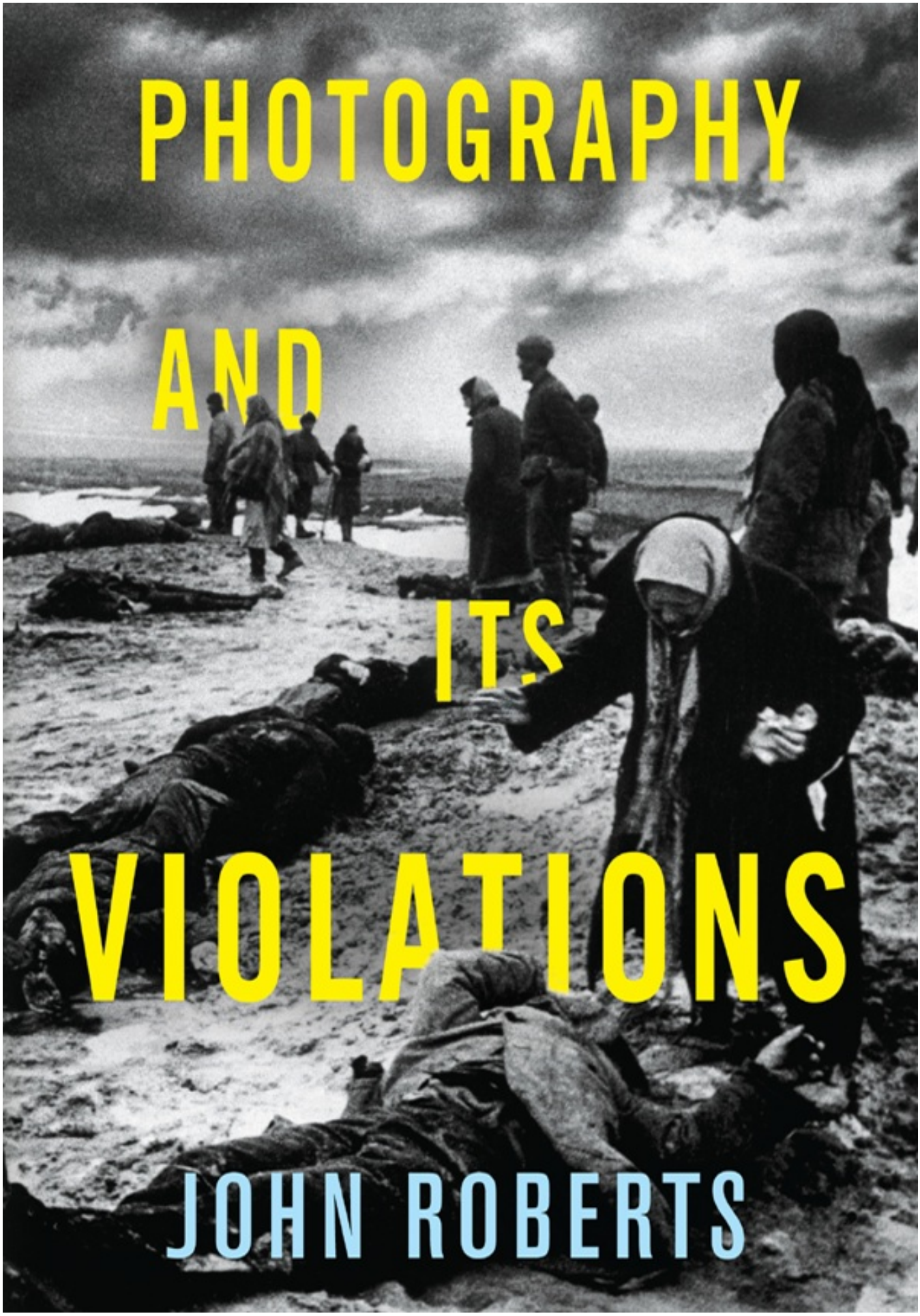
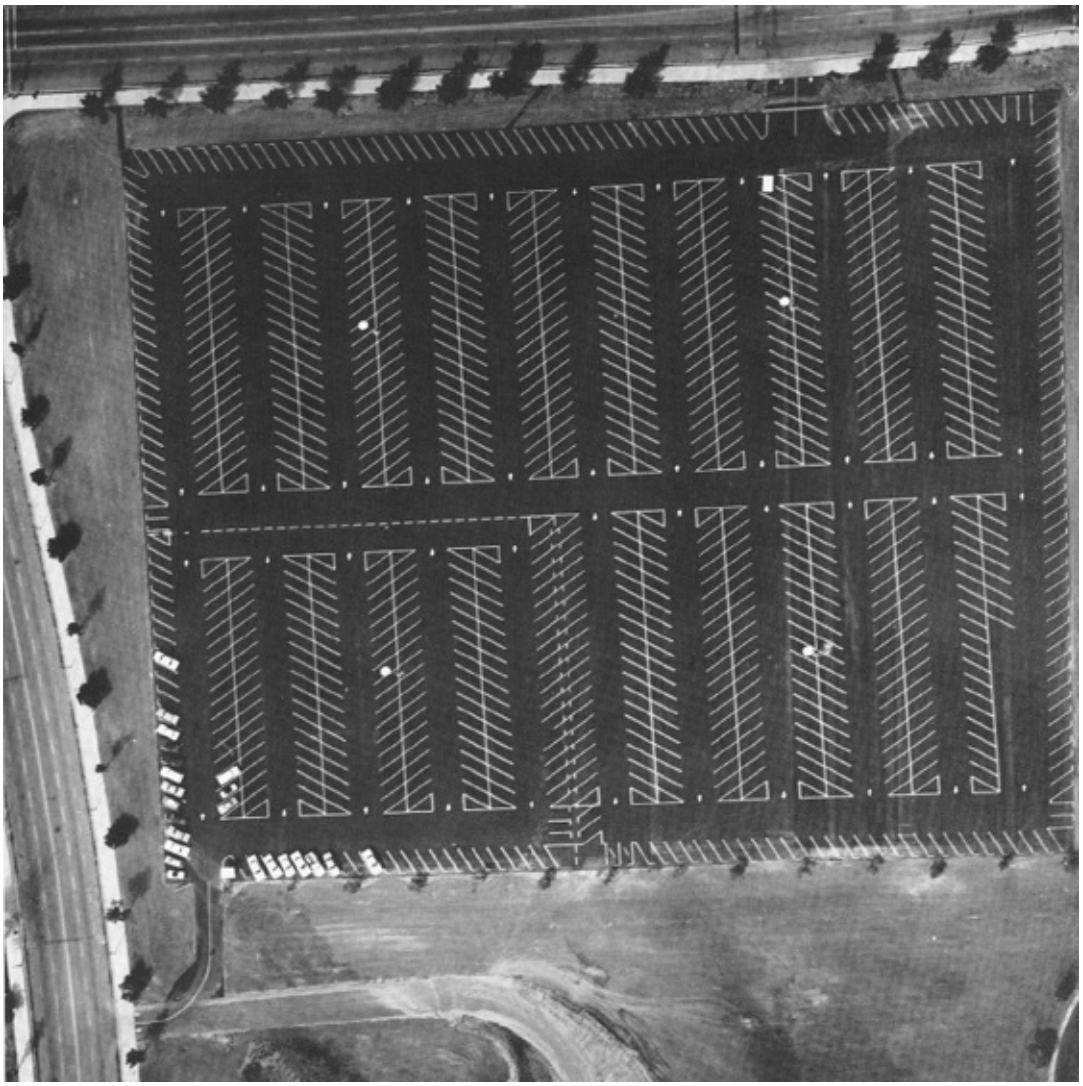

PHOTOGRAPHY
AND
ITS
VIOLATIONS
JOHN ROBERTS

PHOTOGRAPHY AND ITS VIOLATIONS

Columbia Themes in Philosophy, Social Criticism, and the Arts Lydia Goehr and Gregg M. Horowitz, Editors



Century City, 1800 Avenue of the Stars (© Ed Ruscha. Courtesy the artist and Gagosian Gallery)

PHOTOGRAPHY AND ITS VIOLATIONS

JOHN ROBERTS

Columbia University Press  New York

Columbia University Press
Publishers Since 1893
New York Chichester, West Sussex
cup.columbia.edu

E-ISBN 978-0-231-53824-4

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Roberts, John, 1955–
Photography and its violations / John Roberts.
pages cm — (Columbia themes in philosophy, social criticism, and the arts)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-231-16818-2 (cloth : alk. paper) —ISBN 978-0-231-53824-4 (ebook)
1. Photography—Philosophy. 2. Photography—Social aspects. 3. Photography—Influence. I. Title.

TR183.R6324 2014
770. 1—dc23

2014009808

A Columbia University Press E-book.
CUP would be pleased to hear about your reading experience with this e-book at cup-ebook@columbia.edu.

Jacket design by Noah Arlow

References to websites (URLs) were accurate at the time of writing. Neither the author nor Columbia University Press is responsible for URLs that may have expired or changed since the manuscript was prepared.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people over the years have played a part in the formation of this book as colleagues, confidants, collaborators, commissioning editors, students, conference and seminar organizers, and interlocutors. I would like to thank Jorge Ribalta, Steve Edwards, Blake Stimson, Sergio Mah, David Campany, Robin Kelsey, Andrew Warstat, Devin Fore, David Green, Andrew Yarnold, Anna Lovatt, Julian Stallabrass, Richard West, Sina Najafi, Alan Radley, Robert Grose, Mette Sandbye, Diarmuid Costello, Jan Baetens, Julia Peck, Margarida Medeiros, Malcolm Bull, Stephen Wright, Duncan Higgins, and Johan Sandborg. Also particular thanks to Jeff Wall for our discussions over the years (our differences are always productive), to Ben Seymour for the many conversations we have had on abstraction, nonreproduction, and the value-form, to Andy Fisher, John Timberlake, and Simon Baker for reading the manuscript in its different versions, to Chris Gomersall for picture research, and to Ed Ruscha and the Gagosian Gallery for permission to reproduce the frontispiece and to Tommy Spree at the Anti-War Museum in Berlin to reproduce the image from *Krieg dem Kriege*. And finally thanks to the four anonymous reviewers for Columbia University Press, whose comments were very helpful and insightful, and to Wendy Lochner for seeing *Photography and Its Violations* through its multiple stages of production, and to the series editors Lydia Goehr and Gregg Horowitz for their unstinting commitment to the book.

Various chapters and sections of this book have been published in different forms or presented at conferences or seminars. Parts of chapter 1, “Photography and Its Truth-Event,” were published as “Photography and Its Truth Event” in the *Oxford Art Journal* 31, no. 2 (2008). Parts of the first half of chapter 2, “The Political Form of Photography Today,” were first presented as “On the Ruins of Photographic Culture” at the conference “La photographie au regard des théories de la communication/Photography as Culture and Communication,” Leuven University, 2007, and published as “On The Ruins of Photographic Culture: The Politics of Photographic Form Today,” in *The Meaning of Photography*, ed. Robin Kelsey and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2008) and parts of the second half as “Becalmed” in *Source 59* (Summer 2009). Chapter 3, “‘Fragment, Experiment, Dissonant Prologue’: Modernism, Realism and the Photodocument,” was presented as “‘Fragment, Experiment, Dissonant Prologue’: Realism and the Photodocument” at the conference “Utopia and the Document,” Museum of Contemporary Art, Barcelona, and Department of Photography, University of Lisbon, 2008, and the conference “Historical Materialism” 7, School of African and Oriental Studies, London, 2010. Section 1 of chapter 4, “Two Models of Labor: Figurality and Nonfigurality in Recent Photography,” was published as “Dois modelos de trabalho: figuralidade e neo-figuralidade na fotografia contemporanea/Two Models of Labor: Figurality and Non-

Figurality in Recent Photography," *Passagens* (Lisbon: Lisbao Photo, 2003); and parts of section 2 were presented as "The Avant-Garde and the Fate of the Photographic Snapshot" at the conference "Framing Photography," University of Copenhagen, 2001, and published as the "Logics of Deflation: The Avant-Garde, Lomography and the Fate of the Photographic snapshot," *Cabinet 8* (Fall 2002), and as the "Logics of Deflation: The Avant-Garde and the Fate of the Photographic Snapshot," *Arken Bulletin* 1 (2002), and in *Copy Work* (Vancouver: Vancouver Contemporary Art Gallery, 2007). A version of chapter 5 was first presented as a key note address at the conference "Estranged Realities" as "Photography After the Photograph," University of Wales, Newport, and published as "Photography After the Photograph: Event, Archive and the Non-Symbolic," *Oxford Art Journal* 31, no. 4 (2009) and as "A fotografia depois de fotgrafia," *Revista de Communicaçao e Linguens* 39 (2008). A version of chapter 6, "Photography, Abstraction, and the Social Production of Space," was first presented as "Photography, Landscape and the Production of Social Space," at the College Art Association, Chicago, 2010, and published in amended form in *The Philosophy of Photography* 2 (2011). In addition some of the material on Ed Ruscha was presented as "Ed Ruscha, and the Emergence of the 'Everyday'" at the conference "Representing the Everyday in American Visual Culture," University of Nottingham, 2008. A section of chapter 7, "Violence, Photography, and the Inhuman," was first presented as "Violence, Representation and the Inhuman" at the Academic Higher Research Council workshop "Representations of Illness," Loughborough University, 2008, then in an amended form at the conference "Violence and Representation," Tate, London, 2010, and at Ruskin College, Oxford University, and Bergen National Academy of the Arts, 2011; and a version of another section was presented as "'Pointing To': Ostension, Trauma and the Photographic Document" at "Photography and the Limits of the Document," Tate, London, 2003, and at the Conference of the Society of European Philosophy, University of Essex, 2003, and then published in a revised version in *Parallax*, as "'Pointing To': Ostension, Trauma and the Photographic Document," vol. 16, issue 2, no. 55 (2010).

INTRODUCTION

The Social Ontology of Photography

This book is the result of a long gestation process, in which I have continually returned to photography in order to chew at it again, like a dog with a recalcitrant bone. Indeed, this duality of photography—its intractability and restless assertiveness—is something that is not only mentioned by many writers on photography, but in certain instances has constituted the very ground of engagement with its form and history, as in Roland Barthes's *Camera Lucida*. This book is no different. For what makes photography worth returning to and chewing over again (and again) is precisely its unstable and destabilizing character, or what I call its productive capacity for violation. By this I mean that photography's capacity for "pointing at" as an act of disclosure invites the ruination of self-identity and the denaturalization of appearances, which, as such, far from these powers of ostension objectifying or reifying persons or things, are indivisible from photography's claims to truth. Indeed, what gives photography its politically exacting and philosophically demanding identity is, first and foremost, its unquenchable *social intrusiveness and invasiveness*, and, as such, its infinite capacity for truth-telling. "Pointing to" as an act of violation, then, opens up a space of nonidentity between the visible identity of a person or thing and its position within the totality of social relations in which the representation of the person or thing is made manifest. That is, in a photograph there exists empirical evidence of the palpable truth of appearances ("this looks like…"), but also evidence of the social determination of these appearances ("this looks like…*because* of…"); and this evidence will thereby form the causal and interpretative basis for the discursive reconstruction of the image. Hence when I talk of violation, I am talking not simply about how some well-composed photographs expose social contradiction or the mechanisms of ideology in a self-evident way (the starving African child next to a well-fed aid worker), and, therefore, how such photographs offer an image that is unambiguously grievous or shaming, but about how violation is, in a sense, built into the photographic reproduction of appearances: that is, photography is the very act of making visible and, therefore, is conceptually entangled with what is unconscious, half-hidden, implicit. This is why violation is in itself embedded in, and is an effect of, power relations and materials interests external to the act of photography itself. *Photography violates precisely because social appearances hide, in turn, division, hierarchy, and exclusion*. But this does not mean that the photographer *willingly* invites this violating power into his or her practice, even if the violations of photography act objectively against the conscious intentions of the photographer. The photographer, rather, is always faced, given the circumstances under which he or she photographs, with an ethical choice: to secure or advance photography's truth-claims

on the basis of these powers of violation or to diminish or veil these powers in order to either protect those in power (the conservative option) or "protect" the integrity of persons and things (the left/liberal option). Photography's immanent powers of violation, therefore, are something that constantly challenges and tests the photographer at the point of production and in the darkroom or at the computer. Thus, whatever political content accrues to a photographer's powers of violation in any given social context, these powers of violation are not in and of themselves a univocal progressive force, as if everything needs to be made visible, at all times, under all circumstances, and with the same level of intensity and candor. On the contrary, what in some circumstances might need to be made visible at all costs in other circumstances may need to be occluded or veiled, made apparitional or allegorical. Yet violation in the form of "pointing to," as inscribed in the documentary photograph, is the motive force of photography's truth-telling powers, and as such, predetermines other claims to truth on the part of other kinds of photographic practice.

So having published *The Impossible Document* in 1997, and *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography, and the Everyday* in 1998, I return in *Photography and Its Violations* to some of the key problems and issues that preoccupied me in the earlier texts: namely, what is particular to the photographic document that makes it different from other forms of image-production? And, as such, in what ways is photography's relationship to truth to be best understood and defended?

In the earlier work I placed a strong emphasis upon the legacy of philosophical realism and its embodiment in the documentary tradition in order to try to answer these questions, defying the rise, at the time, of various antirealisms in photographic theory and relativistic accounts of photographic truth. But what distinguished my claims at the time from traditional defenses of the document was a fundamental insistence on the *continuity* between modernism and realism, the avant-garde and realism, within the space of the claims for photographic truth in the twentieth century. This was to avoid two related and persistent problems in photographic theory and history: on the one hand, the recurrent tendency toward a version of positivism when photographic truth is attached to a defense of documentary practice as a source of value against the rise of staged and fictive photography, and on the other hand, the failure to recognize that staged and fictive modes are themselves embedded in the social-relational framework or social ontology of the photographic document. The social appearances of photography's fictive and staged modes continue to have a causal and indexical relationship to the truth-claims of the photographic document, for there can be no social relation between their constructed naturalism and the world without this prior relationship to the index. This bypasses, then, the problem of identifying realism and the truth-telling claims of photography solely with the document, and conversely, antirealism with staged and fictive photography. If the claims of realism are both the outcome of the decision-making of the photographer and the recognition of his or her implication in the constructedness of the photographic act, and in turn, of the critical judgments and interpretation of the

spectator, document and staged image alike are part of a conceptual and critical continuum. Yet despite this continuity certain problems and trouble spots remain, and it is these problems and trouble spots that are picked up and developed in *Photography and Its Violations*.

The relationship between what I call figural (staged, digitally amended) and nonfigural (documentary) photography is not a mutually interdependent one, insofar as the relationship rests on a fundamental asymmetry. Photography may possess many different modes and functions (microscientific, aerial-topographic, pornographic-affective, state-coercive, commercial-appellative) but its *primary and globalizing* function rests on its infinite reproduction of social appearances and relations as a making visible of some part of the world. And it is precisely this primary social relation that grounds, or overdetermines, all of photography's other functions. For, imagine a world in which the two primary functions of photography were the studio setup, controlled down to the very last detail by the photographer and his or her assistants, and the micro-photographing of various natural processes and phenomena, in which the reproduction of exacting invisible detail outweighs all other visual considerations; our emplotment and sense of place in the world would not only become obviously constricted, but troublingly autistic, blinded as it would be by a delimiting finitude and technical reification. There are two aspects to the social ontology that are crucial here: firstly, that the photographer in principle is able to arrive *unannounced*, and thereby is able to disclose what prefers not to be disclosed, producing what I call an existential imperative on the part of the photographer to *get in the way of the world*; and secondly, that the social-relational content of the photograph is not simply descriptive-historical, but affective and empathic: in short, it provides an emotional "hold." Indeed, to arrive unannounced is what, in many instances, makes photography the affective and empathic thing it is, and as such there can be no claims to truth in photography without this. This is why Barthes's *Camera Lucida* (1980) is one of the most important books written on the *photograph* since the 1930s, yet, paradoxically, as a book purportedly on *photography*, politically and philosophically it also one of the weakest theoretically.[1] His unprecedented recognition that photographs wound us psychologically in distinct ways is a profound contribution to the defense of the social ontology of photography. But for Barthes this codification of the "wound" (for Barthes, the punctum) separate from the exigencies of the photographer arriving unannounced (despite Barthes's tentative "dialectical" meeting between punctum and studium) lifts photography's affective and empathic power into a subjectivist and aestheticist détente with the world. This is reflected in Barthes's general distaste for photographs that subordinate the spectator to the violence of appearances, expressed early on in his writing on photography in his attack on war photography. Such photographs, he argues, relieve him of his "freedom" to judge aesthetically. The construction of the "pensive" spectator (the spectator who is free to highlight the most insignificant detail in a photograph as a sign of spectator freedom at the expense of the photograph's manifest content) is alive and well today in Jacques Rancière's and Michael Fried's writing on photography. Both adopt a version of the pensive spectator as an explicit

critique of the social ontology of photography and of the documentary tradition, as a judgment on politics as an imposition on the spectator, and, therefore, in their respective ways *becalm* photography.

In the light of the affective and empathic function of photography, there is therefore something bigger at stake than the familiar playing off against one another of photography's various operational functions in a kind of pluralistic compendium of "creative options." On the contrary, photography possesses a social imperative that both drives the greater part of photographic practice, whether amateur or professional, artistic or commercial-appellative, and links these producers, as well as (importantly) the users of photography, to a broader process of socialization and critical self-reflection. In other words photography in its various social-relational modes is one of the primary means through which individuals inhabit, experience, and reflect on the world in which they find themselves, but also, equally importantly, through which they experience and reflect on those worlds in which they *don't find* themselves or don't recognize themselves. As such, the unannounced identity of the photographer and the affective and empathic effects of photography both play a constitutive role within the production and mediation of the political.

The diminishment—or out-and-out forgetting—of this fact in the generalized epistemological attack on documentary practice in the 1980s and 1990s is, therefore, a damaging misconstrual of the wider social forces that have shaped the political economy of photography since its inception, or certainly since its development into a programmatic encounter with the social world at the beginning of the twentieth century (in Lewis Hine's work, for example). Photography is not divisible simply into "documentary practice" and "art-photography," technical photography and commercial photography, but rather, in its overwhelming embodiment as a social relation between photographer, world, image, and user, is an endlessly englobing and organizational process in which representations of self, other, "we," and the collective are brought to consciousness as part of everyday social exchange and struggle. This is the social ontology of photography.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND ITS ACTANTS

Recently this socially englobalizing dynamic has come to play a more pronounced role in the theory and history of photography, drawing on what has been a very fragmented legacy of realist theoretical engagement with photography's social relation and empathic function.[2] Of particular note as part of this shift are Ariella Azoulay's *The Civil Contract of Photography* (2008), Susie Linfield's Azoulay-influenced *The Cruel Radiance*: *Photography and Political Violence* (2010), and Tessa Morris-Suzuki's *The Past Within Us: Media, Memory, History* (2005). All place an emphasis on photography's participation in this social dynamic as a way of variously contesting the notion of documentary practice as an objectification of the "other" (Azoulay), the notion that photography should somehow protect the sensibilities of the spectator from the violence of the world (Linfield), and the notion of

photography as a failed or corrupt or unreliable historical witness (Morris-Suzuki). All set store, then, by the capacity of photography in its social-relational form to break through the constraints of the dominant media culture and the prevailing theoretical nihilism, and construct the conditions for an active, engaged, reflective, empathetic spectator. Azoulay speaks for much of this prodocumentary, prorelational thinking, when she argues that photography is "actually deeply embedded in the active life (*vita activa*); it attests to action and continues to take part in it, always engaged in an ongoing present that challenges the very distinction between contemplation and action. The photograph always includes a supplement that makes it possible to show that what "was there" wasn't *necessarily* in that way."[3]

And this supplement is, essentially, the historical space left by what the photographer, photographed, and extant spectator cannot know or predict at the point of the photograph's production and initial reception. That is, photography establishes a constellation of places between photographer, photographed, and spectator (immediate and futural) that is never stable temporally, in the sense that the image is never "possessed" by the photographer, photographed, or spectator (what I shall call here the various actants of the photograph) irrespective of who speaks for, or who criticizes, the photograph at a particular time. The truth of the photograph always exceeds these given places of social exchange, given that it participates at all points in an unfinished process of truth-disclosure that is coextensive with the transformative and universal claims of the historical process itself. Take one of Azoulay's examples—Dorothea Lange's well-known portrait of an impoverished American migrant mother from 1935 (*Migrant Mother*). This image is not reducible to Lange's own account of her subject (the pitiful conditions of Southern US migrant workers in the 1930s), or to that of her editors and the mass media (the tragic face of the Depression), historians (the exemplary ethnographic field work of the Farm Security Administration [FSA]), or the subject of the photograph herself, Florence Owens Thompson (who thought it a grave distortion of who she once was as a person, and as such an image that should be withdrawn from circulation), insofar as each of these positions is a partial account of what the photograph signifies to each of its actants under given conditions at a particular time. Indeed, the most ideologically invested of these positions, Lange's own (as producer) and Thompson's (as subject), are the most tendentious, firstly, because Lange's view is so closely bound up with the contingent demands of taking a good picture, and secondly, because Thompson's view of her former self is *utterly* particularist, failing to recognize how this *image* of herself (not *her*self) has entered world history, and thus now functions well beyond her own control, or anybody else's, as a space for the reconstruction of historical consciousness. To want the image removed from the historical record, or to demand some kind of recompense for its purported "distortions," is to say *this event did not happen and I had no place in it*. In other words it perpetrates a greater violation than the violation produced by the initial encounter. Similarly, the idea prevalent in much photo theory in the 1990s, after the publication of John Tagg's *The Burden of Representation* (1988), that such an image

represents the conflation of the documentary tradition with the state control of the working-class body as victim or deserving poor, and therefore is ipso facto injurious and repressive, is equally tendentious, in that the presence of the state in the production and conditions of reception of the photograph does not thereby determine the reception of the image tout court. By constructing what is essentially a monological position based on the conflation of the actant position of the social historian (the meaning of the image is ultimately in the hands of those who control its reception and distribution) with that of the actant position of the photographed subject ("this doesn't not represent me!"), Tagg actually desubjectivizes and dehistoricizes the meaning of the FSA archive, driving documentary practice into nihilistic collusion with the state. Hence, the notion that the subjects of documentary photographs are fixed in their "otherness" or conditions of production and as such are unable to talk back *historically*, or can only talk back in historically delimited ways as the "other," is one of the main targets of Azoulay's book. And in this respect, her writing extends the dialogic work done on enunciation and reportage within the realist tradition in the 1990s, which I have already mentioned.[4] Her work on nineteenth-century American slave photographs as voices that speak to us *through* their visible subjugation is extremely valuable in this respect.

Consequently, to expand Azoulay's argument at this point, we might talk about each of these actant positions (of photographer, photographed, spectator present and futural) as fundamentally *nonequivalent* to the particularist claims of the material interests and discourses in which they are embedded: that is, none of the material interests and discourse positions inscribed in the production and reception of the *Migrant Mother* photograph—the producer (photo history and art history), the editor (popular journalism), the historian (social history), or the subject (first person reminiscence)—speaks *for* the truth of the photography. Each of these actant positions may participate individually in shaping the truth-discourse of the photograph, but in the final analysis, they cannot control, *in their own interests and image*, the ends (emancipatory, counterintuitive, or reactionary) to which the image will be put. Or perhaps another, and better, way of putting it: the possible emancipatory or critical content of the photograph is always in a state of emergence *from* the image's competing conditions of reception and interpretation; and therefore this emergent emancipatory content will be dependent on the social and historical conditions of its future reception.

Now Azoulay's rejection of the monological and instrumental accounts of documentary practice prevalent in some quarters in the 1980s and 1990s is compelling and a powerful advance even on those redoubtable defenders of documentary *practice* during this period.[5] In this respect her defense of the exceptional social character of the photodocument is both culturally persuasive and philosophically robust. She offers a view of photography that places it unapologetically within the bounds of knowledge production and social exchange. "The widespread use of cameras by people around the world has created more than a mass of images; it has created a new form of encounter between people who take,

watch, and show other people's photographs, with or without consent, thus opening new possibilities of political action and forming new conditions for its validity."[6] And this is something that has been going on, under various political conditions and to various political ends, and with varying degrees of power and alacrity, since the beginning of the twentieth century. Photography, then, in its modern forms of production and distribution is not the story of the subject's perfected objectification and successful subjection to photography's commodity-forms; rather, it is the space of an unfolding egalitarian encounter between producers and spectators, insofar as the production and reception of the photograph are two of the few practices where those without advanced professional skills of one sort or another can, in taking and looking at and talking about photographs, establish a critical distance between themselves and commodity relations. Famously Walter Benjamin recognized and developed this function of photography in the 1930s in his essay "The Author as Producer." Moreover, it is precisely the *proliferation* of the photographic document (under photography's social-relational form) that actively guarantees this political space. There are always more photographs to be taken and looked at in order to defend and reconstitute this nonimaginary egalitarian community. Hence the idea that what photography best needs is an ecology of the photograph as a break with the power of spectacle—once famously proposed by Susan Sontag and echoed by many others since—is thus self-defeating and politically antipathetic to photography's social ontology.[7]

This proliferation of the photograph and the expansive and irrepressible system of symbolic exchange are what Azoulay describes as the essential citizenship at the heart of the dialogic character of photography, citizenship meaning here subordination not to a sovereign power and its national interests, but to the construction of a *non*particularist global "political community." "The civil contract of photography organizes political relations in the form of an open and dynamic framework among individuals, without regulation and mediation by a sovereign."[8] From this perspective she offers a striking critique of the dominant post-Debordian, post-Situationist, post–Frankfurt School, post-Tagg disciplinary line on the production and reception of the image under mature capitalist conditions. Indeed, in an echo of Jacques Rancière's recent writing on the image,[9] she infers that the society of the spectacle is, in fact, a nihilistic myth that only works to misrepresent how the ordinary photographic document or snapshot actually operates under capitalist conditions. Thus what characterizes the everyday photograph is not the ease with which it is subject to state control, patterns of political exclusion and censorship, and the strictures of commodity relations generally, but, on the contrary, how it consistently outruns these constraints, even in instances where all the forces of the state are engaged in its suppression or destruction—for instance, famously, the Abu Ghraib photographs. What capitalism dislikes about the photographic document is precisely this uncontrollable volatility of the photograph, in which even images that are supposedly secure within the very heart of the system spill out to be used and reframed by others to defame and embarrass the state, particularly in a world now dominated by instant image

transmission. This position, then, is extremely important in moving the debate on photography beyond the dualistic account of an active dominant media and a passive audience subject to its dictates; the arrival of the Internet and a multitude of forms of cheap camera technologies have undoubtedly contested this arrangement, encouraging sharing and discussion. But nevertheless Azoulay's account suffers from a number of significant political and critical weaknesses that reflect badly on how the social ontology of photography and its possibilities are currently being constructed politically across much of photo theory and cultural theory today.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND "BARE LIFE": A STATE OF EXCEPTION?

Azoulay is certainly correct to defend the supplemental logic of photography; and she is certainly right to insist on the proliferation and exchange of photographs as an essentially egalitarian force and, as such, a constitutive presence in the formation of political and historical consciousness. This position is a critical imperative for anyone looking at the political economy of photography beyond the labored categories of "art" and "documentary"; and her defense is admirable. But for all her commitment to the social-relational ontology of photography and, in turn, to the productive violations of the photographic enterprise, Azoulay's political understanding of photography is remarkably indifferent to questions of class, labor, and real abstraction (the quantitative, naturalizing character of commodity relations that precede thinking and praxis under capitalism and, therefore, constitute the prereflective formation of subjects and thus spectators) and, in turn, hegemony. Indeed her understanding of the social-relational form of photography is premised on a highly *underdetermined* notion of the political. By identifying with the state of exception of the noncitizen in photographs taken in the occupied territories in Israel, she confines the possible political relation between photographers and spectators to a humanitarian solidarity between citizens *with* papers and citizens *without* papers. In this, she says, the spectator is forced to confront the ideological disavowal that lies at the heart of bourgeois citizenship: in rejecting or fearing the immigrant as an alien or illegitimate presence, citizens identify with their own national state as "protector" and forget they are themselves *governed*. Such photographs then recall us as spectators to a citizenship "beyond" sovereign power: "we must find the means for rehabilitating citizenship as a negotiating position vis-à-vis the governmental power in which all of the governed participate."[10] This seems an extraordinarily open-ended way of constructing a progressive political "we" or a concept of the collective, expanding the social ontology of photography into solidarity with those who are without political "identity" under bourgeois law. Now this is not to say Azoulay has no space for other struggles or cannot incorporate these struggles within her interpretation of the social ontology of photography, but her other major subject in *The Civil Contract of Photography*, the nonrepresentation of rape within the public realm, suggests that photography primarily interests her as space for the representation of "bare life," the life lived without "state" protection or recourse to the implementation of "rights." (As is

well known, prosecution for rape in the West is depressingly low, and in war zones nonexistent.) The concept of "bare life," after Giorgio Agamben[11] (and its efflorescence under the war on terrorism), has of course functioned primarily as a universal sign of increasing human superfluity under a late capitalism in crisis (the growing reserve army of labor and the increased exclusion of workers from waged labor, *under*-employment in the Western economies, the massive increase in pauperization globally and the proletarianization of increased layers of nonproductive workers, the vast increase in violence against women globally, particularly in war zones, and the unpreparedness of states for climate change and manmade and natural disaster). Azoulay thus identifies this superfluity of labor and bodies as the real and global "state of exception," the exceptional-unexceptional state that is now held to be normative and commonplace, requiring photography to repay "in kind."

This repoliticization of the social ontology of photography through this "state of exception" can be seen, therefore, as part of a broader political recomposition on the left, in which the loss of faith in organized labor as part of universal emancipatory project is channeled into an increase in support, on the one hand, for the implementation of "human rights" "from above" (certainly in the imperialist war zones), and, on the other, for a fractured resistance of the marginal and dispossessed "from below" (in the Western metropolitan centers), in a kind of revival of Mikhail Bakunin's politics of the margins (those outside of waged labor and the productive system).[12] Azoulay's construction of a new spectator for the social ontology of photography is clearly indebted to this new space—postsovereign citizenship being the mediating link between the dispossessed victim and human rights discourse.[13] The social ontology of photography is exemplary in these terms, therefore, for Azoulay, because of the way those without any rights and recourse of reply to sovereign power can speak through the disseminated image of their subordination and exclusion. In this respect, as she notes, many Palestinians who have suffered brutality *insist* on being photographed; or, the friends and comrades of those who been shot or injured *insist* on a photographer nearby photographing their friend, because they know at some point the photographing of their friend's injuries will possibly encourage someone at some point to speak up and defy state silence about such atrocities. The citizenry of photography, then, for Azoulay, is largely formulated through a state of exception in which the prevailing social relation of the content of photography's social ontology is that of witness to the trauma of those "without" speech. But this is not a defense of the atrocity picture as a short cut to consciousness-raising or an assumption that atrocity pictures can speak the political truth of that which they depict; Azoulay is not an old-fashioned defender of documentary as invitation to the worst, believing that by raising the ideological heat through such photographs, political consciousness will follow. At all times she is a modernist constructionist sensitive to the demands of spectatorship: images have to be given time, based on the requirements of attentive reconstruction, through the spectator's exposure to other images and to the labor of knowledge hard won. "Careful construction, not only of what is visible in them, but also of the photographic utterance in general circumstances of repression."[14] Indeed

she has pushed the discursive boundaries of "careful construction" to the point where the truth of atrocity is no longer correlate with the bodily referent in the photograph at all: "a photograph pictures atrocity when it is created under disaster circumstances *regardless of what it captures*, even when no visible trace of the atrocity is actually left in it."[15] Yet despite this, there is a sense in which the conditions of exception are the most exacting and demanding that photography can bare witness to in the current period, insofar as the undocumented—noncitizens—speak for us all living under this global "state of exception."

So perhaps, it's no surprise that she doesn't give any space to a discussion of the left-modernist and realist traditions that shaped and framed photography's social ontology in the twentieth century. Perhaps she feels that the neoliberal destruction of this politicized culture of the image over the last forty years and the rise of what is taken to be this state of exception warrant a fundamental break with these older political formations, and therefore the need for the construction of a new politics of the image. Or perhaps the destruction is simply too hard to take, and is not worth reclaiming or reconstructing today. Anyway, advertently or inadvertently there is no "looking backward" in her book, no lineage building. As a result, the book's retheorization of the social ontology of photography operates curiously adrift from any discussion of its critical precursors: early US reform photography, revolutionary Soviet reportage, European and US workers' photography in the 1930s, European and US reportage in the 1960s. It means that her theory of the citizen photographer, citizen spectator, and citizen subject of photography is divorced from any wider critical perspective on the political fortunes of documentary practice over the last eighty years, or from an account of the actual political conditions of the would-be egalitarian community of producers and spectators of photography in the current period. Furthermore, *The Civil Contract of Photography* lacks any sense that her own commitment to the "modernist" spectator as a counter to the positivization of photography's social ontology has itself a history within twentieth-century documentary practice. Thus in place of a discussion of realist-modernist history, and, as such, a social ontology of photography from below, what we get is a social ontology of the "victim."

This problem of political focus is also reflected in a different way in Susie Linfield's account. But whereas Azoulay uses the social ontology of photography to repoliticize its field of vision, Linfield defends the social ontology of photography only to dissolve the viability of its possible political audience today. Thus in a revealing contradiction in the introduction to *The Cruel Radiance*, she says on the one hand (in the spirit of Azoulay), "I believe that we need to respond to and learn from photographs rather than simply dissemble them";[16] and on the other hand, *The Cruel Radiance* is "against the progressive view of history…that the arc of modern history bends towards freedom and justice."[17] Linfield therefore seems to position herself somewhere "between" the defense of the social ontology of photography and the forces of its nihilistic critique. Thus, although she is highly critical of the epistemological attack on the social ontology of photography in the critical

postmodern theory of the 1980s and the critique of representation more generally in this period (Tagg, Abigail Solomon-Godeau, Douglas Crimp, Martha Rosler, Claude Lanzmann, Janina Struk), she is quick to divorce this defense of social ontology from any broader emancipatory project: “Photographs teach us that we will never master the past. They teach us about human limits and human failures.”[18] In this sense all that remains of the social ontology of photography is a kind of humanitarian empathy with the worst, echoing Azoulay’s photography of the unexceptional exception. But if the focus of this state of exception is Israel for Azoulay, for Linfield it is the permanent state of war in Africa as a symptom of what she argues is the unrelenting separation of global political violence from what we might call, following Walter Benjamin, the “righteous violence” of earlier working-class and national struggles. Across Africa and the Middle East there is a glorification in arbitrary violence as a condition of inflexible ideological assertion. The notion that the “permanent” violence of Africa is somehow unmoored from conflictual material interests and, therefore, is somehow more pathological than the violence of other civil wars is highly contentious. The persistence of the violence in Africa and the Middle East is a consequence of proxy and direct imperialist interests being played out in these states. And the increased and persistent violence is therefore a condition of how high the political stakes continue to be, expressly over the control of natural resources. Nevertheless Linfield uses this contentious sense of “unmoored” violence to pinpoint, in the wake of this, three significant downward pressures on the social ontology of photography in the current period: (1) the increased difficulty of photography to actually enter these wars zones; (2) the increased inability of photography to identify, if it does manage to enter these zones, with progressive forces within these zones (rather than simply with the victims of these conflicts); and (3) the lack of any viable political culture of reception that might receive and use these images, because the images either are censored or exist in clandestine form, or when they do circulate are unable to find a stable symbolic currency, because of the overwhelming desire on the part of many people first and foremost to protect the victims of such struggles against the violations of the photographer. So in a significant sense, for Linfield, the social-relational form of photography doesn’t freely apply where it should apply in these cases—bringing into view the political consequences of such atrocities as part of photography’s egalitarian and public function—for there is no progressive culture of reception for these images, such images either being censored before they are able to find a public resonance, or being dismissed or occluded as evidence of the pornography of violence and the “victimization of the victim” all over again. Recently this is reflected in a kind of allegorical withdrawal from the representation of the effects of combat in the work of a number of photographers working in the imperialist war zones, such as Simon Norfolk and Luc Delahaye (see chapter 5). This photography after-the-event, or aftermath-photography, produces a combat photography “without” combatants in a kind of recognition of the ideological limitations of “closeness.” Distance is identified with the “totalizing” vision of history painting, closeness with a kind blindness, even madness (the “closeness” that drove the African-based photographer Kevin Carter to

suicide after witnessing the near death of a starving child he photographed in Sudan).[19] Indeed, lying behind these aftermath-photographs is a rejection of the existential imperative of the unannounced photographer, and as such a desire to protect the subject in the very act of violating disclosure; arriving after the event allows a reflection on the transhuman dynamic of the historical process.

In this respect Linfield offers an instructive corrective to Azoulay's tendency to dehistoricize the social ontology of photography. The social ontology of photography is not the *essence* of photography, but a set of resources and affects, that function in a position of constant negotiation with the state, collective politics, and the market. On this basis, then, we might say that the critique of the disciplinary image is premature. The social ontology of photography has to operate in and define itself through the forces of reification and of real abstraction. And the most powerful of these forces is the collusion between the dominance of the nonsymbolic in the public sphere (the restricted production and circulation of certain genres of images and certain contents in order that commodity relations reproduce themselves as smoothly as possible) and the exclusionary powers of the state. This interrelationship has, of course, always defined the modern relationship between the state and mass culture as hegemonizing spaces of control. Today, though, after 9/11 and the "war on terror," the exclusionary powers of the state have become more explicit, certainly in the West. The rise of various restrictions on photographing in public spaces and the limitations on distribution have transformed a state of exception into a permanent condition of *reasonable security*, in which the state becomes "the arbiter of what is, and is not, a subject of photographic interest."[20] And it is this normalizing of the "exception" that can be said to hide another reality: the increasing incapacity of capitalism to reproduce itself free of the deepening crisis of capitalism's social nonreproduction, heightening the state's anxiety about the social-relational power of photography. As a result the struggle to sustain the social ontology of photography today is freighted with increasing pressure from above. Because of this, in contrast to Azoulay's more sanguine and ahistorical account, Linfield bases her argument on a notional assessment of what has actually been *lost* politically for photography.[21] In emphasizing the contemporary nihilistic separation of the social ontology from an emancipatory politics, she reminds us where social ontology and political process have coincided: namely, the 1930s, and in particular the work of Robert Capa during the civil war in Spain. Here photographer, photographed, and spectator shared, she argues, a sense of the possible transformative effects of photography's violations (specifically the representation of violence). The problem with this historical perspective, however, is that it inflates this progressive triangulation of photographic actants—photographer, photographed, and spectator—in this period into a mythologization of the documentary tradition as such. Documentary practice in these forms suffered as much from censorship and exclusion, and the vicissitudes of political repression, as photography does today. Moreover, as I stress in chapter 5, by the late 1920s photography was also formally and culturally subordinate to the new film culture, producing documentary practice's own filmic, modernist revolution.

But what is different today—and Linfield is right in this respect—is that the nature of certain struggles (such as the Spanish civil war) brought photographers and spectators into various conflicts as *partisans*. Even those Western photographers, who photographed on the front line in the Vietnam war, and were critical of American intervention, rarely produced their work for and in the name of the Vietnamese themselves.

Anyway, Linfield's attempt to historicize the social ontology of photography points to how this ontology is subject to pressures and structures that photography must negotiate at all times. But her post-Enlightenment reading of this history suffers from a similar abstractedness to that of Azoulay. Where Azoulay defends a poststatist humanitarianism based on active citizenship, Linfield defends a bleak humanitarianism devoid of collective ideology: for her there is no place for a new progressive citizenship inside a global state of exception, only the advocacy of human rights stretched to their very limits. "The establishment of human rights is a project—a life-and-death project—to build a kind of "species solidarity" that is deeper and stronger than culture, nation, religion, race, class, gender, or politics."[22] In other words, what photography's ostensive powers can at least do, Linfield appears to be suggesting, is provide a moment of emotive connection with our own finitude, a moment of connection *and* catharsis. This is because, above all else, photography, through its empathic powers, is able to show with utmost candor what people struggling without rights—in the realm of "bare life"—actually *look like*. Again, the construction of a concept of the political here drawn from a notion of state of exception is dangerously underdetermined politically, resituating the social ontology of photography back within the space of humanism's "weak universality," the very thing that the rise in critical photo theory in the 1980s was attacking—the most we can hope for is to bring some of the images of darkness back into the realm of the living. What Linfield gives with one hand she takes away with the other.

AGAINST PERSPECTIVALISM

What these two positions on photography reveal is how a defense of the social ontology of photography needs to bring a discussion of photography's ostensive, affective, and empathic powers, its egalitarianism and dialogic function, under a dialectical account of the political economy of photography. The defense *of* the social ontology of photography is not enough. For the defense of the social ontology of photography is not a historical given or set of attributes that can be mobilized at will, or conversely, something that is historically fixed in an image of prevailing capitalist relations. Its content and possibilities shift; the social ontology is available for emancipatory uses and is constrained simultaneously. This is why the three key premises of photography's social ontology—social relationality, egalitarianism, and empathic-affective power—need more than an affirmation or disaffirmation of photography's social-relational form. Rather they need, firstly, a history of realism and modernism; secondly, a concept of real abstraction (of the commodity-form and

state); thirdly, a theory of reification or social abstraction (of the effects of the nonsymbolic); and fourthly, a theory of capitalist crisis (or nonreproduction). Without these distinctions, photography risks falling back into the realm of the positivistic and merely humanistic, or into an endless rage against the forces of nihilism. Consequently a critique of the political economy of photography needs to mobilize and redialecticize these categories in a way that resists both the overdetermination of the disciplinary regime thinkers of the image (from Debord to Baudrillard, Foucault, and Tagg) and those who assume the social ontology of photography is simply a standing reserve that can be adopted at will and not something that is at all times under threat and susceptible to retreat and marginalization. Thus, a critique of the political economy of photography requires both a historicization of the social ontology of photography and a realist-conjunctural assessment of its possibilities today.

In a sense these two defenses of the social ontology of photography show how difficult it is to write about photography in the current period with any degree of political flexibility and long-term social engagement: for, just as it is easy to assert the disciplinary function of photography over photography's social ontology in order to say we live in the worst of times, it is just as easy to presuppose an autonomy for photography's social ontology without the disciplinary realities of the state and market. Similarly, in the wake of the state restrictions on the social-relational functions of photography, it is easy to talk about the end of photographic realism and the end of a photography of, and by, labor and the need for a "photography of exception" or the margin. Or conversely, it is easy to insist on the critical autonomy of photography as art as a defense of photography as such, against the downward pressures on the social relation of photography; in this, the studio becomes the sanctuary of progressive practice. Thus, in insisting on the critical autonomy of photography, it is also easy to prioritize the staged image against the ostensive and affective powers of the photodocument in the belief that because of these downward pressures on the social ontology of photography the photodocument is irredeemably weakened. However, none of these options and oppositions can in themselves provide an adequate understanding of the photograph today, not because they depluralize the photographic landscape, but precisely because they fail to dialecticize both the social ontology of photography and its relationship to its "others."

