

Humanities and Sciences Department of the School of Visual Arts Twenty-Third Annual National Conference on Liberal Arts and the Education of Artists: Visions of War: The Arts Represent Conflict. October 21-23, 2009

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THE AESTHETIC EQUIVALENT OF WAR

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Let us reclaim the virtues proclaimed by the proponents of war. In this we follow, momentarily, William James. Since the list of virtues could be vast, let us, for clarity and economy choose the strongest military or martial virtues from the outset and focus on self-sacrifice, courage, and discipline. For the advocates of war these martial virtues offer personal and historic drama wherein life and death are decided, featuring movements of populations, armies, geopolitical revolution, and rapid change in governments, explosions, in short, action. James admits the “moral equivalent” of war will not end war. He’s a pragmatist. And, to be sure, wars will *malignantly* continue. He argues that youths may instead dedicate themselves to a moral good as rigorous as war to improve the world, in pursuit of civic virtue, practically applying sacrifice, courage and discipline. Let us think domestic soup kitchens, wind farms, solar roofs, or, internationally, the Peace Corps or Doctors Without Borders. All this is noble, and good.

James does note in dryly ironic terms how the proponents of war cleanse their accounts of the blood, rapes, brutal “collateral damage” to civilians, of innocent lives lost, as human despair goes missing in the books he cites, one of which is German, S.R. Steinmetz’ *Philosophie des Krieges*, prior to WWI as James ably refutes the illusion that war alone embodies virtues we can practice without it. Yet a structured, disciplined sacrifice of individuality is always suspect, even when doing “good”. One can be wrong about the good. Neither can we legislate, nor oblige individuality. And those most eager to sacrifice their individuality prove dangerous with guns. Even if they are “doing good” it may be by accident, even as honorable and as needed as dedicating oneself to the good of others, say, the Red-Cross in war zones, or famines.

Virtue can be illusory when one sacrifices one’s “self” for the good. Courage or discipline may lack creative scope, respect for life, for wisdom. Morality may be co-opted by fanatics. All this is on the ethical plane, and we can harmlessly experience desperate private impersonations of sacrifice, discipline, and courage, say, in ultra-marathoning, or in re-scaling Mount Everest (Our Everest is great art. But more of this soon). We need yet to affirm that virtue is secondary to creativity, for we create our virtues. We need not forget the value of these virtues. But virtue owes its existence to creativity.

James’ morality of an expanded civic duty, however, begs Nietzschean deconstruction for its unexamined roots, given that lack of creativity and an escape from individuality can lead to misconstruing the “good”. There’s also an obvious thrill in murder masked as virtue—war can reflect the will to dominate by those who cannot create. Martial virtues in religious or secular armies clearly demand the erasure of individual creativity. Those who wish to lose themselves in mass destruction need to negate themselves and the world—to destroy—because they fail to create themselves. Nietzsche once wrote: “My enemies are those who destroy without being able to create themselves”. Uniqueness, to many, seems “unfounded” – and it is “unfounded”: since there is nothing determining who we are or how we will act. They mistake the anxiety of our freedom for a wrong done them, which they must “right”, through murder. We protest this mindless destruction. Our protest need not be angry but rigorous. We need courage not fanaticism, sacrifice not spiritual suicide. We need not dominate others through projected guilt. The creative do not need to dominate.

What is self-sacrifice, then, if one resists creating a unique self? This is a lack of courage. What is courage if one lacks the discipline to learn, travel, meditate, reflect on history, learn languages, and dwell on genius, so as to deeply consider what one should be “rigorous” about? If we are not listening to philosophers or artists who live modestly (self-sacrifice?), or challenge conventional thought (courage?); who take time and effort to gather information and reason among their choices (discipline?), maybe then we need to humiliate, lie, or prostrate ourselves to a public or private fascism.

The moral equivalent of war can project “virtue” from a nagging deficit, project a failed subjectivity as “morality”, then feel compelled to aim a buried self-accusation—at civilians—then call that “good”, or “moral”, then kill.

The *aesthetic* equivalent is not an equaling but an exceeding of this negation. If we choose hard lives why need we defend ourselves against those who take them? To oppose nation states and ideology in behalf of creativity is already to suffer exile. Why defend our courage, or sacrifice an atom of our experimental selves to the violence they mistake for “reality”? Warriors can defend, and we truly thank them, but often their lack of questioning offends us. Real rigor is to never kill. Our dignity is daily assaulted by those who fail to realize themselves except by dominating others. Why must we defend ourselves against our defenders?

Those who lack awe for life may take it. One may make a fundamental lack of gratitude for existence, a cause, as most causes owe their allegiance to an original alienation from awe. One may replace life with obsessive rigor, a disciplined escape from the nagging doubt that one “does not get it”, that is, understand, how short and frail existence is. A dim reconnaissance with this lack of awe, or fundamental gratitude to be able to perceive at all, may spur a self-reproach, this absence of understanding *as* virtue. Life is all we “have”, who we are but, dumfounded by its meaning, or lack thereof, we may resent then reproach, wage war against ourselves then wish to replicate it outside ourselves. We need destroy the self that fails to understand then destroy others who do as witnesses. Perhaps this is why the young are seduced into combat by “leaders”, who are alienated from elemental gratitude, or awe.

The misuse of the word, “cause” can prove interesting too. “Cause” re: “*Because*” as a retrospective cause of our behavior may be transferred by stealth to “right”. The secret, or as Hume may have it “occult”, connection between the “cause” and my behavior is never experienced, this absence is then filled in by a tacked-on belief. We wish something to be true without evidence then claim this supposed self-evidence the “truth”, which *causes* my actions.

This expresses an alienation from awe.

Awe is to perceive the origin of one's self, and the world, with gratitude that one can perceive.

Awe is prior to belief—for belief projects into the unknown what one wishes to be “there”.

When gratitude fades, we project the internalized result of our suffering onto others. Our boredom, inertia, our greed for power, confess we are strangers to awe. We feign amnesia. We sever our access to awe.

We live but once and briefly and to be conscious alone is a miracle. We kill time as if we are immortal. We join those who prefer us distracted, because they are.

So we are all capable, if pushed or straying far enough from ourselves, to err, to kill. Could it be that without an experience of the meaning of life that there's no stopping one's losing all sense of its value except immediate gratification or a protracted scheming to grab more than what anyone could rationally deserve? If the meaning of life is not evident in living, we lose it.

Nevertheless, the cruel would often rather die than leave their cup of poison. They are addicted to interpersonal or public dictatorship to killing and to death. The first principle of awe, as a ground for a modest ethics, should be: never, if possible, take another life, never kill another human for we are each (even those whom we detest) of inestimable value, and already a miracle.

Artists do not need war since peace proves so difficult. To be in visual arts, say, to paint, is already arduous. Yet the truly creative do not compete with others, nor with the history of their art, but themselves. If an artist rises each morning to a modest meal in an isolated, un-“cool” neighborhood, or to family humiliation traps, dressing in cheap clothes, takes public transportation (ignored by the press, world and his contemporaries), works a humiliating “day job”, then presses on to paint, perhaps to write, draw, dance, perchance to act, this is courage and creativity. For this artist, dedicated to creation, there is no time to kill.

We honor real sacrifice, courage and discipline, those who travel to dangerous places, to prolong, or better life, risking their own, but we also honor those who pursue art when it means great loss of status, security, and risk of self.

The aesthetic equivalent to war already exists in the lifetime pursuit of art if one engages art without need for money, nor fame. It already evokes, honors, and spreads, awe. If one does not practice art for attention, press or career, a life dedicated to art without reward, is already hard. Anyone can rebel in college or in one's twenties until the reality sets in that career and jobs, some security, if fired, sick or old, can prove daunting, even disastrous. Just when and how should we live? That is what everyone creative asks oneself.

Also, how many young, daring artists give up, unless lucky or connected, or secured by inheritance? Worse, how many commit spiritual suicide? How many betray all they formally valued, some of which was vague, utopic, or romantic, perhaps hūbristic or egotistical, but also they renounce authentic creative visions, and, often, their physiology, even their face, changes? Spiritual suicide comes after a prolonged or extreme disappointment then a negation of what one formerly valued. One rejects imagination since it has misled one into poverty, perhaps ridicule, one feels one has tricked oneself, then one may additionally decide to trick others, and so, imagination must go, or, be closed down, or used for gain. To endure as an artist, however, and not commit spiritual suicide (which is also what one does when one kills) if not motivated by fame or money is already a “war”. It takes sacrifice, daily courage, and discipline to survive: to be an artist for life.

What compares to creating one's whole lifetime without seeking to sell, nor gain attention? We all hear the phrase: This book, film, gallery etc. is “getting attention”? It is favored by those who *sell* art. Did Emily Dickenson, Rimbaud or Nietzsche “get attention”? The aesthetic equivalent of war is a struggle in solitude for the reward of a vision, replenished by living in

awe, yet often unnoticed and alone. Emily Dickenson hid her poems in a tin box. Rimbaud paid to print *La Saison En Enfer, The Season in Hell*, as did Nietzsche the third and fourth volumes of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. Compare those who refused, say, even to talk to Rimbaud after he returned to Paris from his scandal with Verlaine with the poet who also wrote *Illuminations*, published years later by Verlaine who thought Rimbaud dead. Reflect on Holderlin living in a tower after going “mad”, writing completely unnoticed some of the most beautiful and tragic lyric poems in human memory?

Human memory. How frustrating is it to know that we do not really know! The risk of a life dedicated especially to visionary art is to choose radical exile within the society in which one seeks to survive. There may indeed be a Franz Kafka living in one’s apartment building or looking through a window down this block while the press and public are filled with appreciation for a Tom Clancy. Herman Melville (excuse the pun) sunk his career by publishing *Moby Dick* and spent years in obscurity working as a dock inspector in New York while the now-faded celebrity novelists of his time enjoyed attention and respect. Further, how many geniuses have we lost through the centuries when no one bothered to revisit their ignored masterpieces? How many have written, danced, painted, sculpted, acted, sung, whom we do not nor will ever know? Given the prejudices against women or “different”, that is, non-white or male heterosexual artists in richer countries, how many geniuses have we lost, but who created, anyway? How many artists have been berated not only by total erasure from “history”, but in their own time, by family, critics, private jealousies, the omniscient philistines, who received absolutely no reward for the “virtue” of their creations? Artists who create know this risk, but create nonetheless. Artists know the risk. The Aesthetic Equivalent of War, indeed.

But let us entertain for a moment, the *aesthetic* “virtues”: Is it divine madness (Plato), Catharsis (Aristotle, on tragedy), Taste (the tolerant, Hume), beauty or sublimity (Kant), or a fleeting Historical revelation of the *Weltgeist* or Absolute Spirit (Hegel)?, a Dionysiac intoxication united with an Apollinian dream (early Nietzsche), or a metaphoric anticipation of authentic existence (anticipatory resoluteness, as Heidegger maintains) or an engaged reflection of social change (as Marx slash Sartre would have it?), or the changing of perception and of inventing new truths (here referencing Ezra Pound then a phenomenologic openness)? Each one of these major aesthetic theories, even if one disagrees with their origin or province, requires the virtues claimed by war proponents. Indeed almost everything exceptional that is peaceful does!

The aesthetic equivalent of war has no need of excuses, or to sacrifice innocent lives. Our self-discipline is to re-invent love as we create art.

But since we cannot embody all virtues, we choose among them. We rank virtues. There is a fertile debate as to what virtue, almost on a valuation-scale, is better in any given situation. Is courage better than love? Is self-sacrifice superior to self-expression? Is prudence superior to exuberance? Does discipline trump spontaneity? It depends on the situation—and on one’s choice. The problem is the *need* behind the determined veneer, to “resolve”, “finalize”, compel any kind of valuation or vertical esteeming—as in a totem, or an imaginary obelisk, which seems to predetermine what need be valued in novel situations. The key, again, is to see that we create virtues, and that creativity is the author, or artist, of life itself.

If then we are to reveal, nay, more, revel in our gratitude for our one existence, to live in awe, what better life-pursuit then to be and remain an artist, who, rather than protesting their sacrifice of normality, income, the questionable but often tangible rewards of conformity, and

not bothering to hold out the Gorgon's head to the bourgeoisie, to negate a negation, but to celebrate with beauty, laughter, with our embodiments of wonder? Our protest is not propaganda if a unique vision discloses the awe of our one existence as a celebration of life's brevity in acute, accelerated noticings.

When an artist does not sense an original awe at being able to perceive anew, or, being able to perceive at all, when reflected in art an ethical statement can be added on. Those who believe in having enemies and care naught for awe begin to leave art for propaganda. Protest already occurs in great art, even when it ignores ethical questions for it rejects the negation of creativity as a falsity. One need not advocate ignoring the suffering in Dafur if one presents an alternate question, or, even of a luxuriant world, say, as a reader finds in Flaubert. Yet, if the obligation is not "there", or pre-given, then when it does appear, even implicitly, it is far stronger for being free, for being authentic.

How desperate we are, then, when we lack awe, or gratitude, for our one time on earth. What strange idols we privately erect, knowing full well that nothing we, nor, say, Plato, nor Shakespeare (choose your lexiconal genius) will last, will escape the conflagration, if we ever see it, say, of our sun, or the earth's destruction. We know we are temporary. We respect energy, nonetheless. We know both life and our lives are absurd. As we will to live beyond obligatory "rigor", for if one is naturally bright and inspired, we work without glory (We should examine "glory" as a possible disease of the ignoble). Socially: kindness is *our* edge. We excel ourselves in honesty, and creativity as our pride bows to scope, given that we here but for a blink of an eye (or, as the Germans say it, *eine Augenblick*, or for the French *un clin de l'oeil*). So, we may be admired nor not. Our efforts may be for naught, yet we can celebrate awe. Then, rather than taking life we create more life.

Consciousness itself should then be a work of art, a temporary masterpiece, with fine brushstrokes, color, affective nuance, pastoral gentilities as a reflection of global or kaleidoscopic experience. We leave youth as we leave life—intoxicating, humorous but often shallow—yet the reason why we are reappears, not to grasp, iconize, nor brag, not to kill, but to experience the only reality we can live or die for: our challenge to live in awe, and to create more life.

Taking our cue from William James "Moral Equivalent of War" we still recognize that one can be wrong about the good, since any morality owes its existence to human creativity. If one is not creative one may sacrifice one's "self" to project guilt from a failed subjectivity, and call that "good" or "moral". Those who lack awe before our short, frail and tenuous life, may take it, or "replace" themselves with a cause, good or bad. Dedicated to creation, artists do not need war because peace is already arduous. For an artist, there is no time to kill.

Awe is a perfect word for the uncanny apperception (perception *of* perception) of the origin of consciousness.

THE ART OF WAR: ETHICAL DILEMMAS WITH A CASE STUDY OF THE ART OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ERA IN CHINA, 1949 TO 1976

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Discussions of the ethical issues concerning war usually cover under what conditions it is moral to enter into war (in Scholastic Latin, *jus ad bellum*), the ethics of conducting war (*jus in bellum*), and the ethical issues of the aftermath of war (*jus post bellum*). A topic which is rarely discussed in the ethics of war literature is ethical issues related to propaganda literature, posters, and art. This issue is closest to the category of *jus ad bellum*, although it spills over into *jus in bellum* and *jus post bellum*. I shall argue that there is a serious ethical issue raised by the creation and use of such posters and art, and I shall use a suggestion from Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831) as the principal argument for this claim.

I. THE BOXER REBELLION, WORLD WAR I AND WORLD WAR II

One does not have to search very deeply to find examples of the use of posters and art—I shall not dwell on drawing a distinction between the two—to promote war in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Here are a few examples from eve of the Boxer Rebellion (1900-01), World War I, and World War II.

Herman Knackfuss. *The Yellow Peril*. 1895.

Boxer Rebellion. German poster. *Wir hau'n ihn fest und treu zusammen, hipp, hipp, hurrah!* (“We hit him, beat him thoroughly and faithfully (*treu*). Hipp, hipp, hurrah.”) 1900.

Anonymous. Boxer Rebellion. *Uncle Sam & President McKinley lead attack on the Chinese Boxers*. 1900.

In 1895 Tsar Nicholas II received a gift from Friedrich William II, Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia, of an oil painting by the German artist Herman Knackfuss entitled *The Yellow Peril*. The painting was based on a sketch by William II himself. It depicted seven women gazing anxiously from a mountaintop toward an approaching storm. Each of the women symbolizes one of the principal European nations (not difficult to identify). A large white cross hovers in the sky. The storm clouds contain a cross-legged Buddha. William II himself explained the not very unsubtle meaning of the allegory. The powers of Europe are called together by the Archangel Michel, sent from Heaven, to unite for the defense of Christianity and in resisting the inroads of Buddhism, heathenism, and barbarism. For William II, the Yellow Peril was a threat to the west, and the European powers need to unit to subjugate this peril. Just five years later, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Britain, France, Italy, Russia, the United States, and Japan, sent troops to China to suppress the Boxer Rebellion.¹

Among the huge number of World War I and World War II propaganda posters created in the United States, Thomas Hart Benton's series, “The Year of Peril,” stands out in part because they it was created by a professional artist and because of the raw viciousness of the paintings.

Thomas Hart Benton. *The Sowers*. 1942. One of a series of 8 paintings created in early 1942 in response to Pearl Harbor. Benton gave the paintings the generic title of “Year of the Peril.”

Thomas Hart Benton. *Beat Back the Hun with Liberty Bonds*. no date.

II. THE *WECHSELWIRKUNG* ARGUMENT

What are the ethical issues raised by these creations? Just war theory has a deep tradition traceable to Augustine (354-430 CE), but the form of most contemporary discussions is most indebted to Aquinas (1225-1274 CE). He proposed three norms for entering into war: that there is a just cause for entering into the war, that it is begun by a proper authority, and that it is entered into with the proper intention—that is, are the aims of the intended war good ones.² These have been much amended in subsequent literature.³ But neither Augustine nor Aquinas nor Walzer in his *Just and Unjust Wars*,⁴ the most influential contemporary book on the subject, discuss the ethics of creating war propaganda and art.

In searching for an ethical principle for discussing this issue, I found a passage in Clausewitz (Prussian, 1780-1831; *Vom Kriege*, c.1830), hardly a defender of approaching war with ethical scrupulosity, which I propose can serve as a basis for an ethical analysis of the use of art-propaganda in the run-up to war. The logic of war, according to Clausewitz, is that “each of the adversaries forces the hand of the other.”⁵ Each side fuels the emotions (*Gefühl*) of its populace. The result is a “reciprocal action,” and a continuous escalation (*Wechselwirkung*), an escalation which tends to outrun the original intent of each party. “War tends toward the utmost exertions of forces,” and toward increasing ruthlessness, since “the ruthless user of force who shrinks from no amount of bloodshed must gain an advantage if his opponent does not do the same.”⁶ The key concept I wish to focus on in this passage is *Wechselwirkung*, the continuous ratcheting-up on both sides.

Niall Ferguson gives the following examples of *Wechselwirkung* in World War I. The Germans were the first to bomb cities; Zeppelins over Scarborough and London rained down bombs on civilians. The Germans also used unrestricted submarine warfare against merchant and passenger ships. These two actions evoked reprisals, not in bombing—this pattern emerged in World War II—but in the killing of German prisoners. One British soldier stated that “we killed in cold blood because it was our duty to kill as much as we could. I thought many a time of the Lusitania.”⁷ Ferguson comments:

The fact that these attitudes could take root on the Western Front, where the ethnic differences between the two sides were in fact quite minimal, was an indication of how easily hatred could flourish in the brutalizing conditions of total war. In other theatres of war, where the differences were deeper, the potential for unconstrained violence was greater still.⁸

In World War II, the escalation of the bombing of cities followed a similar pattern. A. C. Grayling in his *Among the Dead Cities* gives a detailed account of this escalation. At the beginning of the war in September 1939, both Britain and Germany attempted to keep their air forces within the 1923 guidelines of The Hague. The event which loosened the no-civilian attacks ethos more than any other was the Luftwaffe’s bombing of the Dutch city of Rotterdam on May 14 of 1940 during the German attempt to capture the city.⁹

The bombing was largely accidental. A Dutch delegation was preparing to surrender to the Germans, and a German official sent a message to the Luftwaffe to cancel the attack. But the message arrived too late. Repeated attempts to contact the bombers failed. Even after they arrived over Rotterdam, flares were sent up to signal the bombers to cancel the mission. But they were not seen. The bombing killed 900 civilians and reduced the heart of the old city to rubble. Newspapers around the world outside of the Axis countries headlined the horror of the attack, characterizing the German demolition of the city as an act of unmitigated barbarism.¹⁰ Germany had already bombed civilians in Warsaw in 1939, but because of distance from the west, this was not widely known. As a result of the Rotterdam bombing, Churchill's War Cabinet authorized bombing raids east of the Rhine for the first time. These initial raids avoided as far as possible civilian targets. In August of 1940, the Germans began bombing English cities, destroying Coventry in November of 1940 and central London in December. But even then, throughout 1941, British bombing was directed to specific military and industrial targets.¹¹ The London blitz in 1941 further escalated the unrestricted air war or area bombing. Grayling concludes, "hence a fatal error by Germany [the bombing of Rotterdam] was part of a tit-for-tat begun by the accidental Luftwaffe bombing of London on 24-5 August, and the RAF's retaliatory bombing of Berlin on the next and subsequent nights."¹²

On July 25, 1943, the Royal Air Force mounted a huge bombing attack on Hamburg. The night bombings continued for a week and a half; the aim was to wipe Hamburg from the map of Europe.¹³ The majority of the bombs were incendiaries. On the second raid of the night of July 27-28, the incendiaries set off a firestorm. This was the first ever firestorm created by bombing.¹⁴ No one to this day knows how many in Hamburg died. Grayling suggests at least 45,000.¹⁵ This series of raids marked the beginning of "area bombing," the deliberate targeting of civilians on a large scale in WWII. Perhaps surprisingly, the United States Air Force did not follow the area bombing policy of the Royal Air Force, but concentrated on military and industrial targets. This policy changed in the Japanese theatre where the US used incendiaries to destroy large sections of Japanese cities.¹⁶

A later illustration of this ratcheting up occurred in the winter of 1943-4 when Allied bombing of German cities was intense. Goebbels walked through some of the most heavily bombed sections of Berlin, and, expecting a cool reception by the people, was surprised when crowds cheered him. The Berliners were angered by the attacks and asked Goebbels to seek revenge.¹⁷

The slow but steady escalation of the bombing of cities in WWII is a good example of *Wechselwirkung*, the ratcheting up of violence and the dehumanization of the other side. Propaganda art may play a small part in this spiral, but the ethical issue for artists remains. These works contribute to this ratcheting up, both in the push to enter into war (*just ad bellum*) and also the way war is waged (*jus in bellum*). One of the best expressions of the former is in William James' 1906 essay, "The Moral Equivalent of War," written in protest to the Spanish-American War.

The popular imagination fairly fattens on the thoughts of wars. Let public opinion once reach a certain fighting pitch, and no ruler can withstand it. In the Boer war both governments began with bluff, but couldn't stay there; the military tension was too much for them. In 1898 our people had read the word 'war' in letters three inches high for three months in every newspaper. The

pliant politician, McKinley, was swept away by their eagerness and our squalid war with Spain became a necessity.¹³

James refers here to the print media, but he could have well included propaganda art. And once war begins, as the examples above illustrate, art propaganda contributes to the escalation of the war toward ever more extreme atrocities. It leads to the demonization of the enemy and of entire ethnic groups. This in turn violates one of the main principles of just war theory—the restriction of the waging of war to military targets and avoidance, as far as possible, of civilian targets.

III. THE AESTHETICISM ARGUMENT AND RESPONSE

There is reluctance on the part of artists to admit complicity with this sort of *Wechselwirkung*. Denials run the gamut from the claim that propaganda art fostering war or demonizing the enemy is not “genuine” art, to the Aestheticist’s claim that art belongs to its own world and as such is immune to ethical evaluation.

The first objection seems to be an arbitrary prescription of what constitutes genuine art. In any case, whether one’s theory on the nature of art is restrictive or latitudinous, there certainly are many works about war or the run-up to war which would, even under the tightest strictures, be accepted as art. The second objection is a bit more complicated.

The idea of making moral assessments of art and artists offends against some deeply entrenched views in the philosophy of art and art criticism. Karen Hanson calls the view that art is immune to moral criticism the “art for art’s sake position,”¹⁹ a slogan which became current in France in the first half of the 19th century,²⁰ and in the English world in the second half of the nineteenth century under the influence of Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde, James McNeill Whistler, Aubrey Beardsley, and A.J. Symons, and became known as Aestheticism.²¹ In its earliest and most dogmatic form, this doctrine asserted that a work of art should be judged only by its internal aesthetic standards, and that any external function it may happen to have should be counted as a serious defect.²² All works of art are separate from and thus exempted from considerations of morality.²³ Walter Pater defended this position with the claim that “art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments’ sake.”²⁴ The point seems to be that the purpose of art is to produce rich aesthetic experiences, and it either does this or does not, and morality has nothing to do with it. Pater treated aesthetic values as primary, and as overriding all other values, even moral ones. Wilde followed in Pater’s footsteps with statements such as “it is better to be beautiful than to be good,”²⁵ and “as long as war is regarded as wicked, it will always have its fascination. When it is looked upon as vulgar, it will cease to be popular.”²⁶ The “art for art’s sake” doctrine continues to be popular. I believe that there remains a widespread view that we might admire the documentary-propaganda films of Leni Riefenstahl’s depiction of the grandeur and power of Nazi military extravaganzas, yet judge that what the Nazi party stood for was profoundly evil. Anthony Burgess in *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) depicts Alex as an evil bully who nonetheless is moved by the beauty of Beethoven’s symphonies.

I will challenge these views. Borrowing from Marcia Eaton, I propose that art should be no more immune to moral evaluation than any other realm of human activity. And secondly, that art, just because it is art, is not by that fact always morally good. Marcia Eaton, among others, challenge this view on the grounds that the good and meaningful life is one lived as a whole.

Both living morally and aesthetically are about living a meaningful life.²⁷ This means that both moral factors and aesthetic should be taken into account in making aesthetic and moral judgments. In the words of Marcia Eaton, “aesthetic and moral values . . . [may be] seen as part of a more general value construed as the overall meaning of life.”²⁸ “The aesthetic cannot be understood in isolation from other human concerns and experiences. If we know that the grand formal flow of movement in a Riefenstahl’s film of Nazi militarism is connected to a party which perpetuated some of the greatest evils of history, we should not separate our aesthetic judgment from our moral ones. Eaton’s holistic position also provides a response to the assumption that moral values should always override the aesthetic. To the perennial question, should we build a museum when so many poor people need the money, the holistic answer is that both are important. It’s all of a piece.

IV. CHINESE PROPAGANDA ART DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY ERA (1949-1976)

I will close, as promised in the title, with a brief examination of Chinese art during the revolutionary era in China. This is a much more subtle instance of the use of propaganda art—not that the propaganda was subtle, it was anything but—the use of it was largely internal to the country and was used to promote large social and political movements rather than to wage war against another nation. This makes the artists’ ethical choices much more problematic. I shall return to this shortly.

Well before Mao’s victory over Chiang Kai-Shek, Mao gave a series of lectures at Yan’an in 1942 in which he laid out the purpose of artists in the new revolutionary regime: art must serve social and political purposes and must be accessible, instructive, and suitable for mass circulation in public exhibitions. After the 1949 Chinese Communist Party (CCP) victory, there was a brief period of creative freedom in the arts. But by the mid-1950s, art students studying in the Westernized schools of art in Shanghai, were sent to farming villages and factories to create works idealizing the working class. The standard style became realism with a socialist message, hence the tag Socialist Realism. In 1959, Mao initiated the Great Leap Forward (1958-61), a plan for the rapid industrialization of China by encouraging and often requiring rural villages to build small furnaces to melt down iron and steel for reuse in large building projects and factories. This program not only failed to produce any usable steel, but because of the neglect of agriculture it led to a massive famine in which an estimated 30 million Chinese died.²⁹

Yang Wenxiu (b.1929), Ha Ziongwen (B.1925), Xian Daxin (b. 1922), & Weng Yizhi (b. 1921). *Exerting the Utmost Effort, Aiming at a High Position, and Constructing Socialism in More, Faster, Better and Cheaper Ways*. 1958. Poster.³⁰

The next major movement instigated by Mao was the Cultural Revolution. The Revolution was Mao’s attempt to triumph over party members who opposed him and to re-vitalize the spirit of the revolution. It led to severe criticism of the older generation of traditional painters. All artworks were required to serve the people and possess revolutionary characteristics.³¹ Immense amounts of traditional art and artifacts were destroyed. Prominent artist Zheng Shengtian later wrote about being arrested by the Red guard in 1967 and kept prisoner in a shed on the campus of Peking University for three months.³² Most art during this period consisted of propaganda posters and portraits of Mao. In addition to paintings and posters, all

kinds of objects—ornaments, medals, tapestries, calendars, and china were produced with images of Mao.

In the spring of 1966, the Cultural Revolution swept from Beijing to Hangzhou. It was often violent. Students poured ink and paint on the heads of professors, among them the artists Fang Ganmin and Zhao Yannion, and forcibly paraded them around the campus of the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts (now the China Academy of Arts) in Hangzhou.³³ Radical slogans such as “destroying the old and establishing the new”³⁴ and “a new literature and art to launch a new epoch in the history of mankind . . .”³⁵ were endlessly repeated. The only type of art produced was posters and images for tabloids published by the Red Guard. Although there was a brief and largely unsuccessful attempt later in the Cultural Revolution to have peasants produce art, most creators were teachers and students from art academies.³⁶

Smash the Cultural Ministry. 1967.³⁷

Wang Huaiqing (b.1944). *Celebrate the Establishment of the Red Guards Congress of Colleges and Universities in the Capital.* 1966. Woodblock print.³⁸

A movement to deify Mao also began in the summer of 1967. Art creation was largely directed at the “campaign of god-creating” and “to establish on a grand scale the absolute authority of Chairman Mao.”³⁹ Middle aged artists were now rehabilitated and directed to create oil paintings and posters glorifying the long march, the victory of 1949, and the glorious rule of Mao.

Shen Yaoyi (b.1943). *Advancing Through the Storm in the Footsteps of Chairman Mao.* 1966. Woodblock print. Adapted from a photo of Mao greeting the Red Guards. Later the head of Mao was isolated from the rest of the picture and reproduced in a single image. The image soon became ubiquitous and appeared in newspapers as the masthead illustration accompanying quotations of Mao.⁴⁰

Anonymous. *Mao Zedong, the Sun of the World.* 1967. Poster. Many portraits of Mao use the image of the sun. In this image, Mao is in the center of the sun, “a phenomenon that clearly emerged as a response to the campaign to deify Mao.”⁴¹

Liu Chunhua. *Chairman Mao Goes to Anyuan.* 1967. First exhibited in October of 1967 in Beijing. It drew huge crowds. An estimated 900 million copies were distributed during the Cultural Revolution. Almost everyone who lived during this period would have seen the painting. The painting evokes the impression of a god descending to earth.⁴²

In early 1967, the eruption of violent conflicts in many regions of China led Mao to embark on an inspection tour of several provinces and to give several speeches in which he criticized some of the rebel factions asserting that the “little generals” may have committed errors.⁴³ This illustrates the tendency of revolutionary movements, even within a country with a relatively high degree of homogeneity, to suffer *Wechselwirkung* once a movement has been launched.

In 1969, a new anti-Soviet phase of the Cultural Revolution was launched after several border incidents in northeast China. Again, propaganda art was used to mobilize the people, this time to demonize the Soviet Union.

Guan Qiming (b.1942). *Heighten our Vigilance; Defend the Motherland*. 1969. Poster.⁴⁴

The Cultural Revolution, in the words of Niall Ferguson, “unleashed a ghastly generational conflict. Formed into Red Guards and later Revolution Committees, young militants were encouraged by Mao to subject their teachers and other figures of authority to beatings, torture, ritualized humiliation. In the summer of 1966, more than 1,700 people were beaten to death in Beijing alone. Some victims were killed by having boiling water poured over them; others were forced to swallow nails. More than 85,000 people were exiled to the countryside, where they were forced to work in ‘reform-through-labor’ camps.”⁴⁵ At least twenty-three faculty members at Peking University were persecuted to death. All of this was done in the name of and at the instigation of Mao, and was spurred on with propaganda art.

V. HOW CULPABLE ARE INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS?

An important proviso needs to be considered here. I am not claiming that individual artists are responsible for the ratcheting-up to which they contribute. Here Walzer’s notion of “the moral equality of soldiers” is useful.⁴⁵ Walzer argues that ordinary soldiers on both sides of a conflict are almost always convinced that they are on the right side. Today most leaders of nations entering into or engaged in a war work hard to justify their actions to their citizens. And they are usually quite successful. Most soldiers are persuaded by these reasons, if they reflect on them at all. As Walzer notes, “their routine habits of law-abidingness, their fear, their patriotism, their moral investment in the state, all favor that course.”⁴⁶ In addition, military training emphasizes solidarity with one’s fellow soldiers such that regardless of occasional individual reservations about the justice of the cause for war, soldiers fight to support each other. Thus on the level of the trenches, the soldiers on both sides are moral equals. I suggest that the same principle applies to the artists who created posters for the Boxer Rebellion, World War I, World War II, the Great Leap Forward, and the Cultural Revolution. In China of the revolutionary era, few students questioned the work they were asked to do for Mao’s wing of the party. Zheng Shengtian says that he was caught up in the Cultural Revolution and had the sense that his work was contributing to a world-historical event. “Many of us sought,” he wrote decades later, “to create a new art for a new world, as artists in other countries and other times had tried to do.”⁴⁷

But what’s the point of discussing the ethical issues of creating this art, if no one is responsible? But this is not my proposal. There were those who were responsible, namely, the party officials who commissioned the works and who specified the character of the works right down to the colors and the social realist style, and who fostered turmoil for the purpose of consolidating and keeping political power.

NOTES

1. An inchoate, anti-Christian movement which began in Shandong in 1898. It was at first directed against European missionaries, but eventually led to the seizure of the Western embassies and concessions in Beijing. For a recent, lively story of the rebellion, see Diana Preston, *The Boxer Rebellion: The Dramatic Story of China’s War on Foreigners that Shook the World in the Summer of 1900* (NY: Walker, 2000).
2. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* II-II, 40.
3. See Douglas Lackey, *The Ethics of War and Peace* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1989).

4. Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, 2nd ed. (NY: BasicBooks, 1977).
5. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. & trans. Michael Howard & Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 76.
6. Clausewitz, 76-77.
7. Niall Ferguson, *The War of the World: Twentieth-Century Conflict and the Descent of the West* (NY: Penguin, 2006), 127.
8. Ferguson 130.
9. A.C. Grayling, *Among the Dead Cities: The History and Moral Legacy of WWII Bombing of Civilians in Germany and Japan* (NY: Walker & Co., 2006), 34.
10. Grayling 35.
11. Lackey, 71.
12. Grayling, 40.
13. Grayling, 16.
14. Grayling, 18.
15. Grayling, 20.
16. Grayling, 21.
17. Grayling, 101.
18. William James, "The Moral Equivalent of War," in William James, *The Moral Equivalent of War and Other Essays*, ed. John K. Roth (NY: Harper Torchbooks, 1971), 5. James originally gave this essay as a speech at Stanford University in 1906.
19. Karen Hanson, "How Bad Can Good Art Be?" in ed. Jerrold Levinson, *Aesthetics and Ethics: Essays at the Intersection* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 204.
20. *The phrase is attributed to Victor Cousin (1792-1867) in his lecture on Le Vrai, le beau et le bien (1818, published in 1836), and was later used by Theophile Gautier in his preface to Mademoiselle de Maupin (1835). See David Whewell, "Aestheticism," in A Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. David Cooper (NY: Blackwell, 1992), 6.
21. In England, Aestheticism, another name for the movement, was more than a theory about the role of art in society. It was a way of living, and it led to a revival of the decorative arts (wallpaper, chintzes, blue and white china, "the cult of Japan." Lionel Lambourne, *The Aesthetic Movement* (London: Phaidon, 1996),
22. David Whewell, "Aestheticism," In *A Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. David Cooper (NY: Blackwell, 1992), 7.
23. Whewell, 7.
24. Walter Pater, *The Renaissance* (NY: Modern Library, 1873), 199.
25. Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, ed. & intro. Robert Mighall (NY: Viking Penguin, 2001), 186.
26. Oscar Wilde, "The Critic as Artist" (1891), in *The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde*, ed. Richard Ellmann (NY: Random House, 1969), 405. This essay was originally published in a collection of four essays under the general title of *Intentions*.
27. Marcia Eaton, *Aesthetics and the Good Life* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickenson University Press, 1989), chapter 7, "The Aesthetic and the Ethical."
28. Eaton 169.
29. Roderick MacFarquhar, "The Cultural Revolution," in *Art and China's Revolution*, ed. Melissa Chiu and Zheng Shengtian (New Haven, CN: Asia Society of New York & Yale University Press, 2008), 41.
30. In *Art and China's Revolution*, ed. Melissa Chiu & Zheng Shengtian (NY: Asia Society & New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 2008), 155, fig. 95.
31. Melissa Chiu, "The Art of Mao's Revolution," in Chiu & Shengtian, 6.
32. Chiu, "The Art of Mao's Revolution," 6.
33. Zheng Shengtian, "Art and Revolution: Looking Back at Thirty Years of History," in Chiu & Shengtian, 25, 30.

