inception, the rhetorical connection to the monument in the aftermath pinpoints something precise about the conditions of 9/11. Chapter 4, "Lights, Camera, Iconoclasm: How Do Monuments Die and Live to Tell about It?," attempts to draw out this relationship by reading this metaphor in literal terms. Approaching the everyday operation of the towers and their destruction through the unique status of the contemporary monument sheds light on the ways in which these two trajectories of the structure are intertwined via a formative relation to media. However, in the course of pursuing this reading of the destruc-

tion of the towers, these insights reflect back upon the status of the monument, introducing a theme which will be taken up in the concluding chapter. Whereas this initial analysis of the monument will seek to establish the form as a kind of latent presence, an absence whose virtuality makes possible an interconnection to the image, the final chapter will look at the ways in which this potentiality is systematically contained and delimited via the larger power operations which inscribe it. Ironically, this reversal will transpire in the context of a visual motif which has historically signified the openness of nonhierarchical, participatory modes of articulating history.

Born out of what Thierry Groensteen describes an "art without memory," the mnemonic function of the graphic novel could not contrast more starkly with the permanency and timelessness of the more officially sanctioned cultural form of the memorial.[50] However, it is this opposition which allowed these two disparate media to form the virtual bookends to the period of iconoclasm that followed 9/11. The concluding chapter, "The Failure of the Failure of Images: The Crisis of the Unrepresentable from the Graphic Novel to the 9/11 Memorial," considers the way in which the progression instantiated by Art Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers* (2002) and Michael Arad's *Reflecting Absence* monument (2011) reflects a broader trajectory within the visual culture of the disaster which effectively bridges the gap between an unthinkable image and a permanent installation. Animating this narrative are questions regarding the representation of personal experience and the viability of the "unrepresentable" in the face of a ubiquitous and increasingly homogenized image of disaster.

Throughout these inquiries, the image of absence visualizes what Mondzain describes as the crossing of a threshold through which power is expressed. In light of the instability that such images seem to mark in the context of disaster, the intent of this book is less to give a totalizing theory of the invisible than to trace the ebb and flow of a complex interaction which undergirds the visual culture of the event. It pursues momentary linkages between images, modes of seeing, intellectual histories, and often hybrid media forms. In this it reiterates the kind of concatenation of detail that Irit Rogoff connects to the field:

> In the area of visual culture the scrap of an image connects with the sequence of a film and with the corner of a billboard or the window display of a shop we have passed by. . . . Images do not stay within discrete disciplinary fields.[51]

And yet in pursuing these chains of visual phenomena in the context of 9/11, this model comes to articulate a more radical proposition of looking at the spaces both between and within images, not just their interrelation or collective contributions to a visual field but their articulation of a realm of possibilities through which one witnesses the emergence of 9/11 as a legible event. It is this dialogue which is on display in the exchange between the visible and its other in the wake of the disaster.

Every time I press the shutter, the viewfinder closes. And
it happens so fast that what I'm mostly seeing is black. . . .
I didn't know what was occurring in front of my lens.

DAVE BRONDOLO,
New Yorker, on photographing 9/11

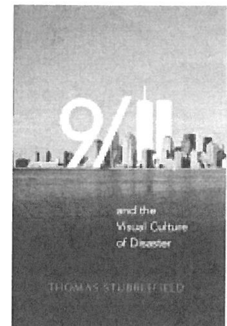
Armed with a lens to inject between myself and the world . . .

GEOFFREY WOLF,
The Sightseer

PROJECT MUSE®

9/11 and the Visual Culture of Disaster

Thomas Stubblefield



Published by Indiana University Press

Stubblefield, T..
9/11 and the Visual Culture of Disaster.
Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014.
Project MUSE., https://muse.jhu.edu/.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/35530

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ONE

From Latent to Live

DISASTER PHOTOGRAPHY AFTER THE DIGITAL TURN

As the first year that digital cameras outsold their analog counterparts, 2001 marked a tipping point in the digital turn, one that would forge a new relation between the medium and the spectacle of disaster.[1] With its dematerialization into code and capacity for instant transmission, the digital format allowed photography, perhaps for the first time in its history, to satiate the desire for "live" images. As a result of this sudden acceleration of the still image, the cultural position and function of film photography would endure an equally profound redefinition. In an attempt to retain legitimacy in the face of what John Roberts calls the "intrusion" of digital technologies and a "defeated documentary culture," film photography in the twenty-first century appeared to relinquish its hold on the now in favor of more reflective and distanced role.[2] As David Campany explains, in ceding "the representation of events in progress . . . to other media," the postdigital identity of the medium became bound to the role of the "undertaker," that shadowy figure who "turns up late, wanders through the places where things have happened" in order to document "the aftermath of the event" rather than the event itself.[3]

However, the experience of photographers "on the ground" on 9/11 suggests that this familiar narrative of digitization was momentarily compromised by the disaster. Within minutes of the collision, gift shops that surrounded the World Trade Center reported selling out of disposable film cameras. The manager of a Duane Reade drugstore in the vicinity of the towers even claimed to have sold between sixty and one hundred film cameras in the first hour of the attacks.[4] These accounts, along with the numerous exhibitions of amateur photography from that

day, confirm that the most photographed disaster in history was just as often captured on celluloid as in binary code. While one is tempted to diagnosis this phenomenon as a nostalgic return to a more familiar mode of seeing in the face of uncertainty, framing the issue in these oppositional terms tends to overlook the unique circumstances of this resurgence. As the rivalry between these formats was momentarily eclipsed by a larger desire for visibility, photography in the context of the disaster was no longer simply in a transitional state as of 9/11, but was rather a hybrid medium.[5]

As analog and digital platforms coalesced at the level of practice, new modes of vision were momentarily made possible which would challenge reigning assumptions regarding disaster photography. Under the influence of trauma studies, the camera's presence at the scene of the catastrophic events is typically read in terms of a defense mechanism which safely removes the subject from a scene that is too great. Manifesting as a kind of blindness within the operator's field of vision, this phenomenon is understood in terms of a failure to fully comprehend let alone experience the reality before the lens. However, as a result of the convergence of a series of conflicting forces which center on the delayed temporality of the analog medium and the disaster's demand for instant images, the non-seeing of analog practice was taken to such an extreme that it pushed what is under normal circumstances a deferral of vision into an indefinite suspension. As a result, the model of "looking away" which has characterized the relation of trauma to the camera came to disclose the possibility of what I will call non-seeing, a blindness in which the traumatic experience does not return in a newly encoded symbolic image, but rather remains within this absence as an unfathomable event. This overwhelming of the capacities of the film camera recalibrates familiar models of the sublime according to a new techno-imaginary where enduring metaphysical or transcendental associations are jettisoned in favor of a more immediate redistribution of the senses.

Given the evocative power of the photographs that came out of that day, it is on some level understandable that the operator's experience would take a back seat to the image in the scholarship on 9/11. However, subordinating the act of taking pictures to the lure of images not only

threatens to naturalize the interventions of both operator and apparatus, but also reinforces certain elisions within photographic theory more broadly. (It is telling in this respect that the two dominant figures of the field in the last half-century, Roland Barthes and Susan Sontag, both attest to a dislike for taking pictures.) For these reasons, this inquiry will begin before the image, or rather at a moment when the image exists in latent form, clouding the vision of the operator as a virtual presence. This broadened configuration of practice, which I will call the "photographic situation," understands the immediate phenomenological experience of the camera as a simultaneously futural event in which the present is roped to an impending image. Approaching the act of photography as the creation of an interval within experience serves to draw out the critical relationship between practice and image and in turn bring into view the larger transformations of the medium that were under way at the time of the disaster.

DISASTER PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE ABSENT OPERATOR

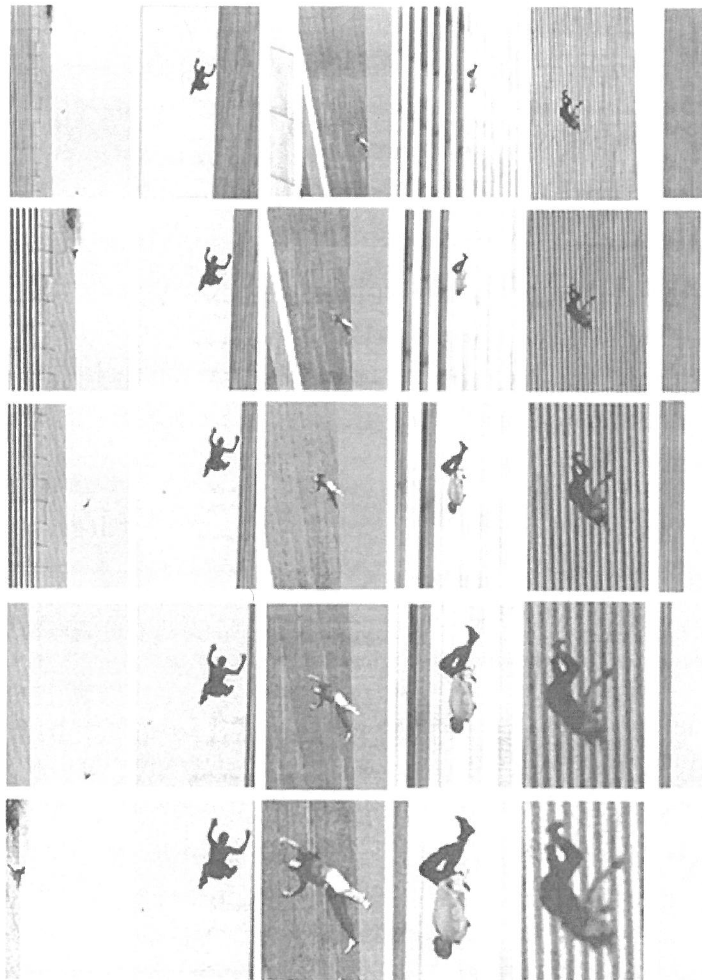
While the motivations behind the impulse to take pictures in the face of the 9/11 disaster are admittedly as varied as the images they produced, it is telling to find a recurring thread running through the accounts of those who either found themselves reaching for the camera or witnessed this response from afar. For example, E. Ann Kaplan describes her own urge to photograph in terms of "a desire to make real what I could barely comprehend."[6] David Friend similarly attributes this pervasive response to the realization that "only rendering this act visually would confirm its reality."[7] Citing the photograph's ability to forge order in the place of chaos, Barbie Zelizer describes its role in 9/11 as "a powerful and effective way of visually encountering the horrific event."[8] Reflecting a larger position within the critical study of 9/11, these comments attribute the resurgence of the still image to a collective need for clarity in the face of an unfathomable event, a desire to slow down and make sense of an event that happened "too fast" and that was because of its sheer scale and unprecedented nature incomprehensible at the time of its occurrence.

While photographs certainly allow for the kind of careful contemplation that the disaster itself does not, this possibility is more often than not contingent upon an impoverishment or at least displacement of the now at the level of the operator. The most well-known articulation of this relationship is found in Susan Sontag's *On Photography,* which famously argues that the act of taking a photograph functions first and foremost as a way of avoiding experience in the present. As an instrument of "non-intervention," the camera, according to Sontag, effectively removes its operator intellectually and even emotionally from the reality before the lens, a dynamic that becomes especially disconcerting in the face of human suffering. Sontag states,

> Photographing is essentially an act of non-intervention. Part of the horror of such memorable coups of photojournalism . . . comes from the awareness of how plausible it has become, in situations where the photographer has the choice between a photograph and a life, to choose the photograph. The person who intervenes cannot record; the person who is recording cannot intervene.[9]

The binary between immersed participation and detached observation is admittedly less restrictive in the context of everyday photography, as the operator seamlessly moves between positions in order to coax his or her model or simply arrange the scene before the lens. However, this scenario is often condensed into an either/or proposition in the disaster, where issues of life and death are often decided in a single, fleeting moment.[10] Even if a given photograph does not itself embody the "pregnant" or "decisive" moment, the potential for such images structures the scene of photography, fueling a prolonged production of images which sustains the disengagement of the operator. The interconnectedness between this pursuit of the image and the violence of the disaster is embodied in Carolee Schneemann's *Terminal Velocity* (2001), in which the artist arranges thirty images of the falling bodies of 9/11 in serial format. Emphasizing the downward motion of these bodies, the grid of images not only renders the compulsive nature of disaster photography visible, but also, in Warholian fashion, portrays this activity as somehow inseparable from the impending death of the camera's subjects.

However, when read in the context of her larger project it is clear that Sontag is, like so many of her contemporaries, interested more in diagnosing the alienation of the "image world" that the apparatus al-



1.1. Carolee Schneemann, *Terminal Velocity,* 2001. Black and white computer scans of falling bodies from 9/11. Enlarged sequences of seven columns by six rows—forty-two units, each 16 × 12 inches. Image courtesy of the artist. © 2013 Carolee Schneemann/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

legedly produces than in the specific operations which determine the moment of photography. By working backward from this recurring diagnosis of spectacle, a misleading conception of the noninterventionist quality of photography emerges. Specifically, what is considered an active denial on the part of the operator in these formulations is in reality a symptom of a larger sacrifice of vision that takes place via the photographic operation. From this standpoint, the operator does not so

1.2. Thomas Hoepker, *A Group of Young People Watch the Events of 9/11 from a Brooklyn Rooftop*, 2001. By permission of Magnum Photos.

much choose the camera over reality, but rather suspends the possibility of such a choice within the interval between blindness and sight that the processes of chemical photography introduce. Once incorporated within the photographic environment, the disaster no longer appears as a space of intervention; in fact, it no longer appears. This capacity of the photographic operation to produce non-seeing is illustrated by two controversial images produced during 9/11, both of which depict a disavowal of the camera at the moment of disaster.

In his 2006 *New York Times* article entitled "Whatever Happened to the America of 9/12?," Frank Rich wrestles with the larger implications of a photograph taken by Thomas Hoepker on September 11. The image shows a group of lounging New Yorkers, "taking what seems to be a lunch or bike-riding break, enjoying the radiant late-summer sun and chatting away as cascades of smoke engulf Lower Manhattan in the background."[11] Published on the fifth anniversary of 9/11, Rich's editorial portrays the image as representative of the growing nonchalance of the American public following the disaster: "Traumatic as the attack

on America was, 9/11 would recede quickly for many. This is a country that likes to move on, and fast."[12] Though the piece does not blame the medium per se for the troubling disconnect the image seems to visualize, Hoepker's photograph is nonetheless prompted to engage with its role in producing this disconnect by virtue of the photographer's implied participation in this practice of passive looking.

Ironically, Chris Schiavo, the second woman from the right in the photograph, is herself a photographer and would later confess to wrestling with these same issues of disaster photography on that day. However, unlike Hoepker, she decided to

> not touch a camera that day. Why? For many reasons including a now-obvious one: This somewhat cynical expression of an assumed reality printed in the *New York Times* proves a good reason. . . . But most of all to keep both hands free, just in case there was actually something I could do to alter this day or affect a life, to experience every nanosecond in every molecule of my body, rather than place a lens between myself and the moment.[13]

Hoepker's photo suggests that Schiavo's refusal of the camera is motivated not only by a desire to fully experience the event and thereby save it from reification, but more immediately to *see* the disaster. Its internal spectators – whether dismissive or seeking communal support in the face of uncertainty – compose themselves around the act of looking and thereby distinguish their experience from that of the camera and its operator. The stopped bicycle, the two chairs pulled up as if to allow those sitting in them to get a better look, and even the faces of those figures who momentarily turn away from the burning towers, suggest a verbal communication of what has just been seen. As such, the photograph presents two forms of looking: one based in direct apprehension and social engagement, and the other a remove, a virtual blindness that permeates the photographer's own vision of the disaster and perhaps even the "coverage" of the event more broadly.

Fellow Brooklyn photographer Tim Soter responded to the disaster in a similarly anti-photographic manner. Rather than capturing the event itself, the photographer chose to nonchalantly pose for the camera with the burning towers as his backdrop. While some have objected to the image and its seemingly opportunistic memorialization of human suffering (the work landed on the "wall of shame" in the *Here Is New York*

1.3. Tim Soter, *Self-Portrait,* 2001. By permission of the photographer.

exhibit), it nonetheless reveals something critical about the operation of the camera in the moment of disaster. According to the photographer, the image was born out of a simple desire to include himself in the narrative of a truly historic event and to perhaps even provide a document for his grandchildren who would one day "read about the event in a textbook."[14] In the process of fulfilling this witnessing function, the image necessarily presents the photographer's attempt to evade the camera and its eradication of the event. Accordingly, what might first appear to be a callous mode of apprehending the trauma of that day suggests the exact opposite. Rather, in posing for his own camera, Soter's reflexive gesture equates freedom from the apparatus with the possibility of communion with the disaster. Paradoxically, in order to make good on what John Berger describes as the most basic promise of the photograph, the assertion that "this particular event or this particular object has been seen," both Soter and Hoepker actively present a negation of the photographic

process. They testify to "having seen" by foregrounding the act of not photographing and in the process ascribe a kind of blindness to the apparatus that is willfully avoided.

The anxiety that these images visualize regarding the capacity of disaster photography to suspend vision would be validated by a roundtable discussion among the photographers of 9/11 in the weeks after the attacks. In this exchange, David Handschuh, who captured the collision of the jet with the towers in a now-iconic image, confessed to never seeing an airplane enter his frame. The next morning when a neighbor brought over a copy of the *Daily News* to his door he was stunned to find his byline underneath the image. Similarly, it was only after receiving a call from a lab technician that Richard Drew realized that his photograph of the exploding tower had also captured a person holding on to a piece of the crumbling building.[15] Like so many other New Yorkers, Will Nuñez raced to the local newsstand to buy a disposable camera after seeing the smoking crater in the North Tower. While shooting his colleague standing in front of the window of the thirty-second floor of One State Street Plaza, he inadvertently captured the second plane streaking through the frame, a detail that only became apparent after he got the film developed weeks later.[16]

Such instances dramatize the euphoric blindness which, as Vilém Flusser describes, shadows instances of "photo-mania." In these cases, photographers "are not 'in charge of' taking photographs, they are consumed by the greed of their camera, they have become an extension to the button of their camera. . . . A permanent flow of unconsciously created images is the result."[17] It is the very alterity of this flow of inanimate and mechanically produced images for which Walter Benjamin praised the medium. Transcending the limitations of vision, the camera's eye excavated that which was invisible to the everyday sensorium, the end result of which was a "salutary estrangement between man and his surroundings."[18] As the disaster confirms, the overcoming that Benjamin and other modernists celebrated is, however, the product of a negative relation to sight that is made possible by the camera's implicit promise to return experience as image. As the expectation of an ensuing image promises to fill in the blanks, the operator is relieved of the burden of fully experiencing the now and perhaps even subsequent reflec-

tion upon it. Consequently, the photographer's experience of the moment itself is one of inexperience and non-seeing. Sylviane Agacinski explains,

> In counting on a retrospective vision, in entrusting my memory to the material trace, I can save myself the effort of a subjective recollection, indeed even an attentive look at the present. This is how the amateur photographer risks depriving himself of any present.[19]

This guarantee of the return of the experience as image grants the photographer a bye so to speak, as it ensconces him or her in between the "not yet" and the "already no more" of the visible. Such is the unique position of the photographic interval, which effectively defers vision until a later date, leaving the photographer in what artist Ariel Goldberg calls "a place of delay and darkness."[20]

Through the relinquishing of vision that occurs in the practice of film photography, the impending image is able to establish the sight of the operator retroactively. However, at the time of its occurrence, the act of photographing leaves only a promise of return in its place. Barthes captures the future tense that this exchange ascribes to the photographer's vision (or lack thereof) in the following terms: "The photographer's 'second sight' does not consist in 'seeing' but in being there. And above all, imitating Orpheus, he must not turn back to look at what he is leading – what he is giving to me [the viewer]!"[21] By disentangling seeing from bearing witness, the camera offers a kind of godlike oversight of the world by which the very origins of reality are placed at the disposal of the operator, not so much in terms of content of the image or the deployment of technique, but rather in the simple and dramatic act of bringing vision into being once again. The euphoria of this possibility is dramatized in the opening of Italo Calvino's short story "The Adventures of a Photographer":

> [The weekend photographers] come back as happy as hunters with bulging game bags; they spend days waiting, with sweet anxiety, to see the developed pictures. . . . It is only when they have the photos before their eyes that they seem to take tangible possession of the day they spent, only then that the mountain stream, the movement of the child with his pail, the glint of the sun on the wife's legs take on the irrevocability of what has been and can no longer be doubted. Everything else can drown in the unreliable shadow of memory.[22]

As Calvino explains, the camera's suspension of experience/vision leaves a vague but "sweet anxiety" regarding its return as image while all that escapes the confines of representation is left to "drown in the shadow of memory," if it ever achieves entry into conscious life at all.[23]

Drawing upon the psychoanalytic understanding of trauma, scholars have tended to regard this disassociation of the photographic operation as a form of "looking away" that recalls the traumatic moment when the child perceives "the lack." In reaction to an unassimilable signifier which threatens to unravel the symbolic order, the subject in this model directs the gaze elsewhere, usually onto a fetish object whose presence momentarily restores the stability of self and world. The act of photographing, like the inner workings of trauma itself, allows us to evade experience in the moment so as to postpone our encounter with the event. The processes of chemical photography require that we wait for the image to be developed, whereupon we can engage with it in a more contemplative and controlled fashion. Commenting on this affinity, Ulrich Baer states, "Because trauma blocks routine mental processes from converting an experience into memory or forgetting, it parallels the defining structure of photography, which also traps an event during its occurrence while blocking its transformation into memory."[24] In the moment of taking the image, this deferral manifests within the visual register as a kind of blindness that is, under normal circumstances, eradicated or at least smoothed over with the return of the experience in the form of an image.

From this perspective, the persistent blindness among 9/11 photographers would seem to confirm the camera's role in providing what Bob Rogers calls "a substitute for assimilating the psychological and sociological implications of what has been witnessed."[25] Yet there are numerous complications with this association. Despite working through a similar logic of belatedness, the temporal delay of trauma cannot so easily be collapsed with the processes of chemical photography. Such a position overlooks the fact that, in the case of photography, the reappearance of the image is under the explicit control of the subject, whereas Freud's understanding of "deferred action" is one in which the traumatic resurfacing of the event is traumatic in part because of its sudden and unpredictable appearance. As Jean Laplanche points out, it is for this reason that sexual development proves so fertile a ground for the experience

of *après coup,* as it proceeds according to an "unevenness" that has a tendency to abruptly introduce the subject to a body of knowledge which drastically revises his or her understanding of past events. From Dora to the Wolf Man, Freud's case studies repeatedly illustrate the way in which this process often occurs against the will of the subject or at least without conscious consent. The reactivation of this previously elided event more often occurs by chance than intentionally, the result of an encounter with situations or ideas that bear some superficial similarity to the "psychic representatives" of the unassimilated event. Perhaps the most problematic element of this association of the camera with the psychoanalytic understanding of trauma is the assumption that the image is somehow synonymous with the event itself, as if the former operates as a transparent window upon the latter. Though certainly capable of triggering memories, an encounter with a two-dimensional representation must be distinguished from the resurfacing of a psychic event itself. Putting aside these not-unimportant issues, 9/11 exposed a more immediate clash between photography and the conceptual rubric of trauma which demands further scrutiny.

As one of the first large-scale disasters to be captured by amateur and professional photographers in digital form, 9/11 would require a reconsideration of many of the basic assumptions of disaster photography.[26] In the process of engaging this important yet still unresolved question of the role and significance of digital technology as a medium for recording disaster, I would like to shift the emphasis backward, so to speak, and look at the ways this new medium transformed the above relations of the analog film camera. From this perspective, the incongruence between the temporality of the analog still and the disaster's thirst for live images meant that the model of "looking away" which has characterized the relation of trauma to the film camera came to disclose a new mode of vision, one that was intimately connected to the historically specific conditions of the image as of 9/11.

THE VIEWFINDER IN THE SHADOW OF THE SCREEN

Beginning with William J. Mitchell's canonical text *The Reconfigured Eye,* scholars have painstakingly cataloged the ramifications of the digi-

tal turn in terms of the image, noting a greater instability that has resulted from the fluidity of transmission, a non-indexical relation to the real, and an overall dematerialization. However, the advent of digital photography has also had important ramifications at the level of practice, perhaps the most immediate of which concern issues of temporality. As taking and viewing the photograph occur in what for all intents and purposes are the same, indivisible moment, the accelerated temporality of digital photography reduces the interval of its analog counterpart to near nonexistence. Nicholas Mirzoeff presents this condensed temporality of the digital image in terms of an "expanded present" which "intrudes briefly into the past but is experienced as a continuum."[27] Accordingly, the act of taking pictures is no longer structured around the expectation of return but rather is experienced as what Pavel Büchler describes as an encounter with a "found object," something that we "come across without knowing what we are looking for."[28]

The recoding of the still image as live flows in large measure from the digital process of (pre)view which presents the scene before the lens as moving image rather than supplement or prosthetic to "natural" vision. As an extension of systems of perspective, the optical, embodied experience of the analog SLR tends to incorporate vision in its entirety. From the black curtain to the matte finish of the camera body, the obscuring of direct visual apprehension of the outside world allows for a near-perfect conversion of binocular to monocular vision. This prosthetic character of the analog camera is, however, largely absent from digital practice as the camera is disconnected from the body, is held at arm's length, and consequently produces an image that is in visual dialogue with the object or event it purports to record. This shift in photographic practice from prosthetic or "natural" vision to autonomous view is reflective of a larger dynamic of premediation which undergirds the digital experience. By substituting an already coded image for what film theorists once called "the pro-filmic event," the operator's task is recast in terms of enacting screen captures within an enclosed flow of data, a conjuring of the image through an intermedia exchange between movement and stillness. As such, the practice of photography produces an image which remediates rather than represents, recurs rather than returns. This relation is both the basis for the virtual simultaneity that the still image achieves with

the present and the motor by which the practice of photography loses its future orientation.[29]

Artist Scott Kildall illustrates the way in which this new temporality of the still image collides with existing expectations to create a heterochronic experience of the camera. In his *Video Portraits* series (2006–2008), Kildall approaches strangers with his digital camera and asks if he can take their picture. While the subject assumes and then struggles to hold a pose for the impending photograph, Kildall records them with the camera's video function. The sitters are then left to wait for the click of the camera, which never comes. In the context of this indefinite suspension, both the subject and the viewer of Kildall's work eventually become aware of the futility of waiting for the image. Not only does the seemingly interminable length of these pieces eventually give up the ruse, but so does the unabridged access to the now that the camera presents in its place actively displace the expectation of such an image. Eventually, one comes to realize that the portrait they await is right before them, a suspicion that is confirmed by the work's title, which is not *Photos in Waiting* or something of the sort, but *Video Portraits.* As the "portrait" and the moment of transcription come to exist in the same singular moment, the deferral that we expect from the camera is eradicated as the still "photograph" is rendered not only animate, but live.

In the following passage, Johanna Drucker describes the larger implications of the painfully awkward performances that ensue in Kildall's work:

> Their expressions change and flickers of mood – anxiety, annoyance, frustration, question, flirtation – show dramatically that they have internalized the idea of "the photograph" as a final event, a flash, a quick slice through ongoing life, a record, an instant. They dodge toward and lunge away from the camera, waiting for the moment, the snap, the action of the shutter. Their movements are always anticipating immobility, and as Kildall stretches out the clock in an unspecified stretch of time, they begin to exhibit a restless uncertainty about exactly how to define what it is that the photograph is. Have they missed it? Is it coming? What is the *it,* the phenomenon, the photograph? A limited frame, a time frame, cut, held, fixed, defines the photograph. And Kildall refuses to fix the frame, take the picture.[30]

By disclosing those intimate moments of preparation which betray the kind of affectation that the "good" photograph successfully conceals, the

1.4. Still from Scott Kildall's *Video Portraits* series, 2006–2008. By permission of the artist.

work compromises the medium's enduring connection to memory and death.[31] As Barthes points out, the static postures and artificial expressions that comprise this "making of oneself into image" form a ritual which has from the medium's inception been regarded as a prefiguration of death. However, while the practice of analog photography obliterates the now as a precondition for its future resurrection, the image in digital practice provides an anterior future, confirming what one has already seen, delivering immediately what was once irrevocably lost to the moment. In this way, the "givenness" of the image, its precession in the form of a live preview, acts as a guard against the very loss that motivates the analog experience.

Kildall's work thus dramatizes not only the enduring artificiality of the photographic portrait, but more importantly for the purposes of this chapter, the way in which the experience of deferral that is built into the analog process is suddenly rendered palpable in the shadow of the digital image. Now the image appears missing, more distant and

less connected to the time of its taking than it once was. An ad campaign launched four months before 9/11 for the Sony Cybershot camera capitalizes on this relative lag. The commercial features a group of young women whose lunch is suddenly interrupted as Aerosmith lead singer Steven Tyler walks across the room. As they frantically reach for their cameras, the table is upended, wine splashes against a white tank top, and the once-tranquil scene begins to resemble an Aerosmith video. Within this chaos, one woman effortlessly removes her digital camera, tracks her prey on screen, and then captures the perfect image while a film camera falls from her girlfriend's purse and pops open upon hitting the floor. In the meantime, the women are crowding around the playback screen of the digital camera, which has not only sidestepped the dangers of exposing film but delivered the image for inspection before Tyler even leaves the room. The tagline which follows reinforces the camera's newfound capacity for instant review: "The great little camera with a great big screen."[32] Reversing the hierarchy between the screen (viewing) and the image (taking) that traditionally accompanies photographic practice, the slogan distills a larger dynamic which will culminate in the disaster, one which allows the apparatus to function as an instrument for seeing rather than representation.

As these examples suggest, not only does the digital format allow for a virtual simultaneity between taking and viewing images, but so does it in turn bring the interval of the film camera to light in almost irritating vividness. As such, the unconscious processes of deferral that were implicit in film photography now move to the level of conscious experience. While prompted by the arrival of the digital format, this consciousness of deferral is only exacerbated by the disaster, where the urgent need for images pushed photography even further toward instantaneity and away from the model of deferral discussed above. As the analog image collided with the digitized media sphere of 9/11, the film camera was subject to a relative "loosening" or deceleration of the interval between the click of the shutter and the return of the experience as image. Indeed, these relations momentarily made possible a disconnect between the terms of the interval, a collapse between taking and viewing images. This possibility is illustrated by stories such as that of Gulnara Samoilova, who, after photographing the events of 9/11, hurried home to develop the film

in her kitchen. While waiting for the chemicals to process the film, she turned to her TV to see the second building collapse.[33] Suddenly, the urgency was gone as the instantaneity of one medium trumped the belatedness of another, sending its image into a state of extended deferral.

While such anecdotes literalize the notion of an imageless experience of the camera discussed above, the larger claim is not simply that the immediacy of the image in the coverage of 9/11 made developing the filmic image a moot point, although this seems to be a not-uncommon response. [34] Rather, as a result of the unique position of the medium as of 9/11, analog practice offered the possibility of an indefinite deferral of vision, a non-seeing which in opening the interval of photographic practice would undermine the very distinction between seeing and its other. Far from impoverishing or eradicating experience, this absence within vision, like the "negative presentation" of the sublime experience, allowed for an encounter with the unfathomability of the event that the image itself seems bound to delimit and contain. At the same time, these historically contingent and fleeting assemblages of vision would disconnect the sublime from its intimations of the absolute, disclosing the film camera as not only an instrument of the imagination but also a means of de-imaging a disaster which from the beginning appeared to take place within and for the image.

DOES THE DISASTER WANT TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED? NEGATIVE PRESENTATION AND THE ANALOG SUBLIME

Of the varied reactions to 9/11, two seemed to take center stage, forming a sort of mantra of the witness in the aftermath. Over and over, firsthand accounts described the event as both "like a movie" and "unreal." The seeming paradox of this simultaneity, which posits both unrepresentability and an image-like quality, reflects the central paradox of the sublime. While the sheer intensity of the sublime experience would seem to ally it with those events perceived as vividly real, somehow more fully present than the banal occurrences of everyday life, philosophy has consistently pointed to cognitive failure as its founding characteristic. As an overwhelming of the faculties, such experiences have generally been understood as the tendency of larger-than-life events or objects to ex-

ceed, interrupt, and thereby expose the inadequacy of our ability to fully apprehend, let alone make sense of, an extraordinary reality.

In the *Critique of Judgment,* Kant refers to the perception of such phenomena in terms of a "negative presentation" in that they prompt a failure of the imagination which manifests as an image of the absence or, at least, incompleteness of the object or event in question. According to Kant, this short-circuiting of perception occurs in two modes: the mathematically sublime and the dynamically sublime. In the case of the former, we are presented with something that "is large beyond all comparison" such as a mountain as seen when standing at its base, or the pyramids in Egypt when taken in from a similarly overwhelming vantage point. However, as this sublime is rooted in the incompatibility of perception and those *a priori* conceptual categories used to process such a perception, it is not the size of the object in itself that overwhelms. Rather it is only through a particular vantage point or mode of seeing that such experiences exceed human scale and thereby come to refuse the gestalt that our preexisting frames of reference seek to bestow upon them. The consequences of this "failure" of the imagination to adequately present the object to the mind are twofold: first, we are presented with the limits of our normative ability to process and perceive reality, and, second, the discrete forms on which these processes rely unravel into a state of "formlessness," thereby allowing the mind to "progress without hindrance to infinity." In order to understand how this violence to the imagination is the condition of possibility for the photographer's engagement with the disaster, a peculiar paradox of Kant's text must come to light, one that is perhaps best illustrated by his discussion of the dynamically sublime and its relation to reason.