The social ontology of photography is certainly indivisible from the disciplinary forces of the state, producing as a consequence a self-censorship among amateur and professional photographers alike, reflected in the sharp decline in street photography. A fear of being thought of as a "snooper" meets the increasing desire of the state to control all photographic representation in the public sphere. Open street photography has become largely impossible; clandistinity, with the help of cell phone cameras is the preferred option. Similarly the dominant circuits of distribution of images seek to dissolve the critical/egalitarian effects of the social ontology of photography, subjecting it to the non-symbolic: the available spaces for images are invariably taken up by commodified networks and circuits of exchange; indeed, the commodified image continually excludes the social-relational function of photography,

with the exception, of course, of natural disasters and terrorist attacks, where the social relational content of the photograph and commodity relations meet in a beautiful symmetry. But, however delimiting these pressures are, they are to be expected; the social ontology of photography is defined, produced, and negotiated within the consensual and coercive borders of the state. And one of the downward pressures of this coercion is to permanently or semipermanently exclude photography from the factory and other workplaces and "sensitive" sites of national security. This is why the civil part of Azoulay's version of the social ontology of photography's contract is asked to do far more than the actual class actors producing the photographs—those actants represented in the photographs and those looking at the photographs—can actually do. This is not a recipe for pessimism or the enclosing of thinking and the imagination against the multiple actants of the photographic enterprise. Rather, it is a recognition that the social ontology of the photograph is, as it was at its origins, caught up in the machinery of capitalist *re*production. Thus today photographic theory needs more than goodwill—it needs a good old-fashioned dose of political realism. For today, we see something else enter this picture: the increasing pressure of *non*reproduction on reproduction.

The rise of neoliberalism over the last forty years, in an attempt to revive the profitability of the capitalist system to postwar levels (1945–73), has been largely unsuccessful. The downward trend in profitability since the height of the postwar boom remains the same. Various parts of the system have certainly increased their profitability (the US economy through the 1990s steadily expanded), but globally overall across all sectors it is down.[23] Now this does not mean that the system has not become more *productive* in certain sectors. Falling rates of profit indeed are not incompatible with increased productivity, or the expansion of the world economy as whole (in 2006–07 growth rates across the system were faster than at anytime in the previous thirty years). This is because fewer workers are now producing more in a shorter period of time. In the United States, for example, fewer workers do more for less or the same; real wages have largely stagnated since the 1970s, with the shortfall being made up by workers working—when possible—overtime, and the availability of cheap credit. But, with the long-term decline in profitability comes the increasing inability of capitalism to reproduce many of its basic state functions (those functions that, in the phantasms of the right, far from being restrictions on the liberty of people, serve necessarily to reproduce the social structures that reproduce labor power as efficiently as possible). The right's attack on the state therefore is, despite the rhetoric, not an attack on the state as such, but a covert way of saying that certain elements of state expenditure that workers have taken for granted will have to be covered in part or whole by workers themselves. Nonreproduction, consequently, at the sharp end, is felt mostly by the working class. But of course, there can be no "social state" produced by and consumed solely by workers: the middle class uses roads, public buildings, and public amenities and state offices as much as workers do, and suffer accordingly when they are eroded, fall into decay, or are withdrawn. Anyway, it is no surprise, then, in the light of this that a "state-of-exception politics"

has emerged during the last twenty years, for essentially this politics is a symptom of this long drawn out, if uneven, period of capitalist nonreproduction. As a result, it is also no surprise that the social ontology of photography is being squeezed ideologically, for the institutions and agencies (cultural and labor) that had an interest in defending its critical claims have gone or are in retreat, along with other labor and radical-cultural institutions. So this book, in a sense, is a product of this dismantling; and as such, in response to this, it represents an attempt to put some of the fractured elements of the recent period not necessarily back together again, but into some renewed critical and proximate relationship, as a way of thinking through current problems and issues. This is why photography needs to mediate its critical possibilities and limitations not just through a state-of-exception—or its cousin, the atrocity image—even if these things represent the extreme points of the social ontology of photography in the current period and should be defended as evidence of *systemic* crisis. On the contrary, photography needs to *think* again, in the sense that those commitments to the connection between the social ontology of photography and the avant-garde in the 1920s and 1930s thought the possible links between image and concept, image and form.

Thus what needs to be stressed is that the social ontology of photography is not strictly identifiable with traditional documentary practices. Documentary practice certainly falls under the social ontology of photography, but it is not in and of itself that which guarantees the political and critical claims *of* photography, for documentary in its historic forms is one of the outcomes of this social ontology. Hence the category of documentary is necessarily open to transformation through the changing political and technical and technological conditions and fortunes of photography's encounter with the real. Consequently, just as we need to separate the photodocument from documentary practice, we also need to see documentary practice as open to new forms and challenges. Hence, this book defends the social ontology of photography as the space through which, and in which, claims on photographic truth across the categories of "documentary" and "art," across the photodocument and the avant-garde, across the roles of amateur and professional, and across practices of analogue and digital photography can be pursued. The worst thing, then, is to rush to a premature assessment of "where photography stands today." For in a sense photography stands where it has always stood in the modern period, as a *subordinate threat and source of dissensus*, in which its powers of recall, conceptualization, and violation bring the appearances of the world into discursive view. This is why the rush to move on from earlier accounts of the social ontology of photography and the eagerness to move into a postideological or humanitarian position are to fall prey to perspectivalism; rather, what photography needs, more than ever, is an englobalizing vision, in which the social ontology of photography is placed foursquare within a dialectics of the image.

In this respect, the first part of the book looks at the relations between documentary practice and modernism, figurality and nonfigurality, as a reflection on the place of the photographic index and ostension in art and the figural complexities of

the document. The second part looks at the affective and empathic as necessary corollaries to photographic violation, and the relationship between photography's social ontology and real abstraction and social abstraction. Both parts, though, focus essentially on the relationship between the photodocument and the category of art; in this sense this book is a product of the debates on the document and the social ontology of photography within contemporary art discourse, and not from within what remains of the traditions of documentary and photojournalistic practice.

Part I

THE DOCUMENT, THE FIGURAL, AND THE INDEX

1

PHOTOGRAPHY AND ITS TRUTH-EVENT

The history of photography now possesses a history itself. That is to say, it is only until recently that the history of photography has "stabilized" itself as a field of inquiry, allowing its methodological problems and inconsistencies and ruling myths to be subject to criticism and revision, and as such providing the means for the development of a theoretical literature. This is obviously due partly to the maturity of photography as a set of practices and techniques across its social domains (necessitating a critique of photography's effects, affects, and functions), but it is also the result of the massive incorporation of photography into the relations of production over the last 120 years: the embodiment of photography in the (scientific) production and (cultural) exchange of commodities. With the force of the latter, photography has become a determinate part of the twofold and dialectical dynamic of the logic of abstraction under commodity exchange: the equalization and naturalization of things (reification), but contrariwise, the production of knowledge. This is why photography retains its theoretical fascination, because, essentially, its effects, affects, and functions are split between these forces of abstraction and the exigencies of knowledge production in palpable, living, and intrusive ways. And accordingly, this is why the theoretical literature—or the reflexive history of photography, as we might now call it—has grown enormously since the 1960s. The determinate role of photography within the production and exchange of commodities, along with, concomitantly, photography's increased status as a primary commodity itself, has meant that the history *of* photography has of necessity—given photography's embeddedness in relations of production and relations of power and truth—had to be thoroughly *deaestheticized*.

But, interestingly, one of the consequences of this since the first wave of the new literature (by Roland Barthes, Susan Sontag, Victor Burgin, Rosalind Krauss, John Tagg, Vilem Flusser, Henri Van Lier) is that this process of deaestheticization has produced a literature that has tended to emphasize the photograph's place in the reification of things, at the expense of photography's relationship to the production of knowledge. Indeed because photographs are reified things—reified things in a world of other reified things—their relationship to truth and the real is unstable and suspect. Yet, the initial drive of this writing was in no sense conservative. The diminishment of the truth-claims of photography was held to be not a loss to photography as such, but, on the contrary, an indication of how close photography is under the logic of commodity exchange and the modern autonomization of cultural production, to the figural and metaphoric operations of art. A paradox, therefore, enters this literature: at the point where the photograph is deaestheticized through a recognition of photography's embeddedness in the relations of production and (state) power and of

its semiotic undecidability, it is *re*aestheticized through its perceived fundamental figural character. This is not to say that these authors did not recognize this conflict; but driven as the writing was by the desire, in the spirit of a modernist semiotics, to affirm photography as pictures, rather than as "windows on the world," the photograph's singular relationship to the claims of realism and the real was weakened.

In the 1990s, however, under the formative influence of the photographer and writer Allan Sekula (very much writing from within and against this first wave of literature), a second wave of theoretical literature emerged (Richard Shiff, Laura Mulvey, Molly Nesbit, Abigail Solomon-Godeau, Steve Edwards, Blake Stimson, Ariella Azoulay). This second wave has in a sense qualified the notion of photographs as pictures, without either dropping the framework of reification-theory or returning to a window-on-the-world model. What distinguishes photography in its specificity is that it is *more*—or *less*—than art, and it is this that defines its epistemological, cultural, and historical status. Thus photographs may be pictures, but they are pictures of a particular kind: that is, they are light *traces*, indices *of* things, and as such the result of the "spontaneous" ordering of contingent appearances. This makes their production and reception "unconscious" at one level, insofar as the producer at the point of the photograph's inception has incomplete control over the production process. Consequently, the modern photographer's notion of himself or herself as an artist—the issue, essentially, that drove the first wave of literature—is continually made unfamiliar to itself: in making pictures the photographer is not an independent creator, in any conventional sense, but a kind of "unreliable" functionary. The photographer seeks control over an objective and anonymous process, but the process continually and necessarily betrays his or her attempts at control.

THE DEBATE ON INDEXICALITY

A reinvigoration of the debate on the relations between the index, the icon, and the symbol in representation—out of renewed interest in Charles Sanders Peirce—became crucial, therefore, to this second wave of literature, in order to let some fresh air into what had become an unproductive stand off between the artists and documenters. In what ways does the relationship between indexicality, iconicity, and the symbolic in the photograph produce meaning? What kind of pictures are indexes? How do indexes produce photographs as icons/pictures? This in turn has generated something of a post-second-wave stage, in which the position you adopt on this question is largely where you place the significance of the index in the index/icon/symbol mix: is it subordinate to the process of picturing, or is it beneath it, or perhaps athwart it, in some way, as a kind of recalcitrant presence? Indeed, if anything, there has been a general swing back to first-wave thinking, with the rise of digitalization. For it is precisely digitalization's precocious emphasis on figuralization in the production of photography—the *putting together* of the image—that has revived the artistic claims of photography and delimited the "objectivist" and functional role of

the photographer. This is not to say that these writers believe the index to have disappeared from photography; instead, they assert that its role has become greatly diminished, relieving photography of many of its (tiresome) veridical burdens: if we have to talk about truth and the index in photography, let's only talk about it within the space of figuralization and picturing (Joel Synder, Geoffery Batchen, Andrew Benjamin, Michael Fried), or more precisely, a certain kind of picturing that takes on the ambitions of painting.

The debate on the index continues to shape the debate on photography, because it puts into sharp relief where photographers and artists stand on the social ontology of photography. Is indexicality an ideological hangover from the social-relational functions of photography, or does it remain, in some form, the primary determining force on photography? In this light it is worth mentioning James Elkins's anthology *Photography Theory* (2006),[1] because of the focus it gives to the index debate, and the fact that in its capaciousness it draws on the writing of numerous leading photographers and theorists, thereby giving an overview of where the debate stands for many photographers and theorists today. Derived from a series of papers and a seminar at University College Cork in 2006, Elkins's book is very much the product of the second-wave reassessment of indexicality after digitalization—indeed obsessively so. Most of *Photography Theory* is taken up with a discussion on the index at the expense of any other significant topics. Looking again at the index in this depth is surely a good and valuable thing, and this collection certainly provides a number of entry points into a discussion of its continuing significance.[2] The status of the index in photography is clearly what challenges us to think about photographs as photographs; and therefore clarifying the function of indexicality as part of post-second-wave thinking is important. Unfortunately, driven by Joel Synder's powerful desire in the roundtable discussion to have done with the index altogether —"photography is incredibly plastic, and…indexicality stops us from seeing the plasticity, and enjoying it"[3]—and the general depoliticized context of the discussion, much of the debate gets locked into a endless to-and-froing between first-wave and second-wave thinking. Contributors line up, to a man and woman, to either dismiss or defend (some aspects of) Synder's views. What is missing, as a consequence, is a sustained dialectical account of indexicality.

One exception to this rule is Martin Lefebvre's contribution to the collection. In a finely nuanced analysis of Peirce and the index, he argues that without indices "our representations would only stand for objects that are utterly vague and distinct or general and without any anchor in the world."[4] But the idea that photographic indices are the only indices worth talking about and that other forms of representation—such as paintings and "painting-like" things such as computer-generated images—are index-free or index-deficient is inadequate. Paintings and "painting-like" things such as computer-generated images are no less reliant on indexicality than photographs. But whereas photographs rely on *direct* indexical relations, paintings and computed-generated images are reliant on indirect indexical relations: "if all portraits, whether they be photographic or painted, necessitate the existence of their object as a

determining factor in the existence of the sign, then the only difference between them —from the point of view of indexicality—lies in the fact that photography requires a direct contact between the object and the sign, whereas in a painting both are indirectly connected through yet another sign (namely the painter) which is in direct contact with the painting (*efficient causality*) and either in direct or indirect contact with the object."[5] In other words, echoing Peirce, there are no such things as "pure icons" unconnected existentially, in some way, to the world they inhabit and figure. Thus Lefebvre seems to be working both sides of the debate simultaneously: photographs are not the sole productive source of indexicality; and no embodied sign (be it analogue or digital) is free of indexicality's effects.

> Any worldly thing whatsoever—whether it be a photograph, a film, a painting, or a CGI [computer-generated image]—is dyadically connected to the world (or reality) in a potentially limitless number of ways, each one of them can form the basis for an indexical function. This implies that it is absurd to pretend that a photograph is *more* indexical tha[n] a painting or a CGI, since it is impossible to quantify the number of ways in which something may serve as a sign.[6]

As with fingerprints, photographs—photodocuments—fall into the first category; and paintings and digital images fall into the second category. Whereas photographs are the result of an immediate contact between object and sign, object and sign in painting and digital images are connected via another sign (the hand of the painter or digital artist). Thus, in this category the sign is a *secondary* effect of the object that causes it. Accordingly all embodied signs have some indexical relationship to the world of objects.

In this sense digitalization does not, in fact, represent a loss of indexicality at all. Firstly, this is because the translation of the distribution of light intensities into binary code is no less the product of a causal relationship between image and appearance than that of chemical photography's contiguous and contingent capturing of light on light-sensitive film. And secondly, therefore, there is nothing inherent in digital photography's "secondary" indexicality that positions it against the traditional documentary imperative. Indeed many digital photographers reject the constructed, artifactual implications of the new digital technology on the grounds that digitalization is first and foremost reportage made compatible with a twenty-four-hour global news services, and not evidence of reportage made epistemologically unrealizable. This integral presence of the index across modes of representation, then, allows a shift away from the mournful and melancholic view that digitalization represents the demise of indexicality and as such opens the debate beyond the old binarisms.

Lefebvre's argument on secondary indexicality has two important implications, then: firstly, the digitalization of photography has made explicit the transitive technical and cultural character of photography (that is, there is no such thing as photography as a distinct medium based upon a stable technology grounded in the chemical

development of the image); and secondly, in direct opposition to the prevailing technological determinist reading of these changes, the digital and virtual dissolution of photography does not thereby mean the disappearance of "realism" and the document as key aspects of photography's truth-claims. On the contrary, far from digitalization eroding realism and photographic truth, the malleability of the digital image has prized photography away from the positivization and reification of realism and photographic truth as categories. For if there is no natural or unmediated relationship between the photographic referent and photographic truth, no one kind of photograph—chemically produced or otherwise—can be said to privilege the photograph's access to truth. Digitalization does not destroy the truth-claims of photography; rather it makes such claims an explicit condition of critical *reconstruction*, the thing, of course, that has constituted the historical critique of positivism and naturalism in photography itself, since the classic exposition of this position in Brecht's critique of the political indeterminacy of the decaptioned photograph. Thus, given the requisite discursive support required for image interpretation, it is difficult—to borrow Peirce's terms—to talk of computergenerated images being interpreted as rhemes (metaphors) and photographs as dicents (matters of fact). *Both are discursively reconstructable as dicents, as things connected to the world*. Hence, neither the chemically produced photodocument nor the digitally produced image tell the truth *of* things; rather, photographs are able, through causal analysis and the act of interpretation, to put themselves *in the way of truth*—a different matter altogether. Importantly, therefore, digitalization has no less a responsibility to reveal the conditions of its material constructedness than have documentary practitioners, who have deliberately manipulated and orchestrated scenes to create a particular "truth-effect."

Yet, if secondary indexicality seems a progressive and dialectical move on Lefebvre's part, it is nonetheless not without its problems, and these center on the qualitative distinction between the direct index and indirect index, and what this means in terms of the affects and effects of the photographic document and the political and social history of photography. For despite Lefebvre's recognition that photography's indexicality is of a different order than that of painting and "paintinglike" things—what he calls its "semiotically pertinent difference"[7]—this is not opened up in his discussion to the vast political and social history that has shaped and *driven* this distinction in the twentieth century. We would all seem to be painters or rather "painter-like" producers now—photographers and photo theorists alike. This prognosis in many ways affects the whole collection, given its unwillingness to engage with, or indifference toward, the ways in which the photographic index has been mobilized, transfigured, and invaded by the real in the twentieth century. Indeed, as Abigail Solomon-Godeau puts it in Elkins's collection—she is one of the few dissenters in the collection against the general tenor of the discussion (rather than one of those dissenters, more generally, who are bored or irritated by the prominence or direction of the debate on the index per se)—"there is no discussion of [indexicality's] profound imbrication with the social, ideological, or political."[8] The crucial point, therefore, is this: indexicality is meaningful

insofar as it is subject to an interpretative process of truth-disclosure, to the claims *of* realism, so to speak. This means that we should be asking of realism and photography a very different question than usually gets asked on either side of the indexical divide. Not: what is to be gained by defending the primacy of the photographic index? Or: what is to be gained by dropping the primacy of the index altogether? But rather: what is it about the *direct* indexicality of the photograph and the indirect indexicality of the digital image that makes it worthwhile investing in photography as a distinct process of truth-disclosure, and as such, why is it worthwhile defending the category of realism? That is, how might realism be constructed *in* and *for* photography, if we know that the photographic index produces a different existential relationship to the world than the secondary index of the computer-generated image and painting? And in addition what is it about the photographic index in both its analogue and its digital forms that allows photography to contribute to the debate on realism in ways that are specific to the function and character of the document (rather than substituting itself in general terms *for* the realist debate)?

In this sense we have a reflexive history here of the histories of photography without the ways in which indexicality has brought truth and the real into not just artistic and cultural theory, but cultural and social praxis itself. In this respect what is lacking in *Photography Theory* is a discussion on indexicality and photography as it bears on the social and cultural mediation of the photograph. What is it that artists, writers, and cultural producers have noticed about photography's indexicality that has made photography a suitable, vigorous, and exacting candidate for the forces of modernity, political and cultural democracy, revolution and truth in the twentieth century? In what ways does indexicality, therefore, ground the social ontology of photography?

Well, it seems to me that in order to answer this question effectively we need a concept of violation, but, more precisely, a concept of violation that is mediated by the violations and negations of the political process. So we might say that indexicality is certainly born with photography in the 1830s, but its actual conceptualization is emergent in the twentieth century precisely through photography's increasingly systematic dehierarchization of appearances, and by extension its world-transforming incorporation of the nonidentitary (the heterogeneous) into a political and philosophical program of social transformation—hence, the absolute centrality of the Russian revolution for this moment of demotic self-consciousness. For what the Russian revolution concretized for, and in, photography was a set of social and cultural perceptions that up until that point had been largely invisible or had existed on the intellectual fringes of photography, that is, the ease with which photography enabled workers and those previously excluded from developing their cultural skills to bring their subjectivity to bear on the production of the real (as producers, spectators, and social "actors") in order to define a new world of forms, relations, textures, and affects in which they might participate and recognize themselves. In short, under the impact and guidance of the Russian revolution, photography—and as such artistic

practice—became a dynamic presence inside the collective cultural transformation of the proletariat, that class previously named as being without culture. In this respect this requires us to ask a question, in the spirit of Alain Badiou, that rarely gets asked in photo history or art theory these days, for fear of its vulgarity: what is the Truth-Event of photography in the twentieth century?[9] Which is not to ask: what is the *essence* of photography last century? But rather to ask: what conjunction of social events, class irruptions, cultural forces, and artistic forms that, in their interconnection, reach depth and semiotic richness grounded photography in the twentieth century? It is therefore not too difficult to see why the Russian revolution is pertinent here, as it has been for avantgarde theory generally: to imagine photography without the Russian revolution, in a sense, is to imagine photography as a twilight world of *carte-de-visites*, sedate family portraits, Pictorialist effusions, studio ornamentalism, and perhaps—if pushed—a soft-focus documentarism—in short a world without the cut and diremption of social agency and collectivity *inside* the photograph. No doubt this is not a helpful exercise for those who think of the Russian avant-garde as a remaindered or a "lost" cultural moment; but nevertheless there is no long-range theory of the index without this moment, because the boundaries and universal range of photographic truth could not have emerged without being tested in the fires of these transformations, and therefore, without the intrusion of the collective into the photograph. Badiou makes clear more broadly what is at stake here. What is crucial to this epoch "now coming to a close" (which he locates in the mid-1980s) is that "every authentic political subjectivation is collective, and that every vigorous intellectuality implies the construction of a 'we.'"[10] We might say, therefore, that the Russian revolution doesn't just allow the representation of the collective to be expressed through photography, but produces the representation of the collective in and through photography's relationship to the political process. In this sense the social ontology of photography is brought into the space of politics proper for the very first time.

One second-wave theorist who has engaged with photography in these terms is Blake Stimson. In his *The Pivot of the World: Photography and Its Nation* (2006) the history of photography is returned to its place in the symbolic construction of the collective. But for Stimson, this is work of a melancholic and redemptive nature, far removed from any active extension of the avant-garde legacy today. In this he seeks to recover this space of photography's shared political subjectivity in order to mark a space or draw a line under what appears to be in photography no longer, in order to make what is no longer speak *to* the future. His focus is on that transitional space between the ideals of the early avant-garde and the "cultural front" in the United States in the 1930s and their muted and allegorical reinscription and displacement in the 1950s and 1960s during the American-driven Cold War. This makes his historical project particularly pertinent, inasmuch as the photography he discusses (Edward Steichen's MoMA exhibition *The Family of Man*, Robert Frank's *The Americans*, and the industrial archives of the Bechers) is as much in retreat from the avant-garde as it is concerned with the rebuilding of a photography of social critique and critical

belonging, a position not too different from our own period. In fact, for Stimson, the progressive "we" from below of photography in this photography from the 1950s and the early 1960s is a severely stunted and blocked enterprise, revealing how this period was the "Enlightenment's last great hurrah for the visual arts."[11] Hence, as for Susie Linfield, for Stimson there is work of mourning to be done for the lost collectivity of photography before the transformative work of photography can begin again. Thus, he recognizes that the Soviet and European photographic avant-garde and the "cultural front" work in the United States that followed it promised two interrelated things, which draws attention to the current political deracination of photography: the continuing possibility of photography's place in the public sphere as a "training ground"[12] for critical reflection; and the idea that out of "alternative forms of collective identification,"[13] photography might contribute to the production of a "new, new man," or new forms of subjectivity.[14] In this, his mourning for a lost collectivity is a mourning not simply for photography's lost "public values," but for the place photography once played in the formation of an explicitly oppositional culture. As such, Stimson's book is not an essay on the narrowing of the concept of community in contemporary culture—which would be egregious, banal, and reactionary—but rather a reflection on the decline of a discussion of the formation of the political subject *within* community, as a process of the subject's/collective's self-becoming. For what interests Stimson is not that the avant-garde and postwar photography allow us to talk of a collective (working-class) "we" and contemporary photographic practice does not, but rather that the avant-garde and 1950s modernist documentary, in their respective ways, "shared the vision of photography as a sociality, a modelling agent of social form."[15] Thus, what I take him to be defending, as a further reminder of what photography once imagined for itself in the 1920s and 1930s, is that what is purposeful about looking again at the *The Family of Man*, *The Americans*, and the Bechers' industrial archive—for all their ideological fudges and blockages—is their sensitivity to the production of subjectivity *out of* the interpellations of a progressive "we" set *against* the bourgeois self-images of nation and state. This, of course, proposes a very different cultural politics for photography than any simple "politics of community" we care to imagine.

The broader issue, therefore, is not simply about isolating the importance of photography historiographically during the Russian revolution or acknowledging the significant presence of photography within the avant-garde as a whole, but rather about recognizing those forces that *broke* photography, that *broke inside* photography in the 1920s, thereby transforming what the nonidentitary as the intimate of indexicality might *accomplish*. Two issues stand out. As Jacques Rancière rightly puts it, in this period photography did not determine the emergence of the nonidentitary and the dehierarchization of appearances itself; this motivation, to a certain extent, was already in place with the rise of French literary naturalism in the 1870s and its aestheticist dismantling of the remnants of classical order and class hierarchy in representation.[16] However—and this is something that Rancière doesn't

emphasize—photography under the mantle of the Russian revolution changed the force and direction of this aestheticist dismantling forever, insofar as the indicative and ostensive function of the index becomes the basis of collective cultural praxis. I would contest, therefore, that this breaking of photography on the back of the construction of a collective, diremptive "we" challenges photographic history to make clear what defines its broad social and cultural dynamic in the twentieth century. This is because photography, as *the making conscious* of the index, in a sense, may be inferred through the effects of naturalism in the nineteenth century, but it does not exist as a *position*, politically, prior to the Russian revolution. This is why the social ontology of photography is made on the basis of the social and political forces that pass through photography and not something that preexists these forces. In other words the social ontology of photography may be immanent to photography, even the earliest photographs, but its meaning and efficacy is qualitatively refunctioned in the wake of the Russian revolution and the avant-garde assimilation of the photodocument. In his important history *The Making of English Photography: Allegories* (2006), Steve Edwards raises an interesting point in the light of this: "the works I examine [mainly mid-to late-nineteenth-century studio portraits] lack a redeeming utopian or critical moment like that found in 'the New,' as the Parisian avant-garde put it. I hope there are some gains to offset the critical losses."[17] Indeed, there are a number of gains: we now know an extraordinary amount about the petit-bourgeois formation of photography in England in the nineteenth century and the fears the industry inculcated in photographers about the collapse of their profession into "mere" labor—and we know this largely from Edwards's book. But the point is that no number of genealogical accounts of the petit-bourgeois formation of photography in the nineteenth century across national cultures as a troubled category can bring the truth of the photographic index—its interpellation of a "we" as a "vigorous intellectuality"—into being. This is why, despite the achievements of a Stiegltiz or a Hine (or a Peirce for that matter), the photographic index does not "exist" philosophically before the Russian revolution, because it takes the diremptive power of the revolution to destroy both the aesthetic occlusion and the positivistic affirmation of the index in order to release it as a nonidentitary force into collective cultural praxis.

Few historians of photography recently have risen to the challenge of the "we" in photography in these terms (Azoulay and Stimson are exceptions); the current political settlement obviously militates against it too strongly, as if to recall the early twentieth century's "passion for the real" (Badiou) is to undo all those hard-won "artistic" gains for photography over the last fifty years. Clearly this is why Elkins's *Photography Theory* makes no concerted effort to translate the index back into this history, and why second-wave theorists committed to the "we" of photography are conspicuous in their absence from the collection.

Much of the current critique of indexicality, then, is shortsighted, given its simplistic conflation of realism with index itself, and as such, it points to a recurring issue in photographic theory and discourse to this day: In what ways is photographic truth a

consequence of the *operations* of the photographic apparatus? In what ways are claims to photographic truth the outcome of the theoretical articulation of the technical functions of the camera itself? In other words, the simple-minded equation between digitalization and the end of realism represents a failure to grasp how claims about realism and truth in photography have themselves historically been inseparable from photography's *theorization* of developments to the photographic apparatus. For instance, with the invention of the miniature-format (35 mm) portable camera in the 1920s (in particular the Leica) the photographic representation of movement and the contingent detail becomes constitutive of the expanded truth-categories of photography. This is not to say that a realism of the contingent simply follows the introduction of the Leica and other portable cameras, but rather that the change in apparatus initiated by the portable camera supplies the technical/theoretical ground for the elaboration of a realism of the contingent as a *working category* of practice. That is, the shock and rupture of the nonposed scene, the rapid divergence in scale and focus from image to image, allow the traditional vocabulary of photographic spontaneity (the indeterminate edge of the photograph) to be shaped into a new photographic epistemology: the photographic as vehicle of interruption and denaturalization.

There is no stable and self-identical concept of realism across the historical functions and forms of photography then. Realism is not a thing that the tradition of chemical photography once possessed—or claimed to possess—and that is now redundant or superseded under digitalization. Rather, claims on realism, and for realism, have been derived, and continue to be derived, from appropriating, testing, and manipulating the technical conditions of photography. Digitalization, therefore, offers further resources for this ongoing research program. This introduces one of the key arguments of any materialist photographic theory today: that claims on the critical powers of photography are in fine determinate upon photography's theoretical intervention into and transformation of the dominant functions and meanings of technological change. The history of photography is not a history of photography's unfolding debt to technological development, but more precisely a history of photography's resistive and transformative place *within* the dominant relations of technology. The new conditions of spontaneity introduced into photography by the Leica and other portable cameras were produced out of the development of the critical and political possibilities of the technology's formal effects.

However, if it is important to counter a technological determinist view of photographic history, in which technological change breezily invites us to forgo the cultural underpinnings and theoretical allegiances of the photography of the past, one should not fall into an opposite trap: assuming the essentially undetermined conditions of cultural practice, as if the "realism" or "modernism" of the past were freely available. It may be easy to point out the fallacy of technological determinist arguments, but this is not to say that the concepts of photographic realism and truth —and photography itself in its predigital modes—are not in crisis formally or on the defensive politically. Digitalization may not be coextensive with the "end of realism,"

but its impact, under the vast market-led and neoliberal dissolution of the egalitarian horizons of modernism, has certainly contributed to the demise of an older image-making culture. So, when digitalization places less existential emphasis on "being there," and when the ruling media culture, in turn, sees "being there" as an acute embarrassment to its interests, it is no surprise that the dynamic of photography's truth-content changes. We should be wary, therefore, of introducing any upbeat narrative of photography's continual critical "reinvention" of itself against the swamp of cultural reaction. This is the undialectical obverse of technological determinism, in which the progressive connection between changes in the technological base of photography and its critical content is always in play *at the same level*. We might call this today an autonomist, quasi-Negrian approach to cultural theory and resistance to the neoliberal agenda. Everything is immanently and eminently progressive, here and now; and Azoulay's defense of the social ontology of photography has echoes of this.

Consequently, although it is important to locate the achievements of recent photography within a counterhistory of photography formed out of the radical rehistoricization of photography in the 1970s and 1980s, we certainly shouldn't make light of the difficult conditions that face photography—or more specifically the photographic document—today. Indeed, to speak of photography's critical "reinvention" and "counter-history," as we must, we must also speak—as any adequate account of art must do today—from a position of *ruin and deflation*. Individual photographers may still call on the achievements of the past, and they may even still think of themselves as close to the "spirit" of these achievements, but photography as a *culture*, as a set of critical horizons and vigorous social and institutional arrangements, is in a state of abeyance. In this sense Stimson and Linfield are right to insist that this loss is an expressly political question.

2

THE POLITICAL FORM OF PHOTOGRAPHY TODAY

It would seem, therefore, that what I am compelled to do here is what any theorist or historian faced with the deracination or crisis of a tradition might do: represent the relationship between past and present as a narrative of decline. Yet, if my arguments accept that there has been some kind of recent determinate split between past and present for photography, this sense of an "ending" is not about the decline of *quality* in photography, or even about the erosion of photographic truth or meaning, as commonly understood. This is because there is no history of photography and no history of the photographic apparatus, so to speak, in which quality and value are handed down from one generation to another generation as if by cultural and artistic pallbearers. On the contrary, there is only a notional shared history of producers, in which the conditions of artistic and cultural production and the theoretical transformation of the apparatus are *themselves* the mediation of division and contradiction. In other words, the achievements of the modernist and realist canon in photography between the 1920s and the late 1980s are not the result of some recently lost aesthetic and critical repleteness in which decline and crisis were somehow held at bay by sturdy and transparent notions of quality, but the result of a period of work whose qualities and achievements were the very outcome *of* division and cultural crisis. What we think of as the social achievements of photography in this period are a consequence of the ways in which division and crisis were theoretically embedded *in* practice; and this, precisely, is the motor and dynamic of modernism, as I stressed in the last chapter. The broad historical point, therefore, is not that the current political defeat of photography divides the present from the past on the grounds that photography has lost its "ideological bearings"—for the interrogation of contradiction and division as a model of cultural production under the condition of art's alienation in a sense cannot end under prevailing relations of production—but that the transformative social conditions that shaped and directed realist and modernist photographic practice and theory are no longer in place, or no longer in the same place, in the same way, with the same investments and sureties. To put it bluntly, photography is no longer attached to a political culture of resistance or counterhegemony in which *artistic resources and extra-artistic forces cohabit freely*. From the 1920s to the 1980s this documentary-image culture was the outcome of a progressive triangulation of cultural and political forces: (1) the link between photographic truth and the power of photography to wrest some symbolic space from the specularity of capitalist culture; (2) the link between photography and the

democratic dispersal of counterknowledge as part of working-class struggle and other struggles from below; and (3) the link between access to photographic form and access to a common world of artistic skill.[1] Today, (1) and (2) are in retreat, as the documentary photograph loses its organizing function as site of *distinction and distance* from within the working-class movement, and from within radical culture generally, to be replaced by a range of photographic stylisms internal to artistic tradition; (3) has found new voices, in many ways as a result of the crisis of the above. Consequently the political contraction of photography is about something bigger than photography's feelings of inadequacy in face of the intrusive and implosive power of mass culture. It is rather about the defeat of the classical and oppositionist modernist and realist culture that has overwhelmingly *shaped* the identity of photography's transformation of its apparatus from the 1920s to the late 1980s: that is, in its political annexation from the recent past, photographic culture no longer has the *organizing* capacity—for practice and theory—it once possessed.

The current demise of the political function of photography, then, is part of a larger political and historical narrative of cultural crisis that is all too familiar in this period of widespread cultural revanchism, and is therefore not straightforwardly a question of photography's would-be "loss of direction." But, in the construction of any narrative of a political break with the recent past, we should also be aware of what photography, in the deepest sense, carries over from this older culture of the image, and in turn, how this affects both our reading of this political break and what this means for photographic and cultural production today. For, although I would argue that photographic culture today exists in a state of political rupture with the organizational functions of the realist and modernist culture of the recent past, we nevertheless cannot assume that the photography of the past was in no less a *subordinate cultural* position than it is today. And this is something that left histories of photography intent on valorizing the 1930s (as Linfield does) tend to forget, in their memorialization of this older culture. By this I mean that the formation of photographic realism and modernism in the twentieth century is the result of a sense of itself less as a vanguard practice—even in the Soviet Union in the 1920s—than as a minor and subsidiary art, once photography is faced with the rise of cinema. A few of the new illustrated magazines may have had a mass audience, but the photo-text books, documentary prints, and avant-garde shows were seen by relatively few. Thus the major political and critical achievements of photography in the 1920s and 1930s and beyond were accomplished *in spite of* the increasing marginalization of a photography-of-report and art-photography, within the consolidating, film-led, mass culture. Indeed, it is precisely photography's increasing awareness of its subordination to film and mass culture and, therefore, its need to transform its functions into a filmic or protofilmic language that are the intellectual and cognitive driving forces of photography's modernist retheorization of the photographic apparatus in the 1920s and 1930s. There is no realism of the contingent and no sequential photo practice in Alexander Rodchenko and El Lissitsky, Walker Evans and James Agee, without Sergei Eisenstein and Dziga Vertov. So, the notion of the decline of the political function of

photography has to be qualified by, and understood in relation to, the *general subordinate condition of the photograph itself*. This means, as a result, that the issue of a political break is a double-edged one: the organizational legacy of realism and modernism may now be atomized, but our own moment of photography's political displacement is *no less continuous with, and therefore, no less a reflection of, photography's subordinate status*.

This allows us to avoid many of the historicist pitfalls in radical photohistory and radical art history, in which photography is assumed, in the light of its democratic powers of dissemination and access, to have been at the center of the culture and at the forefront of cultural change, say, between 1917 and 1990, and, as a consequence, is judged, because of its political decline now, to be culturally impoverished. Critical reportorial and documentary photographic practice, despite the mass cultural ubiquity of photographs themselves, has *never* been at the center of the culture; even at the height of photography's political and organizing functions in the 1920s and 1930s and 1940s (particularly in the United States), it was always a minority form and in many contexts was highly policed by its own institutions; its audience was always primarily literary, specialist, and middle-class, from Lewis Hine's photo-text books to Rodchenko's montage narratives and Edwin Rosskam and Richard Wright's collection *Twelve Million Black Voices* and the work of the FSA photographers. Indeed, documentary photography's demotic role is something of a shibboleth: documentary and reportorial photography has been subject to all the same kinds of ideological occlusions and exclusions as modernist art practice itself.

Thus, once we acknowledge the subordinate cultural status of photography, we then can distinguish the real effects of the organizational decline of photography, after realism and modernism, from the idea that this decline reflects an ideological encirclement of photography as such. Or, to put it another way: the politics of photographic form—its claims for democratic access, cognitive transformation, and consciousness-raising—are built out of closure, failure, and permanent sense of delimitation. In a period of real and indefatigable organizational crisis for photography, then, this sense of photography as both critically emergent and subject to cultural and political retardation releases photography and the politics of photographic form from false expectations without weakening the fact that it is precisely the weight of photography's critical expectations (political, social) that defines its ambitions and history and possible future. The release from these false expectations becomes the basis *of* further critical work, insofar as photography's emergent critical mediation of its subordinate status prevents us trading in the organizational crisis of photographic culture for a postpolitical fetishization of the new technology or a return to the predigital as a source of cultural solace. That is, mediating the political break of photography through photography's subordinate status allows us to develop a dialectical repositioning of photography within the divisions of capitalism; and, as such, it allows us to reassert photography's resistive role *within* the dominant relations of technological production.

This means that we can resist the current temptation to see the current political

crisis of the social ontology of photography from a post-Enlightenment position, as is the case with Linfield and to certain extent Stimson. Photography's relationship to the collective was not miraculously intact in the 1930s and is now in disarray. On the contrary, it has always been in a state of ideological and material flux. Thus in order to avoid reifying one moment of photography's social ontology—a moment admittedly that brought documentary practice's critical machinery into modern view—we need to begin from the premise of photography's subordination, for it now inhabits a culture that, despite photography's ubiquity, is largely indifferent to the photograph itself (to its cognitive and political particularities). Consequently the classical commitments and ideals of photography have had to change to find new ways of being responsible to photography's singularity as a medium.

Hence, it is more productive to talk about the extended *conceptualization* of photography in the wake of the demise of classic documentary image culture. That is, the changes in photography, represented by the rise of art-photography and digital culture, are the expression of a deeper change in photographic production and in relation to its own compromised history. Photography is now self-consciously embedded in the theoretical categories of *representational thinking* as such. In other words, the assimilation of photography into the categories of art is a further indication of the cultural demise of those two opposed but intertwined worldviews that propped up so much visual production from the late nineteenth century to the 1970s: cultural positivism and Romanticism. Positivism (conventional realist painting, photographic naturalism) and Romanticism (painterly expressiveness and the hubris of authorial omnipotence) defined the boundaries of artistic value, artistic identity, and artistic achievement during this period, producing a fundamental split between representation and intellectual labor, conceptualization and expression. Photography's passage into the categories of art between the 1970s and the 1990s (on the back of course of the legacies of the historic avant-garde), then, is the result of and a contribution to the historical weakening of these reified positions. The emancipation of photography and art from the theories of positivism and Romanticism, however, is not solely the result of the efforts of photography and art itself. This is one of the myths of the postmodernist criticism of modernism. On the contrary, photography and art have been subject to the forces of a massive intellectual derogation and reorientation that have their origins in a succession of social, political, and disciplinary breaks with bourgeois culture and science. The first is the Russian revolution, where for the first time photography and film are theorized as intellectual forms capable of *reconceptualizing* the real. The release of the photographic index into the nonidentitary is the subjection of photography to theoretical abstraction. The second is the antipositivistic revolution in the philosophy of science, from Karl Popper, Thomas Kuhn, and later Imre Lakatos down to Roy Bhaskar, which has emphasized that all supposed scientific "facts" are implicated in theoretical claims on the world.[2] "*No factual proposition can ever be proved from an experiment*. Propositions can only be derived from other propositions, they cannot be derived from facts: one cannot prove statements from experiences."[3] And the third is the extensive cultural

and political-semiotic revolution in representation after May ‘68 and the rise of the women’s movement, black and lesbian/gay liberation, and the new cultural theory, in which the theory of the subject splits open the perceived “expressive unity” of artistic expression and photographic representation. Thus, in this light, a new paradigm or set of boundary conditions has gradually been installed within photographic practice and theory: *there can be no images innocent of their own truth-claims*. This extended epistemological transformation of photography, however, is not a uniform or stable process. In fact, this paradigm over the last thirty years has been underwritten by an older struggle and debate that shape and direct its contours: the long-standing philosophical and political conflict between realism and idealism (the same debate, in fact, that has driven the critique of positivism in the philosophy of science). In this sense, we need to reassert the continuity of this conflict for understanding contemporary photography in its defense of the continuing validity of the realist claims of photography. The question of photography’s postnaturalist and post-Romantic conceptualization as an activity is, in my opinion, not settled therefore, and certainly not by the rise of digitalization. What intractable and residual effects and affects of photography-as-photography make the necessary conceptualization of photography a singular and very different process from those in other forms of visual practice? What does photography retain, even in the digital realm that renders it *nonassimilable* to the processes of artistic figuralization, which is so widespread now in the turn to the studio image? In other words, what is it about photography that, despite its necessary conceptual identity, resists its incorporation into the category of art generally?

My response to this question is simple: photography’s capacity for violation—of appearances, of the event, of the archive, of identity, of space, of history, of art itself. Indeed, what remains challenging about photography, in its classical indexical role as a medium of report, is its fundamental indifference to the identification of its artistic (and conceptual) status with its aestheticization as a medium, what François Laruelle has called photography’s fundamental blindness;[4] that is, there is always a cognitive and ethical cost for photography when it submits itself wholeheartedly to this aestheticization and figuralization. *The actual and symbolic violence of the world is placed at a distance*. The continuity between documentary practice and modernism, the figural and the nonfigural, then, is never symmetrical; photography necessarily must always resist its own conceptualization as art in order to submit itself *to* the world, so as to be able to function *in* the world, as part of its conceptualization of the world. The critical cost of failing to do this is seen at its most explicit in perhaps the most ambitious aesthetic defense of the new figural conditions of photography, Michael Fried’s *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before* (2008). Fried assumes, like many aestheticizing theorists of photography before him, that photography’s conceptual self-consciousness allows photography to escape its realist “indifference” to the world. Thus, it is important to clarify what Fried means by photography mattering as art as never before, and why *Photography and Its Violations* is explicitly opposed to it.

BECALMED

Michael Fried has ploughed a straight, and increasingly deep, furrow for the last forty years. Since “Art and Objecthood” (1967) and *Absorption and Theatricality* (1980), Fried has, across a range of books and articles, been concerned with one abiding theme in his criticism and art-historical writing: the pertinence of art’s fictive resistance to the presence of its beholders in the interests of generating its own, demanding conditions of to-be-looked-at-ness. That is, for art—specifically painting—to secure its autonomy as art, it has to resist the lures of thinking itself as existing coextensively in the same real-time or actual space of the spectator. Indeed, for Fried this is the condition of modern spectatorship and modernism more broadly: the notion that painting is first and foremost to be *beheld* and not dissolved into a furtive system of interactive exchanges with the depicted figures of the painting, or what he calls, after Denis Diderot, the false or inauthentic attentiveness of theatricality. Yet, at the same time, since Manet—most importantly—the fiction that the content of a painting is something that the spectator “happens upon” in an almost incurious fashion breaks down. Manet, in a series of vivid encounters between depicted figures, who are turned directly toward the beholder, addresses the spectator as someone who is engaged fully with the painting *as* a painted artifact. In *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before* Fried reprises his long-standing position in a cogent and compressed fashion, and therefore it is worth quoting in full:

> Starting in the mid-1750s in France a new conception of painting came to the fore that required that the personages depicted in a canvas appear genuinely absorbed in whatever they were doing, thinking and feeling, which also meant that they had to appear wholly unaware of everything other than the objects of absorption, including—this was the crucial point—the beholder standing before the painting. Any failure of absorption…was considered theatrical in the pejorative sense…. By the same token, the demand that painting defeat theatricality—that it establish what I have called the supreme fiction or ontological illusion that that the beholder did not exist…—placed the art of painting under tremendous pressure for the simple reason that paintings, more intensively and as it were primordially than any other class of artefacts, are made to be beheld. What this was to mean historically is that, throughout the century that followed, one or another “solution” to the new requirements came sooner or later to reveal its inadequacy, as the underlying truth about painting —that it had the beholder in view from the first—could no longer be denied.[5]

Consequently, modernism proper (in Manet) sets painting on a new course in which the demands of premodernist absorption (namely, to convince the spectator that what is depicted “is true” because it is *there*, so to speak) are faced with the demands of a new to-be-looked-at-ness, the fact that paintings are not just things which invite curious and distracting peaks into other lives, other worlds, but

sensuously constructed artifacts that encourage sustained engagement and looking. Fried's reading of modernism, then, has focused on this tension between the requirements of absorption (the separateness of the artwork as something to behold, as other to my subjective interests) and theatricality (the demands of the artwork to attend *to* the beholder, to attract my attention) in order to produce a workable framework for what sustained looking might actually be as a demand of modern art. In this he remains at heart a Diderotian: theatricality, although representing the condition of the to-be-looked-atness of modern art, fatally weakens the quality of the intensity of looking once it appeals to the contingent conditions of spectatorship, the distracted and temporally extended experiences of beholding. This is why in the late 1960s in "Art and Objecthood" he is so critical of minimalist sculpture, because of its tendency to dispense with the internal complexity of the autonomously perceived object in the interests of an environmental and extended interactivity between beholder and artwork; and it is conversely why he was so much the defender of certain forms of high-modernist abstract painting and sculpture (Morris Louis, Anthony Caro), on the grounds of what he called their "presentness," or indifference to the "knowledge seeking," empathic, or temporally engaged spectator. Indeed, this was the great watershed of his criticism. The increasing theatrical, nonabsorptive conditions of art after high modernism put in jeopardy what he considered to be the value of absorption in sustaining modern art's resistance to the false charms and easy democracy of interactivity, with its increasing entreaties to popular taste.