34. Shengtian, "Art and Revolution: Looking Back at Thirty Years of History," 30.
36. Ralph Croizier, "Politics in Command: Chinese Art, 1949-1979," in Chiu & Shengtian, 66-67.
37. In Chiu & Shengtian, 31, fig 16.
38. In Chiu & Shengtian, 11, fig. 6. Wang Huaiqing (b. 1944), then a relatively young artist, recalls working with the elderly master Wu Guanzhong on an oil painting, but the master was allowed to paint only the background. "Only Red Guards and revolutionaries were allowed to paint Mao." Melissa Chiu, "The Art of Mao's Revolution," in Chiu & Shengtian, 10.
39. Shengtian, "Art and Revolution: Looking Back at Thirty Years of History," in Chiu & Shengtian 32.
40. In Chiu & Shengtian, 97, fig. 51. Yan Shanchun, "Painting Mao," in Chiu & Shengtian, 96.
41. In Chiu & Shengtian, 97, fig. 52. Yan Shanchun, "Painting Mao," in Chiu & Shengtian, 96.
42. In Chiu & Shengtian, 121, fig. 78. "Yan Shanchun, "Painting Mao," in Chiu & Shengtian, 94-95.
43. Zheng Shengtian, "Art and Revolution: Looking Back at thirty Years of History," in Chiu & Shengtian, 32.
44. In Chiu & Shengtian, 12, fig. 7.
45. Walzer, 34.
46. Walzer, 39.
47. Shengtian, "Art and Revolution: Looking Back at Thirty Years of History," in Chiu & Shengtian, 39. But it was Zheng Shengtian who also voiced opposition to the Red Guards and who, together with Pan Tianshou (artist and president of the Zhejiang Academy) was imprisoned for three months on the campus of Peking University.

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AN ARTISTS' RIGHTS COURSE FOR YOUR SCHOOL

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Peter Schjeldahl, in his recent criticism of “Vermeer’s Masterpiece ‘The Milkmaid,’” “gorgeously describes the effect art has upon us:” . . . an approximation of humane wisdom that was probably far beyond the artist’s personal capacity . . . klutzes in life transfigured as seraphim in their work—(but seldom so sublimely).... Something well worn has become something never seen before.... That’s beauty in action . . . an abrupt realization that the finest crystallizations of sensibility may readily befall us, in the matter-of-fact decisions of resolute artists, if we will abide their chastening force.” This exalted response is why many of us live and work in the art world.

Yet, my task here today is to address a mundane concern that we must discuss if we are to fully educate artists. SVA’s Office of Career Development advises that graduating students report they wish they had learned about the business and law of art. When I give workshops on copyright law and artists’ rights—whether in NYC, at SVA, in East Hampton or Los Angeles, working artists are hungry for information about their legal rights.

We all know that most art students will not elect to take a class in artists’ rights. Given the choice of a painting class and a law class, we know what the choice will be. However, we must provide a course for our students to learn about their legal rights and responsibilities (and counsel them to take it) while in school. Practically speaking, lawyers charge by the hour—many charge upward from \$350 an hour. To be blunt, many artists won’t be able to afford to learn when they are paying lawyers by the hour. If as working artists, they understand their rights and all they have in the copyright in their work, they can much more effectively make a living as artists. They can also better assess when they need a lawyer to help them. We must also teach them how to stay abreast of the issues that directly affect their art and careers and how to simply advocate for themselves. In this paper, I will describe the essentials of a course to teach artists about their basic rights.

I would like to illustrate the contents of this proposed course, which I call *Protect Your Creative Assets: Legal Issues for Visual Artists in a Digital Age*, by describing the legal issues faced a typical artist. Sara is a very dedicated painter. She would like to just paint, but she also has to earn money by working at a foundation for a famous deceased artist and licensing her work to rug and floor tile makers.

BASIC COPYRIGHT—A BUNDLE OF RIGHTS

Sara asked me if she could make and sell prints from an image that is hanging in a gallery. The most basic understanding that she needs is that she has a bundle of rights—a copyright in a work is a bundle of rights. Had she understood this as a young painter, she perhaps could have lived on her artwork alone.

As soon as she creates an image in tangible form, she has a copyright. The copyright is comparable to owning a rental house with many rooms and gardens. The owner can rent the

entire house for ten years, rent it for a summer, and/or rent individual rooms or the garden for shorter periods of time. If she only rents out one room, she is not availing herself of the full value of all the rooms in the house. Similarly, copyright is a bundle of rights—a bundle of assets which can have great economic worth and which can be sold and/or licensed as the artist sees fit. The bundle of rights is five-fold—to copy, distribute, display, adapt, and perform.

THE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES

Only the artist can make prints and other reproductions of the work. Sara and only Sara (subject to exceptions which would be discussed) can make prints of her work, t-shirts, posters, backdrops—unless she licenses those rights to someone else.

THE RIGHT TO DISTRIBUTE

Sara's gallery cannot put her images on their web site or on post cards without her consent. Of course she will allow the gallery to distribute them, but when she finds her work on a Sag Harbor dealer's web site—who was not her dealer—she can tell him with authority to take down the images. She can also sue if she needs to. Likewise, the guy on the street who made a gorgeous shawl from her image cannot legally sell it.

THE RIGHT TO DISPLAY

The gallery and others cannot show her work without her consent. If her painting is on the wall in a living room in a movie, the studio has to get her permission (and pay her if she asks) to copy, display, and distribute her image. Faith Ringgold successfully sued a television production company for using her image without payment and consent. Sara created a beautiful floor that looks like an abstract expressionist painting. If a design magazine wants to show her floor, they need Sara's permission—and knowing this she can insist upon payment and credit.

THE RIGHT TO ADAPT

The Shubert Theater asked their designer to adapt one of Sara's images into a backdrop for the new hit play about art. Sara, of course, was thrilled. The theater cannot do so without her consent. She ended up making a deal for a hefty payment and credit in the Playbill.

THE RIGHT TO PERFORM

This doesn't usually apply to visual artists, although a play was made from a Charlie Brown cartoon. And, of course, there is Spiderman. Yet each right contains the artists' ability to exploit her images and to make money from her art. That sounds very basic, but if that were understood by artists, they could more easily make a living and could avoid being taken advantage of by those who truly understand this. If you have seen a publishing agreement, you know that it lists myriad uses for the copyrighted work. The publisher understands that there are many ways to exploit a work and they want to exploit those rights—the rights that spring from the original work of the artist, the copyright.

WORK MADE FOR HIRE—AN EXCEPTION TO COPYRIGHT

This means that even though the artist creates the work, the bundle of rights belongs to someone else. Work for hire is created in two ways: first, if you are an employee your work is automatically work for hire. The second way is to sign your rights away. For example, movies are done as work made for hire. By industry practice, the creative contributors sign their rights away.

A well-known carpet manufacturer wants to make rugs from Sara's images. She is thrilled and imagines the new studio she is going to build from the money she earns. The rug company, saavy in business of course, hands her an agreement which they describe as "standard." She quickly signed it. The agreement had a simple sentence which said that the images are work for hire. Had she known what the terms means, she wouldn't have signed it so fast. Several months later, her gallery received a letter from the rug manufacturer. It said that they now own the images and want to control the promotion of "their artwork." Sara then received a letter from the company advising that she cannot use the images in her artwork as they belong to the rug company.

Work for hire can work both ways. An artist wants to be very careful not to unwittingly sign her rights away. However, if an artist has someone working with her, she may want that person to sign a work for hire agreement. Work for hire is of course more complicated than I can explain in a few minutes (and will discuss at length in the course), but it is very important for an artist to understand. One agreement can change their lives.

REGISTRATION: ARTISTS' LIABILITY INSURANCE

Sara is very upset and thinks for a while about how to handle this issue. After six months, she goes to see her lawyer. The first question the lawyer asked is whether Sara registered her image with the U. S. Copyright Office. The lawyer explained that unless she registered prior to or within 90 days of the infringement, her rights are severely limited. Had she registered, she could win damages of up to \$150,000 per infringement and get her attorneys' fees paid. Without it, she can only get her lost profits, which can be very hard to prove.

Registration of copyrighted images is an essential aspect of the course. Registering an image is truly "artists' insurance." It allows an artist to literally get money when others unlawfully use her images and to prevent unauthorized uses. In addition, Congress is most likely going to pass Orphan Works legislation. Simply stated, this legislation would protect someone who uses Sara's copyrighted images if this user, after a good faith search, cannot find out that Sara created the work and how to reach her. Imagine a magazine publisher who photographs an apartment with Sara's rug on the floor. The magazine asks the owner, who knows that Sara created the rug but doesn't how to reach her. The rug company cannot be reached to provide Sara's contact information.

Under current law, Sara could sue the magazine for damages of up to \$150,000 per infringement, because it can't use the image without her consent. Under Orphan Works legislation, the magazine could use it and would only have to pay Sara the cost of licensing the image; unfortunately, Sara would have to sue the magazine in order to even recoup the license fee. However, if Sara had registered her image, the magazine could not argue that they could not find the artist. Her information would be contained on the registration itself. Also, under Orphan Works, unscrupulous users could make a business decision that it is cheaper to use the work and possibly pay a license fee than to contact the artist and make a deal to pay to use her

work. So, for these reasons it is essential that artists learn how to register their work with the U.S. Copyright Office.

FAIR USE

Sara is fed up with all her legal problems and decides to move into a different area—to comment about the excesses she sees in the Hamptons and what she calls Bloomberg’s New York City. She clips photographs from *Architectural Digest*, various Hamptons and New York magazines, and also takes photographs to show the high and low life in both places. She incorporates these images into her own collage-type paintings. Sara has by now invested a lot into her house and studio and doesn’t want to get sued. So Sara needs to understand fair use—what copyrighted images of others she can legally use. There is no simple answer, but artists want to know. This is a critical part of the course.

JOINT COPYRIGHT

Sara and her assistant take the photographs for the collages. Sara doesn’t think to have an agreement—she pays the assistant by the hour. The work is not noticed, but all of a sudden gets some acclaim. The assistant has moved on, but now wants half of the money from sales and wants to be credited as a co-artist. Sara refuses. The assistant begins to distribute the work as hers alone. Sara needs to understand what constitutes a joint work—that each part is independently copyrightable and that there is intent to be a joint copyright. With this understanding, she could have asked her assistant to sign an agreement, which states their understanding as to who owns the work and covers credit and compensation or that her work was work for hire.

RIGHTS OF PRIVACY, PUBLICITY, MORAL RIGHTS AND CONTRACTS

Can Sara use images of celebrities without their consent? Regular people? Her work was hanging in a museum—she had no agreement. When she picked it up, it was damaged. What can she do? These questions involve issues of moral rights, rights of privacy and publicity, which artists need to understand. This week the Tate removed Richard Prince’ photograph of Brook Shields as a little girl when the police claimed it was obscene. Could Prince be sued for obscenity—a criminal offense? Also, contracts are important to understand. They contain legalese and are written to benefit one party usually. In class, we discuss all these issues and go through typical agreements so artists know what they are signing and know when and how to negotiate.

In my class and in my workshops on the East and West coast, we discuss all these scenarios. Whether the session is a couple of hours, four sessions, a workshop, or a full semester, we can make artists familiar with these issues. I also want them to know about advocacy organizations that can help them throughout their careers and keep them abreast of the current issues. They may not have all the answers when issues arise, but they will know that there is an issue that they need to explore more, and who can help them.

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ORSON WELLES' *WAR OF THE WORLDS*: SIMULATION, DRAMATIZATION, OR DECEIT?

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October 30, 1938—CBS broadcasts a radio adaptation of H.G. Wells' 1898 novel, *War of the Worlds*. It is the brainchild of Orson Welles, whose radio plays for *Mercury Theatre on the Air* are routine after-dinner fare for Sunday night listeners across the country. Gathered around the radio in the living room, families can usually expect a newly dramatized version of a novel or short story,¹ but tonight's performance is different. Welles' *Mercury Theatre on the Air* has been lagging in the ratings behind the *Chase and Sanborn Hour*, starring Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy,² so in an effort to lure audiences away from Bergen's light entertainment, Welles and his co-producer, John Houseman, have assigned in-house scriptwriter, Howard Koch, to condense, update, and adapt *War of the Worlds* to be presented as a series of current news reports over the course of an hour. Koch has spent six frantic days completing the project.³

At 8 p.m. Eastern Time, the CBS announcer opens the show, and the voice of Orson Welles begins the play. The opening words are reminiscent of the first chapter of the H. G. Wells original: "We know now that in the early years of the twentieth century this world was being watched closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own..."⁴ Welles' narration continues through several lines and fades into an authentic-sounding weather report which mentions "a slight atmospheric disturbance of unknown origin . . . reported over Nova Scotia,"⁵ followed by music from "the Hotel Park Plaza in downtown New York."⁶ As we listen to the sounds of Ramon Raquello and his orchestra, the music is interrupted by a simulated "special bulletin" reporting scientific observations of several explosions on the planet Mars. We are then returned to the music of Ramon Raquello and his orchestra. Another news bulletin interrupts, followed by an interview with fictional Professor Richard Pierson, famed astronomer.⁷ It is during this interview that realistic-sounding reports arrive of "a huge, flaming object"⁸ falling on a farm in Grovers Mill, New Jersey. With the musical program now relegated to occasional brief interludes, we are thrust into rapid-fire, on-the-scene reports and eyewitness accounts of strange creatures emerging from an ominous cylinder, striking forty people dead and setting fire to the entire area with jets of flame.⁹ Soon we are purportedly hearing from the United States Secretary of the Interior (actually an actor) on the gravity of the situation,¹⁰ and next we are witness to what seem to be actual military shortwave reports from the field of battle.¹¹ An announcer describes the panicked population fleeing the city and the black smoke now drifting over New York,¹² followed by the eerie on-air question of a shortwave radio operator, "Isn't there anyone on the air? Isn't there anyone . . ."¹³ followed by silence. It has now been forty minutes since the first and only mention that these interruptions and reports constitute a radio play when the announcer says, "You are listening to a CBS presentation of Orson Welles and the *Mercury Theatre on the Air* in an original dramatization of *The War of the Worlds* by H. G. Wells. The performance will continue after a brief intermission."¹⁴

When the program returns, the tone has changed. It is now straight drama. The audience hears Orson Welles, as Professor Richard Pierson, in a soliloquy. Like the narrator of the H. G. Wells novel, he believes that he "may be the last living man on earth."¹⁵ He has survived the siege of the Martians only to question existence itself. But wait! After sensing "an odd feeling of being

watched,”¹⁶ he happens upon a stranger, “armed with a large knife.”¹⁷ The two weigh each other out, converse, compare notes on the Martian invasion; the conversation grows grimly philosophical before Professor Pierson takes his leave to discover “the fate of the great city on the other side of the Hudson.”¹⁸ However, as he loses all hope of the world’s survival and takes one last long look at desolate, uninhabited Manhattan, he realizes that the Martians, ironically, are also dead (following the plot of the original novel), victims themselves of an enemy invasion—of common bacteria, harmless in humans, but against which their systems have no defense.¹⁹

So the bad guys lose, but all is not well. To this seemingly satisfactory conclusion, Welles adds a disclaimer, indicating that he might have overplayed his hand, that the realism of the play turned out a bit too real: “This is Orson Welles . . . out of character to assure you that ‘The War of the Worlds’ has no further significance than as the holiday offering it was intended to be. The Mercury Theatre’s own radio version of dressing up in a sheet and jumping out of a bush and saying Boo! . . . You will be relieved, I hope, to learn that we didn’t mean it, and that both institutions are still open for business....”²⁰

Perhaps Welles’ disclaimer should have come a bit earlier; it turns out that the play’s description of millions fleeing the city had not been far from reality that October night. Before the first station break at forty minutes into the program, reports of panic in the streets had reached CBS, prompting the insertion of the reminder, “You are listening to a CBS presentation of Orson Welles . . . in an original dramatization....”²¹ Scriptwriter Howard Koch, at home in his apartment and oblivious to the panic, recounts the situation as he later learned it: “The scene in Newark . . . was one of complete chaos, hundreds of cars racing down streets, disregarding traffic lights to the bafflement of policemen. . . . People in the Riverside area reported . . . the sighting of Martians on their giant machines poised on the Jersey Palisades before wading the Hudson to take possession of New York City.”²²

The chaos was not limited to the New York City area. According to a study by Princeton Professor Hadley Cantril and published in his 1940 book, *Invasion from Mars*, there were more than six million listeners on the night of October 30, 1938, and of those, an estimated 1.7 million are believed to have taken the radio play as fact, and within that number, approximately 1.2 million panicked.²³ First-hand reports and newspaper accounts corroborate this assessment. Chicago, St. Louis, Richmond, New Orleans, San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Memphis, Birmingham, Indianapolis—the response was everywhere the same. Newspapers and radio stations were flooded with calls from panicked listeners. Many in the Northeast reported seeing the fires and the smoke and the Martian machines, smelling the gas, and hearing the machine gun fire.²⁴ Such, we would come to learn, is the power of the media.

Newspaper headlines the following day read “Fake Radio ‘War’ Stirs Terror Through U.S.,” “Radio Listeners in Panic, Taking War Drama as Fact,” and “Many Flee Homes to Escape ‘Gas Raid from Mars’—Phone Calls Swamp Police at Broadcast of Welles Fantasy.”²⁵ In the aftermath, Welles, Houseman, and Koch were painted as both “scoundrels and heroes.”²⁶ At a press conference the next day, Halloween, Welles claimed “utter amazement”²⁷ at the panic, although much later, in 1955, he hinted that he and his team “weren’t as innocent as [they] meant to be when [they] did the Martian broadcast...” and actually were commenting on the “credibility of the machine.”²⁸

Over the next several days, newspapers quickly progressed from exposing the malicious Halloween mischief of the radio play and its collateral damage to assessing the aftermath and debating what it all meant. On November 1, the *New York World-Telegram* gently chided Welles while concurrently disagreeing with calls for government control of radio to eliminate future public confusion over the medium. Instead, the paper called for radio to police itself and, as the editorial put it, to “avoid use of the news broadcasting technique in dramatizations,” asserting the danger of the public’s “mistaking fiction for fact.”²⁹ On November 2, *Variety*’s headline read, “Radio Does U. S. a Favor,” addressing the recognition of the power of the media to throw the nation into panic.³⁰ Perhaps the definitive viewpoint of the time came from Dorothy Thompson, columnist for the *New York Tribune*. Her opinion was that Welles should be given a Congressional medal for “contributions to the social sciences . . . by exposing the “incredible stupidity, lack of nerve, and ignorance of thousands.”³¹

The so-called “ignorance” referred to by Thompson—that undefined set of contributing factors that caused so many listeners to readily believe what they heard on the radio (and to act upon it)—has, from 1938 to the present, been turned upside down, inside out, and viewed from every possible perspective. It has been the object of analysis in the social sciences, literature, dramatic theory, cultural studies, and media studies. All of these academic fields have attempted to shed light on the question: why did the public react to this radio drama as if it were real? Enough of that. For the sake of argument, let us turn the question around: why should the public have reacted any differently? Instead of pondering why radio listeners panicked at Orson Welles’ *War of the Worlds*, I would ask, given all the circumstances surrounding the broadcast as well as the nature of the broadcast itself, why wouldn’t they have panicked? I maintain that it was the rational public who panicked, not vice versa.

To begin, we must ask: was it impossible to believe, in 1938, that this country could be attacked from outer space? The original *War of the Worlds* had been published only forty years earlier, at a time when, according to David C. Smith in his biography *H. G. Wells: Desperately Mortal*, “the possibility of there being inhabitants on the planet Mars . . . had become a part of the standard wisdom” of the day, and the frightening question of “whether the citizens of Earth could conquer them” underlay this mentality.³² Stephen Whalen and Robert E. Bartholomew, in their article “Great New England Airship Hoax of 1909,” remind us that “Western civilization has steered a course somewhere between the fantastic and the possible,” and early twentieth century had been “a time when it was exceedingly difficult to distinguish the two. . . . [For instance,] Percival Lowell had asserted that he could discern canals on the face of Mars, [and] these stories [had] appeared alongside real advances in communication, power generation, medicine, [and] transportation.”³³ How many wonders did in fact exist in 1938—the automobile, the airplane, the telephone—that had been considered impossible just a few years earlier?

Even so, perhaps the most influential invention of the 20th century—television—had yet to appear in American homes. William Stott, author of *Documentary Expression and Thirties America*, tells us that “the thirties mind,” not yet influenced by the invention of television and its invasion into our lives, is symbolized by the camera, and as the producer of mental photographs, the thirties mind “aspired to the quality of authenticity, of direct and immediate experience, that the camera captures in all its photographs.”³⁴ No wonder listeners “saw” the devastation being described in the broadcast!

We can further understand Stott's camera metaphor for the 1930s mindset through Susan Sontag's insights on photography. In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, she reminds us that "it has always been possible for a photograph to misrepresent. A painting or drawing is judged a fake when it turns out to be not by the artist to whom it had been attributed. A photograph—or filmed document available on television or the internet [or by extension, I would add, a radio dramatization]—is judged a fake when it turns out to be deceiving the viewer about the scene it purports to depict."³⁵

Can we, then, realistically attribute to a 1930s audience the expertise necessary for immediately spotting an artistic forgery? Norman and Jeanne Mackenzie, in their biography of H.G. Wells by the same name, refer to the radio version of the novel as "tellingly realistic," including place names, "commentators, professors, policemen, and even a Secretary of State [sic]."³⁶ It was presented on "a radio network on whose authenticity the public relied."³⁷ Indeed, only a month earlier, on September 25, 1938, an actual news bulletin had interrupted *The Mercury Theatre on the Air*, commanding the audience's attention concerning the crisis in Germany. Such reports quite frequently interrupted radio programming in the days leading up to Welles' broadcast.³⁸ How different could these bulletins have sounded from Welles' fake ones? That the public can be misled is no surprise, but it can be posited that those who listened to the program from the beginning would have known the difference. (It is estimated that about four million listeners switched from Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy to *Mercury Theatre on the Air* at the break and thus would not have heard the beginning of the broadcast.³⁹) However, Rebecca Jean Emigh, in her article "Power of Negative Thinking," tells us that this factor explains approximately eighty-five percent of the listeners who panicked; the remaining fifteen percent heard the beginning and still believed the fake bulletins!⁴⁰ The expectation that real news bulletins would interrupt regular broadcasts (as they had in the past) must be factored into the response of the remaining fifteen percent. Perhaps the fifteen percent who panicked in spite of hearing the beginning of the broadcast were more informed and rational than those who dismissed it entirely and did not panic at all.

With this added understanding of how a 1938 audience could have perceived Welles' broadcast as reality, can we continue to believe that audience naïveté concerning the power of this new medium of radio actually explains the widespread panic? A repeat performance thirty years later indicates that it does not. In 1968, station WKBW in Buffalo, New York, decided to broadcast its own updated version of Welles' radio play. To prevent a reenactment of the 1938 aftermath, it ran announcements of the play every hour for twenty-one days before the broadcast. The station informed TV stations, newspapers, police, and schools. The show ran at eleven o'clock on Halloween night. Even though it was broadcast only regionally, not nationally as was Welles' 1938 version, four thousand people phoned Buffalo police stations, newspapers, and TV and radio stations. The Canadian National Guard sent units to repel the Martian invaders. Forty-seven newspapers around the country carried stories of the panic in Buffalo.⁴¹ In 1968! And again, as late as 1974, radio station WPRO in Providence, Rhode Island caused local panic by broadcasting its own version of *War of the Worlds*.⁴²

So the power of this radio play to produce panic seems to transcend time, at least to a point. Michael Kirby, in his article "On Political Theater," attests to the "power of radio to make the unreal seem real."⁴³ Using Welles' broadcast as a given, he extrapolates that "it would be possible to use staged news footage on television without anyone realizing that it was not, in fact, real."⁴⁴ News, whether on radio or TV, is predicated upon the public's trust. "Theatre,"

Kirby reminds us, “on the other hand, is recognized—and appreciated—for its ‘lies.’”⁴⁵

Yes, we recognize that theatre “lies” and appreciate the fact that its “lies” serve as a vehicle to truth. On the other hand, those same “lies”—“fiction’s shapely lies,” as John Updike calls them—can be the very agents of confusion between truth and deception when one is unsure of the medium of delivery. For instance, one would not go to the theatre to hear a news report and thus would not mistake a dramatized news report in a play as fact, but one *would* turn on the radio to hear a news report. In 1938, one would also have turned on the radio for nightly dramatic entertainment—thus, the public’s understandable confusion between fact and fiction. Believing the “lies” of fiction can be seen as synonymous with Coleridge’s “willing suspension of disbelief,” but when the public is deprived of this prerogative, as in this instance, this phenomenon becomes the *unwilling* suspension of disbelief. Welles’ panicked audience never had the option of suspending its sense of disbelief. Jerome Bruner, in his article “The Narrative Construction of Reality,” explains this “illusion created by skilful narrative” as “narrative seduction”:

Great storytellers have the artifices of narrative reality construction so well mastered that their telling pre-empts momentarily the possibility of any but a single interpretation—however bizarre it may be. The famous episode of a Martian invasion in Orson Welles's broadcast of *The War of the Worlds* provides a striking example. Its brilliant exploitation of the devices of text, context, and *mis-en-scene* predisposed its hearers to one and only one interpretation, however bizarre it seemed to them in retrospect. It created “narrative necessity”⁴⁶

“Narrative necessity” in Welles’ production, then, converged with early 20th century context, the 1930s pre-television mindset, and the crisis-charged world atmosphere of 1938, in order to *require* its audience to believe. Orson Welles, with John Houseman and Howard Koch, created a vision of war in words, still vivid even today, however implausible, that emphasizes what Peter Swirski has pointed out in “Nature of Literary Fiction”: that the “difference between fiction and nonfiction is far from inconsequential.”⁴⁷

Janus-like, the vision looked back to the turn of the twentieth century and its fascination with the possibility of life on Mars, while simultaneously (we know now) it looked forward, in eerily prophetic manner, to twenty-first century images of devastated cities. Fictional Professor Richard Pierson describes New York after the Martian invasion as “strangely dwarfed and leveled off, as if a giant had sliced off its highest towers with a capricious sweep of his hand,”⁴⁸ summoning our visions of smoke-smothered lower Manhattan in 2001. Pierson’s description of “silent shop windows, displaying their mute wares to empty sidewalks”⁴⁹ elicits now-familiar images of flooded, evacuated New Orleans in 2005.

We have seen these images in the media, and they are now burned into our mental landscapes, whereas Welles’ audience created their own mental landscapes crafted from words heard on the radio, and then they unwillingly played the part of the panicked populace in the play itself. In looking back as well as forward, today’s audiences must ask, what part do we continue to play for the media, as visions of war pound our senses with ever-increasing frequency and clarity? And—in whose play?

NOTES

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40. Rebecca Jean Emigh, "The Power of Negative Thinking," *Theory and Society* 26, no. 5 (1997), 654, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/658025>.
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INHABITANTS OF MEMORY'S CHAMBERS

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The purpose of my paper is to address the layers of tragic memories embedded in physical environments: reconstructed and rebuilt. I would like to suggest some intricate meanings these environments carry.

I would like my paper to be a gentle yet firm reminder of the fact that in the trivial and monotonous pursuits of immediate everyday realities, we are very often caught in the Platonic cave of allegorical shadows. We tend to forget the reality that makes us human, we forget our sense of genuine human values.

Sigmund Freud and Albert Einstein exchanged letters on the topic of war. *Why War?* asks Freud. He concludes that complexity of that question leaves, unfortunately, almost no answers. Is there, then, hope for a peaceful world? Freud writes, "Whatever fosters the growth of culture works at the same time against war." One can only hope...

Einstein also provides powerful insights while referring to violent conflicts when he says: [War] brings me to that worst outcrop of herd life, the military system, which I abhor. That a man can take pleasure in marching in fours to the strains of a band is enough to make me despise him. He has only been given his big brain by mistake: unprotected spinal marrow was all he needed. This plague-spot of civilization ought to be abolished with all possible speed. Heroism on command, senseless violence, and all the loathsome nonsense that goes by the name of patriotism—how passionately I dislike them! How vile and despicable seems war to me! (Einstein)

Among debated issues of today are the ethics of rebuilding. They have become the core of discussion in many professional circles. The ongoing dialogue is one of necessity, particularly if we think about hope and the future of ensuing generations. As Margaret Sommerville writes, "And hope is the oxygen for human spirit; without it our spirit dies, whereas with it, it can survive even appalling suffering."

Reconstruction and rebuilding cannot happen without the integration of the soft and delicate tissues of memory. How do we remember? Can we claim that we remember someone else's tragedy? Or would this be an unethical gesture because of its personal nature? How much of a human tragedy can be passed into the future without manipulation and alternation? How much of an authentic tragic experience is embedded in memory?

The scars of time are the scars of life, but how can they become the realities of the environment? Do we need a half-fallen wall to be reminded of the vulnerability of this environment? We do and not because of the tangibility of experience, but rather because of its fragility. The built environment becomes one of the first victims in any human conflicts or deliberate assaults. Unfortunately, human history is filled with tragic and agonizing examples of such acts: the ruins of Warsaw, Dresden or Sarajevo are more than painful reminders of violent gestures that sanctioned authority's horrific signs of power reinforced by universal propaganda's strategies that validated the "duty" to destroy.

War and destruction carry with them a tragic loss of life and of human dignity whose parts are embedded in the built environment. One of the most important recent writings on war and the destruction of architecture comes from Lebbeus Woods. His *War and Architecture* is a clear and definite attack against bureaucratically sponsored destruction. His *War and Architecture* is full of lucid words and images and it is dedicated to the citizens of Sarajevo. Woods hopes that his ideas will “in some way contribute—when the time comes—to the rebuilding of the city and way of life.” In the last chapter of his book, he refers to architecture seeking “nobility of persistence in a world of the eternally perishing”. Woods does not provide a series of ready-made answers, he suggests, rather, with dedication and profound understanding, ways in which destroyed environments can be rebuilt. His concern is genuinely ethical.

Change in our physical environment affects our familiar memories of form and space—that is why we feel the unconscious and conscious attachments to the past. I am the space where I am. We associate so strongly with the spaces around us that it is almost impossible to separate ourselves from them. As Churchill suggests, “We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us.” They become us, we become them; they contain our secrets, struggles, our glories. We touch and embrace them, they touch and embrace us. The lack of a nourishing environment can strip from us the invaluable presence of what is necessary in our lives: the mystery of our existence and a humble ambition to remember.

Warsaw was totally destroyed during W.W.II. Stone on stone—a desert that was once filled with people, culture, life and laughter. A city of one million stopped existing. On the photographs of Warsaw taken in 1945 it looks if the city was destroyed to be never alive again. It seems as though one has witnessed the death of the city, its people, parks, theatres, birds, smells and songs... And yet, almost hours after the end of the war, in the midst of chaos, a new non-linear order, one appropriate for the human condition, began to emerge. People were coming back to their city from the concentration camps and from hiding places and they were determined not to accept the reality of destruction. Slowly, but with vivid energy, the life of Warsaw started anew: from the pile of debris someone dragged out a piano; miraculously, it had not been damaged. He tuned it and played Chopin's polonaises that had been forbidden during the war. In the canyons of stone where it seems as if everything was lost, people stopped to hear the music. The music echoed in the ruins and was also a reminder of normalcy, so long forgotten in the world of a pathological insanity. People smiled again. It might sound overwhelmingly romantic, but their smiles came out of a deep necessity.

From a purist point of view (and many urban designers and architects in the 1940s and the 1950s subscribed to that view), destroyed Warsaw was to become a memorial to the thoughtless and brutal destruction of W.W.II. It could have become the most poignant memorial, a haptic and tangible one. Rebuilding was a laborious process of removing and raising and almost never ending debates of how to... But Warsaw was rebuilt, not because of economy or even nostalgia, but due to irresistible desire and necessity. There are so many layers of the past that can form a destroyed city. These multi-layered webs have the power to turn universal memories into private ones and vice versa. So the private memory was no longer a private possession. The power of turning universality into personal experience is of paramount importance because it can make memory vivid. It can allow fractured discontinuity, rupture and dislocation to be healed. The rebuilt city became a space that was alive, that resisted uniformity and false appearances because its spine was simultaneously rooted in the past and the present and, “making no attempt to reconcile the gaps between what is new and old” (Woods 16). These

spaces declare no control over behavior of people by being compliant to programmatic codes of use. This is how architecture gets its richness and depth. The hidden order of things is revealed by the poise and the consciousness of the sight. The city becomes filled with memories: happy and painful, solidly resisting oblivion.

We have to face a salient question: is the imagination, supported by a tangible form, of the same value as the virtual imagination?

For many scholars, and anyone else who would like to remember, Warsaw rebuilt is a living memorial. On streets and squares that are sixty years old, but look four hundred years old, life vibrates. One might still argue that any environment that is sixty years old and appears four hundred is not a genuine environment. It can be viewed as a mimesis, as an imitation. And yet, this environment can be real, it can be genuine. How? There are some examples to be found: one of the most intriguing is the concept of *forever young-forever old* expressed so vividly in the main shrine of goddess Ise. Every twenty years, the span of one generation, there is, in Japan, a celebratory process of recreating and rebuilding the shrine of goddess Ise. The shrine is disassembled part by part, element by element, beam by beam, and then reassembled from new elements that are precisely and carefully crafted based on the forms and measurements of the pre-existing ones. Is the new shrine old, or is it new? The process is a part of the repeated cycle; it is the ritual that becomes the reality. Dream and myth have not disappeared; they are united in the event, stimulating the sensuality of memory. Ise remains *forever young-forever old*.

The structure of memory does not rely on a simplistic accumulation of *facts*; it rather relies on the powerful strata of events and nonconformity of perception that is like the harmonious and polyphonic sound responsible for necessary streams of communication. Very often a vertiginous approximation of past tragedies requires a series of active involvements leading to concrete spatial and architectural commitments: streets, buildings, squares.

The composition of memory is reinforced by the function of time. This function is not exactly synonymous with the useful, the practical or the efficient. It is the force that unifies fragmented realities of overlapping virtual and real visions. Time becomes one of the most crucial elements involved in the re-creation of spaces essential for the existence of memory. Time is an intricate part of any physical environment, as the backbone of the past and as the bridge to many aspects of our culture that we cherish. In this context, time becomes flexible and it can be used in a positive manner. As Arata Izosaki proposes, "Space was perceived as identical with the events occurring in it; that is, space was recognized in relation to time flow." Time also allows a transformation of the aesthetic experience into mnemonic events; it allows fragments of these events to be unified as an amalgamation of energies. It provides a *sense of sight* that penetrates beyond the visible.

It is a positive instinct to reconstruct and rebuild what has been violently destroyed by war and by hatred: it is like the myth of Phoenix who rises from his own ashes and whose myth has often been associated with the rise of the destroyed Warsaw. To build upon shattered forms becomes a necessity; but the re-creation of destroyed spaces can be devoid of meaning if it is not fluid and adaptable to the forms of life and memories. The need to build without nostalgia, but with the recognition that rises from the tragedy of profound personal and public losses, persists. I am not suggesting here banning nostalgia or sentimentality from human action, I am referring to an illuminating idea of the justification of urban architectural forms rooted deeply in structures of our psyche. It is important to rebuild with courage and imagination. As Kathryn

Bigelow proposes “Courage is not the absence of fear, but maintaining a sense of humour in the face of fear.”

In Western tradition a raised hand with open palm means oath. Margaret Sommerville writes: In Egyptian mythology the single feather represents truth. And the single feather, the traditional quill pen—the image and the word. We need both images and words in doing ethics —perhaps most of all we need poetry. . . . Together the hand and feather bring yet another message . . . life has placed itself in the palm of our hand. Can it trust us to hold it gently and safely, to respect its fragility and mystery?

Today when we enter the gates leading to the concentration camps, the memory of people who suffered and died there becomes tragically sharp and vivid. It is possible that we see it from a personal perspective, from a personal frame of mind, but our thoughts are nevertheless united in a scream **never again! Never again** should **never** become trivial. This can be though the answer to the question *why remember?* *To remember* can help us shake off any apathy and disillusionment and then, hopefully, the ethical discussion will gain a truly human perspective. We should not forget about intellectual and sensual experiences, otherwise we will be standing on the brink of the abyss. When memory becomes part of the collective unconscious then it is able to disturb and challenge passivity and indifference. Design practice can then be perceived as truly social practice.

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PRESERVING AMERICAN VALUES: THE UNINTENTIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF W. EUGENE SMITH'S PACIFISM

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A committed pacifist, World War II photographer W. Eugene Smith sought to point out the folly of war by humanizing it. Through his photographs we feel the pain of the innocent; the anxiety and weariness on a face soaked in sweat; the prayerful moment of a severely wounded soldier; and the tension-filled boredom of waiting for the next battle. Conveying what Smith considered to be “intangible truths,” these images are subjective portrayals of the devastating physical and psychological consequences of armed conflict.

Ironically, couched within these very same images are positive broad cultural paradigms that help justify, one might even say perpetuate America's participation in war. Collectively known as the American spirit, these imperatives are a complex blend of individuality, stalwartness, resoluteness and righteousness that in fact continue to define American society today. Smith, perhaps unintentionally, participated in the self-preserving myth-making necessary to wage war. In fact, so successful was he at pointing out the tragedy of war while simultaneously providing the cultural imperatives necessary to wage war that his formula has influenced generations of war photographers.

Verity, although sometimes considered an inherent characteristic of the photographic medium, is, as we know, a relative term. Smith, who could be quite dramatic in his photographs, understood the profound implications of this. He sought in his imagery, therefore, not truthfulness in the objective sense of the word, but the “intangible truth,” a careful blending of the subjective and objective. To achieve this “truth” he allowed for a certain amount of contrivance, of “setting up,” “rearranging” and “stage direction” if done in the service of “reality.”