In the case of the dynamically sublime, size is replaced with power, as in, for example, the unbridled strength of a stormy sea (actual) or the abyss beneath a cliff (imagined). Kant departs from his predecessor Edmund Burke by distinguishing the dynamically sublime from the experience of fear, claiming that, despite the initial danger, these phenomena must be witnessed from a relative position of safety in order to occasion the sublime. This caveat reflects a larger interest in claiming the sublime as "purposive," i.e., as reaffirming reason, despite its initial overwhelming of this faculty. Kant insists that while the initial experience

of the sublime is one of confusion and excess, the very ability to ponder something that exceeds the senses and the imagination (mathematically sublime) or to contemplate and cope with a potentially life-threatening experience without giving in to it (the dynamically sublime) reaffirms the supersensible faculty of reason. With this position Kant runs into an obvious problem, as this compensatory gesture seems wholly incompatible with the kinds of experiences the sublime would seem to describe. One does not immediately associate the experience of, for example, being at sea in the midst of a roaring hurricane or leaning against the glass of the observatory deck of the Sears Tower with this kind of intellectual satisfaction. Clearly, an account must be made for the lingering shock of the sublime alongside this affirmation of reason. For this, he introduces the notion of "negative pleasure," which presents the movement between these two phases not in terms of an irreversible, causal relation but as a "vibration" or "oscillation."[35] In light of this "rapid alternation" reason's superiority is momentary and partial, subject to the same inability to fully manifest as the very sublime event itself.

This relation is perhaps most clear in the context of the mathematically sublime, where the unboundness of the initial experience is accompanied by an idea, if not a direct apprehension, of its totality. The classic example here is the night sky. While processing the size and distance of such an object proves impossible, an idea of the universe persists which to a certain degree contains this "unbounded" object. In turn, the non-seeing of the sky, our inability to create and process an image in its totality, gives way to a particularly vivid mode of seeing. This occurs through a simultaneity between, on the one hand, a failure of perception, and, on the other, a persisting mental image of that which exceeds perception. In this way, the subject of the sublime successfully contemplates the scale and power of the event while at the same time tasting its incomprehensibility, simultaneously mastering it and letting him- or herself be mastered by it.[36]

In the context of the disaster, this duality of the sublime experience finds its correlative in the film camera and its transformation of vision. As the apparatus bifurcates the operator's gaze it similarly presents visual experience in terms of a reconciliation between two conflicting images – one which manifests within the viewfinder as an incomplete

image, the other the product of an imaginative act through which the impending photograph comes to shadow the present as latent presence. Alejandro González Iñárritu's contribution to the anthology film *September 11* integrates this unique mode of vision into its mode of address and in so doing illustrates the formative relationship that the camera maintains to the sublime experience in the context of this event.

The work begins with a slowly building soundtrack of panicked voices and ambient sound which plays against an entirely black screen. After almost a full two minutes of darkness, an image flashes and then disappears. As similar images begin to appear more rapidly and eventually remain onscreen long enough to be deciphered, they come to reveal bodies falling from the World Trade Center at almost incomprehensible speeds. Immersed in darkness for the majority of the film, the viewer struggles to situate him- or herself within this filmic space as desperate voices and occasional screams seem to come from all directions. With the viewer's eyes adjusted to the darkness, the flash of images is intrusive, literally difficult to watch. Its afterimage lingers in the absent spaces from which it emerges, merging the work's claims to visibility with its outright refusal to do so. While the film's scenes of falling bodies are composed of video footage, their momentarily flash mimics the photographic act and as such asks the viewer to extrapolate the logic of the film to the experience of the camera. Indeed, the spectator position of the film is in many ways that of the disaster photographer whose precarious oscillation between survival and image, seeing and non-seeing, appears written into its very form.

It is telling that the film conjures such an intense affective charge by mimicking the experience of the camera, integrating its structure of delay and return, opening its intervals to interminable durations before finally delivering the tortured image. Clearly, in a world where disaster is signified by a swarm of cameras, the photographer's experience appears as both psychic code and visual shorthand for the experience of trauma. However, in merging the camera's transformation of vision with the psychic experience of disaster, the film suggests a larger interpenetration, one which is at the center of Flusser's theory of the photographer and the arrival of a "techno-imagination."

1.5. A body falls from the World Trade Center in Alejandro González Iñárritu's segment of the anthology film *September 11* (2002).

As a postindustrial form of labor which displaces work onto the apparatus, the "photographic gesture" in its normative instance is one of play, an incessant recombination of possibilities within a given "program." The givenness of these space-time manipulations is central to what Flusser describes as the Kantian base of the photographic operation:

> One time and space for extreme close-up; one for close-up, another for middle distance, another for long distance; one spatial area for a bird's-eye view, another for a frog's-eye view; another for a toddler's perspective; another for a direct gaze with eyes wide open as in olden days; another for a sidelong glance. Or: one area of time (shutter speed) for a lightning-fast view, another for a quick glance, another for a leisurely gaze, another for a meditative inspection. . . . The result is a mass culture of cameras adjusted to the norm; in the West, in Japan, in underdeveloped countries – all over the world, everything is photographed through the same categories. Kant and his categories become impossible to avoid.[37]

The apparatus's articulation of these universal categories not only provides the condition of possibility for translating experience into a codified and legible image, but also decenters the processes of cognition through a dynamic exchange between camera and operator. In applying these categories to their subjects, photographers ("functionaries") mani-

fest the apparatus's preprogrammed possibilities at the same time that they subject this process to their own desires ("The camera does the will of the photographer but the photographer has to will what the camera can do").[38] While imagination ("the specific ability to abstract surfaces out of space and time and project them back into space") serves as "the precondition for the production and coding of images," the camera itself supplies what Kant refers to as the "ontological predicate" of perception, those categories through which thought takes place and in turn the world comes into being.

This externalization of Kant's representationalist philosophy is in many ways prefigured by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, who understand the selective function of the culture industry as a displacement of once-internal processes of cognition. They explain,

> Kant's formalism still expected a contribution from the individual, who was thought to relate the varied experiences of the senses to fundamental concepts; but industry robs the individual of his function. Its prime service to the customer is to do his schematizing for him. Kant said that there was a secret mechanism in the soul which prepared direct intuitions in such a way that they could be fitted into the system of pure reason. But today that secret has been deciphered.[39]

For Horkheimer and Adorno, the self-realizing demographics of marketing combined with the predictability of genre and the sheer ubiquity of mass culture allow the culture industry to effectively supplant the individual so as to reproduce the material conditions of exploitation.[40] Flusser's revisions to Kant, on the other hand, suggest a less deterministic relation which proceeds according to reciprocity rather than repression. For Flusser, photographing operates as a means of "post-ideological manipulation" in that it relies upon the seeming autonomy of choice at the same time that it delimits and contains the possibilities in which this "freedom" can take place. This departure from the top-down deployment of power complicates the relation of the camera to vision, as the enigmatic "black box" is in this exchange neither a prosthetic extension of its operator nor an autonomous agent which covertly reprograms the sensorium. Rather, echoing Foucault's abandonment of the "repressive hypothesis," Flusser's camera oversees a reciprocity or "unity" in which the subject's seemingly autonomous operation of the device serves to reproduce (at the level of form rather than content) the authority of those

underlying parameters of experience which the apparatus articulates. This circle establishes a "symmetry between the function of the photographer and that of the camera, [so that the] apparatus functions as a function of the photographer's intention [and] this intention itself functions as a function of the camera's program."[41]

For Flusser, the static quality of these givens ("Photographers can only photograph what they can photograph") is at the root of the medium's connection to totalitarianism, as it provides the universal language through which large-scale processes of homogenization can take place. In the context of 9/11, the same immutability of these analog "camera-categories" prompts a confrontation between the camera's mode of seeing and the accelerated urgency of disaster in the face of the digital turn. As these latter forces resist the film camera's attempts to process the scene, they come to fuel an overwhelming of these mechanized categories, thereby prompting this "techno-imagination" to reproduce the Kantian experience of formlessness. Paul Crowther explains the latter in the following terms:

> If we view a mountain in the distance it has a characteristic shape which enables us to describe it as a "mountain." But suppose that we are standing at its base with, perhaps, its higher reaches shrouded in mist. Under these conditions . . . the mountain seems . . . to be a limitless phenomenal mass or aggregate, without any defining shape or form.[42]

While on the one hand the negativity and formlessness of the sublime event testifies to a violence performed upon the imagination, on the other, it is precisely this inability to "see," or at least to see fully, that grants us access to a beyond representation for Kant. As Derrida points out, "In this violent renunciation . . . the imagination gains by what it loses. . . . It gains in extension and in power. . . . [The] potency is greater than what is sacrificed." Understanding the productive nature of this breakdown in the context of 9/11 involves recognizing the ways in which this concept is literalized for the film photographer. As the apparatus comes to function more as means of looking than imaging, it aids the exchange between operator and "black box" described above at the same time that it makes possible the increasingly inconceivable prospect of an experience without an image. In holding off rather than producing images, the disaster thus offers what Flusser calls "meta-programming,"

a *detournement* of the camera by which this "anti-apparatus" comes to work against the camera's most essential functions.[43]

The unfathomability that the analog camera produces is in this relation clearly not the transcendental outside to representation, nor does it offer the thinly veiled intimations of an absolute which has historically accompanied the concept of the sublime. As the camera furnishes the categories through which sensation can be translated into experience, what were once *a priori* categories of the soul materialize in Flusser's theory as mechanical conventions. As such, these "camera-categories" form not only the ground from which the photographic act emerges, but also the conditions for their own overwhelming. In this regard, one can read the sublime's "negative presentation" of the disaster in a dual sense – not only as the Kantian overwhelming of categories of reason, but also as the return of the unique and specific cultural conditions which are necessarily elided by the universal image.[44] As the image "ensnare[s] the cultural conditions like a net with a limited view through its mesh," the photographer must endure a kind of blindness in order to see the contents of this web. The unique position of the camera as of 9/11 momentarily made such an experience possible.

PREMEDIATION AND SUBLIME SPECTATORSHIP

Nearly half a century ago, Guy Debord famously declared that "all that was once directly lived has now become mere representation."[45] While intended to diagnose a larger cultural condition of postwar consumerism, this statement succinctly describes the transformation of vision that occurs as the photographer raises the camera to his or her eye. By collapsing vision with a virtual image to come, the gaze of the photographer presents what Heidegger explained in a different context as "[not] a picture of the world, but the world conceived and grasped as picture."[46] The dual temporality of this "world picture" enacts a bifurcation within vision whereby the now of the viewfinder is intertwined with the futural dimension of a latent image. While the above discussion has focused on the way in which this interval can emulate the sublime's "radical openness," it is important to point out that, in its everyday instantiation, this interstice or in-between is also the site where photographic practice is

co-opted by the spectacle.[47] The ramifications of this interpenetration are illustrated by the following scene from Don DeLillo's novel *White Noise.*

> Several days later Murray asked me about a tourist attraction known as the most photographed barn in America. We drove 22 miles into the country around Farmington. There were meadows and apple orchards. White fences trailed through the rolling fields. Soon the signs started appearing. THE MOST PHOTOGRAPHED BARN IN AMERICA. We counted five signs before we reached the site. There were 40 cars and a tour bus in the makeshift lot. We walked along a cowpath to the slightly elevated spot set aside for viewing and photographing. All the people had cameras; some had tripods, telephoto lenses, filter kits. A man in a booth sold postcards and slides – pictures of the barn taken from the elevated spot. We stood near a grove of trees and watched the photographers. Murray maintained a prolonged silence, occasionally scrawling some notes in a little book.
>
> "No one sees the barn," he said finally.
>
> A long silence followed.
>
> "Once you've seen the signs about the barn, it becomes impossible to see the barn."
>
> He fell silent once more. People with cameras left the elevated site, replaced by others.
>
> "We're not here to capture an image, we're here to maintain one. Every photograph reinforces the aura. Can you feel it, Jack? An accumulation of nameless energies."
>
> There was an extended silence. The man in the booth sold postcards and slides.
>
> "Being here is a kind of spiritual surrender. We see only what the others see. The thousands who were here in the past, those who will come in the future. We've agreed to be part of a collective perception. It literally colors our vision. A religious experience in a way, like all tourism."
>
> Another silence ensued.
>
> "They are taking pictures of taking pictures," he said.
>
> He did not speak for a while. We listened to the incessant clicking of shutter release buttons, the rustling crank of levers that advanced the film.
>
> "What was the barn like before it was photographed?" he said. "What did it look like, how was it different from the other barns, how was it similar to other barns?"[48]

The scene illustrates how ubiquitous and excessive mediation undercuts the future orientation of the photographic practice and in the process introduces a nonproductive conception of blindness into vision of the operator/spectator. Photography in these instances functions as a reaffirmation of the status quo, a "taking pictures of pictures" which only

reproduces the dominant image of reality. As such, the photographer's gaze is simultaneous to a destruction of vision as it delimits and destroys experience outside of this pervasive image ("No one sees the barn"; "It becomes impossible to see the barn"). Contrary to the negative presentation of the sublime, this blindness is nonactive; it is simply the placeholder for a no-longer-accessible real. These relations are made possible through a vast collectivization, what Flusser describes as "an embodiment of the social apparatus of representation" whereby users reaffirm the authority of this dominant image through individual practice.[49] In this way, the network of "nameless energies" that the narrator of *White Noise* senses in the swarm of clicking shutters before him dramatizes a "mass culture of cameras adjusted to the norm."[50]

The capacity of photography to reproduce the spectacle is particularly pronounced in the context of the disaster, where the virtual image manifests in accordance with what Christine Battersby refers to as "our over-familiarity with framed images of apocalypse and tragedy."[51] As these images "distance us from the force of uncontained power," the operator can and often does close the interval discussed above, thereby evoking DeLillo's circular narrative.[52] However, it is the sheer unavailability of analog photography's program to the user, its refusal of easy reconfiguration, which both granted the medium its dominance and universality and opened the photographer's vision to the kind of overwhelming of these categories in the context of 9/11. As a result of the convergence of multiple dynamics, which include the near-perfect distribution of analog and digital media at the time of the disaster and the relative deceleration of the film camera at the hands of a pervasive desire for live images, the photographer's gaze became entangled in a web of conflicting temporalities and expectations. In these instances, the logic of deferral which characterizes the analog image clashed with the larger desire for instant visibility, leaving an activated absence in the place of the virtual image. As a result of this absence, the apparatus came to work against itself, holding the balance between image and non-image in an indefinite suspension so as to present the shattered landscape before its assimilation into an image. However, this apparent escape from representation must be qualified, as its articulation of the outside is dependent upon and at least partially the product of the

techno-imagination of the camera which presents this deferral of vision not as negation or erasure but as an active production of invisibility. While the structure of disavowal and delay has long been the basis for an enduring connection between the psychoanalytic understanding of trauma and the seemingly universal phenomenon of disaster photography, such assemblages problematize this enduring approach. Rather than a "motivated" gesture of disconnect by which an autonomous unconscious intervenes, this unique mode of vision recognizes the formative role of media in the sensorium's processing of time and space and, in turn, removes the negative connotations of the disaster photographer for whom looking away no longer functions as a means of circumventing contact.

An excess of speed turns into repose.

ROLAND BARTHES

In 1900, the soul suddenly stopped being a memory in the form of wax slates or books, as Plato describes it; rather, it was technically advanced and transformed into a motion picture.

FRIEDRICH KITTLER

Concerning Consequences

STUDIES IN ART, DESTRUCTION, AND TRAUMA

Kristine Stiles

The University of Chicago Press *Chicago and London*

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The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 60637
The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., London
© 2016 by Kristine Stiles
All rights reserved. Published 2016.
Printed in the United States of America

24 23 22 21 20 19 18 17 16 15   1 2 3 4 5

ISBN-13: 978-0-226-77451-0 (cloth)
ISBN-13: 978-0-226-77453-4 (paper)
ISBN-13: 978-0-226-30440-3 (e-book)

DOI: 10.7208/chicago/9780226304403.001.0001

Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
Stiles, Kristine, author.
Concerning consequences : studies in art, destruction, and trauma / Kristine Stiles.
pages cm
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-226-77451-0 (cloth : alkaline paper) — ISBN 978-0-226-77453-4 (paperback : alkaline paper) — ISBN 978-0-226-30440-3 (e-book) 1. Art, Modern—20th century. 2. Psychic trauma in art. 3. Violence in art. I. Title.
N6490.S767 2016
709.04′075—dc23
2015025618

⊗ This paper meets the requirements of ANSI/NISO Z39.48–1992 (Permanence of Paper).

In conversation with Susan Swenson, Kim Jones explained that the drawing on the cover of this book depicts directional forces in "an X-man, dot-man war game." The rectangles represent tanks and fortresses, and the lines are for tank movement, combat, and containment: "They're symbols. They're erased to show movement. I'll draw a tank, or I'll draw an X, and erase it, then re-draw it in a different position. . . . But when they're killed they're erased and that leaves a ghost image. So the erasing is a very important element of the war drawings. . . . The important thing is that it's always changing" (Susan Swenson, "Conversation with Kim Jones: April 25, 2005. New York City," in *Kim Jones: War Paint* [Brooklyn, NY: Pierogi, 2005], 4). Two years earlier, Jones described his "war drawings" as images of "a war that never ends" in *Teaching a Dead Hand to Draw: A Studio Visit with Kim Jones*, a fifteen-minute video codirected by David Schmidlapp and Steve Staso (2003).

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Introduction

"If sacrifice is necessary, it must be accompanied by the appropriate ceremonies, [as] an unceremonious sacrifice is a crime against the natural world,"[1] With this comment, the Chinese artist Ai Weiwei closed his reflections on the torture of the Moon Bear, the Asian black bear with a white crescent on its chest that is strikingly similar to some genera of prehistoric bears. After the animal is captured, and before it is confined to a "crush cage" too small for it to stand up or turn around in, tubes are inserted painfully into its gall bladder to extract bile, a valuable commodity in traditional Chinese medicine. The Moon Bear is often caged from ten to twelve years; its muscles atrophy, and even if it is rescued, Ai explains, it remains "wrecked in spirit" and displays "characteristics common to manic depressives," or psychological trauma.[2] In protest, the artist declares: "The world belongs to animals . . . willing to live with us," but only in "trust. . . . When trust disintegrates, the world will crumble, and nothing can thrive."[3] Ai continues with a reference to social responsibility: "Any animal that considers itself of a higher order," as humans presumably do, "should, by duty, protect weaker animals." The result of failing this trust is "terror," "cruelty," and a "helpless world."[4]

The human animal can also become "wrecked in spirit," a common condition of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the etiology of which the American Psychiatric Association identified in 1980.[5] PTSD may include many, and sometimes all, of the following alterations in somatic and psychological functioning: impaired affect and difficulty interpreting, expressing, or acknowledging internal emotional states; intrusive thoughts, flashbacks, and nightmares; numbing and dissociation; and the psychic intrusion of the death imprint. The more specific term, "complex post-traumatic stress disorder" (C-PTSD), has been used to describe prolonged exposure to physical, psychological, and/or sexual abuse; captivity and the inability to flee a situation; being forced to succumb to the restraint and abuse of a perpetrator; the continuous impact of racism, homophobia, and other disruptions of identity; extended exposure to war, dictatorial regimes, cults, and terrorism; and the impact of natural disasters.[6]

Extreme, prolonged circumstances in which one is forced to lose complete

control may lead to the loss of a sense of a unified self, a condition often diagnosed as dissociative identity disorder (DID), previously known as multiple personality disorder (MPD). Symptoms include involuntary disconnection from reality, compartmentalization, and splitting of identity, a process that entails walling off of memories, thoughts, and actions, which may lead to the development of two or more alternate personalities. In addition, studies have shown that the DNA of children exposed to extraordinary and protracted psychological, physical, and/or sexual abuse shows "wear and tear normally associated with aging."[7] Neuroscience confirms the biological basis of trauma, and the fact that pain can "force an indelible impression on the brain . . . be it mammalian, reptile, or even invertebrate," affecting the hippocampal formation which is critical to declarative memory.[8] Despite scientific evidence and growing public awareness of the impact of trauma on humans and animals, an urgent need continues worldwide for much deeper understanding of the complexities of trauma and its dire consequences.

Since the mid-1980s, when trauma studies began to emerge, humanists have located the concept of trauma as a category of knowledge in modernist psychoanalytic and psychiatric discourses,[9] genealogies,[10] the Holocaust,[11] war, genocide, the nuclear age, terrorism,[12] sexual violence and cults,[13] race, sex, and gender discrimination,[14] animals,[15] environmental disaster,[16] colonialism, migration, and diaspora.[17] Michel Foucault's groundbreaking *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (1961) is considered foundational to critical theories of trauma, for its scrutiny of madness in formations of history and memory. Beyond examining the epistemological adjudication of reason and madness in the institutions of the Western Enlightenment, Foucault did not discuss trauma directly. Nevertheless, at the end of *Madness and Civilization*, he summoned Goya's *Disparates* (ca. 1815–23) to describe the "man cast into darkness."[18] Such psychic despair leaves one numb, with the sense of being dead while still living: experience akin to what Foucault described as "screams from black holes."[19] Foucault's description anticipated by nearly twenty years the dissociated sense of inner nothingness that would be diagnosed as a primary condition of PTSD.[20] From the perspective of critical theory grounded in Foucault's work, it is reasonable to frame the emergence of trauma studies within psychoanalysis and corresponding modernist fields, especially considering that the French psychoanalyst Pierre Janet identified and named "dissociation" in 1889 as a foundational condition of trauma.[21]

Modernist histories, theories, and practices, however, are inadequate to account for trauma in the visual arts, where its representation could be said to have appeared for millennia, albeit under changing terminologies. To depart from modernism as the originating locus of the concept of trauma, this introduction turns to the Upper Paleolithic paintings in what is known as the *Shaft of the Dead Man*, a shaft located in the extensive underground cave at Lascaux in southwestern France. Parietal images with similar stylistic imagery were executed throughout the region's caves for a period of some twenty-four thou-

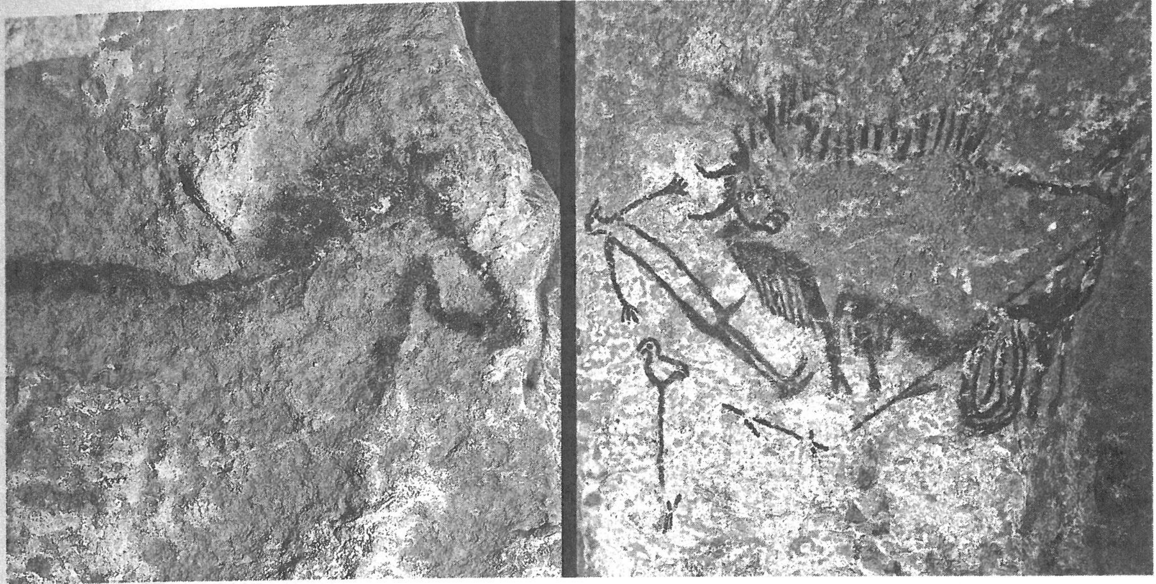

FIGURE 1. *Scene of the Dead Man* in the "Shaft of the Dead Man," ca. 16,800 BCE, Lascaux caves near the village of Montignac in the Vezère Valley, Dordogne, France. Iron oxide and manganese, mixed with water and animal fat, and charcoal.

sand years, from approximately 34,000 to 10,000 BCE.[22] The images in the shaft at Lascaux carbon date to about 16,800 BCE, and belong to what is known as the "shaft scene" (figure 1). I approach the "shaft scene" with the view that it is the earliest known representation of trauma, and I focus on what I describe as "the Bison's gaze" to introduce the supposition that the Paleolithic artist or group of artists (hereafter described as artist[s]) who depicted its primary narrative image—a ferocious encounter between a man and a bison—crafted a unique, multifaceted pictorial schemata for the purpose of communicating the worldly affect of violence and its traumatic circumstance.[23] My aim is to situate the shaft scene's imagery as a cornerstone of visual representations of trauma that belong not to modernism but to deep time, and most likely with unknown antecedents tens of thousands of years earlier. I will further suggest that the shaft scene may be understood as a visual corollary to Ai's twenty-first-century discussion of the Moon Bear's trauma, and that the pictorial and imaginal metaphors in the shaft scene bespeak the conscious effort of the Lascaux artist(s) to respond to the trust placed in them to reveal and transmit the exigencies of their time.

I am fully aware of the numerous obstacles to proposing a prehistoric lineage for images of trauma, risks that the anthropologist Margaret W. Conkey has systematically enumerated. Her warnings include that attempting to read images without words, from the standpoint of photographs and drawings rather than from direct access to the works themselves, may be suspect;[24] that the interpretive field within which such paintings have been approached "is as tectonic,

varied, and even as ironic as can be imagined";[25] and that while it is "likely" that such images "have something to do with symbolic and spiritual worlds," these worlds "lie outside the scope of what are considered plausible inferences in an archaeological time period for which even ethnographic analogies or the direct historical method are weak or lacking."[26] Whether or not these ancient paintings can be examined as historical evidence remains in question, according to Harvard anthropologist Ofer Bar-Yosef, who observes that such theories remain "suppositions."[27]

Despite these steep obstacles, Bar-Yosef also notes, "there is no way to satisfy the entire community of investigators because interpretations of the same evidence vary."[28] In a related comment, Conkey avows, "If there ever were a corpus of imagery that *should* be taken as historical evidence, it is . . . the thousands of images made in caves and rock shelters over at least a thousand generations [my emphasis]."[29] Taking Conkey's and Bar-Yosef's admonitions under advisement, I proceed with their cautionary encouragements. For, as Jean-Luc Nancy writes, it remains incumbent to make an effort to understand "the creation of the world and curiosity, [as] however far humanity is from being the end of nature or nature the end of humanity . . . the end is always being-in-the-world and the being-world of all being."[30] This book is a record of being-in-the-world for other beings.

THE BISON'S GAZE

The *Shaft of the Dead Man* is located in a fissure of the Lascaux cave with a drop of six meters (nearly twenty feet) into a pitch-black space where carbon dioxide can reach high levels of toxicity. The artist(s) executed the scene on the wall that faces the descent into the shaft's small space, which was accessible to only a few who would have shimmied by rope into the darkness, illuminating their way with small lamps flaming with deer fat ignited by juniper wicks. An elegant, highly polished, rose-colored sandstone lamp with two enigmatic signs incised on the upper face of its handle was found on the floor of the shaft among other lamps and cultural artifacts, offering evidence of how the artists lit their way.[31] On one wall of the looming rock face, the artist(s) depicted a brutal scene of mortal combat with no equal in Paleolithic art, in which less than 10 percent of animals depicted "appear to have been wounded or killed."[32] If the shaft scene eventually proves not to have been the first visual discourse on trauma, then it will certainly remain one of the most sophisticated compositional depictions on trauma in the history of art.

The shaft scene is constituted in two parts: a narrative scene on one wall and a solitary horse on a facing wall. Although the narrative scene has been widely interpreted, the single horse is uniformly disregarded in efforts to decipher the entire conceptual scheme of the ensemble of paintings in the shaft. The primary narrative, to which most attention has been focused, includes a bison with lashing tail, flying mane, gleaming humanlike eyes, and exposed entrails hanging in loops from its belly. The woolly beast's head faces an ithyphallic man who is

either in the midst of falling backward or already lying on the ground, but the bison's gaze is directed toward the viewer and at its own entrails, which are disemboweled by the javelin that pierces its body. The position of the figure on the ground is ambiguous, suggesting that the bison may have killed the man; but there is no evidence of goring, unless it is his penile erection, which may also be a consequence of death.

A staff with a bird's head standing upright in the ground near the man's body has prompted scholars to consider the figure a shaman disguised as a "bird-man."[33] A lance-throwing tool with a hook at its end that enables a hunter to propel a spear more effectively lies near the feet of the prone figure. This innovation in Upper Paleolithic weaponry has led some scholars to identify the man as the "spear thrower." What has been overlooked in discussions of this scene is the fact that the spear thrower itself lies nowhere near the site from which the spear apparently was hurled—namely, from behind the bison, as its point of entry and exit attest. Positioning the spear in the animal's body in this way and turning the bison's head toward its hindquarters, the Lascaux artist(s) seem to have sought a visual means to recognize the existence of viewers outside the immediate frame of representation, be they a hunter, who continues to be incriminated by the bison's gaze over millennia, or other witnesses called to attest to these events.

On an opposite wall of the shaft is the lone horse. This equine is a crucial figure in my interpretation of the shaft scene, for how it provides access to the broader social message regarding trauma that I think the Lascaux artist(s) aimed to convey. Though it is an animal of flight, the legs of the horse are not depicted, as are the full bodies of many of the other similar standing, grazing, and galloping horses in the main hall of the Lascaux cave. Rather, by attending only to the horse's upper torso—its head, neck, shoulder, withers, loin, croup, and haunch—the shaft scene artist(s) sharply focused on its attention to the scene, demonstrated by its pricked ears, poll held high, and keen, raised, and tense expressive posture. All of these physiological elements emphasize the equine's acute senses of sight, hearing, and smell, which for millennia have made horses sentinels, entrusted to watch over herds and nearby animals and to warn of impending danger.

By placing the horse at a safe distance from the main scene, and by separating it from the herd—an act that inculcates a state of alarm in an isolated horse—the artist(s) may have introduced it as a visual device to also alert viewers to a threat in the environment that its vigilance would register long before humans could perceive it. Such compositional devices suggest that the artist(s) meant to convey something of the dependence of Paleolithic society on the physiological aptitude and mental attitude of the horse as a guardian against imminent peril. In this context, it is significant that the bestiary in Lascaux is principally of herds of horses, whereas, here in the shaft, the introduction of the hypervigilant lone horse reinforces the distress implied by the traumatic content that is registered in the shaft's main scene and beyond.

Finally, a rhinoceros stands to the left of the prone man, with its back turned

to the drama. I do not consider the rhinoceros in the following discussion of the shaft scene narrative, because radiocarbon dating confirms that it was painted at a much later date.[34] Furthermore, as Norbert Aujoulat, head of the Department of Parietal Art in France for thirty years, points out, the main scene, including the observing horse, was painted in one graphic style while the rhinoceros was painted in an entirely different style, leading "very early on" to it being "interpreted as an unrelated element" in the scene. A series of pigment analyses confirmed Aujoulat's argument, and revealed "appreciable differences of composition and texture [and] the colouring agent" for the rhinoceros.[35] Six pairs of black dots in three vertically paired regular intervals appear just under the rhino's tail and extend in a line beyond it. The symbolic purpose of such dots is yet to be deciphered, but according to André Leroi-Gourhan, they appear to "mark the beginning and end of [a] whole decoration or of different parts of it."[36] If Leroi-Gourhan is correct, then the presence of the black dots might serve to confirm for viewers encountering the painting at a later period that the rhinoceros was added after the completion of the primary narrative scene. For these reasons I turn my back to the rhinoceros, which turns its back to the scene, in order to discuss the remarkable narrative event more carefully.

"Despite the numerous possibilities offered by the vast wall surfaces," Aujoula astutely observes, "only a very localized fraction of the space [of the shaft] was exploited."[37] Unlike the majority of images in the cave, where continuous friezes of animals appear, the shaft scene has a narrative that the artist(s) self-consciously contained in order to maximize its explicit message of a traumatic human/animal encounter. The point is that the artist(s) invented new compositional devices to communicate the social and ethical affect of this savage event, and organized their composition to both acknowledge the presence of viewers and converse visually with them. The goal of this protracted visual program was carefully realized in what might be identified as four innovative stylistic techniques: (1) the bison's gaze as a sign of the animal's recognition of its own wounded hindquarter, spilling entrails, and imminent death; (2) the bison's all-too-human gaze at a viewer standing in the space of the shaft; (3) the bison's gaze at the horse as a witness, another animal that is able to attest to the lethal events while standing at a distance across the narrow shaft; and, most astonishing, (4) the bison's gaze at something or someone outside of the frame of representation, even perhaps outside the shaft and the cave as a whole. Of greatest import, the bison's gaze serves as a narrative device calling into question as much of what is marked as of what is unmarked in its spatial field: the mores of Paleolithic viewers.

Let us review. First, the component parts of the shaft scene include a narrative visualization of suffering, dismemberment, and certain death, as well as a prone ithyphallic man, possibly dead or in a trancelike dissociated state. Second, let me emphasize that in addition to being the first known work of art to visualize trauma directly, the shaft scene may also be the first known composition to tell a story in the round. Therefore, because the narrative content and

storyline depend not only upon the central scene but also on the horse as witness at a distance, the work might be considered a panorama. Third, the visual story unfolds in triplicates, including three distinct characters (man, bison, and horse), three symbolic objects (bird-headed staff, spear-throwing tool, and lance), and three positions for spectators (viewers in the space of the shaft; implied hunter[s] outside the scene but in the shaft space; and hunter[s]/viewers beyond the walls of the shaft).