It is perhaps no surprise, therefore, that with the collapse of high modernist painting and sculpture as viable practices, Fried should switch his interest in absorption and theatricality to the study and elaboration of their intertwined historical function and development, for there was little work to be done critically on modernist work "on the ground," as conceptual art and later post-conceptualism swept all before it. Hence in a series of books on key painters within the early (realist) modernist tradition (Courbet, Manet, and Menzel), Fried explores why the interlocking demands of absorption and theatricality remain the conscious and unconscious framework of modern forms of beholding through the nineteenth century into the twentieth century. In an almost repetitive-compulsive defense of his argument, he returns again and again across these books to the view that it is impossible to understand the achievements of the long tradition of modern art without acknowledging its debt to the absorptive tradition and its construction of the necessary "ethical" distance between beholder and artwork. High modernist painting and sculpture, then, for Fried, represent an exemplary reassertion of this tradition, the moment when absorption becomes explicit again. However, the outcome of this long art-historical haul—almost thirty years—is not the revitalization of abstract art, or the "optical" as Fried called the absorptive condition of high modernism, but its final burial (as viable practice, that is). Indeed, by the time of the Menzel book, after extensive work on the legacy of realism across these texts, the focus of the to-be-looked-at-ness of the absorptive painting shifts in accordance with the historical demands of realism itself. Looking at the artifactual condition of painting in the Menzel book

becomes an expressly empathic or empathetic enterprise.[6] That is, for Fried, the strength of a painter like Menzel (certainly the early Menzel) is his extraordinary ability to navigate the beholder around the picture so that the beholder might reimagine the actions and events depicted, feel himself or herself in the "company" of the events and actions represented. In this light, it is perhaps not unexpected that it is the notion of the empathic that leads Fried out of a weakened or defeated "optical" legacy of modernist absorption back to the concerns of contemporary practice and the contemporary legacy of realism: namely, photography. For, historically, it is precisely photography that has (for a hundred years) taken over the empathic experience of realist painting; moreover, it is photography, in its empathic powers, that is overwhelmingly—indeed ontologically—situated within the dialectic of absorption and theatricality.

This long aside to the discussion of *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before* has been important for one distinctive reason: it reveals how intense and self-refining the development of Fried's ideas has been over the last forty years, and, as such, it provides us with a clearer sense of how he has arrived at his discussion of photography. Fried is perhaps alone among major contemporary historians of art to plot his interests through the application of a given system or set of interests across all his critical writing. The recent book, then, is the structured outcome of a well rehearsed—if recently critically revised—set of arguments. However, the self-refinement and self-criticism do not make these arguments any less unconvincing. Indeed, Fried's application of his dialectic of absorption and theatricality to the legacy of modern art, and now photography, continues to generate enormous problems. These stem from the purely *formal* character of his dialectic, the fact that the relations between absorption and theatricality are framed solely by a psychologistic and methodologically individualist account of the beholder. Fried has an almost pathological distrust for allowing a transformative conception of the social (its divisions, exclusions, reifications, repetitions, and alienations) to shape and direct his judgment of works of art and the position of the beholder. Here are few indications of this from *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before*: "It might…seem tempting to think of Gursky as seeking to underscore the dehumanizing aspects of certain forms of work, but I think this would be off key."[7] "One might imagine, faced with such a photograph [*Ratingen Swimming Pool*, 1987]…that Gursky's interest was sociological…. However, far more important than considerations of this sort is the viewer's feeling of remaining wholly outside the proceedings the picture depicts."[8] "The 'gap' [between intention and effect in the photograph] emerges in Dijkstra's work as a basic structure of photographic address rather than the tragic (or tragicomic) fact about human existence in society that it is for Arbus."[9] "A Marxist or perhaps simply a socially alert commentator might wish to observe of [Beat Streuli's street videos] that he proffers an anodyne vision of universalist globalism" (but I wont!).[10] "*Mimic* is also characteristic of Wall's engagement in his art of the 1980s with social issues" (which he thankfully has dispensed with).[11] On one level, this reticence about

attributing “sociological” or “critical” content to pictures can be seen as evidence of the critic looking carefully at how pictures reveal their content, rather than rushing to “read in” or apply the predetermined characteristics of genre; and Fried is nothing but a careful and assiduous reader of pictures (the Menzel book is a tour de force in this respect and there is much to admire in *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before* on this score). But on another level, it represents a structural refusal to think of images and artworks as grounded in the conflictual determinates of their production, as if at the point of their reception they are finally free of these determinations, and, therefore, it represents that their discussion and evaluation on this basis don’t matter anymore. This is why the last of the quotations, although the most innocuous, is by far the most revealing. Jeff Wall’s work in the 1980s is, above all else, characterized by its “social” engagement, Fried asserts, as if the social was merely a compendium of themes or attributes that the artist or photographer *takes up or drops at will*; therefore, in Wall’s case that was “then” and no more, or might arrive again some time in the future. At no point is the social examined as the constitutive ground of *all* Wall’s work, indeed of all artworks, rather than of those with would-be explicit social content such as his example, *Mimic* (Wall’s well-known image of a man, tugging along his girlfriend on a Vancouver street, exhibiting a racist gesture behind the back of an Asian man walking a short way in front). This thematization of the social as issue-specific content, and not the cultural-political frame of a given work’s production and reception, produces a fundamentally *irenic* (becalming) as opposed to *agonistic* understanding of the social form of the photograph and the position of the beholder.[12] That is, the social as the realm of conflict, struggle, repetition, and alienation is always outside, or incidental, to Fried’s ideal absorptive beholder, leaving the dialectic of absorption and theatricality free of its nonformal determinates. In this respect, Fried’s psychologistic and methodological individualist approach fits comfortably within an Anglo-American pragmatist tradition, which emphasizes cooperation and consensual exchange between subject and subject, subject and object, rather than conflict, struggle, or diremption. Indeed, it is precisely the link between the absorptive and the irenic that defines for Fried why photography matters as art as never before; and, in a way, it connects his becalmed spectator to that of John Szarkowski’s photographic modernism from the 1960s.

Let us clarify, then, why Fried defends the photography he does, in the way he does. For Fried the new art-photography of the last twenty years (in particular Andreas Gursky, Rineke Dijkstra, Thomas Struth, Wall, Luc Delahaye, Candida Hofer, and Thomas Demand) offers an unprecedented—even “epochal”[13]—transformation of photography’s “regime of the visual.” Given the importance that these photographers place on the display of photography *on the wall*, and their direct reliance on digital production and the staged image, the relationship between the photograph and the beholder standing before it becomes “crucial for photography as [it] had never before.”[14] In other words, the increased capacity of photography for constructedness through the 1980s and 1990s produced an increased capacity on photography’s part to replicate the complex absorptive demands of modern art itself. Indeed, for Fried,

photography—even modernist photography—was too exposed to the functional vicissitudes of theatricality. Accordingly, in overcoming its own theatrical determinates, photography is, for the first time, available to enter not just the category of art (which of course it had inhabited for a long time), but also the singular experience of modern art since Diderot, definable as absorptive distance. So, the reason that photography *matters as art as never before* is that at a fundamental level it has been able to defeat theater or theater's functional constraints on the photographic enterprise, leaving it free to pursue and determine its own "inner purposes."[15] Crucial to this, therefore, for Fried is the eradication or weakening of the presence of the photograph's indexicality. As he says with some relish, the loss of a classical indexicality in these digital and staged photographs severs many of them from "any originary perceptual experience."[16] For Fried, this is on the whole a good thing, because it means that photography is able to avoid the platitudes of art's "secondary" status as a medium of report. But, what are the photographs that Fried favors as a result of this shift? What are the characteristics and attributes that he values in the work of this new would-be "epoch"? Well, in keeping with general becalmed ethos of his absorptive beholder, it seems to be work of a kind of distilled quietude, of empty spaces, of lost horizons, of temperateness, balance, and self-possession. Thus the "ethical" promise of absorption (its call to a "distanced attentiveness") tends to work in one direction only: a state of equanimity. This means that a large amount of what photography does or has done, or is best at doing, can't get through his arguments. For instance, how does one possess or readily want to possess—in the absorptive interests of "presentness"—images of conflict or violence? What is it that is valuable about photography when it brutally solicits our gaze, when it is, in short, aggressively theatrical or intrusive? This means that there is something immanent to photography that profoundly tests the "ethics" of absorption: politics, but, more precisely, the responsibility of the beholder to meet this test of politics through the work of interpretative engagement. If what matters, above all else, is the place of the ideal beholder outside of the picture this interpretative engagement never stands a chance.

In essence, then, following Barthes, Fried completely dismantles the dialectics of photography's social ontology in order to reinstate a privileged aesthetic spectator, who demands or expects an exceptional encounter with "intelligent" form as a condition for the exercise of his or her sensitivity and knowledge as a spectator, quite separate from the historical and social causality of the photography itself. The cost of this is twofold: it pursues the meaning of the photograph outside of the struggles that produced it and are inscribed in its production, and it makes photographic realism a condition of the spectator and not of the represented, of the referent. It is no surprise, therefore, that Fried uses the aesthetic identity of this spectator—as has been the case historically in photographic modernism since the 1930s—to transpose the ethics of spectatorship into a resistance to what are considered to be the essential *monological* demands of the referent. The truth-content of the referent is always secondary to the primacy and authenticity of the spectator's specific

encounter with the photographer's formal exploration or resolution of a given scene. As a result this leaves discussion of the social relations of the represented in ideological limbo in order to protect such figures and the spectator's response to their *photographic* representation from ideological overdetermination. This is where the figural account of the photograph blocks the social-reconstructive demands of empathetic looking, rendering the studio photographic servile overall to the "ethics of nonrepresentation" (as a means, as its defenders argue, of protecting the integrity of the represented). It is also no surprise, therefore, that Fried favors those studio photographs that expunge direct social conflict altogether, or in the case of Jeff Wall's work he discards the works that represent struggle and conflict in favor of those works that invoke the demands of contemplation. So, following Barthes's notion of and Jacques Rancière's recent rearticulation of the notion of the pensive spectator, Fried not only expels the social ontology of photography from the figural, artistic c uses of photography, but actually suppresses one of the founding critical precepts of the new turn to the figural in the late 1970s: the attempt on the part of the photographer, in the spirit of Brecht's critique of photographic naturalism, to assert some *political control* over the meaning of the photograph. We see this in the studio work of Cindy Sherman, Jo Spence, and early Wall and in the postproduction fabrications of Andreas Gursky. The turn to the figural, above all else, was a way of bringing the politics of representation into the studio; Wall's reflections in the early 1980s on the legacy of social modernism or left modernism, French history painting, and the lost realm of the "painting of everyday life" in modernism was a sophisticated indication of this. That many photographers who returned to the studio in this fashion were unable to sustain the complexities of this critical legacy does not alter the fact that the "figural turn" was produced out of a political response to what was perceived as the limits or critical foreclosure of the documentary tradition, and not from out of the modernist release of the spectator from the strictures of a failed partisanship (Rancière). So, if this move has become reified in Fried's writing, this does not mean that this position, in turn, is in itself compromised, or that thinking through figuration in photography is explicitly conservative. This is why we need to dialecticize the social ontology of photography beyond the antimonies of documentary practice and studio practice, while also recognizing that the photographic index remains at the core of photography's social ontology. Or rather, there is no figurality without the recognition that the social ontology of photography is the basis through which all photographs negotiate and mediate their function and meaning. In this sense the issue of violation works on a number of levels.

Firstly, violation represents the constitutive function of art's social contract: its capacity to interrupt, disinvest, denaturalize. Secondly, violation refers to those aesthetic veilings of this capacity that continually threaten this primary violation in the interests of weak universality: respect for the "other" (which translated all too easily into a respect for power). And thirdly, the productive violations of the studio, of the staged or nonnaturalistic photograph, that subject the positivistic and nihilistic uses of photographic violation to political scrutiny. So violation, here, may be a constitutive

force of photographic truth, but it is itself always subject to the responsibilities of discursive framing. The ethics of representation needs a concept of violation in order to defend the powerless against the powerful, but not in order to submit such bodies and faces to ignominy and shame. Violation is always poised between the exposure of the body to abjection and to its defense against such necessary intrusion.

There is an ethics of representation that protects the victim and that protects identity, and an ethics of representation that holds them in view in order to expose them to the "unbearable" look of empathy. To look *at* violence, in a sense, is to bring it under imaginative reconstruction. Admittedly exposure to the effects of violence is not the only pathway to critical disclosure in photography; the atrocity picture is not the virtuous center of photography's resistance to the world and to the "aestheticizations" of the moment. Such openness to the representation of violence produces its own crippling political closures: a terrible un-lookable-at-ness and a disabling moral righteousness that can easily leave us bereft. For looking at the victims of violence in an act of sustained imaginative reconstruction is not a thing that is easily done. Yet, there is also a sense in which the violations that actual and symbolic violence produces in the spectator produce an ethical continuity with experience. In this sense in the realm of bodily exposure, photography's ethical impulse is precisely its unwillingness to protect its objects of scrutiny at the expense of truth. That is, as soon as photography begins to defer to the sensitivities of its subjects (and to the sensitivities of its audience), it makes it impossible to imagine that human subjects are historically other to themselves (objects or victims, the material actuality of history), and, therefore, that photography might play a part in revealing and confronting these states and this historical process (what I call in the final chapter the necessity of the inhuman for photography in its conceptualization of the world). In this sense the continuing realism of the photograph lies in its capacity for interruption and discontinuity, thereby generating a gap between the expectations and distractions of our daily capitalist sensorium (of being too close to its reified appearances) and truth (the need to step away).

In the next two chapters, I want to look a little closer at what a becalmed or undialectical theory and history of photography do to this immanent negativity of the photograph and to photographic form. Firstly, by analyzing the relations between modernism and realism in the origins of documentary, in a discussion James Agee and Walker Evans's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, and secondly, through a discussion of Jeff Wall's elaborate photographic figuration, in relation to its critical "others": the recent rise of the nonfigural snapshot in art and in the newly expanded realm of amateur or nonprofessional photographic practices.

3

“FRAGMENT, EXPERIMENT, DISSONANT PROLOGUE”: MODERNISM, REALISM, AND THE PHOTODOCUMENT

MODERNIST REALISM

There is a common tendency to think of realism and the photodocument in the 1920s and 1930s as existing largely separate from the textual and rhetorical demands of modernism. The rise of documentary and the new realism is usually assumed to subordinate photographic form to the would-be privileged truth-telling powers of photography as such. Yet, as documentary emerges as a category from out of the Soviet and German avant-garde in Britain, the United States, and elsewhere, this distinction across many photographic practices is actually less discernible than we might first imagine. In fact, there is a persuasive argument to be made that much of the most convincing documentary practice of 1920s and 1930s produced outside of the Soviet Union arises from *within* the category of modernism. But one of the main reasons we are unable to see this “realism-into-modernism” and “modernism-into-realism” more clearly is that the conditions of reception for this work have become separated from the historical record. There are two related aspects to this obfuscation: firstly, the rapid drive of the means of cultural distribution in the capitalist West in the 1930s to transform the sequential, “scripted,” internally “narrated” content of photography into highlighted, unique moments of public consumption; and secondly—and coterminously—the general tendency within modernist theory after World War II to privilege discrete works from a given sequence of images or research program as evidence of the singularity of the photographer’s vision, which is part of the general attack on the collective program of documentary practice. Indeed post-1950s photographic modernism is mostly constructed from a highly contentious premise: where 1920s and 1930s modernism embraces the systematic language of avant-garde realism, it does so only as a stylistic spur to great “picture making” (rather than as anything so tendentious as the critical refutation of the myth of the “photographer’s eye”).[1] A self-aestheticizing pincer movement is duly created. What appears (on the basis of prior selection for “quality”) to be the singularity of the photograph (as against its discursive and systematic production) is, in the end, assumed to be a confirmation of photography’s transcendent relationship to its original conditions of production. In short, postwar photographic modernism reduces the early avant-garde’s alliance between realism and modernism to a kind of superfluous residue, evidence of an unworkable partisanship.

Yet, irrespective of the postwar career trajectory of individual photographers from the 1920s and 1930s, reflection on their production points to a very different picture. Many photographers compelled by both the protofilmic modernism of the avant-garde and the realist dictates of "truth-telling" in sequence follow the discursive program of the avantgarde, over and above any commitment to the merits of the singular image. Indeed, far from channeling the photograph into the confines of a singular, aestheticizing authorship, many photographers embraced the pivotal form of the early avant-garde—the book and its collaborative agency—as the ideal horizon of a new realist practice. Bill Brandt (*The English at Home*, 1936), Aaron Siskind (*Harlem Document*, 1940), Walker Evans and James Agee (*Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, 1941), and Rosskam and Wright (*Twelve Million Black Voices*, 1941) all adopt the open conditions of literary form as a way of testing the truth-conditions of the photograph and including the "voices of the many." In this respect they all share a cultural ambition and cognitive space—to various degrees—with Ernst Friedrich's *Krieg dem Kriege* (1924), Vladimir Mayakosvky and Alexender Rodchenko's *Pro eto* (1923), André Breton and Jacques-André Boiffard's *Nadja* (1928), and John Heartfield and Kurt Tucholsky's *Deutschland*, *Deutschland über Alles* (1929). The more general point, therefore, is that realism (understood as a form of ideological "unveiling" and a metaphoric bid for "totalization") and modernism (understood here as the ironization of photography's claims to a transparency of meaning and truth and photography's necessary multiplicities of form) meet and interrogate each other. Indeed, after the Russian revolution this mutual interrogation represents a massive culture shift in European and American culture, in which the entry of large numbers of workers into cultural production and artistic c activity shifts the class composition and allegiances of modernism. As Henri Lefebvre said in the 1960s, this was the first time the bourgeoisie "lost" control of culture, insofar as a massive surge of energy from below proletarianized mass culture and modernism until the outbreak of World War II.[2]

This shift is easily misunderstood and exaggerated; in Europe and the United States these changes did not equate with a socialist break with the dominant culture; the main centers of bourgeois culture were not under new leadership. But as Michael Denning has also argued in his important work on the cultural front in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s (a period of extraordinary countercultural and counterhegemonic inroads into the dominant commercial culture in the United States), the cultural activity in this period after the Russian revolution represented a massive shift in power from below. Rightly, Denning argues that the bigger issue, then, is not the rise and fall of "engaged art" as a consequence of the (overrehearsed) Manichean clash in this period between Stalinism (populism and realism) and Trotskyism/left liberalism (modernism), but the new and expanded lines of connection and exchange between workers' politics and a collective culture and the new modernism, which allowed working-class artists to participate in and reframe the emerging modernism and modernists to address themselves to the lives of workers and to the legacy of realism. In this sense he recognizes that the progressive shift—

as far as the United States was concerned—was less specifically the advance of avant-garde ideas within the common culture than the mass mobilization of energies from below as a transformative presence within this emergent modernism. The effect was to "open up a politics of several levels of cultural work—movement cultures, experimental cultures, state-sponsored cultures, and the culture industries—that went beyond any of the left avant-gardes, including surrealism."[3] Indeed, in the opening up of these links between workers and modernist modes, US culture in this period stands along Weimar Germany in the 1920s as one of the most progressive periods of cultural activity under capitalist, mass-cultural conditions. This is reflected in the extraordinary development in modes of documentary practice developed during this period (Living Newspaper, Newsreels, Workers Film and Photo League, proletarian fiction, photo-text books) and in addition the widespread incorporation of the document (as "readymade") into modernist fiction and poetry (for example, in the work of John Dos Passos, Louis Zukofsky, Lorine Niedecker, and George Oppen). In this light, Denning argues, it is a fundamental misunderstanding to assume that the art of the 1930s under the "cultural front" is dominated by an unthinking representationalism. On the contrary, the development of documentary modes was, in fact, a *modernist* response to the crisis of an older and creaking literary social realism. The customary and sentimental attachments to the vicissitudes of working lives in this writing seemed feeble against the grotesquery, violence, and speed of contemporary mass-cultural capitalism. "The cultural front was not characterized by an opposition to modernism; and the crucial aesthetic forms and ideologies of the cultural front were not simple representationalism."[4] "The documentary impulse was a peculiarly modernist solution to the crisis of representation and narrative."[5] Indeed, the "proletarian" movement in US theatre and the novel was—in homage to early Soviet experiments—an expressly avant-garde moment of assimilation of this grotesquery. And this is why the effects of this counterhegemonic cultural moment are so uneven: a huge amount of radical and dissenting work is produced, and a huge amount of energy released through grass-roots cultural activities, but beyond the impact of a small number of films (*Citizen Kane*, *The Grapes of Wrath*), little of the activity finds a general audience, even in the area of photography, precisely because the modes of engagement with the social crisis were so formally unstable and unusual, and therefore were unable to compete on the same terrain and to the same effect as popular magazines, variety entertainments, and Hollywood films. Many of the photobooks sold in the low hundreds, and various attempts to produce a popular workers' illustrated magazine along the lines of *Arbeiter Illustriete Zeitung*, such as *Photo-History*, *Direction*, and *Friday*, were short-lived, once the ideological high point of the Spanish civil war was over. The very real shift in class relations of cultural production and reception, then, needs to be squared—particularly in the area of photography—with the limits of the hegemonic reach of the new social modernism, for works need institutional legitimation to find their way in the world, and this was in short supply for the cultural front.

Many of these ambitions and contradictions are perfectly embodied in James

Agee and Walker Evan's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941). The work is an excellent example of plebeian social modernism: on the one hand, it reveals a passionate commitment to the representation of working-class lives as part of the general delegitimatizing thrust of the cultural front, but, on the other hand, it is also an extensive reflection on the problems and limits of representation itself. If many works in the period seek a point of mediation between the "social" and experimental form, Agee and Evan's work is perhaps the most fastidious of these; indeed, the meeting of documentary mode and modernism in Agee's text and Evans's photographs is highly self-conscious, even squeamish in Agee's writing at times. And this is presumably why it sold so few copies when it was first published and why it was poorly received: its modernism seemed to sit incongruously with the authors' desire to expose the destitution of the rural working poor.[6] Thus the construction of documentary practice in the United States may have been part of the broader emergence of social modernism, but the political demands of the time were unable to shape and sustain a progressive alliance between documentary modes and modernist form. This lack of political orientation is cemented, of course, in the ferocious attack by the American state after the Second World War on the cultural front as part of the anticommunist, Cold War drive. The productive links between modernism and realism, documentary practices and the post-Soviet avant-garde, were sundered as the cultural front was identified with a crude partisan representationalism and fellow-traveling Stalinism. When your organization is put on the attorney general's list of subversive organizations—as the Workers Film and Photo League was—it is not surprising, then, how quickly your view of modernism might change in order to take your distance from these alliances, enabling a version of modernism to flourish that was happy to say goodbye to the politics of the avant-garde tout court (as in Greenberg's "neo-Trotskyism"). But, if this becomes a frightened common sense after the Second World War, it was because the ground had already been well seeded. *The Partisan Review* made every effort to disinvest the productive links between realism and modernism from the social crisis, particularly through the contributions of Greenberg, who was eager to associate the cultural front with all things one-dimensional and fleeting. Greenberg's reduction of the complexities of this cultural moment in "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" (1939) confuses the opacities and crudities of European Popular Front realism with a very different set of historical forces and cultural alliances operating in the United States, forces that were certainly admiring of the antifascist mobilizations of the European Popular Front, but, equally, were not imitative of its cultural forms.[7] Admittedly in 1939 it was hard to map the various trajectories of the cultural front or make nuanced distinctions between it and the European Popular Front, even for someone as sharp-eyed as Greenberg; but nevertheless, there is a lack of specificity to Greenberg's complaints about "populism" that bypasses the multifarious achievements and energies on the ground. Indeed Greenberg's Popular Front is a myth, a vacant space that, of course, many New-era American modernists were all too willing to rush into.

As a result Greenberg establishes an advanced outpost of what will become

American modernism's exit from social modernism and the basis of the freewheeling, pensive modernist spectator that will do much to suppress the modernist origins of documentary during and after the Second World War and that will give rise to John Szarkowski's formalism. We can see the beginnings of this trajectory in the response to Evans's work after Evans's publication and MoMA's exhibition of *American Photographs* in 1938. His work was seen to have left mere documentary practice behind or to have outplayed it, eluded it, as Alan Trachtenberg puts it, through the photographs' indifference to documentary coherence. "By excluding words, and more important, by denying his reader the unities of time and place, Evans rejects [this coherence] entirely. His sequences have nothing to with chronology or place…. [As such the] book also disrupts any expectation that its pictures of here and now must be 'news'; that is, topical, or scenes of current events."[8] As such, Evans's images from this point on were rarely discussed in relation to the social modernism or modernist-realist literary expression that was to find its advanced form in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (specifically, the self-scrutinizing attention it gives to the ethical and epistemological problems of representing those who are without access to the power of self-representation). Indeed, after the book's publication, this delimited response to the political complexities of the moment became commonplace. This is because the conventional documentary expectations of liberals, conservatives, and radicals at the time were so strong that Agee and Evans were invariably represented as *failed* documentators. Because their work didn't mobilize opinion in any direct sense, conservatives, liberals, and radicals saw it as unable to perform its own generic (realist) claims. And this of course suited conservative detractors of the documentary ideal, as well as liberals and radical neo-Trotskyists alike, who were all keen to inflate artistic c independence above anything that smacked of Stalinist populism and socialist realism. Admittedly Agee doesn't help his case, nor does Evans, who by the late 1930s, after his uncomfortable time in the FSA, was beginning to construct an identity for himself as a "maverick outsider."[9] In the "Preamble" to the book, Agee is pathologically uncertain about the massive historical task he has undertaken with Evans and, therefore, absolutely candid about the limits of his literary skills and truth-telling powers. "If I could do it, I'd do no writing at all here. It would be photographs; the rest would be fragments of cloth, bits of cotton, lumps of earth, records of speech, pieces of wood and iron, phials of odors, plates of food, and of excrement…. As it is, though, I'll do what little I can in writing. Only it will be very little. I'm not capable of it; and if I were, you would not go near it at all. For if you did, you would hardly bear to live."[10]

Yet for all the text's confessional powers, it accepts the ethnographic and political responsibilities of the witness: to speak with, in dialogue with, those are who are the chosen subjects of representation in order to best represent the interests of those subjects. At an important level, then, this sets in place, with great vividness, the defining epistemological gap between Western documentary practice's invocation of *realism-as-witness* and the Soviet avant-garde's invocation of *realism-as-praxis*: the former accedes (hesitantly) to the interests of the proletarian subject "from above,"

while Soviet photography is engaged in a shared process of political transformation with the collective proletarian subject "from below." In the end, as the political conditions became increasingly unpropitious for any kind of witness work "from above" (certainly in the United States in the 1950s), this division contributed to the later realist retreat of photographic modernism: namely, that there is no authentic "collaboration" with the subject and no claims for "totalization" that are not explicitly totalitarian, and that there is only the authenticity of drift, the pathos and difficulty of the photographer as silent sentinel.

Thus, the interrogation of realism by modernism in US and European documentary practice in the 1930s is conducted under quite different terms from that of the factography of the Soviet avant-garde. The prevailing question in European and US photography is: how do I tell the truth of a class I have little or no access to? In the Soviet Union it is: how do I extend the formal limits of photography in order to represent the revolutionary dynamism of the proletariat, of which I am a constitutive part? Nevertheless, what interests me is that the very asking of the former question puts in place a commitment to the rhetorics of the image that in turn puts documentary interestingly at odds with any positivist model of photographic transparency. The significant point, consequently, is that the truth-effects of the photodocument at the point of the emergence of documentary as a concept are always sliding into a modernist critique of the limits of photographic transparency. This sets aside any easy recourse to the idea of 1930s documentary as the place where the truth-telling powers of photography are secured politically (and then later eroded, so to speak). As Agee says in 1939 his original preface to *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*:

> Actually, the effort is to recognize the stature of a portion of unimagined existence, and to contrive techniques proper to its recording, communication, analysis, and defense…. Ultimately, it is intended that this record and analysis be exhaustive, with no detail, however trivial it may seem, left untouched, no relevancy avoided…. [But of] this ultimate intention the present volume is merely portent and fragment, experiment, dissonant prologue…. The photographs are not illustrative. They, and the text, are coequal, mutually independent, and fully collaborative…. The text was written with reading aloud in mind. That cannot be recommended; but it is suggested that the reader attend with his ear to what he takes off the page…. It was intended also that the text be read continuously, as music is listened to or a film watched, with brief pauses only where they are self-evident…. This is a *book*, only by necessity. More seriously, it is an effort in human actuality, in which the reader is no less centrally involved than the authors and those of whom they tell.[11]

This is a striking compendium of many of the strategies of avant-garde literary and photographic form of the period: an emphasis on "totalization" through the

accumulation of multiple detail (Rodchenko, El Lissitsky); the equivalence between image and text, or the intertextual exchange of photograph and text (Breton and Boiffard); the idea of the photographic work as a continuous (filmic) sequence (Tretyakov); and the notion of the work as a unfolding collaboration between author and reader/spectator (Moholy-Nagy). In this respect, the book's bid for (failed) totalization takes on, out of necessity, a complexly hybrid form: a highly wrought first-person phenomenology of rural tenant experience combines with sociological analysis, biblical rhetoric, ethnographic and archival summaries, political reflections, illustrations of family records, poems, and a list of further reading, all prefaced with the recorded subjects as a list of dramatis personae, to produce a text that is closer to the multiplicities of James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939) and even Jean Toomer's *Cane* (1923) than it is to the cloying documentary sentiment of Erskine Caldwell and Margaret Bourke-White's *You Have Seen Their Faces* (1937).[12]

REALISM AGAINST THE INDEX/THE INDEX AGAINST REALISM

Now, why is it so important to single out the family resemblance between some of the key moments of early documentary practice and the avantgarde literary tendencies of the 1920s and 1930s? Why do we need to evoke the likes of Walker Evans and James Agee to say the things we need to continue to say about the avant-garde, realism, and modernism and the social ontology of photography? I would argue that we need this continuity precisely because it tells us something about how easy it is to give the photographic document a passive role in photographic production once the photodocument is aligned with documentary as a formal category. This means that whatever work we might want to do now on the relevance of the photodocument and realism we must do within the *predetermining* space of modernism. Or, to put it another way, there is no such thing as a unified documentary practice that once spoke *of* the photographic truth of things or told the truth *of* things unmediated by the requirements of modernism's ironization of meaning and truth and the multiplicities of form. There is, therefore, no photographic modernism of the 1950s and 1960s that "rescues" photography from the antimodernism of documentary tradition as such (as John Szarkowski tries to do in lieu of Greenberg's "Avant-Garde and Kitsch") in order to free us of the would-be tendentiousness of documentary practice. On the contrary, at documentary's birth in the late 1920s and early 1930s, documentary was self-definitional as photography precisely through the modes of modernism (even if various documentary practitioners and theorists at times believed otherwise or disguised their debt to modernism for pragmatic reasons). This, in turn, has important historical and cultural ramifications for debates on digital practice, realism, and the photodocument today.

The arrival of digitalization and the critical displacement of the photodocument may have further weakened the role of documentary practice as a *political culture*, but it is a mistake to assume that this announces the final demise of realism, inasmuch as

there is no Realism *to* supersede. That is, under the aegis of documentary practice, realism—understood as the truth-claims of the photographic index—did not once exist in all its political glory and then, with the advent of the index's would-be displacement under digitalization, come to a sorry close. This is because (1) the indexicality of the photodocument and realism as an epistemological category are not the same thing, and (2) digitalization is itself a form of displaced, or a *secondary* form of, indexicality. As I stressed in chapter 1, whereas photographs are the result of a direct contact between object and sign, object and sign in painting and digital images are connected via another sign (the hand of the painter or digital artist), implying that all embodied signs have some indexical relationship to the world of objects.

In his introduction to *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, Agee doesn't talk about the photodocument in terms of the index. The concept of the index was not in common usage in photographic circles in the 1930s. However, he certainly brings into view a systematic interrogation of how photography both calls forth the referent, its sociality, and its truth (realism), and yet "loses" it at the same time in the fading of this truth in the execution and reception of the image (modernism). This calling forth of the referent would seem therefore to be one reason why a defense of realism in photography is still a requirement for photographic theory, because—despite Agee's worries over the ethics of his own particular intervention—it is precisely the way in which the index allows the photographer to "bear witness," on the grounds of *individual testimony* (so elaborately and passionately staged by Agee and Evans) that distinguishes photography's "primary" indexicality semiotically from painting and computer-generated images. The photograph-as-testimony invites us to say this "happened." This is not to say that digitally manipulated images have an attenuated relationship to evidential truth, but rather that they are reliant on the existing form of photography's direct indexicality for the content of their truth-claims. Moving beyond this dichotomy, therefore, we need a theory of the indexical primacy of the photograph in which a defense of testimony-in-photography doesn't stop with a reified documentary practice of "facts," which provides the "first-person" data for modernism, but flows as "fragment, experiment, dissonant prologue"[13]—to quote Agee—*into* the critical and "totalizing" claims of realism.

MODERNISM, TESTIMONY, AND THE INDEX

What I am claiming here is close to what Paul Ricoeur has argued in his defense of the primacy of testimony as the basis for historical practice. As he says in *Memory, History, Forgetting* (2004),

> It is before someone that the witness testifies to the reality of some scene of which he was part of the audience, perhaps as actor or victim, yet in the moment of testifying, he is in the position of a third-position observer with regard to all the protagonists of the action. This dialogical structure

> immediately makes clear the dimension of trust involved; the witness asks to be believed. He does not limit himself to saying "I was there," he adds "believe me."[14]

The self-assertion and self-verification of the witness, obviously, are not guarantees of the truthfulness of any testimony, but rather, as Ricoeur makes clear, the first step into a discursive space in which various witnesses and various testimonies confront and challenge one another. In this respect, the clash of testimonies opens the possibility of a public space for the *promise* of truth: "It is against this background that a critique of testimony is grafted to its practice. The witness anticipates these circumstances in a way by adding a third clause to his declaration; 'I was there,' he says, 'believe me,' to which he adds: 'If you don't believe me, ask someone else,' said almost like a challenge."[15]

Of course the skeptic might want to challenge this no matter how many witnesses enter this space (as with Holocaust deniers or those that believe that May 1968 was nothing more than a turbulent student uprising and not a nascent revolutionary moment), but the testimony, in its flow into public discourse, is *in potentia* always a moment of assent to or dissent from the universal. This in turn means that the testimony is never free, either before or after it flows into this public space, of the requirements of a theory of history. What is spoken for, and spoken to, what is recognized and reclaimed as worthy of fidelity against the loss of historical memory, is all circumscribed and mediated by historical knowledge. This is why the photodocument possesses a connection to the verbal testimony that painting and computer-generated images do not possess. In other words the direct indexical relations of the photograph, for all their formal continuity with other kinds of indexes, possess a quality of "thisness," of existential proximity or propinquity to the world, that continues to distinguish photography as a place of historical recovery, intervention, interruption, violation, and recall.

Most photographic theory, however, after Barthes's *Camera Lucida* has tended to move in the opposite direction.[16] The history of this move under the auspices of postmodernism and poststructuralism has generated much theory and has been widely reflected on, and certainly doesn't need any additional commentary here and now. Suffice it to say that Barthes's late writing on photography, despite its (undeclared) debt to the modernistrealist phenomenology of a work like *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, is invidiously antihistorical. This has much to do with Barthes's own exhaustion, even boredom, with the political and critical stakes of the index, which left the concept exposed in *Camera Lucida* to a crass subjectivity, which unbeknown to Barthes would become one of the ideological props of postmodern photo theory and now a mainstay of the current revival of photography-as-painting. Indeed, *Camera Lucida*'s distinction between the punctum and the studium has, in these terms, given photographic theory the license to shift its terrain from questions of photographic veracity to those of the endless mutability of photographic

interpretation. As Walter Benn Michaels has argued, “The real point of the *punctum* is thus that it turns the photograph from a representation—something made by someone to produce a certain effect—into an object—something that may well produce any number of effects, or none at all, depending on the beholder.”[17]

But we don’t need to forgo veracity for interpretation once we accept that the photodocument’s indexicality is continuous with but distinct from other forms of indexicality. This means that we don’t have to sacrifice the philosophical claims of realism for fear of supporting the idea of the interpretative transparency or objectivity of the photographic document, and hence the idea that conventional documentary practice is the sole political guarantor of truth. On the contrary, by defending the dialectical repossession of the index-as-testimony, the photo-document is able to sustain an open relationship to the discursive, transitive, and constructible claims of photographic realism to the figural; and this is why the complex relations between modernism and realism, the photodocument and the post-Soviet avant-garde, in Evans and Agee’s *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, are a good place to start to show why this is so.

4

TWO MODELS OF LABOR

Figurality and Nonfigurality in Recent Photography

An ambivalent relationship to authorship and creative skill has defined photography's very emergence and development as a medium since the 1840s. The fact of photography's automaThism has made it difficult to place the photographer within traditional categories of expression and aesthetic facility, splitting photography, historically, between those who believe that this is what is important about photography, and therefore what distinguishes it from painting, and those who believe that photography represents a different but comparable order of creativity. Indeed, this reordering of the creative relationship between subject and machine is at the heart of the legal valorization of photography in the middle of the nineteenth century. By defining the mechanical act of photography as the mediation of a *technique* (rather than an inert form of copying), the state brought photography into line with the intellectual rights theory of bourgeois copyright law. Under the protection of this legislation, the photographer shifts from being a craftsman without social rank (and therefore the placeholder of common property rights) to having the status of an artist. The photographer is now free to appropriate the real in his or her own name rather than pass his or her labor on as the objective outcome of an undifferentiated and anonymous process of reproduction. As such, photography becomes the expression of a *subject*.[1] The representation of the real is only recognized in law if a photographer is shown to have produced a deliberative, intentional act. In this respect a fundamental transformation takes place in the representation of the labor of the photograph: the mechanical function of photography is subsumed under the autonomous will and mark of the creative subject, discarding and suppressing the radical social value of photography, its unprecedented technological equalization of the process of image-making. One of the consequences of this culturally in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth is the painterly adulteration of the photographic plate (smudging and so forth) and the mimicry of painterly genre as a generation of artists using photography seeks to shed all vestiges of its commercial workshop character. The photograph is taken to be the result of the supervention of the photographer, the "photographer's eye."[2]

This drive to the aestheticization of photography out of the codification of the commodified subject in law has, in large part, formed the target for various attacks on aesthetic ideology in photography in the twentieth century. Lewis Hine, Sergei Tretyakov, Walter Benjamin, Ed Ruscha, Allan Sekula, and photo-text Conceptual art, for example, all represent various attempts at the deaestheticization of the agency of

the subject-creator of photography in order to reidentify the labor of the photographer with the mechanization and automatism of the photographic apparatus. In this way a very different model of labor in photography has underwritten the dominant aesthetic model in law during this period. What the aesthetes feared and expunged—the photographer as mere, or able, technician—Hine et al. openly embrace and expand. Hine thought of himself first and foremost as an educationalist; Tretyakov and Benjamin, famously, of course, saw the revolutionary Soviet photographer as a producer; the early Ruscha and Sekula, in their respective ways, invoke the artist-as-photographer as a counterarchivist. All these positions have their origins in very different social spaces and ideological perspectives, but they all share a view of the photographic process as something that is irreducible to the subjectivity of the photographer. The photographer produces the image as the outcome of a number of decisions and judgments, but he or she does not *make* the picture. The picture is produced in and by the apparatus. In fact, the notion of the machine's "labor" here is itself questionable, for the photograph is produced instantaneously. Unlike in painting or sculpture, there is no recourse to a process of judgment, revision, and manipulation in the process of production. In this lie photography's radical historical novelty and the basis of its political and critical appropriation since the beginning of the twentieth century: the fact that it is able to compress the skills needed to render the depiction of the world into an instant and infinitely reproducible form.

Consequently, for the critics of the subjectivization of photography, what distinguishes photography from the fabrications of art is its intrusive realism, its capacity to disclose the look of things in complex detail. In this regard, we might say that this mimetic function has the character of a trauma. Because the photodocument has an indexical relationship to the thing depicted—because it is produced as a trace of the material world—it is a representation of the real before it is a figural or constructed/metaphoric intervention of the artist. This generates a disjunctive kind of embodied relationship between beholder and photograph. The beholder is confronted by the object as something that is recognizably part of their own experiential world and not the fictive world of the artist. Many photographers and theorists have taken this indexical character of photography to represent the universal and unmediated truth of photography. The early history of photography is very much entranced by this belief. But what this position obviously confuses is truth with verisimilitude. In a reversal of the aesthetic position the apparatus comes to subsume the intentionality of the photographer, leaving the photograph as an object without a history and, ironically, as a mechanical image divested of the machine that produced it. Photographic theory played out various versions of this division, down to the 1970s and 1980s. Barthes's and Ernst Gombrich's notion of photography as a system without a code is a reworking of the theory of photography as a natural language in Henry Fox Talbot; and Umberto Eco's insistence on photography as internally encoded is a philosophical version of Alfred Stieglitz's notion of the essential figurality of photography. The first position tends to retain a view of photography as involving a resistance to the figurality of painting, the second sees photography as creatively

extensive with the figurality of painting. In this respect, both positions are torn halves of a whole and, as a consequence, seriously misunderstand the peculiar or estranged status of photography. Photography is neither figural nor nonfigural, neither an art nor a nonart: it is both, insofar as in appearing to be nonfigural it makes other systems of representation appear *more* figured. Photography, therefore, has been able to stand in successfully as a "proper" (truthful) system of representation, given its convincing appearance as truth. In this regard, the critique of photography as a natural, universal language is correct. But, as a "stand-in" for the real, photography is also the best or only visual representation of the real we have. The trauma of photography, then, is crucial to photography's truth claims. Photography's apparent capacity to suspend the figural is the means by which claims for the real can be made. This is very different from saying that such a process is identifiable *with* the real. On this basis, Richard Shiff has called photography a form of catachresis: that which can be two things and yet remain neither.[3]

Treating photography as neither a "proper" nor a "figural" system of truth-telling allows us, therefore, to avoid repeating the sterile debates between art and the photographic document that stalled the legacy of 1930s social modernism. In establishing photography as a form of catachrestic production figurality is revealed to be as much a part of photography as painting. Yet for all the value of catachresis as a means of avoiding binary thinking, it does not resolve how we theorize the labor immanent to the photograph. For when photography is taken to be figural, it also annuls what continues to escape the figurality of the photograph: its indexical, automatic, "proper" function. Thus, seeing photography simply as figural also annuls the radical notion of the photographer as a nonartist or technician. Thus, despite the importance of thinking photography catachrestically, the residual tensions between the "non-figural" and the "figural" are not easily removed, and they therefore retain their critical significance for understanding how photography today mediates its recent history and its new institutional locations. For instance, although Allan Sekula accepts, like Shiff, that photography is a figured/nonfigured language, he nevertheless sees the moment of photography's "proper" relationship to the world as defining what is potentially destabilizing about photography's artistic identity. By foregrounding the "nonfigural" content of the image in the form of a continuous archive, he subordinates his activity to the documentation of the world, not in the knowledge that he is telling the truth of the world univocally, but in the belief that photography's indexicality has a privileged relationship to the process of truth-telling.

This is a debate, then, about how the interrelationship between labor and machine is represented, how hand and mind come to produce the functions of photography in the light of what is held to be photography's defining characteristics. In this respect, I want to look at what I see as two radically opposed models of labor in the photograph in contemporary art, which reflect on this fundamental tension between claims to figurality and nonfigurality in photography. Firstly, I want to look at Jeff Wall's work, whose cinematographic photographs represent a paradigmatic refiguration of photography through painting; and secondly, I want to look more

generally at the exponential rise of the snapshot (predominantly domestic), which continues, in transformed ways, the radical antifigural traditions of the 1920s photodocument. In this sense, this chapter is less a comparative study of two models than a discussion about the labor of the photographer in the epoch of the global digitalization of the image and of culture.

MODEL 1: PICTORIALISM, FIGURALITY, AND AESTHETIC UNITY

Since the late 1970s, Jeff Wall has presented his staged, back-lit photographs as a dissolution of two dominant theoretical dualisms: the fundamental opposition between montage—in its broadest sense—as the advanced form of photographic practice in the twentieth century and pictorialism as its regressive other; and the opposition between photography as something "taken" and painting as something "made."[4] In this respect, his work, notionally at least, follows the idea of photography as a form of catachresis. But in contrast to Sekula, Wall has chosen to advance the claims of figurality as against those of the nonfigural. Both his "naturalistic" landscapes and his staged images invoke or refer directly to the pictorial forms of early modernist or premodernist painting. Extant paintings provide a model of pictorial composition. But this self-conscious figurality is not a reinvention of an aestheticist model of photography. On the contrary, his pictorialism is subject to a process of internal disunity through either formal disfiguration (the use of the grotesque or enigmatic detail) or the fragmentary dispersal of figures and objects and the "bending" or stretching of space. For example, in *A Ventriloquist at a Birthday Party in October, 1947* (1990), the perspective of the room is imbalanced, slightly skewed, just as our view of the scene is pushed to the right side of the scene above the seated children watching the ventriloquist.[5] Moreover, the ungainly, disheveled appearance of the ventriloquist's dummy and the fearful expressions on the face of the children conflict with the implied humor and happiness of the scene. This "not quite making sense" within the pictorial space of the tradition of the "painting of modern life" identifies this work (and others by Wall) as being indebted to Edouard Manet's paintings of the 1860s.[6] As in Manet, in Wall's photographs pictorial space is represented as internally inchoate or unsurveyable from a single viewpoint. But if Wall is not reinventing aestheticist photography, neither is he reviving Manet's modernism. Wall chooses to produce figurally complex photographs and not figurally complex paintings. This is because, for Wall, it is only photography that is now able to sustain the program of what was once called realism. Any reinscription of disunity in Manet, therefore, can only be mediated by the very crisis of the "painting of everyday life" itself. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, Wall's choice of photographic pictorialism is also mediated by what he sees as the crisis of the postconceptual critique of pictorialism.[7] What he perceives as the limitations of the postconceptual turn against pictorial representation are the basis for his mediated turn to pictorialism and Manet. Thus, although Wall's tropes of disunity are built from this critique of

pictorialism, this critique has at the same time, he claims, led to the dissolution of the realist and public functions of early modernism. Postconceptual practice may have opened up the cultural frame of art, but it has also entrenched conservative antirepresentational prejudices—hence the reclamation of Manet's painting as a significant critical (allegorical) force. Manet's modernism is the point where modernism in realism is won and lost as modernism passes into painterly abstraction. On this basis, Wall's photography is an attempt to produce another modernist dialectic: the reintegration of a modern aesthetic of disunity and fragmentation (or montage) *within* the pictorial space of a "painting of everyday life" as a means of refiguring the closures of both positions. The prospect of aesthetic unity and the impossibility of such a unity as a modern problem of picture-making are made conspicuous *in* the making of photographs—the new modern medium par excellence of the "painting of everyday life." Wall, therefore, gives new form to an old question: in what ways is it possible to produce coherent representations of the everyday that also figure the fragmentation and alienation of capitalist social relations?