Over the course of his career as a photojournalist, this philosophy would lead to such masterful and powerful images as *The Thread Maker*, published in *Life* magazine in April of 1951, and *Minamata*, 1972, which recalls, at least in the Western viewer, traditional images of a Pietà. At its least successful, it had led to extreme contrivance as in this simulated attack on Army engineers and this recreated bombing exercise for *Parade* magazine where Smith and an assistant posed as soldiers because officers would not allow their own men to be placed in such a dangerous situation. (Smith, who experienced a broken eardrum and concussion because of his proximity to the explosion, would later express his regret at not ‘raising his arm a little and bending his elbow more’ to achieve a better photograph—perhaps because of his awareness of the arm and hand used to trip the shutter.)

Despite the uneasiness we feel today with this type of deception, Smith's contrivance is rooted in the very nature of the photographic profession in the 1930s and 40s where reality had little to do with spontaneity and everything to do with creating, or recreating, a particular circumstance for a fine photograph. As Victor Keppler wrote in his helpful 1942 article “Action: Real and Posed:”

Whenever possible, action shots should be rehearsed before you start shooting. Regardless of their name, action pictures should be planned.

Keppler favored the use of a 4 x 5 Graflex camera over the “miniature” 35mm camera, an instrument he referred to in derogative terms as a “so-called candid camera.”

A similar sentiment was expressed earlier that year by *Popular Photography*'s editors when they instructed their viewers on how to create the impression of informality:

Carefree spontaneity is difficult to picture. Nobody would guess that these shots were planned beforehand.

I am not suggesting that W. Eugene Smith resorted to such extreme, and in many cases downright bad, manipulation; however, as a photographer who supplied stock images for Black Star Picture Agency, planning and rehearsing were an essential component of the arsenal of photographic weapons at his command, and compositional tricks of the trade also served him well. An often employed technique in this regard involves using a relatively low camera angle to contrive compositional lines that direct the eye diagonally in an upward movement across the picture plane, empathetically creating a hopeful and positive attitude. Dramatically lit, these photographs have an air of spontaneity, but upon further analysis appear highly contrived and staged. Here a spot-lighted trainer's head is framed precisely within the space created by a boxer's leg, torso, and arm. His diagonal glance leads us to the counter-thrust of the boxer's torso, which angles toward the upper-right corner. The resulting empathetic feeling is one of hopeful determination, individuality and forthrightness, qualities so valuable, at least in Smith's mind, that he used this model many times in differing contexts. The technique was particularly successful with soldiers, as can be seen in this example where a figure is framed by a broken fence, his glance, and his rifle dramatically leading us to the upper-right side of the photograph.

What made these images successful and dare we say truthful in the eyes of the majority of American viewers was not their representation of reality but of cultural imperatives that in many ways defined America—a perceived reality that emphasized the stalwart and hopeful individual, hardworking, steadfast in the face of adversity, righteous and able to hurdle overwhelming obstacles if given a fair chance. As Samuel Huntington recently pointed out in his important study *Who Are We?* Americans by and large thought and continue to “believe that whether or not one succeeds in life depends overwhelmingly on one's own talents and character.” This ethos is reflected in the many choices made by Smith in his photographs. In this image, for example, individuality is emphasized by the low camera angle which monumentalizes the figure and cropping and dramatic lighting focuses our attention on a demeanor that reflects resoluteness rather than defeat. The latter was particularly important as America pulled itself out of the Great Depression and now faced a war that threatened those very characteristics. Photographs such as this embodied how Americans perceived and defined themselves as a nation, symbolically representing a broad cultural paradigm, with all its contradictions, that encompasses what Susan Sontag referred to as “tacit imperatives of taste and conscience.”

But by all accounts Smith was keenly aware of the dangers of following such preconceived

notions of a subject and tried his best to avoid them. His admonition to photographers that one's "mind should remain as open and free from prejudice as possible" was profoundly proposed in 1948 with the following:

"The photographer must bear the responsibility for his work and its effect. By so much as his work is a distortion (that is sometimes intangible, at other times shockingly obvious), in such proportion is it a crime against humanity. . . . photographs (and the little words underneath) are molders of opinion. A little misinformation plus a little more misinformation is the kindling from which destructive misunderstandings flare."

So, recognizing that Smith was acutely aware of the danger of photographic manipulation, how do we then explain the seemingly ideologically driven images that came from his lens? How do we begin to understand these photographs as truth, "intangible" or otherwise? Certainly, we must consider what often passed as truth in 1930s and 1940s American media: that is, an entertaining blend of fact and fiction that operated within, and correspondingly reinforced, Americans' perceptions of themselves during troubled times. Witness, for example, the *March of Time* film series, the prototype of *Life* magazine produced by Louis de Rochemont for Time Inc. that in the second half of the 1930s played to millions of viewers in thousands of theaters and which merged actual footage with re-enactments, staged events, impersonations and supplementary footage. Rochemont and others involved in the production freely admitted its theatrical bent, but as *March of Time* director Jack Glenn explained, an American point of view was not questioned but accepted: "patriotism" he explained "was one of the starting points of objectivity." The most well-known example of this sentiment is *Life* magazine, whose owner Henry Luce's idealized view of America as the world's beacon of "freedom, justice and hope" is legendary. But *Life's* was not the only editorial staff to take this approach. It was also inherent in the Ziff-Davis publishing family, for whom Smith worked as well, whose trade journals *Flying* and *Popular Photography* had a decidedly pro-American editorial policy. Take, for example, the latter's interpretation of government restrictions on wartime photographs, where the "permitted" category surrounds the flag with all things essential to the American spirit including children at play, a farmer at work, a dog and the all important girl on the beach.

The line, then, between fact and fiction blurred. "Patriotism served as one of the starting points for objectivity." As Defender Photo Supply chimed in one of its advertising campaigns, "Photography mirrors an America worth fighting for." The word "mirrors" is significant here and warrants repeating because of the verity implied. Photography doesn't translate or represent; it mirrors. Finally, consider that *Prelude to War* from the *Why We Fight Series*, a dramatic and entertaining blend of fact and fiction that merged the ideology of General George Marshall with the cinematic talents of Frank Capra, won an Academy Award for Best Documentary in 1943 by combining actual footage with acted recreations, animation and clips from previous dramatic films. In light of these, Smith's *Bombing Exercise* is beginning to look more and more truthful!

But when a nation is at war, taste and conscience, and pride in such, become more acute, heightened, when, as Hedges notes, self-preservation and self-worth drive the feeling of superiority necessary to kill and be killed and ultimately to be victorious. A nation must be convinced of its rightness and goodness, nourish a mix of truth and fiction that ultimately supports this myth. In America this implies individuality and belief in self-determination, or in the common colloquial: "self-made man." The famed words of Harold Ickes, Franklin D.

Roosevelt's Secretary of the Interior on the eve of the United States' entry into World War II, still ring true in the minds of many Americans today:

An American is one who loves justice and believes in the dignity of man. An American is one who will fight for his freedom and that of his neighbor. An American is one who will sacrifice property, ease and security in order that he and his children may retain the rights of free men.

Those who photograph wars are often, consciously or not, active participants in the creation of this necessary myth-making and Smith was no exception. He was, after all, an American citizen and all that implies philosophically, culturally and intellectually and therefore, despite sincere efforts of objectivity, was susceptible, for good or bad, to its particular sense of being special and worth preserving in a way that the enemy is not. When Smith returned to the South Pacific in 1944, after a brief stint covering the war with Ziff Davis Publishing, to photograph that theater of World War II for *Life* magazine, he was very conscious of the ability of the photograph to shape opinion and tried earnestly to avoid any direct manipulation or contrivance. Regardless, as we've seen, certain cultural imperatives inform many of his dramatic images. This image, *Marines under Fire, Battle for Saipan, June 27, 1944*, although not published until many years after the war, has become one of his most popular and reproduced photographs, supporting Baudrillard's concept of a media-informed "hyper-reality." And for good reason, as it contains many of the characteristics that are associated with the very essence of what it means to be an American: individuality, resoluteness, strength of character. Other figures are present, but play a subservient role to the unique characteristics of the central figure. Dramatic, one might even say Baroque, shifts of light and dark define the lines on the face of this heroic individual, whose form looms large and triangular in front of us. The eyes play a substantial role in our reading of the figure. They are tired but penetrating, weary but alert. And although our compositional thrust is not quite apparent, *Life's* editors later remedied the problem by tilting the soldier to the right. In *Frontline, Soldier with Canteen, Saipan, June 1944*, the same soldier, Angelo Klonis, is shown again—this time, raising a canteen to his mouth to replenish the fluids that now glisten on his face, mixed with soot and grime. We are here allowed even closer to the subject; in fact, uncomfortably close, as if a fellow soldier, experiencing the same hardships of battle. Like *Marines under Fire*, the aperture of the camera has been stopped down to allow for extreme clarity and focus of the central figure. The resulting shallow depth-of-field blurs another soldier, who stands only as an anonymous sentry, his gun rising diagonally to the left corner of the frame as he looks out to the right, as if to safeguard the foreground soldier who, in a moment of vulnerability is preoccupied with quenching his thirst.

So prominent in these images are the paradigmatic characteristics of the American psyche, that they have come to represent (a "hyper-reality" if you will) the American soldier in World War II, despite their lack of notoriety during the actual conflict. Was there an intention on the part of Smith to capture soldiers in a particularly iconic light, a not-so-clandestine contrivance to project a particular stereotype that would resonate with American audiences? Perhaps, but we must consider that the photographer was only one part of a complex machine that would guide the image to eventual publication. Indeed, *Life* magazine, for whom these images were taken, exercised vast editorial control over their photographers' work, a control that often included a picture script provided ahead of time. Images that well-illustrated the script were screened through a series of contact, picture and department editors. In fact, so little was the input of the photographer beyond the initial submission, which in order to be considered for publication

had to adhere to a certain preconceived agenda, that scholar Glenn Willumson has suggested that the photographer “acted more like a thesaurus than an author.” Smith’s take on editors: “A photographer is not best known by the clichés of his editors.”

An important point to be made, however, is that American audiences may have accepted and applauded these dramatic recreations based on patriotic ideology but, by and large, recognized them for what they were. It was not reality, but a perceived reality, in line with American values, that was essential. In fact, one could make the case that photographs that contained “American values,” or tacit imperatives, were considered that much closer to the truth regardless of the measure of contrivance. Certainly, Americans were not completely naive to the ability of photography to manipulate as evidenced by this “made to order” war picture from 1943.

As Smith intimated, reality could be recreated only if an implied cultural honesty, including bits of fiction, prevailed. It is perhaps for this reason that he was so successful. It must be said, however, that Smith’s abhorrence of war often colored his perception to stretch the boundaries of our cultural imperatives. Even here though, the true devastation is relegated to the enemy, an anonymous “Jap” to use the term frequently published with such images, rather than to individual Americans, who wisely crouch while under attack and, in the final analysis, put their faith in God and country.

As one might expect, after the very real threat to America on September 11, 2001 our “cultural imperatives of taste and conscience” became heightened as we fell back upon traditional American values and imagery of God and country. Church buses were painted red, white and blue, American flags were a common sight on houses, buildings and car bumpers and stereotypical images were once again accepted as we began to build a new fiction necessary for war.

As war with Iraq drew nearer the pictorial myth-making grew. While Iraqi soldiers were represented in the same light as goose-stepping Nazis, Americans were shown as heroic individuals and although we expected the media to verbally question the motives of an administration launching a pre-emptive war, as in this example, images remained sacred to our need for a superior self-identity necessary to go to battle. The resulting mixed messages are represented on this *Newsweek* cover from February of 2003.

Apparently, the questions we faced during World War II remain: What is reality and do we as a society want to see it during times of war and a perceived threat to our very existence as a culture? Indeed, is it possible to wage war successfully if an unvarnished view is shown, one that does not reinforce a sacred identity? One could argue, and several have, that imagery of the Vietnam War that did not reinforce the constructed visual myth of the American soldier as Smith had contributed to the loss of public support and ultimate withdrawal of troops.

The Associated Press code of ethics calls for unaltered images. Simply put, they state, “our pictures must always tell the truth . . .” This is a noble statement indeed, but whose truth and whose values? Is the intimation for unvarnished truth, or is it in actuality an implied truth filtered through the perception of a threatened society as photographers and editors embody certain inherent values? Does American patriotism remain a starting point for objectivity during times of war? Perhaps we are more skeptical now than in 1943, some might even say jaded, particularly in our verbal questioning of U.S. policy, but as a counterweight, and intriguing

juxtaposition, our images by and large remain faithful to established ideas of American individuality and heroism. The measure of deconstruction apparent in many photographs from the Vietnam War may have shaken our self-perception but only temporarily and W. Eugene Smith's words of caution in 1948 remain relevant and thought-provoking:

Photography is a potent medium of expression. Properly used it is a great power for betterment and understanding; misused, it can kindle many troublesome fires.

SUBJECTIVE REALISM AND THE COMBAT PHOTOGRAPHER: A FORMAL ANALYSIS OF W. EUGENE SMITH'S *SOLDIER SAIPAN HOLDS BABY & THE WALK IN PARADISE GARDEN*.

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OVERVIEW

Every photograph is in fact a means of testing, confirming and constructing a total view of reality. Hence the crucial role of photography plays in an ideological struggle. Hence the necessity of our understanding a weapon, which we can use, and which can be used against us.¹

When the “art of photography” came into its own, somewhere during the cultural revolution of the seventies, photographers began to be parceled off into two camps: **the artist**, and **the documentarian**. Who was placed in either category was, and still is, largely determined by sensibilities of gallery owners, curators, and academics as to what they individually or collectively believes constitutes photographic art. However, whereas the work of a photojournalist has been deemed “artistic,” by and large, the work of **the documentarian** is first and foremost, an act of recording history as it is happening. Thus, **the documentarian** is an exclusive photographer, in that, society demands that the “art” of **the documentarian** is strictly beholden to its ability to capture the machinations of reality, however limited that slice of reality may be in reporting the complete truth. In short, **the documentarian's** work, according to social convention, *must* be without **conceptual abstractions**, and rarely judged as an exercise in **form**. No matter how expressive or representational the photograph, **the documentarian** is demanded to faithfully characterize that sliver of reality, even if the final interpretation of the photograph's meaning remains within the “... broader historical and cultural context” the viewer's understanding and familiarity with this context as being able to make sense of the image.²

In the end, more is made about the authenticity of **the documentarian's** photograph—consider the continued controversy about Robert Capa's *Loyalist Militiaman at the Moment of Death*³—or that **the documentarian** was capable of capturing the moment. Perhaps this is understandable in that **the documentarian's** “art” is to impress us with views of human activity that we would otherwise not see or know of if it weren't for his or her sure eye to see what we neglect. But as much as **the documentarian's** subject matter may impress but any discussion about the “art” of his or her photograph goes no further than the political or social significance of the image; its historical document, how it appropriates the subject's identity, and any of those other cerebral examinations that only assume to investigate the psychosocial effects of the image.

Drawing upon two W. Eugene Smith photographs, *Soldier in Saipan Holds Baby* (c. 1944)⁴, and *The Walk in Paradise Garden* (c. 1947)⁵, this paper takes the position that **the documentarian**, beyond all the historic and cultural context of his or her work remains a **subjective realist** who makes images that offer abstract viewpoints on the human condition, much in the same way **the artist** appropriates the meaning of object in order to transform it into **something other**. To

this end, as a **representational artist, the documentarian**, like that of the **subjective realists** of Italian cinema who elects presents an **authentic subjective reality** through his or her use of **artistic selectivity**, offers a view on the human condition that supersedes the historical or informative value of his or her photograph.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER AS THE ARTIST

Photography is a weapon; so is technology; so is art!

— Edwin Hoernle

As **the artist**, the photographer constructs a **concept** through the transformation of a familiar object by **artistically selecting** certain formal devices of photography; i.e: lighting, color, depth, vantage point and so on. By and large, **the artist** looks to persuade the viewer emotionally by manipulating those formal devices and ultimately in the complete realization of his or her concept toward that **specific idea**. In this sense, **the artist** is offering a new viewpoint in which the viewer can experience a familiar world and those pre-existing emotions by examining how a familiar object has been transformed into **something other**. The viewer is asked to contemplate the quality of this transformation on *the artist's* use of those formal elements contribute to the realization of that study. The meaning of the image can be obvious as in the case of a nude, or more evasive as in the case of an abstract where preconceptions about the object's meaning become solely the providence of the viewer. The form itself creates nothing beyond the idea of what the viewer alone experiences. It is the form—the lines, the texture, and most important, the interplay of light—that defines the object's existence as an object and only experience gives it its meaning.

Looking at Edward Weston's *Pepper* (c. 1930)⁶ and *Nude* (c. 1936)⁷, the viewer is presented with two photographs of visual fluidity. In the case of the *Pepper*, Weston transforms one object—the pepper—into another: human form. He manipulates light and shadow, and in doing so, the viewer get a sense that he or she is looking at a person with his or her back to the camera and arms locked behind the head. By manipulating what is **known** and what can be **seen**, Weston transforms the pepper beyond its simple definition. In other words, what defines a chair is based entirely on its function: something used for sitting. But what if the chair is used as substituted as something to stand on? It is now a stepladder?

If Weston redefines the pepper visually, does he change the meaning of it? A trained eye will see only how Weston takes control of light and shadow to produce a beautiful photograph. The layman, less concerned about the process of photography, will respond to this transformation of something familiar and perhaps see an abstract form perfectly realized, not to say, impressed by Weston's ability to reconfigure the familiar so brilliantly. The crucial ingredient here is what the viewer "brings" to the photograph rather than what the photograph itself represents. This is the freedom **the artist** has over **the documentarian**, in that the viewer does not expect to see reality, but rather a **subjective reality** of reality.

In Weston's *Nude*, the viewer sees a photograph that reduces the form of a woman in such way (and again using the formal elements), that the female subject is no longer a woman, but rather a wonderfully composed structure of photographic devices. The photograph offers an idea of a woman. As such, conceptually, it becomes less of about what makes a woman a woman, and more about a subjective view of beauty and human sensuality. What may make the photograph

controversial are the viewer's feelings toward the human body, and more specifically, human sexuality. In other words, because the object is that of a naked woman, the viewer will inherently bring a subconscious and cultural context that will determine his or her ability to appreciate the photography as **something other**, rather than simply a photograph of a naked woman. To this end, Weston's art is the sum of a more organized whole that without the viewer's own experiences with the world, psychologically and culturally, would not have the ability to transform either object into **something other**.

Without explanation, captions or cut lines, **the artist** offers a view of an object that is less about what the object is and more about *transforming* a preconceived idea, into **something other**. As a result, he or she asks the viewer to consider his or her own relationship with the world through this new idea that trades on the old. This would not be possible however if **the artist** did not borrow on the **familiar**. The **transformation** of ideas is only possible when the subject matter is something familiar. Even the most abstract work borrows on the **familiar** even if the actual object is so transformed it becomes unrecognizable. In other words, there is a cultural context to what people expect of a photograph—art. What makes a Pollock controversial to the layman is not the painting itself but the fact it such a painting is to be consider “art,” particularly when it hangs beside a Michelangelo.⁸

THE PHOTOGRAPHER AS THE DOCUMENTARIAN

There is no real warfare between the artist and the documentary photographer. He has to be both.

- Dorothea Lange

The documentarian has the power to shape the collective conscious by focusing on a moment in the timeline of human events. Such images, when executed with a skilled and ready eye, shatter cultural barriers and transcend language because the subject is identifiable in its humanness. The viewer may not necessarily see him or herself in the photograph, but what is recognized is the human condition. As a result of this relationship between what **the documentarian** chooses to photograph, and how the viewer responds, no other type of photographer has had more of an impact on social ideas.

Rarely are such photographs hung in galleries because they are seen as devices of a mass medium that aid in the communication of national and global events. Only when such photographs are collected up in a series, or fashioned together to tell a complete narrative, may they find themselves hung as art objects. But to flip through the pages of the *New York Times* or other news publications, the daily work of **the documentarian** infrequently finds any emotive value beyond the knee jerk reaction of what it reveals about our humanity, or the lack thereof. As a result, **the documentarian's** art is seen as a useful art, whose aesthetics lie not in its formal properties that constitute good photography, but in the image's the ability inform while conveying some kind of truth.⁸ **the documentarian**, however, like **the artist** is borrowing on reality, and **transforming** that moment in order to extend the meaning of his or her photograph beyond the barriers that moment places on that image.

The intent of **the documentarian's** photograph is another area that brings together more discussion. In today's highly divisive world, concern for **the documentarian's** politics for taking a particular photograph offer an interesting view on the discussion about the power of

photography in general. Consider the controversy of the caskets of American soldiers?¹⁰ Such images, and those of Abu Ghraib, become art only when appropriated by someone and sewn together as to impose a view about war that may be completely disconnected from the image's intent. In this context, the art is less about the photographs themselves, and focused more on the concept of putting all those gathered images into a single stimulating narrative that begets discussion and debate.

If recording truth is the ultimate reason for making a photograph at any given moment, then should **the documentarian** should exorcises him or herself of all subjectivity beforehand? Social expectations are such that **the documentarian** should be beyond politics, or at the very least, not beholden to those emotions that could taint the photograph so as render it **subjective**. To this end, **the documentarian** is reduced to being nothing more than an extension of the camera, and the images he or she creates, the property of either side to use in the propagandizing of a war or other some controversial issue. Such transparency is, however, impossible, even if society demands it. Ironically, society expects more of **the documentarian** than it does of itself. Nothing else matters but the subject itself, or so it is believed, and the authenticity of the photograph of the utmost importance. Not the lighting, not the vantage point, not the use of repetition or contrast, only the subject and the subject alone. Would Lewis Hine's photographs of children laboring in factories have the same impact had he taken them out of the cruel environments where they worked, and sat them down in a studio to compose Avedon-like portraits? For many the answer would be yes, but the question would be why? Some would argue that Hine has manipulated the truth but this argument only assumes that photographs, or at least those created by **the documentarian**, do not have the power to manipulate, regardless of how they were created?

All photographs are manipulate emotions. It is for this reason some many papers, books, and lectures spend time on the power of photograph since Nicephore Niepce first presented his new "art" to the world. What both the advocates and critics of any issue overlook however is the **artistic selectivity** employed in the images created by **the documentarian**, unless to argue about image ethics or the political and emotional reactions they may incite. If we strip **the documentarian's** work to be simple that of verisimilitude and rethink these images as **authentic appropriations** from reality, we then regard their images as something **transformative**, or interpretations of the human condition rather than snapshots in time. Moreover, if we look at **the documentarian's** photographs in this way, the politics of the image—albeit they are there—become elements of the overall concept, much like the formal elements of the photograph itself, **the documentarian** has used to convey meaning. In doing this however, the emphasis on the viewer to understand the historical and cultural context of the image increases, as does the responsibility of those who teach and practice photography that the emphasis is on form not truth, even if truth is objectivity captured.

THE DOCUMENTARIAN AS THE SUBJECT REALIST

Dorothea Lange's *The Migratory Cotton Picker* (c. 1940)¹¹ is a powerful image that can be seen as both a historical record of The Great Depression as well as an **abstraction** about the human spirit. In the photograph, a migrant farmer holds his hand before his mouth leaving the viewer to look only into his deep, shadowed, sullen gaze. Was this a result of just getting the shot or did Lange see the shadow as being something more; an **artistic device**? What is known of Lange's experience as a photographer is that she began her career as a portraitist, so it it's

obvious she was aware of the principles of light and shadow. Therefore, her choice to take this photograph, develop and print it with her subject's eyes lost, makes Lange in this instance a **subjective realist**, who choose to borrow from reality to convey an **authentic subjective view** on the human condition. Perhaps for Lange, behind shadows of life's tribulations the human spirit survives, or maybe see saw the farmer to embody those human qualities we all share regardless of our place in time, circumstance, and occupation?

What of the tight frame, which yields up only a close view of the farmer's hand, the top of his shoulders, and one hand. Again, is this simply a matter of happenchance or was Lange seeing something more in her subject; something **transformative** beyond the familiar? What the viewer can know simply by looking at the photograph is that this makes it an intimate and personal work, almost as if the viewer is looking in a mirror that uncoils the individual complexities of his or her own psyche. The vantage point is another formal element worth considering. The camera is low, which elevates the farmer's position and as such, heightens his—our—humanity to **something other** than just another man down on his luck. If Lange wanted the circumstances of the farmer's life to be the focus of her shot, logically then, she would be looking down. This was not the case, and therefore, his humanness is the profound statement Lange seems to want to make. Finally, what of the fence, which cuts along the lower right third of the photograph as well as the farmer's arm, which juts out from the right and across the center? What do we make of the combination of these elements? Was Lange looking to reinforce a deeper concept: that they're rigidity, and extending beyond the photograph's border, symbolize that endurance and resoluteness of the human spirit?

Like Weston, Lange effectively uses formal devices to **transform** her familiar object, suffering, into **something other**: hope. In the face of desolation and abandonment, the human spirit will survive. Lange wants us to respect the humanity unfolding in the photograph, and viewed in this way, the farmer becomes a figure of restrained but powerful humanness.

So long as such a photograph is view solely as a historical record, albeit wonderfully executed, it remains an image that exists outside of our shared experiences. If we examine **the documentarian's** work however, as something that transcends a specific event, constructed with an **authentic subjective view** and **artistic selectivity**, then the work of **the documentarian** becomes a **representational** form or art that offers a view on the human condition. The importance of looking at **the documentarian's** work as artistic expressions, rather than simply as recorded events, we free ourselves of imposing **objective authenticity** on these photographs, and thus study them as artistic abstractions on the human condition, and in the case of this paper: what is the meaning of war.

SUBJECTIVE REALISM AND THE COMBAT PHOTOGRAPHER

Combat is arguably the most intense experience a human being can endure, whether as a soldier or as a photographer. It is also one of the most complex ... where life on an hour-by-hour basis becomes a blinding reality, produce emotions ranging from terror to ecstasy in a maelstrom of confusion.¹²

Why do we photograph war? Is it because as some combat photographers argue that the images they bring back, they provide an opportunity to improve the world, or is it more pessimistic, and that their pictures, although change nothing, serve as witness to the darkest moments of

human behavior and prevent distortions from the truth?¹³ Taking an even more cynical view, could it be that war, so ripe with drama, that it is hard to ignore the photographic beauty of such a brutish endeavor? I am reminded here of a discussion I had with a friend on Clint Eastwood's film, *Letters from Iwo Jima*. Having both enjoyed it we got talking about Eastwood's directing abilities when this friend made the astute observation, "It was an easy film to make good. The story was just that good."

Is the story of war just that good, that it's hard to get a bad picture? Perhaps. One thing is for certain, when the curator, academic, and layman react profoundly to a particular image brought back from the battlefield, more often than not, the reaction is based on the moment captured. The photographs of Abu Ghraib were startling because of what they showed not because the pictures were so stunningly strong, compositionally speaking. The "art" often attributed to combat photography is the surefootedness and bravery of the combat photographer in getting the shot. To this end, there is no art in the making of such photograph, it is, as John Berger puts it, a language of events.¹⁴ And after all, not all combat photographs are well-made photographs. Indisputably what they are, are dramatic, ephemeral snapshots in time never to be repeated and fortunate to have been made.

The idea of **subjective realism** in combat photography suggests something more than just getting the shot. It offers the view that some combat photographers, in capturing a particular moment, sought to heighten that moment with **artistic selectivity** order to convey something idealistic and uncompromising. An abstraction on human values composed with an **authentic subjective view**.

Saipan: I do not believe I could have reached this close without my family, for these people of the pictures were my family—reflected in the tortured fates of another race. Accident of birth, accident of home—the bloody dying child I held momentarily while the life fluid seeped through my shirt and burned my heart. That child was my child. And each time I pressed the shutter release, it was a shouted condemnation hurled with the hope that the pictures might survive through the years and at last echo through the minds of men in the future. One faint ray of hope, I found then, was the shine of tenderness in the eyes of battle-tired men who could yet give tenderness and gentleness to the innocent of the enemy.¹⁵

In *Soldier in Saipan Holds Baby*, W. Eugene Smith presents the viewer with two soldiers, one in the foreground holding a dying infant, another observing in the background. All identifying elements of the three are in shadow, or obscured by Smith's vantage point; the camera only exposes the viewer to the emotions of the scene. The top of the infant's head is positioned toward the camera with the soldier peering into the child's vacant expression, his features obscured by the shadow of his helmet. The soldier in the background stands in a sunlit clearing, a cigarette dangling loosely in his lips, his rifle held low at his waist. The contrast of the surrounding jungle that borders the corners of the frame effectively highlights the obvious subject, and underscores the abstract symbolism.

Details for Smith don't matter, only the larger idea, and to this end, Smith's appropriation of the available light heightens the larger context: in the destruction of innocence, and the darkness this evokes, compassion endures. This idea is embodied in Smith's properly exposing for the infant's sunlit face, while leaving the soldier's in shadow. Moreover, his use of negative

space—the surrounding jungle—adds emotional depth to his narrative by framing the action, from which the viewer can infer meaning: from the inhuman wilderness of war, compassion survives. Smith's vantage point of being slightly above the action further lends to this idea in that he, as the viewer, can only observe the action, not as a petty voyeur, but a somber witness to the unfolding dignity and humanity.

The soldier in the background represents an interesting element to the image, in that, he is the only subject who is facing the camera; albeit not looking directly into it. He acts as an allegorical figure; a mirror in which the viewer can see him or herself, sheepishly observing, emotionally and psychologically, from a distance. And yet, no longer can the viewer claim to be a passive eyewitness. He or she is now involved, and because of this, required to act by burning this scene to memory and work toward a future when such madness can be avoided.

What we know of *The Walk in Paradise Garden* is that it was the first photograph Smith made after he recovered from injuries he suffered during his coverage of World War II. The photograph offers a gentler view of humanity represented in the serene innocence of Smith's own children, and provides an allegorical bookend to his days as a combat photographer that is haunting redolent of *Soldier in Saipan Holds Baby*.

In the photograph, the viewer looks on with Smith as his children walk, unaware of the past, into a sun drenched clearing. The forest seems to open up for them, welcoming heartedly into a new world of possibilities. Smith's vantage point is a crucial element in conveying a sense of emotional and philosophical evolution movement toward new beginnings. Unlike that of his position in *Soldier in Saipan Holds Baby*, in *The Walk in Paradise Garden*, Smith is looking up at the action from behind a dirt embankment. The idea the viewer can get from this is that Smith is imprisoned in a hole rife with his own dark memories of war he is incapable of escaping, but that which his children are blissfully unaware. Moreover, whereas the action in *Soldier in Saipan Holds Baby* is static, thus immobilizing the viewer to do anything but look on, the action in *The Walk in Paradise Garden* is moving at a determined pace away from the camera. In framing the photograph in this way, Smith **transformed**, what would otherwise be a **familiar** object—the family snapshot—with **artistic selectivity** into a **something other**: a powerful vision of promise and universal hope; that our children will mend the crippled world we have left them.

The composition of *The Walk in Paradise Garden* is similar to a Renaissance altarpiece in which the focal point, often Christ or the Madonna and Child, are placed in the center of surrounding elements that frame the action on all sides. The viewer sees a similar arrange in how Smith appropriates the natural surroundings of the environment and splendidly incorporates these elements to draw attention toward the center of his shot, and his overall allegory. Add to this the sharp contrast he achieves between light and shadow, in that all the light is concentrated around his children leaving the foreground almost all in shadow, and the viewer is left with the impression that from the surrounding darkness that comes from pain and hopelessness, hope and faith in humanity emerges. Interestingly, the composition also puts the children somewhat at a distance from the viewer. Thus, the shadows of the surrounding forest underline an almost surreal dichotomy of hope versus pain, and faith versus abandonment. Similar to *Soldier in Saipan Holds Baby*, Smith again reveals that he is less concerned with defining characteristics of an individual's identity, and more intent on conveying an abstraction of the human condition. To this end, the children serve to underscore the **conceptual intent** of

the photograph: war versus peace, knowledge versus innocence, remorse versus joy, or death versus life.

CONCLUSION

There is evidence to suggest that Smith constructed many of his wartime photographs to support the American war effort.¹⁶ While this realization brings controversy to Smith's work, a pacifist and who had great disdain for the "...greed, the stupidity and the intolerances that cause these wars," it does not diminish the importance or meaning of his photographs. As a matter of fact, knowing this only serves to reinforce the premise of **subjective realism**, and Smith's **authentic subjective view** and use of **artistic selectivity** produced abstractions on war and the human condition.

In truth, all good photography borrows on the principles of **artistic selectivity** in order to communicate some abstract idea. Even the simplest snapshot, crude as it may be, remains a work of **artistic selectivity**. The photographer instructs his or her subjects put on smiles, wrap arms around each other, stand with their best side to the camera, and so on, all in order to make a better photograph and convey some kind of meaning, even if it is simply to say, "Look what good friends we are," or "Look how sexy I am."

What **subjective realism** suggests is that **the subjective realist** uses an authentic **subjective view** of reality, and the limitations imposed by the moment and environment, to construct an **abstraction** regarding the human condition. Toward this end, individuals become symbols and personalities become reflections. It is not enough for the **subjective realist** to be in the right place at the right time, and prepared to photograph it. Like Lange, Riis, Hine, Bresson, Evans, Capa, and countless others, Smith was a **documentarian** who understood how to use form to his advantage, even if his subject matter was appropriated from reality. *Soldier in Saipan Holds Baby* and *The Walk in Paradise Garden* each offer a view of war and peace that transcend the mere act of recording a moment in time by creating an idea of humanity that go beyond a culturally centralized view to reveal universal human values.

What we see in *Soldier in Saipan Holds Baby* is a narrative of war that is not based in a mythology but a profound reality where innocence will be destroyed no matter how just the cause. The very truth of this cuts through the veneer of symbolism, and reveals the raw humanness, good or bad, created during wartime. Similarly, *The Walk in Paradise Garden* would not be one of such humanity had Smith never experience war. To this end, Smith, as the **subjective realist**, has made two images of superb clarity that can be seen as images that define our collective humanity.

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CRANES IN THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE

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Armed conflicts bring a great deal of suffering and destruction not only to human populations but to other species as well. The defoliants used during the Vietnam War irrevocably changed many landscapes in Southeast Asia. Landmines all over the world kill unsuspecting animals along with people. However, on rare occasions conflict can provide a refuge. That is the case with an area created during a war that never did end. Technically, the Korean War was never officially a war, but an “armed conflict” because war was never declared by the United States. And no treaty was signed at its conclusion; there has never been an official conclusion. Instead, there was an armistice with several provisions, including the creation of a Demilitarized Zone or DMZ between North and South Korea. Because human activity is kept to a minimum in the area, it has become a de facto wildlife refuge. This has been particularly beneficial for two endangered crane species which have flourished in the DMZ since the 1950s. Coincidentally, the crane became a symbol of peace after the end of World War II. In this paper, I will discuss this bird as an example of the relationship between war and conservation, as well as how it can be used in teaching about the link between environmental and political issues. In addition, I will touch on the issue of warfare metaphors used in science.

THE KOREAN DEMILITARIZED ZONE

The DMZ is a stretch of land 148 miles long and 2.5 miles wide. It runs roughly east-west along the 38th parallel. Toward the east, the land is mountainous, and in the west, there are river deltas and grasslands. Under the terms of the agreement that created this buffer zone between North and South Korea, there is fence along the DMZ's center, marking the Military Demarcation Line. All heavy weapons and large troop placements are banned from the area, though more recently, some roads and railroad lines through the DMZ have been allowed to be reconnected. The only people usually in this area are soldiers and observers. On the southern side, there is small town whose citizens are allowed to enter the DMZ to harvest crops.

The creation of this barrier has had two major effects on the area. First, populations on either side of the DMZ have grown tremendously, and the areas have become much more urbanized and cultivated. This development contrasts sharply with what has happened within the narrow DMZ. As satellite images indicate, particularly at its western end, the DMZ appears as a green swath with gray areas, representing developed land, on both sides. If we can see this from the air, so can birds, which have literally flocked to the DMZ. There are also wild angora goats, Amur leopards, and bears. While the Siberian tiger is thought to be extinct in South Korea, there are indications that there may be some roaming the DMZ. These signs include paw marks in the snow and trees scratched in a way that is characteristic of these tigers. Local farmers have also reported animals killed by what is apparently a large predator. This evidence has led conservationists to lobby for the removal of the fence across the Military Demarcation Line so the tigers can move more freely and be able to breed over a larger range, thus insuring genetic diversity.

CRANES AND THE DMZ

While all this is fascinating, I want to concentrate on the crane species which have also flourished in the DMZ. I first learned about the existence of sizeable populations of cranes in this area from Peter Matthiessen's great book *The Birds of Heaven: Travels with Cranes* (2001). He literally goes around the world, studying all seventeen species of cranes, each in their natural habitat. This is a depressing book because there are few happy tales to tell about these bird populations. In most cases, development is encroaching, breeding grounds are shrinking, and crane populations are dwindling. Through all this catalog of problems, Matthiessen presents the people who are attempting to relieve these situations. They, too, are to be found literally around the world.

