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THE JOURNAL OF MEDIA ARTS AND CULTURAL CRITICISM

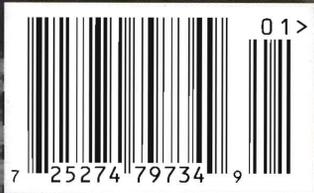
Media, War, and the Future of Collective Memory

Google Art Project and the 21st-Century Period Eye

The Ideological Roots of the Photographic Image

The Return of the Photo Collective

VOL. 40, No. 4



USA \$5.50/CAN \$7.50

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THE JOURNAL OF MEDIA ARTS AND CULTURAL CRITICISM

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MAY THE ROAD RISE TO MEET YOU

Sara Macel

(INSIDE COVER SPREAD)

Editorial and business offices: 31 Prince Street
Rochester, NY 14607
Phone: (585) 442-8676, ext. 26
Fax: (585) 442-1992
Email: afterimage@vsw.org
Web: www.vsw.org/ai/

AFTERIMAGE PROVIDES A FORUM FOR THE DISCUSSION & ANALYSIS OF PHOTOGRAPHY, INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO, ALTERNATIVE PUBLISHING, MULTIMEDIA, AND RELATED FIELDS.

A PUBLICATION OF THE VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP

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Afterimage is published bimonthly (July/Aug., Sept./Oct., Nov./Dec., Jan./Feb., March/April, May/June) by the Visual Studies Workshop, a nonprofit organization founded in 1969 to promote and support the media arts, at 31 Prince Street, Rochester, NY 14607. Director, Visual Studies Workshop: Tate Shaw. Board of Trustees: Virginia Bacheleer, Eric M. Fairchild, David Cay Johnston, Staffan Lundback, Joan Lyons, Nathan Lyons, Doug Manchee, Lois Niland, Lindsay Olson, Marni Shindelman, James Silverman, Robert Wisey.

Afterimage (ISSN #03007472) January/February 2013, Volume 40, no. 4.

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Visual Studies Workshop is supported in part by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the County of Monroe, and by private contributions from individuals and foundations.

Afterimage Subscription rates: Individuals: \$33 for one year, \$61 for two years (U.S.), \$90 for one year (Foreign). Libraries/Institutions: \$100 for one year (U.S.), \$165 for one year (Foreign). Students: \$20 for one year (with ID). Foreign subscriptions must be drawn in U.S. funds payable by a U.S. bank. Missing issue claims may be made for six months after publication. Address all subscription inquiries, back issue orders, and changes of address to: *Afterimage*, Subscription Department, 31 Prince Street, Rochester, NY 14607. Phone: (585) 442-8676, ext. 26. Fax: (585) 442-1992. E-mail: subscriptions@vsw.org. Web site: www.vsw.org/ai/.

Periodicals postage paid at Rochester, NY. POSTMASTER:
Send address changes to *Afterimage*, 31 Prince Street, Rochester, NY 14607.



Cover

Yibin I (Bathers) Sichuan Province (2007) by Nadav Kander

SEEING AND BELIEVING: THE IDEOLOGICAL ROOTS OF THE PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE

In earlier times and societies, art objects and their creation were interwoven with the fabric of cultural life. Artists were often not even a distinct category, and when they eventually did emerge from the anonymity of the collective cultural background, as they did in the West in the fifteenth century, they continued overwhelmingly to give voice to that collective tradition. In the present, that collective expression appears to have receded and been replaced with the notion of personal vision—the expression of an artist’s individual and unique creative universe and a concomitant belief in the transformative power of creative genius. Together they have become the cornerstone of contemporary art creation, criticism, appreciation, and marketing. In 1961, the anthropologist and art collector Michael Rockefeller capsulized this belief by comparing our present society with the culturally imbedded tradition of the Asmat. He noted, “The Asmat culture offers the artist a specific language in form. This is a language which every artist can interpret and use according to his genius, and a language which has symbolic meaning for the entire culture.” “Our culture,” he continued, “offers the artist no such language.” Rockefeller went on to suggest that, “Only the greatest geniuses are able to invent an expression which has meaning for a nation or people.”¹