As a result, by combining painting with "theater" from within the framework of a cinematographic photography, Wall pursues a very different set of ambitions for photography than is customarily associated with postconceptual art: the photograph becomes the complex site of a painterly, staged figurality. Many photographers in the nineteenth century and twentieth century made photographs *as if* they were producing paintings, but this was largely governed by photography's insecurity in the face of painting's institutional prominence. Today, this insecurity has been dissolved, even reversed. Thus, Wall is producing a cinematographic photography not in order to upgrade the status of photography as against painting, but rather in order to defend the preeminence of photography as a form of complex figurality that possesses a *comparable* status to that of painting. In this sense, for Wall the defense of the figurality of photography is about the terms under which the status of photography is to be secured. Hence, although the critical status of photography has been validated institutionally since the 1960s, for Wall it has been validated in ways that have *underdeveloped* the labor of the photographer. Despite postconceptual photography's deflation of cultural hierarchies, invocation of the everyday, and critique of photography as a universal language, its material base has, according to Wall, been cognitively thin: that is, through identifying the critical form of photography with the nonfigural content of the snapshot (with or without text), this work was unable to open out the embodied subjectivity of the photographer.

In breaking with Conceptual art, then, Wall broke first and foremost with the inability or unwillingness of an earlier generation to break with the *limited* concept of artistic labor enshrined in the conceptual photodocument. In adopting a deskilled category of art through the use of the serial snapshot, the possibility of the photograph as the site of internal complexity was diminished or evacuated. This move, of course, had much to do with the overwhelming desire on the part of these artists to forge a new set of artistic relations and formal strategies that owed nothing to inherited high cultural pathways and the elitist baggage of painting. Nevertheless,

the genres of painting continued to form an unconscious residue within this work, a repository of unacknowledged figural traces. What Wall has pursued, in this respect, in his break with the postconceptual document, is the reassertion of the cultural legacy of painting within an expanded and multimedia modernism, turning these historical traces and cultural preconditions into a concrete aesthetic program. He has pursued this, however, not in order to reinstate the *primacy* of pictorial art, but in order to develop a model of labor in photography that could be compared, in its productive complexity, to the figurality of painting and the mise-en-scène of film. Accordingly, in order to make the kinds of pictures he wanted, Wall paradoxically had to reinscribe photography within the modern relations of production.

Although the modernity of the photodocument in Conceptual art was disruptive of the canon and aesthetic ideology, its actual mode of production was largely small scale and artisanal. In fact conceptual photography was driven by the actual disidentification of itself as photography in order to separate itself from what it held to be the conservative professionalism of fine art photography. Repositioning the genre of the "painting of everyday life," then, within a "cinematic" mode of photography was a way for Wall both to open out the subjectivity of the photographer beyond his or her role as "objective" witness and ascetic bearer of the critique of the commodity and to expand the social relations of the artists through collaboration. In this way, the mediation of painting within a cinematic framework was an attempt to resocialize the mode of production of art in a period when a domesticity of production was the principal guarantor of radicality (although Wall retains the identity of sole author of the works).

Many artists have taken this route after Wall, but Wall's work remains significant, given its self-conscious theoretical position within this transformed, technological, and material space of art. By this I mean that the emphasis on the prephotographic production of the photograph (the building of sets, finding of sites, hiring of actors, extras, and so on) and on the postproduction labor at the computer embeds Wall's work in an expanded conception of the time of the photograph's production and reception. By employing the panoramic, by installing complex internal relations between depicted figures, and by emphasizing the staged detail, Wall's large-scale cibachrome lightboxes generate on the part of the beholder an unsettling and inquisitive mode of attention. Such an experience, however, is not simply about the slowing down of perception. For this is exactly what Conceptual art set out to achieve through the serial use of the photodocument and text. Rather, the use of an integrated pictorialism encourages a form of *empathetic* attentiveness; and it is this experience of the empathetic that gets dropped not only out of postwar modernism and Conceptual and postconceptual art, but also out of French modernism after Manet—that is, the notion of the beholder as the imaginative reconstructor of the depicted human interrelations and objects of a scene. Traditional forms of pictorial art do not in themselves secure this. What they can do is integrate the processes of cognition within a determinate framework, allowing the eye to flow or circulate through the picture. Looking is driven not just by a process of discontinuous pattern-making, but

also by the logic of causal detection. Hence by placing photography within a constructed model of labor, the image is able to embed details and relations in storytelling form in ways that the photodocument is less able to do.

MODEL 2: THE SNAPSHOT, DEFLATION, AND CREATIVE DIFFUSION

Wall's model of labor has become very successful and has been much imitated (if not his disruption of the viewing field of the spectator). This is because it brings modern photographic image-making into contact with the contemporary conditions of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. That is, it brings photography into alignment with the available resources and technical skills of the advanced capitalist technological sensorium. In this respect, Wall's move against conceptual photography in the late 1970s was based, paradoxically, on what he perceived as its contribution to the stultification of photography's nonfigurality. But Wall's and others artists' attempt to return to subjective control over the photographic image, to reinvest the hand of the artist in the extensive, prephotographic labor of fabricating and directing, has brought with it its own difficulties. With the emphasis on prephotographic production, the motility and spontaneity of photography is suppressed. If this, of course, is exactly what this kind of photography wants and demands (on a nondualistic basis), this does not mean that its effects are any less problematic. For what has accompanied the extensive institutionalization of this generation of a constructed figural photography is the complacent ease with which the major institutions have celebrated this approach to photography as a form of prestidigitation that is able to take the place of painting.[8] The nonfigurality of photography is again suppressed in the name of the category "art." This is why, at the point where the new figural photography has achieved a huge amount of institutional success (Wall, Sherman, Gursky, Demand), there has recently been a strong nonfigural countermove against this model of photography. In this respect, this work reasserts a model of labor in the photograph that is openly opposed to that of the prephotographic model of production. In turning to the tradition of the snapshot, it recovers and reinscribes the nonfigural "ordinariness" of the photodocument. Indeed, this model of production wholly rejects the centripetal ambitions of the new figural photography. In discarding the notion of the photograph as a space for panoramic image-building, it reemphasizes the uncomposed and domestic qualities of the snapshot. The small-scale, the contingent, and the serial or composite display are its defining characteristics, a reprise of the informal aesthetics of the late 1960s. As such, in contrast to the notion of the photographer as director, this photography also reasserts the photographer as technician and archivist. Yet, even if this returns photography to its "proper" pole of attraction, this work does not fit so easily into the category of critical documentary or into Sekula's notion of the political archive. For what drives this work is a radical deskilling and deflation of art that put it at odds not only with the prephotographic model of labor but also with the tradition of documentary practice. This is because the return to the nonfigural content of the photograph in the form of the snapshot is delivered not only as a critique of

photography-as-painting, but as a critique of the institutional assimilation of photography into art itself.

Aesthetic ideology today is no longer confined to a defense of the artisanal practices of painting. With the technological transformation and institutional ascendancy of photography, aesthetic ideology is now embedded within the advanced technological relations of art itself. The result is that strategies of antiaestheticism that define art's autonomy are no longer based on the institutional domination of painting, but on the institutional dominance of photography. As photography is assimilated into the category of art, it is unable to adopt the usual avant-garde deaestheticizing strategies: the appropriation of the nonart or nonfigural character of documentary photography as a way of removing art from the institutional power of the aesthetizing beholder. For, with the general incorporation of photography into the category of art, documentary practice has itself now become subject to the massive photographic and filmic transformation of the conditions of artistic production and reception. The photographic document as a source of illicit or transgressive nonfigural content has been incorporated into the expanded category of art (for example, by Nan Goldin, Richard Billingham, and Boris Mikhailov).[9] The outcome is that the negation of aesthetic ideology can no longer be performed as easily in the defense of photography as it was for almost fifty years, from the early avant-garde to Conceptual art. This essentially is the basis of Wall's split with Conceptual art. Thus, a division has opened up between photography and the institutions of art, forcing the hand of a generation: is it possible to defend the nonfigural content of photography as a critique of aesthetic ideology, or should the photographer identify photography's critical function with the figural, accepting the inevitable assimilated aestheticized status of photography? Most artist-photographers (such as Wall) took the latter option because they saw the alternative—the artist-technician—as too self-limiting and instrumental.

There would seem to be little space left, therefore, in which photography can proclaim its nonfigurality as a critique of aesthetic ideology without appearing to advance the redundant argument about the immanent radicality of photography, given that photography is now thoroughly enmeshed in the post-1960s expanded field of art. Hence, the critical status of the snapshot today is wholly unprecedented. Its deflationary logic is now framed and mediated by the institutionalization of photography. This is why there is a radical reversal of the prephotographic model of labor in this new snapshot photography. In reclaiming the domestic, non-compositional, and contingent, the new snapshot reinvests photography with a nonprofessional ethos borrowed from Conceptual art and (to a lesser extent) workers' photography of the 1930s. This move takes two forms, or the two forms that interest me here: the notion of the photographer as part of a group or collective (in the spirit of Mass-Observation) and the idea of the photographer as diarist of his or her domestic circumstances or social milieu. Before we look at this work, though, we need to clarify, what is at stake critically for the revived snapshot.

SNAPSHOT AND AMATEUR

The ideological role of the snapshot in art since the 1990s has been essentially deflationary. That is, the snapshot doesn't simply reverse or block photography's institutional aspirations to the status of painting, but challenges the spectacularization and the reification of the advanced technological image *as such*. Accordingly, the casual and low-key use of the snapshot reinscribes one of the significant and unifying strategies of all twentieth-century avant-gardes: the testing of art's dominant modes of reception through various kinds of artistic deskilling or destabilization. One of the key strategies of negation particular to modernism and the avant-garde is the self-conscious adoption on the part of the artist of various formal moves or conceptual strategies that test the competence of prevailing artistic skills and procedures. By failing to meet preconceived conditions of skill, the performance of "incompetence" becomes a means of challenging or qualifying the boundaries of would-be professional practice. Conceptual art, as much as various versions of Expressionism, could be said to perform different kinds of "incompetence" in this way. On these grounds, modernism and the avant-garde share essentially an understanding that the modern *in* art is the place where notions of skill and value are continually tested and retested. This is why what largely mediates the question of deskilling is the artist's identification with the amateur, for it is the amateur who is practiced, so to speak, in those skills that fail the test of dominant cultural validation. In aspiring and failing, aspiring and failing again, the amateur becomes a symbol of authentic toil.[10] However, the avant-garde artist does not actually aspire to the status of the amateur. Rather, he or she borrows from and performs the amateur's lack of dominant cultural expertise metonymically as a critique of what is falsely excluded from the experience of art or what is reified in its name. This is why photography, and in particular the snapshot, has played such a crucial role in the dialectic of antiaestheticism and antiart from Surrealism to Conceptual art. The snapshot's intimacy with the banal, the contingent, and the "ordinary" challenges both the hierarchy of artistic skills, and which artistic subjects are held to constitute legitimate aesthetic experience.

In these terms the snapshot has been a highly efficient means not only of stripping down the inflated artisanal skills of the traditional artist, but of questioning the academic and professional aggrandizement of modern art. This is why it is no surprise that the snapshot came into its own again in the neoconceptualism of the 1990s and early 2000s. For in the late 1980s and 1990s not only did photography experience a rapid ascendancy into the older category of history painting, but the various strategies of deskilling identified with the photographic practices of an older avant-garde (desubjectivization, masquerade, repetition) became, under the auspices of postmodernism, part of a new critical academy. Postmodernism's deconstruction of the author, identity, and representation may have unblocked some of the cultural prejudices and infirmities of American modernist theory, but it also presented the contemporary artist with the disabling specter of the academicization of critique itself as the museum opened its doors to the new postmodernist practices. The outcome

was that a younger generation had to reassess the photographic content of these strategies of deskilling in the wake of the fact that photography now found itself inside the portals whose power it once criticized. The staged image and the upscaled snapshot, then, are only two aspects of the general assimilation of photography into the new museum. After Conceptual art, and critical postmodernism, photography is now coextensive with the reinvention of the modern art institution itself. This is why the current use of the snapshot (be it singularly or as part of a combinatory aesthetic) is not simply a return to the antiaesthetic informality of Conceptual art. It is a reengagement and repositioning of the snapshot's deflationary logic in a system where the history of such strategies is now institutionally familiar and canonically anointed. The deflationary content of the contemporary snapshot is something, therefore, that is *constituted, framed, and mediated* by its own critical assimilation.

On this score the casual, antiaesthetic use of the snapshot today demonstrates two related functions: on the one hand, it reinscribes an older demotic, partisan view of photography as nonart and antiart (borrowed from the 1920s and 1930s); and on the other, it attempts to deflate the theatrical-scaled, high-end ambitions of the new museum-based postconceptual art. It draws generally, therefore, on what historically has been one of the snapshot's self-proclaimed virtues: its intimacy and obdurate domesticity and spontaneity. If in the world of the spectacle all images slide toward radical interchangeability, in the domesticated world of the snapshot the image is reconnected to specific life histories and everyday contingencies—hence the singular connection between the snapshot and the time and space of autobiography and biography. Principally, the snapshot is a conversational form. In its connection to the "intersubjective" and the "familial," the "diaristic" and the "confessional," it produces a performative intimacy with the political and cultural categories of the "everyday," what Benjamin saw as the interrogatory grammar of photographic realism, and Bourdieu called the "instruments of intra-familial sociability."[11] We should be wary, therefore, of overstating the discontinuity between the upscaled snapshot and the aesthetically "evasive" contemporary snapshot, despite the latter's deflation of the former's ambitions. The contemporary snapshot actually brings into new forms of alignment those aspects of snapshot ideology in postconceptualism that the new "museum-assimilated" photography has tended to submerge or turn over to a spectacularized narcissism: the *ethics* of social/self narration.

Since the late 1970s cultural theory and the new art history have placed a significant emphasis on photographic self-representation as a means of dissolving repressive processes of socialization. Consequently, when the critique of representation in cultural studies and the new art history dovetailed with the feminist critique of representation in photographic theory in the 1980s, a generation of photographers who turned the camera on themselves did so on the basis of photography's powers of subjective disclosure. Nan Goldin is one such photographer, Jo Spence is another. This in turn owed something to the incorporation, after the 1960s, of the photographic self-representation of the artist and his or her milieu into an expanded sense of portraiture, as in Andy Warhol and Bruce Nauman. In this way,

scaling down the image, turning the camera on oneself or one's friends and colleagues, on the routines and scenes of everyday life, has constituted a familiar way for artists to retain their autonomy over their production and to reconnect with both the familiar and the nonconventionalized aspects of their immediate environment. Indeed, the power of these convergent traditions can even be seen in Gerhard Richter's work in the mid-1990s. In his huge photographic installation of found and taken snapshots, *Atlas*, Richter adapted Goldin- and Spence-type notions of a counterfamily album as a way of revealing the contingencies of his own working life in the studio and at home. The contemporary snapshot revisits these forms of self-representation and narration, but significantly—and this is what extends its deflation of the aesthetic ambitions of the new high-end photography to a deflation of critical postmodernism proper—*without* the predetermining theoretical framework of the critique of identity and representation, and *without* the idea, as in the case of Richter and Warhol, of the snapshot acting as a kind democratizing entry into the high-cultural domain of the artist. Rather, the art-snapshot today tends to disperse itself *anonymously* into a postconceptual world of deskilled skills in order to claim a broader democratizing and "ordinary" identity between the art-snapshot and the nonart snapshot, as in the work of Nobuyoshi Araki, Fiona Tan, and other artists who have sought to dissolve the consumption of the domestically produced snapshot into the public space of the gallery. By bringing "ordinary" modes of attention and display into the orbit of the gallery, Araki's home snapshots perform a blurring of the boundary between professional artist and nonprofessional artist. That is, the "ordinary," nonartistic modes of attention of the snapshot—those that are invariably "unthinking" and customary and destined for the family album—are seen as a legitimate site of artistic reflection. By subjecting the intimate character of the domestic snapshot to serial repetition, the spontaneous qualities of amateur photography are drawn into a cinematic frame of exposition and storytelling. The adoption of such strategies is directly the result of the fact that the boundaries between professional artist, occasional artist, and nonartist have been increasingly eroded since the 1990s under the conjunction of postconceptual aesthetics and popular access to new forms of visual technology, creating an elision between "advanced aesthetics" and the aesthetics of the photographic amateur, and concomitantly a blurring between the "good photograph" (the result of extensive labor and editing in the darkroom or on the computer) and the would-be "bad photograph" (the instantaneous photograph taken as a private love token or memento mori). And this is why the deflationary content of the snapshot is *functionally* different in relation to the nonart and antiart content of photography in so much contemporary art using photography.

Whereas in the 1980s the use of the snapshot sought to displace the high-cultural assimilation of photography into art on the basis of pursuing photography in nonart contexts (as in Spence), the high-cultural deflation of art today is shaped by the *mass democratizing function of the new visual technologies themselves*: the producer of the snapshot in the gallery becomes coextensive with the producer of the snapshot

outside of the gallery, and not simply the conduit through which the hierarchies of professional art practice are to be challenged or subverted. There is not just a mimetic identification between professional and nonprofessional photography, but a mimetic *extension* of the nonprofessional photograph. In this way the informality of the contemporary snapshot is evidence of a general ideological uncoupling of photography's democratic content from the critical photographic programs within the professional domains of art; or rather, what has occurred is the transference of many of the critical impulses of these programs in the 1980s from the confines of art theory into the popular domain of photographic production itself. Indeed, if the place of the snapshot in the contemporary art-world is characterized, in its reckoning with critical postmodernism, by its overwhelming withdrawal from the interventionist dictates and aims of content of the documentary tradition, this legacy of interventionism now finds a systematic and critical voice in the widespread popular embrace of a counterarchival notion of snapshot photography outside of the artworld in the realm of the "amateur" proper, in the emergence of the lomography phenomenon and indymedia.

Lomography and indymedia represent two of the current and significant *mass forms* of the deflationary logic of the art-theoretical snapshot. Both essentially are file-sharing networks, although what distinguishes Lomography is its analogue status, providing an interesting retardation of the digitalization of the snapshot. Lomography is the generic and critical name given to photographs taken on the Russian instamatic camera the Lomo Kompakt Automatic. A well-thought-of but relatively obscure camera trading fitfully on the achievements of the old Soviet camera industry, the Lomo Kompakt was rediscovered by a group of young Vienna University students in the early 1990s. What distinguishes the camera is the high quality of the lens—for such an inexpensive camera—which enhances contrast, color saturation, and vignetting. Fired up by the commitment to the camera, the students persuaded the company to allow them to be the sole distributors of the Lomo in Europe and North America. On the strength of this, the St. Petersburg–based company has expanded and is an unusual tale of postcommunist market success. But most significantly, since the mid-1990s, particularly with the development of the Internet, the camera has become the basis for an extraordinary proliferation of Lomo photo clubs and Lomo events on a global basis under the collective title of the Lomographic Society International (LSI). The LSI—the echoes of the Situationist International here are not fortuitous—formulates various guidelines and procedures, which each of the various Lomo organizations across the world hosts and develops. One of these is the A-Z City challenge, which involves would-be "lomographers" turning up at a prearranged place in a major city and being handed a roll of film, a map, and a list of twenty-six suggestions or challenges that they must follow, as the basis for exploring and photographing the city. Another is the idea of designating a particular idea or theme that the lomographers must pursue, for instance, being asked to photograph all things red in a given city, as was the case in Singapore in September 2001, or being told to photograph blindfolded. The inventiveness and ambition of these "shooting scripts"

depend very much on the local organizers and circumstances. However, what unites all these events is their competitive and festive character. After the shoots, usually lasting two days but sometimes longer, all the lomographer's work is exhibited and then judged, with the best being identified as the work of "lomolympic champions." The exhibition and competition then, invariably, become a party and celebration of the lomographic spirit.

These events, publicized and archived on the Internet, provide an extraordinary reminder of the ethos of the early Workers' Photography movement in the Soviet Union, the Weimar Republic, and Britain in the 1920s. Photography becomes, on the one hand, the basis for a mass social archiving and, on the other, a reflection on the relationship between photographic truth and who is standing behind the camera. But, if lomography embraces a popular politics of self-representation and the counterarchive, it is a popular politics without a determinate political context, or without direct reference to documentary traditions of dissent and resistance. The critical languages in evidence are either resolutely diffident or historically vague, as in the Ten Golden Rules of Lomography: "(1) take your LOMO with you wherever you go; (2) use it all the time, at any time—day and night; (3) lomography does not interfere with your life, it's part of it; (4) get as close as possible to the objects of your lomographic desire; (5) don't think; (6) be fast; (7) you don't have to know what's going to be captured on your film beforehand; (8) you don't have to know what's on the film afterward either; (9) shoot from the hip; (10) don't worry about rule 10." Or the languages can be neo-Dadaist, as in the First International Lomoist Manifest (2002): "The lomoist cultural conspiracy encourages plagiarism because plagiarism saves time and effort, improves results and shows initiative on the part of the individual plagiarist"; "We demand an end to culture, ethics and inwardness"; "We demand the abolition of capitalism at 3pm on next Sunday."[12]

Clearly the Lomographic International is more than the sum of these parts. Those who participate in the organization obviously bring to it different commitments and interests, some of which will be critical of these prescriptions and guidelines. Yet the collected aperçus, manifestoes, and guidelines produce a certain philosophical and cultural tone, which is easily definable. Lomography conjoins the loucheness of Zen conceptualism (Yoko Ono) and the neo-Situationism of the Plagiarist art movement with the positivism of Mass-Observation ("lomography is everywhere"). In this way lomography's refusal to name what lomography might pick out as critical and its encouragement to develop disciplinary guidelines within the framework of the representation of the "city life" invoke the unitary urbanism of the Situationists, but without the group's incendiary notions of inversion, disruption, and disturbance. On this basis, lomography is, rather, an *immersive urbanism*. Its commitment to the snapshot as a mass form is primarily about networking and the collectivization of creativity, and not a model of vanguard cultural intervention. In this sense the loose collaborative ethos of lomography could be seen as a cultural manifestation of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's "multitude": the constituent democratic power of the collective.[13] As an inclusive political category—the mass that refuses its

constitution in law—Hardt and Negri's concept of the "multitude" is shot through with all kinds of indeterminacies and evasions and gives away too much, despite the authors' claims to the contrary, to conservative postmodern readings of class and identity. Nevertheless, what their notion provides, in fruitful ways, is an insight into how photographic technology is currently being used by a new generation of producers. For lomography, photography *is* the space of the "multitude"—of multiple subjectivities, modes of attention, culturally strategies—not because photographic technology is ipso facto democratic, but because the ideals of lomography enable some notional kind of collective control over the photographic apparatus. Lomography's expression of the "multitude"—open participation without extended training—identifies possible new forms of cultural production with a democracy of intersubjective participation, opening up the social ontology of photography to collective action. Accordingly, the LSI links this democracy t0 an understanding of itself as a continually expanding cadre of snapshot-photographers who, collectively and individually, bring the forms, practices, and subjectivities of the city "into view." Significantly, then, lomography's deflationary logic is harnessed to a wider cultural dynamic: the production of "diffuse creativity" across cultural boundaries and competences.[14] The diffuse creativity of the snapshot is seen as a means of evading constrictive professional decision-making processes and criteria of conventional artistic value. By relying on the spontaneity, intimacy, and mobility of the instamatic camera, the unmanipulated snapshot is taken to be inherently democratic. In this way, the deflationary logic of the snapshot represents a model of labor in the photograph that draws emphatically on the small camera as a compact, flexible, non-hierarchical technology. This, in turn, is why these deflationary moves are not to be found in work that is of the same order as that of Wall and Gursky, work that proposes the figural ambitions of photography. Rather, this model of labor is precisely about a resistance to such ambitions, in the name of cultural access, group participation, and the transformed identity of the artist. This is the result not only of the diffusion of cheap forms of digital technology, but more importantly of the diffusion of cultural and critical competences outside of the confines and constraints of the artworld and the art market. In these terms the turn to the nonfigural content of the snapshot is itself figured through the category of art (through various conceptual strategies of creative self-limitation).

This attaches another level of meaning to the figural/nonfigural tensions I have been exploring. The turn to the nonfigurality of the snapshot as a critique of artistic hierarchy, the high-cultural artist, and photography-as-painting is itself subject here to the reflexive strategies of post-conceptual art. Lomographers may see themselves as nonprofessionals, but they also see themselves as "nonartist artists." Thus, this isn't a case of nonartists attacking art in the name of the nonfigurality of photography (as was the case in the early avant-garde) but of nonartists defining an art in their own interests through photography. This reflects a wider set of cultural transformations since the early 1990s: the massive diffusion of cultural and critical competences that owe little to the symbolic validation of the artworld and the art market. "Nonartist

artists" produce photographs in the name of an expanded category of art without seeking the approval of the institutions of art.[15] The history of twentieth-century photography, of course, is the history of these ambitions for the nonartist. Benjamin's and Tretyakov's model of the author as producer is based on exactly these principles (albeit under revolutionary conditions), but with the reinstitutionalization of photography as a figural practice, these (fragile) links between the nonartist and the artist under the mantle of cultural access have been largely deposed or marginalized. Lomography's defense of the snapshot as the site of a diffuse, reflective creativity (albeit depoliticized into the realm of the festive) revives this model.

Consequently we need to place these diffuse photographic practices within an expanded secondary economy of occasional and part-time artists.[16] Over the last twenty-five years thousands and thousands of occasional artists and part-time artists, some of whom were once trained at art school and some of whom have learned from those who trained there, continue to bring their symbolic skills and knowledge to bear on a wide range of activities that have no artworld institutional location or artworld exchange value. Most of these activities are temporal and have no life beyond their immediate conditions of production and display. Yet collectively, these activities across many social locations and in many varied forms represent an increasingly reflexive awareness of representation and artistic content outside of the professional institutions of art and, as such, provide an informal culture of artistic production that "nonartistic" producers participate in and learn from. Indeed, knowledge of the way the critical categories of art production have been dispersed into nonartistic locations has barely been addressed in current theoretical writing. Lomography (along with, for instance, the vast growth of new "home" music production) is representative of these subterranean changes within the political economy of culture.

This notion of the work of the "multitude" as a deflationary ideological force is also reflected in the more politically focused phenomenon of indymedia, or the Independent Media Center, work that has a more explicit connection to the documentary tradition. Indeed, if the mass form of snapshot in lomography is harnessed to various strategies of political indirection, in indymedia the snapshot becomes the direct bearer of the notion of the counterarchive. Loosely linked to the anti-globalization movement, indymedia provides an online site for photographers, and in particular nonprofessional snapshot-photographers, to post their images of events, activities, and demonstrations that the dominant media do not cover or cover perfunctorily or antagonistically. In this regard the site updates the many alternative news and picture agencies that developed in the 1980s. However, as an Internet service, it obviously provides mass access and distribution in a way that the earlier organizations were unable to do by offering an efficient means of pooling images and information: "Indymedia is a collective of independent media organizations and hundreds of journalists offering grassroots, non-corporate coverage. Indymedia is a democratic media outlet for the creation of radical, accurate, and passionate tellings of truth"; "The Independent Media Center is [an]…organization committed to using media production as a tool for promoting social and economic justice."[17] The

language may be slightly awkward and politically pragmatist and the assumptions about truth-telling straight out of a version of documentary positivism, but the contemporary implications for the photographic snapshot are clear enough: the snapshot is what links the agency of the "multitude" to the production of truth and the real. In this way the Mass-Observation tendencies of lomography are put on a more overt political and counterarchival footing. In submitting your snapshots of demonstrations and public events to the site, you are not only providing a platform for "other ways of telling," but establishing the cultural validity of what you do as part *of* the "multitude." In lomography and indymedia there are no professional or amateur photographers as such, but rather photographers who take part in a collective, nonhierachical productive process. This process, in turn, is itself now dispersed through many other file-sharing sites, such as Flickr.

Yet the deflationary imperatives of the "amateur" do play a significant part in the self-identity of such organizations as the LSI and indymedia. The attachment to a sense of the snapshot-photographer as unconstrained by any of the inhibitory professional notions of quality is crucial to the inclusive ideal of indymedia. The indymedia contributor is interpellated as the redoubt of low-tech, unschooled authenticity, even if many of the activist contributors have been trained—and train one another—in dealing with the corporate media. Similarly, despite the central importance of the Internet in distributing the content of the LSI project, lomographers celebrate the Lomo camera as an analogue technology, operating in the face of the centralizing cultural logic of the new digital technologies: "Digital reproduction is but the delusion of memory…. come witness the fury of screw-up photography."[18] In this way the use of a cheap, aging technology provides a democratic ethos for the avant-garde ideology of practiced failure or incompetence. Lomography's democratic advocacy of the multitude over the singular is also the advocacy of the multitude as a space where mistakes are honored and value is self-created. Failure, or rather the deliberate avoidance of given or prevailing standards and criteria of high-cultural artistic success, is taken to be a virtue. On this basis, the analogue snapshot-photographers of the LSI and contemporary digital snapshot-artists share a familiar and compact ideology: that the critique of value through photography is an emancipation from cultural division and hierarchy. This ideology is very seductive and has driven so much avant-garde art and popular photographic practices during the twentieth century. Today, though, it is not so much photography as such that stands as a "placeholder" for the critique of value, but the photographic snapshot in particular. That is, in a culture where photography has become inscribed within the canon of modern art, the snapshot's residual informality and cheapness are taken to be the primary generator of a "diffuse creativity." However, with the "multitude" of inclusivity and unburdened and productive failure comes the unbridled "multitude" of the same. In the world of the snapshot, no image escapes its formal bond with all other snapshots. No image (ultimately) is better or worse than any other—to infinity. In this sense both lomography and contemporary snapshot-artists provide a theory of countervalue in terms of the democratic *proliferation* of the same and the generic,

although the impulses of one and the other are not exactly comparable. The art-snapshot functions as a negation of aesthetic ideology in order to challenge or delimit notions of would-be real creativity; the lomographic snapshot functions as a negation of aesthetic ideology in order to identify and expand notions of creativity within a given set of possibilities. Nevertheless, for both lomography and contemporary art the reproducibility and simplicity of the snapshot become the sine qua non of the democratization of form through mechanical reproduction. In these terms it might be said that the dream of the lomographer and the contemporary snapshot-artist is a world open to representation expanded to everyone all the time. Indeed, by extension, at the heart of snapshot ideology is a utopian notion of the "amateur" photographer as a reflexive artist-in-waiting.

In this regard the deflationary logic of the snapshot hides a genuine democratizing impulse, an impulse that continually reconfigures itself in art and culture as a return of the repressed. There can be no defense of the social ontology of photography without this. But under conditions where the critique of value is simply a placeholder for the critique of value, its function easily becomes self-positivizing. There is no intrinsic virtue in the contingent, fleeting, and miniature itself. There is no intrinsic virtue in resisting the idea of quality in art as a judgment on internal complexity. There is no intrinsic virtue in mass reproducibility itself. (Interestingly, one of the recurring heroic figures in lomography literature is Herman Melville's naysayer Bartleby: "I would prefer not to.") The snapshot, therefore, is always caught in a dilemma, whether allied to an antiaesthetic position inside the institutions of art or to the dictates of some notion of mass-cultural democracy outside of the institutions of art. It is called on to disinvest the image of congealed and arthritic aesthetic ideologies, but it necessarily cannot escape its own limited naturalism as a critique of value. In this way the snapshot performs a spectral function within and outside contemporary art: *it haunts the self-identity of aesthetic ideology without being able to provide a counteraesthetic of its own*. But paradoxically, it is because it cannot establish a counteraesthetic of its own that it is able to continue to provide a critique of aesthetic ideology.

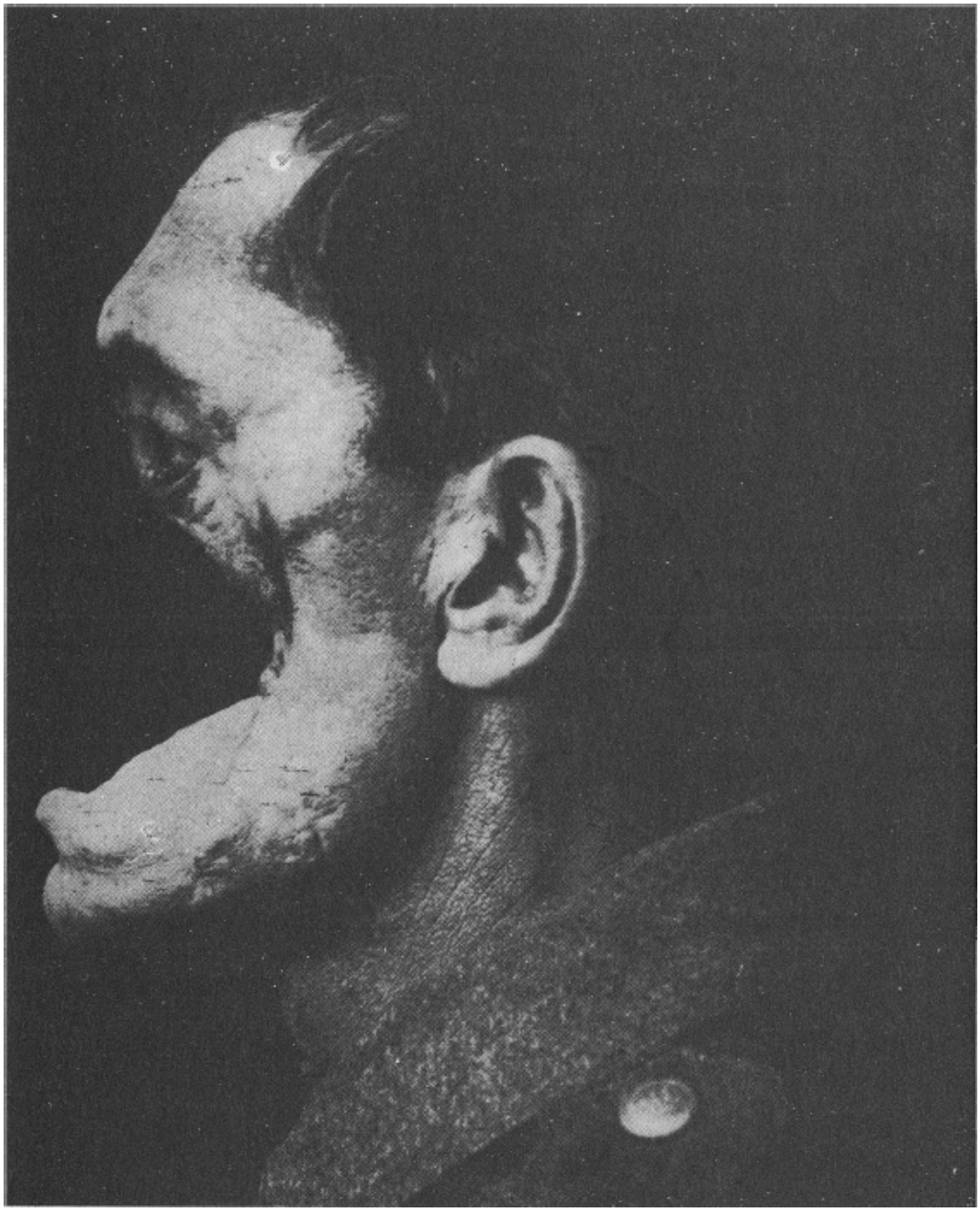
FIGURALITY, NONFIGURALITY, AND VALUE

The deflationary model and the prephotographic model of labor represent, essentially, competing models of value. The prephotographic model insists that if photography is not to submit to the false democracy of mechanical reproduction or to the wider deskilling and nihilism immanent to the commodity form, it must transform photography in the image of high-artistic ambition. The deflationary model, in contrast, insists that photography and art do not need to pursue these ambitions to secure their cultural identity, but need, rather, to recognize that photography's spontaneity, mobility, and essential cheapness can be the basis of another, socially expansive model of artistic labor: the democratic inclusion of the nonartist into the production of the image. This opposition returns us to an older cultural debate between the claims

of aesthetic integration as a defense of aesthetic value and the notion of aesthetic dispersal and diffusion as a defense of democratic access to shared artistic skills. For Wall, the deflationary model cannot sustain a theory of value; for lomographers, new Mass Observers, and postconceptual defenders of the snapshot, the prephotographic model confuses value with the rehierarchization of art. These two positions are at one level incommensurable and, as such, represent the formalization of the catachrestic content of photography. Consequently, it is foolish to talk about one or the other of these models of labor as progressive in and of themselves, as if the figural should be submitted to the nonfigural or the nonfigural to the figural. In one sense the deflationary photographers are right about the prephotographic photographers and the prephotographic photographers are right about the deflationary photographers. The critical issue isn't about asserting one model over the other, as if the cultural and social divisions that produce this split at the level of the sign can be resolved at the level of photographic practices. Rather, the critical issue lies in seeing the split in photography between the figural and the nonfigural as a productive source of different kinds of critical work—but with two important qualifications. Firstly, the prephotographic model of labor annuls itself when it bases its value on the suppression of nonfigurality in photography, because it is exactly the nonfigurality of photography that renders photography's claims to the real as different from any other system of representation. And secondly, the defense of nonfigurality as truth is always breaking down in the face of the assimilation of photography into art and the figural as a requirement of conceptualization and political enunciation. The outcome of this is that the truth-claims of the nonfigural and figural are *both* allegorical; however, the truth-claims of the figural cannot exist without the prior claims of the nonfigural. That is, the catachrestic character of the photograph hides the asymmetrical function of the nonfigural as index, and this in turn is what drives the social ontology of photography. The photographic document (the snapshot) always leads us back to the trauma of the real and the role of the witness and, therefore, to the debate on violation and truth. This is the *value* of the nonfigural.

Part II

ABSTRACTION, VIOLATION, AND EMPATHY



“The ‘health resort’ of the proletarian. Almost the whole face blown away.” From Ernst Friedrich’s *Krieg dem Kriege* (1924), p. 227. (Courtesy of the Anti-War Museum, Berlin)

5

PHOTOGRAPHY AFTER THE PHOTOGRAPH

Event, Archive, and the Nonsymbolic

SOCIAL ABSTRACTION AND REAL ABSTRACTION

In this half of the book I want to focus on the question of abstraction and violation. If the figural suppression of the index is a violation of photography's social ontology, the catachresistic relationship between the figural and the nonfigural is mediated in turn by the overlapping forces of social abstraction (the material and symbolic structures of domination expressed in the heteronomous character of the built environment, the social divisions of the landscape, and the repetitive, inertial logic of commodity relations) and real abstraction (the organization of production and consumption through the discipline of the value-form, the internalization and naturalization of the value-form as "free competition").[1] In other words the two competing and overlapping pathways of figural and nonfigural photographic practices are a consequence of these inertial and heteronomous forces of the commodity form on photography. For despite the sense of photography as an expanding and pullulating system (in Azoulay's sense), the photographic document has invariably imagined and experienced itself as constrained: constrained by the index, constrained by pictorialism, constrained by photographic two-dimensionality, and constrained by photographic spontaneity, but most acutely and paradoxically constrained by photography's truth-telling powers itself. Just as the material truth of the event is never quite secured by the photograph, the reception and circulation of these would-be provisional or "failed" photographs are always prevented from finding their audience, in some instances through direct censorship, but more commonly through the residual expulsion of the photograph from the symbolic through the nonsymbolic labor (reifying work) of the circuits of mass culture. Most nonphotographic images or artworks don't feel these pressures so profoundly, because their audience requirements are not based on the empathic and relational drive of the social ontology of the photograph: the need to exchange knowledge in the here and now, to bear witness, to break the continuum of appearances. Anxiety about art's marginalization is not a condition of art's sense of immediate expectation: whatever audience the artwork may find will be found later rather than sooner. So the penetration of social abstraction and real abstraction into the production and reception of the photograph finds a profound anxiety and frustration in relation to *where* the photograph goes and how "speedily" it reaches its destination or destinations. This is why so many photographers give up trying to master the relational and empathic codes of the document altogether and move into

other photographic modes and into the studio and the figural. For the figural, above all else, guarantees a notional control over the event that helps to diffuse this anxiety over the photograph's indeterminate temporal life. The time of the photodocument as it tries to find a position for itself in the circuits of commodity exchange invariably cannot compete with the accelerating and self-forgetting temporality of real abstraction itself: the ferocious turnover of the commodity as the luxuriant and sensuous life of the image under capitalism-become-image (hence the recent emergence, as I discuss below, of the category of "aftermath" photograph as a critical compensation for this). The social ontology of photography, then, has to live in and shape a destiny for itself, inside the forces of real abstraction and social abstraction as a matter of common practice. So although, I insist below and in the next chapter on the ways in which photography continues to resist, mediate, and challenge abstraction, there is no photography—no photographic imaginary—that lives, or might live, on the other side of its effects. The challenge to abstraction, then, cannot be conducted outside of abstraction, as if abstraction were a mere excrescence or supplement, for social abstraction and real abstraction as the constitutive forms of commodity relations precede thought. "The essence of the commodity abstraction.... is that it is not thought-induced; it does not originate in men's minds but in their actions."[2] However, the forces of abstraction are not themselves abstract, they have a history, and a particular violent and accelerated history over the last eighty years.[3] This is why the defeat of social modernism in the 1930s is so significant, for it was a victory not just of liberal pluralism over leftist political content, but of the corporate rights of image-makers and distributors to further open up popular image production to capital accumulation. Since the 1950s, consequently, the deflected, broken, repressed temporality of the photographic has been a primary consideration of photography's life inside the exigencies of abstraction. In addition this is also why the documentary tradition's crisis has primarily been a crisis of its relationship to the (historical) event. If documentary practice cannot act directly in the name of the event—if it cannot freely report the worldly event back to the world—then why continue to talk of documentary practice as an agent of change?

Firstly, then, let us look at how photography has constructed its relationship to the "event" under these conditions.

THE "SINGULAR EVENT" AND THE NONSYMBOLIC

What has distinguished the claims for photography's temporal distinctiveness across its fields of practice and its ideological domains over the last one hundred years has been the photograph's connection to what was once commonly known as the "decisive moment,"[4] or here, what I will call, for my purposes, "singular event." In bringing a reflective stillness to the contingencies of a passing scene or to the movement of bodies, the photograph exercises what we might call the hidden or

spontaneous powers of convergence. Indeed, these powers of convergence represent the veridical core of reportage and the photodocument since the 1900s, shaping photography's public emergence as a "truth-telling" medium. In this respect Henri Cartier-Bresson's "decisive moment" has the virtue of identifying what is crucial to the photodocument's powers of convergence: the photographer's existential proximity to the world. But for my purposes here, by "singular event" I mean something quite different, or more conceptually capacious, than Cartier-Bresson's notion. For Cartier-Bresson the "decisive moment" has a precise formal content. The "decisive moment" does not represent the imagined moment of temporal intensity of the prephotographic event—its peak—but rather, more circumspectly, the moment of temporal conjunction, the moment when the internal elements of an observed scene appear, subjectively, to *cohere* pictorially. In this way photography's powers of reflective stillness are subject to a highly subjectivized account of convergence. The "good" photograph lies in getting the "decisive moment" right. This is why the "decisive moment" was so favored by modernist critics of photography: it allowed photography's spontaneous powers of convergence to be fetishized as evidence of the "photographer's eye." My understanding of "event" here refers more generally to what happens to the "decisive moment," as the moment of imagined convergence, and as a space of *historical* disclosure. That is, how the "event" of the photographic process—photography's cut into the continuum of experience, its temporal "pulls," so to speak—constitutes the "event" of the photograph, how these "pulls" constitute the syntax of photography's historicity. In other words, the photograph's essential contingency and contemporaneity recover for us the "pastness" of the past and—as the discursive life of the image unfolds in time—the moment's historical textuality. This is why the historical particulars of the photograph have always had a privileged relationship to the representation of the event as a form of historical knowledge. Once edited and cropped or transformed by a text or in juxtaposition with other images, the "singular event" is open to systematic meaning.

Today, though, this sense of the event for photography—or the notion of photography *as* an event—no longer appears to be available to photography in quite the same way. This is reflected most immediately in photography's transformed relationship to its own critical history, in particular documentary practice. Much of the debate on reportage, realism, the photodocument, photojournalism, and the snapshot now takes place in the artworld, which has been the key site of photographic production and theory since the 1980s. Currently there is little critical theorization of the photographic image as a form of historical practice outside of this context. Even Azoulay's *The Civil Contract of Photography* focuses primarily on artists' engagement with documentary modes. However, this is not to say that documentary photographers or photojournalists, or reportorial image-makers have all become artists (although some have, as I discuss below), or that they do not still work according to (some of) the critical demands of realism, or that significant numbers of photographs within these traditions are not being produced and being seen in commercial and nonart contexts (for instance, the revival of Mass-Observation

strategies through the Internet discussed in the last chapter), or that no photojournalists manage to get their photographs in the Sunday supplements, or that no interesting work is being done in the area of "scientific" imaging. But rather, it is to say that these images, overall, have no public circulation as part of what we have already discussed as the decline of *documentary-image culture*. My contention, then, is that in the wake of the demise of this culture and the theoretical extension of art-as-photography, there has been a contraction in the temporal efficacy of the photodocument. Photography no longer believes it speaks to the moment. This loss of symbolic space and distinction, of critical "immediacy," is, of course, at one level a consequence of long-term political and social transformations: with the decomposition of (an older) class politics since the 1980s, documentary culture is no longer available to so confidently speak *to* collective working-class interests or the interests of the dominated, and to therefore link the "event" to its public representation. But, perhaps more significantly, this process of decomposition is ideologically overdetermined by the extensive penetration of the commodity form (through photography) into everyday experience and thus the increasing cultural valorization of the photodocument as *blank* "information." As Vilém Flusser puts it—in many ways summarizing the general argument on social abstraction for photography—the imagined transparency of photography under the universal expansion and dominance of the commodity form lies in the fact that its naturalism is held to be "nonsymbolic,"[5] that is, to be without any discernible, embedded "textuality" or connection to external social and historical forces. The image, in its perceived neutrality or functionality (in illustrated magazines, technical journals, pornography, and so on), appears to be "free" of the demands of conceptualization, of the need for interpretation and judgment. The resilience of the nonsymbolic, therefore, despite the successful critique of this naturalism in the 1970s and 1980s within photographic culture and the institutions of higher education,[6] expresses one of the binding actions of late capitalist reification: the convergence of an increasingly depoliticized public culture and the functional requirement of commodity culture to continually displace and overrun (nonfunctional) spaces of reflection and engagement; in other words, in mass culture the nonsymbolic tends to *crowd out* the symbolic.

However, if the naturalizing force of the nonsymbolic is residual and prereflective, it is not simply exclusionary. In many instances it is actually inclusionary and productive, insofar as the photograph interpellates the viewer as one who is presumed to know historically, on the basis of what is already commonly known historically. In this respect, the naturalization of the popular photograph also operates, on another level, through a process of circular confirmation. The photographic referent is assumed, isomorphically, to be an index of the historical event or narrative that the photograph is taken to be an exemplary representation of. This, of course, is the outcome of the place of preformatting within the nonsymbolic functions of the photograph: the tendency for our experience of the historicity of the photograph (and thus the historical process) to be based on a limited and normative set of generic categories: "the horrors of war," "ethnic conflict," "national identity," "the community."