It's perhaps a sad commentary that one of the few places where the situation for cranes has improved is in an area that has been the site of fierce human warfare, and which still teeters on the brink of new disasters. However, the fact that humans have agreed, for their own purposes, to create what amounts to a no-man's land has been great for the cranes. The two species native to the area are the white-naped crane, *Grus vipio*, and the red-crowned or Japanese crane, *Grus japonensis*. Now there are also the rare hooded cranes, *Grus monachus*, in the DMZ. Matthiessen gets to Korea and the relative crane paradise toward the end of his book, where he has chronicled so many woes. This makes the DMZ seem even more miraculous. But needless to say, the situation is far from ideal. Ironically, one of the chief worries of conservationists is that peace could mean trouble for the cranes. If tensions were to ease, developers are aiming at making the DMZ a hub for north-south industrial projects, and a place where hotels and an airport could be built. Though the DMZ seems "safe" from too much peace at the moment, environmental groups are already lobbying to keep the DMZ untouched.

BEAUTY AND HOPE

I realize that I have chosen to present one of those rare examples where human strife has actually benefited other species, rather than taking one of the too plentiful examples of just the opposite. However, I have done this because I think beauty and hope are two things that we just don't dwell on enough. With the focus in the news on war zones and environmental disasters, it's easy to get discouraged, if not feel absolutely hopeless. It's easy to become convinced that humans can do nothing but mess things up. The cranes in the DMZ provide a counterexample, and they do it in a very beautiful way, because they are among the most beautiful of birds. Not only do they look lovely but they move so gracefully; it's not surprising that their mating displays are called dances.

There is still another reason for focusing on cranes. They have become symbols of peace, in large part because of Sadako Sasaki, a little Japanese girl from Hiroshima who died of radiation-caused leukemia in 1955. When she was sick, she set about making a thousand paper origami cranes as symbols of peace. She didn't complete her project before she died, but others took up her work, and to this day continue to make cranes as symbols of peace. A few years ago, I was on a train in England where a Japanese girl was folding cranes that she set on the window sill before she left the train—that sight has stayed with me. Here with the Japanese paper cranes, we have a terrible military situation being turned into a spiritual and moral message with the crane as the vehicle for this message. This is a great example of what one person can do to make the world better. It is also a great example of animal symbolism.

TEACHING

I teach nonscience majors so I am constantly confronted by the fact that many of my students see science as a subject that isn't relevant to them, isn't part of their lives and therefore not worth considering. I struggle to overcome this problem, and I find that different forms of connection work with different students. The crane example I am presenting here is great because it allows for several of these forms. First of all, it is about history, war, and politics. Some of these students have grandparents who served in the Korean War so this is not totally foreign territory to them. Others are interested in environmental issues, so the idea of preserving green space, in such an odd way, may fascinate them. Many are children, deep down, and making a paper crane is a kinesthetic exercise that's fun and may make the whole issue of the environment more memorable.

There is also another way in which the subjects of war and biology relate, and some of these can also come up through a discussion of the cranes. One is obviously the event which precipitated the original thousand paper cranes project: the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. The human devastation was so great that the environmental devastation and pollution seems almost trivial, though obviously it's not. Added to this is the environmental impact of atomic bomb production facilities, testing sites, and nuclear power plants, as well as the dangers of accidents at any of these installations. Radiation sickness, radioactive isotopes in medicine, the lasting effects of Chernobyl—the possibilities here are almost endless. Even the Cold War which grew out of the nuclear standoff between East and West had environmental consequences. A recent study indicates that by the time East and West Germany were reunited, there was a significant difference in the number of invasive species between the two. The West had many more because of the greater travel and trade between it and the rest of the world (Chiron, Shirley & Kark, 2010). The East, being much more isolated, suffered from much less incursion.

And there is still another path that can be taken in exploring these issues and that is into the cultural significance of cranes and of other organisms used as symbols. Cranes have long been of importance in the art of China and Japan. I think it is important for students to understand the many levels of meaning entailed in organisms and their representation. There is also the whole culture of origami, much of which is related to creating animals and plants in folded paper. The novelist Walker Percy argued that once in every semester students taking an anatomy course should come to the lab to discover a Shakespeare sonnet instead of a specimen in each dissecting tray (Coles, 1979). And likewise, students of Shakespeare should arrive in class one day to find dissecting trays instead of poems on their desks. His point is that the surprise of these turnabouts will of course be memorable, but what will be even more memorable is their puzzling out how poems and specimens are linked. And they are. We are always bemoaning the lack of interdisciplinarity in our curricula, and complaining about the institutional barriers to preventing such cross-pollination. But I think we are letting ourselves off the hook too easily. There are little things we can do to begin the process of integration. Creating a paper crane doesn't really take that long in class, and I have found that this digression from "hard" science is definitely worth the time involved. Students are so stunned by this change in routine that they are wide awake. And let's face it, it's fun to make something. The rest of the class seems to be a lot more productive after one of these interdisciplinary moments.

THE AESTHETIC IMPULSE

Though I've drifted a long way from the theme of war, I haven't forgotten what precipitated the creation of a thousand paper cranes to begin with. However, I am becoming more and more convinced that dealing with political aggression, environmental destruction, and human disease requires an aesthetic impulse. And I would like to emphasize the word "requires" here. This runs counter to the strong strain of pragmatism that pervades American culture. Beauty is neither practical nor necessary. It is a frill. What are some paper cranes in the face of a 100-megaton nuclear warhead? Perhaps one of the reasons the world is in such a depressing state is precisely because we don't value the aesthetic more highly.

There are those who see religion as an important force for good in the world, and while I don't want to explore that question here, I do think that the spirituality is an essential part of human nature. While I am more familiar with aesthetic rather than spiritual issues, I have been surprised to discover in my rather cursory examination of the latter, that what some writers describe as a spiritual experience could easily serve as a description of an aesthetic experience. I would like to take as a case in point the writings of a biologist, Ursula Goodenough. In *The Sacred Depths of Nature* (1998) she gently lays out basic biology. However, at the end of each chapter, she presents a "Reflections" section, a meditation on the spiritual dimension of the concepts she's just covered. Among the words she uses frequently are "awe," "wonder," and "sublime"—all common words in the aesthetic literature as well. Now one might argue that this crossover is due to the defects of language, that we don't have words specific enough to distinguish between these two types of experience. But another view is that we can't distinguish between them because they are in essence the same thing, they both arise from the same deep place in our being. This is the deep place that we need to nurture and mine in dealing with conflicts.

ANOTHER NORTH AND SOUTH

I realize that this seems very idealistic but fortunately we have a model for this approach to peace, and it comes from a country with which I've recently reconnected: Ireland. Here again is a country, like Korea, that has been split into north and south. And if anything, the rifts are even greater because they have been around so much longer, and they are not just political but religious as well. In 1998, an accord was signed that brought the first real peace to Northern Ireland in centuries. Yes, that peace is fragile, and there are still major political and religious problems, but people are no longer afraid to venture out of their homes and you no longer see armed soldiers in the streets. How was this apparent miracle created? Obviously, the politicians were involved, but so were the church leaders. In fact, that is where the rapprochement began. Catholic and Protestant clergy rose up against the violence and began to work together and to encourage their respective congregations to work together. Ecumenism has become a very important word in Ireland, particularly in working with the young. And among the ecumenical projects developed in the North were ones involving environmental work. The reconstitution of the park system of Belfast was an integral part of the city's rehabilitation. Green spaces became places where all the citizens of the city could come together in peace.

I seem to have come a long way from Korea and the cranes, ending up in Belfast with the flowers. But there are obviously some parallels here, and reasons for hope, both for the people, and flora and fauna. Making Korea and Belfast more beautiful by preserving nature is essential to any plan for peace.

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WAR MEMORIALS, SEEN ETHICALLY AND AESTHETICALLY

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Opening poem by W.S. Merwin (Powerpoint display):

When the war is over (1967)

When the war is over
We will be proud of course the air will be
Good for breathing at last
The water will have been improved the salmon
And the silence of heaven will migrate more perfectly
The dead will think the living are worth it we will know
Who we are
And we will all enlist again

I. THE CONTEXT FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT

We *think* we remember what we're *supposed* to remember about wars, or some war in particular. **But, for our students**—advancing young humans, budding citizens, potential cannon fodder or possible protest-sign holders—what does it mean to “remember a war”—or to witness how older people remembered a war?

This question describes a specific outcome of a more general task, an assignment I give each year in a course called Ethics and Aesthetics. By far not a conclusive survey, and not even my idea for a class in the first place, this course is nevertheless one of my favorites to teach. It allows students to explore why they should or shouldn't be doing things—as citizens, as well as being artists or designers – and then it allows them to explore why or how creative activities, or the practice of art and design, have been thought important or impressive over some centuries.

Briefly, this class is for anyone. Also briefly, this class is not perfect. MCAD has no other specific classes in morals, ethics or aesthetics; nevertheless, at an art college the concepts of authenticity and originality and art-defining categories are pretty much in the air we all breathe, whatever the class. What I try to do with Ethics and Aesthetics is provide some common ground, a forum across the disciplines.

In doing so, as an instructor, I make no deep claim to expertise as either a moral theorist or an aesthetic philosopher. Like most of us, I've had to weather some genuine moral challenges, and I share these experiences—my Selective Service classification as a conscientious objector and 2 years of alternate service in 1970, or being on the losing end (\$11,000 worth) of an arbitration, for having sold a house with known defects.

Also, like just about everyone at an art college, I see and talk and think about aesthetics just by entering the building. My own 21-year experience as a film critic and arts writer is kind of a qualification for thinking about aesthetics, but any ambitious 20-year-old furniture or comics

student, looking for a personal place in a creative spectrum, is as qualified to be an aesthetics scholar.

Ethics and Aesthetics ends with a research paper assignment to explain the ethical and aesthetic dimensions of a particular memorial. I feel this is definitely fair game as a subject, since we all feel the need to remember someone or something, some of the time, and because as far as I know there aren't any majors with a claim or patent on "memorializing" as intellectual or creative territory. In the instructions to the assignment, I encourage students to think of what a "memorial" means to them—and stipulate, basically, that it needs to have certain clear characteristics:

- **It needs to be physical and deliberately made.** Not necessarily made to be a memorial, but not some naturally occurring landmark, ephemeral statement or dedication credit at the end of a movie, or a song. Also, literature and music don't count.
- **It needs to be accessible to strangers.** A grandfather's pipe, kept in a sock drawer, isn't a memorial, but Mark Twain's typewriter on display in Hannibal, Missouri could be.
- **It needs to be "known" as well as always accessible.** Tattoos can now function as memorials, but they can't serve this project. However, rear-window decals on cars are always evident and accessible, and they would be acceptable.
- **It can't be made by the student writing the paper.**

My point with these instructions is to encourage interpretation and to invite exploration. I've received a wonderful array of newly christened "memorials" from this assignment, and that is part of the thrill of learning from these students. A documentary film, old-fashioned giant tin men, gravestones of classmates who died as children, a refurbished water tower, a skate park, the Judy Garland museum in Grand Rapids, Minnesota—all are potential memorials. I only rule out obvious memorials like the ones to Lincoln and Washington, Mt. Rushmore, Stonehenge and the Pyramids – whose status as "memorials" of what remains doubtful.

As a summation of ideas from ethics and aesthetics, this assignment tries to unite the two halves of the semester. The aesthetics part seems obvious—and so I explain in the instructions that "the memorial should ideally refer to a higher philosophical concept or goal" and that "a memorial abstracts and remembers idealized values, actions, and/or concepts." These guidelines help to remind students of the ethical territory—to use the central terminology, of obligations, acknowledgments of divine commands or social contracts, community effort or disharmony, greater goods and greatest numbers, existential action to displace nothingness, gestures of caring or adjustments to "justice". As the students try to cover some of these concepts, they also may find justification for the aesthetic properties —scale, visibility, materials, style, representational mimesis, setting, and the like.

These are some of the ethical terms or concepts covered in the class itself:

- obligations or duties—universalizability
- acknowledgments of divine commands or social contracts
- community effort (eudaimonia = "flourishing") /or disharmony
- greater goods and greatest numbers

- existential action to displace nothingness
- gestures of caring
- adjustments to “justice”

I show a few examples of conventional memorials, but Maya Lin’s experience with the creation of the Vietnam War memorial wall is most central to explaining this assignment.

II. WHAT SOME STUDENTS HAVE DONE WITH THIS ASSIGNMENT—OR, WHAT I’VE LEARNED FROM THE STUDENTS

Again, the assignment doesn’t require a particular memorial function, but those students who have chosen war- or war-related memorials, however broadly interpreted, have managed to explore ethical terrain in insightful fashion. Here is a brief accounting of some of these papers, written over the past decade:

SITE /MEMORIAL

Crazy Horse mountain memorial,
South Dakota (student A)

Crazy Horse mountain memorial,
South Dakota (student B)

ETHICS AS INTERPRETED

Crazy Horse as leader sought justice
Local ‘community’ is Native Americans
(setting is appropriate & deserving)
No government funding
Ziolkowski refused personal profit (art & labor
as a gift)

The land (site) is sacred; divine-command link
Crazy Horse died because of betrayal—
entrapped by a false promise. While Mt.
Rushmore was ‘top-down’ (‘authoritarian,’
government project) CH memorial is grass
roots, from—ground-up CH memorial *process*
(community intersubjectivity)is just as
important as a final object

Footnote to both papers: the body
language of pointing with the fingers is
considered “unethical” because Lakota
would point with lips
<http://www.manataka.org/page1425.html>

Children’s Memorial by Moshe Safdie
in Jerusalem Holocaust Museum

Setting: “cultural mosaic” (Safdie) of Jerusalem
Dark room with one candle, reflected into
multiple flames—‘extending into infinity’/
fractal design. Names & birthplaces spoken
Names & birthplaces spoken aloud over
Speakers Sadie honors others by being true
to his own vision (authenticity) Heidegger on
work: “Death and judgment . . . are ultimate
things” Heidegger: art establishes truth /
establishes the origin of a people—guards

history as meaning. Particulars become deontology or universalizability— universal (utilitarian?) Kantian categorical imperative) (Even the original model was “universalizable” —moved viewers to tears.)

student’s ideas—‘good art is like a close friend or a family member to all of society . . . has the right to speak directly and Honestly.’ ‘thought is what is beautiful in a work of art.’

Oradour-sur-Glane village in France – Site of German massacre at end of World II; village left as it was, a ruined ‘found Object’ memorial

Almost ‘utilitarian’—because all who visit receive meaning—reception is universal but specific interpretation requires War individual effort. Promotes abstract reflection; suggesting and implying “it offers ourselves back to us— our past as influencing our future.” Unaltered ruins a kind of beauty due to historical integrity Matches **descriptive ethics**—assumes nothing & dictates no particular value (except to notice, remember, meditate) ‘beautiful in intent’— blank confrontation as a decision. (implied— evokes the disgust reflex that’s behind moral sense)

Richard Drew photo, *The Falling Man*

2 conditions for a memorial (citing Gemma Tipton): (9-11 photo from World Trade Center) —memorials must ‘ease the pain the’ living encounter’ *and* ‘express that a person’s death is not in vain’

Portrait of a willful jumper.

Drew took images of 15 people, about 9-12 images of each—**this** image universalizes/ idealizes the character of all jumpers—showing the man’s control over fate following Barthes, photographs are the ideal medium for a memorial /we seek death in photographs Proust/Adorno—art is ‘derivative of mourning’ but *can* preserve ‘continued vitality’ *this* image transcends fetish/shock web photo archives— it has ‘ambiguous nature and aesthetic grace’

Northland Vietnam Memorial, Duluth, Minnesota

Structure is ‘mysterious’—oddness of form Immediate visual connection to Maya Lin (“the dark swath of stone” of slab with list of names) Embracing shell cf. cold, confrontational wall cites Nietzsche—Apollonian vs. Dionysian

traditions, tragedy brings balance to society'
Beauty can shield people from suffering –
provide new affirmation for life

WW2 memorial at American National
Cemetery in Saint-Laurent-sur-Mer
(Omaha Beach)

(written by a Hmong immigrant who'd spent
grade-school years in France) “no right or
wrong to have created this memorial . . . these
people deserve so much more than this big
cemetery.” Uniformity of the crosses makes
everyone look equal— utilitarian? [John]
Rawlsian adjusted-justice?
—many people willingly fought for that cause
—the ‘community’ is all humanity—not just
locals— cemetery creates **inclusion**—of all
who have been affected by war

III. ONGOING PERSONAL RESEARCH; WHAT I AM CONTINUING TO LEARN THROUGH REGULAR BUT RANDOM VISITS TO CURRENT WAR MEMORIALS.

Originally, I began gathering images of any kind of memorial just to use in class when introducing this assignment. Each time the class is taught, there's also a field trip to a nearby cemetery, a Frederick Law Olmstead landscape where Hubert Humphrey and Paul Wellstone are buried. But as I have taken even casual road trips over the past several years, I've increasingly been drawn to specifically war-oriented memorials, especially in smaller towns. These memorials show a constantly evolving notion of *both* the ethical and aesthetic function of a war memorial.

I realize there are some central questions about war memorials, and my students were the first to ask or imply these questions: **When a war comes home, what kind of home do we make for that war?** How should a memorial fit the community, or home, that it serves as much as the departed people it's memorializing? **And . . . can or should a memorial *interrupt* our everyday life? And if so, why?**

I should add that this is not yet a scientific or systematic project, by any means. However, my examples come from several states and cities or towns, small (305 residents) and large (Atlanta). I intend to continue and expand my research. I'm especially interested in how the history of the war that's memorialized fits in with the larger history of the town or area itself—whether there is any continuity of local awareness, of sequence or even consequence.

Simply put, the *ethical* issues behind a newer memorial seem now more oriented toward service, inclusion and local origin rather than the older model of heroic sacrifice. Listing all veterans as well as those who died, they're as much about survival as about sacrifice. They also seem to idealize local boosterism or basic civic staying power in precarious economic times. They are statements from within a community that its continued existence still matters.

Additionally, the *aesthetics* issues involved in newer memorials might be summarized as “What hath Maya Lin wrought?,” or “grass-roots’ now means geometric patriotism.” Not being a sculpture historian, I prefer not to make any judgments, pro or con, about the beauty of current memorials. I'm like the person who practices descriptive instead of prescriptive ethics.

What seems more interesting, and safer to say, is that—as with many historical cycles of a grand, direction-changing aesthetic filtering down to the eyes and hands of its audience—an originating and original principle has been translated into more pragmatic forms. The end result may not really match or equal its ancestor, as America’s quasi-Greek temples of government don’t match the Parthenon, but the end result can also be considered a humbler re-imagining of a standing design, something newly by and for the people.

I think it’s important to inject at this point the fact that Jan Scruggs, the Vietnam War vet who started the whole project for the Wall, was at the time a graduate student aiming toward a career in counseling. And his committee, long before they’d ever heard of Maya Lin, already stipulated the need for a list of all the Vietnam War dead. So the *ethical* project of the Wall might be seen as therapeutic. Additionally, Lin and others seem to be part of a wider trend in museum and history display to make the exhibit a text that needs to be read by walking—occasionally the narrative is a choose-your-own adventure, but more often it appears to require a mild linearity, leading to at least a few important common conclusions. The elegant minimalism of Lin’s design—stated by her as intentionally ambiguous, *requiring* individual interpretation—poses a therapeutic, self-reflective, *ethically meditative requirement* for any visitor.

Stylistically, many of these newer memorials *reconcile the groups once in opposition* over Maya Lin’s Wall. The slabs are there, and they reflect visitors as they list the names. But also on the slabs are the figurative and more overtly patriotic elements—portraits and quotations. New technologies allow digital carving on stone, as with an inkjet printer. A useful term to describe these newer memorials might be “vernacular minimalism,” and to be both fair and descriptive, it might be safe to say that desktop publishing and scrapbooking are just as much inspirational sources as Maya Lin’s wall. They are humble and familiar, not as grand or imposing as prior memorials. What seems most important as an act, not necessarily an element of style, is that these memorials almost always include lists.

As already noted, the lists are for those who’ve served in addition to those who died. In a few cases, the memorial promises to continue honoring future military veterans, as if a local citizen were pre-approved for later honor. Another related trend in some towns is the placement of signs along the main street, each one naming a local man or woman in the service.

Additionally, the setting and placement—often on flat cemetery plots or town squares—sometimes acknowledges associated local history. Sometimes, sadly, the new memorials don’t echo with or respond to what else the town or village is defined by. In the best cases, these new memorials engage with local history and admit the memories of a war to its new home, with renewed local meaning. Arthur Danto has written that “*we erect monuments so that we shall always remember, and we build memorials so that we shall never forget.*”

In conclusion, I’ve always been interested in the intersection of ethics and aesthetics. But my students’ own probing into the idea and meaning of “a memorial” has led me to deeper understandings of history, memory, service, and community. As I seek out new examples of war memorials, I am fulfilling my own class assignment. Rather than summarize insights in what is admittedly a work-in-progress, I prefer to finish with a visual tour of some of these newer memorials.

Here are some examples . . . [Powerpoint slides were shown]

LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
Lindstrom, Minnesota	Located on a busy corner; multi-war slab memorial “looks across” to statue of Swedish immigrants
Potomac, Illinois	Located at edge of broad, flat, town cemetery; multi-war slabs have blank space for future wars or veterans/ KIA. Uses new stone-cutting ‘laser printer’-like clip art images
Wabasha, Minnesota	Located on a triangular corner plot heading toward main street (along Mississippi River); Vietnam memorial stone slabs joined by “chainsaw art” figure of kneeling soldier
Mount Pleasant, Iowa	Located within county courthouse area, multi-war slabs with older memorials to war or patriotism (1950s Statue of Liberty); new memorial includes both slabs with lists and a permanent guide/index
Custer, South Dakota	Located on grounds of county courthouse where American Indian Movement activists were tried for the Wounded Knee standoff of 1973; 2 angular, whimsical “modernist” figures of “George” [Custer?] and “Chief”
Mankato, Minnesota	Located on riverfront by public library; 3 successive figures or plaques placed to reconcile historic tragedy of Christmas Day hangings of 38 Dakota warriors in 1862. Process of placing these 3 memorials over several years has “reconciled” former foes.

THE RISE OF THE CELLULOID SOLDIER: MAGNUS HIRSCHFELD, TIL BRUGMAN, AND THE DEPARTMENT STORE OF LOVE

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In his efforts to open a research facility dedicated to the scientific study of sex, one of the most significant problems that confronted Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, the German pioneer of “sexology” or “sexual science,” was to determine exactly what constituted sexual practices. Already in 1908, Hirschfeld had claimed that a future sexual science might be comprised of a dizzying variety of research areas: sexual anatomy, sexual chemistry, sexual attraction /physiology, sexual psychology, sexual evolution, comparative sexual biology, sexual hygiene including sexual enlightenment, sexual prophylaxes, sexual politics, sexual legislation, sexual ethics, sexual ethnology, sexual variations, and sexual pathology. Hirschfeld provided a more condensed program when, in 1919, he opened the Institute for Sexual Science in Berlin’s Tiergarten district. Reminiscent of the architectural and socio-political display strategies of Rudolph Virchow’s Institute for Pathology, which had opened nearby just twenty years earlier, Hirschfeld wrote that his facility too would have a research institute as well as a division dedicated to practical medicine. This division was similar to that between private research and public access as set forth in Virchow’s institute, where some of the structure’s sections were reserved for medical professionals while non-scientific visitors had access to the facility’s impressive collection of anatomical pathological specimens in the public museum. In Hirschfeld’s center the public would have access as well to individual treatment in the facility’s medical offices and to public displays in the building’s large foyer.¹ The location of the Institute’s exhibition of its empirical scientific evidence emphasized Hirschfeld’s belief that there existed visibly discernable markers of sexual orientation that any visitor could see. Like Virchow’s own faith in his lay visitors’ optical abilities, Hirschfeld’s belief that the public could encounter specialized scientific knowledge and “sehen lernen” (“learn to see”) was indebted to medical science and the related, emerging professional discipline of anthropology.²

Not all the members of the public who visited Hirschfeld’s Institute were enamored with his ideas about sexual orientation. After a visit in the early 1930s, the Dutch author Til Brugman wrote “The Department Store of Love,” a short grotesque in which she challenged Hirschfeld’s sexual science by suggesting that the fetish as epistemological fact was equivalent to representational hyperbole. Brugman saw in Hirschfeld’s use of the fetish a conflation of empirical reality and epistemological speculation.³ Brugman’s short satire demonstrates a concern that German sexual science had sacrificed human interest in the name of political instrumentality and objectifying methodology.

Brugman examines in her short tale the effects of empirical science’s techniques of representation and display in the context of the larger epistemological function these visual tactics have. Thus, her literary engagement provides a practical application of a grotesque vision with continued reverberations, a grotesque meant to shock the uncritical viewing public into assuming the role of critical observers—a valuable strategy whether the object inducing our optical conformism be scientific displays, genetic maps, or television news programs.

SEX, SCIENCE, SHOPPING

No other aspect of Hirschfeld's work or of the Institute's emphasis on trained forms of visual assessment speaks more directly to his ambitions than the so-called *Zwischenstufenwand* ("wall of intermediary stages"). The wall was filled with photographs of individuals who expressed corporeally various intermediate stages of biological development between normal masculine-male and feminine-female. The collection consisted of initially sixteen prominently displayed posters each containing four photographs with accompanying text that identified various forms of intermediate biological development and, thus, sexual identity as well. This orderly display, however, was soon turned disorderly as images were added to the *Zwischenstufenwand* in a way that did not reflect the chronological proximity of the supposed intermediary developmental stages. That is, new pictures were added to the wall in a hodge-podge fashion without regard for the construction of a visual narrative of biological development from supposedly most incomplete to supposedly most complete.

A colleague of Hirschfeld who worked in the Institute, Ludwig Levy-Lenz, would describe the archival collection and the display materials in a way that demonstrates why the focus of the visual markers of sexual and gender biological difference became problematic for people like the writer Til Brugman:

The Museum of the Institute was one of most unique sights in the world. Here were among others, thousands of photographs to view, images of sexual criminals, of neurotics, mentally disturbed individuals, pictures of absurd sexual practices, perversities, of methods and tools for such purposes, images of prostitutes, photos of homosexuals, transvestites, lesbians, exhibitionists, sadists, masochists, pimps, kleptomaniacs, and many, many others. Short and succinct, what was brought together here was really a labyrinth of human miseries and confusions! We had an infinite number of objects that had served as sexual fetishes. A collection of roughly one hundred pairs of ladies' Chevreau shoes, in all colors, heels, and from these a few that could be laced above the upper thigh. In the same Museum there was a cabinet with braids and bundles of hair that a single braid-cutter had cut off and kept. From an undergarment fetishist (Wäsche-Fetishisten) we inherited an assortment of the most beautiful, expensive, delicate and intimate pieces of underclothing that have ever been worn.⁴

Emphasizing the sensationalistic and exhibitionistic nature of the Institute's displays, Levy-Lenz reveals the diversity of materials collected and displayed together under the auspices of research in the name of sexual science. Brugman's "Department Store of Love" sought to produce a similar description of Hirschfeld's facility, albeit with a critical, grotesque edge.

Throughout "Department Store of Love," Brugman's narrator discusses the desires of a number of visitors to her facility. The first customer is a commander in the military, a high deputy of the government who was given a "determining impression" from a chamber pot in "the most delicate days" of his youth. According to the narrator, the official had attempted to suppress unsuccessfully his inclination to live permanently and openly with the object. Other guests include a sixty-year-old woman who wants to wear used military riding pants, and an old man who desires rubber children's bottoms, one to dress and undress, and the other without accessories. Also among the curious guests to the Department Store of Love is a female kleptomaniac who is also a gymnast, thus making her able to hide stolen goods on her person in a most impressive and occasionally

provocative fashion. The needy customers and the exceptional demand force the unique store to close early on most days, suggesting the owners are not capitalists involved solely for the sake of extensive profit. Such realistic references in combination with fantastic and comical elements—typical of the grotesque style—are meant to distance the reader in order to prepare her or him to reflect on the critique contained in the text’s overall thematic structure.

What appears at first a wholesale embrace of capitalism in the Department Store is, in reality, a challenge to science’s supposed objectivity. The owners feel indebted not to capitalism but rather to science for their success and worldwide popularity. They acknowledge explicitly the impact of science on their enterprise: “We looked happily at each other . . . all of our ideas that science found also were transplanted uninhibited into reality.”⁵ The owners suggest that their store has allowed science’s abstract concepts and typologies to find material expression in everyday life. Such a claim depends implicitly upon the subtle critique that science itself is abstracted from reality. Thus, the challenge can be seen in embryonic form in the irony of the comment that science has enabled the public expression of the fetishistic desires of the store’s clientele.

To develop further her challenge to sexual science, Brugman connects scientific discourses suggestively with sexual and military fantasies in her tale. The narrator describes a peculiar series of events that threaten not only the existence of the Department Store but also its clientele. A parade to celebrate the business’s success is dispersed by “disruptive military hordes” in a passage that provides us with a glimpse of some of the other fantastic elements of the grotesque style:

And if they—the baffled crowds—did not want to do what was demanded then the army used force. Suddenly a wild screeching began, and each was concerned solely with burring his love object . . . to save it. The disruptive military hordes demanded everyone stop and hand in their love objects. And if they did not want to do so, then the army used force. The military group set up bomb fires, broke everything that they could put their hands on, stepped on objects of the most tender love with their feet. They choked belches from the body of a woman and trampled glands that lay around. Screams of misery flew here and there. People fled, protected their little rubber bottoms and hid themselves with their gramophone horns in the earth. Trombones were taken away before the melody was even finished; frightened, a boy buried underneath his outstretched body a bald head that meant everything in the world to him. The noise was deafening.⁶

The military threat represented in the literary scenario paralleled actual events that occurred in Berlin in May of 1933 when National Socialists looted and burned Hirschfeld’s Institute of Sexual Science. The event in Brugman’s story, written roughly two years earlier, produces however a much different outcome.

The narrator of Brugman’s tale approaches the military horde’s leader, who was ironically enough the first customer of the Department Store of Love. The narrator confronts the military official, a high deputy of the government and a commander, and demands to know why he earlier bought a chamber pot to satisfy his own desires and now wants to close the store and prevent others from realizing similar, personal pleasures. He can only reply that he has been ordered to close the store to preserve the old, authentic, good birth—“*die alte, authentische, gute Geburt*.” No matter what happiness he or others might find through the auspices of the Department Store of Love, such happiness cannot solve the problems of the modern nation-state. He asks the narrator rhetorically: “Can we for instance fight war with this happiness? If everyone as he pleases shoots his semen

wherever he wants instead of putting children in the world. The state wants ovaries . . . not Ocarinas.”⁷ Brugman’s narrator, engaging the military commander’s insistence that war and non-reproductive sexual happiness are incommensurable, suggests more than pacifism. Rather, alluding to the declining German birth rate as the issue for military intervention, Brugman implicitly connects increasingly restrictive social and political ideology of the time with questions of gender and sexual liberty. That is, the individual who would “shoot his sperm wherever he wants” without regard for the need for reproductive sexuality jeopardizes not only the birth rate but also the ability of the state to wage war.

As a solution to the dilemma raised by the military commander, Brugman’s narrator suggests using celluloid to produce soldiers and, hence, to satisfy both the state’s need for reproductive sexuality and the Department Store of Love’s customers’ desires for their fetish objects: “We could bring immediately 1,000,000 million [a million million] celluloid-children (**zelluloidkinder**) into the five parts of the world.”⁸ The military commander accepts readily the narrator’s alternative solution to the state’s demand for reproductive sexuality. The two co-owners of the Department Store of Love already have manufactured the celluloid children, we find out, as a “small surprise for the League of Nations.”⁹ The celluloid children, much like the photographic images used in Magnus Hirschfeld’s typological studies of sexual and gender deviancy, become equivalent to real human beings in Brugman’s story. While the conflation of the real and celluloid by the military is made explicit, the conflation by science is introduced indirectly. The two discourses are united through a circumvention of reproductive sexuality in order to satisfy the reproductive demands of the modern military state. It is the fetishistic use of celluloid reproductions and phenomenal substitutes for reality by the German state—and, implicitly, Hirschfeld’s and his colleagues’ sexual science—that are the foci of Brugman’s grotesque critique.

CONCLUSION

In Hirschfeld’s Institute of Sexual Science, the collection of sexual and so-called primitive fetish objects in conjunction with the research within the facility clearly demonstrates the surface-conflation of epistemological and anthropological otherness. These artifacts, when applied in the context of German subjects, became key in promoting the supposedly scientific insight that there existed visible, external substitutes for incomplete biological development. Physical characteristics or “markers” of sexual identity were indistinguishable from the use of fetishes as expressions of the biological “in-between-ness” of individual sexual development. Hirschfeld would write in 1926 that the relationship between secondary-sex characteristics and what he described as “anti-fetishes” (i.e., a disdain for supposedly normal sexual or gender attributes such as male facial hair or female breasts) proved that sexuality was biologically determined and that the fetish substituted for the incompleteness of an individual’s sexual development.¹⁰ It is in this context that Hirschfeld increasingly promoted the importance of scientific photography for the Institute, including suggesting in 1919 the need to develop a department devoted explicitly to scientific photography and cinema as well as an archive to contain these images in combination with a collection of cultural artifacts that served as fetishes for European and non-European groups.¹¹

The anthropological approach enabled a broad array of public campaigns in the effort to render normal the apparently different sexual practices of Hirschfeld’s fetishistic European subjects. Due to its members’ belief in the fungibility of visible, morphological features and the biology of sexual development, the Institute became involved in a 1921 contest sponsored by the Medical Society for Sexual Science and Eugenics. The contest challenged participants to submit an essay defending a particular response to the question, “Do anatomical foundations speak for the possible existence of

homosexuality?” The Medical Society encouraged essay writers to explain the biology of sexuality in terms of visible manifestations of sexual orientation. The surface of the German body, extended epistemologically to include the fetish, found in the anthropological fetish an indicator of visible difference.

Brugman’s “The Department Store of Love” reveals in the symbolic and literal metonymies of the fetish and of the celluloid-subjects not only a way for us to analyze our contemporary relationships to scientific insights and technological developments, but also to express a skepticism about how these forces change, for the better, the world in which we live. Much like the work of Walter Benjamin, who proposed an approach to assessing the tasks which modern cultural forms pose for the “human apparatus of perception at the turning points of history,” Brugman demonstrates a concern with the way in which a perceptual conformism influences our engagements with—or passivity in the face of—ideologically suspect images and displays.¹²

In Brugman’s short story, we find an emphasis on the human use of **technik**—both the use of fetish objects to appease various human desires as well as the use of celluloid to alter the understanding of what constituted human reality. The celluloid children of Brugman’s tale—the **zelluloidkinder**—suggest that it is not so much the fetish that is a psychic extension of the human subject but rather that the human subject itself can be read as an extension of the fetish. That is, Brugman focuses on the material rather than psychic attachment to the fetish through the setting of the department store. Displacing the subject-centered focus on the fetish indicative of psychoanalytic interpretations, Brugman suggests that our uncritical attachment to material forms of modern culture alters the very understanding of not only what constitutes good data for scientific research, but also what constitutes the human subject her—or him-self. Figured as a precursor to our own contemporary fixation on cyborgs and robots as literal replacements for human subjects, and potential objects of human desire, Brugman’s “Department Store of Love” reveals, to paraphrase Benjamin, the irreproducibility of the human body in the early phases of a fetishization of technical reproducibility itself.

NOTES

1. Magnus Hirschfeld, “B. Das Institute für Sexualwissenschaft,” *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* 1 (1908) 570-588; Herrn, “Einleitung” 13. The research institute would have four divisions: sexual biology, sexual pathology, sexual sociology, and sexual ethnology. Likewise, the practical medical activity of the Institute would be divided into four units: marriage and professional advice, psychopathic conditions and nervous illnesses, sexual illnesses of the soul (i.e., mental disorders) that led to impotence and disruption of the sex drive, and physical sexual illnesses (i.e., gender disorders and diseases of the skin, hair, and cosmetic).
2. Rainer Herrn, *Einleitung zu Theorie und Praxis*, unpublished manuscript (2004) 4-5. In 1927, Karl Giese, the Institute’s librarian and archivist, would indicate that the facility actually was intended to house five research departments to research the entirety of human sexual life (*Liebesleben*): biology, ethnology, culture, medicine, and forensics. Iwan Bloch, who had written one of the formative studies on sexuality in the early twentieth century and with whom Hirschfeld was quite familiar, indicated in 1909 an even broader disciplinary range for a (future) science of sexuality: Sexual science would be a “*Wissenschaft vom Menschen, in der und zu der sich alle anderen Wissenschaften vereinen, die allgemeine Biologie, die Anthropologie und Völkerkunde, die Philosophie und Psychologie, die Medizin, die Geschichte der Literatur und diejenige der Kultur in ihrem ganzen Umfange*” (Bloch as qtd. in Herrn 5).
3. The German *Liebe* might also be translated as “sex” given the context in which the term is used in Brugman’s story. For purposes of consistency, however, I will use the more commonly used translation “love” throughout the essay.