All of these viewing positions convert seeing into the act of witnessing the social and cultural impact of trauma in the human-animal-technological world in which a spear-throwing tool has amplified the lethal impact of the lance. The shaft scene narrative presents a complicated, nuanced composition of traumatic witnessing and testifying, conveyed through sophisticated composition, conceptual complexity, and composite narrative—all formal innovations that expand its descriptive features into scenes within scenes: (1) the bison witnesses an attacker and the horse; (2) the horse witnesses both the prone man and the disemboweled bison from beyond the frame of the primary scene but within the pictorial context of the shaft enclosure, and also sees and/or senses the danger of hunter(s)/viewer(s) outside the visual evidence of the shaft scene; (3) a viewer within the shaft witnesses the primary scene and the horse that watches; and (4) someone unseen—hunter(s)/viewer(s)—witnesses being witnessed by the bison and the horse.

Finally, an even more distant scene that simultaneously comprises memory and continuous enactment is implied. For the bison's imperturbable stare over eighteen thousand millennia suggests a refined self-consciousness on the part of the artist(s), who sought to convey the psychological effect of the animal's appeal to viewers not only to witness and remember, but also to testify in the present and in the future to the tragic and traumatic content of the event. This appeal extends the interior space into the exterior world, carrying the encrypted content forward in time. It must be said, too, that as an index of Paleolithic cultural respect for and dependence upon both bovine and equine warnings of physical and psychical emergency, the presence of the bison and the horse anticipate the historical role these two animals have played as both metaphors for and metonymies of the gods in world myth and religion.[38] The bison's gaze is a reminder of atrocity, as much as the horse's alert attention confirms the will and instinct to preserve life. The artist(s) of the shaft scene acknowledge the rage and the stoic suffering of the bison, and certify the deadly power of technology (the lance and spear-throwing tool). They also honor the wisdom, vigilance, and passivity of the horse, presenting it as the embodiment of moral conscience deployed to awaken the viewer-as-witness to the unfolding devastation.

My reading of the shaft scene contributes to wide-ranging scholarly debates about and interpretations of the *Shaft of the Dead Man*, which include the contention that it resembles celestial temporal constellations;[39] that it is connected to hunting magic and perhaps is the reenactment of a hunting accident;[40] that it pictures a shaman in a trance induced by the high levels of carbon dioxide in

the cave, especially in the shaft; that it expresses neurological visual phenomena and mental imagery related to dreams, altered states of consciousness, and hallucinations;[41] and that the shaft is a sacred place with occult power at "the heart of the sanctuary" (a name sometimes given to Lascaux as a whole).[42] This last allusion to a spiritual place in the bowels of the cave refers as much to the confines of the shaft as a sacred place as it does to the fact that the composite human-animal bird figure may be what archaeologists have identified as a type of sorcerer figure found in other Paleolithic parietal art from remote areas in the region.[43] The archaeologist and historian Nancy K. Sandars also considers the shaft scene to depict possibly a "natural or supernatural crisis [that] may have driven the artist . . . to make up a scene," and she argues that the inaccessibility of the shaft "adds much to the . . . atmosphere of something secret and deeply significant."[44]

For his part, upon first viewing the paintings in the upper hall at Lascaux, Georges Bataille suggested that they provide evidence of the "extreme self-effacement of man before the animal—and of man just turning into a human."[45] In this comment, Bataille seems only to denote the animal world depicted throughout Lascaux, but not the content of the shaft scene, dominated as it is by the altercation between man and beast in which the human is anything but self-effacing. In a later text, he suggests that the shaft scene could be interpreted as "the alteration of taboo and transgression [and] the religious aura that surrounded the animals as they were done to death."[46] In this scenario, either a predator human has disemboweled an animal, inflicting certain death, or a shaman is dissembling as an animal (bird).

While Bataille did not mention trauma as the result of the breach of taboo and transgression, he did identify "man [as] the being who has lost, and even rejected, that which he obscurely is, a vague intimacy."[47] Bataille also held that paintings like the shaft scene were evidence that the Lascaux artist(s) understood human separation from animality and sought "a reunion with nature through the operation of sacrifice in the realm of the sacred."[48] For Bataille, this reality proved that "to subordinate is not only to alter the subordinated element *but to be altered oneself* [my emphasis]."[49] According to Angus McDonald, in searching for redemption Bataille read intimacy with nature through what he called the "birth of art." Art constituted "an excess not a utilitarian activity," and was a vehicle for "a celebration of the ability to represent the animal life surrounding the painter with an intimacy thought irrecoverable," but was also a loss that could be retrieved through an understanding of "the essential ideas of taboo, transgression, law, the sacred and evil."[50]

When Bataille surmised that the shaft scene represented human "separation from animality," he could not have known that the image belonged to the epochs-long parting of humans and animals, which later archaeological evidence and scholarship has proved. Neither could he have known that the Lascaux artist(s) depended upon a much older tradition, identifiable in the paintings discovered in 1994 at Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc in the Dordogne region of France. The Chau-

vet paintings have been repeatedly radiocarbon dated from between 32,410 to 30,340 BCE, and are currently among the oldest known Paleolithic paintings in the region, if not the world.[51] Two Chauvet paintings are pertinent to and perhaps antecedents for the Lascaux shaft scene: a composite human-animal figure, the *Venus and the Sorcerer*, which appears on an outcropping of stone hanging one meter above the floor in the Salle du Fond, or End Chamber, the deepest alcove of the Chauvet cave; and the representation of a solitary horse in a recessed niche also in the Salle du Fond. Carbon dating suggests that the different parts of the hybrid *Venus and the Sorcerer* were painted within an interval of more than one thousand years. The pubic triangle and vulva were incised first in the stone, followed by the painting of a horned bison (*The Sorcerer*) with a penetrating gaze that is integrated into the composition, its legs doubling as the legs of the Venus and its body pressed against her with its head curled onto her belly. The upper part of the belly of the Venus is integrated into the belly and shoulders of a lion with a formidable head. Finally, a magnificently painted horse, auguring the lone horse of the shaft scene, is painted in a separate niche in the rock of the Salle du Fond.[52] Worth remarking upon is the fact that the artist(s) of both Chauvet and Lascaux reserved an inner chamber for a unique narrative representation and a sole horse.

In pointing to this similarity, let me emphasize that while the iconography and narrative skills displayed by the Lascaux artist(s) may belong to aesthetic canons in operation at least fifteen thousand years earlier, their skill in visual narration is much advanced from that of the Chauvet painters. The composite figure of *Venus and the Sorcerer* has nothing to do with the traumatic realism of the Lascaux scene; and there seems to be little narrative link, as there is in Lascaux, between the beautiful horse in Chauvet and the semiotic fusion of woman, bison, and lion, even though its proximity is significant. In Lascaux this juxtaposition contributes to a distinct narrative in the round that offers a story freighted with penetrating psychological and social commentary. Such works prove that the skills displayed by the Lascaux artist(s) belong to aesthetic canons at least twenty-four thousand years older, themselves indebted to millennia of artistic invention and mastery of both representation and narrative. These representational traditions include the accurate artistic observation, nuanced rendering, use of diverse materials, technical application, realism, plot complexity, and exquisite insight into human and animal emotion, all of which the Lascaux shaft scene exhibits.

More specific to the context of trauma is the Lascaux artists' commentary on the human capacity to inflict pain, suffering, and death, and the animal's concomitant agency to react with emotion and its own deadly force. Could the shaft scene be an ancient form of social engineering by artist(s) entrusted to appeal to the moral conscience of Upper Paleolithic viewers by representing the consequences of brute force, augmented by technological means? As Maurice Blanchot would put it, remarking on Bataille's observations, the Lascaux painters "make us enter into an intimate space of knowledge."[53] There, in subordinating

another, as Bataille perceptively insisted, one is "*altered oneself.*" However imprecise our understanding of the conditions of Paleolithic knowledge and mores may be, the deeper significance of what these artists conveyed about the human-animal nexus remains insistent. The Lascaux artists initiated viewers into the surfeit of violence of their period in terms of the interrelation between humans and their technologies and animals and their emotions, and they provided visual access to the volatile conditions that the historic record supports.

The shaft scene was painted during great cultural and environmental change. *Homo sapiens* began to emerge as the dominant species in the midst of the demise of *Homo neanderthalensis*, who mysteriously disappeared around 10,000 BCE. Increasingly, archaeologists are dating the painted caves of southwestern France and northeastern Spain to thousands of years earlier, and hypothesizing that Neanderthals were the artists who may have painted them.[54] This is also the period of the recession of the Ice Age and of the global warming that permitted northern migration. A veritable population explosion took place within villages, which grew from as few as four hundred to as many as a thousand inhabitants.[55] This period of rapidly changing climate also witnessed increased hunting in which more effective weapons accompanied the extinction of some fifty species of large animals. It may be that the shaft scene provides insight into a momentous period when the disappearance of large game had already begun to be perceived in a manner akin to what Ai Weiwei labeled "a crime against the natural world"—a traumatic act worthy of representation and recognition.

This altered environmental and cultural crisis requires a brief detour into what Michael Winkelman calls "the shamanic paradigm in cave art" in his study *Shamanism: A Biopsychosocial Paradigm of Consciousness and Healing* (2010). Drawing on numerous fields including neuroscience, evolutionary psychology, art, archaeology, and anthropology, Winkelman discusses the origins of modern human cognition as demonstrated in art, and as it relates to shamanistic practices. He argues that the shaman's "healing rituals played an essential role in the defense of the psychic integrity of the community," which was accomplished by various "ecstatic state[s]," such as "trance," "the language of the animals," "inhabiting animal spirits," and "acts central to shamanistic practice" of shamans who were healing those believed to have "lost their souls."[56] Winkelman continues:

> Selection for the role of the shaman was often derived from a prolonged period of illness or insanity that was caused by the spirits who chose the individual for the shamanic role. The worsening of the individual's circumstances often then led to experiences interpreted as death, . . . [during which] the spirits healed the initiates by giving new rules of life that made the person a "wounded healer."[57]

The experience of a psychic death and quest for spiritual power was a solitary vigil, Winkelman adds, involving the appearance of "savage beasts that attacked

and killed the initiate, but then reassembled the person with new capacities and powers, a death-and-rebirth experience that empowered the shaman."[58]

Winkelman and, increasingly, other scholars link this shamanic activity to the "new mentality" evinced in cave art, namely the mental capacity "to produce . . . the dramatic evolution of material culture" which took place sixty to thirty thousand years before the present.[59] Such social advances included "cognitive fluidity for integrating technical intelligence and social intelligence in the production of artifacts that were *designed to send social messages* regarding status group affiliation, and relationships through personal decoration and adornment [my emphasis]."[60] While some scholars attribute the capacity for symbolic processes to the impact of language on consciousness, Winkelman observes that "art involved an imagetic, presentational, analogical modality that necessarily predated spoken language," and that, as a result, "language, spoken or otherwise, cannot explain the evolution of artistic representations."[61]

For Winkelman, the emergence of art and religion began around 100,000 BCE and reflects meta-representation that is dependent upon imagery and mimesis.[62] He also notes that the combination of animal and human figures resulted from a growing ability "to integrate the social intelligence and natural history intelligence with personal and social identity," and that it produced "cross-modular integrations" related to various types of cognitive abilities, from religious, animistic, and anthropomorphic thought to "the interpretation of self, others . . . found in totemism."[63] Such integrative cognition led to the capacity for symbolic representation and collective expression and "shared group consciousness and culture."[64] The shaman served to expand animal ritual conduct, or "isopraxis," wherein "animals automatically imitate each other's behavior as a means of identifying other members of one's own species."[65] Such mimetic behavior enabled shamans to provide psychologically and socially adaptive advantages that were necessary to the development of more complex human systems, and which may have led to "the extensive focus on the animal 'other,'" producing an emotionally charged identification that resulted from the act of killing and of witnessing pain and death.[66]

Certainly such a view is in keeping with interpretations of the man in the shaft scene as a shaman/birdman in a trance with his bird staff nearby. It would also support the interpretation of the death of the ithyphallic man, as the act of killing and the fear of death led to compensatory strategies which included ritual dancing and singing, trance, and artistic representation.[67] Trance actions also mimicked the adaptive animal behavior of "freezing" that is typical of mammals and primates when faced with predators. Through these adaptations the limbic system developed, controlling emotional and behavior functions and long-term memory, among other things. Most importantly, Winkelman adds, "Hunting must be seen as a central feature enhancing consciousness and awareness of death, as hunting produced death in animals and exposed the hunter to risk of the same," and rituals prepared hunters for such "life-threatening activities."[68]

This chain of developments over millennia can be said to have culminated

in the shaft scene and other yet unknown works which offer legible access to Upper Paleolithic artists' visualizations of a traumatic episteme that served the purpose of "healing and enhanced survival" for a "hominid population in which the capacity for ritual enhancement of well-being was a common feature of humanity."[69] The "psychodramatic struggles" that produced the "wounded healer" seem also to be at work in the shaft scene's unprecedented formal innovation.[70]

Armed with the visual episteme of the Paleolithic artist(s), we may now return to Ai Weiwei, with whom this meditation began. Ai writes:

> If we say that artists must interpret their existence, and interpret their physical and spiritual state, this interpretation would unavoidably touch upon the era in which they exist, and upon the political and ideological state of that era and, naturally, the artist's worldview. This worldview is presented through artistic languages and ambiguity, and just like all the other things that we call "facts," it has clear-cut characteristics and is immiscible. Even so, art's transparency is then possibly "multiple" or "indistinct." Here, ambiguity and suggestion create a substantial spiritual orientation, like an outstretched hand pointing to an indecipherable and unexplainable space, a forward direction where nothing and everything, can happen.[71]

Similarly, the painter(s) of the shaft scene could be said to have appealed with an outstretched hand (in the form of the bison's gaze and the attuned ears of the alert horse) to the political and ideological state of things in the era, and that this metaphorical hand, through the import of visual narrative, pointed forward over millennia to the present day wherein nothing and everything can happen, just as the immiscible flows into culture as the solubility of one liquid into another.

Faced with nothing and everything, Ai posed two questions: "Who can clearly explain that utter lack of substance that is left after a fixed gaze? Contrarily, who can clearly understand the profound deceit that remains after careless and inattentive eyes?"[72] In these questions he seems to ventriloquize the unspoken quest in the bison's steady gaze, which bespeaks a helpless world that advances the threat of those wrecked in spirit along with their multigenerational legacies. Ai's questions refer to sight not for its own sake, but as an instrument of action, and as a fundamental imperative to deploy the fixed gaze in careful, attentive, and thoughtful ways that are vital to the humanity of humanity. The utter lack of substance and the deceit he identifies are what enable the destruction, violence, and trauma visible in the betrayal of careless eyes.

As is well known, the gaze concerned Jacques Lacan. In 1964 he noted that "the eye is only the metaphor of . . . the pre-existence of a gaze" that ameliorates the eye's ability to see "only from one point," when the truth of sight is that one is "looked at from all sides."[73] The basis of this confusion between a focused and an all-encompassing gaze, Lacan explained, exposes "the split between the

eye and the gaze . . . manifest at the level of the scopic field," which he believed was "no doubt to be found in a more primitive institution of form."[74] Lacan identified that primitive state as "a real *specific prematurity of birth* in man," an "organic insufficiency" in the split between one's *Innenwelt* (inner world) and the *Umwelt* (outer world), which "effects one's sense of reality [emphasis in original]."[75] In specifying what he meant by the prematurity of birth, Lacan explained that "primordial Discord" is found in humans, who as a species are "impaired by a kind of dehiscence of the organism in the womb," dehiscence being the wound of being born too soon and gestation that is incomplete.[76] Lacan felt that not only is maturation in the womb not long enough to form a fully developed human psyche, but also that a "primordial" prematurity itself exists in evolution in the transformation from animal to *Homo sapiens*.

Lacan's intuition is not far from recent anthropological research on the emergence of cognitive modernity (or behavioral modernity) in Paleolithic symbolic thought.[77] Could it be that the artist(s) who executed the bison's gaze already grasped, on both a cognitive and intuitive level, the implications of the split in the human *Innenwelt* and *Umwelt*, picturing it in a narrative painting with multiple viewing positions? What of their understanding of the intelligence of animals as visualized in the bison's gaze? Given the growing scholarship in ethology and animal studies on animal behavior and animals' remarkable capacity for understanding and empathy, the question is not frivolous.[78] The prescient responsiveness of the Paleolithic artist(s), so vivid in the shaft scene, would appear to posit an ethics of human/animal interaction along a continuum of life and death, which indicated mutual understanding exemplified in the representation of one in each other's terms: the reversal of human/animal identification, from the bird-staff-become-man to the bison's human look, and from the isolated *Innenwelt* of the bison (with a wrecked-in-spirit mortal gaze) to the *Umwelt* of the bird-man (with the public erection common to an animal).

I am contending that like an outstretched hand, this painting implores a substantial engagement from the witness, asking beholders to enunciate the traumatic implications of the scene, to arrive at a moral judgment about the past in relation to the present, and to address what Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman call, in another context, "the moral responsibility of society in relation to the distress of the world."[79] The shaft scene affirms the self/other awareness of the Paleolithic artist(s), and the consciousness of the ceremonial role of art in expressing the concerning consequences of traumatic events some eighteen thousand years before Susan Sontag, in *Regarding the Pain of Others*, wrote:

> It seems a good in itself to acknowledge, to have enlarged, one's sense of how much suffering caused by human wickedness there is in the world we share with others. Someone who is perennially surprised that depravity exits, who continues to feel disillusioned (even incredulous) when confronted with evidence of what humans are capable of inflicting in the way of gruesome hands-on cruelties upon other humans, has not reached moral or psychological adult-

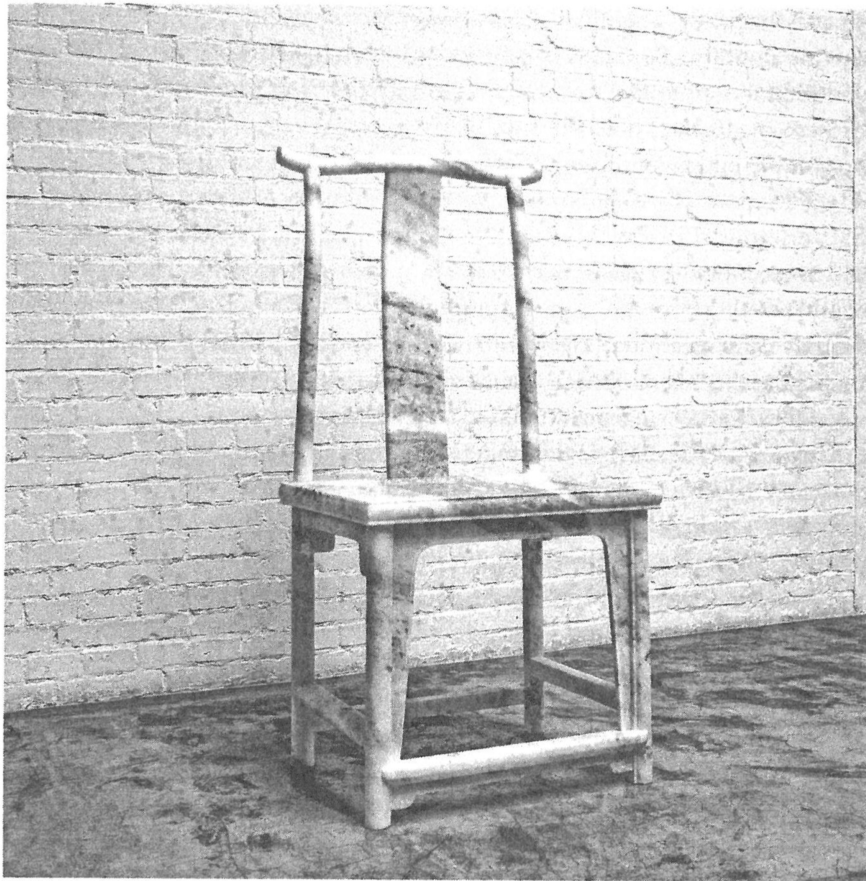

FIGURE 2. Ai Weiwei, *Marble Chair*, 2008. Marble, 120 × 56 × 46 cm. Photography by Ai Weiwei. Courtesy of the artist.

> hood. No one after a certain age has the right to this kind of innocence, of superficiality, to this degree of ignorance, or amnesia. . . . Let the atrocious images haunt us . . . The images say: This is what human beings are capable of doing . . . Don't forget.[80]

Ai Weiwei never forgot. Rather, he confirmed his preparedness in a blog on May 28, 2009. Pretending to caution himself, Ai advised: "Be careful! Are you ready?" Then, responding to his own warning, he answered:

> I'm ready. Or, rather, there's nothing to get ready for. One person. That is everything that I have, it is all that someone might possibly gain and everything that I can devote. I will not hesitate in the time of need, and I won't be vague.[81]

This striking declaration represents Ai's stance, a commanding affirmation that this "one person" will sacrifice himself for his principles with unambiguous clarity and decisiveness. Ai's *Marble Chair* (2008), in its solitary dignity, exemplifies his readiness, political resolve, and spiritual orientation (figure 2).[82]

Marble Chair is a metaphor of the artist-as-witness, whose life and art are evidence of his commitment to the social body, and who stands ready to fill the void left after the gaze departs and refusing to allow the careless eye its negative authority.

Marble Chair might also be understood to sit in for the unidentified Chinese man, standing in for the collective will, who stopped the column of fifty-nine tanks on June 5, 1989, during the protests in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. Unlike that man's spontaneous response to the threat of tanks, Ai's continued confrontations with the Chinese government represent a battle that honors the memory of his father, the renowned poet Ai Qing, denounced under Mao by an anti-rightist movement as an enemy by the state. Sent in 1958 with his wife and baby (Ai Weiwei having been born in 1957) first to a labor camp in Beidahuang, Heilongjiang, Ai Qing was then exiled to Shihezi, Xinjiang, where he was consigned to clean public toilets until Mao's death in 1976. Having lived through and witnessed his father's humiliation, Ai Weiwei never ceases to confront and resist the Chinese state. In his opposition, the artist joins the history of charismatic, traumatized leaders.[83]

Exposure to risk is the story of Ai's life, and the reason he can write: "In a great majority of circumstances, it was difficulty that helped me. I'm a despicable thing, because I have hope for people."[84] In the next breath, he states:

> I've never seen "the People." What is the People? The People is the sum total of many persons, and the summation of people is imperceptible and intangible. Mao said: 'Only the People have the power to create history.' One person is a person; a multitude of people is the People. One ambling person is a vagrant, a pariah; a throng of people cramming into train cars to go on holiday, tens of thousands of people flooding into the same location--this is the People. . . . Who helps the people–something that never existed—is a fool.[85]

As a vagrant pariah, Ai maintains hope, courage derived from what he associates with the act of discernment. Stating that while he did not receive a proper education, he became "like a traveler at dusk [trying to] discern which direction I was headed."[86] His optimism is also a form of poetry that reflects his ambition to become "that rare kind of negative example, [who] endow[s] my existence with a certain kind of necessity."[87] Such an individual provides the outstretched hand to the world.

BIOGRAPHY AND TRAUMA STUDIES

"The problem with your scholarship is that it is not easy to find and not readily accessible," commented Ivana Bago, a Zagreb-based curator and doctoral student, whom I mentor in art history at Duke University. Pausing, she added, "No, the real problem is that you have been *held captive by artists* and your writing is hidden in artists' exhibition catalogs and monographs." With her usual precision and lightning-quick insight, Ivana introduced the dilemma of writ-

ing monographic essays about artists rather than, in her words, "writing something abstract that other scholars can pick up and make their own." Yet Marina Abramović dubbed me the "atom bomb"; Carolee Schneemann accused me of "pinning artists to the wall like butterflies"; and Joseph Kosuth described me as "a taxonomic terrorist." These are hardly descriptions of someone "held captive by artists." Still, Ivana is partially correct about the fate of these essays becoming invisible in the kinds of publications that a diminishing number of people read. Still, I remain unapologetic for being an artist-centered art historian. Artists' work, ideas, and biographies are the very material of art, and the ephemeral aspects of those lives and their production of objects intertwine with history, society, and culture. Probing the entanglements of biography yields insight into objects, texts, and/or actions and their functions as intermediaries between the individual and culture.

Jacques Derrida cogently argued for the necessity of biography shortly before his death, when he told an interviewer:

> I am among those few people who have constantly drawn attention to this: you must (and you must do it *well*) put philosophers' biographies back in the picture, and the commitments, particularly political commitments, that they sign in their own names, whether in relation to Heidegger or equally to Hegel, Freud, Nietzsche, Sartre, or Blanchot, and so on.[88]

Derrida's position stands in stark contrast to that of the art historian Rosalind Krauss, who opined in 2007 that the culprit responsible for the current resurrection of the biographical subject for contemporary scholarship "is the 'twisted dialectic' called trauma."[89]

> Trauma befalls a subject who was unfortunately absent—too distracted or decentered to defend him- or herself properly at the time of the attack. The life story of the traumatic subject is thus the account of a fundamental absence and lack of preparation. Because of this, trauma studies is addicted to biography, which is to say, to the reconstruction of decentering and the shattering that is its result.[90]

The contrast between these two points of view regarding the necessity or ruination of biography proves that recourse to biography remains contentious, even while being a critical portal through which comprehension of culture and history must pass.

Scholarship on trauma in art history developed in the 1990s, a somewhat tardy entrance to the field, due in no small measure to the methodological suppression and substitution of biography with a poststructuralist emphasis on the construction of gender, sexuality, identity, class, and other burgeoning social theories. These topics and their theoretical analysis have proved invaluable over the years, even if only slightly altering the angle of attention to the role of biog-

raphy in an artist's life and production.[91] In some ways art history has moved back to biography for its access to the otherwise unknown "commitments," as Derrida remarked, and for insight into the unarticulated thoughts, passions, and behaviors of artists in all their irrational and simultaneously reasoned logic. Most of all, biography is essential when it comes to writing about trauma, especially in performance art where the artist's body/psyche is the material of the work of art.

Art historians began to resist biography in the 1980s, partly on the basis of such failures of psychobiography as Freud's analyses of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo.[92] In a groundbreaking 1988 article on the state of psychoanalytic research in art history, art historian Jack Spector opened with an account of the methodological questions facing the discipline, and he cited Arthur Danto's insistence that art history must arrive at a "totally different structure." Danto's "The End of Art," written four years earlier, had been the lead essay in a volume edited by Berel Lang devoted to the "death of art." Addressing this article, Spector observed: "Danto . . . sees the replacement of artists by philosophers in his Hegelian version of the future."[93] Danto's prediction, like that of Hegel before him, has not come to pass. Quite on the contrary, with the arrival of the "pictorial turn," heralded in 1992 by W. J. T. Mitchell, artists are once again celebrated, but with greater recognition of their intellectual and philosophical contributions.[94]

Neglecting trauma as an appropriate field for art historical research, mainstream art history by and large also ignored the history of performance art well into the 1990s.[95] But trauma studies and performance art converged in the Italian sociologist Lea Vergine's 1974 publication *Il corpo come linguaggio (La "Body-art" e storie simili).* While Vergine raised the question of trauma in the context of the development of body art, she proceeded to dismiss it in her conclusion as representing "dissociation, melancholy, delirium, depression, and [the representation of] persecution manias."[96] In 1987, Donald Kuspit applied his interest in British psychiatrist Donald W. Winnicott's theories of transference to Adrian Piper's work.[97] Kathy O'Dell wrote about masochism in 1988,[98] the same year in which I completed a monograph on destruction in the performances of Raphael Montañez Ortiz.[99] Leo Bersani's *Culture of Redemption* (1990) had an immediate impact in art history, and my essay "Shaved Heads and Marked Bodies: Representations from Cultures of Trauma" (1993) had been reprinted in French, German, and Romanian by 1995. Peggy Phelan's *Unmarked* (1993) and *Mourning Sex* (1997)[100] and Hal Foster's *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century* (1996) received widespread attention in both art history and cultural studies.[101] Griselda Pollock's first essay on the art and theory of Bracha Ettinger came out in 1996,[102] followed by Ernst van Alphen's *Caught by History: Holocaust Effects in Contemporary Art, Literature, and Theory* in 1997,[103] with O'Dell's *Contract with the Skin: Masochism, Performance Art and the 1970s* appearing in 1998.[104] By the late 1990s, trauma had become a legitimate subject in art history.

The advent of trauma studies in the United States is also indebted to the

civil rights movement, the women's movement, gay liberation, and now LGBT activism. Trauma studies also owe a debt to the impact of the personal testimonies, teaching, and consciousness-raising practices of feminist artists.[105] Trauma began to appear in mainstream culture in such works as Art Spiegelman's *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* (1991) and Andrew Jarecki's documentary *Capturing the Friedmans* (2003), which chronicles the domestic environment, familial relations, and biography of a father (Arnold) and one of his three sons (Jesse), who are both accused and convicted of sexually molesting Arnold's students in a computer class he has taught in their home. Monographic exhibition catalogues on artists whose work has dealt with aspects of traumatic circumstance have increased exponentially since the late 1980s. A few examples are *In Context: Yayoi Kusama, Soul-Burning Flashes* (1989),[106] Mike Kelley's *Educational Complex* (1995),[107] *Doris Salcedo* (1998),[108] and *Louise Bourgeois: Memory and Architecture* (1999).[109] Group exhibitions on trauma, and the use of the term to describe an artist's work, gained increasing legitimacy from the end of the twentieth century into the twenty-first, as in *Telling Tales* (1998),[110] *Trauma* (1999),[111] *In the Aftermath of Trauma: Contemporary Video Installations* (2014),[112] and *Alberto Burri: The Trauma of Painting* (2015).[113]

In the early 2000s, an explosion of publications would appear that contextualized trauma in diverse subjects: widowhood in India;[114] Iron Age archaeology;[115] early modernity;[116] long-term unemployment;[117] lesbian experiences;[118] war and combat;[119] the "disappeared" people of Chile and Argentina;[120] the terrorist attacks of 9/11;[121] rape;[122] domestic violence;[123] television hospital dramas;[124] a variety of subjects in photography, theater, and art;[125] the odd pairing of incest and the Holocaust in film;[126] and, for its traumatic dimension, the interconnection between Eros and Thanatos.[127] A host of publications by younger scholars appeared in the mid-2000s, like Jill Bennett's *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art* (2005) and Lisa Saltzman and Eric Rosenberg's edited anthology *Trauma and Visuality in Modernity* (2006), a book curiously and erroneously marketed as being "among the first in the field of art history to explore the relation between the traumatic and the visual field in the modern period."[128] In 2004 the Tate Modern in London would advertise talks on trauma by such eminent scholars as W. J. T. Mitchell, who would publish *Cloning Terror: The War of Images, 9/11 to the Present* in 2011, and Griselda Pollock, who would publish *After-Effects/After-Images: Trauma and Aesthetic Transformation in the Virtual Feminist Museum* in 2013.[129]

As this brief overview of trauma studies in art history suggests, scholarship in the 1990s opened the way for widespread application of trauma theory in the humanities and beyond. The explosion of trauma scholarship also brought trauma fatigue, which, in his response to a graduate student's doctoral defense of a dissertation on trauma, a Duke colleague sighed: "Haven't we had enough trauma?" Clinical psychologists have long been familiar with the negative reception of trauma as a subject, and they caution about the stigma that attaches to work on trauma and with traumatized individuals.[130] Trauma fatigue became

more prevalent with the increase in genocide worldwide, the bombing of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 9/11, the emergence of world terrorism and multiple conflicts in the Middle East, the upsurge of the terrorist Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and the impact of global migration and diaspora, environmental disasters, sex trafficking and sexual and physical violence,[131] satanic cults,[132] international gangs like MS13,[133] drug cartels,[134] trafficking in organs,[135] and the veritable epidemic of PTSD suffered by veterans and child soldiers. There is also mounting evidence of, and scholarship on, the effects of multigenerational trauma.

Regardless of the ever more urgent need to address trauma worldwide, artists and critics are justified in also expressing concern about the proliferation of discourses on trauma. Hakim Bey, for example, worried about fetishizing the traumatized artist, and cautioned that especially those who produce sexually explicit work like that of Sue Williams, Kiki Smith, Jake and Dinos Chapman, and Tracey Emin, to name only a handful, may become victims of "systematic/economic disempowerment."[136] Mike Kelley, who tragically committed suicide in 2012, was impatient with "living in a period in which victim culture and trauma are the rationale for everything."[137] He turned his disdain into the sardonic and brilliant biographical sculptural installation *Educational Complex* (1995). He based this sixteen-foot-long tabletop of interconnected model buildings on his memory of every educational institution he had ever attended, and included spaces for the rooms, corridors, and other architectural features that he could not remember. These blank spaces represent Kelley's satire of the widespread occurrence of and emotional debate over "recovered memory syndrome," the phenomenon in which repressed memories of traumatic events, especially incest and sexual abuse, resurface years after the initiating events. *Educational Complex* also recalls the detractors of this movement, those associated with "false memory syndrome," who argue that such memories are inaccurate, compromised, and sometimes invented under the guidance or pressure of unprofessional or untrained therapists.[138]

Richard J. McNally, a Harvard clinical research psychologist, considered the "politics of trauma" in *Remembering Trauma* (2003).[139] He argued that the definition of PTSD had been too broadly applied, and suggested narrowing it to include "only those stressors associated with serious injury or threat to life"—a suggestion that would drastically alter the public discussion of rape, incest, abuse by clergy, and the traumatic affect of racism and homophobia, to name just a few potentially trauma-inducing contexts and actions.[140] McNally presents his conclusion that most traumatic experience is remembered soon after the event, as if his view represents objective scientific research, when much evidence suggests that memories of traumatic events reoccur over time unpredictably. McNally's bias is apparent in his strong support of Ian Hacking's curiously fervent effort to discredit the diagnosis of multiple personality (dissociative identity disorder) and Hacking's effort to blame clinicians attached to recovered memory therapy of the spurious "rewriting" of patients' "souls."[141] While McNally accounts for

those who *do* recall their traumas, he does not equally offer an explanation for those who *do not* remember them, and his extensive bibliography and research do not cite key publications that would challenge his results.[142]

As significant as this debate is in clinical psychology and society, it has not been widely addressed in trauma studies on art. On the contrary, monikers proliferate that turn trauma in art into an art historical movement. Some of these include "confessional art,"[143] "abject art,"[144] "trauma art,"[145] "wound culture,"[146] and "victim art."[147] All these terms risk subsuming traumatic imagery in overarching aesthetic frames that remove art from the events to which artists have attested, sequestering and trivializing their work in the art industry as a trauma commodity.[148] What is more, in the continuing pursuit of what Harold Rosenberg identified nearly fifty years ago as "the tradition of the new," some appear to want to move beyond one "ism" to the next, as the title of the afterword of Jill Bennett's *Empathic Vision*, "Beyond Trauma Culture," seems to recommend.[149]

CONCERNING CONSEQUENCES

It stands to reason that, having introduced the phrase "cultures of trauma" in 1993 to describe the situation in Romania and other Eastern European countries following the Velvet Revolutions in 1989, I must answer to having initiated perhaps the first trauma "ism" in the arts. It may be difficult to believe in today's climate, drenched with the awareness of PTSD, that the explosion in trauma studies was unimaginable in 1992 when I first presented this phrase at a conference entitled "War and Feminism" at the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Center. Even then I noted that contemporary Romanian artists were engulfed in trauma, and I identified the exponential advance of trauma as a worldwide phenomenon. Therefore, I stand by the phrase "cultures of trauma" as prescient of what has indeed become a global epidemic.