These generic conditions of meaning are very powerful, and now have become largely invisible, operating as the "vanishing mediators" of ruling editorial interests and perceptions. This, in turn, generates a further process of generic preselection when the photograph is "called up" from the archives as part of historical narration. The production of a historical narrative or historical sense is formed through a given hierarchy of key photographically mediated moments, for instance, the construction of "1960s-ness" from such core elements as the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Bobby Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, hippies and yippies, Pop culture, and the moon landing, and so on. This generic (and USled) mortification of history, then, is subsumed by the general ideological conditions of the nonsymbolic. The reduction of the historical to the preselection of these events is held to be self-evident and noncontentious—the history "of our times"—and, therefore, without need of any further comment or support.[7]

This naturalizing of photography's "history effect" is precisely that which defines Barthes's early account of myth.[8] But today the naturalization of the photograph is brought to a further pitch of intensity with the vast expansion of the nonsymbolic functions of the photograph and the concomitant narrowing of photography's channels of distribution. This has produced a culture of the image in which the naturalizing apparatuses of the dominant ideology (presently neoliberalism) reproduce and extend the nonsymbolic across all domains of image-production. Furthermore, this is articulated and reinforced by the extensive technical transformations that have overtaken photography since the 1990s. One of the most obvious of these transformations is the vastly increased diffusion and mutability of the image under the network flow of video-fication and digitalization. This has resulted, crucially, in the severe narrowing of reportage and documentary photography within the circulation of social meaning, placing a further strain on the idea of the photograph as the place where the flow of nonsymbolic "information" stops and critical exchange begins. Where documentary practice could claim, even up to the late 1970s, some residual connection to political praxis and the social process (certainly in South Africa, Northern Ireland, and Latin America), today this has been eroded by the depoliticized formatting of documentary and reportage. The would-be democracy of the Internet has not changed this, despite the revival of Mass-Observation–type practices such as lomography and indymedia. Lomography and indymedia and similar initiatives are excellent at circulating images. But one of the paradoxes of the current period is that a huge number of images circulate, but few images take on a discursive and political life beyond their passing moment of consumption. This is not helped by the social pathologies of the Internet itself: its tendency to increase the fetishistic content of formatting and genre in its widespread identification of the real and authentic—in the "intimate" spaces of the blog—with the sexually transgressive, culturally grotesque, and socially adventitious, which further crowd out the social-relationality of the photodocument. Similarly the rise of new forms of mass photography needs to be offset by the new realm of surveillance and insecurity about photography on the street, which has been reinforced by an increasing popular awareness and sensitivity

toward photography as intrusive and “objectifying.” The democratic resistance to being photographed without acknowledgment—as a basic right—and the desire to photograph in one’s own name (and in turn to be photographed with one’s consent) at the same time create a huge aversion to what we might call the first two avant-garde principles of documentary practice: first, the notion that the photographer steps into the experience of the everyday *unannounced* in order to tell the truth of the appearance and flux of division, conflict, and daily oblivion; and second, the notion that the photographer is part of a collective space in which the photographer and his or her subjects share a public and visible modernity.

The latter in a sense is the basis of all street-photography from the 1920s, reflected in the widespread drive on the part of the photographer from the 1920s to the 1960s to see photography as a transformative intervention into the continuum of daily appearances. As Dziga Vertov declared in 1922, reportorial photography and film represent first and foremost the “art of movement,”[9] in which photographer and filmmaker inhabit and move with and through the crowd, just as Siegfried Kracauer declaimed in his essay “Photography” in 1929, “The street in the extended sense of the word is not only the arena of fleeting impressions and chance encounters, but a place where the flow of life is bound to assert itself,”[10] and as such where the photographer as natural flaneur is most at home. Similarly, in 1952 Henri Cartier-Bresson announced famously in *The Decisive Moment*, “I prowled the streets all day, feeling very strung up and ready to pounce, determined to ‘trap’ life, to preserve it in the art of living,”[11] as if to suggest that the photographer, the street, and photographic truth are inextricably fused. Now, these three examples represent very different and critical moments in the history of photography’s relationship to the avant-garde and modernism (let us not forget that for Vertov, as for Rodchenko and other revolutionary street-photographers, the life of the street was inseparable from the action and dynamism of the working class and the display of its power); but nevertheless, they all pinpoint a social and cultural continuity between photography’s capacity to move with a kind of unguarded and probing sensitivity and acuity into everyday life and the energy of the street. Today this has broken down, for the reasons mentioned above, to the point where the presence of the professional or amateur photographer moving freely through the crowd unannounced is perceived as a direct threat, or if not a direct threat, then at least an indirect threat identifiable with the action of someone who is considered to be, shall I say, eccentric or untrustworthy. For who takes a photograph unannounced? Either the police or someone who appears to want to photograph *no one but strangers* and, therefore, who seems to be acting in a way similar to the clandestine actions of the police themselves. One contemporary photographer who has directly addressed the crisis of the photographer as an unannounced stranger is Bruno Serralongue. He works for newspapers without official documentation, taking photographs of demonstrations, strikes, and political events at their margins, operating as a “distant witness.”[12]

The singularly important role of photography to arrive unannounced, therefore, is presently caught between photography’s two most powerful socially legitimizing

forces: its role as a form of state surveillance and its role as a socializing and consensual force inside and outside of the family. Thus photography occurs all the time on the streets of cities globally; there are probably more images taken on the street than ever before, but these images are largely taken on cell phones, and are invariably the focus for shared moments between known individuals. People familiar to one another photograph one another in close view of one another as part of an exchange of image as commemorative or diaristic tokens. Indeed, cell phone technology actually encourages this approach: the quick, impulsive photograph taken at close range as a repetitive act of affection or daily record between friends, family, and acquaintances.

This production of a mass photography within the bounds of these forms of microsociability, then, reflects another aspect to the crisis of documentary culture as a social practice: street photography is now the space of diverse clusters of image-production and image-exchange directed toward the maintenance of small social networks that help to push the intrusive and socially directed photographer and socially directed photography out of the public arena into the realms of the pathological and criminal. As such, using a camera freely on one's own rather than a cell phone socially as part of a group with another person, the photographer is invariably confronted with a question: why are you taking a photograph? Followed by: you can't take photographs here. Now, of course, street photographers from Lewis Hine onward have invariably been asked the same question when they have arrived to take photographs for the purpose of embarrassing those in power. There is nothing unusual about photographers being turned away from areas that are sensitive to the interests of the powerful; and there is nothing new about radical photographers being criminalized. But the repeated asking of this question today seems to reflect a wider privatization of photographic culture as it comes into alignment with the technologies and modes of presentation and exchange of digitalization and the release of the self-image under celebrity culture: the social bond between photography and the life of the street that Vertov, Rodchenko, Kracauer, and Cartier-Bresson took for granted has been overtaken by the mass and diffuse exchange of images of self-commemoration. The link between cell phone photography and microsociability, consequently, has produced its own internal logic of surveillance: taking photographs outside of the domestic sphere reproduces its consensual borders through the form of tokens of enclosed self-representation.

This eradication of photography's critical intimacy with the historical event—the event that is subject to exemplary and sustained political reading—is, of course, not a new phenomenon. Even at the height of the documentary movement in the 1930s, photography's relationship to the event was not innocent of formatting and genre and the pressures of the nonsymbolic. The public emergence of photography starting in the 1900s, in fact, is a history of photography's relentless struggle with the agents of distribution over what constitutes the "event" and therefore how the "event" is historicized and brought to visibility once it leaves the photographer's hands. The problems encountered by the Farm Security Administration photographers at both the

production level and once the images were in the hands of editors are a case in point. Dorothea Lange, Ben Shahn, and Russell Lee, among many others, all suffered at the hands of editorial preformatting during the selection process for publication ("too political," "too black," "too miserable," and so on).[13] The production of historical representation—as the representations of the many—and the state's ratification of the photo archive are interdependent. "There is no political power without the control of the archive, if not of memory," to quote Derrida.[14] However, what video-fication and digitalization have accelerated is the underlying process of this preformatting. In other words what video-fication and digitalization provide for the dominant nonsymbolic functions of the photograph is an *easier* passage through to the process of ideological naturalization (at the state level), as the rapid turnover of generic images becomes the sole criterion of newsworthiness, visibility, and profitability. In fact, at the point where photography now meets the horizon of its historic and long-range social and critical commitments (photojournalism, reportage, documentary practice), countersymbolic practices feel very much incidental to the dominant nonsymbolic effects of photography. Where once the symbolic (and countersymbolic) functions of these traditions exercised some public and critical leverage, they now appear increasingly derailed by these dominant forces. Indeed, it might be said that the critique of naturalism has actually contributed to this displacement. For although the critique of naturalism has been one of the critical and interdisciplinary successes of the academy over the last thirty years—releasing a huge amount of countersymbolic energy from below between 1975 and 1995—it has paradoxically also allowed the critique of photographic transparency to ally itself with a prevailing left-liberal critique of realism and documentary practice. That is, if naturalization had to be expunged from "thinking on photography" in order to wrest photography from the nonsymbolic, then realism and documentary, as the would-be political and historical "cognates" of this transparency, had to be excised as unwelcome and atavistic objects of desire; the crisis of photographic truth coming to stand synecdochically, in a period of general political retreat for the left, for the failure of the (modern) politicization of culture.[15] In other words, one of the political consequences of the critique of photographic truth is that it has allowed an unfortunate conflation of realism and documentary with the nonsymbolic.

We are at a particular juncture, therefore, in which the old institutional arrangements are no longer operative. Yet, if the photo document has now effectively been separated from critical notions of realism, documentary culture, and the public sphere, this is not the whole story; and because it is not the whole story, we are in a position to ask how photographers might operate in this restricted climate and, moreover, what photography is now as a set of disparate and diffuse practices that gives some cultural specificity to a defense of the social ontology of photography. In this it requires us to briefly suspend our political narrative (indeed our preconceptions about the centrality of a certain kind of documentary ethos for photography) in order to look closely at photography's relationship to technology and its technical history, because it is on the basis of a close analysis of how photography's technological and

technical history intersects with the categories of realism, documentary, and reportage that we will be able assess photography's present and future critical possibilities. In this regard I want to focus on an issue I raised in chapter 3: namely, we mistake the political efficacy of documentary practice once we fail to recognize its relatively marginal position within the political economy of culture, even at the height of left-documentary practice in the 1930s. The crisis of documentary culture does not represent an absolute decline from a position of unassailable authority; and photography's transformation and adaptation of its technologies and technics over the last eighty years tell us why this is the case.

THE CULTURAL FORM OF THE PHOTOGRAPH: PHOTOGRAPHY AS A HISTORICALLY SUBORDINATE PRACTICE

If the history of photography is a history of its struggle over how practitioners have defined and foregrounded the "event," this struggle is inseparable from photographers' use and adaptation of new photographic techniques. Thus, we can see pretty clearly—with the exception of photography's very early history, when it had no technological competitors—the photographic document has actually been in a *subordinate position* to the dominant photographic technology of the last century and of this one—namely cinema. There is no history of photographic "realism," "truth," and the "symbolic" in the twentieth century—and therefore no conception of the "singular event"—without taking into account how the photographic both mediates and rises to the challenge of the moving image.[16] Consequently, photography's claims on "realism," "truth," and the "symbolic" are indivisible from the photodocument's perceived technical inadequacies and *limitations* (which are very different from the assumption, in photographic naturalism, that the photographic document is the gateway to unmediated truth). Modernism in photography is born, therefore, at the point of modern photography's crisis and self-doubt, and not as a reestablishment of the photograph's would-be transparency.

Two things are identifiable from this antihistoricist account of the apparatus. Firstly, that the meanings of "realism," "truth," and the "symbolic" do not *preexist* the photographic apparatus, but are produced out of its retheorization in relation to an emergent dominant visual apparatus. Secondly, that the cultural functions of technically superseded apparatuses are never superseded en bloc; rather, their subordination becomes a means of reconfiguring what the apparatus is judged capable of accomplishing and what the dominant apparatus, in contrast, is thereby unable to accomplish. A superseded technical apparatus, consequently, does not disappear at all, but repositions itself, relationally, to the dominant apparatus, opening up a space for the reinvention of the cultural possibilities of the subordinate apparatus. This is clear from the history of photography's relationship to cinema in the 1920s and 1930s.

In the 1920s and the 1930s the photographic document radically reinvented its form and its understanding of its audience in the light of the new Russian and German

cinema. Some photography directly mimicked the “cut” of cinematic form and became diegetic and sequential (as in the Soviet avant-garde), but, generally, photography defined its nascent modern identity in relation to the dominant sensorium of cinema.[17] That is, photography opened up its working procedures to the interruptions of cinematic time and space. This is why from the 1920s to the 1980s photographers, whether they adopted a montage model of composite elements (after Dziga Vertov or Sergei Eisenstein) or simply invoked the contingencies of the “everyday,” largely labored within the cinematic paradigm of “expanded perception.” In this, Cartier-Bresson’s “decisive moment” is itself an echo of this cinematic model; the photographer uses the convergent powers of the photograph in order to position the single image within an imaginative and dramatic continuum.

Thus the rise and demise of documentary culture are a profoundly heterodox and modernist experience. And, therefore, any notion of documentary culture’s dissolution has to recognize that the self-definition of the photodocument was, at key points, determined by its reflection on its own cultural subordination. Indeed, it is precisely photography’s increasing awareness of its subordination to film and mass culture that provides documentary practice with the intellectual and cognitive driving force of its retheorization in the 1930s. One significant example of this, as we have seen, is Evans and Agee’s *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941), another is Aaron Siskind’s *Harlem Document: Photographs, 1932–1940* (1939/1940), first published, in part, in *Fortune* (1939) and *Look* (1940). In the original preface to *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, written in 1939, Agee reflects on the limitations of conventional documentary practice and on his own weaknesses as a would-be documentarist writer, as a spur to rethinking the formal challenges of documentary practice’s ethical commitments: “The effort is to recognize the stature of a portion of unimagined existence, and to contrive techniques proper to its recording, communication, analysis and defense.”[18] It is film technique that stands behind this. Similarly, Siskind’s *Harlem Document* takes the cultural limitations of documentary practice as read in order to destabilize the conventional documentarist conflict between “bearing witness” and the making of convincing pictures; filmic and complex in structure, *Harlem Document* was produced from elaborate shooting scripts.[19] This means that we need to keep the objective demise of documentary culture separate from the more tendentious notion that documentary culture is the place where the truth-telling powers of photography were once secured politically through a commitment to a stable photographic realism and then later eroded. For, it is precisely the confusion of the latter with the former that fuels much of the confused understanding of the political fate of the photodocument and documentary culture today. Just as documentary culture is separated from modernism in order to render it formally mute and therefore render its political demise more easily digestible, the arrival of digitalization is assumed to be antithetical to photography. This is not surprising, because digitalization is indeed a profoundly anticinematic and “antiphotographic” apparatus, leaving its effects less open to the kind of appropriation that would enable the photographer to sustain a working relationship with the craft of image-making. With its instant powers of

diffusion and its immediate retrieval and miniaturization of the image (its rapid switch from big to small and vice versa), digitalization essentially destroys the to-be-looked-at-ness of the discrete photodocument, in turn further reinforcing the general conditions of distracted consumption of the naturalized image. Thus, where cinema and photography shared a cultural space in the first half of the twentieth century, despite photography's subordinate role, photography and digitalization have in crucial respects diverged culturally.

This is expressed through a narrowing of how photography now views its historically subordinate position: on the one side, a defeated documentary culture and an erosion of the claims of the "singular event" that need to be mourned, and on the other, an aggressive and intrusive digitalization that needs to be tamed. One of the effects of this is that the adaptation and articulation of digital form within photography after the legacy of modernist-documentary practice (and the countersymbolic work of the 1980s and 1990s) have been highly conflicted and conservative. Thus, digitalization's most ambitious and successful use has been in the work of artists who have wanted to extend the critique of photographic naturalism into the domain of photographic *illusion* (such as Wall and Andreas Gursky). Postproduction digital effects have become the means by which the real is self-consciously conjoined from discrete elements, transforming naturalism's idea of the photograph as a neutral transcription of appearances into its very opposite: the figural (metaphoric) construction of the real, as in painting. Where this process of digitalization is less favored is among those documentary photographers who see the formal ambition of this painterly figuralization as appropriate to the new culture of the photograph, yet who see its reliance on the "staged" image as a further unwarranted diminishment of photography's relationship to the event. In this they reassert the indexical integrity and authority of the photodocument in an attempt to secure the *realist complexities* of photographic space. Nevertheless, this process of differentiation remains a highly circumscribed one. This is not a return to documentary practice as traditionally conceived, for all the reasons outlined above. On the contrary, this is a photography of the event in which the event is displaced from its conditions of immediacy from the outset, so to speak. Indeed, we might say that this is a photography of the event, *after-the-event*.

All photographs, of course, are after-the-event, documentary and staged alike. The "singular event" always comes late, insofar as the singular event is part of a continuum of other "singular events." There is no primary "singular event" to any given event, which defines and identifies that event. All the same, there is a clear sense that photography has arrived after-the-event to record what remains of the event, or what can be reconstructed from evidence that an event of significance or import has taken place. Essentially, this is a photography of the event-as-aftermath, and, as such, it tends to stress the ineluctability of the recent past through emphasizing the melancholic allure of photographic stillness. This kind of elegiac and mournful photography has a long history across its premodernist and modernist-documentary forms: Alexander Gardner, Roger Fenton, Mathew Brady, and Jacques-André

Boiffard, through to Richard Misrach, Willie Doherty, and Joel Meyerowitz. But as David Campany has argued, this is much more than the recodification of one particular branch of reportorial and modernist-documentary practice, and therefore, much more than the reformulation of a genre. Rather, more broadly, it represents photography trying to reposition its relationship to the event in order to establish a new reportorial role for itself by making a case for the necessary *lateness* of the photograph. In a world of the diffuse and mutable image, of instant digital grabs, of the general crisis of documentary culture, of the cell phone snapshot, photography can only arrive—and perhaps more importantly should only arrive—late. "This is a kind of photograph that foregoes the representation of events in progress and so cedes them to other media."[20] Lateness, therefore, becomes a kind of virtue, the thing that digitalization and video-fication are unable or unwilling to secure, and indeed that they abhor. Thus, in the late photograph the subordinate function of the photodocument finds a new cultural function, unifying reportage, photojournalism, and documentary practice in a "posttraumatic" account of history and the event, as in the "war" photography of Luc Delahaye and Simon Norfolk. For, in arriving late to the scene of conflict, the bodies have largely gone.

SIMON NORFOLK AND LUC DELAHAYE: CONTEMPORARY "LATE PHOTOGRAPHY" AS THE "MILITARY SUBLIME"

It would be wrong to emphasize the emergence of this kind of photography as representing a general or systematic position among contemporary documentary photographers. In many instances the bodies quite obviously have not gone; and certainly in the case of Delahaye and many other postcombat photographers (such as Lori Grinker, Nina Berman, Tim Hetherington, James Nachtwey[21]), the dead or traumatized body, in many instances, still remains a primary focus of concern. For instance, a residual human presence distinguishes a number of Delahaye's panoramic aftermath-photographs. These landscapes invariably include a figure or even a group of figures, but their presence is absolutely incidental to the evidential force of the photograph, indeed, they are invariably there simply as markers of scale and of the "void" produced by bombing, or of the devastating impact of natural disaster, as in *Aftermath in Meulaboh* (2005). Yet broadly, the notion that the body isn't there or, if it is there, cannot or shouldn't be freely assimilated into the space of photography does point to a significant change in orientation in how recent documentary photography thinks about its connectedness to the temporality of the event, in line with the things I have been saying so far about photography's cultural subordination and the expansion of the nonsymbolic; and this has much to do with the perceived political limitations of documentary practice and photojournalism within the category of "late photography." This is why this kind of "war" photography, for all its partiality, is particularly exemplary both for a discussion of lateness and for the politics of photography now. "War" photography—or more accurately the attempt to produce a photography *of* war

—establishes a profound relationship to the conditions under which the production of the image find itself under capitalism, inasmuch as the demands for access and the hoped-for symbolization of the "singular event" highlight the exigencies of truth and realism as well as the requirements of the nonsymbolic (naturalization and censorship) within the system as a whole.

As Norfolk has declared in an interview, his former commitment to (leftist) photojournalism (particularly for the antifascist *Searchlight* magazine) entered a political crisis as the pressure to conform to the preformatting and genre was diminishing documentary photography's relationship to any sense of cognitive complexity. In this, his turn to large-format, panoramic photographs of war zones "post-conflict" (Bosnia, Afghanistan, Palestine) was an attempt to reawaken a certain attentiveness—common in a lot of postdocumentary practice—in what he felt to be the lost or diminished spectator of photography. And, interestingly, it is the very absence of the human figure for Norfolk that allows him to resecure this spectator and by extension reestablish the repoliticization of the image.

> I'm trying to stretch [the] idea of what a battlefield *is*.... It's partly because of that that people aren't there—but it's also…for me, I think people gobble up the photograph. They become what the photograph *is*. For me, people just aren't that important; it's about this panoptic process, it's about this kind of eavesdropping, it's about this ability to look into every aspect of our lives. And I think if you put people into these, I don't know—it would draw viewers away. It would draw viewers into the story *of the people*.[22]

So, the politicization lies in the conjunction and display of "inhuman" forces within the scan of the panoramic, which is also characteristic of Delahaye's own move from photojournalism to a similar large-format "postconflict" landscape production. As with Norfolk, Delahaye's disappointment in the transformative possibilities of photojournalism and the demise of photojournalism's critical spectator led him to a photographic form that was directly, as he says, "incompatible with the economy of the press."[23] In this respect what links Delahaye's and Norfolk's move to, broadly speaking, the art-document is the way in which large-format photography is able to secure a cognitive delay in perception or, more precisely, to allow the spectator of photography to reconnect their absorption in the photodocument to a rare sublimity. Another kind of politicization enters the frame. The resecuring of photography's politicization, far from being the recording of the event in all its intense and conflictual unfolding or instrumental horror (the moment of its heightened critical temporality), is identifiable with those incidents and details that emerge as a result of the *atemporal* recovery of the event.

THE ATEMPORALITY OF THE POSTPHOTOGRAPHY PHOTOGRAPH

Before the advent of the televisualization of the image in mass culture, photography and cinema functioned, in their respective reportorial roles, as the places around which collective meaning was formed and challenged. This generated a specific kind of photographic temporality: photographs were produced on the basis that they were able, irrespective of the ambivalence of any given sign, to generate a coherent political effect ("this happened," or more accurately "this happened, but if you don't believe me, ask him or her, who was also there," to reiterate our discussion of Ricoeur).[24] As I have stressed, this can no longer be guaranteed as a public act for photography, given the weakening of photography's interventionist role and its dialectic appropriation of the cinematic model. This has led photography, as a consequence, to draw on that which it has tended to distrust as much as celebrate—its mournful powers of stasis—which places photography's relationship to the event more generally in a precinematic space. A major outcome of this shift is a convergence between what is left of reportorial and documentary practices and the older painterly functions of photography. The late photograph in its elegiac and mournful modes not only tends to remove the body from the picture, but also identifies the political allegorically with the ruin and the remnant. Some aspects of postmodernism in the 1980s made a virtue of this,[25] but here it functions not as a critique of photographic transparency, but as the place where photography openly declares its public and social limits.

Consequently, in "[foregoing] the process of the event and ceding it to other media,"[26] this kind of photography breaks with much of the critical temporal language associated with photography's appropriation of cinema. Gone is the notion of the photograph as an act of interruption, displacement, interrogation, rearticulation—of generalized movement and cognitive disruption, the avant-garde language of denaturalization—to be replaced by the photograph as a site of "glacial" contemplation, as if the splendor and beauty of Ansel Adams's Yosemite pictures were the only available model for a workable and satisfying account of the event. The photodocument, then, seems to be clearing a space for itself in the face of innumerable political, cultural, and technological impediments. But if this move is not exactly the final resignation of documentary practice in the face of neoliberalism and digitalization, it does nonetheless point to a profound reassessment of photography's subordinate cultural form: photography—the work seems to be saying—is at its most perspicacious and relevant when it *foregrounds* its mordant and memorial role. That is, photography is at its most potent and vivid when it claims back an allegiance with the *detemporalizing* effects of aesthetic experience (distantiation, "stepping back," the precipitousness of the sublime) as against the discontinuities and contingencies, or cuts, of cinematic denaturalization. (The rise of the studio photograph in the 1980s is yet another, and obviously familiar, indication of this.) This is why it is harder these days to distinguish photojournalism and documentary practice from the artistic appropriation of the photodocument, because both sets of practices are increasingly reliant on this circumscribed notion of the event-as-aftermath.

Where does this assessment of lateness leave the place of the photodocument in

the culture? Has photography ceded, in any meaningful sense, all its previous interrogatory functions? Has the event-before-the-aftermath of photography been lost irrevocably to video-fication and digital televisualization? Is the photodocument now profoundly internal to the figural functions of art in its mediation of its cultural subordination?

Well, we can't analyze these questions outside of the current neoliberal political and cultural settlement. When I talk of the failure or unwillingness of recent photography to revivify and reimagine its subordinate cultural role, this is largely a political question that lies outside of what photography might or might not want to do, or imagines itself to be doing, within the present political economy of photography. Much photography is late photography now, and therefore outside of what we commonly regard as documentary culture, precisely because the critical and cognitive link between the photodocument and the transformation of social experience is suppressed, not just in the wake of the hegemony of the nonsymbolic, but as a result of the determination of the state to decouple where necessary the "singular event" from the political process, what Éric Alliez and Antonio Negri have rightly called neoliberalism's "state management of nihilism."[27] The recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are the most obvious and latest examples of this. (Although, of course, the digital image does not escape this process of censure and exclusion either; the photodocument is by no means alone in this, just as no war in the twentieth century, even the Vietnam war, has failed to prevent the photographer getting "close"). Yet, if the state management of nihilism has no *space* for the photograph—in any constructive and transformative sense—this does not mean that subordinate forms of cultural production, such as the photodocument, are thereby defined by these conditions. For, what the history of modernist culture under capitalism teaches us is that an experience of cultural subordination can also be a countervailing force for negation, liberation, and self-transformation. This is something that the argument for the lateness of late photography tends to miss.

The turn to the event-as-aftermath may relieve photography of some of the burdens of an older and critically over expectant documentary culture, but there is nothing to prevent photography using the freedom from these burdens to find other routes into the symbolic. This is why the atemporal conditions of the postphotography photodocument represent an instructive moment in the emergence of a new framework for the photodocument. That is, these new conditions of lateness enable the photographer to work *through* the representation of the event in ways that are internally complex, allowing the photodocument to reconnect with its sequential and diegetic modes of presentation. Thus, instead of opting for a melancholic closure of the event-as-aftermath, the event-as-aftermath can equally become a space for the discursive reconstruction and extension of the event. And this process of discursive reconstruction can, of course, be, in principle, infinite. The time-of-the-event, then, lies in the efficacy of the reconstructive process itself—there is no event outside of its symbolic reconstruction—and not in any imagined identification of photographic truth with the immediacy of the "singular event." This does not obviate the empirical

exclusions of lateness. Veridical content cannot be magicked back into existence. If the bodies are gone, the bodies are gone. If the face is not there to look back at us, the face is not there to look back at us. But nonetheless, this approach allows the atemporality of the photodocument now to be reconnected to a very different model of artistic/photographic practice and historical agency. In this respect another kind of cultural form for photography—for late photography—comes to mind. Instead of recalling the photodocument to a pictorial tradition of painting and (essentially) to the viewing conditions of the museum, the photodocument becomes the sequential and intertextual building block of a practice of reading within the archive.

THE LATENESS OF THE ARCHIVE

In the 1980s and 1990s work on the archive emphasized it as a productive machine for meaning. Archives were not simply incurious repositories of things, their neutral contents awaiting redeeming eyes and hands, but intellectually organized forms of rationalization. This is why state and public photographic archives were the objects of extended scrutiny during this period, because in the organization of their materials state archives made clear how archival referents were produced through the processes of archival accumulation and selection. Allan Sekula analyzes this in his work on nineteenth-century police photo archives: the "criminal" body—its modes of state recognition—is produced out of an endless accumulation and refinement of a predetermined criminal physiognomy, derived from the pseudosciences of phrenology and eugenics.[28] What the positivism of this rationalization disguises is a doubling of reified truth. The truth of the photograph is produced twice: once as tendentious science and then as tendentious sociology. Sekula, though, is less interested here in the broader archival conditions of our culture itself: that is, how the archive is not just the instrumental expression of state power, but, in a culture given over to the rapid utilization and turnover of word and image, the organizing commodity-condition of image and text.[29] The archive is precisely, then, what lies waiting for all images, particularly those—the majority—that achieve no sustained circulation. However, if Sekula doesn't formulate a general theory of archivization, he does highlight one of the constitutive challenges of photography for the early (modernist) documenters: that the life of the image depended on its ability to *resist or defeat* (however briefly) the inexorable pull of the archive.

> Can any connections be traced between the archival mode of photography and the emergence of photographic modernism? To what degree did self-conscious modernist practice accommodate itself to the model of the archive? To what degree did modernists consciously or unconsciously resist or subvert the model of the archive, which tended to relegate the individual photographer to the status of a detail worker, providing fragmentary images for an apparatus beyond his or her control?[30]

In fact, such connections *can* be traced, as I have touched on: modernism, the political demands of documentary culture, and the archive are essentially interwoven. Thus the "decisive moment" and the "singular event" are better seen as attempts precisely to avoid not only the nonsymbolic emptying of mass culture, but the "symbolic" void of the archive. "Expressive high modernism" and modernist documentary converge on this very point. But as I have demonstrated, the social and political conditions, under which the "singular event" might productively escape or defeat archivization and therefore produce new forms of symbolization, have become highly circumscribed. We need, therefore, in conditions of photography's inevitable lateness, a different understanding of the relations between the "event" and the archive. That is, an understanding of how the interrelationship of the "event" and the archive allows us to generate a more productive (political) understanding of lateness (and, as such, the "singular event").

Photo archives are sites, essentially, where the lateness of the photograph is made normative. For if the photo archive—state, public, commercial, and domestic—is where "events" live, so to speak, once photographs are removed from circulation and from immediate use, then the archive is a place for sustaining the "evental" content of the photography. The photographic event is subject to a continuous passage from dormancy in the archive to its "evental" reinscription outside of the archive. This is to say that because the continuing life of the photograph is the result of its recovery from the archive, the photographic "event" is in a permanent and fluid state of relationality between the archive and its extra-archival existence. The nonsymbolic roles of photography, however, function to stop or block this relationality and fluidity. This is why the mass cultural photo archive—as a capitalist and imperialist meta-archive—is the most powerful of fixed "evental" structures. Its enormous distributive power enables the stabilization and naturalization of the historical event on a global scale. Thus, if archives are structures of meaning in process, things that are produced through the act of accumulation (the result of prior judgment, editorial decisions, and so on), then the reclamation of photography from the archive always promises a practice of counterproduction, of counterarchiving, of interruption and reordering of the event. Accordingly, we might say that the "singular event" consigned to the archive is *never late*, or is never subject to lateness, because it is always able, through a continuous process of symbolic construction and reconstruction, to *re*temporalize itself. In this light Derrida's work on archivization in the 1990s allows us a more systematic understanding of the archive. For Derrida, under this general reconceptualization of the archive-as-productive, the archive becomes "a movement of the promise and the future no less than a recording [of] the past."[31] This is because the movement from dormancy to reinscription of the "event" is always linked to the unwritten or underwritten (messianic) content of the event's connection to futures past. Indeed, a spectral messianism is at work in all archives, insofar as the recovery and reinscription of materials always promise a break with the dead continuum of the present (the meta-archive), and therefore "what is no longer archived in the same is no longer lived in the same way."[32] This very Benjaminian

formulation points to another possible reading of the crisis of documentary culture and the subordination of the photograph: under the hegemony of the nonsymbolic and the state management of nihilism, work with and work on the archive take on a particular critical productivity, a place of historical defense, as much as a place of critical appropriation, in a period where mnemotechnics are increasingly necessary as a radical and revolutionary resource.[33] There is an important sense here, therefore, that under the vast archivization of our culture "the politics of the archive is our permanent orientation,"[34] promising, if not a new documentary culture, then at least a new documentary theorization: not the separation of event and archive, but their inter-relational positioning.

This is why one of the key forms of this process of retemporalization and any future retheorization of the documentary work remains the photo-text book. In the photo-text book not only is the photodocument restored to its literary/historical and narratological conditions of visibility; it provides a space of systematic relationality for the reinscription of the photograph. The photo-text book is a place where "event" and counterarchive, or the "event" *as* counterarchive, are made coherent. But, more to the point, the photo-text book allows photography to bring its subordinate cultural form into a possible workable critical alignment with the discursive character of digital form. The stop-start diffusion of the digital image and the interdependence and mutability of image and text on the Internet are no longer the antithesis of the to-be-looked-at-ness of the photograph, but offer a sympathetic and compatible setting for the interruptive and narratological reconstruction of the "event."

A POLITICS OF LATENESS?

The reassertion of the book form over painterliness, then, presupposes a tentative response to my reflections on the subordinate cultural role of photography. What kind of model of artisticness does the late photodocument want to ally itself with, in lieu of the demise of an older documentary culture and the rise of "lateness"? A model in which the photograph always moves to a default position—the death of the event and mourning for a lost photographic immediacy—or a model in which the event is brought into extended discursive life, not just as a result of its expansion into readerly artistic form, but as a result of the digital transformation and extension of the book form itself?

One of the virtues of the photo-text book in the modernist culture of the 1920s and 1930s—as in, for example, Evans and Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, but also, importantly, in Ernst Friedrich's *Krieg dem Kriege* (1919), Alexander Rodchenko and Vladimir Mayakovsky's *Pro Eto* (1923), and Kurt Tucholsky and John Heartfield's *Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles* (1929)[35]—was that it allowed photographers and writers to incorporate the veridical demands of the photodocument within the general space of a modernist spectatorship.[36] And crucially, this was both a political and a formal strategy. In refusing to separate the veridical from artistic spectatorship,

a realism of the event and a modernism of form were seen as interdependent and, therefore, as an exemplary form of cultural politicization. There was no photography *of* the "singular event," only a multitude of events that the author was compelled to select from and ascribe singularity and meaning to. This produced a symbolic relationship to the event that was always conscious of the discursive and ironized conditions of visibility and truthfulness of the event. The destruction of this culture of the image and its tentative alliance of documentary practice with the deflationary modes of modernism, in the late 1930s, was one of the main casualties of the cessation of social modernism. Yet, despite the historical demise of these practices, the use of the photo-text book to open up the literary and theoretical rearticulation of the event continues to provide a valuable set of reference points for photography after the photograph after documentary culture. That is, at no point do these forms of photo-book work assume that the veridical content of the photograph can carry its content *unmediated* to its audience, as if the truth of photography lies solely in the immediacy of the photodocument.

One contemporary photographer who has drawn on this modernist legacy and who in turn plunges into the current conflictual conditions of lateness and the photodocument in a way very different from Norfolk and Delahaye is Geert Van Kesteren. If Norfolk and Delahaye accept the physical and symbolic limitations of arriving unannounced in war zones and elsewhere under present conditions, Van Kesteren subverts these limitations by adopting the egalitarian possibilities of cell phone technology to create a clandestine Mass-Observation-type archive of Baghdad life during the Iraqi war. Confronted by the sheer impossibility as a Western photographer of arriving unannounced in Baghdad during the war, he and his assistants commissioned numerous residents in Baghdad to document the everyday appearances of the conflict on cell phones and small digital cameras. Many of these were taken from inside a car in order to avoid arrest. These images were then edited and compiled in a book, *Baghdad Calling* (2008),[37] in which this counterarchive of nonofficial images—everyday scenes of Baghdad life never seen in the West as well as more familiar shots of the recent aftermath of insurgent and Allied violence—was interspersed with photographs taken by Van Kesteren of Iraqi refugees and with interviews conducted by him with refugees in Syria, Jordan, and Turkey on the politics and horrors of the American invasion. In this sense the book form becomes a complex subduction of photographic form and traditional "evental" documentary temporality in the spirit of the multitemporal space of the modernist photo-text book, and it therefore identifies the representations of the war—of war—explicitly with an analytical or reflective lateness. That is, what we have identified with narcissistic self-representation and microsociability (the cell phone camera) is given a conceptualizing function in the spirit of lomography (photograph those things that stand outside of a given schema, framework, or genre), which then forms a part of a number of first-person political narratives. The photographer-as-collective-author, therefore, acts very much as a director of photographic technique and form: he draws on the clandestine possibilities of cell phone technology in order to retemporalize—through

text and the production of new metonymic chains of the counterarchive—the "evental" and generic-symbolic reduction of the invasion. This combination of proxy cell phone images, postevent documentation, and oral history, inventive as it is, however, is not a *solution* to the political and temporal crisis of documentation; yet in social conditions where the mourning for the lost event of photography and the crisis of photography's indexicality are commonly conflated—and as such are taken to represent the very end of the photodocument—these multitemporal image-text stratagems need to be taken seriously in relation to any critically emergent notion of lateness. Thus we need a more nuanced understanding of lateness.

There is the lateness of those who in missing the conflictual "event" find solace in the aestheticizing tendencies of the photographic sublime and, as such, use such lateness in conjunction with the critique of realism in order to "refictionalize" documentary practice in the manner of recent photography-as-painting. This is a lateness that is essentially trapped in its melancholic attachment to the "lost" event. But there is the lateness of those who choose to work outside of the temporal constraints of arriving on time and who, therefore, at a significant level, have worked through a process of mourning for the lost event (as does Van Kesteren). Thus, arriving late may also free the photography from the fetishization of immediacy (without denying that the objective loss of the event for photography is an indisputable political reality, a reality that drives the necessary recourse to mnemotechnics).[38] Hence, arriving on time may not be congruent with arriving on time at all. Arriving on time, in fact, may be the most inauspicious of times, the most premature of times, for what is "on time" may, in its expectations of "directness" and "clarity" and "truth" (and the "decisive moment"), conspire with preformatting and the generic and, therefore, with what is already known, with "dead time," with politics-as-spectacle, with the nonsymbolic. Nevertheless, if lateness is the space in which we stand, this does not, contra Derrida, mean that we should always be content with arriving late; the counterarchive cannot renew itself (and its promise to the future) solely through a process of reinscription. There is no promise of the counterarchive—of the "event" living in the present—without the risk of "getting close" and "getting close, by getting lost," so to speak; no promise of the archive without the renewal and extension of singularity.

Hence, this places an unforgiving responsibility on the photographer, even under the regime of the nonsymbolic, to "get in the way" and to "get in the way" again. So, if the temporality and efficacy of "getting in the way" have been broken politically in some sense, this does lessen the requirement to do so. For if the theoretical issue for photography is not loss of immediacy per se—of asserting the life of the photodocument over that of the archive—the archive nevertheless has to be renewed from outside of its borders. Thus, without photography's willingness to violate and be violated, this renewal becomes an impossibility and, as such, effectively subordinates the photodocument to the atemporal forces of real abstraction and social abstraction.

6

PHOTOGRAPHY, ABSTRACTION, AND THE SOCIAL PRODUCTION OF SPACE

In *The Production of Space* (1974), Henri Lefebvre divides his analysis of space into three distinct categories: spatial practices, representations of space, and representational spaces.[1] "Spatial practices" refers to the links between the routines of everyday life and the use and occupation of the various networks, sites, and routes that make up the public and private, productive and nonproductive, spaces of a given social formation. "Representations of space" refers directly to the "logic of capital": the production and reproduction of the built environment determined by the state and market and their interrelations. And "representational spaces" refers to those spaces created, adapted, or imagined by people either in domestic and private settings or in public, which are derived symbolically from the practices of art and their countercultural modes.

These might be, for instance, the taking over of a disused or derelict site for community ends or simply the transformation of a teenager's bedroom into a fantasy space or recreation area. Unsurprisingly the utopian content of these "representational spaces"—what Lefebvre calls space as *work* rather than space as commodity—forms the basis of his critique of the routinized character of daily spatial practice and experience and the corporate character of the "representations of space" of planners, developers, architects, and technocrats. Yet, if Lefebvre identifies "representational spaces" as involving a stake in the imagination of a different kind of (spatial) future, he is also quick to point out how socially and symbolically weak the collective and social function of such "representational spaces" actually is. "Representational spaces" may define the instrumental limits of abstract space, but they nevertheless remain subordinate to the logic of capital and to state power. These spaces may contribute to the reenvisioning of space—that is, at the level of social planning they may be allowed to humanize or gentrify various urban areas or figure imaginatively in the projects of architects or in the collective fantasies of the tourist industry—but as the basis for any systematic confrontation with dominant property relations, their productiveness and effectiveness are largely local and symbolic.

Lefebvre refers to the increasing dominance of "representations of space" as a process of social abstraction, in line with the general process of abstraction immanent to commodity relations. "Representations of space" are what capital dictates and requires. The production of space, then, is not a backdrop to the extraction of surplus value and the division of labor, to the reproduction of the relations of production and

the accumulation of capital; it is integrated into, and productive of, its monopolistic dynamic.

SPATIAL ABSTRACTION

This was Lefebvre's great theoretical advance in the analysis of space: space is not just what capital occupies, but what capital *produces*, *reproduces*, and *transforms*, and in turn, this has an impact on the social forms capital takes and the social relations it generates. Lefebvre's discussion of this dynamic, however, was written before current debates on globalization and is confined predominantly to an analysis of abstraction in terms of a cultural analysis of the phenomenological and somatic experience of space. This has since fed into less compelling anthropological theories of spatial abstraction, such as Marc Augé's work on airports, supermarkets, and motorways.[2] What is missing from Lefebvre (and more significantly from Augé) is a strong sense that the abstractions of the world market, of what Augé calls supermodernity, are directly given in the concept of capital itself. Globalization, monopolization, and abstraction *are* the logic of capital, and thus the production of space is the perpetual outcome of the global dynamic of accumulation and devaluation. This basic conflict is discussed principally in Lefebvre at the general level of the dynamic interrelation of totality and fragmentation and not in terms, for instance, of the categories of fixed capital, finance capital, and productive capital.

A key dynamic of the production of space under capitalism is the embedding of fixed capital (factories, offices, and so on) in specific landscapes in order to realize the productive value of labor. Such embedding largely determines what defines the boundaries of the urban and its commercial zones and what therefore contributes to the uniform look of many cities and their outlying areas. But because capitalism requires a constant reduction in production costs and in the time it takes to move goods, fixed capital also becomes, to quote David Harvey, "the barrier to overcome."[3] Hence immanent to capital in general is the constant drive on the part of competing capitals to either create an advantageous niche in an existing geography or generate new spatial relations in order to facilitate a competitive advantage or escape disadvantage in a recession. This takes two main spatial forms: relocation and expansion within a known locale; and the more draconian option—pursued usually at the point of extreme devaluation across the system as a whole—of pulling out altogether, as in the decimation of primary industries down the US Eastern seaboard in the 1980s and 1990s. In this latter case, restructuring leaves behind a dead landscape and a massive devaluation of labor power, since it is far more advantageous on the part of companies in the long run to write off fixed capital completely, particularly if it is at the end of its life cycle, than to reduce their scale of operations. And these dead landscapes have become increasingly familiar globally since the 1970s as a result of the recurring crisis of the realization of value as an expression of the long-term relative decline in the system's profitability. Thus, if this is

the extreme point of the forces of real abstraction (value-form) and social abstraction (the socially heteronomous outcomes of competition), one should not assume that these destructive processes are an aberration. Spatial fixing, short-term or long-term, extreme or palliative, local or beyond national borders, is constitutive of the circuits of capital and, therefore, is part of a continuous, day-to-day restructuring of spatial configurations as an expression of the fluctuations in the realization of value. Thus, the interrelationship between the dynamic of real abstraction and the forces of social abstraction produces a constant pressure on planners, engineers, property developers, architects, and designers to produce (to expand, contract, build, and destroy) new spatial fixes that will facilitate the flow of capital and the extraction of surplus value. And these fixes inevitably push through built forms and patterns of occupation that favor maximum productive or commercial values (social abstraction). If this process is dynamic, changing the built environment daily, its dynamism nevertheless is subject to a certain geographical inertia and delimitation. For if fixed capital is the "barrier to overcome," overcoming it is nevertheless fraught with difficulties. Relocation in a given locale at one end of the scale and massive deoccupancy at the height of a period of devaluation at the other are subject to powerful counterforces that favor existing commercial values and power relations. In the case of relocation, these counterforces most obviously are, in highly developed urban areas, the restrictions on the scope for a new build of planning laws, environmental protection laws, architectural heritage protection, and long-standing patterns of ownership (this is why much of the expansion of the new retail sector in favored high-end enclaves has relied on extensive rebranding of existing buildings and sites rather than new builds). Similarly companies cannot freely build outside of designated commercial zones, particularly in undeveloped rural sites. In the case of the deoccupancy, these counterforces are that as the crises of devalorization become more frequent, company flight and the wiping out of fixed capital and a massive range of use-values attached to labor are more and more politically risky, insofar as they plunge further areas of working-class life into the dead realm of nonreproduction. Governments do not want an accumulation of Detroits and Baltimores.

Consequently, this is why the big corporations will do their utmost to keep the fixed capital–intensive parts of their business physically and geographically intact, in the hope that the levels of profit from the long-term investment in plant and machinery will eventually pick up. For the larger the company is, the greater the protection it possesses against other companies that are hoping to enter the market or that are newly present in the market, because of the prohibitive costs of competing; therefore, as a consequence, the larger company has a greater margin of recovery than its competitors (particularly when it has state support). This is why the recent two American administrations have been desperate to protect what remains of the American car industry; the social fallout from its destruction would have been too great on the heels of the deindustrialization of the Eastern seaboard. But more importantly, for productive capital overall, spatial fixes are always confronted with productive capital's *own* spatial inertia (something that many advocates of hyper-

globalization tend to forget or fail to take account of). Financial deregulation may have expanded financial transactions globally, contributing to financial capital's restructuring of the social fabric of many cities, but the internationalization of capital has had a limited impact on productive capital itself. One factor is overproduction in the system as a whole, leaving masses of capital unable to find profitable productive outlets (a consequence of rising productivity from within the contracting industrial base). Another is the fact that productive capital is tied to the concrete advantages of certain locales. This is because the returns on fixed capital as a part of productive capital—certainly big productive capital—are necessarily "slow," and therefore factories and workforces are not movable at will. Indeed, paradoxically, what productive capital needs above all else in order to flourish (which property speculation doesn't) is state support, and invariably only a certain number of developed states worldwide are able to offer this. That is why the vast majority of multinationals are based in and operate out of the major Western economies, for above all else multinationals need local and international transport links that are good, plentiful and subsidized supplies of water and easy access to primary materials, advantageous tax legislation, a regulated credit system, a stable currency, and a working police and judiciary. So, although many major corporations would like to move all their productive capacity lock, stock, and barrel into low-wage and "state-free" zones, they have not been able to do so, because the social costs to capital are just too great. And this is why, contrary to a popular globalization myth, capitalism has not seen the expansion of productive capacity globally over the last twenty-five years. The major tendency in foreign investment during this period has been the buying up of existing enterprises and not the starting up of new productive capacity (hence the continuing immiseration of Africa and large parts of Asia). This is even the case in Russia after the fall of Communism, where the majority of capital flows into the country in the late 1990s were into speculation on the treasury bonds market.[4] This is not say that companies are not willing to risk the social costs of devaluation by moving wholesale out of one area into another this side of mass devaluation; this aggressive and radical "switching" has certainly increased through the 1990s and 2000s. But these relocations are mostly by smaller companies or by larger companies in advanced economies moving to other advanced economies.