This dynamic underlies the modernist notion of the artist as solitary culture hero. However atomized artists have become, and despite the publicity machines that celebrate their individual and unique creative powers, these artists are still imbedded in—and give expression to—deeply rooted and powerfully deterministic collective cultural imperatives. William Henry Fox Talbot announced in 1828 his discovery of a practicable chemical means for preserving and viewing the image created by the camera obscura, and the scientific knowledge—the optical and chemical basis for photography—took centuries to evolve. But equally important, the social environment that would be fertile for the development of photographic imagery—a reason to use and value the camera as a tool for collective and individual expression—also took many centuries to develop. This gave context, meaning, value, and purpose to the scientific innovations and developments that eventually led to a visual language unique to photography.

Europe in the fourteenth century was economically primitive. War, depression, and finally plague, which wiped out one-third of the population, had weakened it considerably. In its darkest days, it looked like Western civilization might, indeed, collapse. Though the prestige of the church had declined somewhat during this period, it still held sway over eternal salvation and that gave it enormous secular power. Yet the fourteenth century also saw the rise of capitalism and, with it, a growing interest in the material world. Learning began to move out of the control

of the monasteries and the church. Universities were founded in Cologne, Grenoble, Heidelberg, Orléans, Pisa, and Rome. The construction projects that resulted from the growing wealth of the emerging middle classes, especially in Italy, unearthed the classical past of southern Europe and gave rise to a renewed interest in the philosophy and sciences of the Greeks and Romans, including Aristotle and his discourse on optics and vision.

As a result, and in light of the new worldliness of its constituency, the church was forced to concede some of its authority or face a brutal contest for political and social dominance. To avoid a potentially devastating cultural implosion, there needed to evolve a means by which both traditional Catholic dogma and a new secular, materialistic worldview could coexist. The foundation for this accommodation was laid as early as the mid-thirteenth century. Implicit in the writings of Roger Bacon in the 1260s was the idea that there was nothing to contradict a belief in the union of mathematical logic and God’s divine grace. Subsequently, the English mathematician Thomas Bradwardine advanced an idea—understandably appealing to Italian painters of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries—that the theoretical, infinite space of mathematicians and the physical space we see before our eyes are one and the same. Despite the obvious paradox, through mathematics the heretofore-sinful material world was poised to become a symbol of God.

By the end of the fifteenth century, mathematical perspective had emerged as a system that allowed European artists to represent the once-profane material world in terms of the divine grace of pure mathematical logic. The camera obscura, whose optics created this mathematically coherent and therefore spiritually sanctified space automatically, quickly became an important tool for painters. Once emulsion replaced the fallible hand of the artist, this notion found continued expression in the nineteenth-century belief in the inherent truthfulness of the camera’s imagery. This faith was expressed in the very word Louis Daguerre used for his camera’s lens: “objectif.” The belief in an orderly, rational universe—as espoused by Enlightenment thinkers of the eighteenth century—still today underlies our most fundamental thinking. To the extent that we hold to it in the face of the growing capacity for seamless digital dissembling that, like the relentless power of the tides, threatens to erode the technical basis for this faith, it continues to support our belief that photography is inherently “objective.”

The philosophical loophole offered by mathematicians to the problem of sacred and profane allowed for the construction of a cultural firewall that has permitted these two worldviews



approaches to the medium. Scientists, as well as explorers and social historians such as William Henry Jackson, Eadweard Muybridge, and Mathew Brady, adopted one approach; while artists—for example, those of the pictorialist movement, including Julia Margaret Cameron, Francis Mortimer, and Oscar Rejlander—adopted another.