Accordingly, *Concerning Consequences* is divided into five parts. Part 1, "Cultures of Trauma," contains four essays that were foundational in my thinking and theorizing about trauma. Part 2, "Doubles," refers to traumatic dissociation, doubling, and metaphors for dissociated personality in the work of five artists: Istvan Kantor, Franz West, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Larry Miller, and Yoko Ono (the last of whom adopted the imagery of doubling when fusing with John Lennon as the double entity "LENONO"). Part 3, "Shooting Range," includes an essay on Chris Burden that addresses his notorious performance *Shoot* (1971) in the context of his meditation on and response to the many political assassinations in the United States in the 1960s, including the killing of Black Panthers and the 1970 National Guard shooting of students protesting the Vietnam War at Kent State University. Part 3 also includes artist Kim Jones, who served in the Vietnam War but never shot anyone, and Jean Toche, who uses a Polaroid camera to shoot mocking self-portraits that express his resistance to every aspect of culture, politics, religions, and much more. Part 4, "Corpora Vilia," is a term I introduced in 2000 in an essay on the Austrian artist Valie Export.

The phrase is derived from the plural of "*corpus vile*," something felt to be of so little value that it could be experimented upon without concern for loss or damage.[150] In this section I use the term to signal the extremes represented in the art of Marina Abramović, William Pope.L, Barbara Turner Smith, Henry Flynt, and Rudolf Schwarzkogler. Part 5, entitled "Terminal Culture," reintroduces a concept I first suggested in a talk at Ars Electronica in 1992.[151] "Terminal culture" applies to Robert Rauschenberg's insistent effort "to act" in "that gap" between art and life in his effort to avoid the incommensurability of what he called the "blinding fact" of both art and life"; Andy Warhol's foresight regarding the demise of cultural conventions, augmented by the ubiquity of capitalism, advertising, and technology; Maurice Benayoun's futurological imaging of trauma in virtual reality; and the hybrid, cyborgian identity that Wangechi Mutu constantly reinvents in her art.

The essays in *Concerning Consequences* do not appear in chronological order. The most recent date from 2014: "Rauschenberg's 'Gap'" originally appeared under another title in the online exhibition catalog *Rauschenberg: Collecting & Connecting*,[152] and "Warhol's 'What'?" appears here for the first time, having been given as a talk in 1993 and then revised and expanded specifically for this book. I wrote the oldest essay in this book in 1978, during my graduate student days at the University of California at Berkeley. Entitled "1978: 1.1.78–2.2.78," the essay was intended to mime the two voices in Lynn Hershman Leeson's doubling as the persona "Roberta Breitmore," and to represent the odd double exigencies of someone who functioned, as I did at the time, in the role of both a scholar and an artist. Each voice is not quite what it wants to be: one has a scholarly tone, the other a not quite street slang.[153] The year 1978 was also when I began working on the subject of destruction in art, the topic that inevitably led me to consider trauma as an underlying condition in almost every artist who used destruction and violence in his or her art, and to recognize trauma in the preponderance of the biographies of artists working in performance art.

In those years, destruction *in* art was so unfamiliar that it was inevitably understood as destruction *of* art, or iconoclasm, and I clearly remember a talk on "violence" that the renowned psychoanalyst Bruno Bettelheim gave in 1980, at the Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco, in which he opened by explaining that the category of violence did not exist in most reference books. Nearly two decades later, Alain Badiou could address the violence of the twentieth century in a series of lectures at the College International de Philosophie given between 1998 and 2001. These formative talks resulted in his book *Le Siècle* (The Century; 2005). Badiou grounded his analysis in the metaphor of the "beast," drawing on Osip Mandelstam's poem "The Age" (1923).[154] Following Badiou and Mandelstam, Giorgio Agamben issued the following injunction in his 2011 essay "What Is the Contemporary?": "The poet—the contemporary—must firmly hold his gaze on his own time, so as to perceive not its light but rather its darkness."[155] An individual who dedicates "his" life to the "darkness," however, must pay for "his" contemporariness with that life by becoming one "who must firmly

lock his gaze onto the eyes of his century-beast, [and] who must weld with his own blood the shattered backbone of time."[156] Having locked onto the beasts of contemporary violence, destruction, and trauma for nearly four decades, I confirm Agamben's view: she pays with her life if she marries (for better and worse) the beasts of her time.

I came to the subject of violence and destruction in art while leafing through old art magazines in 1978, and was suddenly riveted by a photograph of the Holocaust survivor Gustav Metzger, who was using acid to spray paint on and destroy a series of three consecutive canvases, each installed on a large metal frame, in a public performance entitled *South Bank Demonstration* (1961). The photograph brought to mind a 1939 comment by Georges Bataille on the eve of World War II, when the philosopher acknowledged the great effort of art to proceed "from itself, its own reality," and urged that art "must dominate the struggle of good against evil, in the same way that a violent earth tremor dominates and paralyzes the most catastrophic of battles."[157] Eight years later, in 1947, confronted with the future of humanity after the use of the atomic bomb, Bataille urged: "It is better to live up to Hiroshima than to lament it."[158] Contrary to Theodor Adorno's view that "writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric," Bataille insisted: "In truth, man is equal to all possibilities, or rather, the impossible is his only measure."[159]

Such texts as these by Bataille and such images as those by Metzger brought me in 1980 to search out Metzger in Frankfurt, Germany, and conduct a series of long, still unpublished interviews with him. The now famous artist was then completely obscure and had forgotten many of the details of the Destruction in Art Symposium (DIAS), which he had launched and presided over: a rambling month-long event in September 1966 that included a three-day symposium and many performances by some fifty artists from fifteen countries around the world. These interviews with Metzger, along with the dozens of other interviews I conducted with DIAS participants—artists, poets, and psychiatrists—helped me bring the reconstruction of DIAS into focus as the subject of the dissertation I was writing, and they remain foundational in my concern for the worldly consequences of destruction, violence, and trauma.

To a person, the artists discussed in this book have lived up to the beasts of our time. This is true for those who pioneered "destruction in art," and for the documentary photographers who recorded the invisibility of the nuclear age; for those who exposed the imprint of the beast on their bodies and psyches, and for those who fought in the century's wars; for those who rejected the virulent racism and sexism of our time, and for those who also fought back in art and life against sexism and homophobia; for those who pictured the darkness of life, and for those who have shown its light. All of the art discussed here, in one way or another, is the expression of a visual language wrought by destruction, violence, and trauma. Collectively, these essays argue that such art has a constructive social function, linking the consequences of aesthetic form to a set of specific aesthetic, cultural, political, and personal histories, conditions,

and relations. Each essay in this book concerns something that has happened to someone in life, from whose consequences a sequence of events and questions of value have unfolded, and through which an artist translated pain into art. Thinking about such consequences, in my 1993 essay "Shaved Heads and Marked Bodies" (included in this volume), I called for an empathic understanding of trauma and its manifestations in art.

The French artist known as ORLAN has grappled with the beasts of our time: sexism, ageism, and the conditions of the postbiological cybernetic body. She could be said to be one of the few artists whom Agamben could have named but did not, and one of the few who literally "weld with her own blood the shattered backbone of time" that he described. Repeatedly undergoing cosmetic surgery, ORLAN has suffered in an effort to recreate herself first as a sardonic composite of Western art historical beauty, following that with disfigurement (by having forms normally used to enhance cheekbones in cosmetic surgery inserted over her eyebrows), and then altering her image digitally into hybrid constructions that draw on paradigms of pre-Columbian and African physiognomy and concepts of beauty. Eventually, the result has become what she considers a new social entity who celebrates her effort to determine her own identity beyond the controls of heredity, family, and state. In the poster *I Have Given My Body to Art* (1995), ORLAN is pictured after a 1993 operation (figure 3). The essence of the image of trauma, the photograph is a picture of abjection in which the otherwise beautiful ORLAN appears with heavily bruised eyes, distorted nose, swollen lips, and disheveled hair. In "Carnal Art," she writes that her work swings between "defiguration and refiguration [as an] inscription in the flesh [that] is a function of our age [in which] the body has become a 'modified ready-made,' no longer seen as the ideal it once represented."[160]

In such thinking, ORLAN boldly rejects what Badiou calls "the revenge of the scientific problem over the political project," and refers to genetic engineering as a feminist political project that uses scientific means.[161] "What is to be done about this fact," Badiou asks, "that science knows how to make a new man?" ORLAN answers: a new woman. Badiou rejoins with an epic silence, adding only that "inane ethical committees will never provide us with an answer."[162] What this situation promises, he opines, "will come to pass precisely because . . . it will happen in accordance with the automatism of things."[163] ORLAN disproves automatism (as a theory of the machine body uncontrolled by consciousness) by giving her body to art, in the name of art, and by audaciously confronting the century-beasts.[164] In her acceptance of the postbiological revolution, she dares to gaze at trauma in order "to perceive *in* this darkness a light [Agamben's emphasis]."[165] Of artists who confront trauma this boldly, it could be said that they resemble the horse in the *Shaft of the Dead Man*: they face a mounting emergency and function as sentinels for the helpless world.

Neither Ai Weiwei, ORLAN, nor John Duncan are the focus of essays in this book, even as they haunt this introduction. Duncan is the artist who in 1980 performed *Blind Date*. In this action, he purchased a female corpse in Tijuana for

FIGURE 3. ORLAN, *I Have Given My Body to Art*, 1995. Poster produced by the Sandra Gering Gallery, New York. This image is a reverse print of the photograph ORLAN produced on November 25, 1993, entitled *Portrait Produced by the Body-Machine Four Days after the Surgery-Performance*. It is 86⅔ × 65 in. in two sections of 43½ × 65 in., and each Cibachrome print is mounted in Diasec. Photography by Vladimir Sichov for Sipa-Press. Courtesy of the artist and Sandra Gering Gallery. © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris.

the purpose of sexual intercourse and audiotaped his sex act with the dead body. He then returned to the United States to have a vasectomy in order "to make sure that the last potent seed I had was spent in a cadaver."[166] Duncan's violating act resulted in intense self-disgust, which is why he planned "to torture" himself "physically and psychically" before committing it.[167] This tragic event entailed all the subjects considered in this book: biography, politics, ethics, and the potential of trauma to overwhelm morality.

Blind Date is one of the most controversial actions in the history of art. I have argued that it represents Duncan's attempt to assert his life *in art* against his experience of death *in life*—a traumatized psychic death symbolized in violent self-debasement, self-loathing, and heartrending pathos.[168] His very real, contemptible, and desperate act conveyed the palpable signature of his pain and excruciating numbness unto psychic death. As Duncan himself attested, his act unfolded within the epistemological spaces ensured by male hegemony and phallic rule, which seek to guarantee virility and power by any means. In *Blind Date*, Duncan carried the patriarchal ideal to a grotesque extreme, unmasking its real impotence. His personal suffering derived from the conflict implicit in the fact that while he enjoyed all the privilege accreted to a white male, he psychologically cohabited the disempowered, lifeless condition of the woman whose corpse he violated. Emotionally frozen, John Duncan "risked the ability to accept myself. I risked the ability to have sex . . . and the ability to love."[169] In other words, as I wrote: He fucked himself to death.

Duncan's extreme self-loathing can be traced to experiences he recounted in an installation he created five months after *Blind Date*, entitled *If Only We Could Tell You* (1980). Installed in the American Hotel, a refurbished flophouse in the industrial section of downtown Los Angeles, Duncan painted a room in the building black, mounted an electric sander inside a closet in the room, and then locked the closet door. On the wall opposite the locked closet, Duncan hung a framed typed text that read, line after line:

> "We hate you little boy."
> "We hate you little boy."
> "We hate you little boy."
> "We hate you little boy."

Following those four lines, Duncan's "essay" continued:

> We saw you all covered with our blood. We saw you piss and shit all over yourself. We cleaned you up, put food in your fucked-up little mouth. We kept you alive, you ungrateful little bastard . . . We always knew you'd be half-human baggage. You're a blight on our lives . . . Ugly little body with the sex exposed . . . Just look at the mess you've made of everything . . . Every bit is your fault. A dog could have done a better job. We should have put a pillow over your face when we had the chance . . . Why don't you do everyone a favor and kill your-

self. We love a man in uniform. Die, you tit-sucking zombie. Wounded men are so romantic. Go out and blow your head off, prick. We are fed up. Just go out and die.
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While reading this wretched testimony of abuse, one could also listen to the whirring of the electric sander, a sound that reiterated the agony of a mind engulfed in the chaos of traumatic experience. *Blind Date* cannot be understood without also acknowledging how learned self-hatred shaped Duncan's consciousness and art. Such is the legacy and the image of trauma in art to which this book is dedicated. Such is the sacrifice and the ceremony some artists make to right the crimes of the world.

Art is a riddle. It is everything else but *what* it is, and also exists somewhere other than *where* it is, as Heidegger pointed out in "The Origin of the Work of Art" (1935–37). Paradoxically, art is what it is, and this accords also with Wittgenstein's observation that "the totality of facts determines what is the case, and also whatever is not the case" (proposition 1.12). Such a view, he held, is the basis for a "picture theory of language," and for how we "make to ourselves pictures of facts." Art is indeed one of an infinite variety of "pictures of facts." Yet because art is simultaneously personal, issuing from an artist's experience, the "facts" that art "pictures" approximate both personal and collective events and ideas. All the essays in this book explore this intersection, and specifically focus on how an artist's work concerns aspects of trauma in the life of the planet.

REGARDING THE PAIN OF OTHERS

Susan Sontag

PICADOR
FARRAR, STRAUS AND GIROUX
NEW YORK

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Designed by Cassandra J. Pappas

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Sontag, Susan, 1933–
Regarding the pain of others / Susan Sontag.
p. cm.
ISBN 0-312-42219-9
1. War and society. 2. War photography–Social aspects. 3. War in art–Social aspects. 4. Photojournalism–Social aspects. 5. Atrocities. 6. Violence. I. Title.

HM554.S65 2003
303.6–dc21 2002192527

First published in the United States by Farrar, Straus and Giroux

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for David

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Central to modern expectations, and modern ethical feeling, is the conviction that war is an aberration, if an unstoppable one. That peace is the norm, if an unattainable one. This, of course, is not the way war has been regarded throughout history. War has been the norm and peace the exception.

The description of the exact fashion in which bodies are injured and killed in combat is a recurring climax in the stories told in the *Iliad*. War is seen as something men do inveterately, undeterred by the accumulation of the suffering it inflicts; and to represent war in words or in pictures requires a keen, unflinching detachment. When Leonardo da Vinci gives instructions for a battle painting, he insists that artists have the courage and the imagination to show war in all its ghastliness:

> Make the conquered and beaten pale, with brows raised and knit, and the skin above their brows furrowed with pain . . . and the teeth apart as with crying out in lamentation . . . Make the dead partly or entirely covered with dust . . . and let the blood be seen by its color flowing in a sinuous stream from the corpse to the dust. Others in the death agony grinding their teeth, rolling their eyes, with their fists clenched against their bodies, and the legs distorted.

The concern is that the images to be devised won't be sufficiently upsetting: not concrete, not detailed enough. Pity can entail a moral judgment if, as Aristotle maintains, pity is considered to be the emotion that we owe only to those enduring undeserved misfortune. But pity, far from being the natural twin of fear in the dramas of catastrophic misfortune, seems diluted—distracted—by fear, while fear (dread, terror) usually manages to swamp pity. Leonardo is suggesting that the artist's gaze be, literally, pitiless. The image should appall, and in that *terribilità* lies a challenging kind of beauty.

That a gory battlescape could be beautiful—in the sublime or awesome or tragic register of the beautiful—is a commonplace about images of war made by artists. The idea does not sit well when applied to images taken by cameras: to find beauty in war photographs seems

heartless. But the landscape of devastation is still a landscape. There is beauty in ruins. To acknowledge the beauty of photographs of the World Trade Center ruins in the months following the attack seemed frivolous, sacrilegious. The most people dared say was that the photographs were "surreal," a hectic euphemism behind which the disgraced notion of beauty cowered. But they *were* beautiful, many of them—by veteran photographers such as Gilles Peress, Susan Meiselas, and Joel Meyerowitz, among others. The site itself, the mass graveyard that had received the name "Ground Zero," was of course anything but beautiful. Photographs tend to transform, whatever their subject; and as an image something may be beautiful—or terrifying, or unbearable, or quite bearable—as it is not in real life.

Transforming is what art does, but photography that bears witness to the calamitous and the reprehensible is much criticized if it seems "aesthetic"; that is, too much like art. The dual powers of photography—to generate documents and to create works of visual art—have produced some remarkable exaggerations about what photographers ought or ought not to do. Lately, the most common exaggeration is one that regards these powers as opposites. Photographs that depict suffering shouldn't be beautiful, as captions shouldn't moralize. In this view, a

beautiful photograph drains attention from the sobering subject and turns it toward the medium itself, thereby compromising the picture's status as a document. The photograph gives mixed signals. Stop this, it urges. But it also exclaims, What a spectacle!*

Take one of the most poignant images from the First World War: a line of English soldiers blinded by poison gas—each rests his hand on the left shoulder of the man ahead of him—shuffling toward a dressing station. It could be an image from one of the searing movies made about the war—King Vidor's *The Big Parade* (1925) or G. W. Pabst's *Westfront 1918*, Lewis Milestone's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, or Howard Hawks's *The Dawn Patrol* (all from 1930). That war photography seems, retroactively, to be echoing as much as inspiring the reconstruction of battle scenes in important war movies has begun to backfire on the photographer's enterprise. What assured the authenticity of Steven Spielberg's acclaimed re-creation

*The photographs of Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, and Dachau taken in April and May 1945 by anonymous witnesses and military photographers seem more valid than the "better" professional images taken by two celebrated professionals, Margaret Bourke-White and Lee Miller. But the criticism of the professional look in war photography is not a recent view. Walker Evans, for example, detested the work of Bourke-White. But then Evans, who photographed poor American peasants for a book with the heavily ironic title *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, would never take a picture of anybody famous.

of the Omaha Beach landing on D-Day in *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) was that it was based, among other sources, on the photographs taken with immense bravery by Robert Capa during the landing. But a war photograph seems inauthentic, even though there is nothing staged about it, when it looks like a still from a movie. A photographer who specializes in world misery (including but not restricted to the effects of war), Sebastião Salgado, has been the principal target of the new campaign against the inauthenticity of the beautiful. Particularly with the seven-year project he calls "Migrations: Humanity in Transition," Salgado has come under steady attack for producing spectacular, beautifully composed big pictures that are said to be "cinematic."

The sanctimonious Family of Man–style rhetoric that feathers Salgado's exhibitions and books has worked to the detriment of the pictures, however unfair this may be. (There is much humbug to be found, and ignored, in declarations made by some of the most admirable photographers of conscience.) Salgado's pictures have also been sourly treated in response to the commercialized situations in which, typically, his portraits of misery are seen. But the problem is in the pictures themselves, not how and where they are exhibited: in their focus on the powerless, reduced to their powerlessness. It is significant that

the powerless are not named in the captions. A portrait that declines to name its subject becomes complicit, if inadvertently, in the cult of celebrity that has fueled an insatiable appetite for the opposite sort of photograph: to grant only the famous their names demotes the rest to representative instances of their occupations, their ethnicities, their plights. Taken in thirty-nine countries, Salgado's migration pictures group together, under this single heading, a host of different causes and kinds of distress. Making suffering loom larger, by globalizing it, may spur people to feel they ought to "care" more. It also invites them to feel that the sufferings and misfortunes are too vast, too irrevocable, too epic to be much changed by any local political intervention. With a subject conceived on this scale, compassion can only flounder—and make abstract. But all politics, like all of history, is concrete. (To be sure, nobody who really thinks about history can take politics altogether seriously.)

It used to be thought, when the candid images were not common, that showing something that needed to be seen, bringing a painful reality closer, was bound to goad viewers to feel more. In a world in which photography is brilliantly at the service of consumerist manipulations, no effect of a photograph of a doleful scene can be taken for

granted. As a consequence, morally alert photographers and ideologues of photography have become increasingly concerned with the issues of exploitation of sentiment (pity, compassion, indignation) in war photography and of rote ways of provoking feeling.

Photographer-witnesses may think it more correct morally to make the spectacular not spectacular. But the spectacular is very much part of the religious narratives by which suffering, throughout most of Western history, has been understood. To feel the pulse of Christian iconography in certain wartime or disaster-time photographs is not a sentimental projection. It would be hard not to discern the lineaments of the Pietà in W. Eugene Smith's picture of a woman in Minamata cradling her deformed, blind, and deaf daughter, or the template of the Descent from the Cross in several of Don McCullin's pictures of dying American soldiers in Vietnam. However, such perceptions—which add aura and beauty—may be on the wane. The German historian Barbara Duden has said that when she was teaching a course in the history of representations of the body at a large American state university some years ago, not one student in a class of twenty undergraduates could identify the subject of any of the canonical paintings of the Flagellation she showed as slides. ("I think it's a religious picture," one ventured.) The only canonical image of Jesus

she could count on most students being able to identify was the Crucifixion.

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PHOTOGRAPHS OBJECTIFY: they turn an event or a person into something that can be possessed. And photographs are a species of alchemy, for all that they are prized as a transparent account of reality.

Often something looks, or is felt to look, "better" in a photograph. Indeed, it is one of the functions of photography to improve the normal appearance of things. (Hence, one is always disappointed by a photograph that is not flattering.) Beautifying is one classic operation of the camera, and it tends to bleach out a moral response to what is shown. Uglifying, showing something at its worst, is a more modern function: didactic, it invites an active response. For photographs to accuse, and possibly to alter conduct, they must shock.

An example: A few years ago, the public health authorities in Canada, where it had been estimated that smoking kills forty-five thousand people a year, decided to supplement the warning printed on every pack of cigarettes with a shock-photograph—of cancerous lungs, or a stroke-clotted brain, or a damaged heart, or a bloody mouth in acute periodontal distress. A pack with such a picture accompanying the warning about the deleterious

effects of smoking would be sixty times more likely to inspire smokers to quit, a research study had somehow calculated, than a pack with only the verbal warning.

Let's assume this is true. But one might wonder, for how long? Does shock have term limits? Right now the smokers of Canada are recoiling in disgust, if they do look at these pictures. Will those still smoking five years from now still be upset? Shock can become familiar. Shock can wear off. Even if it doesn't, one can *not* look. People have means to defend themselves against what is upsetting—in this instance, unpleasant information for those wishing to continue to smoke. This seems normal, that is, adaptive. As one can become habituated to horror in real life, one can become habituated to the horror of certain images.

Yet there are cases where repeated exposure to what shocks, saddens, appalls does not use up a full-hearted response. Habituation is not automatic, for images (portable, insertable) obey different rules than real life. Representations of the Crucifixion do not become banal to believers, if they really are believers. This is even more true of staged representations. Performances of *Chushingura*, probably the best-known narrative in all of Japanese culture, can be counted on to make a Japanese audience sob when Lord Asano admires the beauty of the cherry blossoms on his way to where he must commit seppuku—

sob each time, no matter how often they have followed the story (as a Kabuki or Bunraku play, as a film); the *ta'ziyah* drama of the betrayal and murder of Imam Hussayn does not cease to bring an Iranian audience to tears no matter how many times they have seen the martyrdom enacted. On the contrary. They weep, in part, because they have seen it many times. People want to weep. Pathos, in the form of a narrative, does not wear out.

But do people want to be horrified? Probably not. Still, there are pictures whose power does not abate, in part because one cannot look at them often. Pictures of the ruin of faces that will always testify to a great iniquity survived, at that cost: the faces of horribly disfigured First World War veterans who survived the inferno of the trenches; the faces melted and thickened with scar tissue of survivors of the American atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; the faces cleft by machete blows of Tutsi survivors of the genocidal rampage launched by the Hutus in Rwanda—is it correct to say that people get *used* to these?

Indeed, the very notion of atrocity, of war crime, is associated with the expectation of photographic evidence. Such evidence is, usually, of something posthumous; the remains, as it were—the mounds of skulls in Pol Pot's Cambodia, the mass graves in Guatemala and El Salvador, Bosnia and Kosovo. And this posthumous reality is

often the keenest of summations. As Hannah Arendt pointed out soon after the end of the Second World War, all the photographs and newsreels of the concentration camps are misleading because they show the camps at the moment the Allied troops marched in. What makes the images unbearable—the piles of corpses, the skeletal survivors—was not at all typical for the camps, which, when they were functioning, exterminated their inmates systematically (by gas, not starvation and illness), then immediately cremated them. And photographs echo photographs: it was inevitable that the photographs of emaciated Bosnian prisoners at Omarska, the Serb death camp created in northern Bosnia in 1992, would recall the photographs taken in the Nazi death camps in 1945.

Photographs of atrocity illustrate as well as corroborate. Bypassing disputes about exactly how many were killed (numbers are often inflated at first), the photograph gives the indelible sample. The illustrative function of photographs leaves opinions, prejudices, fantasies, misinformation untouched. The information that many fewer Palestinians died in the assault on Jenin than had been claimed by Palestinian officials (as the Israelis had said all along) made much less impact than the photographs of the razed center of the refugee camp. And, of course, atrocities that are not secured in our minds by well-known photographic images, or of which we simply have

had very few images—the total extermination of the Herero people in Namibia decreed by the German colonial administration in 1904; the Japanese onslaught in China, notably the massacre of nearly four hundred thousand, and the rape of eighty thousand, Chinese in December 1937, the so-called Rape of Nanking; the rape of some one hundred and thirty thousand women and girls (ten thousand of whom committed suicide) by victorious Soviet soldiers unleashed by their commanding officers in Berlin in 1945—seem more remote. These are memories that few have cared to claim.

The familiarity of certain photographs builds our sense of the present and immediate past. Photographs lay down routes of reference, and serve as totems of causes: sentiment is more likely to crystallize around a photograph than around a verbal slogan. And photographs help construct—and revise—our sense of a more distant past, with the posthumous shocks engineered by the circulation of hitherto unknown photographs. Photographs that everyone recognizes are now a constituent part of what a society chooses to think about, or declares that it has chosen to think about. It calls these ideas "memories," and that is, over the long run, a fiction. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as collective memory—part of the same family of spurious notions as collective guilt. But there is collective instruction.

All memory is individual, unreproducible—it dies with each person. What is called collective memory is not a remembering but a stipulating: that *this* is important, and this is the story about how it happened, with the pictures that lock the story in our minds. Ideologies create substantiating archives of images, representative images, which encapsulate common ideas of significance and trigger predictable thoughts, feelings. Poster-ready photographs—the mushroom cloud of an A-bomb test, Martin Luther King, Jr., speaking at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., the astronaut walking on the moon—are the visual equivalent of sound bites. They commemorate, in no less blunt fashion than postage stamps, Important Historical Moments; indeed, the triumphalist ones (the picture of the A-bomb excepted) become postage stamps. Fortunately, there is no one signature picture of the Nazi death camps.

As art has been redefined during a century of modernism as whatever is destined to be enshrined in some kind of museum, so it is now the destiny of many photographic troves to be exhibited and preserved in museum-like institutions. Among such archives of horror, the photographs of genocide have undergone the greatest institutional development. The point of creating public repositories for these and other relics is to ensure that the crimes they depict will continue to figure in people's con-

sciousness. This is called remembering, but in fact it is a good deal more than that.

The memory museum in its current proliferation is a product of a way of thinking about, and mourning, the destruction of European Jewry in the 1930s and 1940s, which came to institutional fruition in Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., and the Jewish Museum in Berlin. Photographs and other memorabilia of the Shoah have been committed to a perpetual recirculation, to ensure that what they show will be remembered. Photographs of the suffering and martyrdom of a people are more than reminders of death, of failure, of victimization. They invoke the miracle of survival. To aim at the perpetuation of memories means, inevitably, that one has undertaken the task of continually renewing, of creating, memories—aided, above all, by the impress of iconic photographs. People want to be able to visit—and refresh—their memories. Now many victim peoples want a memory museum, a temple that houses a comprehensive, chronologically organized, illustrated narrative of their sufferings. Armenians, for example, have long been clamoring for a museum in Washington to institutionalize the memory of the genocide of Armenian people by the Ottoman Turks. But why is there not already, in the nation's capital, which happens to be a city whose population is overwhelmingly African-American, a Museum of the History of Slav-

ery? Indeed, there is no Museum of the History of Slavery—the whole story, starting with the slave trade in Africa itself, not just selected parts, such as the Underground Railroad—anywhere in the United States. This, it seems, is a memory judged too dangerous to social stability to activate and to create. The Holocaust Memorial Museum and the future Armenian Genocide Museum and Memorial are about what didn't happen in America, so the memory-work doesn't risk arousing an embittered domestic population against authority. To have a museum chronicling the great crime that was African slavery in the United States of America would be to acknowledge that the evil was *here*. Americans prefer to picture the evil that was *there*, and from which the United States—a unique nation, one without any certifiably wicked leaders throughout its entire history—is exempt. That this country, like every other country, has its tragic past does not sit well with the founding, and still all-powerful, belief in American exceptionalism. The national consensus on American history as a history of progress is a new setting for distressing photographs—one that focuses our attention on wrongs, both here and elsewhere, for which America sees itself as the solution or cure.

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Even in the era of cybermodels, what the mind feels like is still, as the ancients imagined it, an inner space—

like a theatre—in which we picture, and it is these pictures that allow us to remember. The problem is not that people remember through photographs, but that they remember only the photographs. This remembering through photographs eclipses other forms of understanding, and remembering. The concentration camps—that is, the photographs taken when the camps were liberated in 1945—are most of what people associate with Nazism and the miseries of the Second World War. Hideous deaths (by genocide, starvation, and epidemic) are most of what people retain of the whole clutch of iniquities and failures that have taken place in postcolonial Africa.

To remember is, more and more, not to recall a story but to be able to call up a picture. Even a writer as steeped in nineteenth-century and early modern literary solemnities as W. G. Sebald was moved to seed his lamentation-narratives of lost lives, lost nature, lost cityscapes with photographs. Sebald was not just an elegist, he was a militant elegist. Remembering, he wanted the reader to remember, too.

Harrowing photographs do not inevitably lose their power to shock. But they are not much help if the task is to understand. Narratives can make us understand. Photographs do something else: they haunt us. Consider one of the unforgettable images of the war in Bosnia, a photograph of which the *New York Times* foreign correspon-

dent John Kifner wrote: "The image is stark, one of the most enduring of the Balkan wars: a Serb militiaman casually kicking a dying Muslim woman in the head. It tells you everything you need to know." But of course it doesn't tell us everything we need to know.

From an identification given by the photographer, Ron Haviv, we learn the photograph was taken in the town of Bijeljina in April 1992, the first month of the Serb rampage through Bosnia. From behind, we see a uniformed Serb militiaman, a youthful figure with sunglasses perched on the top of his head, a cigarette between the second and third fingers of his raised left hand, rifle dangling in his right hand, right leg poised to kick a woman lying face down on the sidewalk between two other bodies. The photograph doesn't tell us that she is Muslim, though she is unlikely to have been labeled in any other way, for why would she and the two others be lying there, as if dead (why "dying"?), under the gaze of some Serb soldiers? In fact, the photograph tells us very little—except that war is hell, and that graceful young men with guns are capable of kicking overweight older women lying helpless, or already killed, in the head.

The pictures of Bosnian atrocities were seen soon after the events took place. Like pictures from the Vietnam War, such as Ron Haberle's evidence of the massacre in March 1968 by a company of American soldiers of some

five hundred unarmed civilians in the village of My Lai, they became important in bolstering the opposition to a war which was far from inevitable, far from intractable, and could have been stopped much sooner. Therefore one could feel an obligation to look at these pictures, gruesome as they were, because there was something to be done, right now, about what they depicted. Other issues are raised when we are invited to respond to a dossier of hitherto unknown pictures of horrors long past.

An example: a trove of photographs of black victims of lynching in small towns in the United States between the 1890s and the 1930s, which provided a shattering, revelatory experience for the thousands who saw them in a gallery in New York in 2000. The lynching pictures tell us about human wickedness. About inhumanity. They force us to think about the extent of the evil unleashed specifically by racism. Intrinsic to the perpetration of this evil is the shamelessness of photographing it. The pictures were taken as souvenirs and made, some of them, into postcards; more than a few show grinning spectators, good churchgoing citizens as most of them had to be, posing for a camera with the backdrop of a naked, charred, mutilated body hanging from a tree. The display of these pictures makes us spectators, too.

What is the point of exhibiting these pictures? To

awaken indignation? To make us feel "bad"; that is, to appall and sadden? To help us mourn? Is looking at such pictures really necessary, given that these horrors lie in a past remote enough to be beyond punishment? Are we the better for seeing these images? Do they actually teach us anything? Don't they rather just confirm what we already know (or want to know)?