The transformation of cities and towns under the forces of globalization, then, is an uneven process of social abstraction, where some older industries pull out altogether and cause desolation, but where most are confined to seeking advantage within given geographical niches. Limited space within given commercial zones, consequently, is subject to an intense interfirm struggle over space that only the bigger companies can realistically compete for—hence the continuing contraction of the multiple use-values of main streets with the arrival of a small number of large retail companies or manufacturer outputs that force up rents to force out competition or unwanted low-scale businesses, as well as the bypassing and destruction of the main street and its multiple uses of space altogether in the building of out-of-town shopping centers or malls. This pattern has been underway—certainly in the United

States—since the 1950s, producing in many smaller towns and cities a distinct zonal distribution of use-values (retail, production, housing) linked by personal transportation, and in turn generating its own specific forms of architectural abstraction (gas stations, freeway stop-offs, off-freeway malls). The attempt to ameliorate the worst social effects of this model of development in the 1980s and 1990s and to revive either old industrial areas or derelict or semiderelict downtown areas, as finance capital moved into supporting the building of prestigious cultural zones (in order to reestablish work/life mixed uses) did not alter the pattern of the distribution of use-values overall. Indeed, many of these cultural zones were simply another way of housing the same companies and the same architectural units, faciae, and forms under new roofs. The impact of financial capital on the new urban cultural zones, then, has tended to create lopsided geographies, in which high-rent and architecturally prestigious commerical/cultural areas sit next to high-density housing and dilapidated public facilities and areas, just as the development of high-end retailing outlets in city and town centers has pushed out low-cost housing. An extreme example of this is SoHo in New York, in which escalating real estate values have forced out long-standing working-class occupants and a long-standing and vigorous artistic community. Certain major metropolitan centers, and particular areas within these metropolises, compete to become the privileged support zones for the new deindustrialized service city: the city that combines light and fast industries (hi-tech, biotech, and digital), banking, culture, and high-end tourism, such as New York, London, Berlin, and Barcelona. One of the effects of this concentration of finance capital on the recent development of major cities is the profound discrepancy between their commercial and cultural development as service centers and the failing cities and towns outside of the anointed loop.

Overall, then, the increased penetration of finance capital into the new industry/cultural zones of the major cities has produced a new urban topos, in which the standardized and privatized forms of these zones have produced a narrowing or destruction of use-values in given geographical areas. Indeed, this is where Augé's notion of nonspaces as part of this broader development comes into its own: the privatized spaces or dead spaces monitored by CCTV cameras that serve to protect commercial zones from social intrusion or those noninhabited locales that act as security buffers near airports and state security facilities have become all-pervasive and a direct corollary to the new commercial/cultural zones, in which "undesirables" are monitored and asked to leave. It is thus not hard to see the connection between the sharpening of these forces in terms of the division and control of space, productive and finance capital's restructuring of the city, the huge expansion in the production of "imaginary spaces" and the politics of space in contemporary art, and the emergence of the documentation of the new "representations of space." The exclusionary violence, sublimity, ugliness, and inertia of the forces of spatial abstraction in the period of its neoliberal aggression have become the explicit cultural background to, and conceptual ground of, a growing number of recent photographic projects. As such, the violations of social abstraction and real abstraction become the

terrain upon which a number of these photographic practices define their own spatial "fixing" and "unfixing"; spatiality is articulated as a violating process.

THE PANORAMA AS CAPITALIST SYNECDOCHE

The most obvious and ambitious of these practices, of course, is that of Andreas Gursky. Gursky's large-scale chromogenic color prints survey the forms of production, the patterns of consumption, and the architecture and design of the new social geographies. His panoramas operate synecdochically as a synthetic visualization of globalized mass culture.[5] By focusing on the commodity-form in its vast extensity and on the uniformities of mass—individualized—consumption, the repetition of things and people *stands in* for totalization, for the global extensity of the market and the forces of the new modernity. The outcome is a photography that invokes the forces of spatial abstraction as much as documenting its forms. By adopting a topographical format, the effects of spatial abstraction in the public domain—the reproducibility of the same, nonrelationality, the emptying of historical consciousness in things and spaces—take on the phenomenological boundaries of the imaginary spectator of the scene: "this is what it is like to be in this place, at this time, and as such, by extension, this is what it is like to live in this world of things and relations now."

Photography, of course, is no stranger to these empathic effects of scale of the view-camera photograph, for example, with the New Topographics in the 1970s, who have been an influence on Gursky; but in Gursky's case, the computer manipulations lend an unprecedented illusionism to the surface of the represented scene, heightening the spectator's imaginary sense of absorption. The force of this lies in the fact that the panoramic presence of the photograph appears to reproduce the sublimity and dread of the new abstract social geographies' aggressive extensity, radically unsettling the domesticated conventions of the documentary photograph as an abbreviated description or notation of some part of the world. Gursky's photographs are not "enlarged snapshots," but the deliberate and composite (edited) result of the extended study of a given range of typical settings and scenes. Gursky's photographs ask significant epistemological questions about the representation and production of space in the contemporary photograph as much as about the category of photography itself. It is as if the extensity of abstract space in advanced capitalism has forced photography to find new technical and cognitive resources to contain its effects.

But if the attempt to contain the logic of spatial abstraction *in* the photograph represents a significant challenge to the domestication of photography, the use of the "domesticated" conventions of photography is no less evident in other contemporary photography that addresses the effects of spatial abstraction. Indeed, Gursky's photography is, perhaps, the current exception to the rule, in that the representation of the "representations of space" in this latter kind of work is generated in the studio and through what continues to be the dominant mode of photographic practice of the

last thirty-five years: the staged image.

INTERIORIZATION OF ABSTRACTION

Reliant on the conventions of the scene constructed for the camera in the studio, the effects of spatial abstraction in this work are figured metonymically through the interior or exterior detail, rather than synecdochically through the panoramic sweep of the fixed-view camera. For example, in the photographs of James Casebere, Thomas Demand, and Jorge Ribalta, the staged architectural interior or exterior produces a deliberately muted or anonymous space, in which the nonrelational effects of spatial abstraction are suggested either in abstentia, through a lack of external reference points, or through a kind of sinister constraint. But what marks out the nonrelationality of these photographs is not their oblique invocation of the "poetics" of space, but their discrete or miniaturized conditions of production: all the photographs are produced from models. Casebere's Gothic crypt-like interiors, Demand's bland, anonymous residential interiors, and Ribalta's graffitied, derelict exteriors are all photographed from small architectural sets made from painted cardboard, paper, or wood. Furthermore, the referential chain does not stop at the model. In Demand and Ribalta the sets are themselves produced from photographs: respectively, grainy newsphotos and snapshots of the old Barrio Chino in Barcelona. An ambiguous chain of verisimilitude is established, based on the passage of the object into a photograph and then into an object resembling the referent of the original photograph and then back into another photograph.

This production of sets by the artist-photographer is, at one level, commonplace enough, and since the early 1970s it has played perhaps the key role in figuring the crisis of representation: the fact that representations never seem to match up to their referents. But this overfamiliar issue of photography's "incommensurability problem"[6] is not my concern here, and the interpretation of these spaces is not simply a question of a semiotic reading of the would-be gap between representation and its referents. Rather, what is at stake here is how photography might interrogate the production of space.

If there is an overarching assertiveness to Gursky's panoramic invocation of spatial abstraction, in the work of Casebere, Demand, and Ribalta their "stilling" of space is used counterwise to produce a sense of intimacy and loss. This captures a very different set of responses to the effects of spatial abstraction. The photographs neither set out to replicate the surface appearance of the corporate abstractions of the contemporary world, nor, in their turn to illusionism, concern themselves with producing fantasy spaces. Rather, they are simulated naturalistic spaces in which the effects of abstraction are produced *fictively*. In this they sit somewhere between the *representation of the representations of spaces* and *representational spaces*.

What is useful, first and foremost, about Lefebvre's work on the production of space is that it is grounded in a discussion of space as a problem of power—of access, of autonomy and relationality—and not as a question of hermeneutics or

poetics. The distinction he makes between representations of space and representational space is, essentially, about distinguishing between qualitatively different kinds of appropriation and control: appropriation and control in the interests of the forces of repetition and reproducibility, and appropriation and control in the interests of difference and relationality. In this way, for Lefebvre space is always an issue of who occupies or uses it, under what terms, and to what ends. On this basis Casebere's, Demand's, and Ribalta's are *deceptively* vacant: the implied connection between the setting and absent orders of power (of abstraction) invokes these places as spaces where certain symptomatic or reified experiences are produced and reproduced. These spaces may be physically empty but they are nonetheless historically and culturally *occupied* by ghosts and specters. What is significant about these "dead" or denuded spaces is not that we can speak of them in terms of "power" rather than "poetics," but how the representation of spatial abstraction and representational space interconnect, and consequently, how space is produced evidentially in the photograph.

What is distinctive about these photographs is that an extended process of fictionality is given over to the mimetic reproduction of the banal and nondescript. As such, it as if these artists are caught between two sets of forces: the direct need to submit their skills to photography's objective powers of mechanical or digital reproducibility, and at the same time the need to insert their hand-based presence in the photograph as a means of asserting an imaginary control over the photographic process as a critique of nonrelationality and heteronomy. It is as if the utopian or negative content of representational space returns through the representation of the representations of space. The result is that, paradoxically, these images are *highly crafted* photographs of the effects of spatial abstraction. This is particularly resonant in Ribalta's photographs of the Barrio Chino, where the elaborate effort that has gone into replicating the look of the old working-class area prior to its "modernization" in the 1990s functions metonymically as an identification with the area's displaced labor. A symbolic link is established between the labor invested by the artist in the reproduction of the dilapidated appearance of the Barrio and the clearance of the area as a place of artisanal production; an area that once had a rich and variegated social and economic history is now designated as unproductive. Capital hates unproductive spaces and will do its best to transform them on the grounds that modernization is a technical requirement and a moral necessity. In this sense these spaces are at the other end of Gursky's vision of globalization. These are images *of* devaluation.

Of course the notion of saving photography from a would-be deadening rationalism by recognizing and releasing the intentional and creative presence of the photographer has long characterized the contested status of photography. The determining role of the photographer's hand has been repeatedly introduced into the discourses of photography to save photography from the "merely mechanical" and inexpressive. But something different is emergent here. These are images in which the indexical powers of photography and the artist's productive manipulation of

materials are evidently fused: in the case of Gursky through his digital remastering of the photograph, and in the case of Casebere, Demand, and Ribalta through their material and painterly construction of the prephotographic referent. Making and reproduction *converge* without a sense that photographic labor needs to be defended as being less processual and open-ended than painting. Consequently, although model-building for the camera is quite a different matter from the internal reordering of the digital image, the means by which the photograph is arrived at possess no less a complex figurality than painting. On this basis it is possible to see this convergence of making and reproduction as reflecting something more substantive and ambitious: the claim that photography has *taken over* the figural complexities of painting. As Andrew Benjamin argues in *Disclosing Spaces: On Painting* (2004), painting and photography are presently reengaged in a coextensive dialogue on these terms. However, this dialogue is not a reciprocal one. The incorporation of photography as readymade into painting has tested and refigured the boundaries of painterly authorship, displacing painterly expressiveness from its historic "first-order" position. Yet if the aftereffect of photography radically transforms the cognitive field of painting and its inherited skill-base, it does not, according to Benjamin, displace painting as such, shunt it back into the failed recovery of its glorious past, as the critics of painting-after-photography have continually claimed. On the contrary the technical relation of photography releases the internal relations immanent to painterly form, productively transforming both the form of painting (and photography). "In other words, what photography allows is the capacity for painting to be reworked such that a potential that in some instances was already there would then be released."[7] The future possibilities of painting are secured, precisely through the technical effects and affects of photography. Similarly, in Fried's *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before*,[8] the figural possibilities of photography are held to derive directly from the historical achievements of painting, blurring the historical gap between photographic truth and painterly process. As he says:

> One of the most important developments in the so-called visual arts of the past twenty-plus years has been the emergence of large-scale, tableau-sized photographs that by virtue of their size demand to be hung on gallery walls in the manner of easel paintings, and in other respect as well aspire to what might loosely be called the rhetorical, or beholder-addressing, significance of paintings while at the same time declaring their artifactual identity as photographs.[9]

Now, these are contentious claims, and claims that are easily appropriated toward conservative ends. Indeed, the eagerness with which the new figural content of photography has been promoted by the major art institutions, such as MoMA, is not surprising, given the need on the part of such institutions to locate photography within the stable confines of aesthetic ideology. Despite the institutional emergence of neo-

avant-garde photography in the late 1970s, the institutions have long felt uncomfortable about photography's destabilization of traditional notions of authorship and the category of "art." However, what makes photography particularly interruptive of aesthetic ideology *is*, precisely, its mechanical or digital reproducibility. Or rather, that it is neither figural nor nonfigural, neither properly art, nor properly objective representation.

Yet the location of photography within conservative ideologies of auteurship is not what concerns me here. What is instructive about this new staged and digital work is not its straining after some putative aesthetic status, but how photography's social claims have now passed *into* the figural complexities of form. That is, there is no fretting and worrying on the part of these photographers that figurality might constitute a loss of referentiality for photography, although Casebere's work is clearly, historically, and culturally a product of such a moment of heightened anxiety about such a loss in early critical postmodernism. On the contrary, model-making, staging, and computer manipulation function as the means by which photography is able to go about its job as art. Figurality in photography is not a retreat from the "real," but produces a rupture or intervention into the real through the sensuous organization of form.

My wider argument, therefore, is that this turn to the figural in the representation of space is a response to two sets of mimetic demands relating to the dominant forces of abstraction on photography's social and imaginary claims at the beginning of the twenty-first century. On the one hand, the requirement to *encompass* or *invoke* the subliminal and repetitive effects of abstract space, and on the other hand, the need to reproduce and confront these effects through some counterimaginary *control* over space. Snapshot and documentary modes are unable to do this in such a way as to render the abstractions as ambiguously homely and unalienated. In contrast then to the documentary tradition, the new resources of figurality in photography employ either an ecstatic exaggeration of form or a seductive illusionism in order to denaturalize social space. By producing a self-consciously fictive and aberrant naturalism, the representation of the effects of abstract space in this work is made unhomely, touching on something long-standing and profound: the continuing sense of loss within photographic modernism of the representation of space as a source of symbolic articulation and distinction. That is, with the extension of capital's powers of abstraction into the city and the countryside, the imaginary contrast between "free space" and the "spaces of power" or the "spaces of the periphery" and the spaces of centralization and control, *representational spaces* and the *representations of space*, has become weaker. To analyze how we have arrived at this point I want to look in greater depth at the "representations of space" within modernist photography.

ABSTRACTION, MODERNISM, AND POLITICS

In the early modern period, photography was born of a confrontation and negotiation with spatial abstraction (Charles Marville, Eugene Atget), inasmuch as photography

was tied to the archival and scientific-positivist demands of the new state. How might photography document the new vistas and perspectives of an expanding world of capitalist relations?[10] And concomitantly, as photography becomes identifiable with its capacity to record what is rapidly passing, how might it provide a memorial of places past and establish a space of recollection for a life before the spread and penetration of these forces? (Photography's emergence is, in this sense, bisected by the drive to modernity *and* its critique.) Twentieth-century modernism—in the broad sense—follows this logic by splitting itself into two principal camps: those who want to place as much of modernity as possible *into* the photograph, and those who want to use photography to *distance* modernity from its own technological and rational self-image. Some photographers in the first category are, of course, no less critical of modernity than photographers in the second category, but it is the second category that tends to define the antitechnological turn of photographic modernism proper as it splits from the avant-garde in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Thus, it is out of the second camp that the revival of the representation of the landscape emerges, as the source of another modernity, one defined by its rejection of the symbols of cultural integration into the processes of modernization. In this sense this photography repossesses what had been the determinate force of the emergence of landscape painting as a political category under Romanticism: the identification between wilderness spaces, deserted landscapes, and sublime spaces of rural retreat that defy through their isolation and indifference to human presence the increasing encroachments of capitalist abstraction. In Ansel Adams's work in the 1940s we see, of course, the perfected moment of this resolve and resistance: the photographing of the untainted landscape is brought to a heightened sense of serene and powerful composure as a critique of modernity.[11] The Yosemite photographs, in a sense, reject the very structure and contours of the urban and capitalist imaginary. As he declared in "My Camera in the National Parks" (1950): "The earth promises to be more than a battle-field or hunting ground; we dream of the time when it shall house one great family of co-operative beings."[12] In this respect the US National Parks for Adams were the key terrain upon which this critique of abstraction was to be fought, the place where noninstrumentalized, nonheteronomous experiences might be formed and sustained. But if in the 1940s and 1950s this critique is undergirded by a communalist (Deweyian/Pragmatist) and quasi-socialist ideology, by the 1970s and 1980s it has become a rebarbative and antistatist form of transcendentalism, in which the natural world is threatened by "over-population, over-exploitatation and over-mechanization."[13] The masses and their desires and habits, and the demiurges that organize them into feckless "consumers" and "spectators," become a destructive problem. "We must fight for *integrity of experience*,"[14] he said in 1945. The experience of nature, accordingly, is not an "escape" for Adams, but should, on the contrary, embody a positive experience of the natural world.

Integrity of experience on these terms, though, can never be a common experience, for there can be no shared experience of nature in the National Parks that could secure the conditions needed to achieve this integrity for all. In this, Adams's

notion that his Yosemite pictures prepare the spectator for this "integrity of experience" is grounded, therefore, in an impossible demand: that the wilderness be available for all as a singular experience (but subject to restrictions of access). Nevertheless, his idealism aside, Adams was not a precapitalist primitivist. As he says in 1956 in a letter to David Brower, Executive Director of the Sierra Club: "We enjoy the wilderness, *because* of the advantages of civilization."[15]

Yet it is precisely this recognition that the pleasures we take from wilderness landscapes are the result of urban enculturalization and its alienations that increasingly undermines this form of the critique of abstraction within modernism. The purity of the wilderness scene, as a metonym for the critique of civilization, appears increasingly reactionary, or at least weakly decorative. The expressive link Adams makes between the wilderness landscape and the critique of modernity loses its political force: it looks too much like evasion and sentiment. This is why after Adams the turn to the landscape as a political metonym for a critique of modernity feels very different, as if the landscape can no longer produce that moment of empathy that he desires. The critique of abstraction cannot be secured simply by advancing the otherness of nature, when this opposition appears unsupportable as a source of value and practice. This is not to say that the rural landscape is no longer available for nonironic symbolization. The use of photography to exclude and isolate empirical details of nature as exemplars of an ethics of vision is no less viable, but this process of exclusion's distinctiveness can longer claim an unexamined moral authority, particularly through the high-definition print that was so crucial to the sought-after intensity of Adams photographs. The direct outcome of this diminishment of landscape as a source of otherness was that photographers were forced to reposition their symbolic relationship to the critique of abstraction. In the 1950s and 1960s this took the general form of what we might call the assimilation and adaptation of abstraction. Abstraction is not that which the photograph symbolically defies, but it becomes continuous with, and constitutive of, photography's powers of disclosure. In the 1950s and 1960s this took three specific forms: the rural landscape disappeared altogether as a site of the critique of modernity (as in the rise of street photography and photographic urbanism generally); the rural landscape becomes absorbed symbolically into the urban landscape; and the rural landscape becomes a kind of trace or memorial element, that which has been left behind by the encroachments of the urban and despoliation. Photographers such as Fay Godwin and Homer Sykes continue to resist this symbolic contraction in the name of a quasi-Edenic ethos, but the general tendency, as a condition of the landscape's conceptual legibility, is to position the rural landscape as that which is subordinate to the forces of abstraction, as in John Ganis's photographs of environmental devastation in the United States.[16] For the purposes of my argument here, though, the three tendencies are best exemplified, respectively, by Ed Ruscha, the New Topographics, and Raymond Moore.

FROM LANDSCAPE TO SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY

In Ed Ruscha we see the first emergence of spatial abstraction in photography as an explicit question of form. The use of repetition *in* the photograph as a metonym for abstraction and the commodity-form had been widespread in German photography in the 1920s, such as in the factory photographs of Albert Renger-Patzsch. But it wasn't until Ruscha's use of repeated motifs and forms in 1963 in the sequence *Twenty Six Gasoline Stations* that an explicit link between abstraction and repetition is made within photography.[17] Indeed we might talk of Ruscha's producing a reification of vision through the repetition of social forms. Superficially this aligns Ruscha's photography with the Weimar documentary. But for Renger-Patzsch, for instance, the reification of experience is brought under pictorial control within a single and compositionally vivid image. And this is what Benjamin famously objected to in Neue Sachlichkeit photography: its aestheticization of critique within the confines of the "good" picture. The result was less the disclosure of reification and its effects than the reinforcement of the spectator who takes his or her pleasure at a critical distance.[18]

In Ruscha, in contrast, the experience of reification is an experience of the viewing experience itself. Yet, this is not because he fails to photograph humans, instead focusing on buildings and the inanimate, but because the perceived author of the photobooks seems not to want to organize his materials into categories of experience that would encourage photography's customary appeals to empathy and identification. As one recent writer on Ruscha has suggested, this "language of vacancy" produces a "refusal to inform."[19] This leads to an overwhelming sense of indifference, as if the resulting photographs were the capricious and obsessive work of an amateur or novice, someone who mistakes his or her own particular and peculiar preoccupations and indulgences with the real. But it is precisely this would-be indifference that marks out a number of the photobooks for close scrutiny—in particular, along with *Twenty Six Gasoline Stations*, *Some Los Angeles Apartments* (1965), *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (1966), *Thirtyfour Parking Lots in Los Angeles* (1967), *Real Estate Opportunities* (1970)—because what is evident is not so much the eradication of empathy and identification as such, but a shift in parameters outside of the details of the photographs themselves. That is, where there is a loss of empathy and identity with the photographer as witness to the human contingencies of everyday experience and struggle, there is instead an empathy and identity with the photographer's *field of vision*. In other words, our empathy and identity shift from the would-be creative disclosure of the photographs to their systematic organization as an abstract or conceptualized worldview. In this these books are not exactly deserts of knowledge or "aphasic places."[20] For what is at stake in Ruscha's abstracted field of vision is a question that was to increasingly preoccupy artists in the 1960s who were subjected to the mediations of photography: under what cognitive terms is the organization of social appearances best organized in a world overwhelmingly subject to the repetitions of the commodity form? In this respect, Ruscha's photographic

repetitions recover what the early photographic avant-garde (in Weimar in particular) has identified as the structural determinate of the new modernity: vision as a dedifferentiated and distracted realm of appearance. Consequently Ruscha's field of vision is precisely that of "social abstraction" or "commodity-vision" and as such draws its efficacy and its claims to knowledge *from* its numbness, inertness, and repetition. In these photobooks the photographer operates as a surrogate for these forces of abstraction, and what we might call the general deflation of the self-authenticating "artist of imagination."

Repetition, then, is divested of its usefulness as a compositional device to be presented as a consequence of visualization and the viewing subject. This intense "staging" of abstraction was a shared interest for this generation of artists seeking to distance themselves from the subjective hubris of existentialism and the rise of a disembodied Cartesian eye in modernist theory. Warhol and the Bechers, of course, follow Ruscha along this route, Warhol intensifying repetition to the point of blunt and visceral spectator resistance in films such as *Empire State Building* (1964). One of the effects of Ruscha's recourse to repetition is that abstraction appears for the first time as *integral* to a modern experience of the visual; there is no place of retreat beyond these repeated surfaces and beyond signage, no "place to go" where capitalism and modernity will not touch you, which results in nature becoming a residual presence in the photography, something that takes place "off stage."[21] For let us not forget that many of Ruscha's early photographs are taken in close proximity to the desert, yet, although the desert lies just out of vision behind the gas stations and storefronts, we are not given any clues as to how close it actually is. The wilderness landscape offers no promise of release or escape. But, if the wilderness landscape is in some sense blocked in imagination here, this is because it also carries with it the traumatic memory (and therefore suppression) of the systematic violence of real abstraction in the form of primitive accumulation: the genocidal removal of Native Americans from the landscape. Thus, lying behind Adams's symbolic reintegration of the uninhabited landscape and Ruscha's negation of this is the unsaid of the origins of capitalism in the United States, Alexis de Tocqueville's "empty cradle"—that the American landscape was not truly inhabited and possessed by Native Americans but merely occupied, and that therefore settler violence was utterly justified in the removal and extermination of the native peoples.[22]

In the work of the New Topographic photographers in the 1970s, the production of reified vision through the repetition of surface and form remains comparable to that of Ruscha. Indeed the curator of *The New Topographics* (1975), William Jenkins, makes this connection explicit: "There is an obvious visual link between Ruscha's work and the pictures shown here. Both function with a minimum of inflection in the sense that the photographers' influence on the look of the subject is minimal."[23] But this link is narrowed by the clear identification of New Topographic photography with its recent modernist legacy and fine art conventions. Ruscha's indifference to fine art photography and its technical protocols was not something many of these photographers were prepared to endorse. As Jenkins points out, the New

Topographics articulate a formal interest in repetition as part of the development of a new kind of documentary image. But Ruscha had no interest in this, for he had little interest in photography per se (Ruscha's gasoline stations are not about drawing out the engaging qualities of gasoline stations). Yet, following Ruscha (and Jenkins is undeclared on this), there is a clear rebuttal in the New Topographics of Ansel Adams's sharply defined distinction between what the integrity of experience in front of the landscape promises and the realities of urban encroachment and the commodity-form and the erosion of nature. The New Topographics "reportorial" work on new tract housing in the Midwest is therefore exemplary of this change, insofar as it dissolves the integrity of the landscape as a distinct experience, setting in its place a liminal place of exchange between nature and urbanity. "We are beginning to realize that there is no wilderness left," as John Szarkowski puts it in his essay on the New Topographics exhibition.[24] These photographs of newly built homes on the edge of the desert traverse the borders of city and countryside. These photographers (Stephen Shore, Robert Adams, Nicholas Nixon, and Frank Gohlke in particular) continue to mark out a new set of spatial references for the transformed relations between city and countryside, rural landscape and urban landscape, abstraction and the critique of abstraction. Pattern and regulated surface prevail as markers of the enculturalization of the landscape. (Gohlke talks in terms, like Ruscha, of laying a frame-like template on the contingencies of a scene.)[25] In the attention to repetition as an effect of the commodity-form, there is further evidence of the dissolution of "landscape" as a discrete genre and source of aesthetic truth, and in its place the growth of what we might call social geography. It is possible, therefore, to talk about a displacement, even a decline, of landscape as both a distinct category and a cultural destination between 1960 and 1980.

My third example is an extreme and poignant manifestation of this crisis within the landscape tradition. Raymond Moore's promontory photographs from the early 1980s combine isolation and a sense of precipitousness to emphasize landscape as an experience of what's "behind" or what has been "left behind."[26]

Moore traveled to the northern coasts of Britain to photograph various isolated coastal areas and homes. At no point, however, does he point his camera out to sea. The coastal landscape is always intruded upon by the presence of these homes, their surrounding objects, and debris. This is not an elegiac sequence; he has not visited the coast to attest to the unspoiled beauty of the coastal landscape and extend the modernist tradition of photography as a placeholder for a vanishing balance between nature and culture. On the contrary, these images look desperate and haunted, as if he had been chased across England to the water's edge and was now dodging washing lines and garbage bins looking for a place to hold out. To take the camera to the edge and not photograph the edge—and its promise of sublimity—is unprecedented within this tradition of modernism. Moore's arrival is designed to say more about what has been left behind than what lies ahead. Indeed, this arrested sense of arrival and departure allows Moore's use of peripheral space to negate both the absent spatial abstractions that lie behind out of sight and the solace of the

modernist landscape that lies tantalizingly in range. These photographs invoke a disenchanted world in which the (Thatcherite) derelictions of politics and the environment produce the desire for immediate flight; yet, as the journey ends for the exile and photographer and the sun goes down, one has to return of necessity to acknowledge the dereliction and damage as the precursor to a renewal of politics and to living. Moore was not known as a "critical" photographer; the majority of his landscape photography follows a conventional modernist-formalist pathway (post–Minor White). Yet, in these works of an edge-arrived-at and not-arrived-at, there is rage at those forces that have compelled him to travel down to this liminal space at the water's edge.

The representation of spatial periphery in this sense is as the place where living is shown to resist the forces of abstraction. This is why "enclave thinking"—spaces of retreat or defense—was so important to the development of modernist landscape photography.[27] But, in Moore's case, although what is represented is essentially peripheral, these are not "enclave spaces" in any conventional sense. Indeed, they produce a very different effect. Here the landscape is a place where abstraction appears to *accompany and inhabit* the photographer in his escape into the periphery. The outcome is a photography that, despite its liminal position between countryside and coastal suburb, is darkly claustrophobic.

NO WHERE TO GO

Ruscha, the New Topographics, and Moore all share this sense of crisis within the category of landscape, and all, in various ways, respond to the conceptual demands of social geography, or landscape as a social category. That is, the notion of landscape shifts from a place of repose or retreat underdetermined by human intervention to one constantly shaped and transformed by the action of human labor and urban encroachment. In this respect there is a palpable weakening of the landscape as a place that speaks, through its imaginary invitation, to the contemplation of the particulars of nature and thus to a critique of "progress," "civilization," "modernity," and "capitalism." This is why the conventional opposition between the sublime and the pastoral, which for so long framed this critique within the Western landscape tradition, is no longer operational by the 1940s. In fact, it began to appear *retardataire* even in the 1860s and 1870s. In a world of fearsome colonial expansion, the rapid demise of the peasantry, and the aggressive expansion of the city, industry, and communications, the truly daunting experiences of the sublime appeared to be manmade (for instance, the smoke and speed of the railways), and the peaceable image of the pastoral as a home in an inhospitable nature appeared utterly disproportionate, a fiction that could no longer support any kind of productive or imaginary relationship to the would-be freedoms of rural life. As Kristin Ross notes, it is during this period in France that, for the first time, landscape becomes expressly geography, geography becomes expressly social geography, and the habitation of

place becomes expressly the production and control of space.[28] Three significant forces, one political, one architectural, and one scientific-critical, contribute to this shift: firstly the profound social and cultural impact of the Commune (1871); secondly the Haussmannization of Paris in the 1880s, with its tearing away of the old working-class fabric of the inner city and the building of quasi-imperialist public spaces;[29] and thirdly, in the late 1800s, the invention of social geography (in the work of Élisée Reclus), which was in direct ways a response to these revolutionary and counterrevolutionary forces.[30] For Reclus, geography was not a science of the permanent or slow-changing landscape (as enshrined in Paul Vidal de la Blache's geography of places not people);[31] it was *history in space*, in which humans transform the landscape and are in turn transformed themselves by this process. In this sense the incorporation of landscape into wider processes of socialization provided a theoretical corollary to the political practices and challenges of the Commune. For the first time the demands of revolutionary politics made explicit how political change is intimate with the democratic transformation and control of spatial relations. And this started, for the leadership of the Commune, with the organization of the political process itself. The leadership of the Commune didn't simply petition for political change—that is, via proclamations and diktats—but placed its collective decisions immediately in the public domain to be discussed and challenged, creating a radical horizontality to everyday social exchange and practice. "The publicity of political life, the immediate publication of all the Commune's decisions and proclamations, largely in the form of affiches, resulted in a 'spontaneous' temporality whereby citizens were no longer informed of their history after the fact but were actually occupying the moment of its realization."[32] In these terms, as Ross declares, the Commune was "a revolt against deep forms of social regimentation,"[33] producing a powerful dehierarchization of time and space. This particularly affected cultural relations: "In the realm of the cultural production, for instance, divisions solidly in place under the rigid censorship of the Empire and the constraints of the bourgeois market —between genres, between aesthetic and artisanal work, between high art and *reportage*—such hierarchical divisions under the Commune were fiercely debated and, in certain instances, simply withered away."[34]

The general point is that in France in the 1860s and 1870s, politics makes an explicit entry into the theorization and symbolization of space, enabling the analysis of spatial relations to become an explicit means of reflection on social exclusion and inclusion, hierarchy and nonhierarchy, and public and private. Henri Lefebvre is the direct inheritor of this profound shift. In a world of social geographies subject to the logic of capital, the critique of space becomes central to politics and to the boundaries of democratic transformation. Indeed, this is perhaps French modernism's greatest contribution to the critique of capitalism and modernity in the nineteenth century and twentieth: its repeated reflection on, and engagement with, the idea of politics as spatial practice and of cultural practice as the politicization of space. The decline of the category of landscape as a haven or retreat from the vicissitudes of

modernity, therefore, is the outcome of a long-term shift to the notion that the rural landscape cannot stand as the privileged "outside" to capitalism. The subsumption of landscape art under the general category of social geography is precisely about producing a different understanding of spatial differentiation. Landscape as social geography—as the produced conjunction of nature, labor, and cultural history—limits the "lines of flight" of the photographer; the signs of the historicity of the landscape reveal themselves at every turn. In this sense the processes of spatial abstraction are not to be "dreamed away" through the "casting off" of the signs of abstraction, but through their critical assimilation and negotiation. This is why Moore is perhaps the last modernist photographer of "escape," and why his last liminal works are full of such pathos; his desire for the "edge," the periphery, becomes, in the end, the need to turn around.

And this, more broadly, is why there is a profound material and psychic reorientation in photography in the late 1970s and early 1980s: with the Romantic and modernist lines of flight suspended, Lefebvre's concept of *representational spaces*—constructed spaces, autonomous spaces in which humans freely contribute their creativity, "counter spaces"[35]—becomes a resource for photography's renewal in its ongoing negotiation and critique of abstraction and its ongoing dismantling of photographic "transparency." By this I don't mean that Lefebvre's writing, in particular, transforms the direction and prospects of photography. Rather, something like Lefebvre's notion of representational spaces becomes broadly active in the culture, as modernism and a positivistic realism break down and the last vestiges of Romanticism fall into decrepitude.

What representational spaces (or their cognates) identify is an active or interventionist relationship between the desire to make something new in three dimensions in space and its given location; by creatively transforming a space or occupying it, no matter how temporarily, a change in function occurs in which the general passivity we experience in our daily spatial relations is suspended or questioned. In *The Production of Space*, these reflections recall Lefebvre's early commitment to an "aesthetics" of intervention, borrowed from Constructivism and Productivism (and the Situationists), in which the form of the artwork exists ideally in an expanded environmental context.[36] The rise of the extrainstitutional artwork in the late 1960s, and with it an expressly spatial understanding of art's meaning and function, is directly indebted to this post-Situationist moment. In the 1960s, though, photography had lost its avant-garde, interventionist, and agonistic spatial language, overwhelmed as it was by the solace of the "other" (untainted nature, the photographer as Cartesian "I/eye," the concept of photographic transparency). Indeed, even with the breakdown of the photographer as Cartesian I/eye and the concept of photographic transparency in Conceptual art, the prevailing critical discourse produced an antiphotographic inertness to photography. In this sense, the widespread changes that overtake photography in the late 1970s and early 1980s are an attempt by photography to catch up with its own avant-garde legacy and the effects of this legacy on advanced artistic practice as whole.

Thus, out of the critique of the photographic Cartesian I/eye and photographic transparency emerge two things: firstly a new sense of photography's own constructedness; secondly and coextensively, an attempt to bring this constructedness into alignment with the conceptualization of the real. By returning to the studio, by fabricating scenes and objects for the camera, photography endeavors to internalize this sense of the constructedness of the world through a program of prephotographic and photographic labor. This hidden or discrete labor performs a mimetic assimilation of the labor of appearances (the producedness of appearances) into the act of photographic representation. And this is what I mean when I say that this work brings the categories of representational spaces into conjunction with representational spaces as a critique of abstraction. For the assertion of the photographer's control over the photographic referent produces, potentially at least, a discrepancy between the referent and its means of realization, rendering the appearance of the referent unstable and therefore subject to symbolic transformation. This epistemological gap is the gap that the photographers discussed here are working across, pushing the traditional idea of the photographer as witness, into a more active, even assertive role: "I am not beholden to these appearances; they don't exist for me: as such I'm not interested in finding myself in them"; "on the contrary, I am interested in making them my own, by transforming their actuality."

But if this work heightens the conceptual exigencies of photographic representation, such a process has subjected constructedness to the dictates of painting and the to-be-looked-at-ness of the large wall-hung object. In this sense there is one aspect of the new constructedness in art after the 1960s that photography doesn't or can't engage with: the notion of photography as the contingent document that discards figural interest and pictorial balance for a dynamic "snapshot" knowledge of the detail (as abstraction). That is, the stress on the extended temporality of artistic judgment in the new photography encourages the conceptualization process of photography to always "exceed" the mere photograph and its immediate, veridical demands. This is the profound tension now built into the assimilation of *representational spaces* into photography. The rise of representational spaces in photography brings with it a downward pressure on the key archival function of the representation of the "representations of space": to bear witness, with all its contingencies, to the endless production and reproduction of space.

7

VIOLENCE, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND THE INHUMAN

From the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, the photographer and artist Jo Spence produced an influential series of naked and seminaked self-images, which documented her treatment for breast cancer. Indeed, the importance and singularity of these pictures have been subsequently confirmed by their incorporation into the photographic canon and into feminist histories of the "bodily turn" in 1980s postconceptual art. At the time of their production, though, Spence had quite a localized sense of what she wanted: namely, to disrupt the flow of pacifying and victim-inducing images of breast cancer produced by the official health care system, thereby supporting the position of the patient who challenges the (unexamined) authority and instrumental pressures of the expert. In this sense her intentions were markedly practical: to shift the focus of care back to the needs of the patient, before, during, and after treatment, by showing how taking some kind of notional symbolic control over your own body can contribute to recovery, or at least to a sense of recovery. As a consequence, Spence's work in the mid-1980s entered the nascent field of body image and disfigurement care.[1] This is why her work during this period had such a widespread impact outside of the borders of photography and critical art practice, insofar as Spence's images of her damaged body openly codified the massive sense of symbolic violence that most people feel who have suffered major illness or disfigurement. The invasion of feelings of worthlessness brought about by the destruction of bodily integrity through disease or disfigurement was something that the healing of the body could not assuage. In this respect her self-images confronted the "unsaid" and "unsayable" social content of major disease and disfigurement: that the loss of bodily integrity severely weakens the individual's resistance to the relentless symbolic violence of the capitalist sensorium, in which bodily norms are taken to be transparent signs of well-being, intelligence, and grace; and that abnormal bodies are held to be without such qualities. And this is why disfigurement care today is so often about establishing some kind of psychic redoubt against this idealizing, aggressive onslaught.

In this light Spence's work remains a striking intervention: it enters the late capitalist structured field of symbolic violence in order to challenge its reified images and demeaning presumptions. However, initially, Spence had little interest in the broader philosophical and cultural implications of these practical questions; what preoccupied her from the early work, which addressed the contents of the traditional family album, to the cancer work was less the "dialectic of violence" inherent in representation under commodity relations than the need to recover a space for the representation of illness outside the clinical stereotypes. Thus, what preoccupied her,

quite simply, was what she felt was *overlooked* or *unseen* by the medical profession. As she said in one of her final interviews, “The Artist and Illness” (1992), with Jan Zita Grover, “the representation and politics of cancer simply does not get debated in the world of politicized photography.”[2] In other words, photographers and artists need to produce images that fill this absence.

This changes, however, in the later and final work. Here what is taken to be “overlooked” is complicated and challenged by Spence’s return of the “gaze” in the photograph as a conscious countersymbolic address to the spectator—as in her psychotherapy series “Class Shame” (1990–92), where she holds up to the camera in her studio various captions chronicling and confronting her working-class background and declassed position as an artist. “If I don’t need to please my parents any more, why the fuck should I worry about pleasing you middle class bastards,” she writes on one placard.[3] This kind of *visualization-as-retort* was, of course, partially evident in the early cancer work, inasmuch the objects she attaches to her body or the words she marks on her body or the signs she holds up return the loss of bodily integrity to the spectator in the form of an old Brechtian admonition: *do not show me pity, exercise your understanding*. As she might have said: “This would-be defeminized body refuses to be the body you think it is.” But, of course, to note these symbolic introjections into the photograph is to also note that in repelling the idealized horizon of the look (the look that seeks out pleasure in order to return it immediately to the spectator) she also reproduces herself as an eroticized body, albeit a sexualized body in mourning for a lost femininity. It is precisely this tension between the pressures of exoteric symbolic violence and the representation of the embodied effects of such violence—a tension, in fact, that was central to the work of many women artists in the 1980s working on the pathologies of feminized body-image—that she begins to confront more directly in the later work, where the retort to the addressee is mediated by a clearer acceptance of her own anger. Thus, in “Class Shame” she embraces her own received “pathologies”—working-class, female, ageing, diseased—as a way of insisting on her own autonomy and singularity. In turn, there is here a recovery of a “dialectic of violence”: that is, if the cancer images produce an image of the violated body as the outcome of forces of symbolic violence beyond Spence’s control, in the later works the violated body takes up the challenge of its resistance to symbolic violence in the language of violation itself. As a result the spectator is forced to adjust to the fact that the look of the photographic subject is returned without the usual compensatory empathetic exchange.

THREE FORMS OF VIOLENCE (DIRECT, SYMBOLIC, SYSTEMIC)

This *forcing of the image*, the image that looks back *at us*, that engages and violates our complicit look, is the concern of this chapter. In this respect, Spence’s work encourages us to look at how the diseased body, the disfigured body, and the body experiencing stress draw into view what is constitutive of the broader dynamic of

representations of violence and the violence of representation: namely, the dynamic interrelationship between *wanting to look* and the need—and requirement—to *look away*. The tension between *wanting to look* and the need to *look away* is not just how we control, or seek to control, unpalatable evidence of the world, but how we constitute the very ethics of a politics of representation. In this, *wanting to look* and the need to *look away* are the means by which the subject both acknowledges and resists the continuum of violence across its three major (and interconnecting) forms: (1) Direct violence (war, daily criminality, physical aggression); (2) symbolic violence itself (the mediatized cultural forms and language of market exchange, in which spatial abstraction plays a role); and (3) systemic violence (the amnesiacal and catastrophic "smooth" functioning of the capitalist system, based on the normalizing and dehistoricization of conflict). (1) and (2) are largely visible, and (3) is largely invisible; but (1) and (2) also need the systemic occlusions and omissions of (3) in order to function efficiently. The question about whether contemporary capitalism is more violent than previous modes of production misses the point. Capitalism is a system designed to reproduce itself through violence, as it is a system committed to concealing or dissolving the effects of these forms of violence as a necessary symbolic resolution to this systemic violence. Indeed, there is general logic, or pole of attraction, to this triangulation. The reality of (3) is excluded, and the significance of (2) is deflated, as against what is seen as the continuous, unfolding, inevitable tragedy of (1). The balance between these forces, however, is never stable; capitalism may like to exclude the conditions of its own violent reproduction from the system's symbolic reproduction, but this is a process of desymbolization that is always breaking down. Indeed, there are real limits to this process of desymbolization. The dehistoricizing logic of (3) is always subject to the material constraints of reason. For example, the Holocaust refuses to be "normalized" as part of the narrative of interstate warfare in the twentieth century. On the contrary, it reveals, even among those who want to contain it within the aberrations of individual Nazis, that the crimes of the Nazis were the outcome of a systematic meeting between racist state ideology and capitalist expansion, and as such were crimes with specific socioeconomic origins.

Consequently, works of art can achieve a particular long-range focus on the interconnection between the effects of direct violence, symbolic violence, and systemic violence. For, artists and photographers are in a position to reflect on violence on all three levels, through presenting the singular body as the actual or imaginary site of conjunction between these levels.[4] This is why Jo Spence's work on body-image remains of particular significance, because it asks a key question about the dynamic between "looking at" and "looking away" across these divisions: how do we keep violence at a distance in our representations in order to preserve respect for its sufferers, but at the same time expose the structures and outcomes of violence? On what terms do we expose the outcomes of violence on the body? Do we show all, or *tell all*, so to speak? Thus Spence's decision to "show" her wounds accepts that at some point in the interest of truth the preservation of the integrity of the "victim" has

itself to be violated, that “showing” has to outweigh “telling.”

In representing the diseased body or the body subject to direct violence, we are always at some point confronted, therefore, with what the representation of violence and extreme illness shares with the drive to visibility in pornography: the psychological barrier of showing *everything*-as-truth. That is, as soon as the limits of representability are transgressed, we lose focus on the thing that the transgression is designed to achieve. In short, the desire and need to look—in order to discover the truth of violence—are countered by the need to look away, by the pain and discomfort of having the truth of violence revealed to us with such absolute starkness. As Slavoj Žižek puts it: “If we proceed hastily ‘to the point,’ if we show ‘the thing itself’ we necessarily lose what we were after. The effect is extremely vulgar and depressing.”[5] “Showing everything” destabilizes the spectator, forcing him or her to look, but then to look away in shock or disgruntled boredom.

ERNST FRIEDRICH AND REPRESENTATIONAL INTOLERANCE

This effect is perfectly and profoundly illustrated by the sequence of photographs of severely facially disfigured German soldiers from Ernst Friedrich’s *Krieg dem Kriege* (*War Against War*) (1919).[6] These photographs show the most appalling facial injuries, and were taken in the hospitals and sanatoriums in Germany during World War I by the doctors and medical orderlies treating the patients, and were passed on to Friedrich clandestinely by employees at these institutions who were sympathetic to his antiwar work.[7] In this sense they “show everything,” that is, they show the thing that never gets shown, the fact that warfare not only destroys bodies but also transforms bodies into the living dead, into bodies that are stripped of all psychic and social integrity. Let us remember that these are photographs of men who actually survived combat and the war, and therefore were condemned to the most terrible social exclusion. Consequently these photographs directly proceed “to the point”; and this is why they remain extraordinarily difficult to look at and assimilate, for there is nothing left for us to know about the horrors of war from these photographs. There is no space on our part for a symbolic reconstruction of events that is adequate to the traumatic content of these images, which reduces us to a state of impotence, even indifference: their horribleness, their unlookable-at-ness, blocks reflection. But Friedrich’s insistence on the inclusion of these photographs in *Krieg dem Kriege* identifies something significant about this form of transgression in its counter to symbolic violence and the effects of systemic violence. The unassimilableness of these images provides an extreme place—perhaps the most extreme place—for what we might call representational intolerance.[8]

This notion is open to confusion. Intolerance in this instance does not mean the disrespect or derogation of others, but rather a respect for the moment of the *inhuman* in the representation of truth, that is, an identification of truth with the *making visible* of the truth of the “victim,” here identifiable in its most extreme form

with the brutal exposure of the "thing itself": warfare as the production of "human waste." The German medical photographers who took these photographs exhibited this intolerance, inasmuch as they paid no heed to the sensitivities of those who might actually see the photographs. Similarly Spence's cancer photographs are intolerant of her own—and her family's—feelings and others' possible squeamishness. Indeed, Spence talked at the time about how she might *use* her body, subject it to repeated scrutiny. Intolerance, then, becomes the affirmation of the inhuman in representation in defiance of a culture where the representations of direct violence are constantly being dissolved into humanist empathy and human tragedy; the inhuman, accordingly, is that which, in its exposure of the violent "thing itself," reveals the interconnections between direct violence, symbolic violence, and the systemic character of violence. In this respect representational intolerance is another way of keeping alive the politics of violence—the need to keep the dialectic between "looking at" and "looking away" in tension in a given picture or sequence of pictures in defiance of the systemic violence of the system.