The rationalist approach to photographic imagery was rooted in the Enlightenment's faith that true, immutable, timeless, and objective laws govern the universe. It held that because photography is an automated perspectival system, derived from the unchanging laws of mathematics, physics, and chemistry, it automatically and exclusively produces images that are factual, reliable, and truthful. The second belief system, echoing in some respects pre-Renaissance religiosity, was romanticism, which presented an angry challenge to what its advocates saw as the impoverishment of Enlightenment thought and attempted to restore emotional and spiritual elements to society and art. It rejected the idea that the universe of optical detail recorded by the camera represented everything worth recording and held that eternal truths are sourced within the heart of a turbulent, tempestuous, and mysterious natural universe. Both this universe and its truths could be approached and appreciated only through one's intuitive, emotional faculties. Photography, like the other arts, could be used to express these emotions and communicate discovered truths.

In the twentieth century, however, the firewall was breached and these two approaches merged into a single, synthetic aesthetic that has reshaped the way we look not only at photographs, but at reality itself. This turning point in the evolution of photographic imagery was the result of the work of Alfred Stieglitz and the photo-secessionist movement. Like others in the pictorialist movement, Stieglitz saw the diminishing status of art photography as a threat and directed his frustration at amateur photographers, blaming them for art photography's plight. He declared in 1897 that "Every Tom, Dick and Harry could, without trouble, learn how to get something or other on a sensitive plate, and this is what the public wanted—no work and lots of fun. Thanks to the efforts of these persons hand camera and bad work became synonymous."² However, the impact of the Industrial Revolution was irreversible, and the public's love affair with the automation of the photographic process in its infancy. It soon became apparent to Stieglitz that if photography were to retain its status as a serious art form, it would be necessary to set forth new criteria by which to distinguish the art photographer from those who considered picture taking merely a "sport." Moreover, Stieglitz had a keen promotional sense and quickly came to see the new role that art was acquiring in the fluid money economy of the early twentieth century as a unique opportunity for personal fame and fortune.

In an attempt to identify potentially profitable new trends in art, Stieglitz had at first mistakenly latched on to the French painter Jules Bastien-Lepage, emulating his style and approach to subject matter in the hope of linking his own work to the next big art wave. Quickly realizing his mistake, Stieglitz dropped

to coexist into the present in uneasy tension. As a result, the duality of worldly and spiritual was reflected in photographic imagery from the very beginning: on the one hand, in the detailed clarity of the Daguerreotype, and on the other, in the painterly Talbotype of David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson. However, it did not resolve the underlying social or philosophical gulf, and as a result it was necessary for this *modus vivendi* to remain in place along with its agent, the camera obscura, for the ensuing centuries. Even decades after Charles Darwin published *On the Origin of Species* and overthrew traditional religious arguments of divine design, thinkers continued to argue that a scientific understanding of nature was compatible with traditional teleology. The idea that the creation of the world reflected the mind of God reemerged in the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, as well as the theories of natural scientists such as Louis Agassiz and Clarence King, who saw the world as having been created by a thought in the mind of God. This allowed nineteenth-century scientists and explorers, like Renaissance artists and thinkers, to view their enterprises as being harmonious with the religious beliefs of their time. The camera continued to be viewed as an important tool in reinforcing and reaffirming this harmony. For example, between 1867 and 1869 Timothy O'Sullivan was the official photographer for the United States Geological Exploration of the Fortieth Parallel under the leadership of King; his images served to document both the geology and the spiritual transcendence of the American landscape.

Despite such exceptions that attempted to harmonize the religious and the secular, as nineteenth-century photography evolved, the two competing worldviews gave rise to separate

Bastien-Lepage and embraced the impressionists, producing images such as *The Terminal* as early as 1892 and *The Hand of Man* by 1902. But there were problems in that direction as well. Art photography, as conceived by nineteenth-century pictorialists, was easily adaptable to the traditional realistic style of artists such as Bastien-Lepage, but it was not so readily adaptable to the more nonrepresentational approaches being developed by the modernists, for whom traditions of craftsmanship that celebrated the “hand” of the artist were being replaced by notions such as “genius” that glorified the mind. Concomitantly, the valuation of art was shifting from one of labor and material to one based on psychological value, which allowed the price of art objects to soar, limited only by the availability of cash and the willingness of a buyer to spend it. Increasingly, the art dealer who could build a reputation for an artist that satisfied Rockefeller’s benchmark would have their fortunes made. If Stieglitz were to identify photography with these new movements, some uniquely photographic basis for establishing “genius” in that medium had to be developed as well.