All these questions were raised at the time of the exhibition and afterward when a book of the photographs, *Without Sanctuary*, was published. Some people, it was said, might dispute the need for this grisly photographic display, lest it cater to voyeuristic appetites and perpetuate images of black victimization—or simply numb the mind. Nevertheless, it was argued, there is an obligation to "examine"—the more clinical "examine" is substituted for "look at"—the pictures. It was further argued that submitting to the ordeal should help us understand such atrocities not as the acts of "barbarians" but as the reflection of a belief system, racism, that by defining one people as less human than another legitimates torture and murder. But maybe they *were* barbarians. Maybe *this* is what most barbarians look like. (They look like everybody else.)

That being said, one person's "barbarian" is another person's "just doing what everybody else is doing." (How many can be expected to do better than that?) The question is, Whom do we wish to blame? More precisely, Whom do we believe we have the right to blame? The children of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were no less innocent than the young African-American men (and a few women) who were butchered and hanged from trees in small-town America. More than one hundred thousand civilians, three-fourths of them women, were massacred in the RAF firebombing of Dresden on the night of February 13, 1945; seventy-two thousand civilians were incinerated in seconds by the American bomb dropped on Hiroshima. The roll call could be much longer. Again, Whom do we wish to blame? Which atrocities from the incurable past do we think we are obliged to revisit?

Probably, if we are Americans, we think that it would be morbid to go out of our way to look at pictures of burnt victims of atomic bombing or the napalmed flesh of the civilian victims of the American war on Vietnam, but that we have a duty to look at the lynching pictures—if we belong to the party of the right-thinking, which on this issue is now very large. A stepped-up recognition of the monstrousness of the slave system that once existed, unquestioned by most, in the United States is a national project of recent decades that many Euro-Americans feel some tug of obligation to join. This ongoing project is a great achievement, a benchmark of civic virtue. The acknowledgment of the American use of disproportionate

firepower in war (in violation of one of the cardinal laws of war) is very much not a national project. A museum devoted to the history of America's wars that included the vicious war the United States fought against guerrillas in the Philippines from 1899 to 1902 (expertly excoriated by Mark Twain), and that fairly presented the arguments for and against using the atomic bomb in 1945 on the Japanese cities, with photographic evidence that showed what those weapons did, would be regarded—now more than ever—as a most unpatriotic endeavor.

6

One can feel obliged to look at photographs that record great cruelties and crimes. One should feel obliged to think about what it means to look at them, about the capacity actually to assimilate what they show. Not all reactions to these pictures are under the supervision of reason and conscience. Most depictions of tormented, mutilated bodies do arouse a prurient interest. (*The Disasters of War* is notably an exception: Goya's images cannot be looked at in a spirit of prurience. They don't dwell on the beauty of the human body; bodies are heavy, and thickly clothed.) All images that display the violation of an attractive body are, to a certain degree, pornographic. But images of the repulsive can also allure. Everyone knows that what slows down highway traffic going past a horrendous car crash is not only curiosity.

Irresistible Decay

Published by the Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities

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Ruins Reclaimed

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Irresistible Decay: Ruins Reclaimed
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This volume accompanies the exhibition *Irresistible Decay: Ruins Reclaimed,*
held December 16, 1997, through February 22, 1998, at the Getty Center, Los Angeles.

Published by The Getty Research Institute
for the History of Art and the Humanities,
Los Angeles, CA 90049-1688
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Printed in the United States of America.

03 02 01 00 99 98 97 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Frontispiece: Constantine Athanassiou, view of Philopappos Monument, Athens,
ca. 1875, albumen print. Los Angeles, The Getty Research Institute for the History of
Art and the Humanities, acc. 92.R.84 (04.11.03).

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Irresistible decay: ruins reclaimed / Michael Roth with
Claire Lyons and Charles Merewether.
p. cm. —(Bibliographies & dossiers: the collections of the Getty Research Institute for
the History of Art and the Humanities; 2)
Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 0-89236-468-8 (pbk.)
1. Ruins in art — Exhibitions. I. Roth, Michael S., 1957– .
II. Lyons, Claire L., 1955– . III. Merewether, Charles.
IV. Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities. V. Series.
N8237.8.R817 1997
930.1'074'79493 — dc21 97-14118
CIP

ummu/bks
3142448X
arch
5/28/99

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Traces of Loss

Charles Merewether

The disaster ruins everything, all the while leaving everything intact.

— Maurice Blanchot

Ruins remain. They persist, whether beneath the ground or above. In remaining, they are always already of the past, yet given to the future. Ruins collapse temporalities. Landscapes and buildings in ruination, reduced to abandoned sites, are traces that embody a sense of loss. Ruins hold out an image of a once glorious present, another time, revealing a place of origin no longer as it was. Their presence is a sign of that loss and of the impossibility of overcoming it. They remind us of finitude as both disruption and continuity, of the necessity of living on among ruins.

Perhaps more than any other site, the city of Pompeii in its afterlife is emblematic of the allure of ruins. Destroyed in the year 79 by the volcanic eruption of Vesuvius, it was frozen in time, buried beneath layers of pumice and ash. To walk among its ruins is not only to experience the sensation of passing back into another time but also to experience the presence of death in the present. Pompeii captures the transience of time while holding change and mortality in abeyance; by arresting time, the ruins of the city offer to life a curious form of immortality. On reading Wilhelm Jensen's novel set in the city of Pompeii, Sigmund Freud wrote: "What had formerly been the city of Pompeii assumed an entirely changed appearance, but not a living one; it now appeared rather to become completely petrified in dead immobility. Yet out of it stirred a feeling that death was beginning to talk."[1] For Freud, Jensen's idea of a past locked in the present provided spatial and archaeological analogies for the procedures of psychoanalysis. The entombed city represented the suspension of history, and its ruins were a testimony to a past that had been buried. Psychoanalysis, like archaeological excavation, could reveal what remained but had become invisible. In a text of 1896, Freud distinguished the option of leaving ruins from that of excavating them, arguing that ruins cannot be left alone or preserved intact because "stones speak." They must be worked upon, worked through.[2] He concluded that only by digging into the rubble does one reveal the fragments of a larger story or meaning. Yet, when ruins are uncovered they are irrevocably changed: they become part of the present.

Framing Ruins

Freud's reference to archaeology and ruins was made at a time when photography had already begun to serve to document the archaeological discoveries of the ancient world. The camera was seen as an instrument that could arrest the passage of time: photographs could capture what had come to pass and what remained. Photography's ability to document ruin seemed to function as a compensation for the experience of losing the past. This modern technology made sense of ruins, not so much in Freud's terms of working through the past, but, rather, by framing ruins as something that we know is behind us. Photography offered a cultural patrimony that provided the moral impulse to belief in a future without ruins.

The French government founded the Commission des Monuments Historiques in 1837 and the Heliographic Mission in 1851, both of which were charged with documenting ancient and Medieval monuments. In 1858, the French Ministry of Public Instruction commissioned expeditions to Egypt and Jerusalem, and the photographer Désiré Charnay was given a commission to record the ancient monuments of the Mayan civilization in Mexico. Arriving in the midst of the Mexican War of Reform, Charnay waited for five months in Oaxaca for his photographic supplies and baggage to arrive. In March 1859, he made his way to the Mixtec site at Mitla, which dates from A.D. 800–1200.

For the next two years, Charnay photographed Mitla and the other principal Mesoamerican sites throughout Mexico. The photographs provide the viewer not only with an extraordinary sense of the architectural construction and detail of design of each building but also with an overwhelming sense of their destruction. They offer a melancholy spectacle of a culture that had returned to the primeval world of nature. The photographs were presented to the French public with a supplementary text by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, an official government architect under Napoleon III and a central figure in the revival of interest in Gothic cathedrals and ruins as a material analogue to a view of the world as transient and fragmentary. The photograph of the "Second Palace" at Mitla (fig. 1) reveals little but the remaining rubble of the structure. Two indigenous men sit beside the ruins, placed there by Charnay to provide a sense of the scale of the buildings, yet their portrayal suggests that they belong to another time, a time before the ruins. It is perhaps the power of this past, the idea that a historical memory was embedded in the ruins, that accounts for Charnay's observation that "the Indians steadfastly refused to spend the night in the ruins; the very idea inspired in them a mortal fear."[3]

By 1863, the year Charnay's book *Cités et ruines américaines* appeared in Paris, the project, which until then had seemed to be conceived within the notion of a universal cultural patrimony, had taken on another meaning. While the United States was embroiled in its Civil War, Mexican Conservatives had called for foreign assistance in their war against the Liberals, and France had seen an opportunity to collect its debt from Mexico and realize its ambitions to establish a foothold in the Americas. Napoleon III saw France's

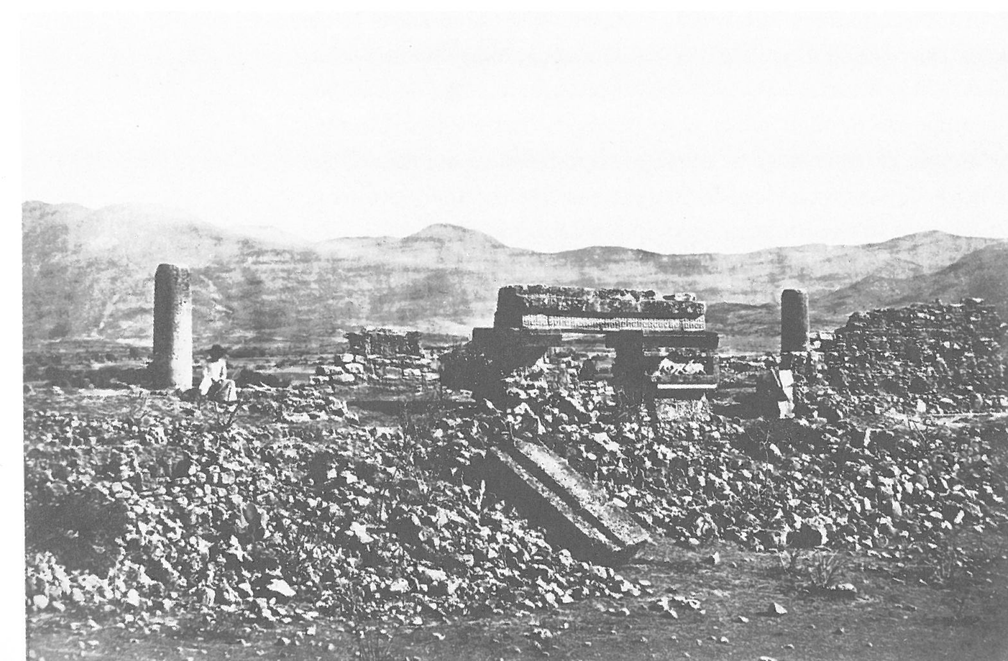


Fig. 1. Désiré Charnay, "Second Palace" at Mitla, Mexico, ca. 1859, albumen print. Los Angeles, The Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, acc. 95.R.126*.

Fig. 2. George N. Barnard, ruins of railroad depot, Charleston, South Carolina, albumen print from *Photographic Views of Sherman's Campaign*, 1869. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum: 84.XO.1323.61.

intervention in Mexican affairs as a way of counteracting the interests of the United States in the region by establishing a vital link to what the Europeans conceived of as "Latin America." By 1864 the French government had installed the Austrian prince Maximilian as Emperor of Mexico, an act that Charnay supported.[4] "It was France's duty to rouse Mexico from its numbness," he wrote. "America will not protest: crushed by the horrible war that devours it, reduced to impotence by the probable recognition of the South, she will only be able to watch with a jealous eye the rebirth of the magnificent empire which escaped her."[5]

Although Charnay's photographs of ruins suggest that they existed in an archaic world far away from contemporary times, his observations offer insight into the relation of contemporary events and theories of culture to the framing of ruins. Charnay, following Gobineau's theory of race as proposed in *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (1853–1855), believed Mexicans to be an inferior indigenous race and a people of the past. He incorporated into his book drawings of these people that compare the physiognomy of their faces with those carved on the monuments. In this respect, the work of Charnay represents an apologist view for intervention in the affairs of the Mexicans. For France, the ruins symbolized the failure of the Mexican culture to become a modern nation, an attitude that legitimated the French Empire's mission to bring Mexico into modern history. And yet, the photographs retain a sense of nostalgia, as if imbued with a longing to return to a time before the ruins. As Charnay noted of these ruins, "this abandon, this silence, this solitude . . . gives you an unspeakable sadness." This is what Renato Rosaldo has called "imperialist nostalgia," which "uses a pose of innocent yearning both to capture people's imagination and to conceal its complicity with often brutal domination."[6] Photographs became the instrument of colonialism and the tomb of history.

Ruins of Disaster

Ruins contain the traces of former worlds and therefore provoke a certain nostalgia, but living with ruins can also be a reminder of disaster. Photographic albums produced during the American Civil War record the ruins of conflict and devastation, suggesting to us how modern culture was becoming a culture of ruins.

There is nothing elegiac or picturesque about the framing of ruins in George N. Barnard's album of the ruins in the American South, *Photographic Views of Sherman's Campaign* (1869). These photographs offered, rather, a moral lesson to their nineteenth-century audience, as evinced by the legend for an engraving based on one of Barnard's photographs that was published in *Harper's Weekly:* "The destruction intended for others fell with an intolerable weight upon itself."[7] Barnard, an army photographer, arrived in Charleston in March 1865, a time when the city was occupied by Union forces and a "'handful of poor unkempt whites and wandering negroes.' These forlorn residents foraged in streets littered with papers, broken glass, bricks, and other

debris from innumerable burned and damaged buildings."[8] Charleston had been damaged by a great fire in December 1861 and again by bombardment and fire during the Union Army's occupation in early 1865. A newspaper correspondent who visited Charleston in that year wrote:

> A city of ruins, of desolation, of vacant houses, of widowed women, of rotting wharves, of deserted warehouses, of weed-wild gardens, of miles of grass-grown streets, of acres of pitiful and voiceful barrenness—that is Charleston, wherein Rebellion loftily reared its head five years ago.[9]

In photographing the city's ruins, Barnard chose carefully. One of his photographs, which shows a Charleston railway site that had been destroyed by retreating Southern troops, recalls the ruins of ancient Greece and Rome (fig. 2).[10] Such a reference could be made because at this time the archaeological discoveries of ancient cities and sites were being recorded photographically. In the same year, 1865, Tayler Lewis published his book *State Rights: A Photograph from the Ruins of Ancient Greece,* in which he made a defense of the Union cause by recalling the fate of Greek civilization. In comparing the Civil War to the age of antiquity, he wrote that "God has given us a mirror in the past" that reveals that "all the dire calamities of Greece" were rooted in the selfish desire of individual states for autonomy.[11] Barnard's photographs of the ruins of Charleston were not picturesque; the ruins they depicted were not objects of veneration. On the contrary, his images told a cautionary tale intended as a corrective to nineteenth-century guidebooks of classical antiquity. Ruins were framed as warning.

Susan Buck-Morss has suggested in an analysis of Walter Benjamin's writings about ruins and history that

> the debris of industrial culture teaches us not the necessity of submitting to historical catastrophe, but the fragility of the social order that tells us this catastrophe is necessary. The crumbling of the monuments that were built to signify the immortality of civilization becomes proof, rather, of its transiency.[12]

Photography is a technology that strives to overcome this transiency through documentation. Yet modern technology has enabled the destructive capabilities of modern warfare, which can effectively erase the very objects that photography tries to document. Edward Steichen's work from World War I made use of photographic techniques that had been adapted for military intelligence. During the war aerial photographs were used to pinpoint strategic bombing sites as well as record the destruction of cities.[13] Such photographs are both an instrument of war and a witness to its effects (fig. 3). The illusion of veridical documentation and the ideological function of instrumental and aesthetic realism create a blind spot, obscuring the complicity of technologies of representation in technologies of destruction. Photography not only documents destruction, it frames and re-presents its subjects in order to create a

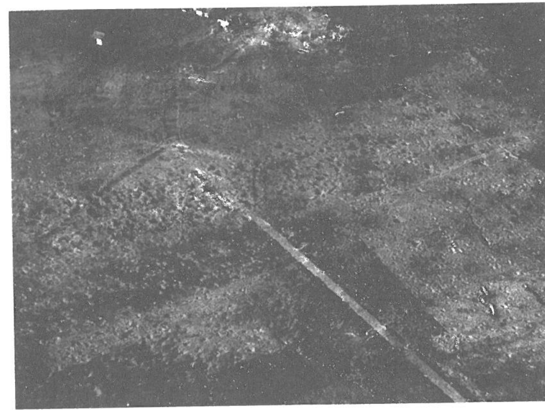


Fig. 3. Edward Steichen, aerial view of war damage, 1914–1918, gelatin silver print. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum: 84.XM.848.9.

Fig. 4. Robert Smithson, "The Great Pipes Monument," from *Monuments of Passaic*, 1967, gelatin silver print. Courtesy John Weber Gallery, New York.

distance between beholders and the events to which the photographs bear witness. In such work photography produces a new aesthetics of surveillance and domination, an aesthetics that values as compelling what modern science and technology can bring to our comprehension of the world, even as they radically threaten it.

In the work of the North American artist Robert Smithson, this view of technology is posed as a critical issue of artistic representation. "Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan" insists that art and photography fail in the face of the Mayan jungle. Aware of those, like Charnay, who had toured and written about the Mayan ruins before him, Smithson ironically employed the format of the travelogue for his artwork of image and text.[14] He writes of looking at photographs of Mayan temples, noting that

> the load of actual, on-the-spot perception is drained away into banal appreciation. The ghostly photographic remains are sapped memories, a mock reality of decomposition.... Art brings sight to a halt, but that halt has a way of unraveling itself. All the reflections expired into the thickets of Yaxchilan.[15]

Smithson's response to this landscape was to place in the jungle a series of mirrors whose reflection displaced the subject, projecting it as elsewhere. He refers to the camera as a "portable tomb," as if to suggest that its function is to capture the subject so that its future is buried in the destiny of the image. Technologies of loss and death haunt the work of Smithson. "Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan" is not about Mexico or Mayan culture but rather, as the artist might say, about the ruin-producing effect of modern culture. Smithson's work points to photography's participation in a culture of destruction rather than to its redemptive potential.

In a 1967 essay, Smithson recounts his journey to view the monuments of Passaic, New Jersey. He boards a bus at New York's Port Authority, opens *Earthworks* by Brian Aldiss, and reads the first line: "The dead man drifted along in the breeze." This beginning frames the observations recorded in "A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey," which recall the newpaper correspondent's description of Charleston as a barren city of ruins. Smithson's tour leads him not to venerable monuments of the distant past but to an industrial wasteland of desolate, forlorn monuments, such as a pumping derrick, drainage pipes (fig. 4), a parking lot, and a bridge he names "Monument of Dislocated Directions."

> Actually the landscape was no landscape, but...a kind of self-destroying postcard world of failed immortality and oppressive grandeur. I had been wandering in a moving picture that I couldn't quite picture.... That zero panorama seemed to contain ruins in reverse, that is, all the new construction that would eventually be built. This is the opposite of the "romantic ruin" because the buildings don't fall into ruin after they are built but rather rise into ruin before they are built.[16]

Smithson transforms his disenchantment into an allegorical desire to return to ruins as the foundation of history.[17] He is critical not only of the problems caused by the industrial use of the land but also of what he discerned as the complacency of the picturesque, whether it be that of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries or that of modernism's ongoing investment in the pastoral landscape.

> Memory traces of tranquil gardens as "ideal nature"—jejune Edens that suggest an idea of banal "quality"—persist in popular magazines like *House Beautiful* and *Better Homes and Gardens*. A kind of watered down Victorianism, an elegant notion of industrialism in the woods; all this brings to mind some kind of wasted charm. The decadence of "interior decoration" is full of appeals to "country manners" and liberal-democratic notions of gentry. Many art magazines have gorgeous photographs of artificial industrial ruins (sculpture) on their pages.[18]

For Smithson, such work by his contemporaries transformed the "'gloomy ruins' of aristocracy... into the 'happy' ruins of the humanist."[19] Against this art, which he saw as championed by the pre-eminent critic of the day, Clement Greenberg, Smithson suggested that "the artist must accept and enter into all of the real problems that confront the ecologist and industrialist. Art... should work within the processes of actual production and reclamation."[20] "Actual production and reclamation" does not mean documentation, but an assault on those destructive forces that continue to produce contemporary ruins.

The idea that modern culture begins in ruins, or with ruins, is critical to the work of contemporary French artists Anne Poirier and Patrick Poirier. Their work represents a meditation on ruins as the trace of destruction and, like Smithson, they stand directly against the tradition of the picturesque that contemporary art perpetuates by its appropriation of the ruin as an object of melancholy beauty. However, unlike Smithson, they have constructed fictive ruins as a way of marking the space between the memory of ruins and the ruins of memory. This is the space of loss. Anne Poirier remarks:

> Ruins aren't just the signs of melancholy; they are also signs of violent destruction.... Patrick lost his brother in the bombings, and throughout my childhood I played in the ruins of our neighborhood in Marseilles. Much later, in 1977 and 1978, we lived in Berlin. We had completely forgotten about the war, but as soon as we arrived in Berlin it all came back to us because the city bears the physical traces of war.[21]

The Poiriers drew on this experience to conceive a form of archive in which, through the fictional character of an archaeologist-architect, each work represents an attempt to draw together the fragments and ruins as a way of making sense of the past. The archaeologist-architect becomes an intermediary, like the analyst, in the work of recovering the traces that remain: "It's his way

of explaining the world around him and trying to understand it, because there's no fixed point to steer by anymore, no trustworthy landmark."[22]

In *Memoria Mundi (No. II)* (1990–91, p. 64), the Poiriers present the archives of this fictional archaeologist-architect in a cabinet whose drawers are filled with different objects: a cranium containing an ancient ruined theater, a field notebook. Each object suggests the material evidence of a civilization, yet the archive is incomplete, and the notebook contains no clue that would allow one to situate the objects' precise place of origin in space or time. The archive turns out to be nothing more than a collection of fragments presented not as ruins of the past but as the ruin of memory.

Neither Restoration nor Erasure

In memory of the events of World War II, Blanchot wrote, "We are on the edge of disaster without being able to situate it in the future: it is rather always already past, and yet we are on the edge or under the threat."[23] Ruins are a legacy that can be neither fully remembered nor fully forgotten; they point to the excessive presentness of disaster, its capacity to spill out of the present into our sense of the past and our expectations for the future. Arrested in time and place, the ruins of disaster are overwhelmingly defined by time and place, yet they are also out of time and out of place.

The architectural work of Daniel Libeskind and Lebbeus Woods has extended into new dimensions the metaphor of ruins suggested by Freud. Both are concerned, like Freud, with excavation because they think that the past cannot be erased, and that to build over the place of ruins would be a suppression and denial of what has come to pass. Their work refutes the domestication of violence and the obliteration of history, seeking to frame what is missing—a void or the space of loss. Libeskind and Woods use ruins to oppose those who propose their restoration to a former glory or infamy and those who argue that since one can never restore what has been lost, ruins must be either erased or recycled.[24]

In the architectural practice of Libeskind and Woods this opposition may be perceived as a negative form of monument, an anti-monument that seeks to expose the history by which it has been produced. As such, their work stands against the building of commemorative structures to memorialize what has been lost, such as Nathan Rapoport's 1948 Warsaw Ghetto Monument, which features a massive bronze relief. Rapoport's monument, typical of those built in the period following World War II, was constructed at the site of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943, a site where more than 50,000 Jews were either captured or shot.[25] In contrast to this heroic depiction of resistance, the negative monument is not an object with which people can identify, it is not a commemorative form that fills in a gaping hole produced by the events of history. Instead, a negative monument makes a place for the ruins that remain; it allows them to become an anguished site of cultural patrimony, a site that keeps alive a sense of something at the threshold between the impossibility of remembering and the necessity of forgetting. The ruin

forms a relation to the past; those that view the ruins are exposed to absence, to that which is missing. Although ruins stand for an ethical acknowledgment of that which has been, they nonetheless remain and therefore must not be denied. Framing ruins as an anti-monument is not only a way of addressing the past, it produces a legacy that offers itself as a suspended fragment.

In several projects Libeskind proposes a critical alternative to modernist architecture, one that "navigates between this Scylla and Charybdis of nostalgic historicism on the one hand, and of the *tabula rasa* of a totalitarian kind of thinking on the other."[26] Against these two forms of architectural resolution of ruins, Libeskind seeks "to create a different architecture for a time which would reflect an understanding of history after world catastrophe."[27] In 1989 Libeskind was awarded the commission to build the "Extension of the Berlin Museum with the Jewish Museum Department," which would house collections relating to Jewish history and culture (fig. 5). He proposed an extension, now under construction, that is visibly separate from the existing building, since, for Libeskind, the Holocaust was "an event across which no connection of an obvious kind can ever be made again."[28]

The extension is composed of several independent structures placed around an underground void, or empty space. The structures are connected by bridges that cross the void. There is no visible connection between the museum and the extension; the three connecting paths are underground. The first path represents "the end of Berlin as we knew it, the apocalyptic void." At the end of the path is the "Holocaust Tower," a windowless structure in which the names of all Berliners who were exterminated are inscribed. The second path leads to a garden with columns filled with earth and vegetation growing downward; it symbolizes exile and emigration as well as the year 1948, the year of Israel's formation. The third underground path traverses the void by means of a bridge between the extension and the main circulation stairway within the museum. The only access to the void is through the galleries that house sacred objects from the Jewish community of Berlin. Libeskind explains:

> The void and the invisible are the structural features which I have gathered in this particular space of Berlin and exposed in architecture. The experience of the building is organized around a center which is not to be found in any explicit way because it is not visible. In terms of this museum, what is not visible is the richness of the former Jewish contribution to Berlin. It cannot be found in artifacts because it has been turned to ash. It has physically disappeared. This is part of the exhibit: a museum where no museological functions can actually take place.[29]

What is missing, that which has been lost—this is the void that is the essential core of ruins. Ruins are not necessarily what remains visible. Libeskind takes us to the limits of representation, to the absence of foundation, and to the decomposition of historical time. From this place, Libeskind attempts to bring the history of Berlin together, showing "its evolution, its

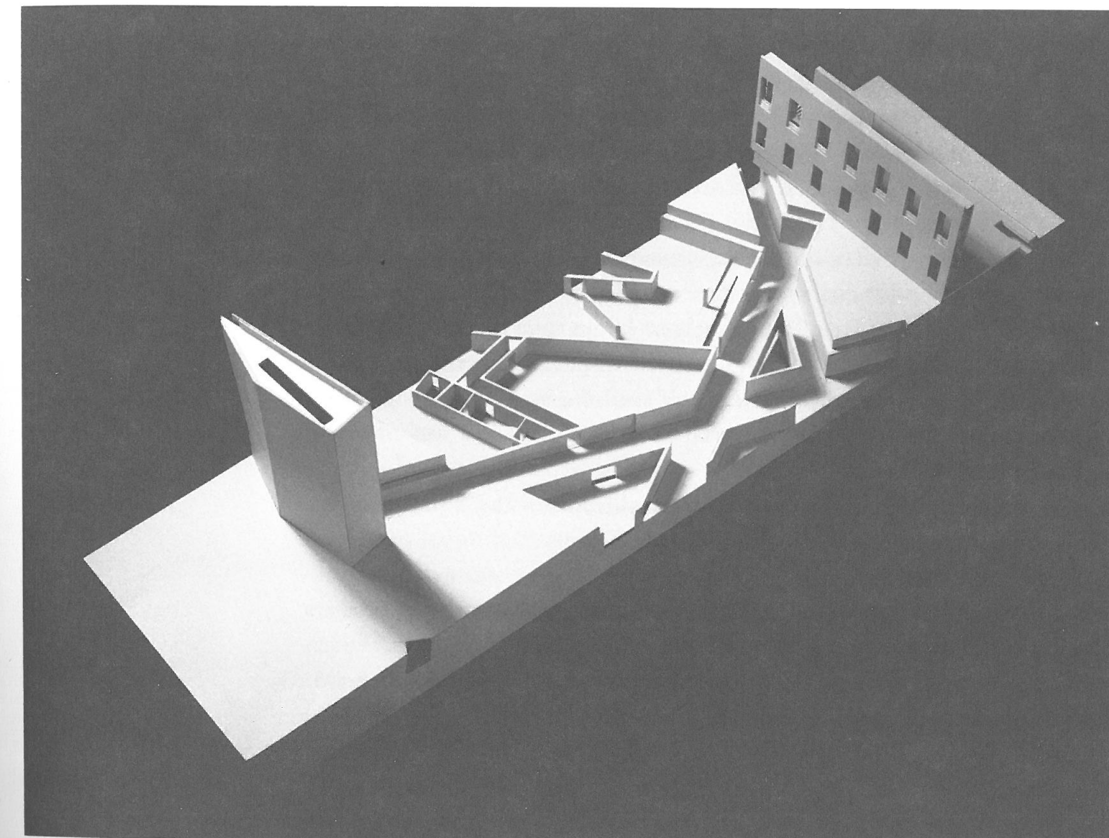


Fig. 5. Daniel Libeskind, extension of the Berlin Museum with the Jewish Museum Department, 1989–1991, architectural model. Los Angeles, The Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, acc. 920061.

history, its erasure" and seeking "not to isolate the Jewish history from the history of Berlin ... not to turn the Jewish history into some anthropological specimen of an absence."[30]

The Jewish history of Berlin is inseparable from "the history of Modernity, from the destiny of this incineration of history; they are bound together ... not through any obvious forms, but rather through negativity; through the absence of meaning of history and an absence of artifacts."[31] The void serves to provoke a realization of memory's absence. It contains no object that is either objectified in some monumental or memorial form or incorporated as a memory of an individual or group. The void seeks to preserve and acknowledge absence and, therefore, to refuse the completion of mourning. Libeskind writes that "the absence, which has been cut off in history, is also the bridge to the future of Berlin. It is through that absence that Berlin goes on."[32]

Lebbeus Woods also argues for an architecture that begins within the context of a culture emptied of meaning. The drawings for the *Berlin Free Zone* project, executed in 1990, just after the dismantling of the Berlin Wall, evoke a sense of a city emptied out or in a state of abandonment (p. 72). The drawings recall those parts of East Berlin that were left in ruins after World War II. By bringing into focus the nature of constructed spaces generally, the images call for a "revaluation of existing cities and societies, as well as the 'use' and 'meaning' of any human life."[33] As aerial views that provide a way of seeing the city in a manner similar to that of surveillance photography, the drawings offer a remarkable visual parallel to aerial reconnaissance photographs. Autonomous forms like airborne missiles appear either to threaten or to fracture and break open the city walls. The grafting of forms over existing structures, however, suggests possibilities for the dynamic transformation of cities and societies. Such change would create what Woods calls "freespaces," which "form the matrix of unpredictable *possibilities* for cultural, social, and political transformation latent in human knowledge and invention."[34]

In 1993 Woods published a manifesto titled *Architecture and War,* written as a proposal for rebuilding the destroyed city of Sarejevo. He argues that while Sarejevo will doubtless rise again, "phoenix-like, out of the ashes," like other destroyed cities, the critical question to be asked is "when they are rebuilt, on what form of knowledge will it be, and to what—and whose—ends?"[35] He notes that "the burning towers of Sarevejo are markers at the end of an age of reasons, if not of reason itself, beyond which lies a domain of almost incomprehensible darkness."[36] For Woods, the destruction of cities and cultures exposes the limits of Enlightenment reason, of a modernity gone awry, and he believes that the project of architecture today is to construct a self-reflexive relation to reason's threat, a relation that recognizes reason's always potential destructiveness. Woods argues that the choice between restoration or erasure is a false one. Restoration is a "reaffirmation of a past social order that ended in war." To replace what has been damaged or destroyed is a "parody, worthy only of the admiration of tourists," serving "the interests of the decrepit hierarchies, struggling to legitimize themselves

finally through sentimentality and nostalgia."[37] And yet, erasure is equally a problem, writes Woods, one imposed by modernist architecture in the name of rationality. Cities are "conceived as *tabula rasa* on which to inscribe new plans," and they are "a totalizing system of space and thought imposed in the name of a common cause."[38] Cities must be (re)built in a way that avoids the temptation of resurrecting the old and beginning with the new.

Thus, like Libeskind, Woods founds his project on living with the power and violence of unreason. He calls for an architecture that will face the fact of war and ruins.

> It is a picture that emerges of its own cruel strength, its disturbing but potentially healing necessity. Only in confronting it can there be any hope of changing its tragic content. Only by facing the insanity of willful destruction can reason begin to believe again in itself.[39]

Willful destruction creates a void, and the recognition of this as an absence is essential to an architecture of the present. Woods views the void like a wound of the body, a wound that can be healed, and the drawings for the Sarevejo project depict architectural surfaces like skin. Over the wound new tissues grow, but the wound leaves behind a scar, the scar of willful destruction. He continues:

> In the spaces voided by destruction, new structures are injected. Complete in themselves, they do not make an exact fit, but exist as spaces within spaces, making no attempt to reconcile the gaps between what is new and old, between two radically different systems of spatial order and of thought.[40]

This site is the place of ruins, and the site of their preservation, where they can remain unforgotten. "The scar," Woods writes, is "a mark of pride, and of honor, both for what has been lost and what has been gained. It cannot be erased."[41] Only on this ground—the incorporation of ruins as a form of memorialization—can the foundations for a different future be built.

The work of Libeskind and Woods, like that of Smithson, makes a politically charged statement about the destructive power of representation. In their architectural designs Libeskind and Woods demarcate a void that is never to have material representation. The void is a figure of their will to recognize absence, to live within the space of loss. The ruined city is part of the patrimony of a culture, and the city itself becomes an archival form constituted from the fragments and shards of memory traces.