4. Lenz-Ludwig as qtd. in Herrn, "Sammlung" 11-12. Ludwig Levy-Lenz, *Erinnerungen eines Sexual-Arztes* (Baden-Baden: N.p., 1954) 372-75. The original German reads as follows: "*Das Museum des Instituts war eine in der Welt einzig dastehende Sehenswürdigkeit. Hier waren u.a. Tausende von Photographien zu sehen, Bilder von Sexualverbrechern, von Neurotikern, Geistesgestörten, Bilder von abwegigen sexuellen Gewohnheiten, Perversitäten, von Mitteln und Werkzeugen hierzu, Prostituentenaufnahmen, Fotos von Homosexuellen, Transvestitten, Lesbierinnen, Exhibitionisten, Sadisten, Masochisten, Zuhältern, Kleptomane und vielen, vielen anderen. . . . Kurz und gut, was hier zusammengetragen war gleich einem Labrynth menschlicher Leidenschaften und Verirrungen! Wir besaßen eine Unzahl von Gegenständen, die als Sexualfetische gedient hatten: Eine Sammlung von rund hundert Paar hohen Damen-Chevreauschuhen in allen Farben, Stiefeln, von denen einige bis weit über die Oberschenkel zu schnüren waren. Im gleichen Museumsraum stand ein Ausstellungsschrank mit Zöpfen und Haarbündeln, die ein einziger Zopfabschneider abgeschnitten und aufbewahrt hatte. Von einem Wäsche-Fetischisten erbten wir eine Auswahl der schönsten, reichhaltigsten, delikatesten und intimsten Wäschestücke, die jemals getragen wurden.*"
5. Til Brugman, "Das Warenhaus der Liebe," *Das vertippte Zebra: Lyrik und Prosa*, ed. Marion Brandt (Berlin: Hoho Verlag Christine Hoffmann, 1995) 79. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Brugman's text are the author's. The original German reads as follows: "*Wir sahen uns geglickt an . . . Alles unsere Idee, was die Wissenschaft gefunden, auch ungehemmt in Wirklichkeit umzusetzen.*"
6. Brugman 79-80. The original German reads as follows: "*Nun fing plötzlich ein wüstes Gekreische an, und jeder war mit einem Mal nur noch darauf bedacht, sein Liebeszeug zu verbergen . . . zu retten. Denn die hereinbrechenden Militär-Horden forderten alle auf, ihre Liebesobjekte sofort abzugeben. Und wenn sie nicht wollten, die verdutzten Menschen, dann gebrauchte das Heer Gewalt. Die Mannschaften errichteten Scheiterhaufen, brachen kaputt, was sie in die Hand bekommen, traten mit Füßen, was soeben noch Gegenstand der zartesten Liebe gewesen. Sie würgten der Dame das Rülpsen aus dem Leibe und zertrampelten die herumliegenden Drüsen. Elende Schreie flogen hin und her. Die Menschen flehten, schützten ihre Gummi-Popöchen und verkrochen sich mit ihrem Grammophonhorn in die Erde. Posaunen wurden weggerissen, bevor noch die Melodie zu Ende geblasen war, ein Jüngling barg unter seinem hingestreckten Körper ängstlich eine Glatze, die ihm alles in der Welt bedeutete. Das Jammern brachte einen um.*"
7. Brugman 80. The original German reads as follows: "*Können wir mit diesem Glück etwas Krieg führen? Wenn jeder, wie er will, herumspermatiziert, statt Kinder in die Welt zu setzen. Staat will Ovarien . . . nicht Okarinen.*"
8. Brugman 81. The original German reads as follows: "*Wir lassen gleichzeitig in den fünf Weltteilen 1.000.000 Millionen Zelluloidkinder zur Welt kommen.*"
9. Brugman 81. The original German reads as follows: "*eine kleine Überraschung für den Völkerbund.*"
- ¹⁰ Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtskunde* 80. Hirschfeld claimed that the fetishist's focus on secondary-sex characteristics and what he described as "anti-fetishism" were both attempts to compensate for a lack of normal sexual development: "*Es ist beachtenswert, daß sich in beiden geschilderten Fällen bei sonst völlig normalsexuell empfindenden Personen der Fetischhaß auf sekundäre Geschlechtscharaktere wie die Brüste des Weibes und den Bart des Mannes erstreckt, die im allgemeinen als besonders typische Geschlechtszeichen angesehen werden, welche für die normale Geschlechtsanlockung daher vornehmlich in Frage kommen. Gerade dieser Umstand läßt weitgehende Rückschlüsse auf die psychosexuelle Eigenindividualität dieser antifetischistisch eingestellten Persönlichkeiten zu, und zwar nach der Richtung, dass sie selber keine Volltypen ihres Geschlechts sind*" (80).
- 11 Hirschfeld, "B. Das Institut" 51-52; Herrn, "Einleitung" 13.
12. Benjamin, "Work of Art" 240.

AFGHANISTAN GOES TO THE MOVIES

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I need to begin this paper with a quick disclaimer. In my extended families' households, James Bond is sacred. I grew up with two older brothers, so I think that is where it began, but my sister and I took it to a new level. I think the only reason that I could even begin to think about criticizing a Bond film was because my sister thought it was hilarious that I could incorporate our obsession into an academic paper. Oh, James. Forgive me.

In some ways, this paper can write itself. Some of the West's best filmic efforts at portraying Afghanistan are high comedy at best or sadly scary at worst. The films I would like to look at in particular, *The Living Daylights*, *Rambo III*, and *Iron Man* do little to help us understand the country with which we are at war and instead promote dangerous stereotypes that, I argue, make it even easier to accede to General Stanley McChrystal's latest troop demands and continue a war that might very well be fought for a long time to come. The counterargument that these are just films—and bad ones at that—simply does not hold up, particularly after Douglas Stanton, in his recent *The Horse Soldiers*, describes American soldiers prepping to go into Afghanistan after 9/11 by watching the “classic” *Spies Like Us* over and over. Silly entertainment or not, these movies matter—a lot. In fact, I would argue that they matter much more than strategists and officials are willing to acknowledge or analyze. Time after time, we have seen real soldiers get hyped up for war by watching precisely these kinds of movies—helicopter pilots playing “Flight of the Valkyries” in imitation of the classic scene from *Apocalypse Now* during the invasion of Grenada, or Marines getting almost sexually stoked watching all kinds of supposedly anti-war films before Gulf I in *Jarhead* (both memoir and film).

Much attention has been given to the call for more American troops in Afghanistan in General McChrystal's leaked, and thus redacted, Initial Assessment. Funnily enough, the mainstream media has blatantly ignored the section where McChrystal discusses the plan to “refocus media efforts.” He wants to “orientate the message from a struggle for the ‘hearts and minds’ of the Afghan population to one of giving them ‘trust and confidence’” (D-5). Along with this new task for soldiers comes another role, one that is particularly relevant to my project. McChrystal argues that “Every soldier must be empowered to be a StratCom messenger for ISAF” (D-6). This is certainly a rather compelling empowerment when it is fed from films that present only a twisted image of Afghanistan—one that shows the country and its people to be helpless and hapless, violent or foolish, but never as they really are.

1988's *Rambo III* is high comedy at its best. Dedicated to “the gallant people of Afghanistan,” it shows the Soviets in their deplorable incompetence and the Mujahideen as “freedom fighters.” The solution to Afghanistan in this film, and one that General McChrystal would be wise to consider, is one John Rambo. Clearly the film resonates better with those who are familiar with the entire library of Rambo adventures—this movie opens with him fighting (surprise!) but then taking his earnings to a Buddhist Thai monastery where he is in retirement. We learn that his former commander in the American Special Forces has been captured by the Soviets, doing a

job that was designed for Rambo himself and ultimately, Rambo realizes that he must save his friend. Thus, the film.

If you have any desire to learn about the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and their long war, this is not the film for you. If you want to learn about the various groups of Mujahideen who operated out of Pakistan, this is not the film for you. But if you want to feel that America is superior to every other culture out there, with a particular nod to Asian countries, then warm up the DVD player and settle on in.

Absurd. Plain and simple. Rambo wanders about eastern Afghanistan in his well known wife beater and bandana and yet is never noticed. He is offered help from the Afghan villagers based on the logic that they want their story to be told to the world. They are willing to sacrifice their lives, their limited ammunition, and their village life for one American because, somehow, they are more than aware that the world does not know of their problems.

The Mujahideen in this film are presented fairly enough, although NPR critic Radek Sikorski called them “salvage halfwits,” but the overall picture of the Soviet/Afghan war is simply absurd. The Soviet regional commander announces that the Khost region has been secure for the past five years—so secure that he has become bored and he is looking to make trouble as a way to get a reassignment. Khost is close to the Pakistan border—so close, in fact, that Rambo is able to cross over with his guide and a horse full of heavy explosives, unnoticed, even in his typical Rambo outfit. Very secure indeed. He has no trouble finding Afghan allies to take out the Soviet base at Khost and on the first night, they mess that place up bad. It’s a blow ‘em night extradonaire—bullets, blood, bombs, bodies. But oops, no American commander rescue. And they also miss the secret storehouse of Soviet bleach and spackle because when Rambo goes back the next morning for his buddy, the place is spotless; no wonder why it took nine years to drive the Soviets out of the country.

Finally, Rambo might be a loner, but these are buddy movies, so while his commander is in prison, Rambo gets his very own Short Round, a tough little Afghan kid who will, we realize, grow up to a pleasant little mercenary like his idol. And this is Afghanistan’s future—violence and incompetence until, thank heavens, the mullet-headed American arrives. But for all the positive portrayals of the mujahideen, Rambo and Colonel Trautman simply leave at the end. We are left to remember the promise of Stinger missiles, but they simply drive off with no delivery date. Hamid (Short Round) and Mousa (Rambo’s guide) ask them to stay, but both dismiss the idea rather quickly and after Hamid’s sad, lost look, Rambo just mumbles a goodbye and leaves. This is quickly followed on-screen by the dedication, but it ends up reflecting history—the Americans simply leave.

1987’s *The Living Daylights* is a much better effort than *Rambo III*, showing the Soviet war in Afghanistan in a fairly different light. However, this is perhaps arguing that someone is half dead. There’s still blood and organs outside the body and the heart isn’t pumping anymore. It’s less of a problem, but a problem still. Very little of the movie actually takes place in Afghanistan and, like all Bond movies, much of it bizarrely unrealistic. But somehow, with so many of our troops on the ground there right now, the film takes on important overtones, even unintentional ones. I suspect there are some, if not many, web sites devoted to all the inconsistencies and bloopers—the one that continually annoys me is how the Soviets are only identified as Russians when by this time nearly all the troops, except for the officers, were from various other republics in the Soviet Union. And the unnamed base is so clean and organized

you would think either no one lived there or that it was a sound stage in Morocco (go with the latter). However, I would like to focus on the Mujahideen.

We first meet their leader, Kamran Shah, when he is in a Soviet prison on the base. He helps Bond fight off the Soviet soldiers, but Bond and Kara are ready to walk out and leave him locked in a cell. He has to beg for the keys and even then, Bond only pauses to toss him the key ring. When we next meet Kamran, Kara and Bond have been “captured” by the Mujahideen. They are brought in front of the Deputy Commandeer for Eastern Afghanistan—none other than Kamran. His broken English sentences are now gone and instead he sports a natty British accent. Although he wears traditional Pashtun clothing, he almost never puts on headgear, presumably a nod to dimmer audience members who would simply lose him in the turban-laden crowd otherwise. When Bond expresses his shock, Kamran responds, “My name is Kamran Shah. Please forgive the theatricals. It's a hangover from my Oxford days.” While the scene takes place, Kara has been given a set of sexy Oriental clothes, which even Bond encourages her to accept (Orientalists all around), and the other mujahideen sit, listening, laughing at Bond, and protecting their British-educated leader.

When Bond reluctantly accompanies Kamran and his gang towards the Khyber Pass, he realizes that their two plans coincide—that the Soviets are buying opium from the Snow Leopard gang and the mujahideen, with diamonds which both sides will then use to buy weapons. He angrily confronts Kamran who crassly responds, “I don’t care if the Russians die from my bullets or their opium.” Even worse, the opium is packed in Red Cross bags—a clever idea but one that backfired—in real life, the famous organization reacted rather badly to this aspect of the script and a disclaimer was added to the film. At this point, the mujahideen look just as bad as their Soviet counterparts.

The legendary manhood and bravery of the Afghans is the next piece of culture to get torn apart. When Bond is trapped in one of the Soviet trucks, none of the mujahideen are particularly sympathetic. They have already provided him with the bomb which he has hidden in the opium and they are now eager to be off. It is Kara, dressed as a man, who must rally the troops. In a kind of reworking of the famous battle of Maiwand (I know I’m reaching here), she challenges the men and rides off on her own after the trucks, virtually emasculating all of the mujahideen present. They have no choice but to follow grumbling, “Women!” as a remasculating excuse.

Follow they do, not only to the Soviet airbase, where they help rescue Bond, but then on to a bridge where they are facing a loss until Bond tosses the same bomb from earlier onto it and blows it and the Soviet troops up (it’s a Bond movie, go with it). Finally, they show up in London for Kara’s concert. However, they are only in time for the reception. Despite being cleaned up physically, all of the mujahideen except Kamran are still armed with bullet bandoliers and thus, Kamran explains, “I’m sorry we missed the concert. We had some trouble at the airport.”

The view overall isn’t so bad—the clothes are right, the landscape is pretty accurate, and so are the goals. But the mujahideen here are led by a man who has been educated in Britain. When he is his more native self, he calls it “theatrics.” He is willing to traffic serious amounts of opium to the world for the sake of weapons and he and his minions never disarm, even when traveling abroad. They are fun in the film, but, it is strongly suggested, because of the British. After all, it is just one big great game.

Both of these movies are all about entertainment—no question. But these are films that shape our visions of other places and other communities. Benedict Anderson has now classically discussed “imagined communities” and the idea is relevant here. How do Westerners imagine Afghanistan? While there have been smart, indeed searing, films about Afghanistan (*Kandahar* is my immediate thought) they are not the big moneymakers that *Rambo III* and *The Living Daylights* are. These are the films people go see. Here, they do indeed get a vision of the Afghan landscape and living conditions, but culture and people? Forget it.

Both of the films date from the late 1980s, so it is fair to question whether the movie industry has gotten any better at imagining Afghanistan, particularly since the United States has had troops in the country since October 2001.

To judge by one of last summer’s blockbusters, that answer is no. Iron Man was the long-awaited filmic treatment of a famous comic book series (of which I have knowledge). Tony Stark is playboy smartass boy wonder whose family has made its gazillions from Stark Industries—a company specializing in defense weaponry.

The story begins in Afghanistan where Tony is hawking his latest creation—the incredibly deadly Jericho cluster missile, to the American military. He is being escorted by his liaison, Lt. Colonel Rhodes, and after a ridiculously destructive demonstration, Stark offers up a toast and then climbs into a Humvee where he chums about with his escort. While everyone is focused on taking snaps and discussing Stark’s sexual prowess, the humvee is attacked and Stark is (irony!) wounded by one of his own mortar rockets.

Now, the entire movie is superhero silly improbable, but obviously, I want to focus on the Afghan part, and this is weird that is really weird. We, along with Stark, discover that he has been taken captive by a group called “The Ten Rings.” In a fake broadcast later in the film, a female reporter calls them “foreign fighters” and assures us, “they are on a mission.” But here’s the funny thing—what mission? Obviously, every viewer assumes this is the Taliban: Stark has given his demonstration at Bagram Air Base (an American set in the western desert) and they’ve been in a humvee so we are in Taliban territory since they couldn’t have driven that far. Calling them “foreign fighters” makes sense but for all the wrong reasons. As gestures to the Convention-bound comic book purists, various folks connected to the original comic book series were given roles as extras. One Ring guide is the guitarist for Rage Against the Machine and this explains the obvious Caucasians who appear in the gang.

But the mission? Nothing about government, and certainly not religion. In *Operation Hollywood*, David Rabb reviews the many films that were altered in order to be allowed to use military equipment, soldiers, and sites at reduced rates for their movies. While Iron Man appeared after his book, I would not be surprised to see it on his list. One actor visited Nellis Air Force Base to get into character and some scenes were shot at Edwards Air Force Base, so the film did have military approval. Perhaps the military did not want the Taliban named since it is revealed later in the movie that Stark’s partner has been supplying the Ten Rings with weapons in under the table deals, and he is the one who created the deal to have Stark kidnapped and killed. Naming the Taliban would imply that US defense contractors are supplying both ISAF and the Taliban—not the message I think the military wants to send—especially to its soldiers.

So where does this leave us with Afghanistan? After his three-month captivity, Stark insists that he is all about peace. But when he realizes what his partner is up to, he creates Iron Man (I'm simplifying—it's a boy movie so he creates various versions and it all ends with an utterly hilarious fight between *Iron Man* and *Iron Monger* on the streets of Los Angeles—solid gold). Stark talks the talk—no more weapons and all that, but when he flies to Afghanistan (and he does—like Superman), he goes after the Ten Rings with a vengeance, killing them just like . . . a weapon. Finally, he injures the subcommander who was about to kill a father in front of his family and tells the villagers, in a Rambo-like grumble, “he’s all yours.” Our last camera shot is of the villagers moving in with menace. So much for peace. Or “trust and confidence.” Now we are back to vigilantes and turning in your neighbors.

The rest of the film follows this path. The talk of peace is a joke because it literally is all about who has the biggest guns. Afghanistan is just a backdrop, and one that is presented only as a killing field—and an acceptable killing field at that. The Afghans are either helpless villagers who will take revenge when given the opportunity or members of the mysterious Ten Rings, a group devoted to destruction. While their leader tells Stark about Genghis Khan and Alexander the Great, it seems clear that he and the US military share the same game plan in *Iron Man*—blow it up.

As I type, President Obama is making major decisions on the American and ISAF mission in Afghanistan. More troops have already been deployed there, and if the military desires are assuaged, many more will go in the coming months and years. But go where? This sounds like a rather stupid question, but I'll stand by it. I would argue that many Westerners cannot really imagine Afghanistan. Our vision comes from steroid-driven, stereotypical fight fests that fail to give any credibility to Afghan culture or perspectives. If this is how soldiers—some of them just young men—are taught to imagine Afghanistan (once again borrowing Benedict Anderson's terminology), how can they possibly build “trust and confidence” with the Afghan people as General McChrystal hopes? Oh, James.

Thank you.

Source information available upon request.

MUSIC AS PROPAGANDA: SERGEI PROKOFIEV'S PATRIOTIC CANTATAS

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Following his return to the Soviet Union in 1936, Sergei Prokofiev wrote seven works for voice and orchestra under the Stalinist regime that came to be known as “patriotic cantatas.”

1. *They Are Seven*, Op. 30 (1917-18; rev'd 1933)—his first work published in the Soviet Union
2. *Cantata for the 20th Anniversary of the October Revolution*, Op. 74 (1936-37)
3. *Songs of Our Times*, Op. 76 (1937)
4. *Hail to Stalin (a/k/a A Toast!)*, Op. 85 (1939)
5. *Ode on the End of the War*, Op. 105 (1945)
6. *Flourish, Mighty Land*, Op. 114 (1947)
7. *On Guard for Peace (Cantata for the 30th Anniversary of the October Revolution)*, Op. 124 (1950)

This paper explores the intricacies of four of these works:

1. *Cantata for the 20th Anniversary of the Revolution*, Op. 74 (1936)
2. *Hail to Stalin*, Op. 85 (1939)
3. *Flourish, Mighty Land*, Op. 114 (1947)
4. *On Guard for Peace*, Op. 124 (1950)

Not only for their contribution to the development of 20th century musical style, but also for their role in the growth and development of socialist realism in music or, if you will, music as propaganda.

The major contributing factor to this level of musical activity stems from the January 28, 1936, publication of the *Pravda* article entitled, *Chaos Instead of Music* which, in addition to serving as a condemnation of Dimitri Shostakovich's work, served as a politico-cultural manifesto seeking to base all Soviet art on the principles of socialist realism. This was the signature piece that Stalin sued to harness the arts as propaganda, to hearten the people, and served as the opening of the campaign to put Russian composers in their place.

Propaganda is defined as “doctrines, ideas, arguments, facts, or allegations spread by deliberate effort through any medium of communication in order to further one's cause or to damage an opposing cause” and as “a public action or display having the purpose or effect of furthering or hindering a cause.” (Webster's, 1817, defs. 2 & 3) Music is a highly effective vehicle for propaganda and functions effectively as a medium for messages and a weapon for social change. By promoting ideas as a shared experience, music helps achieve the goals of the propagandist. Effective propaganda songs have qualities that make them memorable while relaying their messages in a fashion that is not too emotionally extreme to be accepted. Music's effect and attendant demagogic power was recognized by Soviet leaders and assiduously exploited by their composers, particularly Sergei Prokofiev, following his return to Russia in the mid-1930s.

The music of Sergei Prokofiev is not a lifeline to contemporary music; his progress can seem even more like vacillation between incompatible manners and conflicting goals. Even Diaghilev reproached him with a fondness for too many kinds of music: ‘In art you must know how to hate, otherwise your music will lose all individuality.’ When Prokofiev objected, ‘But surely that would lead to narrowness,’ Diaghilev responded: ‘The cannon shoots far because it doesn’t scatter its fire.’ (Gutman, 1988) Regardless, Prokofiev was one of the musical giants of the 20th century whose greatness lies in the premise that no other composer of the time enriched the musical repertoire in such a variety of ways. No other composer of the 20th century enriched the musical repertoire in as many different forms as did Prokofiev, and his gift for writing original and ingratiating melody was second to none. Strong currents of both ultra-traditional conservatism and radical innovation co-existed in Russia from the late 19th century until the Stalinist anti-modernist campaigns of the 1930s. Early Bolshevik leaders retained the view that art would be influenced by political and economic events; it followed that ideological interference was both unnecessary and inappropriate. Trotsky did not believe it possible for a genuinely Soviet culture to emerge until the period of ‘the dictatorship of the proletariat’ had ended and Soviet society had become truly classless. Lenin felt that if the true Soviet art was to emerge naturally from the synthesis of all classes, then state interference could only be detrimental to its development. Music, like the other arts, had to make its own way. The Party might lead the proletariat but it could not lead the historical process (Gutman, 1988) Interestingly, Prokofiev’s reputation as a composer rests upon a slim catalog of works; and some of the less-frequently performed compositions are among his most powerful.

Prokofiev left Russia in 1918 and went to the United States and later to Paris, where he worked throughout the 1920s. There is no prevailing reason that led Prokofiev to return home. He told a friend in Paris: “I’m a Russian, the least suited of men to be an exile. Foreign air doesn’t suit my inspiration. ... I shall dry up if I stay here.” Several events coincided in 1932 to facilitate his return to Russia: (1) the abolition of the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians (“RAPM”); (2) Prokofiev’s last meeting with Maxim Gorky; (3) Ravel’s illness; (4) Prokofiev’s visit to his birthplace; (5) a growing dislike of the way concert tours were interfering with his ability to compose; and (6) Glazunov had thrown over the Conservatory and left Russia. (Hanson, 1964) In an article published in *Vechernaya Moskva* (a Moscow evening newspaper) on December 6, 1932, Prokofiev stated: “I am interested in subject matter that would assert the positive elements. The heroic aspects of socialist construction. The new man. The struggle to overcome obstacles. These are the sentiments and emotions which I should like to embody in large musical canvases.” (Prokofiev, 1956) In 1936 he formally returned to Russia and began a series of “practical” projects. His return was considered a milestone in the development of Soviet music. “I care nothing for politics—I’m a composer first and last. Any government that lets me write my music in peace, publishes everything I compose before the ink is dry, and performs every note that comes from my pen is all right with me. In Europe we all have to fish for performances, cajole conductors and theatre directors; in Russia they come to me—I can hardly keep up with the demand. What’s more, I have a comfortable flat in Moscow, a delightful *dacha* in the country and a brand new car. My boys go to a fine English school in Moscow ... (Gutman, 1988). What changed first were the sources of Prokofiev’s commissions. Soon, his large-scale works were being written to Soviet order. Following the dissolution of RAPM and the subsequent establishment of the Union of Soviet Composers, the administration of musical life was effectively controlled by central government. Composers were officially encouraged to look to the folk traditions of the past, to pay heed to the social content of their music and its appeal to the general populace. And here was Prokofiev ‘the Westernizer’ apparently choosing to throw in his lot with the new directives. He was not alone in failing to grasp their

significance. The new slogan for the arts as ‘Socialist Realism’, a term allegedly coined by Stalin himself at a meeting of writers in Maxim Gorky’s flat in October 1932: “If the artist is going to depict our life correctly, he cannot fail to observe and point out what is leading it towards socialism. So this will be socialist art. It will be socialist realism.” (Gutman, 1988) ‘Socialist Realism’ was put forward as a ‘refinement’ of this ‘realistic’ art. Socialism offered the positive way forward, with ‘Socialist Realism’ the *progressive* art of a *progressive* society. Soviet art, however, has never been content with a mere reflection of reality; it must be instrumental in ideological remoulding. It must display party spirit, class consciousness, and ‘peopleness’. (Gutman, 1988) Regardless of its origins, ‘Socialist Realism’ would not easily translate into musical terminology.

Although Prokofiev was deeply involved in the political vicissitudes of Soviet music life after his return to Russia, his musical personality was largely formed before the revolution of 1917. And, in spite of modification of his style in the direction of clarity and simplicity, his music remained under frequent attack in the Soviet Union. Prokofiev resented the ‘grotesque’ label often applied to his work; any deviations were, in his view, subordinate to four basic lines:

1. The classical line, associated with neo-classical form.
2. The modern trend, associated with his search for his own harmonic language.
3. The ‘motor’ line or toccata trend associated with the repetitive intensity of melodic figures.
4. The lyrical line, associated with long melody. (Gutman, 1988)

The Patriotic Cantata flourished in Russia during the years following the 1917 Revolution with clearly defined characteristics:

1. National historic event as subject, to be treated dramatically.
2. A “monumental” concept, crafted so the masses could both listen to the music and participate in performing it, reaffirming their commitment to Communist ideology.
3. Easily identifiable musical elements such as folksong, traditional instruments, and idioms.

The Soviet “patriotic cantatas” have no exact counterpart in Western European music. The aesthetic debate within Russian music gradually polarized between the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians (“RAPM”), founded in 1924, and the Association for Contemporary Music (“ACM”); its Moscow branch was founded in 1923. In numerous policy statements the RAPM demanded ‘the extension of the hegemony of the proletariat to music’; the creation of ‘music reflecting the rich, full-blooded psychology of the most advanced, sensitive, and understanding class—the proletariat’; the rejection of ‘contemporary bourgeois music incompatible with the proletarian spirit’; the prohibition of ‘extremist innovations’; and the assimilation of those ‘masters of the past whose music embodied proletarian ideals’. The ACM, conversely, urged Soviet composers to learn from the ‘full-blooded virile, sane, lucid, deeply emotional’ music of Alban Berg. New music, claimed the ACM, was closer in spirit to the proletarian century than the great music of the past. (Gutman, 1988) Prokofiev, as one of the best Soviet composers, contributed heavily to the genre as did Alexander Katalasky, Alexander Davidenko, Alexander Krein, and Lev Knipper. Prokofiev’s contribution to the genre includes *Cantata for the 20th Anniversary of the October Revolution*, *Ode to Stalin*, *Flourish Mighty Land*, and *On Guard for Peace*. The large-scale composition, *Cantata for the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution*, Op. 74, is Prokofiev’s attempt to extol the virtues of Communism using the writings of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin. In contrast, his oratorio *On Guard for Peace*, based upon a text glorifying the ideal of peace in the world, sounds as if Prokofiev

genuinely believed in the ideals embodied in the work. Is there a vibrant national spirit motivating Prokofiev's Soviet phase or does the Soviet musician as 'glorifier of Communism' have precious little in common with the nationalist masters of old Russia? Regardless, Prokofiev's return to the USSR is itself some measure of his attachment to his homeland. (Gutman, 1988)

On a personal level, Prokofiev was homesick. It was Russia that beckoned him; neither the Soviet regime nor Marxism. As Nicolas Nabokov explained:

Prokofiev accepted the Russian Revolution in its 'totality' and saw in the new Russia the logical consequence of the old one, the result of a century-long process of emancipation. He was ... a sincere and instinctive Russian patriot, ... a person whose political thinking never developed and how, not unlike many American artists, believed that his main job was to do his own work and leave political matters and entanglements to others. At the same time he felt very strongly his profound association, or rather his organic tie, with Russia, with the Russian people and Russian culture. Despite his long years abroad and his position as a famous composer in the Western world, he remained essentially Russian, in his habits, his behavior, and his art.

When the early plans of the Soviet government concerning the future of Soviet music became known, ... Prokofiev welcomed the official edict as a realization of some of his own ideas about the function of music. 'I always wanted to invent melodies,' he often remarked, 'which could be understood by large masses of people—simple, singable melodies.' This he considered to be the most important and difficult task of the modern composer. (Gutman, 1988)

Cantata for the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution, Op. 74 (1936). In 1936 preparations began for two major jubilees—the twentieth anniversary of the Revolution and the centenary of the death of Pushkin. For the latter occasion, Prokofiev undertook to provide incidental music for stage adaptations of *Eugene Onegin* and *Boris Godunov* and a film version of *The Queen of Spades*. Unfortunately, none of his Pushkin pieces was produced until after Prokofiev's death. The *Cantata for the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution* was equally unlucky, though as a sincere attempt to approach the moving target of 'Socialist Realism', it was perhaps bound to fail. The *Cantata for the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution* is a large-scale composition for massive choral-symphonic forces. It also is an attempt to glorify and extol the virtues of Communism, depicting it as being something noble and humane, by employing the writings of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin. Its principal themes are the Great October Socialist Revolution, victory, industrialization, and the Constitution. Prokofiev became interested in the idea of composing a cantata based upon Revolutionary texts in the early 1930s after studying Lenin's works. A commission from the all-Union Radio Committee served as the impetus for the project. Prokofiev began the work in 1936 and completed it the following summer, in anticipation that it would be performed as part of the festivities in celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Revolution. The complex events reflected in the cantata demanded a complex musical idiom that would, at the same time, be accessible to Soviet audiences and for the mass audience as well.

The score is unexpectedly passionate. No pious platitudes here. The sixth movement, Revolution, is particularly gripping; its choirs sound off antiphonally, exchanging snatches of

Lenin's text faster and faster until the underlying ostinato erupts into an astonishing series of effects—a superimposed bayan ensemble, a spoken announcement over loudspeakers, fire alarms ringing, sirens wailing. This is not 'safe' music, hence its failure to receive a single performance in Prokofiev's lifetime. Found guilty of 'vulgar leftist tendencies' (Nestyev), it could be put down as a dry run for *Alexander Nevsky* and forgotten. Musicologist Moisey Grinberg (1904-1968) described the June 19, 1937, run-through of the draft piano-vocal score at the offices of the Committee of Artistic Affairs, which proved to be a fiasco, as follows:

I am the sole participant of the sole run-through of the piano score of the Cantata who remains alive. The event took place in ... the presence of P.M. Kerzhentsev (the Chairman of the All-Union committee of Artistic Affairs). I remember Platon Mikhailovich saying, "Just what do you think you're doing, Sergey Sergeyeovich, taking texts that belong to the people and setting them to such incomprehensible music?" It must be said the Prokofiev sang very badly but played splendidly on the piano. ... As an obvious result of the criticism, ... the composition was put aside for 28 years. (Morrison and Kravetz, 2006)

Kerzhentsev did not ban the cantata outright, he simply ensured that it went unperformed by instructing the conductor Alexander Gauk, who had attended the June 19 reading rehearsal, not to prepare it. Prokofiev never benefited from his risk-laden, capricious labor.

Ironically, by this time Stalin, too, was dead and disgraced, so the two movements drawn from his speeches were deleted. Until Neeme Jarvi's 1992 performance and recording with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus, the complete work remained unknown, not only in Britain but also everywhere outside Eastern Europe. The Cantata calls for all the musical resources one can muster in order to serve as an instrument of party propaganda, a vision of the heroic peasant-worker state that was constantly alluded to, but never realized; the heroic age that never really existed beyond the magnificent facades of Russian architecture. The work, cast in ten movements, calls for 8-voice choir, expanded orchestra including quadruple woodwinds, eight horns, four trumpets, four trombones, two tubas, plus timpani, percussion, harps, keyboards, and large strings. In addition, there are three extra instrumental groups which the composer utilizes at strategic moments:

1. A bayan orchestra.
2. A brass band consisting of saxhorns, extra trumpets, and horns, and
3. A percussion ensemble that includes alarm-bells, cannon-shot, sirens, and other sound-effect equipment. Added to this conflagration is a speaker, reminiscent of the 'voice of Lenin,' making an announcement through a megaphone.

Added to this conflagration is a speaker, reminiscent of the "voice of Lenin," making an announcement through a megaphone. The movements of the work are:

1. *A Spectre is Haunting Europe* (Prelude)
2. *The Philosophers* (Marx/Feuerbach)
3. *Interlude*
4. *A Tight Little Band* (Lenin)
5. *Interlude*
6. *Revolution* (Lenin)

7. *Victory* (Lenin—speeches & articles, October 1917)
8. *The Oath* (Stalin's Pledge—speech at Lenin's bier)
9. *Symphony*
10. *The Constitution* (Stalin's Constitution—8th Extraordinary Congress of Soviets)

The *Prelude*, subtitled “A spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of Communism,” is derived from the *Epigraph* from the *Communist Manifesto* and implies dark forces. One of Prokofiev's most spectacular openings, the Cantata begins in a slow 3/2 meter with trombones, tuba, celli, bass, timpani, and tam-tam resounding in octave unisons on a low F, *fortissimo-piano* with crescendo, followed by a minor fanfare-like figure comprised of sixteenth-note and eighth-note triplet figure (mm. 1-4). The opening fanfare's melodic shape is rounded out by the use of an arpeggiated altered chord (B-D-F-Ab-C) in the lower woodwinds, brass, lower strings, and piano, punctuated by a heavily accented triplet rhythmic figure in the violins and violas (mm. 5-8). The pounding rhythmic pattern, combined with a soaring trumpet solo in mm. 9-25, represents the ghostly spread of communism across the land; and the figure is repeated, with the trumpet joined by the horns and trombones. The opening material returns at m. 44, but noteworthy in the return is the use of chromatic harmony in the strings at m. 46 that supports the lyrical melody in the upper woodwinds. The tremolo technique and harmonic movement are reminiscent of both Berlioz (*Symphonie Fantastique*) and Mussorgsky (*Pictures at an Exhibition*). With a nod toward tradition, the Prelude ends with a C major chord.

The text for the fourth movement, *A Tight Little Band*, derives, like the bulk of the texts used in the Cantata, from the 1933 six-volume edition of Lenin's writings from the Central Committee Institute of Marx, Engels, and Lenin:

In a tight little band, hands firmly joined, we are treading a steep and narrow way. We are surrounded on all sides by foes and nearly always must undergo their fire. We freely decided to unite to combat our foes, and not to be seduced by the stick-in-the-muds who from the very first arraigned us for splitting into a special group and for choosing the path of struggle not conciliation, and nearly always we must undergo their fire.

This “song for the masses” exhibits elements of Russian folksong such as modal harmonies (Lydian 4th), balalaika “strumming” effects in the strings, rhythmic emphasis on the second beat in the measure, and includes striking word-painting devices. The melodic line rises and falls to proclaim both joy and despair. To represent the Bolsheviks “trudging along a steep and narrow way,” Prokofiev creates a rough and crooked line that struggles to define B minor. For every step up, the melody falls two steps back. To represent the “enemies” that surround the Bolsheviks “on all sides,” Prokofiev pairs an ascending scale segment in B minor with a descending segment in B major and then surrounds it with the pitches F, Ab, and Db. The music for the text, “We freely decided to unite to combat our foes...” is a variation of the music of the first line, with E replacing B as the tonal center. Near the end of the phrase the soldier wanders into a G minor “struggle.” (Morrison and Kravetz, 2006) The movement opens simply, with the melody in the bass voices, accompanied by *pizzicato* string upbeats (mm. 1-6); the texture gradually increases by adding clarinets to the accompaniment at m. 7, along with bassoons and horns doubling the melodic line at m. 14, and addition of tenor voices and trumpets at m. 28. Sopranos and altos join the male voices at m. 38, along with accompanying figures in the upper woodwinds, harps, and piano. Full sonority is reached at m. 62, where both

choirs (Choir I, consisting of Tenor and Bass voices only; Choir II consisting of Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass voices) and, to symbolize the marching feet of the “band,” Prokofiev employs *col legno* strings. The homophonic vocal texture continues to the end of the movement with an evasive cadence (G minor) and drum roll at the end, leading to movement No. 5.

Movement *No. 6, Revolution* depicts the chaotic upsurge of violent events of 1917, creating an entire cosmos where the past collapses into the present and the real into the unreal. The text, derived from Lenin’s speeches and articles of October 1917, initiates a process in which a series of small events prompts large-scale sociopolitical transformation. The pertinent portions of the text include:

The crisis has come to a head. We shall overcome, categorically and undoubtedly. ... Let us seize power at once ... The whole honour of the Bolshevik party is at stake. ... The whole future of the revolution is at stake. ... Not to take power now would destroy the revolution. ... The success of the revolution hangs on two or three days! Let all perish but do not let the enemy pass! ...

The music represents this process through the continual variation of discrete melodic and rhythmic shapes and a load of quotations from previous movements, visitations from other scores, and *musique concrete* (a siren, an alarm bell, recorded speech, and the sound of marching feet). Just as Prokofiev relied upon the principle of *art combinatorial* for the libretto, he also did so for the score. Elements of the melodies of movements 3 and 5 form the antiphonal exchanges between the male and female singers in the first half of the movement. The actual sound of people replaces fictional depiction. (Morrison and Kravetz, 2006) Prokofiev features the augmented triad and whole-tone scale, creating a harmonic climax that is absent a tonal center and emanates from and leads to nowhere. The movement opens with chromatic string figures accompanying an oboe solo and is enriched by harp and string tremolos at m. 9 leading to the first entrance of the women’s voices in the upper register that begins the antiphonal pattern between voice and orchestra (mm. 10-16), which is later augmented by adding the male voices accompanied by low brass to the musical equation (mm. 17-27). The “battle” is depicted in the middle of the movement (mm. 165-184) by the entrance of the military band, percussion, trumpet fanfares, and string scale passages, and “victory is celebrated at m. 172 with the entrance of the bayan ensemble. The voice of Lenin and crowd noise (mm.291-293) is supplanted by the full choirs entering with both spoken and sung text (mm.306-325), followed by string and woodwind scalar passages. The movement closes (beginning at m. 341) in a slower tempo with growling, secco brass chords, string tremolo reminiscent of the Prelude, along with a horn quotation of the folk melody and the descending chromatic line in the oboes, clarinets, bassoons, and contrabassoon.