POINTING, VIOLATION, AND TRUTH

In this regard, at this point, before I return to this question, I want to clarify what underwrites the truth-claims of representational intolerance, and as such what remains intractable and invasive—what I called unassimilable—about the photodocument. This will mean addressing the truth-*content* of the photodocument rather than simply photography's avowed veridical truthfulness as a medium, although the latter is no less significant for my argument. By truth-content I mean the singular and distinguishing capacity of photography to "bring something into view" as an *affect*, as a source of empathic or nonempathic disruption, interruption, or resistance. And the photodocument is able to do this because its claims to evidentiality are the result first and foremost of a cut into the continuum of appearances. This characterization is simplistic, banal even, but it conceals what is surprisingly rarely remarked on in contemporary photographic theory: the fact that the photographer "points at things" and in pointing at things "picks things out" and in "picking things out" is himself or herself "picked out," inscribed into a symbolic chain.[9]

Accordingly, pointing and picking out are essentially active, cognitive categories. As such, they operate on the basis of seeking, discriminating, and categorizing. As Rom Harré argues:

> Of course pointing to samples does play a part in the learning of words, but what part exactly? It cannot be the whole part, since whenever a finger points there are many qualities, relations, individuals, and materials, any one of which might be what was sought. If we already have some ideas about the world and some conceptions of language and indeed some metaphysics, such as the categories of things and of property and quality, then pointing can play a role

> by introducing a sample of what the word is to be used to describe. A word cannot be defined by pointing, but by pointing a paradigm of its use can be introduced.[10]

The obvious cognates of "pointing to" and "picking out" are "surveying," "pursuing," and "finding one's way about"; and as such, "pointing" and "picking out" are indivisible from the movement of the photographer through time and space, even if this movement is fragmentary, intermittent, or partially sedentary, as in the studio. The photographic document is evidence of movement through and in the world, into the world; and so, the photographer guides his or her camera across, above, to, and around his subject with the insatiability and compulsiveness of the explorer, detective, predator, and impassioned lover. In this respect the photographic document's claims on the indexical truth of a given moment is always governed by the position of the photograph within an imaginary continuity before and after the photograph is taken. The photographer moves, moves on, and moves on again in order to find and repeat a moment of imagined satisfactory stillness. Significantly, this is the paradox of the photographic document: at the point at which photography fixes the world of appearances in an image of the truthfulness of those appearances, it is also the uncertain, discontinuous space of the photographer's will, desire, and intentions. It is an "I," a Cartesian eye, a restless accumulator of experience, a hub of hubris and frustration.

The metaphor of the photograph as an external act of invasion or mobilization or destabilization has been much used and analyzed in relation to the category of violence. Photography's capacity for scouring and exposing identity, the self, and appearances, it is argued, is never that far away from violent intrusion, and therefore is always imbricated in the relationship between those who have the power to "pick out" and those who are "picked out." Indeed, for recent critics of photographic naturalism, photography of the "other"—as those who are submissively "picked out"—presupposes the violation of the "other," *all* others; the photographic document is held to be an unwarranted intrusion, an imposture, the work of white, male Western malfeasance even. This blasting of the effects of power through the critique of photographic humanism decentered the photographic "I" and shattered its claims to free and expressive movement; the photographer was no longer able to speak so confidently from inside the space of naturalistic photography's good intentions. As such, it gave pointing a point again, another point, other points; many points.

But if the photographic document is in a position to violate in the interests of power, this violation is not unidirectionally negative, for violation is always the precursor to the production of knowledge. There is no knowledge without the interruption of identity, of breaking sense, without a confrontation between subject and subject, subject and object. Knowledge is inescapably a process of contamination and diremption. Therefore, to "point" and to "pick out" cannot but *be* violating, troubling in a productive way, for to "point out" is to draw attention to something, and to draw attention to something or someone without the

acknowledgment of the “other” is an affront, an impertinence, because it threatens the boundaries of decorum and autonomy, of what should and should not be seen and acknowledged. In fact, pointing becomes literally unbearable: Ben Shahn and Walker Evans, for instance, both used cameras with a false lens (the false lens was at the front, the actual lens on the side) that allowed them to face in one direction while photographing their subject from another (Evans on the New York subway; Shahn on his FSA field trips).[11] In fact, Shahn lent one of these cameras to Evans. Evans also used a concealed camera on the subway. Philip-Lorca diCorcia and Beat Streuli have pursued similar forms of subterfuge today, photographing passersby without their awareness or permission. This allows both photographers to “steal” a certain informality from their subjects, and as such invites obvious criticisms of manipulation, deceit, and betrayal. But, irrespective of the directly dissembling stratagems of such photography, this is exactly what the photographic document, at some level, asks us to consider: namely, that the photographic document in this form is a violation of the space of the other and therefore precisely an affront to the self-image of the other, a running ahead of the self-control of the other, a space where the other can be seen by himself or herself, as much as by others, as other to himself or herself—in other words, a space marked by revelation, discovery, disclosure, and, in the end, for those looking in on those who are looked at and picked out, justice. In this sense, “pointing” and “picking out” undoubtedly come with certain responsibilities to the other, but these responsibilities can only be vestigially governed by an undivided respect for the subject of the photograph. For if it is violation that produces knowledge, then it is the truth of violation that has to be honored, even when this violation produces images that subvert or weaken the dignity and autonomy of the other as other, as in Friedrich’s images.[12]

The responsibility of the photographer, first and foremost, is to be responsible to the truth of this conflict. The photographer must make a judgment on the outcome of this, that is, decide on how far the results of his or her “pointing to” and “picking out” reveal truth (some truth, that is) or its opposite. And this is a critical imperative, despite the public strictures on photography.

In this regard the photodocument is a critically *ostensive* medium, it points at and picks out things because the photographer judges these things to be worth attending to. In fact, this is what is so successful about ostensive communication: to point out, to point at, to point to arouses high expectations of relevance for the spectator. By pointing, or some other ostensive act, the communicator implies that his or her action is significant enough to be worth attending to by his or her interlocutor. In this, the ostensive act focuses the intentions of the communicator, and therefore involves the construction and presentation of conceptual representations.[13]

The photographic document’s “pointing to” as a means of “picking out” is of this order, a making manifest of the thoughts of the photographer. But, of course, the meaning of the things picked out is never copresent with the act of taking the photograph. This is why the temporality of “pointing” in the act of taking the photograph and the “pointing” that takes place afterward in the studio or in front of

the computer are divergent ("I prefer this one! This one is boring. This is one is too ambiguous."). "Pointing at" and "picking out" may be based on the best of intentions, so to speak, but this process is never self-evident once the photograph has been taken. Pointing—*at this point*—is always inscribed within a retrodictive process of truth-telling. "My pointing at this seems better than my pointing at that." "Why did I point at that?" "This pointing is embarrassing."

This is why "pointing at" in photography is partially blind to its own expectations. There is no stable correspondence between what gets "picked out" and what is ultimately judged meaningful about what is "picked out." This is evidence of the much invoked and much theorized notion—after Walter Benjamin—of the photograph as an unconscious optic: the idea that the photographer and his or her interpreters "find" meaning in the photograph retrospectively.[14] The discrepant gesture, the untoward detail, the unbidden strangeness of a sign bring the workings of the unconscious to the surface: those things that the photographer could not prevent entering into the frame of the photograph, yet that finally shape the meaning of the photograph.

This process is undoubtedly what gives the photodocument its revelatory content, what directs and motivates the spontaneity of "pointing at" and "picking out": the recovery of the thing, the detail that lies beyond the photographer's rational control.[15] However, the notion of the law of latent disclosure seems a partial understanding of the function of "pointing to" in photography. This model of disclosure does not touch on the photographic act itself, that is, it fails to register what is disruptive about the photodocument, how the truth of "pointing at" and "picking out" forms and is embedded in the representation of the refractory content of reality. Photography does not just bring back more than we know as discrete signs; it is in *itself* an act of interruption, a break in the continuum of alienated, naturalistic appearances. This is why in an important sense "pointing" as "picking out" as a conceptual act is also involved in a conscious process of secondary ostension: by pointing at one thing, we may in fact be making clear that we are pointing at something else, relating one thing metonymically, synecdochically, to another thing. W. V. O. Quine talks about "deferred ostension."[16] A man points at an empty parked car covered in parking tickets and declares: "He'll be sorry when he gets back." That is, through pointing to a given state of affairs, the man infers another state of affairs.

Photography is unimaginable without this process of indirect or secondary ostension, indeed, the substitution of a declared ostensive meaning for an undeclared supplementary meaning is essential to the social and discursive claims of photography. The photographer "looks at" in order to look beyond, look elsewhere, look awry, so that the beholder in "looking away," after looking at, also *looks* awry, as the active producer of secondary ostension. Thus, for instance, a photograph of a group of buildings might be taken ordinarily as evidence of architectural interest on the part of the photographer, but, on the basis of our knowledge of the photographer's other work and on the basis of our knowledge of the buildings, their type, their history, their location, and their syntagmatic presentation as photographs, the buildings might also be taken as metonymic evidence of the forces and logic of

abstraction. As I have discussed, the passage of landscape photography into the sphere of social geography has been predicated on this. “Pointing to” as a form of “picking out” is pointing as means of pointing otherwise, (allegorically) pointing to the contrary on the basis of pregiven social categories and conceptual distinctions.

In respect of this notion of looking awry, of “looking at” in order to begin looking elsewhere, we come into immediate contact with the aspect of “pointing to” and secondary ostension that is hardest to pin down in relation to photography, but that is nonetheless crucial to understanding photography’s intractability: the experience of what is inside the operations of representation, but is not fixed by representation—trauma.

TWO VERSIONS OF TRAUMA

Trauma is easily misunderstood, insofar as it has two quite different meanings. Firstly, the experience of trauma has direct causal connection to the representation of a crisis, of a tragedy or injury, of the direct signs of pain and loss—a photography of atrocity or horror, so to speak. Spence’s self-representation and Friedrich’s collection of photographs quite obviously fit into this category. My continuing emphasis on the affective power of photography, and its necessarily violating function, draws on this important connection. Indeed, this primary account of trauma constitutes what we mean by the necessity of representational intolerance. But secondly, the affective power of the trauma effect can be something that is latent and invisible, a secondary manifestation of a prior event and therefore something that haunts or lies dormant in representation. This distinction, of course, is a properly psychoanalytic one and is first formulated in Freud and Breuer’s “Preliminary Communication” on hysteria and trauma in 1893. What this distinction allows for our present purposes is a widening of our understanding of the links between photography’s secondary ostensive or allegorical function and its violating power. For the issue of how the photograph holds or doesn’t hold our attention—how and to what ends it is affective—is not simply a matter, as Barthes realized, of its manifest content. Indeed, in some instances it is not the photographer that arrives unannounced, but the photograph itself.

For Freud and Breuer a precipitatory actual event does not act like an agent provocateur in releasing the traumatic symptom, but rather, as they argue, the psychical trauma is the *memory* of the trauma. In other words, the recognition of trauma is the knowledge of imperturbable but invariably undisclosed reminiscences of the founding, disruptive event. “It acts like a foreign body which long after its entry must continue to be regarded as an agent that is still at work.”[17] Trauma is transformed from its specific location in the nervous system and the somatic into the operations of the symbolic. The trauma exists neither within the immediate recollection of an originary event nor in the immediate recollection of physical symptoms, but in the memories of a memory (or, rather, memories) of the precipitatory event. Trauma is a wound that is hidden, or constantly being hidden, displaced, and aestheticized.

This has implications in how we understand the unconscious and the act of "pointing" and "picking out" in photography. Essentially, the experience of trauma is the experience of language divided from being. Putting the experience of trauma into language in analysis, the analysand continually fails to achieve a sense of psychological restitution or assimilation in the face of his or her painful reminiscences. The memory of the memory of the trauma resists integration. The damage caused by the trauma is constantly occluded by the analysand's repetitive processes of aestheticization and dissociation. This failure of assimilation is comparable to, or indicative of, the operations of the unconscious space and function of the photograph. That is, the promise of pointing and the promise of knowledge and clarity in photography turn out to be the promise not of objectivity, not of the "proper" at all, but of the metaphoric and the partial. In this way the photodocument's drive to ostension, its ontology of "bringing into view," is always marked by the failure to realize its desire for completion, transparency, and totality. Yet, the failure of knowledge here does not mean the failure of truth. For, simultaneously, the promise of pointing, of relevance, breaches this failure of objective knowledge and clarity by returning this failure to our critical gaze. That is, the processes of our looking shift from what is being "pointed to" as the promise of rational assimilation (the incorporation of the world of appearances into our systems of knowledge) to what is being *pointed out*, triggering the beholder's engagement with and resistance to what is known (the notion of the photograph, in its secondary ostensive form, as a representation of a fundamental "wound" in the subject's reality) and as such the spectator's empathic or nonempathic relationship to the image. Trauma here lies in the exorbitant power photography has in returning to our vision the unassimilable, rebarbative, violating nature of reality as psychic content. Indeed, Roland Barthes—borrowing from Dali's "Psychologie non-euclidiene d'une photographic"—touches on this indirect traumatic character of photography when he talks about the enigma of the photograph as something that "pricks me," something that pricks me out of my indolence and passive state, so to speak, that *affects* me, that makes it difficult for me to assimilate my knowledge of the photograph's details within the photograph's own descriptive or generic terms. As he argues, the photograph "*fills the sight by force*…because in it nothing can be refused or transformed."[18] In this sense Barthes's punctum is the theoretical transposition into photography of the psychoanalytic understanding of trauma as aftereffect, the thing that recalls me to the memory of my past. But this is not to say that those photographs that "fill the sight by force" for a given subject become triggers for therapy, in the way Jo Spence developed her use of the family snapshot in her concept of phototherapy. Barthes's understanding of the indirect affective power of the photodocument has no psychoanalytic *agenda*. He has no wish to instrumentalize the punctum as a psychoanalytic technique. Rather, the sense of being "pricked" by an untoward or marginal detail of a photograph relates to the way in which the photodocument is able to bring the subject into close proximity to the symptoms of appearances, the living contradictions of appearances. That is, what is visible is not necessarily seen, and what is seen is not necessarily visible—or is

barely visible. *This is the affective truth of photography: its unrivaled capacity to reveal the fact that what we see is not convergent with what we know to be true, and therefore that what we know about what we see we are unable to freely assimilate—there is a fundamental gap between representation and truth*.

A photograph or some aspect of a photograph turns up to disturb the equilibrium of the beholder. But what is explicit in Freud and Breuer is the notion that we can never know what the source of the trauma actually looks like—it is literally inaccessible to us—and therefore that we can only "know" the trauma through its obscure symptoms. This is why photography, through its secondary ostensive function, is a powerful source of the traumatic symptom. In its focused and singular affective relationship to the past, it produces in the spectator a susceptibility to the resistances of traumatic experience. And in turn, this is why the ostensive function of photography is caught up in the primary dialectic of "looking at" and "looking away." The affective function of the photographic document is as much the result of the beholder's *disengagement and denial* as it is their engagement and identification. In this regard, the important point to be made here is that photography's relationship to the unconscious is not reducible simply to that of historical memory, of recording the traces of things past. Rather, photography, in the sense Jean Laplanche has characterized Freud and Breuer's revolutionary notion of the unconscious as a foreign body, represents in its very agency as "pointing to" as "pointing at" a kind of alien possession or disruption, the thing that calls us back to our alienated place in the world. In this sense, the photodocument also represents a *refusal* of reality, a refusal of the assimilation of reality to its historicization as a document, as it makes a claim on the real *as* historical knowledge. That is, the photographic document doesn't capture the past in any direct veridical sense, but rather captures the spectator for an image of the past on the basis of the subject's interpellation as other to itself and the past. Consequently, the compulsive-repetitive nature of "pointing" in order to find the point, to make a point "otherwise," is characterizable as a kind of invasiveness, becoming in its intrusiveness a kind of social and psychic decentering: the photographer in (unconsciously) decentering himself or herself in the act of taking a photograph decenters the consciousness of the spectator *through* the presence of the indefinable "other."

Accordingly, this is very different from a model of the unconscious in which the photographic document simply exhibits or discloses the effects of the photographer's unconscious as hidden signs of the repressed, so that those hidden signs then might be reassimilated into the creative powers of the photographer, the interpretative skills of the spectator, and the miraculous realistic capacities of the camera. This familiar view presupposes that there is something that is tangibly split off from me, that is *there*, and that I and photography can reclaim and make amenable. Thus, from this perspective the effects of the unconscious are reinscribed into a descriptive economy of the photograph as evidence (of times past), rather than as a means by which my "looking awry," my looking otherwise, becomes a recognition of the failure of "pointing to" as the promise of another truth.

PHOTOGRAPHY'S ALIENNESS

The photographic document, I would argue, is an alien body, an alien thing, precisely because its powers of secondary ostension across its conscious/unconscious divide make it difficult for the act of "pointing to" to settle down into the figural and the aesthetic, despite the repeated attempts to turn photography solely into a figural art, as in the recent widespread move to staged imagery and digitalized panoramic and painterly forms. Photography always rebounds as an *affect*, as a set of intrusions and resistances, whether as a space for the memory of the traumatic unassimilable thing (as in Barthes's punctum), or as unassimilable encounter with the trauma of violence. *The photodocument has the capacity to disrupt us, move us—photographer and beholder alike—into a space of disequilibrium*. As Laplanche defines this in his writing on the decentering function of the unconscious: "Internal alien-ness [is] maintained, held in place by external-alien-ness; external alien-ness, in turn, [is] held in place by the enigmatic relation of the other to his own internal alien."[19] The photographic document participates in this logic, therefore, insofar as photographer, photograph, viewer, and the material world exist in a discontinuous yet codeterminate set of relations.

Where does the truth of photography lie then? It lies in this circle of secondary ostensive attention. By "pointing to" as a means of "picking out" as a way of "pricking" us, photography inscribes the representation of the real into a system of shock effects, disruptions to the equilibrium of the ego as the bastion of aesthetic ideology. In other words, the photodocument possesses an alterity or otherness, that is, is unable to assimilate itself to dominant aesthetic categories because of its inability to hide—completely, that is—its relationship to the alienated and material substrate of the world.

But if this alterity widens our affective relationship to the violating powers of photography, if "looking at" and "looking away" conceal the veilings of secondary trauma, making a particular photograph unassimilable from our own point of view, how is the unassimilableness of the traumatic experience of the representation of extreme violence to be thought? Resistance to the punctum—which of course can be any detail in any photograph—is not quite the same as resistance to (to "looking at" and "looking away") the trauma of violence. At what point do we look and at what point do we look away from this experience of the traumatic? For example, how is revealing the "thing itself" of the interethnic violence in Rwanda in the 1990s respectful, helpful, or protective of those who were butchered? For it is hard to think of the benefits of "looking at" as the dead children's bodies lie on top of one another, as children's severed arms pile up on piles of other children's severed arms. This is why many photographers who had access to the Rwanda war zones and the aftermath of the violence took the other route and excluded images of direct violence altogether.

THE LIMITS OF REPRESENTATIONAL INTOLERANCE

If representational intolerance is another a way of keeping alive the politics of violence—the need to keep the dialectic between "looking at" and "looking away" in tension—and as such keeps open the requirement to look, its efficacy is not to be identified simply, and in every instance, with the exposure of the "thing itself." Indeed, to drive the representation of violence (and the violated body) solely through the demands of representational intolerance is to *hystericize* the politics of representation: in short, the whole world is turned into a vast hospital and mortuary.[20] At the point, therefore, where we see the truth, see it in all its clarity, we have to pull back from its consequences in order to recover our (critical) composure and equilibrium. This is why in looking away in this instance, we not only protect ourselves, but try to protect the human being we are looking at: to avert one's eyes is not to block out in order to deny or to forget, but to recognize that in having the power *to* look away, the act of looking away returns a certain autonomy to the object of the gaze. To try to empathize by staring long and hard at the most terrible suffering is the hardest thing to do, because in doing so there is the fear that getting to know something so horrific so well is to aestheticize it and assimilate it as an image that has fallen under the sway of my power to look without consequence. By turning away, therefore, we refuse our own complicity with the depicted suffering.[21]

And this is why the political effects of atrocity pictures are continually being short-circuited: firstly, and most obviously, such images are continually excluded and censored in the interests of social order and propriety; secondly, these images are, indeed, difficult to live with and therefore impossible to stabilize symbolically; and thirdly, to circulate such images in a world where those represented remain connected to the living is to betray the sensitivities of the represented and the living. Yet if we readily accept these limitations, then we also accept the notion that the effects of violence are unrepresentable and that the inviolability of the rights of the represented is sacrosanct, and we thereby concede ground to the perpetrators of state violence and the systemic violence of the capitalist system. In turn, this means that those photographers who expose such symbolic and systemic violence are left with even less opportunity to mediate the effects of violence, critically and politically, than before. So, representational intolerance is not something photographers want to give up, for photography's inhuman violation of the integrity of its subjects is central to its ethical charge and power. Without this, photography loses all sense of its interruptive and countersymbolic function in the world.

But, if representational intolerance carries with it an ethical burden, this burden comes under very different pressures outside of the ideological strictures of Western Europe and North America. First and foremost, we should take note of how representational intolerance is subject to different political emphases and forces in the anti-imperialist zones, particularly the Middle East. Indeed, at the state level, the restricted use of representational intolerance is a consequence of the Western states wanting to minimize the politicization of photographs of Western state violence; and of course, this is not something particular to this political conjuncture. The Imperial War

Museum in London is stuffed with gruesome photographic images of the outcomes of front-line combat from World War I, viewing still restricted to scholars. In the Middle East, however, representations of Western violence in Iraq and Afghanistan, along with jihadist executions of Westerners, apostates, and Shiite opponents, form a continuum of violent spectacle in which insurgent-run websites present decontextualized atrocity images as things that demand *to be* looked at without reserve: here are the consequences of imperialism that everyone should familiarize themselves with! These sites are incredibly popular, forming a digital public sphere (including TV stations such as Qatar's Al-Jazeera and Dubai's Al-Arabiya), which turns the atrocity image into the everyday grammar of political discourse.[22] One perverse outcome of this is that among the young this produces a consumerist obsession with grading and sharing the most gruesome of these images, in an echo of Western adolescents' infatuation with the best and worst of horror and slasher movies. Moreover, Western adolescents avail themselves of these images as well, treating them in turn as better than the best of horror movies. In fact, the logic behind this spectacle of violence is precisely the amoral modes of attention prevalent in certain Western popular cultural forms: the nihilistic valorization of the violent act or outcome itself. Here the dialectic of "looking at" and not "looking away" plays out at a political level in quite a different way from the circulation of violent images in the West. To look at such images is to bare witness to the continuum of politics *with* violence, loosening or dismissing the moral requirement of looking away. Representational intolerance in this form is close to a form of completed nihilism: the world *is* a mortuary, and we should abandon our reason to its bloodlust.

Now in defending representational intolerance, is it possible to separate it from these nihilistic forces? What would an actual politicized commitment to representational intolerance—to the free and constant circulation of atrocity images—look like? Could it serve emancipatory ends? In a way these questions are impossible and foolish ones; under prevailing conditions, there can be no politicized regime of representational intolerance in the West, in which images of violence serve public and critical ends. Such an assumption is gross idealism, that is, outside of the penetration of the same levels of state violence inside Western Europe and North America as those experienced by the populations of Iraq and Afghanistan; then a political imperative would emerge for the advocacy of such an extreme image-regime. But even then, such a regime would do little in and of itself to resist nihilism. Let us be clear, then: representational intolerance can only be conscionably defended if it produces a third and dialectical move that moves beyond the need to look and the desire to look away, indeed, that moves away from the image itself to the spectator. That is, in bringing the violent image into equilibrium with the empathetic reconstruction of the depicted violence, representational intolerance requires a further move after the compulsion to turn away: the requirement that the spectator *return* to the image as a critical assimilation of the perceived suffering. Hence, in the return to the image, this assimilation of suffering is no longer governed by a simple refusal of complicity with the sufferer (or worse through the atrocity-grading of the violence), but

as an act of *imaginative reconstruction* in order to give the image of suffering an articulable and reflective form. As Alan Radley argues, “What is at issue is the possibility of the observer sustaining a look, a look that is not overwhelmed by the stare of the object portrayed. The stare is the power of the image to overwhelm, to suffuse the observer with pity, horror or revulsion.”[23] A politics of violence bifurcated by the requirement to look and the need to look away, therefore, is also conditioned by the need to transform empathy into intellection at the point of the look’s return. To return to look is for the spectator to “work through” their own fear and anxiety. Sustaining this kind of perception ultimately does not make images of horror and extreme violence any less bearable, but it does allow the spectator to carry the memory of these images forward in a spirit of reflection, irrespective of under what conditions such images are being circulated.

In this respect, such extreme images of violence require in the long run a different economy of reception, one that involves the dedicated apprehension and social reimagining of the evidence of bodily trauma, a fully mimetic opening up to its effects and consequences that involves a reorganization of affect in the spectator, an economy of reception that accepts the critical return to the image as constitutive of an emergent or productive lateness. But of course, this mode of reception can only be constructed under constrained ideological conditions, and, as such, under the constant threat of the desensitization of looking, certainly in the anti-imperialist war zones themselves. For whether we call this capacity for sustained looking “critical reflection” or not, living with images of extreme violence is not a politics of representation that we are freely able to inhabit, nor should we. This is why the current public continuum between politics and the atrocity image in the Middle East is maybe the heightened antidote to imperialist systemic violence, but its nihilism is not conducive to emancipatory politics or to the emancipation of the spectator.

One outcome of these limitations in the West, therefore, particularly after the war on terror, is that photography’s capacity for representational intolerance is necessarily strategic, and consequently, what powers of violation are able to accrue to photography at any given time will always be contextually constrained and will be used where possible in a *circuit-breaking* fashion.[24] For let us by clear: in a Western culture where systemic violence expunges the violent image *of consequence and of consequences*, as matter of ideological hegemony, there can be no shared and open dialogue around the violent image; there can only be moments of heightened disruption and intense and brief arbitration.

CONCLUSION

My rejection of the would-be indexical crisis in photography obviously weakens the assumption that digitalization allows photography to dispense with the old documentary machinery of the photographic witness, as if the chemically based index and the document were one. Yet, if the epistemological anxiety about photography has been largely produced outside of photography, this does not mean that the possibilities for photography today are not possessed of their own conditions of anxiety and, as I have stressed, evidence of a broader crisis in documentary culture and the role of the photographer as witness. Thus, it is one thing to say that digitalization does not, in principle, prevent photography's continuation of the documentary ethos, it is another thing to say that it is possible to pursue this ethos in the same way to the same ends today. This is where digitalization has had powerful and significant effects, as it both conjoins with and enables the political and ideological impact of neoliberalism, which has been the economic driving force behind global digitalization and its major cultural beneficiary since the early 1990s. Thus, if realism and the photodocument are released from the historical burden of positivization, this is a freedom won in conditions of documentary culture's abjection and subordination in the face of the onslaught of the neoliberal attacks since the 1980s on the institutions of radical culture. In this sense a defense of the civil contract, or better, the social ontology of photography as a continuous space of contestation, needs to be mitigated by the narrowing political conditions of this contestation.[1] Let's be clear: since the 1980s documentary culture, as a culture of witness, critique, and support of the workers' movement and of the powerless and culturally excluded, no longer exists; and it no longer exists because of the collapse of open and creative lines of exchange between cultural producers and the institutions of the organized working class and the left. But this collapse is not simply the result of the political outmaneuvering of the left or the weakening of class politics per se, but also of a massive cultural and cognitive transformation in the relations between those without the so-called power to represent and those who do the representing in their name. Since the high point of the documentary culture in the 1930s and 1940s, and its partial revival in the 1960s, two things have happened to change these power relations: the internal critique of documentary practice as an imposture on those without power, which the represented themselves have become increasingly sensitive to, and the rapid rise, since the 1960s, in the circulation of portable cameras, leading to the globalization of popular and amateur photography today in the form of cell phone digital photography.

What these changes have created more broadly in the professional culture of photography is a widespread pacifying or irenic social ideology of photography that has found a comfortable home in the institutions of art. If digitalization releases the

artifactual character of photography, and the social conditions of photography on the street and the public sphere are presently stressful and unsustainable, then it is easy to see how the critical autonomy of photography is best suited to the separation of photography as an artistic practice from the demands and vicissitudes of documentary practice as such. We can now see how pervasive this argument has become in the wake of the international success of the new generation of art-photography. But part of the success of this work comes down to the way in which its aesthetic judgments about photography have provided a compensatory cover for the chronic displacement of the public culture of photography in the period of documentary's decline into the realm of the privatized exchange of tokens of self-esteem. For one of the paradoxes of much of this work's achievement is that it generates a false sense of cultural renewal out of the photograph. The successful recourse to a constructed and fictive photography is clear enough, but nevertheless, as a profoundly classicizing move, it seeks a resolution to the social antinomies of artistic practice (under the pathos of the counterrevolutionary defeat of the working-class and democratic culture) in the form of a high-cultural revival of pictorialism. Thus, the relationship between fictiveness in photography and the demise of documentary culture and the photographer as witness poses a deeper political and cultural question: the place and function of photography in the framework of the increasing nonreproduction (or contraction) of capitalist social relations and capitalist culture, that is, the out and out social regression of the system as a whole as distinct from the vicissitudes of "business as usual."[2] By this I mean that in talking about photography here—of its uses, its possibilities, its limits, and its histories—we cannot but recognize how the constructed figurality or artifactuality of the recently anointed art photograph in the museum is built upon the very social ruins of photography and art under neoliberalism's digital and nihilistic cultural onslaught. In this respect the achievement of this work is a consequence and symptom *of* this ruination and not an escape from it, insofar as we might say, paradoxically, that in these times those photographers who return to the studio would seem to have made the right decision: a sure way to hold off the nihilistic tendencies that have run amok out of the devastated social base of photography is by returning to the weight and gravitas of classical forms of pictorial syntax. But its supposed defensive success is precisely its historical burden, because it allows the institutions of art, and the defenders of photography, to mistake the facility, largesse, and finesse of this museum-scale work for the renewable strength of the culture as a whole, or conversely, as the best we might have in the worst of times. This is a sentiment that fills Michael Fried's defense of this work and the rise of the artifactual tradition in *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before* with a terrible bathos.[3] In following a pensive modernist-classicist line, Fried expunges all reference to the deepening social crisis of nonreproduction, distilling photography into a temperate, becalmed state, as if the absorptive figurality of constructed photography is our benighted passage out of the present ruins of photographic and artistic culture. This is George Santayana's neoclassical modernism in *Reason in Art* (1905) for our neoliberal times.[4] On the contrary, though, art-

photography's achievements are as much a symptom of capitalist nonreproduction as the dissolution of the street-photographer and documentary culture, because both freeze and exclude the *realism of the producer*. By this I mean that across both high-cultural and popular domains of capitalist culture, we see the increasing failure on the part of producers to link image-making and the making of meaning to the forces of social abstraction and real abstraction as a condition of opening photography onto the world. In this sense photography is determined not just by what photographers *mean* formally, figurally, but by what photographers *do* as photographers: that is, *where they place themselves, in what spaces, in front of what intransigent forces, and to what ends*. A language of becalmed artifactuality can, in contrast, only close off photography from this outward-looking, prospective realism.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION: THE SOCIAL ONTOLOGY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

1. For an excellent range of responses to the problems of Barthes's thinking on photography, see Geoffrey Batchen, ed., *Photography Degree Zero* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009). See also the discussion of Barthes in Ariella Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography* (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2008). Interestingly for all of Azoulay's critique of the dehistoricization of the photograph in Barthes, Azoulay's politics of the margin follows Barthes's own picturesque valorization of the marginal. As Batchen puts it: "marginalized figures take up a large share of the illustrations in *Camera Lucida*, including among its twenty-five photographs, a gypsy, retarded people, a condemned, slum children from Little Italy, three African-Americans, including Van Der Zee's sisters, and an African" (85).
2. This can be broadly described as a realist tradition; significant contributions include those made by Steve Edwards, Molly Nesbit, Richard Shiff, Allan Sekula, and Jorge Ribalta.
3. Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, 94.
4. See, in particular, Steve Edwards, "The Machine's Dialogue," *Oxford Art Journal* 13, no. 1 (1990): 63–76; and Edwards, "Photography, Allegory, and Labor," *Art Journal* (Summer 1996): 38–44. Azoulay also makes the compelling argument that even those photographs that are produced in violent alliance with the state—photographs of torture or celebratory salacious photographs taken by the perpetrators of genocide—far from victimizing the victim all over again, leaving the voice of the perpetrators dominant and in control, are reversed through the body-of-death as the future-body of emancipation. Susie Linfield makes a similar kind of argument: the body subject to state violence speaks back, not in order to be the subject of victimization all over again, but to give voice to another, nonviolated body.
5. See, for example, Paula Rabinowitz, *They Must Be Represented: The Politics of Documentary* (London: Verso, 1994).
6. Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, 24.
7. Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1979). Admittedly, Sontag changes her position. In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, the would-be emotional attrition caused by "over-exposure" to atrocity images is rescinded. "Where is the evidence that photographs have a diminishing impact, that our culture of spectatorship neutralizes the moral force of photographs of atrocities." Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (London: Penguin, 2004), 94. For a contemporary version of this (within an expressly digital framework) as a "nonrepresentational" or "derepresentational" politics, see Hito Steyerl, *The*

Wretched of the Screen, with an introduction by Franco “Bifo” Beradi (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012). For a critique of this broadly “ecologist” position, see Nicolas Bourriaud, *Postproduction, Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World* (New York: Lukas and Sternberg, 2002), 87: “no sign must remain inert, no image must remain untouchable. Art represents a counter-power.”

8. Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, 110.
9. Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Image*, trans. Gregory Elliot (London: Verso, 2009).
10. Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, 82.
11. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).
12. Mikhail Bakunin, *The Basic Bakunin: Writings, 1869–1871* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1992).
13. For a discussion of this space, see Slavoj Žižek’s *On Living in the End Times* (London: Verso, 2010); and Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2009).
14. Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, 422.
15. Ariella Azoulay, “The Execution Portrait,” in *Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis*, ed. Geoffrey Batchen, Mick Gidley, Nancy K. Miller, and Jay Prosser (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), 251. See also Azoulay, *Civil Imagination: A Political Ontology of Photography* (London: Verso, 2012).
16. Susie Linfield, *The Cruel Radiance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), xv.
17. Ibid.
18. Linfield, *The Cruel Radiance*, 98.
19. As is well known, this photograph of a crouching child, head bowed, unable to walk, behind whom sits a vulture (*Starving Child near Ayod, Southern Sudan, March 1st 1993*), won him a Pulitzer in 1994. Although he managed to take the child to a feeding station, the devastating impact of the encounter contributed to his suicide. For a discussion of the photograph, Carter, and the incorporation of Carter’s work into Alfredo Jaar’s installation *The Sound of Silence* (2005), see Griselda Pollock, “Photographing Atrocity: Becoming Iconic?,” in Geoffrey Batchen et al., *Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis*, 65–78.
20. For an interesting critique of Azoulay in these terms, see Daniel Palmer and Jessica Whyte, “‘No Credible Photographic Interest’: Photography Restrictions and Surveillance in a Time of Terror,” *Philosophy of Photography* 1, no. 2 (2011): 184.
21. For another, less mordant perspective on the lost “we” of photography, see Blake Stimson, *Pivot of the World: Photography and Its Nation* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007).

22. Linfield, *The Cruel Radiance*, 35.
23. See, for example, Robert Brenner, “The Economics of Global Turbulence,” special issue, *New Left Review* 229 (May/June 1998); István Mészáros, *The Challenge and Burden of Historical Time: Socialism in the Twenty-First Century*, foreword by John Bellamy Foster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2008); David Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital: And the Crises of Capitalism* (London: Profile Books, 2010); Chris Harman, *Zombie Capitalism: Global Crisis and the Relevance of Marx* (London: Bookmarks, 2009); End Notes Collective, “Misery and Debt on the Logic and History of Surplus Populations and Surplus Capital,” *End Notes* 2 (2010); George Caffentzis, *In Letters of Blood and Fire: Work, Machines and the Crisis of Capitalism* (Oakland, Calif.: PM Press, 2013).

1. PHOTOGRAPH AND ITS TRUTH-EVENT

1. James Elkins, ed., *Photography Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2007).
2. I have retained the concept of index as a singular concept here, as against using it in partnership with the indice, as Henri Van Lier does. Van Lier, *The Philosophy of Photography* (1981; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2007). In *The Philosophy of Photography* Van Lier makes a very good case for separating the index from the indice on the grounds that Peirce’s use of the index covers two divergent meanings under the one concept (as a result of the symmetry in English of the two words), and is held, therefore, to be too narrow a concept when coming to understand photographs. This is because a distinction needs to be made between indices as *nonintentional phonic* processes and indexes as forms of *intentional* presentation, a distinction that Peirce does not make. In other words, what needs to be drawn out is that indices *signal* or *carry* information and indexes, on the other hand, point and select, indexes being those acts of framing, brightening, darkening, and the closing or opening up the depth of field involved in the photographic enterprise. Photographic indexes, then, organize the nonintentional phonic process from inside the photograph and, as such, in actuality, are *signs*. The photograph is a “contingently indexed indicial imprint,” says Van Lier. Ibid., 111.
3. Synder, in Elkins, *Photography Theory*, 154.
4. Lefebvre, in Elkins, *Photography Theory*, 225.
5. Ibid., 231–32.
6. Ibid., 228.
7. Ibid., 233.
8. Solomon-Godeau, in Elkins, *Photography Theory*, 257.
9. See, in particular, Alain Badiou, *The Century*, trans. with a commentary and notes by Alberto Toscano (Cambridge: Polity, 2007).
10. Ibid. My use of Badiou here might be construed as being contentious, given his problematic separation of the “truth procedures” of politics from the “truth

procedures" of art. Badiou insists, quite rightly, that the crucial lesson of the Russian revolution and the twentieth-century avant-garde is that "it is better to sacrifice art than give up on the real" (131). There is no emancipatory force to twentieth-century culture without this rupture. Yet he qualifies this by asserting that the avant-garde privileged the "act" over the "work," as if one was not implicated in the other. Consequently, this leaves Badiou's theory of the avant-garde without the mediatory presence of photography; by separating the "truth procedures" of politics from the "truth procedures" of art, he is unable to think of photography as the productive and transformative site of this tension between "act," "work," and the "real."

11. Blake Stimson, *The Pivot of the World: Photography and Its Nation* (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 2006), 17.
12. Ibid., 19.
13. Ibid., 26.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., 169.
16. Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, trans. with an introduction by Gabriel Rockhill, and with an afterword by Slavoj Žižek (London: Continuum, 2004).
17. Steve Edwards, *The Making of English Photography: Allegories* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

2. THE POLITICAL FORM OF PHOTOGRAPHY TODAY

1. See Paula Rabinowitz, *They Must Be Represented: The Politics of Documentary* (London: Verso, 1994).
2. Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (London: Routledge, 1992); Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); Imre Lakatos, *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes: Philosophical Papers*, vol. 1, ed. John Worrall and Gregory Currie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Roy Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science* (Sussex: Harvester Press/Humanities Press, 1978).
3. Lakatos, *The Methodology of Scientific Research*, 16.
4. François Laruelle, *Le Concept de Non-Photographie/The Concept of Non-Photography* (Falmouth: Urbanomic, 2011), 101.
5. Fried, *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 26.
6. Michael Fried, *Menzel's Realism: Art, Embodiment in Nineteenth-Century Berlin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).
7. Fried, *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before*, 173.
8. Ibid., 159, 161.

9. Ibid., 211.
10. Ibid., 245.
11. Ibid., 235.
12. For a discussion of the irenic and agonistic in relation to the philosophy of language, see Jean-Jacques Lecercle and Denise Riley, *The Force of Language* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave/MacMillan, 2004).
13. Fried, *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before*, 2.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., 165.
16. Ibid., 166.

3. "FRAGMENT, EXPERIMENT, DISSONANT PROLOGUE"

1. See, in particular, John Szarkowski, *The Photographer's Eye* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966). For a discussion of the repression of "sequential thinking" in the formation of postwar photographic modernism, see Blake Stimson, *The Pivot of the World: Photography and Its Nation* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006). For a discussion of "modernist documentary," see Joseph Entin, "Modernist Documentary: Aaron Siskind's *Harlem Document*," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 12, no. 2 (Fall 1999): 357–82.
2. Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, trans. Sacha Rabinovitch (1967; London: Athlone Press, 2000).
3. Michael Denning, "The Success and Failure of the Cultural Front: Afterword to the 2010 Edition," in *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Culture*, 2nd ed. (1997; London: Verso, 2010). See also Andrew Hemingway, "Middlebrow: For and Against," *Oxford Art Journal* 22, no. 1 (1999).
4. Denning, *The Cultural Front*, 118.
5. Ibid., 119.
6. Most of the first reviews of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* were respectful, even admiring of Agee's writing, but nevertheless did not quite know how to locate it within the given parameters and expectations of the documentary culture of the time. See William Stott, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973).
7. Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," *Partisan Review* 1, no. 6 (Fall 1939).
8. Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs: Images as History, Mathew Brady to Walker Evans* (New York: Hill and Wang, Noonday Press, 1989), 252.
9. Walker Evans, quoted in ibid., 237.
10. James Agee, "Preamble," in *Three Tenant Families: Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* by Walker Evans and James Agee (1941; London: Peter Owen, 1965), 13.
11. Agee, "Preface," in Evans and Agee, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, xii–xiv.

The original project was commissioned by *Fortune* in 1936, but rejected by the magazine as too unwieldy and prurient.

12. Indeed, we might say that the three great works of American literary modernism in the twentieth century—John Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer* (1925), Evans and Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941), and Louis Zukofsky's life-long poem *'A'* (published in 1978, written between 1928 and 1974)—incorporate the social particulars of the documentary tradition within, and as the material of, the constellational ur-modernist form of *Ulysses* (1922). Moreover, Dos Passos and Zukofsky adopt the automatism and sequentiality of a modernist photography as constitutive of this literary constellationality: the representation of urban and industrial experience becomes equivalent to the notion of the repeated, discontinuous snapshot. In addition we also might mention Jean Toomer's *Cane* (1923), the first important black modernist work (praised by Hart Crane and Alfred Stieglitz among others), which combines poetry, the fiction of report, sketches, and dramatic dialogue to produce a version of modernist pastoral.
13. Agee, "Preface," in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, xiii.
14. Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blaney and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 164.
15. Ibid., 164–65.
16. That is, with the major exception of Allan Sekula's writing. See, in particular, Sekula, *Dismal Science* (Normal: University of Illinois Press, 1997). See also Steve Edwards, *Photography: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
17. Walter Benn Michaels, "Photographs and Fossils," in *Photography Theory*, ed. James Elkins (New York: Routledge, 2007), 440.

4. TWO MODELS OF LABOR

1. See Bernard Edelman, *Le droit saisi par la photographie* (Paris: François Maspero, 1973). English translation: *Ownership of the Image: Elements for a Marxist Theory of the Law* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979).
2. All aestheticized theories of photography as art stem from the legal codification of the photographer as creator, although this legal codification does not in itself produce the ideology of aestheticization. Aesthetic ideology and the concept of the modern, autonomous artistic subject preexist this new legislation and as such shape the kind of artistic subject the law has in mind at the end of the nineteenth century.
3. Richard Shiff, "Phototropism (Figuring the Proper)," *Studies in the History of Art* 20 (1989). See also Steve Edwards, "The Machine's Dialogue," *Oxford Art Journal* 3, no. 1 (1990).
4. By "pictorialism" here, I do not mean the painterly aestheticization of Stieglitz and his followers, but rather the conventions of perspectival realism that have

underwritten the post-Renaissance picture space.

5. For an extended discussion of *A Ventriloquist*, see Lisa Joyce and Fred Orton, "'Always Elsewhere': An Introduction to the Art of Jeff Wall (A Ventriloquist at a Birthday Party in October, 1947)," in *Jeff Wall* (Vienna: Museum Moderna Kunst, 2003).
6. See, Jeff Wall, "Unity and Fragmentation in Manet," *Parachute* 35, Montreal (June/July/August 1984).
7. Jeff Wall, "'Marks of Indifference': Aspects of Photography in, or as, Conceptual Art," in *Reconsidering the Object of Art, 1965–1975*, ed. Anne Goldstein and Anne Rorimer (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996).
8. See, for example, Peter Galassi, "Gursky's World," in *Andreas Gursky* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2001).
9. Nan Goldin, *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, text by Nan Goldin (New York: Aperture, 2005).
10. See John Roberts, "The Practice of Failure," *Cabinet* 5 (Winter 2001); and Roberts, "The Amateur's Retort," in *Amateur*, ed. Ralph Rugoff (San Francisco: CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary, 2008).
11. Pierre Bourdieu, with Luc Boltanski, Robert Castel, Jean Claude Chamborden, and Domnique Schapper, *Photography: A Middle Brow Art* (Cambridge: Polity, 1990), 26. Originally published as *Un art moyen* by Les Editions de Minuet in 1965.
12. All quotes taken from website www1.lomo.com/orbiz/DigiTrade/0001/index.html.
13. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000). For Hardt and Negri the "multitude" is another name for the power that is immanent to all societies irrespective of their mode of production and forms of government. In other words, the "multitude" is a continuous and emergent principle of democratic diversity and negation.
14. For a discussion of "diffuse creativity," see Stephen Wright, "Le dés-oeuvrement de l'art," *Mouvements: Les valeurs of de l'art: Entre marché et institutions* 17 (September/October 2001).
15. For an analysis of this phenomenon, see Greg Sholette, *Dark Matter: Art and Politics in the Age of Enterprise Culture* (London: Pluto Press, 2010).
16. For a discussion of this "second economy," see John Roberts, "Art After Art in the Expanded Field," in *That's the Way We Do It* (Bregenz: Kunsthaus Bregenz, 2011).
17. www.indymedia.org.
18. www1.lomo.com/orbiz/DigiTrade/0001/index.html.

5. PHOTOGRAPHY AFTER THE PHOTOGRAPH

1. The debate on social abstraction and real abstraction has its origins in Marx,

"Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy," in *A Contribution to Political Economy* (1857; New York: International Publishers, 1970). There he rejects the notion of abstraction as a mere intellectual imposture or figuration, or phantasm (as in Feuerbach), in favor of a conception of abstraction that is a real and active material presence in the world. For defenses of abstraction from within this tradition, see Peter Osborne, "The Reproach of Abstraction," *Radical Philosophy* 127 (September/November 2004); Alberto Toscano, "The Open Secret of Real Abstraction," *Rethinking Marxism* 20, no. 2 (2008); and Gail Day, "The Immobilizations of Social Abstraction" in *Dialectical Passions: Negation in Postwar Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), chap. 4. For the intellectual prehistory of abstraction and its relationship to the emergence of commodity relations, see Albert Sohn-Rethel, *Intellectual and Manual Labour: A Critique of Political Economy* (London: MacMillan, 1978)

2. Sohn-Rethel, *Intellectual and Manual Labour*, 20
3. There is a debate to be had, therefore, over whether emancipation from the value-form is incompatible with abstraction altogether or is rather the necessary production of a new form of abstraction, a nondominative form of abstraction —"some conception of appropriation within abstraction, perhaps," as Peter Osborne puts it. Osborne, "The Reproach of Abstraction," 27. Indeed, we might say, that emancipation here is precisely identifiable with the nondominative complification of abstraction (as a release from both the one-sidedness of real abstraction and its one-dimensional other: nonconceptualized particularity).
4. See Henri Cartier-Bresson, *Henri Cartier-Bresson* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1947); and Cartier-Bresson, *The Decisive Moment* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952).
5. Vilém Flusser, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography* (London: Reaktion, 1983).
6. Of particular pedagogic note, see Victor Burgin, ed., *Thinking Photography* (London: Macmillan, 1980); Martha Rosler, *3 Works* (Halifax, Ontario: Nova Scotia College of Art and Design Press, 1981); Allan Sekula, *Against the Grain: Essays and Photo Works, 1973–1983* (Halifax: Nova Scotia College of Art and Design Press, 1984); Stevie Bezencenet and Philip Corrigan, *Photographic Practices: Towards a Different Image* (London: Comedia, 1986); Jo Spence, *Putting Myself in the Picture: A Political Personal and Photographic Autobiography* (London: Camden Press, 1986); John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (London: Macmillan, 1988); Richard Bolton, ed., *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1989); Carol Squiers, ed., *The Critical Image: Essays on Contemporary Photography* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1990); David Hevey, *The Creatures Time Forgot: Photography and Disability Imagery* (London: Routledge, 1992); Sunil Gupta, ed., *Disrupted Borders: An Intervention in Definitions of Boundaries* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1993); Martin Lister, ed., *The Photographic Image in Digital Culture* (London:

Routledge, 1993); Jessica Evans, ed., *The Camerawork Essays: Context and Meaning in Photography* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1997).