It did not take long for Stieglitz to find the aesthetic rationale that allowed him to embrace new technology, distinguish himself from the unskilled amateur, and at the same time hold on to the nineteenth-century romantic notions of art he found so appealing. Stieglitz and his photo-secessionists now declared that, as for the scientist and the explorer, the proper subject matter for art photography was the natural world, and its proper expression, realistic imagery. In the process, they rejected many of the traditional values of the pictorialist movement—but they did not reject them all. They held on to many of the pictorialists’ symbolist and romantic ideas about the spiritual aspect of nature, and therein lay a critical problem.

For the photo-secessionists working at the height of the industrial age, the pre-industrial, natural landscape that the pictorialists idealized and celebrated—and which had been widely documented by a generation of scientists and explorers—was fast disappearing. To reconcile this paradox, the photo-secessionists turned inward, into the mind, and found inspiration and expression in metaphor. The romantic world of nature was no longer available to them as subject matter, so instead they used the camera to document not the actual, natural world, but the *idea* of the natural world. To that end, they saw in clouds, buildings, and even urban decay—in the “metropolitan milieu”—the same forces of nature at work that had afflicted the *Raft of the Medusa* (1818–19), and they photographed them as such.

Writing in *The Metropolitan Milieu* in 1934, Lewis Mumford even described this new, industrial, urban environment in naturalistic terms. For Stieglitz, Mumford declared, “New York had become the center of a furious decay,” in which tenement houses were “planted,” the streets were “deep chasms,” anarchists shouted slogans “that would wreck this world worse than an earthquake,” a world in which skyscrapers, “in their stalagmitic upthrust [were] almost as geometric as gypsum crystals. . . . Above all, there is the sky; pervading all these activities is the weather.” He wrote about Stieglitz’s work, too, using nature as the metaphor:



In the stoniest pavements of the city there are cracks. And out of the bleakest soil, between these cracks, a few blades of grass will sooner or later show, whose seeds are borne by the birds; here, even, the germ of a tree will take root and spring up, if no foot disturbs it. It is in the cracks between the new buildings that Stieglitz finds the sky; it is in the surviving cracks in the pavement that Stieglitz finds his trees; and in his most characteristic pictures of the city, so far from emphasizing the massiveness and the obduracy of its stones, he emphasizes the presence of life. One of the most moving and impressive pictures he ever made was that of a little tree in Madison Square Park, young and vernal in the rain, with a street sweeper in the foreground and the dim shape of a building in the background: the promise of life, its perpetual reawakening and renewal, are in that print.³

That the photo-secessionists should wish, on an artistic level, to withdraw from the real world and find meaning and subject matter in an ongoing, parallel universe of their own creation is illuminated by Sigmund Freud. Reality itself, he says in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, is often perceived as unbearable:

so that one must break off all relations with it if one is to be in any way happy. The hermit turns his back on the world and will have no truck with it. But one can do more than that; one can try to re-create the world, to build upon its stead another world in which its most unbearable features are eliminated and replaced by others that are in conformity with one’s own wishes.⁴

Photography provided the photo-secessionists with the ideal means to accomplish this reconstruction. Using the Enlightenment lens like Brady or Jackson, the photo-secessionists documented the world. However, in the symbolist/romantic tradition of painters such as Francisco de Goya or Paul Gauguin, they believed that in order to find truth, one must look inward,

Above
Ancient Crypt Cellars in Provins, France (1910) by Frederick Evans; courtesy Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-62880

and it was upon internal, personal landscapes that they focused their lenses; it was subjective, idiosyncratic worlds that they explored and documented. In this way, the two traditions that dominated nineteenth-century photography—art and science—were merged into one new synthetic form with the mind of the photographer becoming the lens's new prime point of focus.