The text for the final movement, *No. 10, The Constitution*, derives neither from Marx as originally planned nor Pushkin, but from Stalin. Having quoted him on the subject of Lenin’s death in movement 8, Prokofiev again gives him a voice in movement 10 on the subject of the constitution. The adoption of this document in December 1936 was marked by a Bolshoi Theater performance of Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy.” As events played out, Prokofiev’s decision to set Stalin was significantly less prudent than Beethoven’s decision to set Schiller. The Stalin quotations transformed the *Cantata for the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution* into a “dangerous,” “politically incorrect,” and possibly “criminal” experiment. Although composers produced songs and choruses about Stalin in bulk in the mid-1930s, references to

the ruler were nonetheless subject to censorship—former leaders of the Communist Party could be shown on stage and screen, current leaders were off-limits. Likewise, artists were prohibited from representing the Tsar in their works. (Morrison and Kravetz, 2006, p. 248) The finale to the *Cantata* opens with chord clusters, followed by an arching melodic line in the bass clarinet, bassoon, and horns (mm. 4-9) which prepares the listener for the full chorus' unison entrance (m. 5). The texture thins to accommodate the women's voices, accompanied by piano and, after a brief *meno mosso*, the women resume, this time accompanied by woodwinds, string, and muted trumpets (m. 39). The text is thus treated antiphonally with the men's voices and trumpet doubling (m.50), followed by the re-entrance of the women's voices with the rich, lyrical melody at m. 62. A *rallentando* in m. 73 resplendent with timpani, cymbal rolls, and rich brass chords prepares the transition to the full homophonic choral statement of the text (mm. 74-78). The texture then divides itself as the men's voices are accompanied by snare drum and muted brass (m. 80) and the women's voices are accompanied by trombones (m. 84). To conclude the work, Prokofiev employs the full choral statement, extended and amplified by evasive cadences, pivot chord modulations, and diminution. Finally the tempo slows and above the full orchestra, including high brass and screaming piccolo obbligato lines, the full choirs sustain the final words of the text, hovering between chord clusters and major tonalities; finally resolving to a *fortississimo* C Major chord. The listener is left breathless.

Knowing what we now know of Stalin and the Russia he created, it is perhaps impossible to read the platitudinous texts of those "Stalin" movements without recalling the definition of "obscene." What is most important, though, is the music that Prokofiev composed, and our responsibility is to make up our minds accordingly. Prokofiev always strove for transparency in his orchestration and employed only the absolute minimum of instruments. His use of ensembles of several soloists in the orchestra lends an uncommon richness of color to his scores. In scoring he attached particular importance to change in timbres depending upon the register. This explains why he often used very low or very high notes for the trumpets, oboes, and clarinets, causing much complaining on the part of the musicians.

Prokofiev struggled to maintain his artistic integrity while also adhering to official policy. He found himself straddling an ethical line. The transformation is most evident in Hail to Stalin, a 12-and-a-half minute score for mixed chorus and orchestra completed in the traumatic year of 1939 for Soviet Radio.

Hail to Stalin (Zdravitsa), Op. 85 (1939) is based upon text from Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Mordovian, Kumyk, Kurd, and Mari folklore. First performed December 21, 1939 in Moscow. Conducted by Golovanov. Score published by State Music Publishers, 1941; arrangement for voice and piano by L. Atovmyan, 1946. (Prokofiev, 1979, p. 292) The opening lines of *Hail to Stalin* express the joy of free *Kolkhoz* labor (Gutman, 1988, p. 9):

Never have our fertile fields such a harvest shown,
 Never have our villagers such contentment known,
 Never life has been so fair, spirits so high,
 Never to the present day,

Never to the present day grew so green the rye.

'France perished because of excesses and vices; we must preserve morals.' In 1939, Stalin felt the same and Prokofiev was taking no chances. (Gutman, 1988) *Hail to Stalin* or, *A Toast*, was

written in 1939 as a commissioned work by the All-Union Radio for Stalin's sixtieth birthday. Having survived the firestorm of criticism of the *Cantata for the 20th Anniversary of the October Revolution*, Prokofiev was now well-acquainted with the primitive and conservative official taste in music. Since he began to work on the cantata while still in France, it cannot be said that he was obliged to compose it. The explanation for the work seems to reside in the commission, its potential benefits to his career, and its compelling creative challenges. (Morrison and Kravetz, 2006) Currying favor with the Committee, Prokofiev decided to err on the side of caution while at the same time attempting to avoid typical Soviet-style servile glorification of Stalin. In *Hail to Stalin* the composer crafted a type of Soviet pastorate, attempting to be as simple as possible and incorporating stylistic devices from his recent successful film score for *Alexander Nevsky*. However, the work does include verses from the folk songs about Stalin. The work was one of numerous paens to the Soviet ruler written for his 60th birthday. In bitter contrast to the reality of mass starvation and deportation, the work offers fairytale images of resplendent harvests and harmonious labor. Prokofiev was utterly sincere in his attempt to substitute a saccharine fantasy for reality, to disguise totalitarian grimness.

He cobbled together the libretto using fake folk poems by official writers. In fact, such "poetry" was written by professionals in a folk-like manner and then published in special "folk songbooks" in order to show the universal love for the great leader. Prokofiev neither quoted Stalin nor referred to recent historical events. Instead, his libretto, which comprises five poems of contrasting meters, affirms that happiness blossoms wherever the great leader treads, and that Soviet life overflows with abundance. The first two verses of the poem read:

There has never been a field so green
The village is filled with unheard-of happiness
Our life has never been so happy
Our rye has hitherto never been so plentiful

(Morrison and Kravetz, 2006)

Though Prokofiev obviously was not fully inspired by this project, it nevertheless contains beautiful music. For example, the main hymn-like theme, which opens and closes the work, and the choral scene "Aksinyk goes to Kremlin," a masterly stylization of a wedding folk song, are some of the composer's best efforts. However, the disproportion of the score, the mechanically repeated scales that are reminiscent of piano etudes, and the inconceivably uninspired, unpoetic text point to a carefully masked irony. The contrast between sun-drenched imagery of the score's libretto and the circumstances in which it was performed is telling; so too is the muteness of Prokofiev's response to the score's success. The last lines of *Hail to Stalin*, which describe the ruler as the "flame" of the people's "blood," underscore the contradiction of Prokofiev's aspiration to appease the regime on his own terms.

There is a mystical element to this score, an acknowledgement by Prokofiev that the specter of conformism, more than the specter of Communism, had been stalking him. In his propagandistic works, Prokofiev found himself depicting victories rather than failures, smiling and marching rather than weeping and stumbling. The ode has been described as "tragic" and "satiric" at the same time. Overall, Prokofiev successfully created a warmhearted and joyful, though fictional, picture of a sunny life of soviet "kolkhoznics." Although Prokofiev himself never commented on the work in any of his writings, the Soviet authorities called it a

masterpiece, the piece was approved by a special committee, recommended for further performances, and published in no fewer than three editions—one with an English-language libretto. The text, however, had to be changed in the second edition in 1956 when Stalin was dismissed by new party leaders. (Pritsker, 2009) So the glorification of Stalin by this work was, at best, short-lived. The study of this work permits us to apprehend the human, social psychology of the past, in the hope that we might overcome the scary aspects of human nature that produced this blind generation, the uncritical acceptance of Soviet leaders, and so forth.

Flourish, Mighty Land, Op. 114 (1947), cantata on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the October Revolution, for mixed chorus and large orchestra, including harp and piano. Text by Y. Dolmatovsky. First performed November 12, 1947, in Moscow, conductor N.P. Anosov, with Russian Choir led by A. S. Stepanov. Piano score published in mimeographed form by Muzfond, 1947. (Prokofiev, 1979)

In opposition to the *Cantata for the 20th Anniversary of the October Revolution*, this one-movement work lasts a mere eight minutes. The duration was obviously a disappointment for the Soviet authority, which had anticipated a more grandiose offering. The cantata offers much fine music, but has been unjustly neglected primarily for its pro-Communist lyrics. We also must bear in mind the [tenuous] situation in which Prokofiev worked: To decline such a commission from the Stalinist regime could have meant death for Prokofiev and his family.

The choral parts, although expressive and melodic, are typical of Prokofiev's warmer style; however, some sections sound comedic and raise the question of Prokofiev's sincerity in his praise of the Revolution and the Stalinist regime in the lyrics. The cantata begins with a lively trumpet melody in D_b major which is repeated by muted trumpet and piccolo. Afterward, strings and woodwinds continue to develop the theme. The chorus introduces a radiant *a cappella* melody which alternates with orchestral sections. The climax is achieved when the chorus and orchestra join forces. Prokofiev's excellent choral writing is demonstrated when the female voices repeat the word "Glory" with male voices singing the melodic line underneath. The chorus repeats the unaccompanied sections, with slight variation provided by orchestral chords reminiscent of Prokofiev's opera, *Betrothal in a Monastery*. The work closes with the return of the opening trumpet melody and a mini-code consisting of descending tritones (high D_b, G, low D_b). [Flourish, Mighty Land (Prokofiev) Wikipedia.org, 2009]

Prokofiev's life after the winter of 1945 was one long, desperate struggle to carry on with his creative work in spite of illness. There were periods when his doctors forbade him to work altogether, or when they permitted him no more than two hours of work a day. Yet Prokofiev did not acquiesce; he never lost his cheerful, courageous outlook on life, his youthful spirit, and his truly phenomenal capacity for work. (Prokofiev, 1956)

Early in 1948 Andriol Zhdanov made a sinister reappearance. By this time the Allied honeymoon had lost the last of its glamour and East and West were glowering at each other in prewar style. Stalin began to take a hard-line approach. It was the old Russian story; Pushkin had never been permitted to make the visit to Western Europe he longed for so deeply; now Soviet artists were discouraged from visiting the West. Inside the Soviet Union a new self-sufficiency campaign commenced which included a thorough clean-out of Western influence; the degeneracy of Western life and art was denounced and the Soviet people warned against them. This was good propaganda and Stalin likely believed it too; he could effectively point to the unhealthy state of literature and music, reflecting life as it always does. His error was in

presuming that Russians would be corrupted by the West. Stalin was not interested in great art but in a great Russia and forgot that the one is a meaningless phrase without the other. Prokofiev had already stated this publicly. “Many of our composers,” he wrote, “are worried about the kind of music they should write now. I feel sure that our chief need is great music, that is to say music corresponding in form and content with the greatness of our age. Such music would stimulate our own musical development and would show our true art to other countries.” ... “The danger of becoming provincial is unfortunately a very real one for Soviet composers.” (Hanson, 1964, p. 320) When Zhdanov was ordered to attack, he struck at the tallest tree which could be relied on to bring the rest down with it: Prokofiev was a natural target. He had lived in the West and his work displayed western influence. His value as ambassador was now nil; and, in Stalin’s view, the great new Russia no longer needed ambassadors. He was fair game according to the Stalinist rules; the fact that he was slowly dying did not deter Zhdanov, a formidable opponent of free art, for one moment. (Hanson, 1964) As a result, Zhdanov pounced on Prokofiev’s Sixth Symphony, reminding Soviet music critics that such music would not be understood by the hard-working Soviet citizen and pointing out that its mood of sorrow was an insult to a nation which had suffered and won. The critics issued a sheaf of “second thought” articles on the symphony denouncing the praise of a few months earlier and calling the work a very un-Soviet-like way to celebrate the winning of a war, incomprehensible, violent, and morbid. (Hanson, 1964) On February 10, 1948, the Decree on Music was published, leveling charges against six composers headed by Prokofiev: They had “persistently adhered to formalist and anti-Soviet practices in their music, which is marked by formalist perfusions and many undemocratic tendencies. These include atonalism, dissonance, contempt for melody, and the use of chaotic and neuropathic discords—all of which are alien to the artistic tastes of the Soviet people” ... “presenting a Russian version of present-day modernist bourgeois culture” ... which “must be liquidated.” (Hanson, 1964) Unlike Shostakovich’s castigation some years earlier, there was no firestorm of criticism against Prokofiev; he continued as before, but submitted an apology and turned his attention to the performance of his piano works. *On Guard for Peace*, to words by Marshak, was a testing composition, but partly from habit, partly from the growing fear that his time was short, Prokofiev looked around between breaths for anything still left undone.

On Guard for Peace, OP. 124 (1950), oratorio for mezzo-soprano, recitation, mixed chorus, boys’ chorus and symphony orchestra, to words by S. Marshak in 10 parts. First performed December 19, 1950, in Moscow, conductor S.A. Samosud, with choir led by K. Ptitsa, boys’ choir of the Moscow Choir School (director A.V. Sveshnikov), soloists Z. Dolukhanova and Zh. Talanov, pupil of Moscow Choir School, recitation by N. Efron and A. Schwartz. Score and author’s arrangement for voices and piano published by State Music Publishers, 1952. (Prokofiev, 1956, p. 293) *On Guard for Peace* may not boast the dizzying excesses of the cantata or even a melody to rival the enigmatic pathos of the tune which launches the birthday-toast *Zdravitsa (Hail to Stalin)* of 1939, but there is enough authentic Prokofiev in the work to justify its resuscitation even though the oratorio’s theme may have been commandeered since 1948 by the soviet bloc as a propaganda tool against the west’s cry of ‘freedom’.

Prokofiev described the impetus for *On Guard for Peace*:

Not long ago I composed a new oratorio. It is entitled *On Guard for Peace*. I did not seek this theme either, nor did I select it from a number of others. It sprang from life itself, my life and the life of my people. ... I have many friends and acquaintances who are writing books, planting gardens and building houses. Their whole lives are filled

with the poetry of peaceful labour. And that is how the theme of my new oratorio came into being. It tells of the grim days of World War II, of the tears of mothers and orphans, of towns swept by fire, of the terrible trials that fell to the lot of our people; of Stalingrad and the victory over the enemy; of the radiant joy of creative labour, of the happy childhood of our children. In this composition I have sought to express my ideas about peace and war, and my firm belief that there will be no more wars, that the nations of the world will safeguard the peace, save civilization, our children, our future. Perhaps all this sounds somewhat too ambitious for such a modest work, but I think the oratorio expresses the principles I mentioned before. (Prokofiev, 1956)

The movements of *On Guard for Peace* are:

1. *'Ere the guns had ceased to thunder*
2. *To those who are ten today*
3. *Stalingrad, city of glory*
4. *May the heroes be rewarded*
5. *We do not want war*
6. *Doves of peace*
7. *Cradle song*
8. *Peace celebrations*
9. *Talk in the ether (radio conversation)*
10. *The whole world declares war on war*

While working on the oratorio, Prokofiev repeatedly spoke of his desire for simplicity and clarity of musical idiom. He gave much thought to this problem and it was constantly in his mind, insisting that it was not the old simplicity he was striving for, not a repetition of what had been said before, but a new simplicity, implicit in the new Soviet way of life. As Prokofiev saw it, this simplicity should be combined with the highest level of artistic skill, with the evolution of a distinctive, individual style (“but with no affectation of originality”). (Prokofiev, 1956)

By December, Prokofiev had completed the oratorio. It was performed publicly in Moscow that same month and made an immediate impression on a packed hall. The oratorio is a bombastic work stressing the might of Soviet Russia and a warning to the rest of the world to keep its distance. That was the line taken by Stalin; Prokofiev had his own views and expressed them here from his heart – the heart not only of a great Russian but of a great human being, a patriot who hated petty nationalism, a fighter who hated war. The text is by Samuil Marshak, whose monologue of juvenile heroism, *A Twenty-Year-Old*, Prokofiev had set in *Songs of Our Days*, and whose text had accompanied his 1949 children’s suite *Winter Bonfire*.

Gliere recounts that Prokofiev could not sleep the night before the premiere for worrying about the reaction of the audience to his oratorio. Would they understand what he had wished to say? The oratorio is a natural extension of the thought which led to the Sixth Symphony. And how happy he was on coming home from the Conservatoire, after a performance of the oratorio for the workers and employees of some factory, who had received both the composer and the oratorio with enthusiasm. He longed for his music to be appreciated and understood by Soviet audiences. (Prokofiev, 1956)

“So my oratorio first re-creates the grim war days, the lament of women and children for their dead, the terrible trials of the people, victory, the radiant joy of peaceful work and of children happily growing up unterrified by the threat of the horrors of war. In this oratorio I have tried to express my feelings about war and peace and my firm belief that there will be no more wars, that all the nations of the world will safeguard the peace, save civilization, our children and our future.” The crux of this courageous and inspiring work is a boy’s solo: “We don’t want war.” (Hanson, 1964) Prokofiev introduces a lightness of touch to this work, particularly in the second, fifth, and sixth movements; sadly, it is also the children’s chorus who echo the sentiment that their best friend, and best hope for peace, is the man who lives in the Kremlin—Comrade Stalin—who in his last five-year plan was anticipating a third world war to be launched by another wave of Jewish pogroms. There is sadness under the jolly-jog-trot for the child who remembers the war; “enduing peace on Earth’ is proclaimed by the women at the end of the fourth number in eerie triads, and further doubts surround the mezzo-soprano’s placid lullaby. Prokofiev trumpets the obligatory big tune in style at the start of the Stalingrad movement; it may not have the same level of quality as earlier works, but it serves *On Guard for Peace* sufficiently to convey the stirring final majesty.

In 1958, five years after the deaths of Stalin and Prokofiev, all the composers condemned in 1948 were to be officially declared innocent and the 1948 resolution withdrawn as “incorrect,” but Stalin anticipated the inevitable. In fact, he surrendered unconditionally, though in true dictator style he twisted defeat into the appearance of magnanimity. He awarded the 1951 Stalin Prize to Prokofiev for his oratorio, and on April 23 the composer’s sixtieth birthday was publicly honored throughout the country. Special Prokofiev concerts were held everywhere and in all musical centers he and his work were eulogized. He was the pride of the Soviet Union. Prokofiev received the news of art’s latest victory without exuberance. Since he had never varied his style of writing to order, the official implication that he could write as he pleased had no meaning for him; he was fighting a worse enemy than Stalin – his own body. He was too ill to attend the birthday celebrations in Moscow. (Hanson, 1964) Prokofiev died of a cerebral hemorrhage on March 5, 1953, but his passing went almost unnoticed for Stalin died on that same day (Redepenning, 2009).

What distinguishes musical attributes as Communist, Russian, or even Nationalist in origin? Were the policies of ‘Socialist Realism’ that influenced the latter part of Prokofiev’s career anything more than an official attempt to re-direct tradition just as the Russian Orthodox Church had managed to do for centuries? If we consider Communism as a species of secular religion, then the parallel is extremely close. Prokofiev was a national composer in the broadest sense of the word, but not in the manner of the conventionally Russian pseudo-realists. Nor is he national in the “holy water” detail and genre of Perov’s or Repin’s brush. Prokofiev is national in the severely traditional sense that dates to the save Scythian and the unsurpassed perfection of the 13th century stone carvings on the cathedrals of Vladimir and Suzdal. His nationalism springs from the very sources that shaped the national consciousness of the Russian people, the source that is reflected in the folk wisdom of our old frescoes or the icon-craftsmanship of Rublev. (Prokofiev, 1956) Prokofiev’s music is deeply rooted in Russian history, reflecting the heritage of Glinka and Mussorgsky. His return to a Russia increasingly oriented toward the recreation of a nationalist and ‘realist’ school on the 19th-century model was not a craven flight from failure in the West. It was a means of consolidating his true nature. The simplicity that was required of him in the Soviet Union undoubtedly became too constricting and even distressing toward the end of his life. Party demands seem to have agreed with Prokofiev’s own simplicity, his genuine patriotism, and his willingness to take up any given

task with professional efficiency and enthusiasm. Prokofiev was infinitely, passionately sincere; his music expressed his innermost feelings, his deepest reflections on life. Prokofiev passionately loved life, nature, his country, his people. He gave himself wholly to music; and he gave his music to the world, to his fellow men. His personal life suffered, but until 1948 his music did not. Prokofiev's patriotic cantatas were his uniquely personal response to difficult and dangerous times. They show him seeking to find the recipe, the philosopher's stone for approval from the guardians of what is now a discredited and deceased ideology. We believe that Prokofiev fretted that history might not judge him kindly for his service to Soviet power. He prided himself for living in the moment, but he also was haunted by the future. (Morrison and Kravetz, 2006)

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PARIS 1968: FROM THE STUDIOS TO THE STREETS

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1968 is synonymous with world-wide dissent, unequivocal action, and public and political tragedy. And while the era is recognized as an historical milestone in modern collective memory, it has equally become spectral. Edmundo Desnoes, Cuban exile and author of the post-Cuban revolution novel, *Memories of Underdevelopment*, wrote on the thirtieth anniversary of '68: "The lights were pointed in a certain direction, but instead of revealing and changing the injustices taking place in the public spaces, the rebellion seems thirty years later to shine indoors, in bedroom morality and living room intercourse."¹ This, despite images in photographs, film, posters, and graffiti, which that bear witness to a period of open dissent challenging Cold War absolutes, and exclusionary political, educational, and social policies. This historic juncture of a pre-'68 world and a post-'68 terrain seeded a platform upon which culture wars soon flourished, but seemed to leave behind fragmentary political and economic change. Yet, the successes and failures of the era of '68 nonetheless bear witness to an unprecedented moment of aspiration, and a willingness to take immediate action in the belief that positive transformation was possible.² The Paris *Ateliers Populaires* (Peoples Workshops) certainly exemplified this spirit of the moment; but, the organization of the workshops also introduced an innovative studio paradigm with sense of urgency that demanded efficiency.

In these past forty years, hundreds of books and articles have been written about the May '68 in Paris, a water-shed moment often referred to as a near second French Revolution. Despite the countless commemorations, publications, conferences, and commercial exploitation, even a central figure in the events of May 68, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, student leader from Nanterre University and now leader of European Union Green Party, has titled his latest book, *Forget 1968*.³ So, what can we gain by re-considering the role of French artists in this public theater of insurgency and hope? What conditions prompted artists and students to take action in re-thinking their role and changing their practices? And in what ways might we see an outgrowth of a historical model within our educational system, if not directly in our political sphere?

The Peoples Workshops provided a forum where artists, students, and workers from factories to medical school played a key role in directing and supporting the "events of May," most often, anonymously. Artist Gérard Fromanger, a leader in the workshops at the Ecole de Beaux Arts, recalled in a 1988 interview: "It is clear that it was not the Atelier des Beaux Art that made May '68, but precisely '68 which made the Ateliers Populaire des Beaux Arts..."⁴ The Paris workshops transformed the walls of the city into a skin of images⁵ that directed and responded to a range of issues that culminated in a brief period of two months in the fields of education, medicine, media, politics, unions, culture, art, as well as a lingering class divide and the experience of the everyday.

French president Charles de Gaulle was considered the face of repression overall, and he was a favored target for students, who viewed his administration as the hand of systematic authoritarianism. His military credentials, once celebrated as a sign of French liberation, were viewed—in the aftermath of the Algerian War and increasing bureaucratization of society—as fascistic. The counter-part to de Gaulle was Cohn-Bendit, the twenty-three year old sociology student-leader from the University of Nanterre, a campus located in a depressed area on the

outskirts of Paris where immigrant worker campsites were not uncommon. It was at Nanterre that Cohn-Bendit, known as “Dany the Red,” initiated the “March 22 Movement,” a mobilizing force that unleashed student unrest. He led demands for education reforms and increased personal freedoms for students and workers alike. Of French origin, but holding a German passport, he proved an incendiary figure and a charismatic media presence. Cohn-Bendit was barred from Nanterre and when brought before a disciplinary board at the Sorbonne, his dismissal further ignited student grievances. Student unrest and mayhem in the streets of the Latin Quarter forced the suspension of classes at the Sorbonne drawing student support from public intellectuals such as Jean-Paul Sartre, and Herbert Marcuse, who returned to Paris from University of California at San Diego in a show of support for students.

By May 14, 1968, the day after violent protests on the rue Denfert-Rochereau, the Peoples Workshops at the Ecole des Beaux Arts were established.⁶ Other studios were soon set up at the Ecole des Arts Décoratifs, Faculty of Sciences, Institute of Art and Archeology, and Faculty of Medicine. Though the mains workshops at the Beaux Arts and Arts Décoratifs shared common participatory goals in the uprisings of May 68, they operated independently and their political affiliations and leanings (Communist Party, Trotskyites, Maoists, for example) attracted different constituents of artists resulting in a recognizable difference in their production⁷ The Ecole de Beaux Arts had the advantage of established lithography studio, allowing their production to begin immediately; but neither facility had serigraphy facilities.⁸ This medium was used primarily in the U.S. where it had been established during World War II to generate posters to rally support for the war cause. The artist known as Rougement, who had just returned from the US, set up basic silkscreen presses in a production-line model at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, launching a printing method that was little used in France at the time⁹ While at the Arts Décoratifs, where lithography and offset printing was situated, newspapers such as L’Humanité donated left-over rolls of newsprint and staircases were used to unfurl the bobbins of paper to enable systematic printing and cutting of posters.¹⁰ With remarkable speed, the workshops generated thousands of posters gaining momentum as strikes spread from universities to factories, to government services, and media outlets—reaching a peak of some 10,000,000 strikers throughout France.

The first poster produced—U. U. U. (*usine, université, union*) was a minimal print inspired by demonstration slogans. It served to forge an alliance between students and workers, and it was the only poster intended to generate funds to support the material costs of running the workshops.¹¹ From the beginning, students were adamant that their production was not to be considered art nor were the posters to be accorded the status of historical documents.¹² The position tract written at the Beaux Art, published initially in Paris and by late summer 1968, an English edition, states that their goal was not to modernize art and the role of the artists, but instead, to change the condition of art from that of consumer item.¹³ The workshops aimed to re-direct the mission of visual images to immanent historical conditions including providing arts education in schools and to the public. Students believed that they, too, needed to undertake a self-education outside the isolation of a self-perpetuating academic education with a new aim to transform the role of the artist in society.

The workshop systems aspired to a democratic and resourceful production. The Beaux Arts workshops operated on a near twenty-four schedule from May 14 until June 27. Under the leadership of an elected General Assembly of artists and students, poster proposals were presented daily based on an analysis of the day’s events; and student action committees were dispersed to various protest and strike zones to confer on pending grievances.¹⁴ According to

their manifesto, Atelier Populaire: OUI, Atelier Bourgeois: NON, successful proposals took into account appropriateness and fairness of the issue, and importantly, the visual–verbal punch of the idea or message. In all, there were about 350 posters were generated in runs of up to 2000 posters.¹⁵ Their production was methodical with prescribed methods in place from image transfer to screen cleaning; the most successful images repurposed with a different text. The workshop posters are for the most part simple and raw; the newsprint on which most were printed demonstrates how the image-text impact took precedent over aesthetic refinement or nuance.

The workshop artists and students were highly critical of art education premised on disciplinary specialization and the autonomous position of art apropos the larger social and political context. They repudiated the “mentality of the Prix de Rome”¹⁶ premised on academic conformity rather than productive agency. Artists and students increasingly viewed their situation as one of marginality albeit veiled by an impression of creative liberty.

Many of the workshop artists were already politically engaged just as the students were ripe for dissent. According to Gérard Paris-Clavel, an artist working at the Arts Décoratifs, and associated with politically-based New Figuration, the students were already politicized as the result of the colonial war in Algeria and the escalation of the Viet Nam War.¹⁷ The intensification of the ongoing war in Viet-Nam which saw a turning point in January 1968 with the Tet Offensive and atrocities carried through the media had politicized students resulting in the founding of the UNEF in 1967-68. (*Union Nationale des Etudiants Français*).

De Gaulle’s attacks on youth were epitomized by the treatment of Cohn-Bendit, who in the midst of the strife, was temporarily barred from re-entry into France after a brief trip to Germany. This catapulted his situation into a public cause. Two of the most well-known posters features the image of Cohn-Bendit, which was issued with two different slogans—the first, *Nous sommes tous les Juifs et des Allemands* (We are all Jews and Germans) suggests how recent historical memory was implicated in the present dissent; the slogan was soon then replaced with *Nous somme tous undesirables* (We are all undesirable). A second popular poster featured de Gaulle; *Le Chienlit C’est lui!* (The scum, it’s him!) had been initially issued on May 19 in response to a speech by the president in which he used the phrase, “*La Reforme oui, le Chienlit non!*” (Reform yes, the scum no!). This derogatory reference to student strikers led to further attacks on de Gaulle including the cover of the student newspaper *Action* where he is shown with arms raised and the slogan, *Le Desordre, c’est moi* (Disorder, it is me).¹⁸ This publication had reached a near mass circulation during the height of the tensions.

De Gaulle’s attempt at the restoration of law and order through the formation of a “Defense of the Republic” committee to monitor and compile information on strikers and students, to protect informers, and to deploy state security forces (*CDR—Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité*). This poster that responded to this action featured an anonymous state security guard with a raised truncheon epitomizing government sponsored violence. Its success was evident in the variations on the image produced during this period. It was also an image adapted to student unrest on university campuses in California.

Of the many image of de Gaulle generated by the Workshops, the most controversial is a photo-based serigraph depicting de Gaulle’s face as a mask held up in front of Hitler dressed in a Nazi uniform with an armband illustrating de Gaulle’s insignia, the cross of Lorraine produced at the

Arts Décoratifs.¹⁹ De Gaulle was known in France during World War II as the very symbol of Liberation; he was an honored leader of resistance forces against Nazi occupation and the collaborationist Vichy regime. Within two decades, this national figure of liberation was indicted as the embodiment of fascism. Michèle Cone has argued that the production of this image, after debate and approval by artist and student committees, exposed their lack of historical understanding and comprehension of the Occupation. Instead, the rendering of the image of de Gaulle demonstrated the changed meaning of fascism in 1960s France where it was increasingly equated with any form of state or corporate authority serving to banalize (using Hannah Arendt's well-known description of evil) the Holocaust and France's role in it.²⁰ The poster remains anonymous though Paris-Clavel, who printed the image, admitted that while it is a masterful image, its production was misguided.²¹

The difficult transition to a production-based economy associated with French Americanization in the postwar period, along with de Gaulle's efforts at rapid modernization contributed to the grievances in the auto and manufacturing sectors. For the Citroën auto workers, the workshops produced *A bas des Cadences infernales* (Down with the infernal rhythms); and the poster *Salaires Léger—Chars Lourd* (Light Salaries Heavy Loads). De Gaulle's efforts to engage labor in reform efforts in a speech on May 24, were initially unsuccessful and resistance is evident in posters such as *Je Participe... ils profitent* (I participate ... they profit), which urged workers to reject his plan. And after formal labor meetings at Grenelle to advance worker reform (including a return to a forty hour workweek), labor's rejection of the plan nearly destabilized the government. *Travailleurs Unis* (Workers Unite) was produced in support of foreign workers on their request in response to the government campaign to expel foreign workers, students, and journalists, *Frontières epression* (Borders = Repression) was issued during the last week of May.

The medical students too demanded reform and participated in the generation of posters. The National Center of Young Doctors were critical of the repressive structure of medical education especially the hierarchy within the field itself, and the growth of "industrialized medicine" which prioritized medical technologies and pharmaceuticals over prevention and patient context. These posters demonstrate the quick play on words and images and consistent messaging that distinguished the source—*Lutte contra le cancer Gaulliste* (Struggle against Gaullist Cancer) and *San Titre (La Croix de Lorraine)* showing a screw with the Cross of Lorraine inserted into a human head.

With strikes at newspapers and media outlets taking effect at the end of May, the workshops at the *Arts Décoratifs* produced *RTL-ORTF-Eur1*. The ORTF, the official French Radio station, was viewed as the mouthpiece of the Gaullist government, and on May 17, technicians voted to strike. Even RTL (Radio Television Luxembourg) and station Eur 1, though a source of information for students and strikers on the barricades, was accused of suppressing news of the demonstrations. The sense of distrust of news and information is directly communicated in these posters: *La Police vous parle tous les soirs a 20 H* (Police speak to you every night at 8pm), *La Police à ORTF—C'est la police chez vous* (Police at ORTF—It is the police in your home) and *La Presse—ne pas avaler* (The Press—do not swallow) featuring a medicine-shaped bottle.

In the midst of the chaos in Paris, filmmakers associated with the New Wave appeared at the Cannes Film Festival. Having taken a longstanding position against the manner in which the

festival was conducted—including the passage of the of the Blum-Byrnes Accord, which settled French war debt and opened up the French market for American films leading to charges of American influence and imperialism in the film industry.²² But, within the film industry, the firing of Henri Langlois, founder of the Paris Cinematèque, had already enraged serious filmmakers and audiences. He was removed from his government position in February 1968 and only reinstated in April after demonstrations drew high profile film directors including François Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, and Claude Chabrol, leading to an international boycott of the French government film industry.²³ Just a month later, on May 13, the French Film Critic Association called for a sympathy strike in support of students, “to protest against the violent police repression which is an assault on the nation’s cultural liberty, the secular tradition of its universities, and its democratic principles.”²⁴ Calls for suspension of the Cannes Film Festival were unsuccessful, but on May 18, François Truffaut along with Jean-Luc Goddard, Claude Lelouch, Louis Malle, and Milos Forman appealed to the festival audience to shut down the event. While unsuccessful, they did succeed in dissolving the jury so no prizes could be awarded.

A particular cultural target was André Malraux, Minister of Culture, appointed by de Gaulle in 1959. Malraux, prominent in the Popular Front in the 1930s and advocate of the museum without walls and the democratization of art, made the establishment of *Maisons de Culture* a hallmark of his tenure as minister. By establishing these regional *Maisons de Culture*, Malraux aimed to make accessible the cultural patrimony of the French state accessible throughout the country as a means to both educate and unify a fractured France in the postwar and reconstruction period between the years 1946-1959. His efforts to democratize art failed to engage those without cultural background, and his approach seemed to reinforce what was increasingly viewed as an elitist stance. Pierre Bourdieu, a critic of French cultural policies asserts that the “aesthetic grace moment” before a work of art was reserved for those whose education and background enabled that experience, one that was not available to those without education and access.²⁵ Moreover, museum collection policies in 1960s failed to support contemporary artists in either exhibitions or acquisitions.²⁶ Protests shut down the Musée National d’Art Moderne on May 18, and among the vocal critics was Pierre Restany, theorist of New Realism, who was also under fire for supporting what engaged artists considered American capitalist art. For engaged artists, Restany and artists Arman and Martial Raysse, associated with New Realism, epitomized the success of American cultural imperialism. In a series of paintings by Gilles Aillaud, Eduardo Arroyo, and Antonio Recalcanti, *To Live or to Let Die, the Tragic end of Marcel Duchamp* (1965), their political attack on contemporary art is illustrated in a sequence of vignettes, one showing the French artists and critic in US military uniforms.

The uprisings of May 1968 directed attention to the activity of daily life as a place of social change and artistic action. Guy Debord, a central figure of the Situationist International, advocated a *dérive* or a breaking out of repetitive routines as a means explore the psycho-geography of the city. Premised on experience and desire, this method aimed to alter the practice of the everyday as a means to counter a view oriented toward productive regimentation. At Nanterre, sociology professor Henri Lefèvre theorized the everyday as a site of social change through play and the festival as a means to undermine conformity. And Fluxus impresario George Macuinias defined the events, objects, and publications of an international affiliation of like-minded artists who devised alternative art productions and dissemination strategies as “a revolutionary tide in art”—providing conceptual precedents within the arts for the urgent wave of dissent in May ’68.

While the posters were to function as street weapons and not to be accorded the status of art or even historical documents, the posters were collected and have remained important historical documents of the period and the state of the arts and art education. The pedagogical goals of the workshops—social responsibility, political engagement, interdisciplinary, collaboration, and the expansion of the visual arts beyond traditional academic mediums—have become main stream in arts education. However, the knitting together of artists, curators, critics, galleries, auction houses, and museums has generated a powerful economic structure supplied by legions of young artists and those attached to it who continue to graduate from art, curatorial, museum, and auction-house educational programs, which has mollified any substantive change in the role of the artist in society, thus situating interventionist critiques within discreet art world circles. Without a shared imperative and common physical space for dissent, art as an engaged contemporary practice is often a fractious and even a nostalgic affair at odds with the consumer logic of the art market. Modern and contemporary art has become a much-watched indicator of the broader economic outlook, and a driving force from the galleries and art fairs to biennials—followed by museum acquisition committees. Apropos the workshop posters, on the fortieth anniversary of May '68, designer Paul Smith issued a deluxe edition of posters generated by the Atelier Populaire on high quality paper in cloth binding a sign that Cohn-Bendit is correct in pointing out that present-day dissent out to be re-directed away from era.

When the police shut down the Peoples Studios at the Beaux Arts on June 27, the Schools Action Committee responded with the poster *La Police s'affiche aux Beaux Arts—Les Beaux Arts s'affichent dans la rue* (the police set themselves up for the Beaux Arts—the Beaux Arts poster the streets). And on the re-election of de Gaulle on June 30, Arts Deco issue *Retour a la Normale* (Return to Normal) signaling the abrupt end of a stunning springtime in *Parisa* rare, if temporary, departure of art out of the studios and into the streets.