Like Freud, Libeskind and Woods realize that any re-presentation of the past is a reworking of it: they refuse to erase or restore ruins. This sets them apart from Charnay and Barnard, who used the documentary power of photography as a way of overcoming a sense of loss. Smithson wished to expose technology's power to perpetuate destruction. As the work of the Poiriers seems to suggest, ruins belong to the archive: the archive of unending disaster,

which "ruins everything, all the while leaving everything intact."[42] Ruins mark the site where the impossibility of remembering and the necessity to forget are both the ground on which history has been founded and the foundation on which to build the future.

Notes

1. Sigmund Freud, *Delusion and Dream, and Other Essays,* ed. Philip Reiff (Boston: Beacon Press, 1956), 175–76. Freud referred to the novel by Wilhelm Jensen, *Gradiva: A Pompeiian Fancy* (1903), trans. Helen M. Downey.

2. Sigmund Freud, *The Aetiology of Hysteria,* in idem, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* trans. under the editorship of James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953–1974), 3: 192.

3. Désiré Charnay, *Cités et ruines américanes* (Paris: Gide, 1863), 375; translation by Charles Merewether.

4. Charnay had left Mexico before these events had taken their course. Charnay returned to Mexico in the 1880s to photograph again the Mayan ruins. See Keith F. Davis, *Désiré Charnay: Expeditionary Photographer* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1981), 107.

5. Charnay (see note 3), 202, 203; translation by Charles Merewether.

6. Désiré Charnay, *Les anciennes villes du nouveau monde, voyages d'exploration au Mexique et dans l'Amerique centrale, 1857–1882* (Paris: Hachette, 1885), 189; translation by Charles Merewether. Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 69.

7. Cited in Leo Mazow, *Images of Annihilation: Ruins in Civil War America,* exh. cat. (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1996), unpaginated.

8. "Charleston as It Is," *Syracuse Standard,* 14 March 1865, 3; cited in Keith F. Davis, *George N. Barnard: Photographer of Sherman's Campaign* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1990), 93.

9. Sidney Andrews, *The South since the War; as Shown by Fourteen Weeks of Travel and Observation in Georgia and the Carolinas* (Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 1866); cited in Davis, *George N. Bernard* (see note 8), 93.

10. Davis draws a parallel to Thomas Cole's painting *Roman Campagna* of 1843 and the work of Frederic Church. Ibid., 175.

11. Tayler Lewis, *State Rights: A Photograph from the Ruins of Ancient Greece* (Albany: Weed, Parsons & Company, 1865); cited in Davis, *George N. Barnard* (see note 9), 175.

12. Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989), 170.

13. Allan Sekula, "The Instrumental Image: Steichen at War," *Art Forum* 14 (1975): 26–35. The photograph reproduced here is possibly one of the aerial reconnaissance photographs taken under the direction of Steichen in France during World War I by the American Expeditionary Force. Many of the photographs were part of his personal collection. This photograph is attributed to Steichen, but the authorship of the aerial photographs has been disputed, as Sekula notes.

14. Smithson's title makes this explicit by its direct reference to the title of the famous book on Mayan ruins by the traveler-artist John Lloyd Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1841).

15. Robert Smithson, "Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan" (1969), in idem, *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings,* ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1996), 127–28, 129.

16. Robert Smithson, "A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey" (1967), in *Robert Smithson* (see note 15), 72.

17. Behind this work was Freud's notion of the compulsive death drive of culture, a view that originated in the wake of World War I and resonated again in the years that followed World War II. Smithson's work was informed by contemporary writings concerning entropy, especially the book *The Hidden Order of Art* by the psychologist Anton Ehrenzweig and the early stories of J. G. Ballard and Thomas Pynchon. Ehrenzweig advanced the theory that culture was always subject to an irreversible condition of entropy, slowly merging back into the landscape. Likewise, both J. G. Ballard and Thomas Pynchon provided Smithson with a visceral description of a modern world of technology that produced an entropic condition of ruination and death. See Anton Ehrenzweig, *The Hidden Order of Art: A Study in the Psychology of Artistic Imagination* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1967); Thomas Pynchon, *Slow Learner: Early Stories* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1984); and J. G. Ballard, *The Terminal Beach* (London: Penguin Books, 1966).

18. Robert Smithson, "A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects" (1968), in *Robert Smithson* (see note 15), 105.

19. Ibid.

20. "Proposal 1972" (1972), in *Robert Smithson* (see note 15), 380.

21. Catherine Perret and Alain Bonfand, "Anne and Patrick Poirier, Interviewed," *Galeries Magazine,* April/May 1991: 86.

22. Ibid., 83.

23. Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster,* trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1986), 1.

24. This is most evident in a project of 1993 by Libeskind for the urbanization of former SS lands in Oranienburg, near Berlin, the site of the first Nazi concentration camp of Sachsenhausen. Libeskind argued against restoring the SS barracks, proposing rather that the facilities become "a place of ruins," allowing them to "slowly fall into decay ... into oblivion over time." See Daniel Libeskind, "Traces of the Unborn," *Kenchiku Bunka* 12, vol. 50, no. 59 (1995): 24–28.

25. See James E. Young, "The Biography of a Memorial Icon: Nathan Rapoport's Warsaw Ghetto Monument," *Representations* 26 (1989): 79. Apropos of ruins, a survivor and architect Mark Leon Suzin was commissioned to design and construct the base of the monument in Warsaw. He "decided to incorporate the ruins themselves into the monument base by pouring tons of concrete and reinforcement over them." Ibid., 80.

26. Libeskind, "Traces of the Unborn" (see note 24), 31.

27. Ibid., 44.

28. Ibid., 36.
29. Ibid., 40.
30. Ibid., 38.
31. Daniel Libeskind, *Daniel Libeskind: Countersign* (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), 87.
32. Libeskind, "Traces of the Unborn" (see note 24), 43.
33. Lebbeus Woods, *Anarchitecture: Architecture is a Political Act* (London: Academy Editions, 1992), 17.
34. Ibid., 10.
35. Lebbeus Woods, *War and Architecture*, trans. Aleksandra Wagner (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993), 8.
36. Ibid., 5.
37. Ibid., 10.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid., 5.
40. Ibid., 21.
41. Ibid., 31.
42. Blanchot (see note 23), 1.

Refinding the Past: Ruins and Responses

Compiled by Michael S. Roth

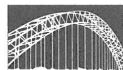
The finding of an object is in fact a refinding of it.
—Sigmund Freud

If, owing to the work of oblivion, the returning memory can throw no bridge, form no connecting link between itself and the present minute, if it remains in the context of its own place and date, if it keeps its distance, its isolation in the hollow of a valley or upon the highest peak of a mountain summit, for this very reason it causes us suddenly to breathe a new air, an air which is new precisely because we have breathed it in the past, that purer air which the poets have vainly tried to situate in paradise and which could induce so profound a sensation of renewal only if it had been breathed before, since the true paradises are the paradises that we have lost.
—Marcel Proust

ON THE BEATEN TRACK

TOURISM, ART, AND PLACE

LUCY R. LIPPARD



THE NEW PRESS, NEW YORK

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page vi–vii: **Gretchen Garner,** *This Is It!* 1992, color photograph.
Billboard advertising a sea shell attraction in Michigan.

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"Trespassing on Common Ground" was first published in
Harvard Design Magazine, Winter-Spring, 1998.
A shorter version of "Surprise Packages" was first published
in *Sculpture* magazine, November, 1998.

Published in the United States by The New Press, New York
Distributed by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York

The New Press was established in 1990 as a not-for-profit alternative
to the large, commercial publishing houses currently dominating
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Printed in the United States of America
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TRAGIC TOURISM

WHAT ARE WE TO MAKE of the popularity of such tourist targets as celebrity murder sites, concentration camps, massacre sites, places where thousands have been shot down, swept away in floods, inundated by lava, herded off to slavery, crushed by earthquakes, starved to death, tortured, murdered, hung, or otherwise suffered excesses the rest of us hope we will never experience? Are these our sacred sites? Are we drawn to such places by prurience, fear, curiosity, mortality (there but for the grace of god go I), or delusion (it *can't* happen to me)? Or have we been blindly conditioned and sold a blockbuster bill of goods, convinced that it is not only all right but socially responsible to wallow in others' miseries? That it is "respectful" to follow

People

CASHING IN

Crime and scandal may not pay for the people involved, but there are fortunes to be made on the sidelines

Innocent or guilty, O.J. isn't simply the accused—he's a brand name

John Bobbitt's severance pay isn't enough to keep him out of debt

Mel Chin, *Evidence from the Truth Hertz T-shirt Investigation, People Magazine,* 1995, T-shirt/performance (photo: courtesy Mel Chin). The artist (at far right) is standing outside the courthouse in which O. J. Simpson was arraigned, where, with different motives, he joined the other T-shirt vendors cashing in on the tragedy. At a later workshop in Aspen, Colorado, students sold Chin's "Truth Hertz" T-shirts so they could see what it was like to be part of the service industry rather than tourists enjoying their vacations.

the paparazzi to Diana's grave, simultaneously imitating and vilifying them?

At these tragic sites, these vast memento mori, we can contemplate mortality and evil. We can pay homage to those less fortunate than we have been (so far), enjoying vicarious restitution for our relatively good luck, a knock on wood that it continue. Yet however high-minded our approaches, the insidious elements of voyeurism and sensationalism will creep in. Tourists visit such sites to get a whiff of catastrophe, to rub a bit closer against disaster than is possible in television, movies, or novels—although the imagination has to work a little harder when confronted with the blank terrains, the empty rooms, the neatly mowed lawns, the negligible remains of real tragedy.

Tragic tourism, more than any other branch of the industry, raises the question of motivation. Tourism in general gets its bad name—travel in search of the sensational or the merely entertaining—from motives that are virtually unmeasurable, generally by those who presume their own to be purer or "higher." We have no way of knowing what other people are feeling when they visit those redolent places. False reverence may be paraded; deep sadness may be hidden.

The conflict between spectacle and engagement is heightened at the site of tragedy, mediated by awe if the site itself is visually overwhelming. If people travel to find what is missing in their daily lives, the grandeur of catastrophe and cataclysm is, oddly, right up there near the head of the list, along with adventure and hedonism. Modern lives are often seen by those living them as petty and meaningless. Of course, we too live in "interesting" times, according to the Chinese curse, though our own heroics are harder to perceive, and the collective misfortunes of the middle-class are more difficult to frame as tragedy. Even as some tourists relish the tragic, others prefer not to be exposed to it, aided by a national propensity to denial that endows tragic tourism with a social mission. The Ellis Island Immigration Museum recently agreed, after some hesitation, to display three (out of fifteen) graphic photographs of the mass murders of Armenians by Turks; they had been suppressed as "too gory and gruesome" for public consumption.

Passive, or indifferent, tourism might be seen as "memory without consequences." "The shape of memory cannot be divorced from the actions taken in its behalf," writes James E. Young in his brilliant book *The Texture of Memory*. "Memory without consequences contains the seeds of its own destruction." Historical tours are billed as educational fun but can equally function as anecdotes to the onset of amnesia, which is perhaps the ultimate tragedy. The closer we are to forgetting, the closer to the surface of events and emotions alike, the further we are from the depths where meaning and understanding reside. Public memorials and visited sites are the battlegrounds in a life-and-death struggle between memory, denial, and repression.

SIGNIFICANT STONES

Humanity has lost its dignity, but art has rescued it and preserved it in significant stones.
—FREDERICK SCHILLER

Cairns, or stone piles, are the oldest known human mode of memorializing. I was driving across Eastern New Mexico a few years ago when I came across a memorable modern example. Having been somewhat disappointed by the Billy the Kid "Museum" (junky, but not funky enough), I stopped at the remains of Fort Sumner, site of the Bosque Redondo, where over nine thousand Navajo were interned from 1864 to 1868, before

the survivors were forced to return to their diminished homelands in a second lethal Long Walk. The monument to their exile is simply a pile of multicolored (often red) stones taken from all over the multimillion-acre Navajo Nation, each one standing for a specific place. Although stones usually imply permanence, these symbolized travel, and at the same time testified to the enduring bond between the people and their homelands. At the same time, a pile of loose stones is always in process, individually created, never completed, so long as the memories stay vibrant. Young mentions family memorials placed on holocaust sites, among them biblical cairns, as well as wooden tablets nailed to trees. A few pebbles laid on top of the marker often distinguish Jewish graves. After the 1998 schoolyard massacre in Jonesboro, Arkansas, little girls handed out stones to arriving parishioners at one local church, in an attempt to understand the child murderers: "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone."

In recent times, few greater tragedies have overtaken the western nations than the genocide of six million Jews during World War II, accompanied by the murders of antifascist resisters, homosexuals, gypsies, and people with disabilities. Thousands of monuments to the Holocaust have been erected all over the world, and there are hundreds of museums and institutions devoted to this tragedy, which has come to represent (and overshadow) all human inhumanity in the modern mind. These monuments attract some 900,000 people annually to Dachau, 750,000 to Auschwitz, 600,000 to the Anne Frank House, 1,250,000 to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. Many of these people are perhaps better defined as "pilgrims" than as "tourists." Young observes that "it seems likely that as many people now visit Holocaust memorials every year as died in the Holocaust itself."

All known tragic sites are heavy with associations and fantasies. Unpeopled places marking the sites of human tragedy must be repeopled by visitors who, if they are open and attuned enough, become surrogates for the absent, the commemorated. Each tragic site has a different impact on different groups and individuals. Young wants to break down the notion of national "collective memory"; he prefers instead the "collected memories" or vast array of real responses to various monuments and memorials. How many visitors, for instance, are aware that between 200,000 and 500,000 Roma (gypsies) were killed by the Nazis in what the Roma call the *Poraymos*, or the Devouring. As nomads, they are not monument builders, but in August 1997 a vigil was held in Budapest and compensation demanded.

Each site also has its own local context and character, its own landscape. The subtleties lie in gauging the power of what remains, physically and informationally. Is a neatly restored torture chamber more impressive than a poignantly deteriorating ruin? Can we picture better what it was like to be there through detailed documentation, or through our own imaginations piqued by place? For me, an empty field with a forlorn weathered marker is more evocative than an antiseptically manicured lawn with an elaborate monument. The weed-choked Jewish cemeteries in Poland may be more poignant because their neglect continues as testimony to an antisemitism that colors Polish memories of World War II, a bias that still echoes the conditions of the war itself.

Whatever the site, scholarly debates boil around what to focus on, what degree of realism is palatable or offensive, who gets the last say about the wording on the markers, and so forth. Each factor depends on location, ownership, audience, agenda, commitment. The artist team

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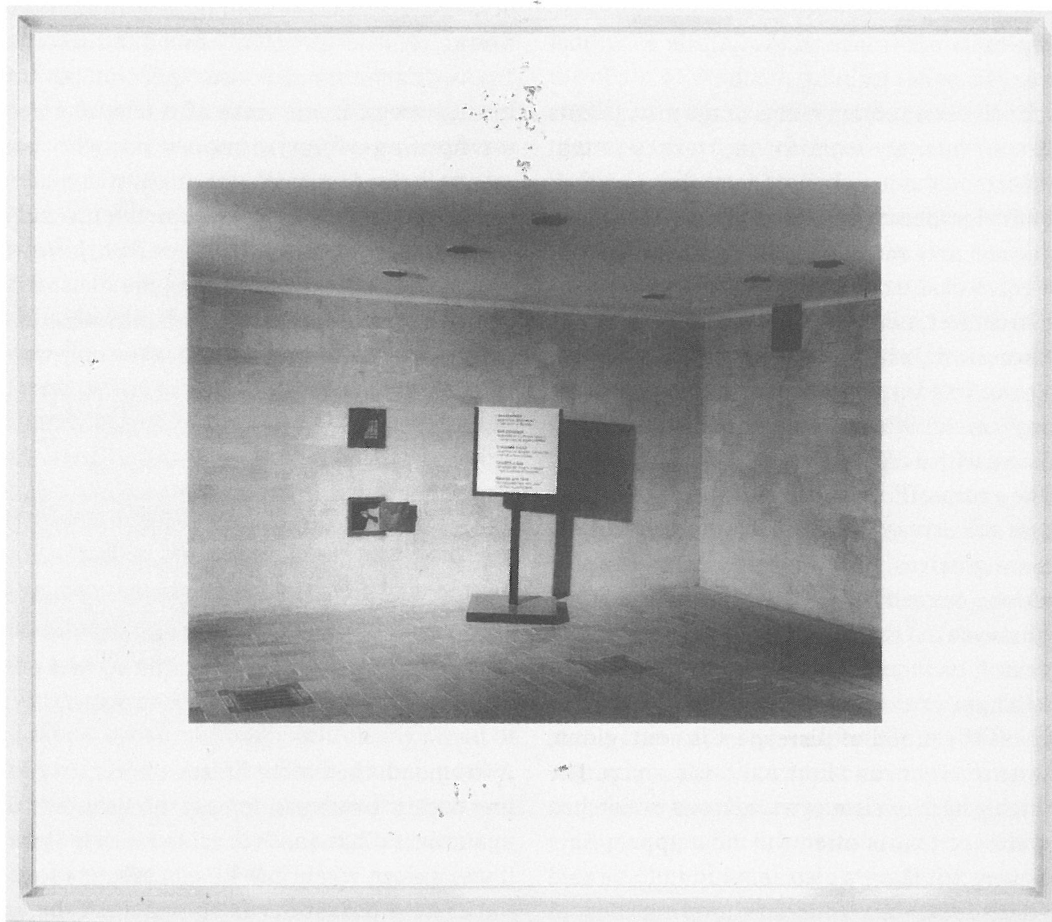

Andrea Robbins and Max Becher, DACHAU, *This Gas Chamber Was Used,* 1994, Chromogenic print, 29 w/4" x 34 1/2" with frame. Dachau, near Munich, was the prototype for Nazi death camps. It opened in 1933, added the famous gas chamber disguised as a shower in 1942, and was liberated in 1945.

of Andrea Robbins (an American Jew) and Max Becher (a German immigrant), when photographing Dachau, pointed out that "often the very techniques used to memorialize specific areas of the site hide or even destroy the visible links to the past." Their decision to photograph the camp in color, in cheerful sunlight, was intended not only to replace the black and white in our minds but also to make Dachau part of our present and to call attention to how we deal with this necessarily unburied past. The thirty original barracks were destroyed to create the memorial, and then two barracks were reconstructed for exhibit. Much of the farmland that once supported the camp is excluded from the monument, and has been developed for low-income housing.

More chillingly, "The former SS headquarters complex is off-limits to the public as it now serves as a police training school."

"To the extent that we encourage monuments to do our memory-work for us," writes Young, "we become that much more forgetful. In effect, the initial impulse to memorialize events like the Holocaust may actually spring from an opposite and equal desire to forget them." Commemorative structures, often pompous and inadequate to the occasion, inspire secondary memories that can color or even interfere with responses to the primary event. When an emotionally riveting site is visited with a crowd, the surrounding company can be a turn-off or a turn-on. If the responses of others are reverent, emotional, respectful, an ambiance arises within which one feels those emotions oneself (unless, of course, sentiment disgusts you). If the responses of others are noisily casual, disinterested, or even insulting, unrelated anger can overcome homage and melancholy. If the mood of disrespect is contagious, the site or event can slip from one's grasp. The inevitable hermeticism of a tragic site is matched by a silence that is often the most appropriate response. But there's also something to be said for the sounds of children whooping it up in blissful ignorance around a field of graves.

Certainly the journey's rhythm counts; it is far more mind-boggling to come suddenly upon a massacre site than to arrive after lines of highway billboards have bragged and begged for visitors. Is this a side trip or a pilgrimage? Is the tragic site sandwiched between a picnic and a theme park, caught on the run during a work trip? Are our ties to it powerful enough to disrupt business as usual? Tourists, or those consuming the sites, are not always from elsewhere. To what extent should the local, everyday audience be taken into consideration? Their responses are bound to be different from those arriving for the first time. Does proximity breed indifference? The constant reminder is one quiet but powerful local strategy. In the wake of revelations about the hording of Jewish money in Swiss bank accounts, for instance, a proposal was made to put historical plaques on all apartments and all museum-housed art works stolen from Jews who died in the Holocaust, detailing the life and fate of the lost owner. Maybe the banks should be marked as well. Remembrance is the only way to compensate the dead.

DUST DEVILS

For the smoke that rises from crematoria obeys physical laws like any other: the particles come together and disperse according to the wind, which propels them. The only pilgrimage, dear reader, would be to look sadly at a stormy sky now and then.—ANDRÉ SCHWARZ-BART

A few months before the fiftieth anniversary of the first nuclear bomb test, in 1995, I visited the Trinity site near White Sands in southern New Mexico. It was a clear, windy day. Blue mountains rose in the east, and dust devils spun across the vast rangeland like miniature explosions. Having driven through the gates to "Armyland," on the way in through the missile range, we passed monuments to the militarism of the past—those of the present are inaccessible, of course—in the form of launching pads, machinery, a grounded plane, and ominously less recognizable shapes and structures. Because of the anniversary, the Trinity site was open to the public twice in 1995, rather than once as in ordinary years. The infrequent visiting hours heighten the sense of secrecy and high security, making tours seem privileged, a rare opportunity to enter sacred grounds.

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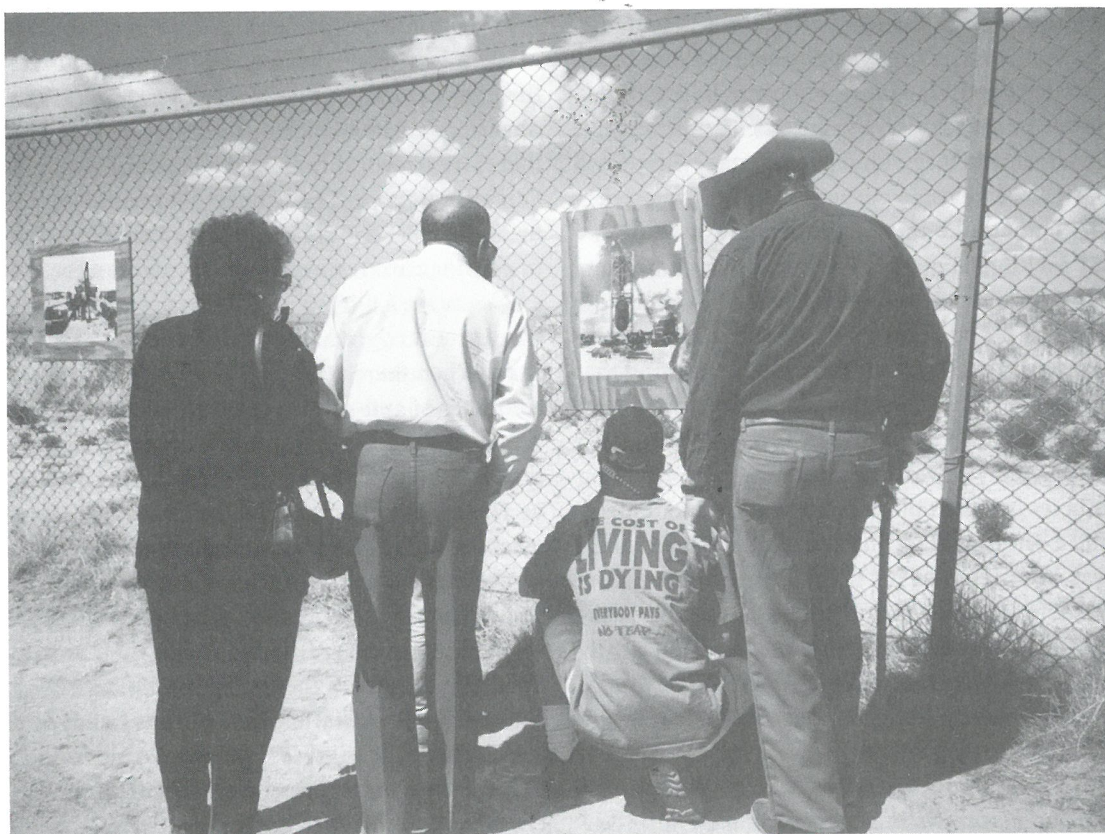
I came from the northern part of the state in the company of some local peace activists and a small group of Japanese who were in the United States to confer with the antinuclear movement. Conceiving of it as a kind of pilgrimage, I expected a pacifist lovefest, some anger, some healing rituals, among like-minded individuals who shared my feelings about the site's tragic significance. When we reached Ground Zero itself, we found a carnival mood, barely if at all muted by associations with death and destruction, suggesting that we were parties to winning the war all over again. Children played happily in some giant rusting (irradiated?) culverts in the parking lot, beaming couples had their pictures taken at the monument, and earnest military buffs perused the literature. I was not prepared for the majority of my fellow tourists: pronuclear enthusiasts, spectacle seekers, enthusiastic aging veterans and their neatly coiffed wives, camo- and leather-bedecked would-be warmongers, self-consciously ragged teenagers and hippie remnants. Many were clearly proud of this monument to America's global power. Blurred class rifts in attitude could be surmised from clothes, vehicles, bumperstickers, although it was sometimes hard to tell where people stood. One youth wore a T-shirt that read THE COST OF LIVING IS DYING/ EVERYBODY PAYS/ NO FEAR.

One of the arguments raised by Santa Fe's progressive Los Alamos Study Group against the reintroduction of plutonium use at Los Alamos (it happened anyway) is that the "dust in the wind," a fallout plume from uncontained accidental explosions, would reach Santa Fe, leaving a permanent swath of contamination and exterminating property, business, and tourism—the venal centers of concern. The conflicting emotions of politically disparate tourists and pilgrims at Ground Zero raised dust devils of their own.

The monument at Ground Zero, really only a marker, is woefully inadequate to commemorate the chain of events that began there. The squat obelisk of volcanic rocks—presumably local and therefore irrevocably altered—resembles a Park Service gatepost. The bronze plaque makes no mention of the dire consequences of the explosion it commemorates, stating simply: TRINITY SITE, WHERE THE WORLD'S FIRST NUCLEAR DEVICE WAS EXPLODED ON JULY 16, 1945. When there was a lull in the picture-taking, a number of anti-nuclear activists held hands and ringed the monument in a silent "never again" ritual for those in Bikini, Hiroshima, Nagasaki... or Nevada. An artist placed grimacing Asian masks at each of the monument's four facets. Our Japanese friends (one of whom, a young woman, had a withered arm, though we never asked if it was radiation-related) took it all in their stride, with little comment, though they must have been bemused by the behavior of Americans holidaying at this particular site—especially one older photographer, who had spent years working with Hiroshima atomic survivors.

A photography show was hung on a section of the chainlink fence that surrounds Ground Zero. Mounted on wood, minimally captioned, the small black-and-white images held their own surprisingly well against the landscape, partly because of its "emptiness," partly because they were pictures *of* that landscape, projecting past onto present in situ. The images offered a straightforward sequence of the momentous activities we were there to ponder: the wooden ranch house before it was overtaken by historical urgency, the construction of the launching pad, the explosion of the bomb. Perhaps because the unspoken, unmentioned events being memorialized—Hiroshima and Nagasaki—were distant and barely conceivable, the immediate destruction of the ranch buildings



Tourists looking at historical photo show on fence of Trinity site, ground zero, 1995, color slide (photo: Lucy R. Lippard)

and "pastoral" life lived in that space before it was annexed forever into war and war-thought was poignant in a more accessible way.

On the other side of the Ground Zero enclosure, the material culture of this history was offered like a yard sale. An array of twisted melted down Trinitite pebbles lay on card tables surrounded by other melted artifacts and reassuring pronuclear propaganda on safety: there is more radiation in a cross-country plane trip, or emitted by a microwave.... Meanwhile, a few yards from the table, a visiting activist's geiger counter was leaping out of control, contradicting these declarations of beneficence. One young man, bearded and wearing a skirt, had crawled for miles to Ground Zero on his knees, and intended to continue his penance on his way out (shades of the region's *hispano penitentes*).

Later, I stood at the fence with my back to the crowd, staring out into the huge uncaring spaces, finding the landscape itself more conducive to thinking about the unimaginable wastelands created by atomic and hydrogen bombs than anything at the site itself. I recalled feeling the same way in a similar landscape—desolate only because of my own desolate thoughts—where

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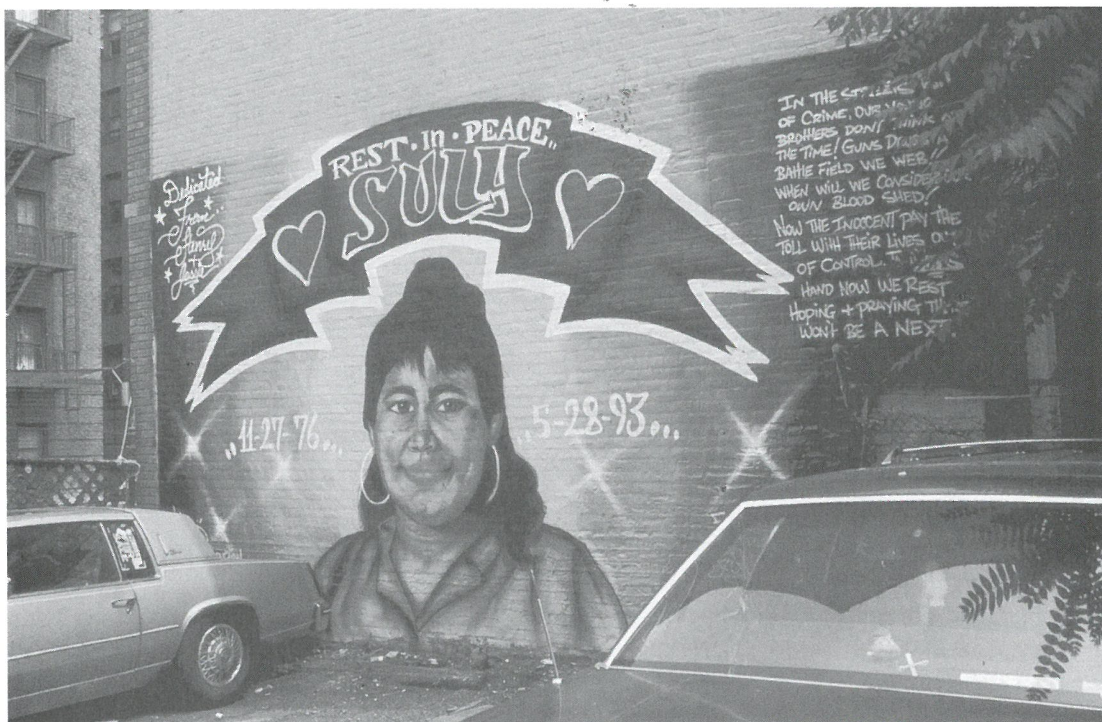
another modest and conventional marker stands in Ludlow, Colorado, over the cellarhole in which eleven women and children died during the massacre of miners by management's (the Rockefellers) hired guns.

Such peremptory monuments may in fact permit more intimate contact with the commemorated events than inappropriate glorification of more ambitious piles, which tend to be self-referential impediments to communication with the space and its events. Dwarfed by the landscape, a modest monument provides at least a visible center for the place itself, which contains the real power. Marginal histories are called in now and then to reflect upon the central focus. Monuments can make you a once-removed witness to memories (or guilt) you never had. When it comes to memories of the memorials themselves, I find I usually recall the place and the events more clearly than the marker, which has functioned primarily to channel memory, to guide me to the empty center.

Cara Jaye, *Descanso, Southern Colorado,* color photograph, 1994.

In cities, tourists pass the urban counterpart of memorial stones and Latino *descansos*—not often though, because few tourists frequent the neighborhoods where drugs and shootings are part of life. RIP (rest in peace) walls in inner-city New York are integrated into daily life. They don't stand out as a "destination," but their often-powerful imagery and bright colors offer the kind of serendipitous sight in which active tourists revel. "I don't have the power to save their lives," says a local community organizer and RIP wall caretaker in Brooklyn, "but I can keep their spirit close." In Philadelphia, little shrines for the dead appear in the rear windows of cars. Crosses and ankhs—the ancient Egyptian symbol of life—have been seen on New York sidewalks. In Miami, Caribbeans place plastic flowers and alcoholic libations at the site of murders. Writer Joseph Sciorra says, "It is people being honored in a public way for a death that was in most cases also public." Names are sometimes added spontaneously to existing walls. The sister of a murdered white cop from Crown Heights who "was a hero there because he treated people with respect," says she feels his presence at his street wall rather than at his grave. A local minister says the walls "do tell the legacy, they tell the history, of our community. And that is young people who did not live out their potential.... Where are all the live heroes?"

The living tend to be more interested in dead heroes. Death itself may be the real hero, when celebrated by history and posterity. On the steps of Gianni Versace's Miami Beach mansion, where an



Alfredo "Per"Oyague, Jr., and Omar "Nomad" Seneriz, *Rest in Peace Suly,* 1993, Soundview, the Bronx (photo: copyright Martha Cooper). Noemi "Suly" Villafane was seventeen years old and three months pregnant when her boyfriend shot her to death. Per and Nomad are a collaborative team of graffiti artists who specialize in memorial portraits on commission. The photo is from the book *RIP: Memorial Wall Art* by Martha Cooper and Joseph Sciorra.

Italian fashion mogul was shot down, Chicago trucker Roland Garcia explained the attraction of this new tourist spot: "He was one of the most famous stylists, you know what I mean? It's being part of history. It makes you feel good to be part of that." The Titanic phenomenon is related, though still more commercially complicated. There is a package tour to visit the Titanic museum in Halifax, Nova Scotia, along with memorials, gravesites, and other Titanic-related places; and then there is the very expensive trip to the wreck site itself. Titanic touring is being touted as "a new travel niche." The monuments we visit as tourists usually bury meaning under myth or nationalist agendas. Or they vanish, taking significance with them. "There is nothing in this world as invisible as a monument," wrote Robert Musil. "They are no doubt erected to be seen—indeed, to attract attention. But at the same time they are impregnated with something that repels attention."