When, for example, Jackson photographed Yosemite Valley in the 1880s, his interest was exclusively in the facts about the landscape that the camera recorded. Half a century later, Ansel Adams photographed the exact same landscape. Yet Adams, a romantic photographer, was interested in communicating his idea of what the landscape means—its spiritual power; its mystery.

The photo-secessionists' adoption of formalism and abstraction served to augment the shift inward of photography's focus. To a certain extent, this move was anticipated by the work of Lewis Hine, who saw that attention to the design and composition of his documentary photographs could enhance their emotional impact. But Stieglitz took this concept to an entirely new level. Although its title reflects his earlier concern with social situations, adopting the Cubist vocabulary, Stieglitz described the success of *The Steerage* (1907) as a photograph in terms of its formal elements: "a round straw hat, the funnel leaning left, the stairway leaning right, the white drawbridge with its railings made of circular chains—white suspenders crossing at the back of the man in the steerage below. . . ." But this approach did more than just identify photography with an important new trend in art. In *The Steerage*, Stieglitz used the lens to create a world out of formal elements that reduced social reality to a prop, human beings to aestheticized clothing-store mannequins. He overlay the human and political realities of shipboard life with a pristine formalism, an aesthetic geometry imbued with the very same notions of purity and spirituality that thirteenth-century theologians ascribed to physical geometry. In his alienation from the world and eagerness for critical acclaim, Stieglitz came to see other people's social realities as grist for his metaphoric "equivalent" mill. "I saw shapes related to one another—a picture of shapes," Stieglitz continued, "and underlying it, a new vision that held me: simple people; the feeling of ship, ocean, sky; a sense of release that I was away from the mob called 'rich.'" When he returned to his steamer chair feeling transformed by the experience, he told his wife where he had been. "My wife replied, 'You sound as though you were far away. In some distant world.'"⁵

Thus, by the early decades of the twentieth century, the camera, with its new, unique ability to give direct voice to "the mind," had become a powerful tool for the expression of individual "vision," Stieglitz's much yearned for photo-marketing equivalent to "genius." Using the forums of his modernist gallery "291" and his magazine *Camera Work*, Stieglitz was finally able to identify photography with the new movements in art, redefining art photography to suit the needs of the emerging art market of the twentieth century. From that point forward, the camera was no longer, as it had been in the nineteenth century, simply a tool for objectively recording worldly matters, or an instrument for the public performance of artistic expression. The role of the

photographer became that of a sybil, seer of greater truths, whose pronouncements emerged not from the hypnotic vapors of hot springs, but from the fog of darkroom chemistry.

"Straight photographers" such as Edward Weston and Adams embraced the lens as a window into the soul, and the highly detailed, large-format traditions of photography as means to powerfully document the "visions" they saw there. The post-photo-secessionist camera gave this inner world an authority that many came to see as transcending the reality of day-to-day experience, and the romantic notions of mysticism, nature, and religion imbued that flight from the mundane with a sense of pilgrimage. As a result, contemporary photography certifies, for both photographers and their audiences, that any personal vision of an idiosyncratic, private heaven or hell that the photographer finds more in conformity with his or her wishes is universally and objectively "real." Adams's and Weston's moral reassertion of the presence of God in the American wilderness, Imogene Cunningham's self-referential world of flowering, vaginal imagery, and Charles Sheeler's phallic glorification of American industrial capitalism all flowed from this wedding of art and science, and these photographers, with Freud, were an inspiration to subsequent generations of autobiographic, confessional imagery. In his *Daybooks*, written between 1915 and 1934, Weston wrote of his feelings about the direct relationship between the camera and the transcendent mind of the photographer, of how he wanted "the greater mystery of things revealed more clearly than the eye sees, at least more than the layman,—the casual observer notes."⁶ He wrote:

Recording unfelt facts by acquired rule, results in sterile inventory. To see the *Thing Itself* is essential: the quintessence revealed without the direct fog of impressionism,—the casual noting of a superficial phase, or transitory mood.⁷

So in photography,—the first fresh emotion, feeling for the thing, is captured complete and for all time at the very moment it is seen and felt. Feeling and recording are simultaneous,—hence the great vitality in pure *pure* photography and its loss in manipulated photography,—by the devitalizing influence of the hand.⁸

Now, one does not think during creative work: any more than one thinks when driving a car. One has a background of years—learning—unlearning—success—failure—dreaming—thinking—experience—back it goes—farther back than one's ancestors: all this,—then the moment of creation, the focussing [*sic*] of all into the moment. So I can make—"without thought"—fifteen carefully-considered negatives one every fifteen minutes,—given material with as many possibilities.⁹

This notion of the transcendence of photographic reality was shared by another group of artists, whose affinity to photography some may find puzzling. In "Photographic Fact" (1929), Salvador Dalí declared:

Photographic data . . . is still and ESSENTIALLY THE SAFEST POETIC MEDIUM and the most agile process for catching the most delicate osmoses which exist between reality and superreality. The mere fact of photographic transposition means total invention: the capture of a *secret reality*. Nothing proves the truth of superrealism so much as photography. The Zeiss lens has unexpected faculties of surprise!¹⁰

Yet surrealism was a natural development in an environment where machines are seen to give absolute power to an infinite mind, and photography readily became the ideal tool for what André Breton, founder and leader of the surrealist movement, defined as their aim: “Pure psychic automatism by which it is intended to express, either verbally or in writing, the true function of thought. Thought dictated in the absence of all control exerted by reason, and outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations.”¹¹ As a consequence of dismantling the barrier that separated outer reality from the inner creative world, all twentieth-century photography became, to a greater or lesser extent, arguably surrealistic.

Paul Strand, in turn, believed that this radical new approach to photography would result in the lasting synthesis of science and art. In “Photography and the New God” (1922), Strand announced a new Trinity: “God the Machine, Materialistic Empiricism the Son, and Science the Holy Ghost.” He presented this vision in terms that reflected his leftist political orientation, implying that a Marxist approach to photography would be capable of also resolving the medieval religious conflicts that had reemerged with this new faith and the ascendancy of machines over nature. He wrote:

In thus disinterestedly experimenting, the photographer has joined the ranks of all true seekers after knowledge, be it intuitive and aesthetic or conceptual and scientific. He has moreover, in establishing his own spiritual control over a machine, the camera, revealed the destructive and wholly factitious wall of antagonism which these two groups have built up between themselves. Rejecting all Trinities and all Gods he puts his fellow-workers this question squarely: What is the relation between science and expression? Are they not both vital manifestations of energy, whose reciprocal hostility turns the one into the destructive tool of materialism, the other into anemic phantasy [*sic*], whose coming together might integrate a new religious impulse? Must not these two forms of energy converge before a living future can be born of both?¹²

What Strand failed to understand was that the social schism he decried also lay at the root of photography. Despite its new role, the camera was still a product of medieval theological conflicts and the very theology that he proposed as the schism’s resolution was, in fact, a continuing expression of those original conflicts. But Strand was not alone in his spiritual whirlpool. Much of twentieth-century photography is similarly rooted in medieval theological conflicts. As a result, photographers, whether artists