NOTES

1. Edmundo Desnoes, "The Walls of 68," in *Paris 1968: Posters from the Atelier Populaire*, exh. cat. (NY: Aronson Gallery, Parsons School of Design, 1998), 1.
2. See Victoria Langland, "Conference Review: Academic Anniversaries and Commemorative Conferences: History and Memory at the 40th Anniversary of 1968," *The Sixties: A Journal of History, Politics, and Culture*, vol. 1, no. 2 (December 2008), 243-245.
3. Daniel Cohn-Bendit, *Forget 68* (Paris, Editions de L'Aube, 2008).
4. "Atelier Populaire de l'ex-Ecole des Beaux Arts: Entretien avec Gérard Fromanger," *Mai 68: Les Mouvements Etudiants en France et dans le Monde* (Paris: documents de l'Histoire d' Histoire sous la direction de Geneviève Dreyfus-Armand and Laurent Gervereau, 1988), 191.
5. Desnoes (1998), 1.
6. *Atelier Populaire: Présenté par Lui-même* (Paris: Usines Universités Unions, 1968), 5.
7. "L'Atelier des Arts-Décoratifs. Entretien avec François Mische et Gérard Paris-Clavel," *Mai 68: Les Mouvements Etudiants en France et dans le Monde* (Paris: documents de l'Histoire d' Histoire sous la direction de Geneviève Dreyfus-Armand and Laurent Gervereau, 1988), 194-195.
8. "La Sérigraphie à l'Ecole des Beaux Arts. Entretien avec Rougemont," *Mai 68: Les Mouvements Etudiants en France et dans le Monde* (Paris: documents de l'Histoire d' Histoire sous la direction de Geneviève Dreyfus-Armand and Laurent Gervereau, 1988), 180.
9. *Ibid.*
10. "L'Atelier des Arts-Décoratifs. Entretien avec François Mische et Gérard Paris-Clavel," (Paris, 1988), 192.
11. "Atelier Populaire de l'ex-Ecole des Beaux Arts: Entretien avec Gérard Fromanger," (Paris, 1988), 184.

12. "To the reader," *Atelier Populaire: Posters from the Revolution* (London: Dobson Books, Ltd., 1969), n.p. Materials in the English publication are copyright protected by Usine-Université-Union, Paris, 1968. See, "Atelier Populaire: OUI Atelier Bourgeois: NON," *Atelier Populaire: Présenté par Lui-même* (Paris: Usines Universités Unions, 1968), 8-10.
13. *Ibid.*, 9.
14. *Ibid.*, 10.
15. "Atelier Populaire de l'ex-Ecole des Beaux Arts: Entretien avec Gérard Fromanger," (Paris, 1988), 185. Also see, Rebecca De Roo, *The Museum Establishment and Contemporary Art: The Politics of Artistic Display in France after 1968* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 48.
16. *Atelier Populaire: Présenté par Lui-même* (Paris, 1968), 6.
17. "L'Atelier des Arts-Décoratifs. Entretien avec François Mische et Gérard Paris-Clavel," Mai 68: *Les Mouvements Etudiants en France et dans le Monde* (Paris), 192.
18. "Le Desordre, c'est moi," cover image, *Action*, no 9, Thursday, June 13, 1968.
19. Gérard Paris-Clavel, "De même que De Gaulle-Hitler, on trouvait ça vraiment superbe. Et c'est vrai qu c'était lamentable" (Paris, 1988), 196.
20. Michèle Cone, "Hitler Equals De Gaulle in a May '68 poster," *French Modernisms: Perspectives on Art Before, during, and After Vichy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 172 and 176.
21. Cone, (Cambridge, 2001) 177.
22. Kieren Corles and Chris Darke, *Cannes: Inside the World's Premier Film Festival* (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), 26.
23. *Ibid.*, 124-127.
24. *Ibid.*, 128.
25. Pierre Boudieu as quoted in Rebecca De Roo (Cambridge, 2006), 34.
26. De Roo (Cambridge, 2006), 39.

THE ARTIST AS WITNESS AND WARRIOR

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When a Gestapo officer noticed a photograph of “Guernica” in Picasso’s apartment, he asked, “Did you do that?” “No, you did,” replied Picasso. The Artist has been a jolting and graphically haunting voice as witness of atrocities committed against our own species and others that share this planet. Artists such as Francisco Goya, Honoré Daumier, the Dadaists, Pablo Picasso, and more recently, Judy Chicago, Art Spiegelman, and Sue Coe have made political art that restores our moral consciousness. They present reminders as to who we once were, who we are and who we aspire to be. It is the Artist who has been a great warrior, a defender in the war that has always seduced and consumed us. It is the ancient one, the one that is inherent within us, the war on ethics.

The international movement of Dada was born in neutral Zurich during the moral and intellectual crisis that was a result of the absurdity of war. The discovery of mechanized war that produced mass extermination, forced a change in the psyche of the West during the First World War. That War proved killing could be efficient in an industrialized society with its technological innovations, such as poison gas, aerial surveillance photography, semi-automatic weapons, airplanes, Zeppelins and submarines. As a result, the casualties were in the tens of millions, and thousands returned home with unprecedented mutilations. The prosthetic industry’s production of half-mechanical humans, and those with psychic wounds, became motifs for the Dadaists in the form of the theme human vs. machine.¹ The modern media culture in the form of posters, cinema, film, newsreels, radio, and photos with text on a page were tools for the artists, writers and performers to redefine art making and to create “anti-art.”

In 1937, the same year as the Rape of Nanking, during the Spanish Civil War, the quiet village of Guernica in Spain was having its usual market day. That was the day that German and Italian mercenaries led by Franco obliterated the town by aerial bombardment. Pablo Picasso’s reaction to this horrific act of war was to create the most powerful antiwar statement in Modern Art in the form of a massive 11’ x 25.6’ oil. “Guernica” *was* a political painting.

Political work created by artists has not been limited to only literal antiwar statements. We live in a frenetic world; most of us having little time to stop, much less observe and ponder. How time consuming is it to be responsible, or take responsibility, much less be heroic? Sadly, the Dadaists almost seem playful today, less lethal, and certainly less shocking! Escapists fill the mall’s parking lots and frustration and anger are released on the freeways. We are so media-saturated that consuming food while watching horrific images on any screen is often a collective activity. The Rape of Nanking in 1937 is a whisper in today’s world whose Western billboards displayed Dolce and Gabbana’s “Fantasy Rape,” as a glamorous fashion statement until Spain’s Women’s Institute objected to the glorification of sexual violence, which began the movement to remove the ads world-wide.

Three living artists today have incorporated the theme of power and powerlessness in their work and all three have made specific reference to the Holocaust. Judy Chicago has promoted a consciousness of moral importance in her major works, all of which have been collaborations.

“The Dinner Party” was created between 1974 and 1979 and is a monumental installation that addresses women in history.

Chicago purposely chose the dinner plate to use as her visual analogy to women. She said, “It seemed as though the female counterpart of this religious meal would have to be a dinner party, a title that seemed entirely appropriate to the way in which women’s achievement—along with the endless meals they had prepared throughout history—had been consumed.”² She further adds, “At some point I decided that I would like the plate images to physically rise up as a symbol of women’s struggle for freedom from containment.”³

Writer Carol Adams also observes that the plate and women have a definite connection in regards to consumption and containment. In her book, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, she makes connections through food between the oppression of women and the non-human animals, i.e., woman represented and marketed as meat. Adams’ “absent referent” refers to the thought process that separates the meat eater from the end product or the space that exists between the animal’s life and your dinner plate.

Adams elaborates on her concept of the absent referent:

I realized that the absent referent was what enabled the interweaving of the oppression of women *and* animals. Behind every meal is an absence: the death of the animal whose place the meat takes. The “absent referent” is that which separates the meat eater from the animals and the animal from the end product. The function of the absent referent is to keep our “meat” separated from any idea that she or he was once an animal, . . . to keep *something* from being seen as *someone*. Once the existence of an animal who was killed to become that “meat,” meat becomes unanchored by its original referent (the animal), becoming instead a free-floating image, used often to reflect women’s status as well as animals’. Animals are the absent referent in the act of meat eating; they also become the absent referent in images of women butchered, fragmented, or consumable.⁴

In 1993, after eight years of research, Chicago and her husband, photographer, Donald Woodman, premiered “The Holocaust Project: From Darkness Into Light” which incorporated painting, tapestry, stained glass and photography.

In her book, *Holocaust Project*, she wrote, “I wondered again whether art could really help in confronting the Holocaust so that its lessons could be applied. Perhaps the Nazis were afraid of modern art for a good reason. Visual art has the power to provide us with a way of facing aspects of reality that are too painful to approach except through the oblique path that art allows.”⁵

Chicago comments her research had led her to the conclusion that it was essential to dehumanize human beings in order to “process” them:

I had learned that during the Industrial Revolution pigs were the first “things” on the assembly line. I began to wonder about the ethical distinction between processing pigs and doing the same thing to people defined as pigs. Many would argue that moral considerations do not have to be extended to animals,

but this is just what the Nazis said about the Jews. Others argue, or believe subconsciously, that animals exist for human use. They assume that people are more important than other species and are horrified when human beings are treated like animals.⁶

She comments still further:

Some people have been offended by the fact that we are suggesting parallels between the destruction of European Jewry and the genocide of other cultures and the mass slaughter of other species. But I believe that it is this larger context of genocide and destruction that created the conditions for the Holocaust and that, in the future, people will look back upon the massacre of other species during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as being genocidal in nature. But that will be a shared view only when we evolve to the point where we understand that *all* species have the right to coexist on the Earth and that other creatures do not exist merely as means to human ends.⁷

As philosopher Theodore Adorno, a German Jew forced into exile by the Nazis wrote, “Auschwitz begins wherever someone looks at a slaughterhouse and thinks: they’re only animals” (qtd. in Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka*, 53).⁸

Proving that the comic can shape cultural ideology, Art Spiegelman won a Pulitzer Prize in 1992 for his graphic novel, *Maus: A Survivor’s Tale*. Thanks to interviews with his father, it is his account, in comic book style, using cats and mice as characters, of his parents’ experiences as Polish Jews in the Holocaust. He said that it was not until he left home that he realized “[. . .] that not everybody had parents who woke up screaming in the night.”⁹

Maus is two volumes; *Maus I, A Survivor’s Tale* and *Maus II: And Here my Troubles Began*. Spiegelman drew Jews as mice, the Nazis as cats, the Poles as pigs and the Americans as dogs. “By using these mask-like faces, where characters look more or less the same, a sketchier drawing style, I am able to focus one’s attention on the narrative while still telling it in comic strip form. So that distancing device actually brings one closer to the heart of the material than a true comix [sic] approach,” Spiegelman said.¹⁰

Spiegelman explained the original impetus for *Maus*:

At first, the genesis of that first-three page “Maus” strip was that I was asked to take part in an “Underground Comic” that Robert Crumb was part of, and a few other Underground cartoonists who were based in San Francisco were part of. The only editorial premise was one used anthropomorphized creatures rather than people. At first I wanted to do comic strips about black oppression in America using cats and mice. As I started I realized that this was a ridiculous thought in that I just didn’t know enough about the situation to be anything other than a liberal wimp with good intentions, but not enough underlying knowledge about the situation to do uhm [sic] any meaningful work. I realized that my own background included material of oppression which could be more directly applied.¹¹

Echoing the comments of Judy Chicago, Spiegelman adds, “The rhetoric of the genocide that

the Nazis used had to do with the extermination of vermin; it wasn't murdering people, it was squashing parasites, lice, rats."¹²

As an animal rights activist for the past 36 years, as that is when I stopped eating animals, the argument for those of us fighting for the humane treatment of animals for food, is not simply to stop eating animals out of compassion for them or for a greener earth, but because of how that animal GETS to your plate. In her book, *The Pornography of Meat*, Carol Adams refers to humans' denial about how that animal gets to your plate as we tend ". . . to keep our "meat" separated from any idea that he or she was once an animal who was butchered, to keep *something* (like hamburger) from being seen as having been *someone* (a cow, a lamb, a once-alive being, a subject)."¹³

In his essay, "The Burden of Complicity" philosopher Tom Regan wrote:

Among the members of the human family we recognize the moral imperative of respect. Every human is a somebody, not a something. Morally disrespectful treatment occurs when those who stand at the power end of a power relationship treat the less powerful as if they were mere objects. The rapist does this to the victim of rape. The child molester to the child molested. The master to the slave. In each and all such cases humans who have power exploit those who lack it.¹⁴

By challenging ideologies and existing cultural practices and commerce, the Animal Movement is indeed part of a full-blown War. The human opposition has promoted genocide, containment, torture and oppression of its animal victims resulting in harassment, ridicule, post-traumatic stress and casualties of its human champions.

Sue Coe's web site is appropriately called "Graphic Witness." Coe has researched and illustrated subjects such as slaughterhouses, factory farming, the subject of containment, the cruelty towards animals in entertainment, AIDS, prisons, apartheid and war—ugly things. Things we prefer to turn away from, and worse, ignore. In my own involvement with animals, I have done rescues and witnessed cruelty cases. I have seen humans do their worst. These experiences are imprinted in my brain and remembered by me. Coe puts these images out into the world for all to see and to be imprinted by. She witnesses and records through her art. Those recordings go beyond her personal experience to collectively become *our* experience.

In an email, Coe said to me:

Any project I embark upon, has to be something I do not have all the answers to, its [sic] my curiosity that fuels the journey. The first intensive farm I saw was for hogs, just outside of Chicago, and that was a shock, there were sow gestation crates, no room for the sows to turn around. Their snouts were all bloodied from rubbing against the cage bars. I found out that the farmers see the animals as a product, a unit, for them to make a living, and the drug company magazines and factory pharmed equipment manufacturers tell them its [sic] a higher life expectancy for the piglets and calves and chicks, to be treated this way. . . . My record of all these events and sights, was done in pencil, as use of a camera would not be viable in most places, its [sic] the way I work, nothing need be exaggerated, it is what it is, a document of reality.¹⁵

The question is—how much pain is *enough* pain? During research at a horse slaughter house Coe, noted, “My companion sees a white mare giving birth to a foal in front of the restraining pen. Two workers use a six-foot whip on the horse as she gives birth, to get her to speed up and go onto the kill floor. The foal is thrown into the spare parts bucket.”¹⁶

As it is not enough to treat each other badly we take advantage of our power over other species. Most of our contact with animals for food is through devouring their body parts. Factory farming is based on deprivation, stress, fear and disease. It is an ideal example of exploitation of the weak by the strong. The moral solution would quite simply be to stop eating meat that would reduce the demand that would reduce the supply that would reduce the suffering.

The intolerable treatment of animals raised for food and the slaughtering of those animals were the subjects for Coe’s work, *Dead Meat*, published in 1995 after six years of work. How does an artist convey the terror in innocent animals’ eyes before death, the sound of chain saws on still breathing bodies, the odor of blood and the jobs of the workers who wade in that blood and flesh every day? How does one stand there as fellow humans compound the horror by adding to the misery of these animals who have no federal laws to protect them? How does an artist convey the sordid reality? Coe viewed first hand slaughterhouses in the United States (that she was allowed access) and documented that journey with her sketchbook and interviews of the workers and the managers of those facilities, those “killing floors.” Apparently, an artist’s sketchbook did not appear threatening, as in New York State at one slaughterhouse, the head slaughterer pointed the bolt pistol at Coe and said, “This is to kill artists, women and animals.”¹⁷

The other question, of course, is **why** would an artist record this? The answer: compassion for those who cannot speak for themselves. Frustration that one has to be seen as consumable, as useable, as *something* rather than *someone*. And anger over that fact that submission is achieved though the use of dominance, subordination, oppression, and cruelty and that we as humans are capable of inflicting indescribable suffering on to all beings. During her study of slaughter houses in order to improve them, animal scientist, Temple Grandin witnessed terrified cattle being hoisted up by a chain around their rear legs at Spencer Foods in Iowa. In her book, *Thinking in Pictures*, she said, “As I watched this nightmare, I thought, ‘This should not be happening in a civilized society.’ In my diary I wrote, ‘If hell exists, I am in it.’ I vowed that I would replace that plant from hell with a kinder and gentler system.”¹⁸

Factory farming denies the beingness and the connectedness to Nature of over 10 *billion* animals annually in cloistered slaughterhouses.¹⁹ Animals are processed, disassembled, packed, and dressed. The majority of animals we eat are female and mothers. The females are impregnated forcefully while under physical restraint called a “rape rack” and held in “iron maidens” for the birthing process.

Coe’s motivation for her work is perhaps best summarized by her reaction to a passing cattle train made during a visit to Colorado, “The suffering of these animals is mute. For the defenseless, the gentle, the wounded, the ones who cannot speak, life consists of indescribable suffering.”²⁰

She describes the conflicts she feels while recording the atrocities and inhumanity of the slaughterhouse.

Every part of my being says to stop it, save them, which is impossible. I think of “art” and how I am going to draw it all. Will anything change when people see? This “art” thought comes so quickly after the failed rescue thought, as an attempt to comfort myself, like the idea of the “spirit” of the animal going on to another place. I feel sick and my legs are shaking—my hands too—I concentrate on acting “normal.” Various animals are killed. I look for a way out.²¹

On yet another kill floor, she relates the scene:

The door slowly closes. The older man grabs the front and back legs of a goat, swinging it to the ground. He pins the goat down by putting his boot on the other leg. The second goat watches and backs away as close to the closed door as possible. The younger man electrocutes the goat and then cuts its throat. The second goat cries like a child, she shakes. . . . The floor is covered with blood and I can see my reflection in it.²²

Coe further remarks, “The Holocaust keeps coming into my mind, which annoys the hell out of me. I see this reference in so many animal rights magazines. Is this the comforting measuring rod by which all horrors are evaluated? My annoyance is exacerbated by the fact the suffering I am witnessing now cannot exist on its own, it has to fall into the hierarchy of a ‘lesser animal suffering.’”²³

Where Carol Adams talks about the “absent referent,” Coe draws the same conclusion, though using different words. She feels the “Meat Industry” sanitizes the process of how meat comes to the supermarket, where the meat is presented as a “bloodless package of parts.” The result—“The screams fall out of the air, as if they never existed.”²⁴

Tom Regan’s preface to Coe’s book *Dead Meat* begins with an appropriate excerpt from a novel by Isaac Bashevis Singer, “As often as Herman had witnessed the slaughter of animals and fish, he always had the same thought; in their behavior toward creatures, all men were Nazis. The smugness with which man could do with other species as he pleased exemplified the most extreme racist theories, the principle that might is right.”²⁵

Confinement systems create the very foundation for factory-farmed animals. These animals have every basic desire and natural behavior denied. No sunlight, no companionship, no earth to stand on, no fresh air. The fortunate are the millions that die before they even reach the slaughterhouse.

Tom Regan comments on animal desires and natural behavior in the preface to *Dead Meat*: “The desires for food and water, shelter and companionship, freedom of movement and avoidance of pain—these desires are shared by non-human animals and human beings. As for comprehension: like humans, many nonhuman animals understand the world in which they live and move. Otherwise, they could not survive.”²⁶ And he further states, “So beneath the many differences there is sameness. Like us, these animals embody the mystery and wonder of consciousness. Like us, they are not only in the world, they are aware of it.”²⁷

Battery cages confine more than 325 million egg-laying hens in the U.S. The wire cages are 18” x 14” x 14” and contain 4-7 debeaked hens. Hens cannot stretch their wings or legs. They must

eat, defecate and lay their eggs on wire. Each laying hens can produce more than 250 eggs per year. Two hundred and fifty eggs being served at Denny's for breakfast, (and many of those tossed in the garbage afterwards) equals to an horrendous two-year hell for a hen²⁸

Chickens and turkeys are transported to slaughterhouses in stacked crates in open trucks. They are not protected from heat stress in the warmer months or from freezing in the winter. Those that do survive, face a tortuous process ahead of them at the slaughterhouse while fully conscious. After they are dumped from the trucks onto a conveyor belt, they are hung by their feet from metal shackles on a moving rail and submerged into electrified water called a stunning tank. This step is to immobilize. Their throats are then slit by a mechanical blade and finally they are submerged into the scalding tank. If a chicken went through an improper stunning tank experience due to a lower use of electricity, and therefore struggled afterwards and missed the cutting blade, they are boiled alive. One must pause and wonder, who can conceive of such a process?

The life of pigs for food, like the other animals in factory farms, is also a life based on containment. A gestation crate is a 2' x7' prison used to confine breeding sows on factory farms. There are more than 6 million pigs in the U.S. and 80% are enclosed in these crates for their 4-month pregnancy.²⁹

A 400 pound sow cannot stand, lie down comfortably, much less walk. She can **not** turn around. Temple Grandin described this as follows, "It's like being stuffed into the middle seat of a jam-packed jumbo jet for your whole adult life, and you're not ever allowed out in the aisle."³⁰ The female pig is moved to a farrowing crate to give birth. After 2-3 weeks, the piglets are taken from her and the process starts again with her being re-impregnated. After 2-3 years, her body is too broken down to continue and she is considered "spent." It is then that she is hauled off for slaughter.

The anemic pale colored flesh on your plate called veal, is from a male calf taken from its dairy cow mother at birth, therefore denied its own mother's milk, denied exercise and confined to a 2-foot wide and 6 feet long veal crate. It is a low in iron diet that makes them anemic and keeps the meat pink. Coping behaviors include head tossing, shaking, scratching and chewing. The conversion from a sick baby animal to a gourmet meal begins when the calf is 3-4 months old. He is starved before being released from his crate, He must be dragged to the slaughter house as he is too weak to stand or walk. He is hoisted on a chain by its rear leg, and his throat is cut and *then*, he is mutilated. Finally he is *served* to you.

In *Dead Meat* Sue Coe describes in greater detail the veal calves' experience in the slaughterhouse:

A huge steel door opens, and two calves are forced through with an electric prod. They are pushed into a restraining crate, a metal box. It is very hard for them to squeeze in, and they don't want to, as they can see everything and it scares them. It takes a very long time to force them. Veals can barely stand anyway, because they have lived their short lives in a crate and been given only milk to drink, no roughage to build bones. So their bones can't support them. The veal's fur is usually caked with diarrhea. The person on the other side of the restraining crate is getting frustrated, because the veals won't move all the way inside. They are two-thirds of the way in. The door keeps dropping down

on them. It's a steel door, and it keeps rising up and dropping. It crashes down on their backs again and again. So the veals are getting electrocuted with the prod from behind and smashed from above. They finally go into the crate. They are squished together and can't move. I see their ears are stapled with lot numbers. They look around wildly, making no sound, their heads are trembling, as if they have palsy.³¹

It is impossible to record slaughterhouse tragedies such as this and remain detached from the animals and their suffering. Coe here describes her reaction to the plight of a veal calf.

Before decapitation is "rodding the weasand" (esophagus), which means separating the esophagus from the stomach to prevent the contents of the stomach from spilling. . . . I can see the front legs move, in slow motion. This poor, pathetic veal can have no memory of actually running, because it was restrained in a crate for its entire life. As I leave the kill floor, I touch a veal. The fur is so soft and long, silky almost. I thought it would be coarse. I touch the ears and realize the last heat is leaving the face. What was alive a few moments ago in helpless misery is now dead, an eight-inch bolt fired into its brain. A power clipper takes off the head in two snips, another clipper takes off hooves—four snips for four hooves. They clatter to the steel mesh. These are hooves that never ran or walked on grass. This creature was kept in darkness its entire life, to keep that flesh tender and white on this day.³²

As if that description isn't gut-wrenching enough, she continues:

The veals wait in line to be decapitated and to have their hooves cut off by power tools. As I watch, I see one veal that is about to be decapitated—alive. Although almost completely drained of blood, the veal has come out of the stun, which means there was not enough electricity or the captive bolt did not hit the right point.³³

A downed animal is what the meat and dairy industries call an animal that is too sick, diseased or disabled to stand on its own. As there is no financial gain in euthanizing an animal that is suffering, that bellowing animal can be dragged by a chain, pushed by high pressure hoses, prodded electrically, fork lifted or hoisted to the kill floor. Others may be left to die on top of each other—however long it takes.

Coe describes in detail the experience of one such downer:

The downer is too heavy to get up. She cries as a chain is attached to her leg, and a winch drags her along the ground to a truck. I can see her skin rubbing off, and her bones grinding into the pavement. I can see the white of exposed bone and blood. She can't lift her head up, so her head, ear, and eye start to tear on the stone. I watch the man operating the winch, and he looks impatient. I start to think of school songs, so my eyes still see but my brain is occupied. At school, we sang those grinding religious ditties: "There is a green hill far away."

As she reaches the truck, the cow rolls over, exposing her udders, which are full of milk. This is the total degradation of a life.³⁴

As the agriculture industry regards animals as commodities, these animals have no laws to protect them. However, California did make history regarding their confinement in 2008 with the passing of Proposition 2 which ends the practice of confining pigs, egg laying hens and veal calves in crates and cages. Proposition 2 requires that factory farms provide enough space for animals to stand up, turn around and extend their limbs. *However*, it does not go into effect until 2015. Seven more years of hell for animals.

I specifically asked Coe how she managed, after all these years, to keep researching and depicting such horrific subjects as factory farming. She responded:

In the face of enormous denial and the silence of collusion at the destruction of all life, we struggle on, and many more will continue on after us, because there is just no other choice. If my work, saves just one life, or makes people happy that they have chosen to be vegans, then that is good enough. Personally—I have no 'hope' whatsoever for our species—but understand and am comforted by, the idea that the planet will survive in some other form, and continue to evolve, long after we have have [sic] vanished.³⁵

We, as humans, can demonstrate great power over others and with that can come the exploitation of those powers. We hunt, confine, oppress, batter, slaughter, abuse, rape, pillage, torture and kill. We are capable of taking what we want, by force if need be, and remain the “superior” species in all of our “glory”, even describing ourselves as “God-like”. However, when the less powerful are objectified, questions of morality begin to rise. “Human” and “Humane” can be polar opposites.

NOTES

1. Leah Dickerman, *Dada* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art; Zurich: D.A.P. /Distributed Art Publishers, 2006) 4.
2. Edward Lucie-Smith, *Judy Chicago: An American Vision* (New York: Watson-Guption Publications-BPI Communications, Inc., 2000) 62.
3. Lucie-Smith 72.
4. Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (1990; New York: The Continuum Publishing Co., 2000) 14-15.
5. Judy Chicago, *Holocaust Project: From Darkness Into Light* (New York: Penguin Books, 1993) 165.
6. Chicago, *Holocaust* 57, 59.
7. Chicago, *Holocaust* 98.
8. Translation of “*Auschwitz beginnt da, wo jemand auf Schlachthof steht und denkt: Es sind ja nur Tiere.*” Quoted in Christa Blanke, *Da krächte der Hahn: Kirche für Tier? Eine Streitschrift* (Eschbach, Germany: Verlag am Eschbach, 1995), 48.
9. David H. Van Biema, “Art Spiegelman Battles the Holocaust’s Demons—And His Own—In An Epic Cat-and-Mouse Comic Book,” *People* 27 Oct. 1986: 99.
10. Joseph Witek, ed., *Art Spiegelman: Conversations* (Jackson, MS: UP of Mississippi, 2007) 89.
11. Witek 90-91.
12. Witek 91.
13. Carol J. Adams, *The Pornography of Meat* (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2003) 23.

14. Tom Regan, "The Burden of Complicity," foreword, *Dead Meat*, by Sue Coe (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1996) 1.
15. Sue Coe, "Re: Questions Tonight," Email to Patricia Denys, 12 October 2009.
16. Sue Coe, *Dead Meat* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1996) 116.
17. Coe, *Dead Meat* 62.
18. Temple Grandin, *Thinking in Pictures and Other Reports from My Life with Autism*. (New York: Doubleday, 1995. New York: Vintage Books—Random House, 1996) 154.
19. Gene Baur, "FW: Fact Checking," Email to Patricia Denys, 21 September 2009.
20. Coe, *Dead Meat* 63.
21. Coe, *Dead Meat* 96, 100.
22. Coe, *Dead Meat* 96.
23. Coe, *Dead Meat* 72.
24. Sue Coe and Mandy Coe, *Meat* (North Vancouver, British Columbia: Gallerie Publications, 1991) 6.
25. Isaac Bashevis Singer, *Enemies: A Love Story* (1972; New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1988) 257.
26. Tom Regan, "Burden," 1.
27. Tom Regan, "Burden," 1.
28. "Factory Egg Production: Laying Hens," *FactoryFarming.com Home Page*, Farm Sanctuary, 13 Sept 2009, <<http://www.farmsanctuary.org/issues/factoryfarming/eggs/>>.
29. "Factory Pork Production," *FactoryFarming.com Home Page*, Farm Sanctuary, 13 Sept 2009, <<http://www.farmsanctuary.org/issues/factoryfarming/pork/>>.
30. Temple Grandin and Catherine Johnson, *Animals Make Us Human: Creating the Best Life for Animals* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009) 176.
31. Coe, *Dead Meat* 54.
32. Coe, *Dead Meat* 55.
33. Coe, *Dead Meat* 55.
34. Coe, *Dead Meat* 101.
35. Sue Coe, "Re: Questions Tonight," Email to Patricia Denys, 5 October 2009.

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R&R (...&R)

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Edward Louis Bernays, Sigmund Freud's nephew, was a key strategist of wartime propaganda campaigns and the intellectual godfather of the advertising and public relations industry, an industry that succeeds in having us equate consumption with fulfillment and well being. He was one of the first in attempting to manipulate public opinion by appealing to the subconscious and argued that such manipulation was a necessary part of democracy. Bernays observed that, until WWII, no other war had been fought in the name of democracy, peace and prosperity. Wars had been fought for land, for the expansion of a particular dynasty or ruling group's power, for religious zeal and for other concretely political purposes. The propaganda campaigns of the Second World War however, successfully spun a different kind of motivation for war—the desire for happiness, peace, prosperity and liberty. The identification of common virtues with the war machine proved to be a remarkably successful motivator.

I have long been interested in the messages we concoct and the stories we tell ourselves to motivate and justify our violence. My earlier works used diagrams and maps to visualize some of the motives and conditions that foster our continual aggression. One is our tendency to see ourselves as the center of the world as is evident on a cosmic scale in images of Ptolemaic systems of the universe with earth at its center. This tendency is also humorously illustrated on a smaller scale in Saul Steinberg's *View of the World from Ninth Avenue* (1975).

Samuel Y. Edgerton, Jr. calls this tendency of cultures to see themselves as the center of the universe the omphalos syndrome.¹ Two of my paintings from the early 1990's, *Power Struggle* and *Gravitational Pull*, visualize the struggle for that center with hands grasping at an axis mundi. Labyrinths are other diagrams that imply an axis mundi, a center for redemption or transformation, as in my painting *Cosmic Cage* (1987). A leaf from the ginkgo, one of the most primitive extant tree species, emerges from the center of the maze, symbolizing survival—a precursor to the redemptive gesture in my current work.

Subsequent diagrammatic and cartographic paintings that mourn or indict the conditions that propel us toward conflict include *Vapor Choir* (1992), in which the directional cherubic winds of antiquated cartographers become grotesque orifices spewing blood into the void. *Amnesia Embellished* (1994) speaks to our national and personal amnesia. Its map is filled with a bloody vapors, crowned by a finger knotted with string and turning blue from loss of circulation. We prefer to forget.

Images in the marginalia of such maps, such as the engraved monsters in Sebastien Munster's *Typus Cosmographicus Universalis* (1532), embody our fear of the unknown or the other, a fear that enables atrocities, whether the Holocaust, the Killing Fields or Abu Graib. *Milk and Oil* (1993) shows the real motives for the first Gulf War and maybe the current one.

Contemporaneous paintings serve as pietas such as *Triumvirate*, *Milk Necklace* and *Hail Mary*. *Hail Mary* juxtaposes a heart-shaped map, a metaphorical locus of love, with plans and diagrams of aggression—others kinds of monsters along the margins. Black symbols above

diagram the Joint Forces Chain of Command while the red elements below indicate a battle plan that won the Gulf War, ironically named *Hail Mary*, co-opting the name of a sacred prayer to a god's mother—and not for the first time. *Hail Mary* is also a football play, another strange fusion of the masculine and the maternal.

Maps that assume the shapes of human body parts, however stylized, inspired many of my paintings. Shapes of a face from the 16th century Fool's Cap world map, kidneys from Antonio Salamanca's double cordiform projection, or the hearts from Peter Appian (1530) or Haggi Ahmed's *World Map* (1559) connect the human body to the world. This connection is further established through sensual and physical paint that suggests body fluids like milk and blood. These fluids fill or disrupt abstract structures of genealogical tables or globes reduced to longitudes and latitudes as in paintings such as *Polar Pain* (1994) and *Demure Dominion* (1993). We tend to associate such abstract, seemingly measured structures with the objective rather than the ideological, but the insertion of the intuitive and the visceral counters that presumption, constituting another harbinger for my current work.

To return to the stories we tell ourselves, some things never change. Stories told to justify wars of the past are just like the stories we tell ourselves today. *To and From the Land of Milk and Honey* (1993) replaces *The Road from Exeter to Dorchester and from Plimouth to Dartmouth* (1698) in John Ogilby's map with the trail of the First Crusade. Ogilby's map exemplifies a non-relational approach that is only about following a straightforward path, from point A to point B. The compass roses point north in relation to the traveler on that path, but not in relation to a larger universe—reflecting the kind of myopic self-absorption that leads us into so much wrongdoing. The Crusade referenced here was initiated by Pope Urban II to deflect internal strife to an external enemy. Crusaders were motivated by stories of babies being forcibly circumcised over baptismal fonts in Jerusalem.

The first Gulf War was accompanied by more stories of babies, this time of infants being removed from incubators in Kuwaiti hospitals, later revealed as false on CBC-TV's Fifth Estate—Canada's "60 Minutes"—in a program called "Selling the War." The red cross emblazoned on the tunics and flags of the Crusaders found its contemporary parallel with yellow ribbons that bedecked suburban trees in 1991, with magnetized versions now adhered to bumpers across the USA. The enemy then were the heathen and barbarians. Today they are those who "hate our freedom", playing out Bernays' linkage between warfare and virtue. Truth can be ugly; lies can be pretty. *Pretty Lies* (1995) is about the we foist upon each other, and ourselves—ugly or not.

Heads Will Roll (2003) was painted in the post 9/11 context of "let's roll" and "bring'em on," and McCain's "bomb, bomb, bomb, bomb Iran". My paintings of pillows and mattresses, like *Contrary Comfort* and *Point of Entry* (both 1999), speak to the violence done to innocents and tales we tell to survive—physically or mentally. In the *Pillow Talk* (2003) series, we can identify with Scheherazade who must invent new narratives everyday to avoid beheading by the sultan. In our case, we invent to avoid indictment by our own moral compasses. Unfortunately, the redundancy of our stories tends to generate a debilitating cynicism.

So, recent work like *Romantic Resistance* (2002) is a gesture at resisting a pervasive sense of futility, at celebrating coherence and survival despite continual assault. Here, 15 circular panels create a necklace of pearls (which I think of as beauty born of pain). The strand persists despite

the painting's format and the bullet holes that puncture each panel.

In 2006, and in light of the ongoing wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and the threat of war with Iran, I felt the need to shift gears. I returned to my early love of Persian miniatures and re-investigated Islamic art and architecture from across the former Islamic Empire. In particular, I turned to the master, Kamal-ud-din Bihzâd (1460-1535) a contemporary of Leonardo da Vinci.

Born in Herat (now in Afghanistan), Bihzâd worked in the royal libraries of the Timurid and Safavid rulers, eventually accompanying the court to Tabriz, Persia (now Iran). He influenced subsequent miniature painting through his works and his students, from India to Turkey and now to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. On my laptop and in my studio, I transported a building site from his *Construction of the Fort of Kharnaq* (1495) into a contemporary scene of a bombarded Beirut neighborhood in *Reconstruct: Castles in the Sky* (2007).

Such works are part of the series *R&R(...&R)*, the title of which takes off on the military abbreviation for rest and relaxation, substituting words like “reveal”, “remorse”, and “resurrect”. I started this series by finding visual documentation on the web of destroyed places, altering them through Photoshop and restoring roads and bridges, figuratively and metaphorically. Hand-painting over these images is a gesture at revealing, regretting and restoring what has been lost and ruined. The fact that they are hand-painted is important. Just as the body fluids and sensual paint filled my earlier map paintings, I want the human touch to intervene in the photographic records that I find. Manual transformation helps close the distance between my purposes and those of some of my sources—soldiers’ blogs and military sites, where images can function as war trophies and posters for the increasing professionalization of the armed forces.

Gradually, I began inserting images from Islamic art and architecture into scenes from recent and ongoing wars though they could be from many other places in the world.

In *Rebuild: Mdeirej Bridge* (2008), the decorative border is taken from an Islamic portrait of a Chinese dignitary, recognizing that every culture is dynamic—not static or fixed in one time or place. I think of art as basically as a generative force, and these gestures, however feeble, are attempts at renewal among the rubble and undoing some of the damage. I borrow images from cultures under attack to remind us of the humanity, as expressed through their own creative production, of those we consider our enemies, as in *Reconstruction (Magenta Beirut)* (2007), which appropriates a construction scene from Building the Great Mosque of Samarkand by Bihzâd or his workshop. Though most of my appropriated images are from the past, I do not wish to romanticize or advocate a return to that past. But the time signatures of these appropriated images are precisely what allow us, as westerners, to recognize a cultural specificity.