The most affecting monuments for me *are* invisible. At places where something awful happened but its traces have disappeared leaving only the voids to speak, we fill the blanks with our own experiences, associations, and imagery. On photographer Drex Brooks's first visit to the vacant site

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Drex Brooks, *Sand Creek Massacre Site, Kiowa County, Colorado,* 1987, from Brooks's book *Sweet Medicine.* The Sand Creek massacre of Cheyenne and Arapaho men, women, and children on November 29, 1864, was one of the worst to take place during the "Indian Wars." The text accompanying Brooks's image is an eye-witness report from an American soldier, and reads in part: "There was one little child, probably three years old, just big enough to walk through the sand.... I saw one man get off his horse, at a distance of about seventy-five yards, and draw up his rifle and fire—he missed the child. Another man came up and said, 'Let me try the son of a bitch, I can hit him.' He got down off his horse, kneeled down and fired at the little child, but he missed him. A third man came up and made a similar remark and fired, and the little fellow dropped."

of the Sand Creek massacre in southeastern Colorado, a dust devil whirlwind set the tone for what was to become his book *Sweet Medicine*, commemorating massacres and treaty sites with Native people in the United States. One of the Cheyenne-Arapaho killed at Sand Creek was a man named Old Whirlwind. Brooks sees *Sweet Medicine* not so much as a documentary as a way of "looking at your own humanity and what it's capable of." He says his whole approach to photography has been "a kind of snapshot approach, a way of remembering and looking at things that I've done.... Memory has an out-of-focus feel to it."

Monuments may also exorcise memories, as burying a friend offers a certain closure through ritual, and repeated ritual at a site can offer periodic catharsis. What if a truly cathartic performance were socially acceptable at these sites? What if one could go to Sand Creek (and I guess one could, since it is not often visited) and

scream, tear one's hair, run down the riverbed where women and children were shot down as they fled, cry out their names and our belated, useless sorrow?

GUILT TRIPPING

Monuments serve as reliquaries, repositories for memories we prefer not to carry around with us. They encourage pious gestures more than real memory—the jolt and pain of actual recall or connection to the present. Currently operating sites are out of bounds. The public sees little at Trinity to remind them that what goes on today at nearby White Sands may also be "monumental."

In the inappropriately named town of Independence, California, 1997 marked the beginning of guided tours of Manzenar, where some ten thousand Japanese-Americans were unconstitutionally held prisoner from 1942–45. (The first and only tour guide is a Paiute schoolteacher named Richard Stewart who is interested in Japanese culture.) The internment camp is on its way to becoming a full-fledged national park, although still privately supported, thanks to Congressional reluctance to cough up more than a pittance for site development. Maintaining Manzenar as a monument to a shameful episode of U.S. history will no doubt be an uphill battle, since few remember or want to recall it. A small group of local World War II veterans object to the site's attaining parkhood, calling it "Un-American"; threatening phone calls have forced the historic site's supervisor to maintain an unlisted number.

These small-time terrorists are unconsciously playing a role in Manzenar's ongoing narrative, demonstrating the kind of bias that brought so many of these tragic sites into existence in the first place. On the one hand, it seems important to open them to the public so a suppressed history can be made known. On the other hand, how far can the "I feel your pain" approach to history go? How much does and should guilt play a role? Japanese Americans will make their annual pilgrimage to mourn the lives lost—economically and emotionally, as well as physically. Other Americans will visit in sympathy and empathy. This does not guarantee a huge number of visitors. How would such a site have to advertise itself to attract the guilt tourists, the vengeful tourists, the merely curious, as well as the reverent and respectful? As Ralph Appelbaum, designer of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's permanent exhibition, has said, "How do you even approach something as horrific as this without turning it into Holocaust Disneyland?... We needed to present the unspeakable in a manner tolerable to the general public who visit Washington museums essentially in tourist mode." This was done by turning all visitors into Jews with ID cards at the entrance, and then by the experiential manipulation of evocative spaces, including a cattle car used for transportation to the camps. Closer to home is a ca. 1939 American living room, to remind us how Americans heard the news, and how little was done about it.

In the United States it often seems that memories of mass suffering are the key to identity politics: Slavery, Native American genocide, Jewish Holocaust, Japanese internment, Latino labor exploitation and deportation... How much is cross-cultural understanding aided by these uneasy tourist moments? Do they divide and conquer, setting up a kind of competition of suffering? I once saw a Native American stand up at a university gathering to state that she was tired

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of hearing about the Jewish Holocaust—what about *her* genocide? A step in the right direction, prompted by tragedy and protest, was made in 1998 in Albuquerque. After protests by Native leaders, a decision was made to abandon plans for a monument to Don Juan de Oñate's brief stay in New Mexico in 1598, during which time he punished the Acoma Pueblos for defending their home by cutting the feet off a number of warriors. In 1997, the right foot was clandestinely cut off of a giant metal statue of the "hero" at the Oñate Center in Alcalde, New Mexico, calling attention to canonization of the conquistadors. In Albuquerque, the aristocratic, individual hero will be replaced by a monument to the *hispano* and *mestizo* rank-and-file settlers who accompanied him.

James Young ends his book on a note hopeful for a coalition of consciousness:

> *Public Holocaust memorials in America will increasingly be asked to invite many different, occasionally competing groups of Americans into their spaces. African Americans and Korean Americans, Native Americans and Jews will necessarily come to share common spaces of memory, if not common memory itself. In this, the most ideal of American visions, every group in America may eventually come to recall its past in light of another group's historical memory, each coming to know more about their compatriots' experiences in light of their own remembered past.*

The commitment to develop the memorial form as part of an artist's lifework is not only valuable but necessary to a fully realized social art. In 1984, it occurred to me in regard to Athena Tacha's proposals for *Massacre Memorials* that "an effective memorial recalls the dead in order to make the survivors responsible to the living. At the same time nature reminds us of our own mortality and of the relationship of individual deaths to grander cycles." But how to spark a sense of responsibility instead of guilt? Tragic tourism can raise consciousness or merely provide a kind of prurient entertainment. The death camps in Ireland (workhouses where 2,700 a week died during the famine) are now commemorated; a Famine Museum occupies the home of a cruel landlord who was assassinated in 1847 for forcing 3,000 of his starving tenants to emigrate. However, despite a fragile peace accord, any memorial to the ongoing Irish Troubles would still only mean more trouble. In the former Yugoslavia, or in Rwanda, war memorials might create new wars. Further abstraction of such internally combustive events is not called for. But a work like Sol LeWitt's 1989 black rectangle titled simply *Black Form Dedicated to the Missing Jews* (installed in 1989 in Munster and then in Hamburg-Altona) is affecting precisely because of its abstraction, its universalizing of events that need no introduction; it remains open to the loftiest aesthetic interpretation or reminder. LeWitt presents a cipher, a sign of the unspeakable and incomprehensible, a void, metaphorically placed in front, and blocking the full view, of an ornate, highly "Germanic" official edifice. He represents absence itself, and in so doing, represents the ultimate futility of the tragic monument.

The ramifications of monuments' centrality to tourism are rarely scrutinized. The real question is whether tourism itself has any relevance to the depth of memory that monuments hope to induce. Possibly all tragic tourism cheapens and trivializes the events memorialized, from individual to mass tragedy. At the same time, an unvisited monument is not fulfilling its function. For better or worse, tourism is the visiting mechanism available to most monuments. Monuments are by definition permanent, but times change,

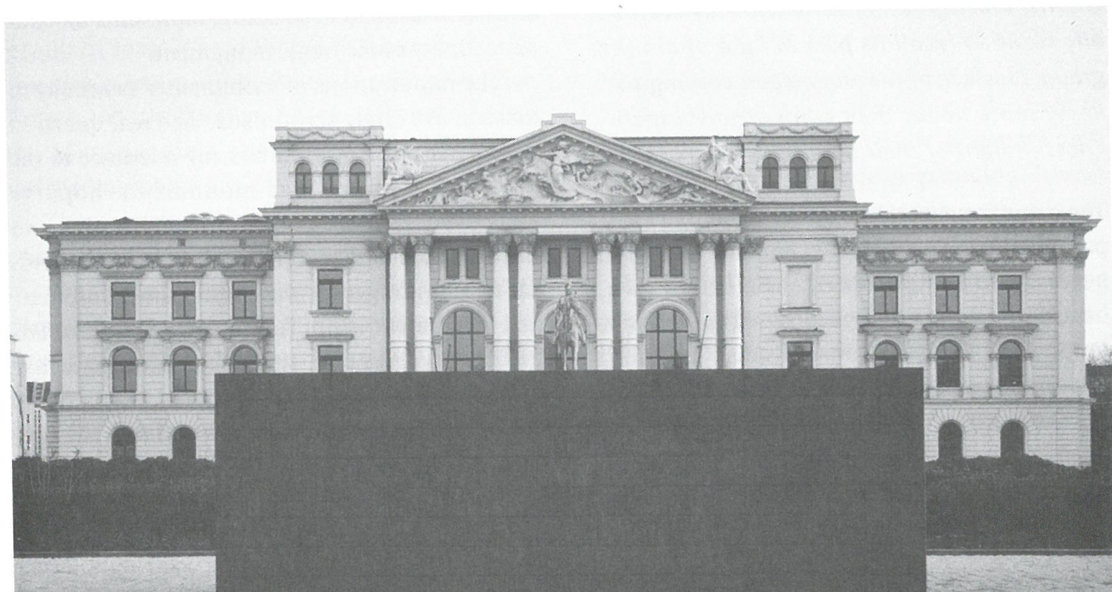
visitors change, and what tourists *know* about the tragedies changes. Great art is often not the best monument (notions of great art change too), nor are those objects glorifying heroism or victimhood instead of exerting a multifaceted emotional pull on the site, the story, the history. While some artists feel that literal depiction trivializes such events, that the scale of tragedy can be confronted only by abstraction, the general public appears to prefer, even to need, figuration or simple markers. The tragedies themselves change in the context of different times and places where history may be repeating itself. Some sites mark socially mandated memories or rituals that we visit now and then like church; or they mark memories shared only by certain cohesive groups (Memorial Day and Veterans Day prime among them). Different monuments seem appropriate at different points in the process of coming to terms with tragedy. Civil War monuments—the lone soldier on his pedestal in the town square—were once deeply moving for those who had lived through the war; now they are widely considered negligible kitsch. It is difficult to imagine that Maya Lin's brilliant Vietnam Memorial might someday meet a similar fate.

PROCEED AT YOUR OWN RISK

The photographer is perhaps the ultimate tourist of tragedy, and the photograph the ultimate memorial. Long after a tragic event that needs to be brought back into the public eye, literal, documentary evidence may be the most affecting. A Cambodian museum exhibits the thousands of ID mugshots of those who were soon to be on the killing fields. Their faces stare out at us with a disbelief we share in retrospect. Few if any "significant stones" can make such an impression. From Weegee's gritty and exuberant scene-of-the-crime photos to Joel Sternfeld's photography book *On This Site: Landscape in Memoriam*, dedicated to "those who will not forget," photography defies the grandeur associated with monuments.

Sternfeld's younger brother was killed in an

Sol LeWitt, *Black Form Dedicated to the Missing Jews*, 1987, concrete blocks 60" x 205" x 68", Platz der Republic, Hamburg, Germany, Freie und Hansestadt, Hamburg Kulturbehörte (photo: courtesy of the artist).



automobile accident, and his older brother died of leukemia. The book is not about them directly, but it is clearly the legacy of their deaths. Brief, crisp accounts accompany each color photograph and throw a glaring light on our society, its values, its greed, its preoccupation with death and violence (which this book of course reinforces, even as it deplores). Sternfeld has produced a visual history of an era through images of tragic sites as disparate and as ordinary as Mount Rushmore and the Mississippi Grocery where Emmett Till sealed his fate by speaking too casually to a white woman.

A partial list of Sternfeld's subjects says something about the nature of public tragedy in late twentieth-century United States: the Texas movie theater seat where Lee Harvey Oswald was sitting when he was arrested; the innocuous Queens street where Kitty Genovese was stabbed to death as thirty-nine people listened without calling the police; the Lorraine Motel in Memphis where Martin Luther King was assassinated; the Cuyahoga River which once burned for an hour; the Stonewall Bar; the Kent State parking lot; a crumbling little house at Love Canal; the San Francisco City Hall office of Dan White, who murdered George Moscone and Harvey Milk; the drunk-driving murder site of the teenager whose death inspired the founding of MADD; Waco; the ordinary suburban streets in Iowa where a boy disappeared; the Morton Thiokol factory, emblazoned with the American flag and admonitions to THINK SAFELY, ACT SAFELY, responsible for the loss of the Challenger; and the scenes of various infamous crimes including a development owned by Charles Keating of the Savings and Loan scam, the murder of a Pensacola abortion doctor, and the Happy Land Social Club fire in the Bronx.

Sternfeld's choice of image is often subtle. A worker sitting at a bank of computers at 911 operations occupies the desk where Nicole Brown Simpson's calls for help during domestic violence were received. A major theme of the book is silence—not merely the silence that has descended on the places themselves, but the frequent silence of those who might have helped before it was too late, the silence that equals death. The sensationalism with which these stories are heralded in the media becomes part of the tragedy. But they end on a hopeful note with the room in the Los Angeles mosque where the Bloods and Crips signed a truce in 1992.

Sternfeld writes of his visit to Central Park to find the site of the Jennifer Levin murder, "it was bewildering to find a scene so beautiful... to see the same sunlight pour down indifferently on the earth." He wondered if each of us has such a list of places we "cannot forget because of the tragedies that identify them." I used to feel that way about the spot on the sidewalk on East 9th street where I first saw a dead body up close, and the house on West 11th Street where several young members of the Weathermen died concocting a bomb.

Those photographers who try to counter the overgeneralized "timeless" syndrome in landscape by bringing both hidden history and current events into view are sometimes accused of "political tourism." And it's true that jaded tourists, innocents abroad, or solidarity proponents occasionally travel in war zones. During the 1980s, I traveled in Nicaragua and El Salvador, believing that if I and my colleagues (largely journalists, photographers, and Central America activists) could return home and raise hell about what the U.S. government was supporting, then such "political tourism" would be validated. Motives vary. A woman who ended up in Bosnia simply for the thrill boasted to the media: "I was the only American tourist around, with United Nations health relief people, UN military people, and

medical personnel.... After about a week I realized it wasn't a safe place and decided to leave."

Hans Magnus Enzensberger wrote that "tourism of the revolution" is attracted by a possible future from the viewpoint of a rejected present. "This reverses the usual tourist viewpoint, which rejects the present for an imagined past and considers no future realities." However, because of the ghettoization of the Left in the United States, work has little effect on the pleasure-seeking tourist population. For instance, through the 1980s and into the present, Guatemala has remained, incredibly, a favorite tourist destination even as the Guatemalan Army massacred the very

Joel Sternfeld, *Cleveland Elementary School, 20 East Fulton Street, Stockton, California, August 1994,* color photograph (photo: copyright Joel Sternfeld). Courtesy Pace Wildenstein, MacGill, New York

Four hundred children were playing in this schoolyard on January 17, 1989, when a twenty-four-year-old man dressed in combat fatigues entered the grounds through a hole in the fence. Patrick Purdy, who once attended the school, opened fire with two handguns and an AK-47 assault rifle. In a two-minute shooting spree, Purdy killed five children and wounded thirty, before killing himself. In Purdy's hotel room, police found over a hundred small plastic soldiers, tanks, and weapons.

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indigenous people who were producing the tourist landscape and attracting visitors. And as more and more bodies are unearthed, tourism is booming. Lost among the cheerful statistics is the fact that Guatemala's new "stability" was "constructed on a foundation of horror and suffering" for the indigenous majority. Anthropologist Leigh Binford reports that the site of the notorious El Mozote massacre in El Salvador is also becoming a major tourist spot.

Progressive photographers in their documentary and muckraking roles are committed to the power of the image to empower, educate, and awaken varied audiences. Wary of the beauty that can ride on or within poverty and brutality in pictures of people and landscapes, these "political tourists" armed with cameras try to use and not be used by their information. They try not to succumb to the tourist inclination toward sensation, exoticism, or victimization. These are not reporters sent to tragic places, but independent photojournalists who choose to spend time in war-torn countries, working and photographing within the struggle. Others search out environmental devastation and the private, corporate, and governmental culprits at home and abroad. All the while they must confront the colonialist history of the camera in occupied territory and issues of decontextualization and depersonalization, unconscious bias, and socially constructed images. Distributing their images "instrumentally" in oppositional publications and leaflets, they are often homeless in the commercial world. They tend to play down drama by photographing ordinary people and everyday lives, often sacrificing style for information. Photographers like Susan Meiselas, Mel Rosenthal, Jean Simon, Steve Cagan, among others, communicate places and events very differently than do most war correspondents and *National Geographic* employees. Their goal is neither touristic voyeurism nor media-immediacy but incitement to thought and action. They can complicate the underlying issues by reaching out, bringing real faces and places into play so that viewers have to think for themselves while being looked in the eye by those who are "living the news." At best, these photographers succeed in interrupting North American complacency, communicating the pain and pride of people who have flashed by on TV so rapidly as to be virtually anonymous.

LIKE TRAVEL and exploration in previous centuries, tourism today carries its own dangers. There's something for everybody—even for masochists. TOURISM'S HOTTEST HOT SPOT IS DEATH VALLEY, reads a 1997 headline. In the summer, when temperatures regularly hit 120 degrees, Death Valley attracts almost exclusively Northern Europeans, Germans in particular: "It is a thrill to us to travel across so much miles. There is nothing empty like this in Germany," says one of them. In July 1996, a German couple and their two children disappeared in Death Valley. In November, their minivan was found, but there was no sign of the occupants. "Their remains probably were scattered by the 50 mph winds and the coyotes," said a park employee.

In another case of insouciant obliviousness to risk, hikers in the Dolly Sods Wilderness, West Virginia, take their children on trails where unexploded ordnance have been found, leftovers from World War II military maneuvers. Dolly Sods is only one of over two thousand sites in the United States where people might be exposed to live bombs, grenades, or mortar rounds. But it doesn't seem to faze recreational tourists, and some have actually gone home with ticking souvenirs.

Although the majority of tourists will go out of their way to avoid risks, the dangers of ordinary tourism are escalating. In the summer of

1997, for example, a group of tourists were captive on a ferryboat between the United States and Canada while angry fishermen blockaded traffic in a dispute over salmon fishing quotas. As tourism becomes big business, turf wars ensue. Visitors have been injured and killed in St. Lucia as tour companies vie for their custom. Tourists in Egypt are targeted by Islamic extremists. Since the Oklahoma City bombing, "domestic terrorism" is a fearful specter even for those staying home, as is street crime.

Florida, haunted by tourist murders, natural disasters, and human-made environmental catastrophes, becomes a Paradise Lost as doomsday scenarios are written for a state where tourism generated 663,000 jobs and $31 billion in 1992. Florida is home to Disney World, which opened in 1971 to become the world's greatest tourist attraction, overwhelming the endangered Everglades, sun-sand-and-sex tropical paradise appeal, Weeki Wachee mermaids, alligators, dolphins, flowers, parrots, manatees, and snake-a-toriums. It is a state described as early as the 1890s by promoter William "Pig Iron" Kelly as living "on sweet potatoes and consumptive Yankees, but mostly we sell atmosphere." However, the piper must be paid. "Floridians must confront the specter of a society splintered by individuality and restlessness," writes Gary Mormino, "a state where image is more important than reality." The Fort Lauderdale Visitors Bureau was recently reported to be changing its target tourists from "beer-swilling fraternity boys staging belly-flop and wet T-shirt contests" to "well-groomed and hand-holding men who favor art galleries and fancy restaurants." "This town has grown up," a city commissioner announced as he curried favor with the International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association.

As the terrain of tragic tourism is opened up to other national and natural disaster areas, to earthquake or tornado as well as military devastation, to strip-mined mountains, clear-cut forests, the former nesting sites of endangered birds, and polluted and over-fished waterways, perhaps what is called for is a wildlife ghosts park, or a tourism theme park that would bring the process full circle. Smog has clouded the famous views from the top of New Hampshire's Mount Washington, and the question is raised: "how much is better visibility worth to people? Are they willing to pay higher electric bills for cleanup?" Protection of the tourist industry is part of the package. In addition, Environmental Defense Fund scientists warn that global warming could wound New Hampshire tourism by disrupting the fall foliage season, shortening the ski season, and harming both the maple sugar and timber industries. (Less is said about the people who remain desperately poor in places where others spend millions.) The consumer approach to nature may be a last defense. As Alexander Wilson has pointed out, nature is now experienced and marketed in undifferentiated parts rather than as a whole. The future can be seen in Europe, where there are no old-growth trees, where overpopulation and lack of space has reversed evolution's direction for large vertebrate mammals; according to Reg Saner, "Euronature is not nature any more."

The be-all and end-all of tragic tourism may well be the Armageddon theme park, now in progress near Tel Aviv. By the year 2000, if all goes well, this classic example of short-term thinking will turn an unprepossessing (but historically blood-soaked) archaeological site into an apocalyptic tourist attraction aimed at fundamentalist Christians who believe Christ will arrive for his second coming in the year 2007—a lot of work for a park that will last only seven years.

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daguerreotypes remain untraced, as does one photograph of a waterfall by an un-named photographer which is listed as being framed and hung among the paintings.

Of the holdings of Townshend's photographs still extant in the Victoria and Albert Museum the greatest group are twenty by Le Gray, comprising mainly his Fontainebleau forest pictures and celebrated seascapes, considered today to be among the finest selections of his surviving prints in the world. Among the other important photographs are a number by Camille Silvy, including his masterpiece *River Scene, France*, (1858), André Giroux's landscape *The Ponds at Obtevoz (Rhône)* (c.1855) and architectural studies by Édouard Baldus and the Bisson Frères. Among Townshend's photographically illustrated books is *The Sunbeam*, (1859)—edited by Philip H. Delamotte, including photographs by him and others such as Joseph Cundall, Francis Bedford, George Washington Wilson and John Dillwyn Llewelyn—William and Mary Howitt's *Ruined Abbeys and Castles of Great Britain* (1862) and photographic reproductions of J.M.W. Turner's compilation of drawings, the *Liber Studiorum*, photographed by Cundall, Downes & Co. (1862). Like many of his Victorian contemporaries, Townshend was also fascinated by popular and eccentric figures. The collection contains portraits of such people Mr. Rarey the famous American horse trainer with the stallion "Cruiser" by Caldesi and Montecchi (1858) and the champion boxers, John C. Heenan, "The Benicia Boy," and Tom Sayers, by George Newbold (1860). Townshend's interest also extended to pictures of topical interest at the time shown in Roger Fenton's Crimean war images and some remarkable scenes of ruined houses in the aftermath of the "Clerkenwell Explosion" taken by Henry Hering. On December 13th, 1867, a hole was blown in the prison wall at Clerkenwell House by Fenians attempting to release one of their group. The photographs record the extent of the resulting damage to buildings. These were some of the last objects collected by Townshend before his death.

Martin Barnes

See also: Expositions Universelle, Paris 1854, 1855, 1867, etc.; Le Gray, Gustave; Giroux, André; Victoria, Queen and Albert, Prince Consort; Silvy, Camille; Baldus, Édouard; Bisson, Louis-Auguste and Auguste-Rosalie; Delamotte, Philip Henry; Cundall, Joseph; Lemere, Bedford; Wilson, George Washington; and Llewelyn, John Dillwyn.

Further Reading

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Reverend C. H. Townshend Bequest Registered File, Victoria and Albert Archive.

TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY

The link between photographic practice and the activity and experience of travel was forged before Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre's process was announced to the Parisian public in 1839. The symbolic meeting of activities occurred at the meeting in 1838 of two principals when the eminent geographer and explorer Alexander von Humboldt visited Daguerre in his studio. Humboldt met with Daguerre in the geographer's role as member of the committee appointed by the Academie des Sciences to evaluate Daguerre's claim that he had perfected a process to record and fix through chemical means the images produced in the *camera obscura*. As Schwartz argues: "at a time when travel was embraced as a way of seeing and knowing the world, photographs offered a new means of acquiring, ordering, and disseminating geographical information" (Schwartz, 1996, 16). Travel was the primary means of gathering the empirical knowledge of the world; travelers' accounts supported by printed illustrations based on sketches, topographic views, and maps produced during the course of travel disseminated that knowledge. The emphasis on travel as a mode to acquire knowledge is part of the nineteenth-century emphasis on collecting, categorizing, and possessing the world associated with the sciences of geography, anthropology, and archaeology. After the introduction of photographic processes, whether as permanent image on metal plate or paper print, photography became the preferred and trusted mode of creating and presenting the visual records of travel because it was derived from the "neutral" operations of chemistry and optics. Later, travel as a method of empirical knowledge pursued by a relatively small cadre of explorers gave way to travel as part of the burgeoning activity and industry of tourism—the organized consumption of place as leisure activity. Photography participated in the change to touristic consumption as a record and validation of leisure travel and by creating and amplifying the desire to participate in leisure travel activities.

The first practitioners of travel photography were amateur enthusiasts who pursued their interests in the new technology of image making as they undertook travels for official, commercial, or personal interests. Joly de Lotbinière and Frederic Goupil-Fesquet sepa-

rately came to be photographing the Sphinx on the same day in November 1839, scant weeks after Daguerre's public demonstration. Lotbinière went on to make an extensive daguerreotype record of his travels over the next year. Jules Itier (1802–1877), a government functionary in the French trade ministry, was an early adopter of Daguerre's technique and made daguerreotypes on trade missions to Senegal (1842) and China, Singapore, the Philippines, Borneo, and India (1843–1846). Baron Louis Gros, a French diplomat, made and exhibited daguerreotypes of the monuments and landscapes he encountered on extensive travels in the Americas, Greece, and England. While yachting in the Mediterranean in 1845, Christopher Talbot, William Henry Fox Talbot's cousin, and Reverend Calvert Jones made a number of calotype views, including early two part panoramas of Naples. The Reverend George Bridges (active 1846–1852) photographed extensively during a tour of the Mediterranean and North Africa. Ernest Benecke (active 1851–1853), the son of an Anglo-German banking family, also compiled an extensive calotype record of travels perhaps undertaken to familiarize himself with family business interests in the region. In most of these cases, the work was shared privately or had limited exposure in exhibitions organized by the newly formed photographic societies. Lotbinière is the exception in that his work was reproduced in some of the first books to feature illustrations derived from photographs—those by Lerebours and Horeau, for example.

Excursions daguerrienes, representant les vues et les monuments les plus remarquables du globe (1840–44), published by the Parisian optician Nicholas Lerebours, was the first book of travel images derived from daguerreotype images. *Excursions* eventually comprised 100 plates of views of Egypt, Italy, Greece, Russia, France, and other countries provided by a number of early daguerreotypists. In this first use of the photographic image as document of travel, images were reproduced as engravings derived by tracing the outlines of the daguerreotype image and then laboriously adding by hand the exquisite detail which the daguerreotype was capable of rendering. Although a very few plates were printed directly from the daguerreotype plate using Fizeau's process, the plates were engraved copies after daguerreotypes. While *Excursions* was the largest and earliest photographic entry into the travel book market, it was rapidly followed by others that reproduced either daguerreotypes or calotypes through engraving, aquatint, or lithography—see for example, Hector Horeau's *Panorama d'Egypte et de Nubie* (1841) and Pierre Tremaux's *Voyage au Soudan oriental et dans l'Afrique septentrionale exécutés de 1847 a 1854* (1852–1854). The first travel book with direct photographic illustrations was Maxime Du Camp's *Egypte, Palestine et Syrie* (1852). Du Camp's book comprised 125 calotype prints derived from paper negatives nade during a lengthy journey in 1849 to 1851, printed by Blanquart Evrard, and accompanied by short texts supplied by Du Camp. Although the work was judged extraordinarily successful—Du Camp was awarded the Legion of Honor in recognition of his achievement—probably no more than 350 copies were printed.

These initial productions defined an elite market for deluxe photographically illustrated travel accounts for the scholar or arm-chair traveler. While amateurs continued to make photographs on their travels, entrepreneurial photographers realized that market demand could be better and more economically met by superior printing technology utilizing wet collodion glass plate negatives from which a large number of albumin prints could be made. Frances Frith should be credited with developing and refining marketing strategies for travel photographs by recognizing the existence of distinct market segments. Beginning in 1856 with his views of Egypt and the Holy Land, Frith produced photographs in a range of formats, including stereo-views, which were affordable to a growing middle class while appealing to Victorian ideals of self-improvement by offering direct visual knowledge of the world. After first working with established publishers, Frith formed his own photographic publishing firm—Frith & Co.—which continued to offer, throughout the nineteenth century, views of local and foreign destinations from a network of operators, as individual prints, collected in volumes, and in sets of stereo cards.

The photographically illustrated travel account, which paired text that reported incidents encountered en route and offered instruction in the history and culture of the region with photographs, functioned as both the document of a completed journey and the stimulus for journeys of the imagination. Frances Bedford accompanied the Prince of Wales' 1862 tour of Egypt and the Holy Land as the official photographer. On his return, prints were offered for sale through his Bond Street gallery and later compiled in *The Holy Land, Egypt, Constantinople, Athens, etc.* (1867). Both offered the British public vicarious participation in the royal journey and a record of the tour. The production of images of foreign or distant locales, ala Frith, Bedford, and innumerable other operators, was accomplished within a distinct set of practices associated with view photography, defined by expectations shared by maker and consumer. View or topographic photographs did not suggest or allude to a place, they delineated it precisely. Dramatic effects of light and shade that might confuse the presentation of a complete, spatially coherent, record of site were avoided. A well-executed view was as much a map as it was a picture, offering a clear understanding of the disposition of structures, access into and within the space, and relative scale and distance. Indeed, the fine detail

of glass plate negative/albumin print could provide an almost tactile registration of the materiality of physical space—the grit of masonry and sand, the smoothness of plastered walls, or subtle texture of wood.

As the industry of leisure travel grew, a development which can be dated to the first package tours to the Crystal Palace exposition in 1851, photography and the activity of travel became ever more intimately entwined. Travel views at once satisfied a demand for views of the world to those who would never visit the places shown, as they encouraged the consumption of places which were becoming more broadly accessible through organized tourism. Thomas Cook was one of the earliest, but by no means the only operator, offering package tours; Cook's Tours brought a growing number of middle class travelers to the Universal Exposition in Paris in 1855, to holiday destinations in Great Britain and Continental Europe by 1860, and to Egypt and the Holy Land in 1869. Expanded access to leisure travel altered the point of purchase of travel photographs but not the standards for the way in which place was inscribed as view. Travelers could purchase photographs of the sites they visited along their route. Commonly loose prints were purchased and arranged in elaborate photographic albums which served as the recapitulation of the journey, although local photographers did offer commercially printed albums dedicated to the particular area. While these albums operated as souvenir and proof of status for a traveler, they also retained the earlier connections between travel, photographic record, and nineteenth-century knowledge making. A number of photographic Tour de Monde albums were placed in public reading rooms or libraries, as a source of instruction for those who could not travel (Mickelwright, 2003. Local photographic studios were common at major sites after the late 1850s and nineteenth-century travel guides listed the best local sources for photographs. Commercial photographers offered photographs specifically for the visitor wishing to preserve the sights he or she encountered in the course of travel, including a variety of staged photographs of local life which had more apparent than real connection to his or her experience as tourist. Native "types" photographed in cafes, dimly lit courtyards, or "domestic" surroundings offered the illusion of connection with the foreign other that was seldom provided by the protected experience of the package tour arranged and managed to cause the least discomfort to western travelers. Maison Bonfils and Abdullah Freres in the Middle East, Bourne and Shepherd, and John Burke in India; Georgio Sommer, Fratelli Alinari, Tommaso Cuccionni, and Robert Macpherson in Italy; Muybridge, Watkins, and Jackson in the American West; Jakob Laurent and Charles Clifford in Spain; Felice Beato and his successors in the Far East; Baldus in France; and George Washington Wilson, Francis Frith, and Roger Fenton in the United Kingdom, to name just a few—were photographers with large commercial offerings of travel views available both on-site and through publication and distribution networks in European and American cities. Views of the Alps by the Bisson brothers (1860) and Charles Soulier (1869) recorded mountaineering, another form of leisure activity that developed as tourism expanded. Rail journeys were recapitulated by photographers in France (Baldus) and the United States (Rau and Jackson), as rail travel accelerated access to distant places. Increasingly railroad companies, who understood that leisure travel passengers offered a significant potential market, enticed those travelers by photographs which celebrated the engineering accomplishment embodied by the railroad and offered the inducement of miles of unfamiliar landscape to delight a passenger's eye. In the United States, the Santa Fe Railroad Company commissioned both painters and photographers to provide images calculated to whet the public appetite for the visual attractions of the American Southwest. Commercial photographers—initially subsidized by the railroad company—set up shop at rail stations and tourist destination hotels, also subsidized by the railroads.

Stereo photography was particularly well suited to travel images, offering as it did an immersive experience of place through the combination of the three-dimensionality of the image and the restricted field enforced by the viewer (Schwartz 1996). The effect of "knowing" the place seen through the stereoscopic viewer was reinforced by the inclusion of didactic text on the reverse of the card. A number of major publishers of stereo images—Underwood and Underwood, Kilburn Brothers, Frith and Co.—dispatched photographers to locations, events, and the aftermath of disasters around the world to feed the extensive market for entertainment and instruction. Realistic Travels Publishers offered stereo views of the far reaches of the British Empire from offices in London, Delhi, and Cape Town; views that reinforced imperial possession while providing instruction to future colonial officers. Stereo series of foreign and exotic locales continued to be widely marketed through the 1930s. Touted as an entertaining form of armchair travel and an educational tool, they could be found in parlor as well as classroom.