7. For a groundbreaking discussion of the archive, see Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October* 39 (Winter 1986), reprinted in Bolton, *The Contest of Meaning*. See also Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. by Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
8. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (St. Albans: Paladin, 1973).
9. Dziga Vertov, *The Writings of Dziga Vertov*, ed. Annette Michelson (Berkeley: University of California, 1984), 8.
10. Siegried Kracauer, "Photography," trans. Thomas Y. Levin, *Critical Inquiry* 19 (Spring 1993), 428. Originally published in 1929.
11. Cartier-Bresson, *The Decisive Moment*, 2.
12. See Hou Hanru, "In Conversation with Bruno Serralongue and Allan Sekula," 2012, www.artpractical.com/feature/in_conversation_with_bruno_serralongue_and_allar
13. See James Guimond, *American Photography and the American Dream* (Chapel Hill: University of North California Press, 1991). See also Andrea Fisher, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Women: Women Photographers for the U.S. Government 1935 to 1944* (London: Pandora, 1987); Jack F. Hurley, *Portrait of a Decade: Roy Stryker and the Development of Documentary Photography in the Thirties* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1974); and Astrid Böger, *People's Lives, Public Images: The New Deal Documentary Aesthetic* (Türbingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 2001).
14. Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 4.
15. The notion of photographic transparency is obviously crude and inoperative, particularly given the way that it has propped up a mystificatory and reified notion of photographic "evidence" on the activist left, too busy to notice that photographs are actually discursively constructed (and reconstructible) *pictures*. But this position also became a convenient alibi for those eager to distance themselves from the evident political disappointments of documentary culture, and from the political understanding that photographs are pictures of a *particular kind*. As figural things, photographs' picture-like status is based on the fact that as *figures* they are also traces, moments of existential proximity and social propinquity to the world. Consequently, in the rush to condemn documentary practice as unreflective, the classical ontology of photography—its unique indexicality as a medium—has been made to appear feeble or irrelevant, weakening the primary content of this indexicality: photography's privileged discursive relationship to the historical event. For a defense of photographic realism, see Steve Edwards, *Photography: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
16. For a discussion of the cultural impact of Soviet filmic montage and filmic

thinking, see Jacques Aumont, *Montage Eisenstein* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

17. For a discussion of the "cinematic" imagination on early modernist art, see Pavli Levi, "Cinema by Other Means," *October* 131 (Winter 2010): 51–68; and David Campany, *Photography and Cinema* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008).
18. Walker Evans and James Agee, *Three Tenant Families: Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941; London: Peter Owen, 1965), xii.
19. The main body of images was not collected and published in book form until 1981, as *Harlem Documents: Photographs, 1932–1940* by Matrix Publishing. The collection was republished as *Harlem: Photographs, 1932– 1940*, with a foreword by Gordon Parks and and introduction by Marcia Battle, by Cornerhouse Publications in 1991. For a discussion of Siskind and "modernist documentary," see Joseph Entin, "Modernist Documentary: Aaron Siskind's *Harlem Document*," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 12, no. 2 (Fall 1999): 357–82.
20. David Campany, "Safety in Numbness: Some Remarks on Problems of 'Late Photography,'" in *Where Is the Photograph?*, ed. David Green (Brighton: Photoworks/Photoforum, 2003), 123–32.
21. See Carol Squiers, "Lori Grinker: Veterans of War," in *The Body at Risk: Photography of Disorder, Illness, and Healing* (New York: International Center of Photography, 2005), 173–91; Nina Berman, *Purple Hearts: Back from Iraq* (New York: Trolley, 2004); Tim Hetherington, *Infidel* (London: Chris Boot, 2010); James Nachtwey, *Inferno*, introduction by Luc Sante (London: Phaidon Press, 1999).
22. "War/Photography: An Interview with Simon Norfolk," http://bldgblog.blogspot.com/2006/11/warphotography-interview-with-simon.html. See Simon Norfolk, *Afghanistan Chronotopia* (Stockport: Dewi Lewis Publishing, 2002); and for a critical review of this series, see Julian Stallabrass, "Simon Norfolk: Afghanistan Chronotopia," www.courtauld.ac.uk/people/stallabrass_julian/essays/simon_norfolk.pdf
23. Luc Delahaye, quoted in Bill Evans, "The Real Thing: Photographer Luc Delahaye," www.artnet.com/magazine/features/sullivan/sullivan4-10-03.asp.
24. See Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blaney and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).
25. See, for example, Craig Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse: Towards a Theory of Postmodernism," *October* 12 (Spring 1980): 67–86.
26. Campany, "Safety in Numbness," 124.
27. Éric Alliez and Antonio Negri, "Peace and War," *Theory, Culture and Society* 20, no. 2 (2003): 109–18.
28. Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," in Bolton, *The Contest of Meaning*.
29. For an extended discussion of the archive and reproducibility in Sekula, see his earlier essay: Sekula, "Photography Between Labour and Capital," in *Mining Photographs and Other Pictures: A Selection from the Negative Archives of*

Shedden Studio, Glace Bay, Cape Breton, 1948–1968, ed. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh and Robert Wilkie, photographs by Leslie Shedden (Halifax, Ontario: Nova Scotia College of Art and Design Press, 1983), 193–268.

30. Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," in Bolton, *The Contest of Meaning*, 374–75.
31. Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 29.
32. Ibid., 18.
33. For a discussion the link between counterarchivization and mnemotechnics, see Tom Cohen, *Ideology and Inscription: "Cultural Studies" After Benjamin, De Man, and Bakhtin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). For an expansion of the theory of the archive-as-production into a discussion of contemporary artistic archival modes, see Hal Foster, "An Archival Impulse," *October* 110 (Fall 2004): 2–22; and Okwui Enwezor, *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art* (New York: International Center of Photography, 2008).
34. Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 4.
35. Ernst Friedrich, *Krieg dem Kriege* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1980); John Heartfield and Kurt Tucholosky, *Deutschland, Deutschland, über alles* (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1973); English translation: *Deutschland, Deutschland, über alles* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1972); Alexander Rodchenko and Vladimir Mayakvosky, *Pro Eto: Ei i Mne* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo, 1923).
36. For an extended discussion of *Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles* and *Krieg dem Kriege*, see John Roberts, "'At Last, at Last the Mask Has Been Torn Away': Realism, Modernism and Photography," in *Adventures in Realism*, ed. Matthew Beaumount (Cambridge: Blackwell, 2007), 158–76.
37. Geert Van Kesteren, *Baghdad Calling* (Rotterdam: Episode Publishers, 2008).
38. See also the counterarchival work of the Atlas Group (Walid Raad), which since the 1990s has engaged in an extensive fictive reinscription and renarrativization of photographic and textual materials from various Lebanese civil war archives (1970s–1990s). For instance, in *My Neck Is Thinner than a Hair* (2001–), the work's documentary premise is the interrogation of the social effects of Lebanese car bombs (around 245 were detonated between 1975 and 1991). The images are "rearchived" as the collection of an imaginary Dr. Fakhouri, who supposedly "donated" the file to the group on his death in 1993. In this sense "lateness" in the form of the fictive reorganization of materials is built into the group's practice. For a discussion of the Atlas Group/Raad, see Lee Smith, "The Art of the Atlas Group/Walid Raad: Missing in Action," *Artforum*, February 2003, 124–29; and Janet A. Kaplan, "Flirtations with Evidence," *Art in America*, October 2004, 134–38, 169–70.

1. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (1974; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991).
2. Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, trans. John Howe (1992; London: Verso, 1995).
3. David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 403.
4. Riccardo Bellofiore, "After Fordism, What? Capitalism at the End of the Century: Beyond the Myths," in *Global Money, Capital Restructuring, and the Changing Patterns of Labour*, ed. Riccardo Bellofiore (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1999); and Simon Pirani, *Change in Putin's Russia: Power. Money and People* (London: Pluto Press, 2010).
5. All photographs operate synecdochically of course. The synecdoche is not a special property of some pictures. However, some pictures, particularly large-scale panoramic photographs that establish a strong connection between their internal relations and the extensity of these relations in space, *invite* a synecdochic reading.
6. Richard Shiff, "Realism of Low Resolution: Digitisation and Modern Painting," in *Impossible Presence*, ed. Terry Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).
7. Andrew Benjamin, *Disclosing Spaces: On Painting* (Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2004), 122.
8. Michael Fried, *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).
9. Ibid., 37
10. For a discussion of Atget's conflicted position in relation to the new documentary demands of the state, see Molly Nesbit, *Atget's Seven Albums* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).
11. For a discussion of this heightened serenity in relation to Adam's modernist resistance to the would-be emasculating force of the photo archive, see Sas Mays, "Ansel Adams: The Gender Politics of Literary-Philosophical and Photographic Archives," in *Photography and Literature in the Twentieth Century*, ed. David Cunningham, Andrew Fisher, and Sas Mays (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2005).
12. Ansel Adams, "My Camera in the National Park," in *Our National Parks*, ed. Andrea G. Stillman and William A. Turnage (1950; Boston: Little, Brown, 1992), 15.
13. Ansel Adams, "Charter Day Address, University of California at Santa Cruz," in *Our National Parks*, ed. Andrea G. Stillman and William A. Turnage (1950; Boston: Little, Brown, 1992), 83.
14. Ansel Adams, "Problems of Interpretation of the Natural Scene—Sierra Club Bulletin," in *Our National Parks*, ed. Andrea G. Stillman and William A. Turnage (1950; Boston: Little, Brown, 1992), 115.

15. Ansel Adams, “Letter to David Brower, Executive Director Sierra Club Feb 15 1956,” in *Our National Parks*, ed. Andrea G. Stillman and William A. Turnage (1950; Boston: Little, Brown, 1992), 117.
16. John Ganis, *Consuming the American Landscape*, poems by Stanley Diamond, introduction by Robert Sobieszek, afterword by George Thompson (Stockport: Dewi Lewis, 2003).
17. Ed Ruscha, *Twenty Six Gasoline Stations* (Alhambra, Calif.: Cunningham Press, 1963).
18. Walter Benjamin, “The Author as Producer,” in *Thinking Photography*, ed. Victor Burgin (London: MacMillan, 1981).
19. Melanie Marino, “Almost Not Photography,” in *Conceptual Art: Myth and Practice*, ed. Michael Corris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 74, 75.
20. Ibid.
21. But at the same time, and to differentiate his work from Warhol, Ruscha does not pull the photographs down into a preset and unified world of reified appearances, as if he were working from an established or normative set of moves that then stand in for the abstraction of appearances (as Daniel Buren was later to do obsessively). On the contrary, the photographs across the sequence of books are all produced from very different conceptual positions (or templates of objectification or constraint), suggesting that what is important for Ruscha is how the photographer-artist finds a counterposition or counterpositions within this determinate and objectified field of vision. In this respect, which is apparent across the span of books, there is good evidence that Ruscha is engaged in a continuous process of countermoves from within this abstracted field of vision.
22. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, introduction by Alan Ryan (London: Everyman’s Library, 1994).
23. William Jenkins, “Introduction to The New Topographics,” in *Reading Into Photography: Selected Essays, 1959–1980*, ed. T. F. Barrow, S. Armitage, and W. E. Tydeman (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1982), 52.
24. John Swarkowski, “Foreword,” in *The New West: Landscapes Along the Colorado Front Range* (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1974), reprinted in T. F. Barrow et al., *Reading Into Photography*, 45.
25. Frank Gohlke, discussed in Jenkins, “Introduction to the New Topographics.” For a very different reading of this approach as “modernist indifference,” see Deborah Bright, “Of Mother Nature and Marlboro Men: An Inquiry Into the Cultural Meanings of Landscape Photography,” in *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography*, ed. Richard Bolton (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1989), 125–43.
26. Raymond Moore, *Every So Often: Photographs by Raymond Moore* (Newcastle-Upon-Tyne: BBC Northeast, 1983); and Moore, *49 Prints by Raymond Moore*

(London: British Arts Council, 1986).

27. The identification between “unbordered” space and photographic authenticity has been one of the major strands of modernism. This has taken three key forms: the search for unpopulated or underpopulated landscapes or settings (as in Edward Weston, Ansel Adams, and Minor White); the selection of marginal or hidden urban sites situated liminally across the boundary between the urban and the countryside (as in aspects of the New Topographics and Keith Arnatt’s rubbish dump pictures); and the peripheral, forgotten, or overlooked urban or semiurban spaces, or enclave spaces, as a respite from the spatial abstractions of the city (as in Eugene Atget). (However, in the work of classic modernists such as Weston, Adams, and White, the threatened landscape itself becomes an “enclave space.”) All these positions, in an important sense, identify photography —and the identity of the photographer—with forms of spatial escape or exclusion.
28. Kristin Ross, *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune* (1988; London: Verso, 2008).
29. See, for instance, Anthony Sutcliffe, *The Autumn of Central Paris: The Defeat of Town Planning, 1850–1970* (Cambridge: Edward Arnold, 1970).
30. Élisée Reclus, *New Physical Geography*, 2 vols. (New York: D. Appleton, 1890).
31. However, this is not to say that Vidal de la Blache ignored human habitation and labor, but that particular landscapes functioned as a kind of pure “standing reserve” for national symbolization. See Vidal de la Blache, *Tableau de le geographie de la France* (1903; Paris: Librarie Jules Tallendier, 1979). For a discussion of the relations between Reclus and Vidal de la Blache, see D. R. Stoddart, *On Geography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).
32. Ross, *The Emergence of Social Space*, 42.
33. Ibid., 5.
34. Ibid.
35. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 367.
36. Henri Lefebvre, *The Critique of Everyday Life: Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday*, vol. 11, trans. John Moore, with a preface by Michael Trebitsch (1961; London: Verso, 2002).

7. VIOLENCE, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND THE INHUMAN

1. For a survey of the clinical literature, see Robert Newell, *Body Image and Disfigurement Care* (London: Routledge, 2000).
2. Jan Zita Grover, “‘The Artist and Illness’: An Interview with Jo Spence,” *Artpaper*, January 1992.
3. For Spence’s reflections on this series, see John Roberts, ed., *Renegotiations: Class, Modernity and Photography* (Norwich: Norwich Gallery, 1993), 26–29.

4. For a critical engagement with the implications of this, see Carol Squiers, *The Body at Risk: Photography of Disorder, Illness, and Healing* (New York: International Center of Photography, 2005).
5. Slavoj Žižek, *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991).
6. Ernst Friedrich, *Krieg dem Kriege* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1980).
7. It needs to be said, though, that active support for the antiwar movement among the German medical profession was limited. In the psychiatric hospitals or neurosis stations, for instance, which treated "hysterical" front-line soldiers, psychiatrists rejected the traumatizing impact of war. Patients were rapidly "cured" through collective labor and discharged into industrial production or agriculture. See Paul Lerner, *Hysterical Men: War, Psychiatry and the Politics of Trauma in Germany, 1890–1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).
8. For a discussion of intolerance as a progressive political concept, see Slavoj Žižek, *Violence* (London: Profile Books, 2008). My use is somewhat different here, inasmuch as I use intolerance here to signify a continuum of (extreme) resistance to the symbolic effects of systemic violence. For Žižek, in contrast, intolerance is that which allows us to share our struggles and overcome our differences as part of an active universalism: "The formula of revolutionary solidarity is not 'let us tolerate our differences,' it is not a part of civilizations, but a part of struggles which cut across civilizations, a part between what, in each civilization, undermines its identity from within." Ibid., 133.
9. The exception is Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1979); and Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (London: Penguin, 2004).
10. Rom Harré, *The Philosophies of Science: An Introductory Survey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 161.
11. Shahn photographed himself operating the camera by photographing his reflection in a plate-glass window (*Post Office, Crossville, Tennessee*, 1937). For a discussion of Evans's use of the concealed camera, see the exhibition "Furtive Gaze," Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago, 2003, and for the collected subway photographs (1938–41), see Evans, *Many Are Called*, introduction by James Agee (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).
12. Friedrich, *Krieg dem Kriege*.
13. For a discussion of ostension and linguistic communication, see Dan Sperber and Deidre Wilson, *Relevance* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).
14. Walter Benjamin, "Little History of Photography," trans. Rodney Livingstone and others, in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol. 2, *1927–1934*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).
15. See Salvador Dali, "Psychologie non-euclidiene d'une photographic," *Minotaure* 7 (1935), reprinted in *Qui* 2 (Paris: Denoël/Gorthier, 1971).

16. W. V. O. Quine, *Ontological Relativity, and Other Essays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969).
17. Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer, “On the Psychical Mechanisms of Hysterical Phenomena: Preliminary Communication,” in *Studies in Hysteria* (1893; Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1974), 57.
18. In his essay “Psychologie non-euclidiene d’une photographic” Dali advances a theory of the centrifugal content of the photograph, in which barely seen or hidden details subvert or transform the ostensible manifest content of the image. Here the incidental detail is a barely visible—or indeed nonexistent—cotton spool in the gutter in front of a group portrait in front of a Parisian shop. For Dali, this lost or ignored item threatens the empirical equanimity of the depicted scene. Dali here shares with Benjamin, and later Barthes, a post-Freudian account of the submerged fragment or detail as a psychic “quilting point” (Lacan), indebted overwhelmingly to the nineteenth-century physician Giovanni Morelli’s theory of interpretation based on an identification of the significant but unnoticed or marginal feature of a painting. Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1982).
19. Jean Laplanche, *Essays on Otherness* (London: Routledge, 1999), 80.
20. However, we might say “hysterically” that there is some truth in this: the military and civilian victims of warfare remain vast, particularly in the imperialist war zones of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. In Cambodia, for instance, one in every 380 people is an amputee; and in the major African war zones, the militarization of children has left hundreds of thousands injured and brutalized.
21. For an extended discussion of this question, see Alan Radley, “Portrayals of Suffering: On Looking Away, Looking at, and the Comprehension of Illness Experience,” *Body and Society* 8 (2002): 1–23.
22. For a discussion of this continuum of representational violence in the Middle East, see Linfield, *The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).
23. Radley, “Portrayals of Suffering,” 7.
24. See, for example, the extraordinary political blog Blog del Narco (which is constantly under threat of being closed down), which includes photographs of the atrocities committed by the Mexican drug cartels, in a situation of almost total media silence in Mexico on these atrocities and the ongoing war with the cartels.

CONCLUSION

1. In my view, for all its importance as a defense of the truth-claims of photography against its relativistic critics, Ariella Azoulay’s *The Civil Contract of Photography* is far too sanguine about the power of the photographic document to create a new political “civic spectator,” outside of the reconstitution of a left public sphere.
2. For a discussion of nonreproduction in these terms, see the work of Loren

Goldner, in particular, Goldner, “Once Again Fictitious Capital: Further Reply to *Aufheben* and Other Critics,” 2003, http://home.earthlink.net/-Irgoldner/october.html.

3. Fried, *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).
4. George Santayana, *Reason in Art: Volume Four of the “Life of Reason”* (1905; New York: Dover Publications, 1982).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, Ansel. “Charter Day Address, University of California at Santa Cruz.” In *Our National Parks*, edited by Andrea G. Stillman and William A. Turnage. Boston: Little, Brown, 1992.

———. “Letter to David Brower, Executive Director Sierra Club Feb 15 1956.” In *Our National Parks*, edited by Andrea G. Stillman and William A. Turnage. 1956; Boston: Little, Brown, 1992.

———. “My Camera in the National Park.” In *Our National Parks*, edited by Andrea G. Stillman and William A. Turnage. 1950; Boston: Little, Brown, 1992.

———. “Problems of Interpretation of the Natural Scene—Sierra Club Bulletin.” In *Our National Parks*, edited by Andrea G. Stillman and William A. Turnage. 1945; Boston: Little, Brown, 1992.

Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.

Agee, James, and Walker Evans. *Three Tenant Families: Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. 1941; London: Peter Owen, 1965.

Alliez, Éric, and Antonio Negri. “Peace and War.” *Theory, Culture and Society* 20, no. 2 (2003).

Andre, Carl. Interview with Willoughby Sharp. *Avalanche* 1 (Fall 1970).

Arnatt, Keith. *Rubbish and Recollections*. Mostyn: Oriel Mostyn Gallery, 1989.

Arvatov, Boris. *Kunst und Produktion*. 1926; Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1972.

Augé, Marc. *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. Translated by John Howe. 1992; London: Verso, 1995.

Aumont, Jacques. *Montage Einsenstein*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Azoulay, Ariella. *The Civil Contract of Photography*. Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2008.

———. *Civil Imagination: The Political Ontology of Photography*. London: Verso, 2012.

Badiou, Alain. *The Century*. Translated and with a commentary and notes by Alberto Toscano. Cambridge: Polity, 2007.

Bakunin, Mikhail. *The Basic Bakunin: Writings, 1869–1871*. Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1992.

Barrow, T. F., S. Armitage, and W. E. Tydeman, eds. *Reading Into Photography: Selected Essays, 1959–1980*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1982.

Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1982.

———. *Mythologies*. Translated by Annette Lavers. St. Albans: Paladin, 1973.

Batchen, Geoffrey, ed. *Photography Degree Zero*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009.

Bathchen, Geoffrey, Mick Gidley, Nancy K. Miller, and Jay Prosser, eds. *Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis*. London: Reaktion Books, 2012.

Bellofiore, Riccardo. "After Fordism, What? Capitalism at the End of the Century: Beyond the Myths." In *Global Money, Capital Restructuring, and the Changing Patterns of Labor*, edited by Riccardo Bellofiore. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1999.

Benjamin, Andrew. *Disclosing Spaces: On Painting*. Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2004.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Author as Producer." In *Thinking Photography*, edited by Victor Burgin. London: MacMillan, 1981.

———. "Little History of Photography." In *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol. 2, *1927–1934*. Translated by Rodney Livingstone and others. Edited by Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Bezencenet, Stevie, and Philip Corrigan. *Photographic Practices: Towards a Different Image*. London: Comedia, 1986.

Bhaskar, Roy. *A Realist Theory of Science*. Sussex: Harvester Press/Humanities Press, 1978.

Böger, Astrid. *People's Lives, Public Images: The New Deal Documentary Aesthetic*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 2001.

Bolton, Richard, ed. *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989.

Bourdieu, Pierre, with Luc Boltanski, Robert Castel, Jean Claude Chamborden, and Dominique Schapper. *Photography: A Middle Brow Art*. 1965; Cambridge, Mass.: Polity, 1990.

Bourriaud, Nicolas. *Postproduction, Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World*. New York: Lukas and Sternberg, 2002.

Brandt, Bill. *The English at Home*. London: Batsford, 1936.

Brenner, Robert. "The Economics of Global Turbulence." Special Issue, *New Left Review* 229 (May/June 1998).

Bright, Deborah. "Of Mother Nature and Marlboro Men: An Inquiry Into the Cultural Meanings of Landscape Photography." In *The Contest of Meaning*, edited by Richard Bolton. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989.

Buchloh, Benjamin H. D. "1962–1969: From the Aesthetics of Administration to the Critique of Institutions." *October* 55 (Winter 1990).

Buchloh, Benjamin H. D., and Robert Wilkie, eds. *Mining Photographs and Other*

Pictures: A Selection from the Negative Archives of Shedden Studio, Glace Bay, Cape Breton, 1948–1968. Photographs by Leslie Shedden. Halifax: Novia Scotia College of Art and Design Press, 1983.

Burgin, Victor, ed. *Thinking Photography*. London: Macmillan, 1980.

Caffentzis, George. *In Letters of Blood and Fire: Work, Machines and the Crisis of Capitalism*. Oakland: PM Press, 2013.

Caldwell, Erskine, and Margaret Bourke-White. *You Have Seen Their Faces*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995.

Campany, David. *Photography and Cinema*. London: Reaktion Books, 2008.

———. "Safety in Numbness: Some Remarks on Problems of "Late Photography." In *Where is the Photograph?*, edited by David Green. Brighton: Photoworks/Photoforum, 2003.

Cartier-Bresson, Henri. *The Decisive Moment*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952.

———. *Henri Cartier-Bresson*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1947.

Chéroux, Clément, ed. *Mémoires des camps: Photographies des camps de concentration et d'extermination Nazis, 1933–1999*. Paris: Marval, 2001.

Cohen, Tom. *Ideology and Inscription: 'Cultural Studies' After Benjamin, De Man, and Bakhtin*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Coplans, John. "*Various Small Fires*: Edward Ruscha Discusses His Perplexing Publications." *Artforum* 5 (February 1965).

Dali, Salvador. "Psychologie Non Euclidiene d'une Photographic." 1935; *Qui* 2. Paris: Denoël/Gorthier, 1971.

Day, Gail. *Dialectical Passions: Negation in Postwar Art*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.

Day, Gail, Steve Edwards, and David Mabb. "What Keeps Mankind Alive?": The Eleventh International Istanbul Biennial." *Historical Materialism* 18 (2010).

Delahaye, Luc. *History*. London: Chris Boot, 2003.

Denning, Michael. *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Culture*. 2nd ed. 1997; London: Verso, 2010.

Derrida, Jacques. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Translated by Eric Prenowitz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Didi-Huberman, Georges. *Images in Spite of All: Four Photographs from Auschwitz*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012.

Dos Passos, John. *Manhattan Transfer*. Introduction by Jay McInerney. 1925; London: Penguin, 1986.

Edelman, Bernard. *Ownership of the Image: Elements for a Marxist Theory of the Law*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979.

Edwards, Steve. "The Machine's Dialogue." *Oxford Art Journal* 13, no. 1 (1990).

———. *The Making of English Photography: Allegories*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006.

———, ed. *Oxford Art Journal* 30, no. 1 (2007).

———. “Photography, Allegory, and Labor.” *Art Journal*, Summer 1996.

———. *Photography: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Elkins, James, ed. *Photography Theory*. New York: Routledge, 2007.

End Notes Collective. “Misery and Debt on the Logic and History of Surplus Populations and Surplus Capital.” *End Notes* 2 (2010).

Entin, Joseph. “Modernist Documentary: Aaron Siskind’s *Harlem Document*.” *Yale Journal of Criticism* 12, no. 2 (Fall 1999).

Enwezor, Okwui. *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art*. New York: International Center of Photography, 2008.

Evans, Bill. “The Real Thing: Photographer Luc Delahaye.” www.artnet.com/magazine/features/sullivan/sullivan4-10-03.asp.

Evans, Jessica, ed. *The Camerawork Essays: Context and Meaning in Photography*. London: Rivers Oram Press, 1997.

Evans, Walker. *Many Are Called*. Introduction by James Agee. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

Fisher, Andrea. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Women: Women Photographers for the U.S. Government, 1935 to 1944*. London: Pandora, 1987.

Fisher, Andrew. “The Involution of Photography.” *Radical Philosophy* 157 (September/October 2009).

Fisher, Mark. *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* Winchester: Zero Books, 2009.

Flusser, Vilém *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*. London: Reaktion, 1983.

Fore, Devin. *Realism After Modernism: The Rehumanization of Art and Literature*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2012.

Foster, Hal. “An Archival Impulse.” *October* 110 (Fall 2004).

Freud, Sigmund, and Joseph Breuer. “On the Psychical Mechanisms of Hysterical Phenomena: Preliminary Communication.” In *Studies in Hysteria*. 1893; Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1974.

Fried, Michael. *Menzel’s Realism: Art, Embodiment in Nineteenth-Century Berlin*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

———. *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.

Friedrich, Ernst. *Krieg dem Kriege*. Frankfurt: Zweitausendeins, 1980.

Galassi, Peter. “Gursky’s World.” In *Andreas Gursky*. New York: Museum of Modern

Art, 2001.

Ganis, John. *Consuming the American Landscape*. Poems by Stanley Diamond. Introduction by Robert Sobieszek. Afterword by George Thompson. Stockport: Dewi Lewis, 2003.

Goldin, Nan. *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*. Text by Nan Goldin. New York: Aperture, 2005.

Goldner, Loren. "Once Again Fictitious Capital: Further Reply to *Aufheben* and Other Critics." 2003. http://home.earthlink.net/-Irgoldner/october.html.

Gombrich. Ernst. "Image and Code: Scope and the Limits of Conventionalism in Pictorial Representation." In *Image and Code*, edited by Wendy Steiner. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1981.

Grover, Jan Zita. "The Artist and Illness: An Interview with Jo Spence." *Artpaper* (January 1992).

Guimond, James. *American Photography and the American Dream*. Chapel Hill: University of North California Press, 1991.

Gupta, Sunil, ed. *Disrupted Borders: An Intervention in Definitions of Boundaries*. London: Rivers Oram Press, 1993.

Hanru, Hou. "In Conversation with Bruno Serralongue and Allan Sekula." 2013. www.artpractical.com/feature/in_conversation_with_bruno_serralongue_and_allan_

Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. *Empire*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Harman, Chris. *Zombie Capitalism: Global Crisis and the Relevance of Marx*. London: Bookmarks, 2009.

Harré, Rom. *The Philosophies of Science: An Introductory Survey*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Harvey, David. *The Enigma of Capital: And the Crises of Capitalism*. London: Profile Books, 2010.

———. *The Limits to Capital*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982.

Heartfield, John, and Kurt Tucholsky. *Deutschland, Deutschland, über alles*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1972.

———. *Deutschland, Deutschland, über alles*. Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1973.

Hemingway, Andrew. "Middlebrow: For and Against." *Oxford Art Journal* 22, no 1 (1999).

Hevey, David. *The Creatures Time Forgot: Photography and Disability Imagery*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Hurley, Jack H., *Portrait of a Decade: Roy Stryker and The Development of Documentary Photography in the Thirties*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State

University Press, 1974.

Jenkins, William. *The New Topographics*. Rochester: International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, 1975.

Joyce, James. *Ulysses*. Corrected edition. Edited by Hans Walter Gabler with Wolfhard Steppe and Claus Melchior. Preface by Richard Ellmann. 1922; Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books in association with Bodley Head, 1986.

Joyce, Lisa, and Fred Orton. "'Always Elsewhere':An Introduction to the Art of Jeff Wall *A Ventriloquist at a Birthday party in October, 1947*." In *Jeff Wall*. Vienna: Museum Moderna Kunst, 2003.

Kaplan, Janet A. "Flirtations with Evidence." *Art in America* (October 2004).

Kesteren, Geert Van. *Baghdad Calling*. Rotterdam: Episode Publishers, 2008.

Kiaer, Christina. *Imagine No Possessions: The Socialist Objects of Russian Constructivism*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005.

Kracauer, Siegried. "Photography." Translated by Thomas Y. Levin. *Critical Inquiry* 19 (Spring 1993).

Krauss, Rosalind E. *The Optical Unconscious*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993.

Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.

Lakatos, Imre. *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes: Philosophical Papers*. Vol. 1. Edited by John Worrall and Gregory Currie. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Laplanche, Jean. *Essays on Otherness*. London: Routledge, 1999.

Laruelle, François. *Le Concept de Non-Photographie/The Concept of Non-Photography*. Falmouth: Urbanomic, 2011.

Lecercle, Jean-Jacques, and Denise Riley. *The Force of Language*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave/MacMillan, 2004.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Critique of Everyday Life: Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday*. Vol. 11. Translated by John Moore. Preface by Michael Trebitsch. 1961; London: Verso, 2002.

———. *Everyday Life in the Modern World*. Translated by Sacha Rabinovitch. 1967; London: Athlone Press, 2000.

———. *The Production of Space*. Translated by Donald Nicholoson-Smith. 1974; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991.

Lerner, Paul. *Hysterical Men: War, Psychiatry and the Politics of Trauma in Germany, 1890–1930*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003.

Levi, Pavli. "Cinema by Other Means." *October* 131 (Winter 2010).

Lier, Henri Van. *The Philosophy of Photography*. 1981; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2007.

Linfield, Susie. *The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Lister, Martin, ed. *The Photographic Image in Digital Culture*. London: Routledge, 1993.

Mansoor, Jaleh. “Ed Ruscha’s One-Way Street.” *October* 111 (Winter 2005).

Marino, Melanie. “Almost Not Photography.” In *Conceptual Art: Myth and Practice*, edited by Michael Corris. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Marx, Karl. “Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy.” In *A Contribution to Political Economy*. 1857; New York: International Publishers, 1970.

Mays, Sas. “Ansel Adams: The Gender Politics of Literary-Philosophical and Photographic Archives.” In *Photography and Literature in the Twentieth Century*, edited by David Cunningham, Andrew Fisher, and Sas Mays. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2005.

Meiselas, Susan. *Nicaragua, June 1978–July 1979*. New York: Pantheon, 1981.

Mészáros, István. *The Challenge and Burden of Historical Time: Socialism in the Twenty-First Century*. Foreword by John Bellamy Foster. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2008.

Meyerowitz, Joel. *Aftermath: World Trade Center Archive*. London: Phaidon, 2006.

Moore, Raymond. *49 Prints by Raymond Moore*. London: British Arts Council, 1986.

———. *Every So Often: Photographs by Raymond Moore*. Newcastle-Upon-Tyne: BBC Northeast, 1983.

Nachtwey, James. *Inferno*. Introduction by Luc Sante. London: Phaidon Press, 1999.

Nesbit, Molly. *Atget’s Seven Albums*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.

Newell, Robert. *Body Image and Disfigurement Care*. London: Routledge, 2000.

Niedecker, Lorine. *Collected Works*. Edited by Jenny Penberthy. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

Norfolk, Simon. *Afghanistan Chronotopia*. Stockport: Dewi Lewis, 2002.

———. “War/Photography: An Interview with Simon Norfolk.” 2006. http://bldgblog.blogspot.com/2006/11/warphotography-interview-withsimon.html.

Oppen, George. *New Collected Poems*. Edited and with an introduction by Michael Davidson. Preface by Eliot Weinberger. Manchester: Carcanet, 2003.

Osborne, Peter. “‘Infinite Exchange: The Social Ontology of the Photographic Image.” *Philosophy of Photography* 1, no. 1 (2010).

———. “The Reproach of Abstraction.” *Radical Philosophy* 127 (September/October 2004).

Owens, Craig. “The Allegorical Impulse: Towards a Theory of Postmodernism.” *October* 12 (Spring 1980).

Palmer, Daniel, and Jessica Whyte. “‘No Credible Photographic Interest’:

Photography Restrictions and Surveillance in a Time of Terror." *Philosophy of Photography* 1, no. 2 (2011).

Peirce, C. S. *Writings of Charles S. Peirce: A Chronological Edition*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981.

Pirani, Simon. *Change in Putin's Russia: Power, Money and People*. London: Pluto Press, 2010.

Popper, Karl. *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Pressac, Jean Claude. *Les crématoires d'Auschwitz: La machinerie du meurte de masse*. Paris: CNRS Editions, 1993.

Quine, W. V. O. *Ontological Relativity, and Other Essays*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1969.

Rabinowitz, Paula. *They Must Be Represented: The Politics of Documentary*. London: Verso, 1994.

Radley, Alan. "Portrayals of Suffering: On Looking Away, Looking At, and the Comprehension of Illness Experience." *Body and Society* 8, no. 3.

Rancière, Jacques. *The Emancipated Image*. Translated by Gregory Elliot. London: Verso, 2009.

———. *The Politics of Aesthetics*. Translated with an introduction by Gabriel Rockhill, and with an afterword by Slavoj Žižek. London: Continuum, 2004.

Ribalta Jorge, ed. *Jo Spence Beyond the Perfect Image: Photography, Subjectivity, Antagonism*. Barcelona: MACBA, 2005.

Ricoeur, Paul. *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Translated by Kathleen Blaney and David Pellauer. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2004.

Roberts, John. "Art After Art in the Expanded Field." In *That's the Way We Do It*. Kunsthaus Bregenz, 2011.

———. *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography and the Everyday*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998.

———. "'At Last, at Last the Mask Has Been Torn Away': Realism, Modernism and Photography." In *Adventures in Realism*, edited by Matthew Beaumount. Cambridge: Blackwell, 2007.

———, ed. *The Impossible Document: Photography and Conceptual Art in Britain, 1966–1976*. London: Camerawords, 1997.

———. "The Practice of Failure." *Cabinet* 5 (Winter 2001).

———. *Renegotiations: Class, Modernity and Photography*. Norwich: Norwich Gallery, 1993.

Roberts, John, and Jeff Wall. "Post-'60s Photography and Its Modernist Context: A Conversation Between Jeff Wall and John Roberts." In *Jeff Wall: Selected Essays and Interviews*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2007.

Rodchenko, Alexander, and Vladimir Mayakvosky. *Pro Eto: Ei i Mne*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo, 1923.

Rosenberg, Eric, and Lisa Saltzman, eds. *Trauma and Visuality in Modernity*. Lebanon, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2006.

Rosler, Martha. *3 Works*. Halifax: Nova Scotia College of Art and Design Press, 1981.

Ross, Kristin. *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune*. 1988; London: Verso, 2008.

Rowell, Margit. "Ed Ruscha, Photographer." In *Ed Ruscha: Photographer*. New York: Whitney Museum of Modern Art, 2006.

Ruscha, Ed. *Babycakes with Weights*. New York: Multiples, 1970.

———. *Colored People*. Los Angeles: Ed Ruscha, 1972.

———. *Crackers*. Hollywood: Heavy Industry Publications, 1969.

———. *Dutch Detail*. Deventer, Netherlands: Octopus Foundation, 1971.

———. *Every Building on the Sunset Strip*. Los Angeles: Ed Ruscha, 1966.

———. *A Few Palm Trees*. Hollywood: Heavy Industry Publications, 1971.

———. *New Swimming Pools and a Broken Glass*. Los Angeles: Ed Ruscha, 1968.

———. *Real Estate Opportunities*. Los Angeles: Ed Ruscha, 1970.

———. *Records*. Hollywood: Heavy Industry Publications, 1971.

———. *Some Los Angeles Apartments*. Los Angeles: Ed Ruscha, 1965.

———. *Stains*. Hollywood: Heavy Industry Publications, 1969.

———. *Thirtyfour Parking Lots in Los Angeles*. Los Angeles: Ed Ruscha, 1967.

———. *Twenty Six Gasoline Stations*. Los Angeles: Cunningham Press, Alhambra, 1962.

———. *Various Small Fires and Milk*. Hollywood: Andreson, Richie and Simon, 1964.

Ruscha, Ed, and Billy Bengston. Al *Business Cards*. Hollywood: Heavy Industry Publications, 1968.

Ruscha, Ed, Patrick Blackwell, and Mason Williams. *Royal Road Test*. Los Angeles: Ed Ruscha, 1967.

Santayana, George. *Reason in Art*. 1905; New York: Dover Publications, 1982.

Sekula, Allan. *Against the Grain: Essays and Photo Works, 1973–1983*. Halifax: Nova Scotia College of Art and Design Press, 1984.

———. *Dismal Science*. Normal: University of Illinois Press, 1997.

Shiff, Richard. "Phototropism Figuring the Proper." *Studies in the History of Art* 20 (1989).

———. “Realism of Low Resolution: Digitisation and Modern Painting.” In *Impossible Presence*, edited by Terry Smith. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Sholette, Greg. *Dark Matter: Art and Politics in the Age of Enterprise Culture*. London: Pluto Press, 2010.

Siskind, Aaron. *Harlem Documents: Photographs, 1932–1940*. Rhode Island: Matrix, 1981.

———. *Harlem: Photographs, 1932–1940*. Foreword by Gordon Parks. Introduction by Marcia Battle. Manchester: Cornerhouse, 1991.

Smith, Lee. “The Art of the Atlas Group/Walid Raad: Missing in Action.” *Artforum* (February 2003).

Sohn-Rethel, Albert. *Intellectual and Manual Labour: A Critique of Political Economy*. London: MacMillan, 1978.

Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1979.

———. *Regarding the Pain of Others*. London: Penguin, 2004.

Spence, Jo. *Putting Myself in the Picture: A Political Personal and Photographic Autobiography*. London: Camden Press, 1986.

Sperber, Dan, and Deidre Wilson. *Relevance*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986.

Squiers, Carol. *The Body at Risk: Photography of Disorder, Illness, and Healing*. New York: International Center of Photography, 2005.

———, ed. *The Critical Image: Essays on Contemporary Photography*. Seattle: Bay Press, 1990.

Sutcliffe, Anthony. *The Autumn of Central Paris: The Defeat of Town Planning, 1850–1970*. Cambridge: Edward Arnold, 1970.

Stallabrass, Julian. *Memory of Fire: the War of Images and Images of War*. Brighton: Brighton Photo Biennial, 2008.

———. “Museum Photography and Museum Prose.” *New Left Review* 65, second series (September/October 2010).

———. “Simon Norfolk: Afghanistan Chronotopia.” 2003. www.courtauld.ac.uk/people/stallabrass_julian/essays/simon_norfolk.pdf.

Steyerl, Hito. *The Wretched of the Screen*. Introduction by Franco “Bifo” Berardi. Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012.

Stimson, Blake. *Pivot of the World: Photography and Its Nation*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007.

Stoddart, D. R. *On Geography*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1986.

Stott, William. *Documentary Expression and Thirties America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

Swarkowski, John. “Foreword.” In *The New West: Landscapes Along the Colorado Front Range*. Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1974.

Szarkowski, John. *The Photographer's Eye*. New York: MoMA, 1966.

Tagg, John. *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories*. London: Macmillan, 1988.

Tan, Fiona. *Vox Populi, >>>Tokyo*. London: Bookworks, 2007.

Tocqueville, de Alexis. *Democracy in America*. Introduction by Alan Ryan. London: Everyman's Library, 1994.

Toomer, Jean. *Cane*. Edited by Darwin T. Turner. 1923; New York: Norton, 1988.

Toscano, Alberto. "The Open Secret of Real Abstraction." *Rethinking Marxism* 20, no. 2 (2008).

Trachtenberg, Alan. *Reading American Photographs: Images as History, Mathew Brady to Walker Evans*. New York: Hill and Wang, Noonday Press, 1989.

Tsivian, Yuri, ed. *Lines of Resistance: Dziga Vertov and the Twenties*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005.

Vertov, Dziga. *The Writings of Dziga Vertov*. Edited by Annette Michelson. Berkeley: University of California, 1984.

Vidal de la Blache, Paul. *Tableau de le Geographie de la France*. 1903; Paris: Librarie Jules Tallendier, 1979.

Wall, Jeff. "'Marks of Indifference': Aspects of Photography in, or as, Conceptual Art." In *Reconsidering the Object of Art, 1965–1975*, edited by Anne Goldstein and Anne Rorimer. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996.

———. "Unity and Fragmentation in Manet." *Parachute* 35, Montreal (June/July/August 1984).

Wilde, Ann, Jürgen Wilde, and Thomas Weski, eds. *Albert Renger-Patzsch: Photographer of Objectivity*. Text by Thomas Janzon. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997.

Wright, Stephen. "Le dés-oeuvrement de l'art." *Mouvements: Les valeurs of de l'art: entre marché et institutions* 17 (September/October 2001).

Žižek, Slavoj. *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991.

———. *On Living in the End Times*. London: Verso, 2010.

———. *Violence*. London: Profile Books, 2008.

Zukofsky, Louis. *'A.'* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.

INDEX

Page numbers refer to the print edition but are hyperlinked to the appropriate location in the e-book.

Note: Page numbers followed by n and a number indicate notes.

Columbia Themes in Philosophy, Social Criticism, and the Arts

Lydia Goehr and Gregg M. Horowitz, Editors

Columbia Themes in Philosophy, Social Criticism, and the Arts presents monographs, essay collections, and short books on philosophy and aesthetic theory. It aims to publish books that show the ability of the arts to stimulate critical reflection on modern and contemporary social, political, and cultural life. Art is not now, if it ever was, a realm of human activity independent of the complex realities of social organization and change, political authority and antagonism, cultural domination and resistance. The possibilities of critical thought embedded in the arts are most fruitfully expressed when addressed to readers across the various fields of social and humanistic inquiry. The idea of philosophy in the series title ought to be understood, therefore, to embrace forms of discussion that begin where mere academic expertise exhausts itself, where the rules of social, political, and cultural practice are both affirmed and challenged, and where new thinking takes place. The series does not privilege any particular art, nor does it ask for the arts to be mutually isolated. The series encourages writing from the many fields of thoughtful and critical inquiry.

Lydia Goehr and Daniel Herwitz, eds., *The Don Giovanni Moment: Essays on the Legacy of an Opera*

Robert Hullot-Kentor, *Things Beyond Resemblance: Collected Essays on Theodor W. Adorno*

Gianni Vattimo, *Art's Claim to Truth*, edited by Santiago Zabala, translated by Luca D'Isanto

John T. Hamilton, *Music, Madness, and the Unworking of Language*

Stefan Jonsson, *A Brief History of the Masses: Three Revolutions*

Richard Eldridge, *Life, Literature, and Modernity*

Janet Wolff, *The Aesthetics of Uncertainty*

Lydia Goehr, *Elective Affinities: Musical Essays on the History of Aesthetic Theory*

Christoph Menke, *Tragic Play: Irony and Theater from Sophocles to Beckett*, translated by James Phillips

György Lukács, *Soul and Form*, translated by Anna Bostock and edited by John T. Sanders and Katie Terezakis with an introduction by Judith Butler

Joseph Margolis, *The Cultural Space of the Arts and the Infelicities of Reductionism*

Herbert Molderings, *Art as Experiment: Duchamp and the Aesthetics of Chance, Creativity, and Convention*

Whitney Davis, *Queer Beauty: Sexuality and Aesthetics from Winckelmann to Freud and Beyond*

Gail Day, *Dialectical Passions: Negation in Postwar Art Theory*

Ewa Płonowska Ziarek, *Feminist Aesthetics and the Politics of Modernism*

Gerhard Richter, *Afterness: Figures of Following in Modern Thought and Aesthetics*

Boris Groys, *Under Suspicion: A Phenomenology of the Media*, translated by Carsten Strathausen

Michael Kelly, *A Hunger for Aesthetics: Enacting the Demands of Art*

Stefan Jonsson, *Crowds and Democracy: The Idea and Image of the Masses from Revolution to Fascism*

Elaine P. Miller, *Head Cases: Julia Kristeva on Philosophy and Art in Depressed Time*

Lutz Koepnick, *On Slowness: Toward an Aesthetic of Radical Contempo-raneity*