or documentarians, have created images of worlds that are either desirable or beautiful (or symbolic of something desirable or beautiful), or worlds that are violent, dangerous, disturbing, or tormented. Like Dante’s Beatrice, they lead the viewer through visions of transcendent paradise—or like solemn Virgils, lead us through ever-deepening circles of hell—from Frederick Evans’s celestial cathedrals and vaulted ceilings, to subterranean crypt cellars, antechambers of heaven itself; from Eugene Atget’s eternal Paris, as empty as Eden after the expulsion, to Sarah Moon’s gossamer fantasies. With few significant exceptions, a Stygian river of street photographers flowing through the canyon cut by Weegee, Robert Frank, and Diane Arbus meanders through town and country, their cameras providing moral safe passage through a world of unreal shadows. For the photographer, that world is temporary and ephemeral, populated with phantoms who, as they would be out of place anywhere else, must belong there, like the ancient moon rocks on the lunar surface recorded by the astronauts of the Apollo missions. Even the idea of cropping and framing reality, the fundamental premise of contemporary photographic “seeing,” pits the Euclidean order of the rectangle against the chaos of random events. Henri Cartier-Bresson is considered a Zen master at this, collecting with a Newtonian eye to order a myriad of “decisive moments.”

Despite Stieglitz’s claim that *The Steerage* was, at heart, socially motivated, his romantic attitude toward art supported a flight from a world increasingly fraught with chaotic political struggles. With that leap, other photographers discovered that the photo-secessionist synthesis of reason and romanticism could not only be applied to the expression of aesthetic and personal concerns, but extended to the expression of social ones as well. And so, in the ninth circle, photojournalists from Robert Capa to Susan Meiselas and Zorah Miller tally the incalculable victims of anger, envy, and lust created by the collective conflicts of nations.

Prior to the turn of the century, photographers such as Brady, Adam Clark Vroman, and Jacob Riis basically produced catalogs of appearances. They curated worldly events as they saw them. Although sometimes not without extreme social prejudices, these photographers nonetheless believed that the facts spoke for themselves and that photographs were objective records of those facts. No doubt to others with similar prejudices these photographs were imbued with significance and entirely convincing. Audiences a century later, lacking the benefit of a contemporary perspective, more often find such images coldly remote and stiff. Although nineteenth-century documentary imagery was not without artifice, such as O’Sullivan’s manipulation of the corpse in *The Home of the Rebel Sharpshooter* (1863), or Edward Curtis’s careful excising of such anachronisms as windup clocks from teepee interiors, by and large the Enlightenment’s scientific lens was left alone to do its work in peace.

Facing Page

Clearing Winter Storm, Yosemite (1937) by Ansel Adams; © 2012 The Ansel Adams Publishing Rights Trust



Although it was personal, subjective, and idiosyncratic worlds that the post-photo-secessionist photographers explored and documented, their approach to recording social conditions ultimately became synonymous with the documentation of objective reality. However, this transformation of technical criteria into aesthetic criteria both relied on, and undermined, photography's role as the innocent, "faithful witness." At the same time, the creation of this new aesthetic of concern most certainly resulted in socially directed imagery that was both personally and passionately felt, from Hine's condemnation of child labor, to W. Eugene Smith's indictment of mercury poisoning in *Minimata*. However, where Riis's imagery presented situations that had to be altered, Smith's are concerned with the human consequences of those situations. They are about pain, horror, and greed. Smith is an interpreter of events, not a chronicler. It is his compassion and rage that initially moves us, not our own. We take his word, not just the camera's. Smith, probably the best known and best loved of all the *Life* photographers, authored many well-known photo essays, including *Spanish Village*, *Country Doctor*, *Nurse Midwife*, and *Minimata*. For Smith, photography was an expression of personal imperatives. Yet because Smith's photography was more socially focused and consciously political than the work of photojournalists such as Capa or Carl Mydans, Smith's dealings with editors and publishers were often as embattled and strifetorn as the stories he covered. Driven by a passionate sense of justice and personal commitment, Smith wielded his camera like a broadsword, a photographic knight-errant slaying dragons and championing the just cause. Smith's unyielding faith in the objectivity of his subjective, emotional, response is revealed in a letter he wrote to *Life* editor Ed Thompson in 1954:

The gravest responsibility of the photo historian or journalist is the search through the maze of confictions to the island of intimate understanding, of the mind, of the soul, amid circumstances that both create, and are created by—and then to render with intelligence, with artistic eloquence, a correct and breathing account of what is found; and popular fancy, myth can be damned. Meaning: get to the guts of the matter and show the bastards as they are.¹³

The ideological framework of the Renaissance gave the camera a tautological authority to certify that the content of its imagery, simply by being the product of physics (the lens) and chemistry (the emulsion), is transcendentally and eternally true—a modern reflection of the mind of a medieval deity. This caused no problem as long as there was consistency (as there was in the nineteenth century) between the intentions of the photographer and the expectations of the audience—as long as they believed the same things about the photographic process and its relationship to the world. In such a case the ideological framework is factored out and photography, like the telegraph, performs as a tool of communication, the message it transmits consisting, for the most part, of either emotions or facts.

At the turn of the century, the photo-secessionist movement and its progeny, "straight photography," despite their enthusiasm for detail and clarity, represented a movement away from the physical world. Yet, at the same time that this flight created a photographic sanctuary from an increasingly alienating modern world, it also had unintended consequences. Today the camera is no longer, as it was at its inception, either a distinct tool for objectively documenting worldly matters or else an instrument for the public representation of otherwise private visions. Today photographs testify that a private vision of a personal heaven or hell "more in conformity with ones own wishes" is inherently and verifiably real; based on the still-transcendent authority of optics, the testimony of the camera allows these inner visions to be both seen and believed.

And in this synthesis can be found the basis of advertising and propaganda, which market the mass-culture "equivalents" of privately wished-for realities—both consumer and political—and which are two of the most potent tools for social engineering and psychological control since medieval theology dominated the European world.

BOB ROGERS is a photographer, writer, and filmmaker. He is chair of the Department of Art and Design at Queensborough Community College-CUNY.

NOTES 1. Michael C. Rockefeller, *The Asmat of New Guinea: The Journal of Michael Clark Rockefeller* (The Michael C. Rockefeller Expeditions 1961), ed. Adrian A. Gerbrands (New York: Museum of Primitive Art; distributed by the New York Graphic Society, 1967), 46. 2. Alfred Stieglitz, "The Hand Camera—Its Present Importance," in *Photography in Print: Writings from 1816 to the Present*, ed. Vicki Goldberg (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1981), 215. 3. Lewis Mumford, "The Metropolitan Mitzu," in *America and Alfred Stieglitz: A Collective Portrait*, eds. Waldo Frank, Lewis Mumford, and Dorothy Norman (New York: The Literary Guild, 1934), 49–50. 4. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1962), 28. 5. Dorothy Norman, Alfred Stieglitz: An American Seer (Middleton, NY: Aperture, 1973), 76. 6. Brett Abbott and Edward Weston, Edward Weston: Photographs from the J. Paul Getty Museum (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2005), 60. 7. Edward Weston, *The Daybooks of Edward Weston*, ed. Nancy Newhall (New York: Horizon Press, 1961), 154. 8. *Ibid.*, 156. 9. *Ibid.*, 169. 10. Dali, "La dada fotogràfica," *Dawn Ades, "Photography and the Surrealist Text"* in *L'Amour fou; photography and surrealism*, Rosalind Krauss and Jane Livingston, published in conjunction with an exhibition held at the Corcoran Gallery of Art—1985 (New York: Abbeville Press, 1985), 176. 11. André Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism" (1924), in Patrick Waldberg, *Surrealism* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), 66–75. 12. Paul Strand, "Photography and the New God," *Broom* 3, no. 1 (August 1922), 258. 13. *Let Truth Be the Prejudice: W. Eugene Smith, His Life and Photographs*, companion publication to the retrospective exhibition *Let Truth Be the Prejudice* at Philadelphia Museum of Art (New York: Aperture, 1986), 54.