Perhaps the last manifestation of commercial photographic practice associated with travel in the nineteenth century was the development and rapid proliferation of the picture postcard industry at the end of the nineteenth century. By the 1890s, travel views sized to meet new postal codes and reproduced in collotype (also known under a number of proprietary names such as Phototype, Heliotype, Albertype, and Lichtdruck) or photolithography became a standard accompaniment to travel. By 1888, the halftone process and later a chromo-halftone

process, which provided rudimentary colored images, made picture post cards ever more available and less expensive. The picture postcard—mailed to friends and family or collected as souvenir—reigned as the commercially produced photographic marker of travel for the next century (Geary and Webb). After 1885 and the introduction of the Kodak, a unitary system of camera, film and processing that reduced the complexity of the photographic act to "You push the button and we'll do the rest," the commercial image was paralleled by the personal, informal, traveler's snapshot. Kodak advertising connected "Kodaking" to the modern pursuit of leisure—outdoor activities such as biking and automobile touring, and, of course, travel—and ads featured prominently the Kodak woman as tourist with camera in hand (West, 40). The personal snapshot and the commercial picture postcard dominated travel views throughout the twentieth century, only to be supplanted at the end of the century by digital images posted on users' spaces and accessed electronically from any computer.

Photography and travel, including the transformation of individual travel through the burgeoning tourism industry, are central and distinct elements of modern life from the nineteenth century forward. The centrality of these linked phenomena has been the focus of critical analysis from a variety of theoretical positions. Analysis of the cultural formations of travel and its associated imagery have addressed the economic and social implications of consuming the world as image and mediated experience (Osborne, Gregory, Taylor)The experience of travel, the visual record of distant locations, and the dissemination of that visual record were recognized as important elements of the social and political structures that reinforced imperial and/or colonial control of distant lands. Thus travel photography has been viewed through the lens of post-colonial critiques of power and resistance (Ryan, Nordstrom, Micklewright, Gregory). Ryan argues that photographic practice was an essential tool in the formation and maintenance of British imperial rule. Taylor focuses on the use of photographs of the British Isles to construct national identity through a shared tourist experience. Gregory defines the production of personal travel photographs by the amateur as one of the central acts in the performance of touristic explorations of the world.

In all of the critical discourse surrounding travel and photography are cores assumptions relating to the value of knowledge production in the nineteenth century and the power of the photograph, by virtue of its perceived transparency and veracity, to transmit knowledge of the world. Prior to the advent of photography, extensive travel was considered the ultimate source of knowledge of the world. Travel books might offer the traveler's journals expanded with observations and field notes, buttressed by research and citations from other authorities, perhaps accompanied by reproductions of sketches and plans, but these were partial and mediated experiences of direct knowledge—valuable but inherently flawed. As Schwartz (2003) argues, the photograph became the surrogate for the direct experience of the world, acting as a neutral, impassive eye in distant places. Not a pale substitute for direct experiential knowledge but a form of knowing that offered advantages over physical travel because it permitted careful and repetitive examination of place, and facilitated comparison between distant places. The assumption that photography functioned as a technologically based system which mechanically produced direct observations of the natural world ensured that photography wielded the intellectual power that allowed it to operate as a tool of imperial and colonial control, a means of structuring national identity through shared place, the underpinning of commercial tourism, and ensures that it continues to provide proof of experience to modern day travelers, despite our understanding of the suspect nature of photography's claim to truth.

Kathleen Stewart Howe

See also: Daguerre, Louis-Jacques-Mandé; von Humboldt, Alexander; Itier, Jules; Gros, Baron Jean-Baptiste Louis; Daguerreotype; Talbot, William Henry Fox; Jones, Calvert Richard; Africa, North (excluding Egypt and Palestine); Benecke, Ernst; Calotype and Talbotype; Lemercier, Lerebours and Bareswill; Italy; Greece; Russia; France; Egypt and Palestine; Du Camp, Maxime; Blanquart-Evrard, Louis-Désiré; Frith, Francis; Topographical Photography; Expositions Universelle, Paris (1854, 1855, 1867 etc.); Underwood, Bert and Elmer; Halftone Printing; and Kodak.

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TRÉMAUX, PIERRE (ACTIVE 1853–1868)

French, photographer, architect, architectural historian

The architect Trémaux was a member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts and Société de Géographie, and winner of a second place Prix de Rome in 1845. He was born in 1818, and is known for a extensive, profusely illustrated, three-part publication on the architecture of Africa and Asia Minor: *Voyage au Soudan oriental et dans l'Afrique septentrionale exécutés de 1847 a 1854* (1852–1854); *Une parallèle des édifices anciens et modernes du continent africain* (1861); *Exploration archéologique en Asia mineur* (1862–1868). Trémaux explored the use of photography for illustration, initially using photographs, as well as drawings, as source documents for lithographic plates. In 1853–54, he made calotypes in Egypt which were bound into volumes in addition to lithographs. The photographic prints deteriorated rapidly and he replaced them with lithographs. For the third part of the series, he turned to Poitevin's photolithographic process. Despite the technical shortcomings of his photographic work, Trémaux's calotypes are recognized as some of the earliest photographs of the people of Egypt.

KATHLEEN HOWE

TRIPE, LINNAEUS (1822–1902)

Working in India and the East in the mid 1850s the photographs of Linnaeus Tripe, along with those of his contemporaries John Murray and Samuel Bourne, rank amongst the finest of the period. Tripe, an accomplished amateur, was amongst several army officers seconded from military duties to record antiquities, architecture and ethnography of the continent and created a body of work which, though highly regarded by his contemporaries, has until recently been sadly overlooked.

Born in 1822 in Devonport, England, Linnaeus Tripe was the ninth of Cornelius and Mary Tripe's twelve children, his siblings including Theophilus, Octavius, Lorenzo, Septimus and Algernon. Tripe studied mathematics and the classics and at seventeen he joined the East India Company as an ensign. By the early nineteenth century, the East India Company itself had evolved from a small trading company to control much of India, employing both political and military rule to protect its commercial interests. The 'Government' was organised into three Presidencies of Bombay, Madras and Bengal respectively. Tripe was stationed with the Madras Establishment, rising from humble ensign in 1839 to honourary Major General by his retirement in 1875.

Tripe's first known photographs were taken between 1853 and 54 around his hometown of Devonport towards the end of a three and a half-year furlough. On his return to India he continued with his new hobby and while on leave in December 1854 took a series of photographs around Halebid and Belur. These prints were greatly admired when shown at the Madras Exhibition of 1855 and Tripe was awarded the first class medal. At this time the Government of India was already showing interest in photography as a more cost and time efficient method to document and record antiquities than commissioning traditional artists. In 1855 they sent a mission to Ava to persuade the King of Burma to recognise the British annexation of Lower Burma following the Second Anglo-Burmese War of 1852. Captain Tripe, probably as a result of his success in the Madras Exhibition, was appointed official photographer and during the three and a half-month trip he produced nearly 220 calotype negatives. In truth, due to sickness and bad weather, Tripe had only 36 working days in which to photograph the region. This was indicative of the problems of the 19th century photographer in India: heat, dust, and flies in summer, damp humid conditions and sickness during the monsoon months, the rapid deterioration of chemicals, and difficulties procuring and transporting the bulky equipment were regular complaints. For many of these reasons Tripe preferred the calotype, modifying Le Gray's waxed paper process to suit his needs. However even this method was not without its difficulties and Tripe complained that the wax often melted in the heat leaving spots on the first prints "so as to spoil them."

On his return to the photographic department in Bangalore Tripe began the labourious task of printing 50 boxed sets from 120 negatives selected from the trip for The Government of India—a total of over 6,000 prints. The skies of these Burmese views have a pronounced granular texture and lack of definition, a fault typical of early negatives since different exposures were needed to record sky and solid objects. Tripe blacked out the sky on his negatives completely so it printed white,

WAR PHOTOGRAPHY

Introduction

The medium of photography was generally accepted as a reflection of reality in the nineteenth-century. In truth, many photographic war scenes were manipulatively staged. At times this was because the artist wanted to reflect what they had seen with their own eyes, but were unable to capture with the camera. The creation of photographs was also incredibly arduous on the battlefield. Lighting had to be ideal, photographic equipment was cumbersome, and plates had to be processed quickly necessitating portable darkrooms. In addition, the slow development of the medium itself made it impossible to produce action photographs.

Even with the assumed veracity of photographic works, photographs were seldom printed in newspapers in the nineteenth-century. More likely they were seen when displayed in galleries, sold in books, or copied by engravers for newspapers. However, often engravers invented scenes of battle that had not been captured by photographers. The development of half-tone printing, which enabled the combining of text with photographs, fueled a rise of photos in papers during the Spanish-American War and Second Boer War at the end of the century.

Early War Photography

The earliest photographs of wartime events come from the end of the Mexican-American War (1836–1848). These images are not of battle scenes, but rather posed scenes of soldiers. "General Wool and Staff, Calle Real, Saltillo, Mexico," c. 1840, offers a good example of the kind of choreographed scene frequently produced. Wool's regiment paused for several minutes to accommodate the exposure time needed for the daguerreotype; one can see that the figures on the left are slightly blurred from having moved. The difficulties of obtaining photographic materials, the lengthy preparation time necessary, and the long exposure period for the daguerreotype, made photography rare in this period. Only around fifty photographs survive, and we have no record of specific photographers of the Mexican-American War images.

The first identifiable photographer who took pictures in a wartime environment was John McCosh. McCosh served as a British surgeon during the Second Sikh War (1848–1849) in India and the Second Burma War (1852). Using the calotype, McCosh photographed fellow soldiers, artillery, and ruins. Karl Baptist von Szatmari also exhibited some photographs of a battle between the Russian Army and the Turks in the Paris Exhibition of 1855; an engraving after one of these scenes survives, as do some of the photographs themselves.

1850s

Richard Nicklin had been hired by the British military to photograph government-sanctioned scenes of the Crimean War (1853–1856), but the photographer and his two assistants were caught in a hurricane and drowned

Wood and Gibson. Inspection of Troops at Cumberlanding, Pamunkey, Virginia. *The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles © The J. Paul Getty Museum.*

in Balaclava Harbor in November of 1854. Photographs from other artists such as Gilbert Elliot, and two military officers, ensigns Brandon and Dawson, were also hired by the government to cover the war, but all of their works have since disappeared.

Roger Fenton produced over 350 images of the Crimean War during 1855. Thomas Agnew hired Fenton with aspirations of creating a profitable issue of photos similar to those that the military photographers had been hired to photograph but never produced. Roger Fenton wrote in letters of some of the horrors he witnessed during his time in the Crimean, but his photographs do not reflect the scenes he describes. Rather, Fenton mostly photographed heroic portraits of soldiers, positive scenes of life in the camps, and images of the surrounding landscape. Fenton may have felt compelled by Agnew, as well as Queen Victoria with whom the photographer had developed a warm relationship, to photograph encouraging images of the war to try and offset the negative impressions given to the British people by newspaper reporter William Howard Russell. Fenton was also limited by photographic materials of the time which did not yet enable spontaneous action shots. He was also challenged by the collodion wet plate process technique which required speed and virtuosity as he only had short time to develop the plates in his makeshift traveling laboratory after taking a scene.

Fenton's most recognized war image is one of the few in which he allowed a sense of sadness at the destruction of war to creep into his work. Arriving shortly after the brutal attack of soldiers of the British Light Brigade by the Russians on October 25, 1854, Fenton's "Valley of the Shadow of Death" showed the infamous valley as a desolate landscape filled with cannon balls. The exhibition of the photograph in 1855, and the popularity of Lord Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade," written in 1864, marked this event in the memory of the British people.

James Robertson, Felice Beato, Charles Langlois, and Karl Baptist von Szatmari all photographed the final stages of the Crimean War. Of these, the sixty or so photographs taken by Robertson have become the most well known. Robertson's works showed more scenes of death, destruction, and violence, the kind of subject matter not in the work of Fenton. Although Thomas Agnew & Sons published both Fenton's and Robertson's Crimean photographs in 1856, Robertson does not seem restricted by Agnew to shoot only government-favored photos as Fenton had been, perhaps because of Robertson's other sources of income. In the end, Agnew's commercial adventure was not as successful as he had hoped. Fenton's and Robertson's photographs went on sale, both individually and as sets, as early as November 1855. However, the public had little interest in these images by the end of the war. By the end of 1856, Thomas Agnew & Sons sold all remaining prints and negatives from both photographers at auctions.

After photographing the end of the Crimean War, Felice Beato and James Robertson worked together in Calcutta and photographed the Indian Mutiny, of First War of Independence, of 1857. Beato's most striking images from this period are scenes of the execution of over 2000 Indian rebels by the British, and those of Secundra Bagh in which he recorded the devastation in the months that followed. In his photographs from the 1850s, Beato is often credited as the first to photograph corpses after a battle. Beato probably choreographed many of these scenes to heighten the dramatic effect, perhaps even excavating and arranging corpses. Beato became the most prolific photographer of war scenes of the Asian world in the nineteenth century including the recording of the Opium War in China (1860) and the Japanese attacks in the Simonaki Straights in September of 1864. Also during this decade, several photographers were sent to the battlefields during the War of the Triple Alliance in South America (1864–1870), in hopes for commercial success. Bate & Co. published Esteban García's work from this period in sets of ten titled La Guerra Ilustrada. However, it was the American Civil War (1861–1865) that was the first war to be extensively photographed.

1860s/American Civil War

It was the publishers' awareness of the public's desire for war scenes that caused the prolific photographic work produced during The American Civil War; at least five hindred photographers accompanied the soldiers of the North. Photographs were then made into engravings to be published in the papers, or sold to E. and H. T. Anthony and Co., who at times issued more than a thousand pictures a day. The photographs themselves would not be viewed by the public until they were displayed in galleries.

George S. Cook took images right after the fall of Fort Sumter, marking the beginning of the war between North and South. While Cook became one of the few photographers to shoot Confederate subjects, one of his most famous works is of a Federal troop leader, Major Robert Anderson who had been defeated at Fort Sumter. After the war, Cook collected over 10,000 photographs from the war; these are now in the collection of the Valentine Museum in Richmond, Virginia.

However, Matthew B. Brady is the name most synonymous with Civil War photography. He determined that he could make a profit organizing photographers to shoot the war and closed most of his galleries which had been highly successful portrait studios for the rich and famous. He had even done several sittings with President Lincoln who credited Brady with helping him win the

election with these fine portraits of the President. Brady claimed he was called to the war, "I felt I had to go. A spirit in my feet said 'go,' and I went."

Although suffering from poor eyesight, Brady initially went to the fields and was greeted with distaste from many of the soldiers who suspiciously saw his camera as some kind of weapon. Later, he organized other photographers to do most of the actual photographing. However, Brady managed to frequently place himself within photographs of military heroes. Throughout the course of the war, Brady hired over twenty photographers to shoot the troops, battle scenes, and the bodies after the massacres. He organized a complex system of equipping each of the photographers with a portable dark room and stocked chemicals and glass plates at the major battlefields. His team of photographers produced over 7000 negatives during the war.

One of Brady's best photographers was Alexander Gardner. Gardner followed the Army of the Potomac and captured most of their battles. His first war photographs were exhibited in Brady's studio in September of 1862 and captured the horrific results of the Battle of Antietam, the bloodiest battle of the war in which 26,000 soldiers were killed or wounded. The gallery received huge crowds desperate to see these first images portraying with veracity the costs of war. These photographs were dramatically realistic in contrast to heroic scenes that had been done of dead soldiers by painters in this period. Gardner showed the actual decay of the corpses and the inhumanity of their deaths. Eight of these photographs were also published in *Harper's Weekly* on October 18, 1862.

The *New York Times* praised the show, "Mr. Brady has done something to bring home to us the terrible reality and earnestness of war" and Gardner was disturbed by Brady's assumed ownership of these photographs. Each photograph was boldly marked with "Brady's Album Gallery" in contrast to Gardner's name written in small barely noticeable print. Gardner reacted by taking the negatives of his photographs along with Timothy O'Sullivan and James F. Gibson, some of Brady's best photographers, and opened his own studio. Once working for himself, some of Gardner's most intriguing works were those from his series on the execution of the conspirators who plotted the murder of President Lincoln.

Gardner clearly credited the photographers who worked for him in the publication of their work. For example, Timothy O'Sullivan, while working for Gardner, produced arguably the most famous war photograph, the "Harvest of Death" taken of the battlefield of Gettysburg. This scene shows a field covered with bodies, highlighting the numerous deaths from this battle. Yet O'Sullivan simultaneously shows the viewer one soldier's face, his contorted hand in the center of the photo, bringing a large inconceivable number down to the reality of many individuals. Other soldiers have their clothes partly removed as thieves have already been searching their bodies. The scene achieves the kind of accurate reportage which Gardner supported when he remarked that this photograph by O'Sullivan "conveys a useful moral: it shows the blank horror and reality of war, in opposition to the pageantry."

Photography also filled a unique role for families who sent their loved ones to battle. Portraits of soldiers were often taken before leaving for the war and makeshift studios were set up in many battlefields enabling soldiers to send home images of themselves. The recently developed and inexpensive tintype photographs were particularly popular. It should be highlighted that although a few photographs of African-American troops and the treatment of slaves were taken, the photographic record of this period for African-Americans is minimal in comparison to the copious photographs taken of the war.

Some of the many photographers not discussed in depth in this essay who photographed scenes from The Civil War include: George Barnard, Bergstresser Brothers, Sam Cooley, James Gardner, James Gibson, S.A. Holmes, David Knox, Theodore Lilienthal, Royan Linn, A.D. Lytle, William Pywell, James Reekie, George Rockwood, T.C. Roche, John Scholten, William Morris Smith, Julian Vannerson, David Woodbury, and J. A. Young. Andrew J. Russell is the only photographer during the Civil War to have been paid by the government.

After the war, photographs of the battlefields were difficult to sell as the public preferred to forget their tragic losses. Alexander Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the Civil War published after the Civil War, which included O'Sullivan's famous Harvest of Death, had little response. While many photographers struggled, perhaps none suffered more than Brady who had bankrupted himself from his investments to photograph the war and ended up destitute and mostly blind. Also after the end of the war, Frank Leslie's *Illustrated Newspaper* published images of Southern war camps and malnourished prisoners. Mary Warner Marien discusses the role of the North's blockade of the South as a cause for the extreme neglect of the prisoners of the Confederacy.

The 1870s and 1880s

During the 1870s and 1880s numerous regional wars took place throughout the globe. However, few photographers recorded these events, as there was little interest in them for purposes of print illustrations. Rather, most newspapers hired artists to sketch dramatic battle scenes believing photography lacked the ability to capture the

action. Louis Heller shot images of prisoners which were used, however, for the cover of Frank Leslie's *Illustrated Newspaper*, July 12, 1873. Eadweard Muybridge produced some dramatic images of the battle between the Modac Indians and the American Cavalry on the border of Oregon and California in 1872–1873. Muybridge frames individual proud Native Americans as they fight to keep their land; in truth, most of the tribe would be hung when this battle was lost. Bismark's war against Schleswig-Holstein was photographed by a handful of artists showing mostly views of the destruction of the landscape and corpses. Only negligible photos survive from the Russo-Turkish War (1877–1888).

While James Burke photographed many struggles in Afghanistan, the best are of the Second Afghan War of 1879 in which the British were fighting in the area of Kabul. In one of the most successful battles in British military history, their troops numbering only 5000 fought off an attack by over 100,000 Afghans. Although he did not shoot the actual battle, Burke's photos of the confident British troops a day before the attack were published as engravings in London Graphic. Burke is known for his sweeping views of troop formations placed against the exotic Afghan backdrop.

Few noteworthy photographs survived from the Franco-Prussian War of 1870; however, photography played a crucial role in the siege of Paris. First, balloons marked "Daguerre" and "Niépce" were used to drop communications into the surrounded city. Later, photographically reduced text was hidden in small containers tied to the tails of homing pigeons enabling those under siege within the city to communicate with French officials outside. Once they realized the French's secret weapon, the Prussians used falcons to attack the pigeons.

The Paris Commune ended with Bloody Week (May 21–May 28, 1871), a period in which 25,000 Parisians were killed by the French government. Various Parisians took some particularly intriguing photos of the Communards posed prior to and after removing the Vendôme Column, an action that symbolized the removal of Napoleonic military barbarism. Bruno Braquehais published 109 photographs, which he personally photographed, in a bound album titled *Paris During the Commune*. Unfortunately, these photographs were later used to identify rebels who were then punished or murdered by the French government. Charles Soulier photographed the city in ruins after the end of the Commune. Eugène Appert fabricated photographs in which he hired actors to stage various scenes from the time of the Commune, and then he would paste in heads of the Communards and reshoot the pasted photo. This handful of contrived images, designed from the perspective of the government, was compiled into a book called Crimes of the Commune.

1890s

The Spanish-American War (April 25–August 12, 1898) is the first war in which photographs of war scenes were quickly disseminated to the public through publication in newspapers. Due to the images in papers owned by Hearst and Pulitzer, Americans saw the atrocities of the Spanish occupation, although often inaccurately reported, and support increased for the Cuban rebel forces. The sinking of the U.S. battleship *Maine*, on February 15, 1898, in the Cuban harbor of Havana was blamed on the Spanish and fueled the decision by the United States to enter the war on April 25. "Remember the *Maine*" became a rallying cry as numerous photography firms marketed stereographs of the event; Keystone View Company in particular made a profit from the selling of such images.

Despite the American public interest in this conflict, few photographers were hired to document the battles. However, Jimmy Hare began a career in which he would become known as the paramount photographer of war. Working for *Collin's Magazine* and later *Collier's* and *Leslie's Weekly*, Hare worked in the field during numerous twentieth-century wars including World War I. While few of his surviving photographs from this period are remarkable, later he would be credited with being the first modern war photojournalist for his courageous efforts in documenting times of war.

International public opinion on the Second Boer War (1899–1902) was also greatly swayed by photographs of the battles and conditions in South Africa. Much of Europe and the United States supported the seemingly simple people of the Boer republic initially in their battle against Britain. Once realizing the power of the medium, the Boers began taking numerous photos of every aspect of the war. The Boers encouraged photos of their weaponry, trenches filled with dead British soldiers, and their prisoners including then war correspondent Winston Churchill.

Through manipulation of these and other photographic images, the British used the media to try and persuade the national and international public to support their troops. Horace Nicholls can be credited with shooting some of the most sentimental images during this period, which engendered sympathy for British troops. Nicholls described his desire to shoot and compose "photographs which would appeal to the artist sense of the most fastidious, knowing that they must as photographs have the enhanced value of being truthful." Numerous other photographers were sent to shoot this war, Reinholt Thiele and H.C. Shelley for example, but many scenes were shot by British soldiers and volunteers who brought their own Kodaks to South Africa. The deplorable conditions of British concentration camps, in which 40,000 women and children died of disease and starvation, were undeniable due to the many photographs taken within the camps of the victims.

Conclusion

While many battles from the larger wars were more frequently photographed, photographs also evidence the colonization by Europeans and Americans around the globe. In many countries, photos of famous cultural sights and exotic locales were taken once an area was conquered. Many of these images were used to lure westerners to become settlers in a certain area and to romanticize the prowess of western cultures at exploration.

Photography was also utilized as a military tool throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. Most military expeditions had a trained photographer as part of their troops. Some armies maintained an entire unit of photographers. Photographic technology was also used to reproduce maps, study military maneuvers and the terrain, and to train servicemen.

In the majority of battles, photographers were successful at performing their role as observers of both sides. Yet in some cases photographers were taken as prisoners when suspected of spying for the enemy. In addition, photographers were frequently warned against photographing any military details and could be imprisoned if such images were ever published. Some soldiers felt uncomfortable with the new technology, as discussed above during the American Civil War. Native American warriors, in fact, frequently avoided the camera for fear that the strange contraption would somehow capture their soul.

The time needed to set up the equipment, the slow development time, and the simple fact that a photographer had to shoot something before them rather than creating it in their mind, made photography a challenging medium to work with in the nineteenth century. Yet, the camera's seeming ability to capture reality also made the desire to take photographs of battlefields and soldiers simply irresistible. By World War II, photographs would be the primary source of images for newspapers informing the public about the war.

Debra Gibney

See also: Half-tone Printing; Daguerreotype; McCosh, John; Expositions Universelle, Paris (1854, 1855, 1867, etc.); Fenton, Roger; Agnew, Thomas; Victoria, Queen and Albert, Prince Consort; Robertson, James, Beato, Felice; Langlois, Jean Charles, Brady, Mathew B.; Gardner, Alexander; Tintype (Ferrotype, Melainotype); and Nicholls, Horace Walter.

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WARD, CATHERINE WEED BARNES (1851–1913)

Born in Albury, New York January 10, 1851, Catherine Barnes traveled with her parents to Russia in 1872. Introduced to photography in 1886, she built her own studio in the attic of her home. She was appointed associate editor of American Amateur Photographer, wrote and lectured extensively on photography, and became known as an advocate for women in photography with her talk

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John Hannavy

EDITOR

A Harvest of Death.

Slowly, over the misty fields of Gettysburg—as all reluctant to expose their ghastly horrors to the light—came the sunless morn, after the retreat by Lee's broken army. Through the shadowy vapors, it was, indeed, a "harvest of death" that was presented; hundreds and thousands of torn Union and rebel soldiers—although many of the former were already interred—strewed the now quiet fighting ground, soaked by the rain, which for two days had drenched the country with its fitful showers.

A battle has been often the subject of elaborate description; but it can be described in one simple word, *devilish!* and the distorted dead recall the ancient legends of men torn in pieces by the savage wantonness of fiends. Swept down without preparation, the shattered bodies fall in all conceivable positions. The rebels represented in the photograph are without shoes. These were always removed from the feet of the dead on account of the pressing need of the survivors. The pockets turned inside out also show that appropriation did not cease with the coverings of the feet. Around is scattered the litter of the battle-field, accoutrements, ammunition, rags, cups and canteens, crackers, haversacks, &c., and letters that may tell the name of the owner, although the majority will surely be buried unknown by strangers, and in a strange land. Killed in the frantic efforts to break the steady lines of an army of patriots, whose heroism only excelled theirs in motive, they paid with life the price of their treason, and when the wicked strife was finished, found nameless graves, far from home and kindred.

Such a picture conveys a useful moral: It shows the blank horror and reality of war, in opposition to its pageantry. Here are the dreadful details! Let them aid in preventing such another calamity falling upon the nation.

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Negative by T. H. O'Sullivan Positive by A. Gardner

A HARVEST OF DEATH, GETTYSBURG, JULY, 1863

PLATE 36

GARDNER'S PHOTOGRAPHIC SKETCH BOOK OF THE CIVIL WAR

BY ALEXANDER
GARDNER

DOVER PUBLICATIONS, INC., NEW YORK

The New York Times Magazine https://nyti.ms/2p0k9KJ

Magazine

Pictures in the Aftermath

On Photography

By TEJU COLE APRIL 11, 2017

In an essay titled "Late-Night Thoughts on Listening to Mahler's Ninth Symphony," the physician and essayist Lewis Thomas wrote: "I cannot listen to the last movement of the Mahler Ninth without the door-smashing intrusion of a huge new thought: death everywhere, the dying of everything, the end of humanity." The essay was published in Thomas's 1983 book of the same title, and he was talking about the likelihood of nuclear apocalypse. When I first read it in the mid-'90s, I appreciated its mournful lyricism, even as it felt like a time capsule of the worries of a different generation.

But I've been thinking of Thomas's essay again. Recently, some video clips of American nuclear-weapons tests from the '50s and '60s were made available to the public for the first time. A few dozen of the clips have been **uploaded to YouTube** by the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. Many are shorter than a minute, and none are longer than eight minutes. On the flickering screen, I have been watching various iterations of the infamous nuclear cloud spraying radioactivity into the atmosphere above Nevada or the Pacific. Several of the clips simply show a mysterious white circle glowing against a dark field. We can watch these videos because they have now been declassified, assessed as belonging safely to the past. But the fears Thomas wrote about back in the '80s now feel real to me. The nation's nuclear stance is back to belligerence, one more significant turn for the worse in a world suddenly full of turns for the worse. Considered with one eye on current news,

the clips are terrifying and mesmerizing, and are made more so by the absence of sound. The unspeakable unfolds in silence.

If Americans are back to brooding about nuclear disaster, Japanese people have had no break from it since the Second World War. There was the staggering legacy of being the only nation to have been attacked with nuclear weapons (the two American bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki). This legacy permeates Japanese society at all levels, provoking questions about what it means to mourn, to move on, to confront the past as both aggressor and victim.

Japan's subsequent embrace of nuclear-power plants was a fateful choice in a country not only laden with such a traumatic past but also vulnerable to earthquakes and tsunamis. The earthquake that struck the Pacific off the coast of Tohoku, in the northeastern part of Honshu, in March 2011 triggered an enormous tsunami and caused immense damage: towns flooded, infrastructure wrecked, forests splintered and more than 15,000 people dead. The earthquake cut off the external power supply to the Daiichi nuclear power plant in Fukushima, and floodwaters from the tsunami damaged the plant's backup generators and disabled its cooling system. Overheating ensued. Fuel in three of the reactor cores melted, leading to a release of radiation. And so to the fast-moving disaster of a tsunami was added the slow-motion disaster of a nuclear calamity.

The tripartite catastrophe of earthquake, tsunami and nuclear accident is known in Japan as 3/11, because it began on March 11. The calendrical naming indicates something of the seriousness with which those events were viewed. And as befits a date so crucial, there has been a varied and widespread set of responses to it — in politics, of course, but also in journalism, photography, literature and in the arts in general.

The 3/11 disaster was perhaps the first major one in Japan to be so thoroughly captured as it unfolded. Footage from surveillance cameras and webcams shows the water coming in, the roads being swept away and the towns and harbors being destroyed. And in the immediate aftermath, extensive documentary work was undertaken by photographers from Japan and abroad. The meticulous photographic documentation of ruins, debris, cleanup and relief operations by the photojournalist

Kazuma Obara was typical: His pictures showed the gut-wrenching scale of the destruction, the professionalism of the emergency crews and the fortitude of the survivors.

But with the passage of time, less direct photographic responses to 3/11 began to emerge, and many of Japan's most respected photographers turned their attentions to Tohoku. Shortly after the earthquake, the Japanese government put into effect a zone of exclusion around the damaged Fukushima power plant that forbade unauthorized persons to breach an invisible perimeter at a radius of 20 kilometers from the reactors (a semicircle on land, because the other half of the circle was in the Pacific Ocean). The photographer Tomoki Imai undertook a two-year project of photographing the irradiated landscape. The photographs in his series "Semicircle Law" were made at different locations on or near the 20-kilometer perimeter, with his large-format camera directed at the damaged reactors in the distance. Sometimes the reactors are barely visible, and often they aren't visible at all. The resulting images are simple landscapes in various seasons. Some of them are banal; others are beautifully pensive. They are decisively transfigured only by our knowledge of the circumstances under which they were made.

Equally subtle is the work of Shimpei Takeda, which at first glance looks like a series of images of the night sky. But his white-flecked black pictures are actually photographs of the soil — or, more accurate, they are photograms, as they were made without a camera. Takeda obtained soil samples from a number of locations around Fukushima and nearby prefectures and placed them on photosensitive paper in a light-tight chamber for a month. Depending on the amount of radioactivity in the soil, the resulting images contain a few white dots or enough to create nebula-like white splotches. These enigmatic images make visible the otherwise unseen toxicity of the ground.

I saw Imai's and Takeda's images earlier this year at an exhibition of post-World War II Japanese photography at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. In the same exhibition was work by Rinko Kawauchi, whose ability to infuse gentle diaristic images with intense spiritual power I have long admired. Kawauchi's response to 3/11 (not presented in the San Francisco exhibition) was published in a book titled "Light and Shadow." A key theme of the sequence of photographs in her book was a

pair of pigeons, one black, the other white. Kawauchi photographed them in and above the wreckage of Tohoku, often capturing them both in a single frame. In Kawauchi's account, these birds were homing pigeons rendered distraught by the devastation below, circling restlessly, uncertain where to land. Their starkly oppositional colors lent the series a further air of symbolism and a sense of the miraculous.

In countless ways, people make images in response to disaster. Seeing is part of our coming to terms. Oblique responses, like those by Imai, Takeda and Kawauchi to 3/11, are especially resonant. They are reactions to a tragedy, but they also reach beyond it and give us new language. In each case, a focused and delimited view of the catastrophe is offered, and this delimitation enables the images to transcend their subject.

As I silently watch the grim old footage of American bomb tests, it occurs to me that the unsteady black-and-white imagery is decontextualized and hints at abstraction. Like the photographs from Japan, it is simultaneously primordial and futuristic. The extreme uncertainty I feel in our current political moment helps me understand for the first time the curious twinship of mourning and premonition. What was endured can hint at what is yet to come. Takeda's radioactive cosmos, Imai's brooding landscapes and Kawauchi's dazed pigeons take me through several registers of thought simultaneously: information about the tragedy, sorrow for the suffering it caused, gratitude for the work that makes that sorrow visible, foreboding about the future.

An alert flashes across your phone. Something terrible has happened far away, a flood, an airstrike. Soon, there's footage of people picking through the wreckage of what used to be their homes. It is easy to pity them, but difficult to imagine that this could be you, suddenly bereft of a solid place in the world. And yet it is precisely this expectation of solidity, this notion that things are probably going to be fine, that I sense falling away from us once again. Listening now to Mahler's Ninth Symphony, I find it inflected by Lewis Thomas's essay, and steeped in a gloom similar to his. It's not just Mahler's Ninth: Listening to anything that touches on the sublime makes me apprehensive, whether it's Coltrane or Bjork or even the silence that greets me when I wake up in the middle of the night.

I think of the reckless policies being rushed into law all around us, the undermining of scientific consensus, the breakdown of diplomacy, the tweeting president and his confrontational temperament, and I wonder which events we in America are doomed to undergo in our own turn, events we may already be well in the middle of, whether by an act of war or by an act of God, whether with a nuclear element or not, events that will expose our utter unreadiness, alter our experience of the world permanently and require us to find new ways of seeing, and new ways of mourning.

Teju Cole is a photographer, a novelist and the magazine's photography critic. His book "Blind Spot" will be published in June.

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A version of this article appears in print on April 16, 2017, on Page MM12 of the Sunday Magazine with the headline: In Japanese photographers' responses to the Fukushima disaster, there is a visual language for pondering future catastrophes.

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