I try to counter the anonymity conferred by ash and rubble with the ornate and specific details as in *Restoration: Threshold I* (2006), that remind us that this not just *anywhere*, but *somewhere*. Details like the curtains in *Reveal: Opening Act* (2007) and *Remorse* (2006) mourn an absence and reveal that people once went about their daily lives as we do ours. Sometimes, as in *Restoration: Red Balcony II* (2008), I simply redrew the edges of walls damaged by mortar fire and put day-glo band-aids on the wounds. Or I provided prostheses for the wounded as in *Repair: Prosthetic* (2007). Sometimes the imagery depicted starting anew as in *Regenerate*

(*Gardening the Robber Hole*) (2007). Here, the gardener is taken from the *Book of Antidotes* of the Pseudo Galen in the style of the first school of Baghdad, 1199. Water slakes the dust in *Refresh(waterfall)* (2007) and fills the craters in *Rehydrate I* and *II*, stylized after Master Ahman Mûsâ's 14th century illustration in a *Mi-râj-Nâme* (Book of the Mystical Ascension). Sometimes I reanimate the desolation with flora and fauna or recall a more idyllic nature as in *Reveal: Pastoral with Flora and Fauna* (2007) and *Replace: Duck Pond* (2008).

In Orhan Pamuk's book *My Name is Red*, there is a character based on Bihzâd. In an interview with the author, Pamuk says:

If you were a medieval painter, your craft would be based on imitation and repetition (not on originality as is so often now claimed). The more you imitate and repeat, the more perfect you are. After years of painting and re-painting the same scenes and subjects, my painters' begin to memorize. These are the beginning of the idea that a master painter does not need to see what he creates."²

Though Pamuk is speaking of refining the artist's craft and vision, I find this observation applicable to those who question our authority in addressing events that we don't see or experience directly ourselves. Pamuk talks about painting and re-painting the same scenes to achieve **credibility**. Conversely, we tell and re-tell, listen and listen again to the same stories that convince of us of **incredibility**. On May 24, 2005 in Rochester, NY, George W. Bush admitted as much: "See in my line of work you got to keep repeating things over and over and over again for the truth to sink in, to kind of catapult the propaganda."³

Pamuk speaks of:

...two different "ways of seeing, painting, and even representing the world. One is that of seeing the world through the eyes of any individual person—looking at things from our humble point of view. The other is seeing the world through God's eyes, from high above as the Islamic painters did, and perceiving the totality of, say a battle from above. The latter is more like seeing with the mind's eye, rather than the eye itself."⁴

In *Rescind: Bird in Rubble* (2008), you see this difference. In my image, you're on the ground, not seeing through God's eyes. This is also an example of work that starts to confuse painting and digital processes. The background cloud and the bird are reproductions of paintings faded or magnified by Photoshop. Ironically, only the cloud balancing on the bird's beak is actually painted. It is the most physical, yet a mirage. I want to make that mirage, that hope, *real*.

I am not deluded that my "restorations" offer any actual balm. Mark Reinhardt and Holly Edwards in their essay *Traffic in Pain* argue that:

trust in such images can harbor diverse illusions and excuses—for example, that the viewer need look no further to understand distant events; that structural violence requires only personal emotional response; that the represented pain or calamity has already been resolved and can therefore be dismissed; or that addressing the problem is the privilege or the perquisite of the viewer."⁵

For both the artist and the audience, the photographic source and its manipulation risk subduing the horror depicted.

Working with photographic sources makes me think hard about why something has to be a painting. *Rue: Cedar of Lebanon* (2007) is one of the few pieces in the *R&R(...&R)* series to retain images of the dead in a horrific landscape of blood-stained shrouded figures from a massacre in Qana, Lebanon. Here photography insists on fact, even though we know photographs can be as fictional as anything other produced image. As printed backdrops or stages for manually applied media, the human touch—its fragility or strength, its vulnerability or violence—becomes magnified.

I do hope that my works pose questions about our complicity in, as well as our seemingly miraculous recovery from, incomprehensible and often self-inflicted destruction. As the Polish poet Wislawa Szymborska wrote: “Reality demands that we mention this: Life goes on.”⁶ In *Rendezvous* (2007) and *Roam: Riding on Remorse* (2008), camels anachronistically coexist with burnt out hulks of cars and military machinery. They look on bemusedly or proceed obliviously as the tanks roll in and the car bombs explode.

In weaving voices and visions from past and present, I hope that my individual voice emerges, one that is both celebrative and sober. I’m hoping for *resurgency* after each and every atrocity such as the IDF bombing of Qana in 2006 resulting in 51 deaths, 22 of them children. Human Rights Watch declared this a war crime.⁷ The victims were not an illusion to be slain like the *Witch of the Cosmic Illusion that The Hero Rustam Slays* in Firdawsi’s *Shanameh (Book of Kings)*⁸, which is essentially an epic of Persian nationalism. So these images I admire and appropriate are propaganda, too—tainted by imperialist impulses that plague us all.

The image of the Cedar of Lebanon used in *Rue: Cedar of Lebanon* (2007) is superimposed again in the oil painting *Resurgency* (2008), over the ruins of another town, Ghaziyeh—also destroyed by an IDF air strike. Wikipedia lists all the practical and symbolic uses of the Cedar of Lebanon throughout history, often intertwined with death and renewal. Its resin was used in Egyptian mummification and its sawdust found in pharaoh’s tombs. The Sumerian epic *Gilgamesh* treats cedar groves as dwellings of the gods. Moses ordered Jewish priests to use its bark to treat leprosy. Its wood was used to build King Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem and was once burned to announce the New Year.

So ashes can be the beginning and the end. As the poet Susan Stewart wrote, “tell me ravaged singer, how the cinder bears the seed.”⁹

NOTES:

1. Edgerton, Samuel, “From Mental Matrix to *Mappamundi* to Christian Empire: The Heritage of Ptolemaic Cartography in the Renaissance,” in *Art and Cartography*, p.26; cited by Harley, “Maps, Knowledge, and Power,” p.290.
2. From a Q & A with Orhan Pamuk. <http://www.randomhouse.com/knopf/authors/pamuk/qna.html>
3. Froomkin, Dan, “The Ostrich Approach,” in *washingtonpost.com*, May 25, 2005.
4. From a Q & A with Orhan Pamuk. <http://www.randomhouse.com/knopf/authors/pamuk/qna.html>
5. Mark Reinhardt, Holly Edwards and Erine Duganne (eds.), *Beautiful Suffering: Photography and the Traffic in Pain*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2007.

6. Szymborska, Wislawa, *Reality Demands* in *Miracle Fair: Selected Poems of Wislawa Szymborska*, translated from the Polish by Stanislaw Baranczak and Clare Cavanagh, W.W. Norton & Co., 2002.
7. <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2006/07/29/israellebanon-israel-responsible-qana-attack>
8. Barry, Michael, *Figurative Art in Medieval Islam and the Riddle of Bizhâd of Herât (1465–1535)*, Flammarion, Paris, 2005. Image attributed to Qadimi by Stuart Cary Welch.
9. Stewart, Susan, “We needed fire...” in *The Forest*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1995.

To see images of some of the works that illustrate this paper, visit:

<http://artscool.cfa.cmu.edu/~slavick/Drawings/rrr-1.html>

<http://artscool.cfa.cmu.edu/~slavick/Paintings/Resurgency.html>

BILLY COLLINS AND WAR: A COMIC ANALYSIS

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Laughing at war can certainly have therapeutic psychological effects, and such laughter can have corrective functional effects on a given society. War, though, is so bloody horrific, that it can be difficult to conceive how war can be the starting point for laughter. Nonetheless, it has, and it is in the poetry of former U.S. and New York Poet Laureate Billy Collins. Known for getting lots of laughs by focusing on the ordinary, Collins will at times venture forth into the more extraordinary subject of war for a laugh. So, without getting into the psychological or functional aspects of Collins's comic treatment of war, an analysis of the starting point of his war comedy helps explain why we laugh in the first place. An intellectual approach evinces the discrepancy between anticipation and surprise, and the unexpected leads to laughs in the war poems of Billy Collins, a selection spanning over twenty years, from the 1988 work, *The Apple that Astonished Paris*, to his 2008 collection, *Ballistics*.

Two factors will facilitate the reader's dealings with citations. First is the use of *Sailing Around the Room* as the source for some of Collins's comic war poetry published in the years before he contracted with Random House. Rather than citing from each individual book, the new and selected poems from *Sailing Around the Room* will do quite nicely. Also, critical sources will be limited. This is a priori, though, for there are simply few critical sources available on Collins's poetry, particularly with an emphasis on war and comedy. In a 2001 article, Rob McClure Smith makes a few references to Collins's humor, but he does not intellectually analyze the humor. He does, however, offer a keen insight into why such a dearth of criticism on Collins, offering "the accessibility of his poetry and its crossover appeal to a popular audience may predetermine its eventual critical neglect" (7).

Adam Kirsch does not mince words justifying that neglect in an essay devoted to Collins in his *The Modern Element: Essays on Contemporary Poetry*. He questions whether Collins's comedy goes beyond punning or remains simply attentive to the way his speakers speak, not necessarily what they have to say. He wonders if there is comedy after the "initial category mistake" (261). However, is there ever any comedy after the incongruity, the presentation of the implausibility? No, the joke hinges on the perceived discrepancy between the two disparate things, a significant discrepancy much like the way a metaphor becomes a conceit when the two things being compared are quite different. To be sure, conceits are more comedic than metaphors. Analyzing these discrepancies in Collins should help gauge our feelings toward war. Kirsch writes that, "nothing in Collins's work suggests he even knows there is a place for difficulty in poetry" (270). On the contrary, Collins addresses war, this Old English word meaning "bring into confusion." After the laughter and our intellectual analysis of it what we have is a better understanding of what it is about war that confuses us, making Collins's work a rather noble effort.

The actual intellectual cause of laughter has been visited and revisited. Comic theorists from Immanuel Kant to Marcel Gutwirth and Paul E. McGehee establish a theoretical base at the starting point of comedy, the incongruity, the contradictory relationship served simultaneously. Kant defines the comic in the *Critique of Judgment* as "an intense expectation that comes to nothing" (qtd. in Gutwirth 333). Several good examples of these bombshells can be found in

Collins. *Questions About Angels* from 1991 yields three such poems. First, in “A History of Weather,” we are led to apprehend the extraordinary in the ordinary. It is said that the weather is what we talk about when we have nothing else to talk about. In this poem, though, the speaker, to our surprise and for comedic effect, adopts an obeisant tone, hailing the weather with monarchs, the Renaissance, and the Bible. However, the first incongruent connection between the weather and something greater is with war. Outlining what his book will cover, the speaker writes that the history will “illustrate the rain that fell on battlefields” (26). From the conceit that a history of weather could help us better understand war to the conceit that war could even be discussed in such terms, we have our starting point of laughter. The common man at the end of the poem only sees the weather in terms of “the passing of enormous faces and animal shapes” in the clouds (26). Like that common man, any reader, confused by war, can begin to see war in the context of nature.

After the laughter, we are left with a couple points about war. First, war is so significant that it is major part of any story, even one about the weather. Perhaps more interesting is the additional idea indicated by the man creating meaning in the clouds, an act suggesting we create our view of war and, consequently, any reality. From one point of view, war may be better understood through an analysis of weather. Another may see that differently, and a discussion may ensue about seeing different realities in the same thing, which is often the case with cloud characterization. So, Collins gives us a laugh and something to think about, and the relationship is cause and effect.

A similar case exists in “Forgetfulness.” The speaker presents memories as defining aspects of a character. In the last stanza, the speaker depicts a character so distressed about forgetting a memory that he gets up in the middle of the night to revisit a fact and ends up having a fragmented aesthetic experience with an image of the moon. The ironic tone gets laughs when the speaker speculates memories go “to retire to the southern hemisphere of the brain, / to a little fishing village where there are no phones” (29). The images of losing memories add an overlapping lamentable tone and rephrase the importance of memory. The character kisses one memory goodbye and watches another pack its bags, both suggesting a significant separation, but that trauma is tempered by the cataloging of things forgotten becoming a bit trivial. The expected serious item is replaced by a state flower and the capital of Paraguay. A later allusion returns to furthering the level of importance associated with memory. The River Lethe connotes a kind of storage facility for cold case files lost in a collective unconscious, and the next step is oblivion. Collins tempers our fears of oblivion with his incongruities that pull the rug out from our expectations, dropping us into laughter. Ultimately, his poem wants to say that all memory, the lofty and the low, help define us, and losing them causes us to lose a part of ourselves. However, for those last two crucial memories, we get a love poem and the name of a famous battle. “No wonder you rise in the middle of the night / to look up the date of a famous battle in a book on war” (29). In the end war and love are the final defining aspects of character.

“The History Teacher” presents another example of Collins working war with comedy to make a poignant thematic statement. In this poem, the comedy comes from the diminishment of names given to periods of time or hugely significant events that happened in them, like war. The speaker informs us that his title character, wishing to protect the innocence of his pupils, diminishes history so that the Ice Age becomes the Chilly Age and the Stone Age becomes the Gravel Age. He tells his students that the infamous “Spanish Inquisition was nothing more / than an outbreak of questions” (38). The sample questions that follow add to the incongruent

pairings and diminishment. This is what makes us laugh. The majority of the examples, though, involve war. “The War of the Roses took place in a garden, / and the Enola Gay dropped one tiny atom / on Japan” (38). The poem ends with the teacher “wondering if [his students] would believe that soldiers / in the Boer War told long, rambling stories / designed to make the enemy nod off” (38). If we stop laughing long enough to reflect, such efforts could be rewarded with a better understanding of how war needs to be perceived realistically.

Still, we must not forget that the starting point for the laughter rests in the irony. A writer’s presentation of simultaneous opposites, of incongruous pairings, leads Ramon Fernandez to write that we laugh at such incongruity because we “cannot be aware of a thing in two opposite ways from the same point of view and at the same instant” (57). For example, Collins gets laughs in “Royal Aristocrat” from *9 Horses* by forcing us to simultaneously think of small arms fire on a level with typing. The conceit diminishes war to an everyday level of understanding while exaggerating the rat-a-tat-tat of typing, an understanding made clearer by the final images of the poem. Images of “mute rooms of furniture, / the speechless salt and pepper shakers, / and the tall silent hedges surrounding the house” (22) emphasize the importance of action. The speaker congratulates himself, saying “at least I was making a noise” (22) with his typewriter. His noise may not seem like much, but it is equated with war, making his noise more extraordinary, and making war more ordinary. A similar example of making war ordinary by making fun of war is found in “Dublin” from *Ballistics*. Underwater warfare conjures images of sleek submarines and svelte navy seals, but in this poem that expectation is shattered by Collins placing the underwater warfare in the 4th century. Forced to consider such incongruence, the reader laughs. War becomes a bit less than it was a moment ago, and the spirit of this theme is enhanced by the last stanza. This matter of war that awakens the restless speaker is trivialized by his remembrance of the gigantic struggles of Leonardo, and the speaker’s imaginings of “hand-to-hand combat beneath the lily pads” (47) assumes its proper absurd station.

An incongruous pairing of war and hats leads to comedy and poignancy in “The Death of the Hat,” from *Picnic, Lightning*. In this poem, the starting point for the comedy is the incongruity of a hat dying. This is the reverse of Bergson’s theory that humans are funny when they do not act like humans, for here we have personification, the non-human thing acting like a human. We can predict the death of, say, the hired man, but not the death of the hat. From this comic point of surprise, Collins adds images in which almost every man wears a hat. In fact, hats are so prevalent that the speaker states one would notice “a man without a hat in a crowd” (126). Among the imagery of men in hats is one in which “everyone in the street was wearing a hat” (127). This imagery occurred to the speaker when “war was declared” (127). Still, that weighty imagery is followed by the most prominent imagery in the poem, which involves the speaker’s father and hats. If the death of the hat is equated with the death of the speaker’s father, both representative of a passing era, then a street filled with men in hats after a declaration of war appears as a defining moment in history for the speaker. Thinking of that image conjures up images of the speaker’s father, and by revisiting these images, the father remains in the speaker’s mind, gaining a kind of immortality, especially when the speaker describes his father’s eternal hats of earth and sky. The image of hats and war, therefore, cannot be sloughed off, for the image not only helps define a particular time but leads the speaker to a sense of timelessness. Within the comic context of a personified hat, Collins manages to once again make a poignant thematic statement on war.

“The Death of the Hat” is not the funniest of Billy Collins’s poems. Not all incongruous pairings are alike, and some are funnier than others. In *Laughing Matter*, Marcel Gutwirth

shows that the greater discrepancy between the frustrated expectation and its incongruous and surprising end, the greater the laugh (93). John Allen Paulos even applies catastrophe theory modeling to comedy and suggests that “the catastrophic drop brought about by the punch line will be greater (more laughter) if there is a large gap between the upper and lower layers (92), which would represent, respectively, the expectation and the result with the latter also being known as the punch line. Often the incongruence can be thought of as a simile as in Collins’s “Osso Buco” from *The Art of Drowning*. In this poem, a plate of food is like a fortification. We have all seen and even been the child who plays with food or the child who plays in sand or dirt, and often enough we have seen or built fortifications. Because the drop from the expectation created by the title and the opening line of “I love the sound of the bone against the plate” (49) to the result of the dish creating a “fortress-like look” with the meat “in a moat of risotto” (49) is not that large a drop, not that far removed from the conscious memory of many, the comedy here is mild although the point those first lines make about war digs deep into the marrow of our existence, placing war in the same context as our dreams, our everyday realities, and our connections to greatness in the past., all of which help define ourselves.

A bit wider discrepancy can be seen in “The Lesson” from *The Apple that Astonished Paris*. Here, as in “The Death of the Hat,” we have personification. Equating a hat with death is incongruous; however, hats do fall into disuse, a kind of death if you will. In “The Lesson,” History is “snoring heavily on the couch” (6). To say history is like a man snoring on the couch is more ironic, more incongruent, less anticipated a result. Collins, though, does not stop the growth of his conceit there. History has a coat in which he keeps history. The speaker borrows the coat to run a morning errand in the village and returns to an enraged History, worried if any history had fallen out of his pockets. Not only is the discrepancy between expectation and surprise result more outrageous and consequently funnier in this poem, but “The Lesson” also makes one of Collins’s stronger thematic statements about war. The poem suggests that we change history. Revisionists seem to have History worried, which in and of itself is a comedic conceit in the poem.

“Snow Day,” one of the new poems in *Sailing Around the Room*, may not be as funny as “The Lesson,” but it has a series of comedic ironies and makes what may be a stronger thematic statement about war. The first incongruence in the poem, one that is also connected to war, comes from the opening line that associates a blizzard with a revolution, which is somewhat surprising although many great American poets, from Emerson to Whittier to Dickinson, have depicted this image of the blizzard taking over the landscape. A later incongruent pairing evinces a wider discrepancy between expectation and result. The speaker in the poem states he is “a willing prisoner in this house, / a sympathizer with the anarchic cause of snow” (140). Whittier has his characters snowbound, so the first part of the conceit isn’t quite the surprise as that found in the second quoted line. Here, the work of the snow becomes part of a militant movement. Whittier may have the landscape overtaken and the characters imprisoned in their farm house, but neither he nor Emerson nor Dickinson go as far as to suggest that the work of mother nature is a paramilitary operation. Collins closes the poem with another comedic conceit with a wide gap between expectation and result. An expectation of innocent glee is hammered home by Collins listing pre-school closings because of the blizzard. The names of the schools range from cute to cuter. The closings get the speaker imagining what children do at these places. The cute names would suggest that the children do cute things; however, our speaker imagines a “few girls whispering by the fence” (141), and the speaker further imagines what they “are plotting, / what riot is afoot, / which small queen is about to be brought down” (141). The innocence drops into revolution, getting a laugh and bringing the poem back to its

beginning as if to suggest that revolutions are natural things, inherent in the race, practiced since the days of preschool.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that basing the starting point of comedy in incongruity requires a sophisticated audience. Sizing up an incongruity is an abstraction of the mind that cannot readily be performed by those who have been mired in a more practical mind set over an extended period of time. The juxtaposition of Nick Adams with Dick and Jane in “First Reader” from *Questions About Angels* requires not only an abstract mind, but an educated one as well. The comedy hinges on the reader of this poem simultaneously synthesizing these two opposite characters, a particularly difficult task for the reader unfamiliar with Hemingway. Moreover, the reader who doesn’t experience the comedy will most likely also fail to perceive the thematic statement on the Blakean move from innocence to experience, war, associated with Nick Adams, being one of the poster children for the kind of experience that shatters innocence. As Gutwirth writes, “humor is an acquired taste, acquired on the basis of a requisite mental sophistication” (94). Additionally, when Collins, in “Consolation” from *The Art of Drowning*, juxtaposes the local “coffee shop and the waitress / known as Dot” with “the dripping corners of a dungeon” and “Napoleon’s / little bed on Elba” (47) the comic effect has less impact on the reader who hasn’t toured Italy, who can’t take the abstract leap. McGhee adds that the reader “must be sufficiently certain of the way the depicted elements actually occur to assure himself that the events simply do not occur as depicted” (66). To be sure, the poem suggests that we prefer the familiar when trying to create meaning in our lives although there are so many outside forces, like those associated with war in this poem, which encroach into our mental processes and mold and shape us through their own specific influences.

“Building with Its Face Blown off, from *The Trouble with Poetry*, can help cement the importance of the laugher’s intelligence to make up the discrepancy between an incongruent pairing. Here, Collins personifies a building to reveal how war can reveal our most private selves. One who has not seen the kind of imagery that the title of the poem depicts would have a difficult time with the poem, and we haven’t even taken the abstract leap yet. By personifying the building, Collins get his best laughs from characterizing the building as if it had been caught with its pants down, or, specifically in this poem, “wearing only its striped pajamas” (38). There is empathy required to get this comedy, for the individual who rambles through existence living an unexamined life will probably feel little humor for the now exposed “blue and white striped wallpaper / of a second story bedroom” (38). There is a kind of sensitivity required to laugh at the embarrassed bathroom in this poem. Collins seems to want to take us down the path that suggests experience or intelligence is key to understanding incongruity, here the incongruence of the emotional building, because he closes the poem by moving farther and farther away from the reality of the bombed out city until we reach a couple picnicking with a bountiful basket “on a blanket under a shade tree” (39). Their comfort and ease is far removed from the harsh, grim reality of war, and they may not laugh from any intellectual base but only from a base feeling of degradation or superiority.

To be sure, Billy Collins addresses war in a comic way, and not only does he get laughs, but he punctuates that laughter with a meaningful statement about war. Collins plays with our expectations, often deflating or diminishing them for laughs. He pairs incongruent things, creating laughter because the mind becomes excited and surprised by processing opposites simultaneously. His poetry helps us see how some comedy can get more laughs by analyzing the discrepancy between the incongruent pairings, and an analysis of his work reveals the importance of the audience when analyzing comedy. In the end, Collins’s poems treating war

also reveal a humorist whose comedy can make us a little less confused by one of the seemingly least funny things imaginable, war.

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BOB KAUFMAN AND THE LIMITS OF JAZZ

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In November of 1959, *Life* magazine took on the Beat Movement in an article now infamous among those who study and write about the Beats: Paul O'Neil's "The Only Rebellion Around."¹ The article opens with a contrived picture entitled "The Well-Equipped Pad," an image that graphically demonstrates how present and yet invisible Bob Kaufman and other blacks associated with the movement were. The young couple in the picture is white, but ironically all the art in the picture is from African Americans. The young man, who reclines on a bare mattress, stares at a Charlie Parker record album while Miles Davis' *Kind of Blue* leans against the bookcase. The poetry broadside beside the young man is not Allen Ginsberg's signature beat poem *Howl*, but Bob Kaufman's *Abomunist Manifesto*, the other poetry broadside from City Lights Books that was a seminal statement of the movement. Ironically, these days, most people have never heard of it. Most of the article that follows the picture focuses on white male beat writers, such as Ginsberg, Kerouac, Burroughs, and McClure, the usual suspects. Kaufman is mentioned once and pictured nowhere—Burroughs, Ginsberg, Kerouac and others are pictured and quoted. Still, African Americans get this startling line early in the article:

The Negro, . . . is a hero to the beats (as are the junkie and the jazz musician) . . . But it seems doubtful that antisegregationsists or many Negroes could take comfort in this fact. The thing the Beat treasures and envies in the Negro are the irresponsibility, cheerful promiscuity, and subterranean defiance which were once enforced on him during his years of bondage.²

Women, or "pad sharing chicks" as O'Neil glibly refers to them, get little better coverage: "The mature bohemian," according to North Beach maxim, "is one whose woman works *full time*."³ O'Neil estimates the number of black beats at 10%. Of women, O'Neil estimates that there are even fewer, "girls being the practical creatures that they are."⁴

It would be tempting to see in this white male portrait of the Beat movement, the kind of distortion typical of mainstream media's bungling attempts to draw pictures of complex movements in culture and the arts if there were not so many other examples to support it. As many have noted, for all of its mantra of egalitarianism, alienation, and liberation, the Beat Movement was largely a white male phenomenon.⁵ And the few black poets who were associated with the movement, such as Bob Kaufman and Amiri Baraka, are distant seconds to white males, such as Kerouac, Ginsberg, and Ferlinghetti. There are also the oft-quoted lines from Kerouac's *On the Road*: Sal Paradise wishes he were anything but white, "wishing I could exchange worlds with the happy, true-hearted, ecstatic Negroes of America."⁶ Given the fact that Kerouac published *On the Road* in September of 1957, two short years after 14-year-old Emmett Till was brutally murdered in Money, Mississippi, by men who never even served time for their crime, two short years after Rosa Parks refused to surrender her seat to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama, and thus was sent to jail, setting into motion the Montgomery bus boycotts, we might well see in Kerouac a startling ignorance about the real lives of black people.

Kaufman has long deserved serious study not only because he has never been given his rightful place among Beat writers, but also because of the unique importance of his work. He understood the jazz that all beat writers declared allegiance to, better than any of the other beats, and he infused it into his poetry in ways more complex than simply importing jazz rhythms or using jazz as a metaphor for improvisation or freedom. He was the ultimate, maybe the only, true jazz poet this country has ever produced. And he also confronted the devastation of war in a more complete and complex way than his white contemporaries. In fact, the title to *The Abomunist Manifesto*, the broadside in the picture from *Life*, alludes to the atom bomb as well as the Cold War obsession with communism—"abom" suggests atomic bomb and "unist" suggests "communist." And with characteristic wit, Kaufman distorted his name on the title page: *Bomkauf*. Finally, if any beat poet ever lived the movement, embodied the movement, and thereby rebelled against a cold war, conformist, 1950s reality in both his life and his work, Kaufman did. The term "beatnik," which was used so frequently in the fifties in association with the movement, was actually coined to describe Kaufman's lifestyle.⁷ In her 1981 essay entitled "What Ever Happened to Bob Kaufman?" Barbara Christian called for serious study of Kaufman's work.⁸ Now nearly thirty years later, his work has received serious study from some excellent scholars, but not the sustained scrutiny that his work deserves. This article is a long overdue answer to that call, but more than that, it echoes the call for more study of an important American voice that has been overlooked.

Part of the reluctance to study Kaufman grows out of the nature of his life and the nature of his work. Both require of us a new type of reading, one attuned to Kaufman's peculiar affinity to jazz both in the way he lived and the way he wrote. In his life, he claimed that he sought anonymity, telling Raymond Foye, editor of the 1981 collection, *The Ancient Rain*, "I want to be anonymous."⁹ Accordingly, he did not set out to have his work published. He lived it and spoke it, often getting arrested in the North Beach area of San Francisco for screaming and shouting poems at cars. During the year of 1959, the date of the above-referenced *Life* article, Kaufman was arrested a stunning 39 times by North Beach police on disorderly conduct charges.¹⁰ It was only through the efforts of his wife Eileen that he began writing his poems down and that the poems themselves survived. In the introduction to *Cranial Guitar: Selected Poems by Bob Kaufman*, Raymod Foye recalls finding in a burned out, "fleabag" hotel where Kaufman had stayed the famous Moroccan leather binder that contained many of Kaufman's poems. They were burned on the edges and soaked by the fire hoses, so Foye and Ferlinghetti took them to the City Lights Publishing office and dried them out. "It was like opening King Tut's Tomb for the first time and seeing all these extraordinary relics," Foye remembered.¹¹

Kaufman also complicated matters by freely fabricating a past that probably did not exist, contradicting the whole notion of wanting to be anonymous. According to some versions of his life, he was the son of a German Jew and a black woman from Martinique, and he attended Catholic mass, the synagogue, and played around with voodoo while growing up. It seems fairly certain now that his father was an African American Pullman Porter who had no Jewish ancestry, but did give to his son a real sense of social activism. His mother was also African American and instilled in her 13 children a love of reading and fascination with literature.¹² Seemingly aware of the various versions of his life he had created, Kaufman wrote to the *San Francisco Chronicle* on October 5, 1963, "Arriving back in San Francisco to be greeted by a blacklist and eviction, I am writing these lines to the responsible non-people. One thing is certain I am not white [sic]. Thank God for that. It makes everything else bearable." Later in

the letter, which was republished as a part of his collection *Golden Sardine*, he asks, “Why are all blacklists white?”¹³

He took a Buddhist vow of silence after the 1963 assassination of President Kennedy. According to some version of his life, he did not speak or write again until the end of the Viet Nam War; according to other versions, though he did not write, he continued to speak when he needed to, certainly to bum cigarettes. He ended his vow of silence by spontaneously reciting T. S. Eliot’s “Murder in the Cathedral” in 1973 while attending a photography exhibition with his wife Eileen. Speaking above the chamber music that accompanied the exhibition, he then plunged into his own work, reciting, “All those ships that never sailed/Today I bring them home and let them sail forever.”¹⁴ Maria Damon states that “Beat poets were determined to write their lives, and this makes examination of those lives—not in an uncritically worshipful way, but with sympathetic critique—especially crucial.”¹⁵ If that is the case, then understanding Bob Kaufman’s life is particularly important to understanding his work. Both have an affinity to jazz itself: they exist in several versions, “played” in various ways. Kaufman’s work and his life remind us of Charles Mingus’ statement about the unique quality of African American, as opposed to white jazz: “life has many changes. Tomorrow it may rain, and it’s supposed to be sunshine . . . but God’s got a funny soul—he plays like Charlie Parker—he may run some thunder on you, he may take the sun and put it up at nighttime. . . .”¹⁶ Kaufman’s life and his poetry move in unpredictable directions, giving to both a sense of improvisation.

At least some of Kaufman’s poetry, like the facts of his life, exists in multiple versions. Gerald Nicosia, editor of *Cranial Guitar*, the most complete collection of Kaufman’s work, has commented upon the difficulty of editing Kaufman’s poetry: “His works were often composed orally in numerous varying versions (. . .) were typeset from transcriptions prepared by others, and then, since he made no effort to save anything, the original manuscripts and galleys were most times lost.”¹⁷ Such a process undercuts one of the basic tenets of textual criticism and traditional literary scholarship: that one must begin by ascertaining the author’s final intentions. But what if the poet produced multiple versions of his work in the same way that a jazz musician may improvise, playing the run in a slightly different way on any given performance of the piece? An oral poet, a street poet, a jazz poet would conceive of poetry in such a way. That is just what Bob Kaufman seems to have done with his ultimate statement on war, entitled variously “War Memoir” or “O-Jazz-O War Memoir: Jazz, Don’t Listen to it at Your Own Risk,” or “O-Jazz-O,” or simply “War Memoir: Jazz, Don’t Listen to it at Your Own Risk.” In this array of poems, all on war and all containing some of the same lines, Kaufman creates a real sense of what jazz is and what war is, but he might not have conceived of a “final” version of the poem or even completely decided what the cultural implications of war and jazz are in a post-nuclear age. Perhaps to some extent he leaves that with the reader or hearer of the poems. To read and hear Kaufman, we must read and hear in new ways. And in many respects this is precisely what the Beat movement itself ostensibly sought to teach us to do before it became fixed in time: to take seriously the absurd, the surreal, and to understand that human utterance is not a fixed entity, but one that is constantly in flux. All the while the society that produces these utterances is demanding a fixed conformity to standards, a commodity—the poem, the recording, the enemy, the war, the movement. And ironically such conformity has plagued the Beat movement as it has become an historical literary event—the movement has set boundaries with a fixed set of heroes, even fixed texts, such as Ginsberg’s *Howl* and Kerouac’s *On the Road*. The contrived photograph in *Life* magazine demonstrates the distortion inherent in attempting to define literary or cultural events with a single, contrived image. Kaufman seems to understand that such standards are illusory—thus, his refusal to “play” his life or his work in one way.

The group of poems I will call “War Memoir” achieves several important ends that I hope to demonstrate here. First, the poems set forth an amorphous yet compelling definition of jazz, not in a musical sense—*that* is embodied in the sound of the poems—but in an ontological sense. Jazz holds for us the possibility of life in a world where death is inescapable, even in a world where our lives, our music, and our deaths are constantly being made into consumable products. But the poems suggest that American culture is incapable of truly hearing jazz or of truly hearing or seeing war, that in the context of a society where everything is a commodity, jazz and war must ultimately be transformed into such. Finally, the “War Memoir” poems may arguably be the most focused artistic statement a Beat writer made on the nuclear proliferation that began in 1945 and would ultimately define the Cold War period, casting a long shadow over all we know and have known since then. In a movement that came to life during the 1950s, the era of cold war conformity, a movement that was defined by providing a sharp critique of mainstream culture, such works should at the very least have the currency of Ginsberg’s *Howl* or Kerouac’s *On the Road*.

The “War Memoir” poems appear in all of Kaufman’s collections. The first version, “War Memoir,” appears in the 1959 collection *Solitudes Crowded with Loneliness* published by New Directions. “O-Jazz-O” and “O-Jazz-O War Memoir: Jazz, Don’t Listen to it at your Own Risk” appear in *Golden Sardine*, published by City Lights Books in 1967.¹⁸ The text of *Golden Sardine* is reprinted in its entirety in *Cranial Guitar: Selected Poems of Bob Kaufman* published by Coffee House Press in 1996. The final version of the poem, “War Memoir: Jazz, Don’t Listen to it at Your Own Risk,” appears in *The Ancient Rain: Poems 1956-1978* published by New Directions in 1981.¹⁹ With the exception of “O-Jazz-O” all versions of the poem contain enough similarities for one to assume that Kaufman saw them as variations on the same basic work. “O-Jazz-O” is tied to the other poems by its title, which is repeated in the new title of “War Memoir” (“O-Jazz-O War Memoir: Jazz, Don’t Listen to it at Your Own Risk”) in *Golden Sardine*, and by its placement in *Golden Sardine*. “O-Jazz-O” and “O-Jazz-O War Memoir: Jazz, Don’t Listen to it at Your Own Risk” are respectively the final two poems in the collection. Kaufman’s repeatedly suggests in his work that jazz is with us from the inception of life, that it is a part of our birth and holds for us the possibility of rebirth. In the relatively well-known “Walking Parker Home,” a poem he wrote about the birth of his son Parker (named for Charlie Parker) and the legacy of Charlie Parker, the famous bebop saxophonist, Kaufman ends with lines that link Charlie Parker’s death not only to the birth of Parker but also to the potential rebirth of all of us:

Death and Indestructible existence
 In that Jazz corner of life
 Wrapped in a mist of sound
 His legacy, our Jazz-tinted dawn
 Wailing his triumphs of oddly begotten dreams
 Inviting the nerveless to feel once more,
 That fierce dying of humans consumed
 In raging fires of Love.²⁰

The wailing in the fifth line quoted above may be the wailing of Parker, Kaufman’s son, as the narrator brings him home from the hospital, or of Charlie Parker’s saxophone some six years after his death. Perhaps there is no difference, for in hearing either of these spontaneous human cries, we, the “Nerveless,” are invited to live again, to live in the midst of that moment

of sound, what the narrator calls that “fierce dying of humans consumed/In raging fires of Love” (“Walking,” 5). Tying Charlie Parker’s saxophone to the wailing of his son Parker, Kaufman suggests that the jazz Charlie Parker played was as elemental, spontaneous, and as fraught with fear and doubt and hope and anticipation as the wailing of a new born baby. In defining jazz in such a way, Kaufman ties jazz to the basic responses that human beings make to the fear, uncertainty, pain, and possibility that life creates, both in birth and death. Jazz is not a studied, fixed statement on what living means, but rather an evocation of all that being human entails, including birth and death. And like the baby’s cry, it rides on the moment.

In all versions of “War Memoir” Kaufman ties jazz to birth and to death just as he does in “Walking Parker Home.” In what I am indentifying as the first version of the poem, the one published in *Solitudes Crowded with Loneliness*, jazz is “At the beginning, a warm dark place.” In other versions of the poem, the narrator explicitly identifies that warm, dark place as the womb. In “O-Jazz-O War Memoir Jazz, Don’t Listen to it at your Own Risk” from *Golden Sardine* these lines become,

In the beginning, in the wet
 Warm dark place,
 Straining to break out, clawing at strange cables
 Hearing her screams, laughing. (“OJOWM,” 94)
 In “O-Jazz-O,” from the same collection, the connection is even clearer:
 Where the string
 At
 Some point,
 Was some umbilical jazz. (“OJO,” 93)

The very screams of our mother in giving birth are presumably the first sounds we hear, and from that we make and understand jazz.²¹ “Her screams were trumpet laughter,/Not quite blues but almost sinful” (“WM,” 52), writes Kaufman in the first version of “War Memoir.” And in the same version of the poem Kaufman suggests that something in that sound stays with us through life, for God plays the blues over and over again because “original sin,” the pain that comes with being born and living while knowing that we will die, never leaves us: “Original sin seemed a broken record./God played blues to kill time, all the time” (“WM,” 52). Still later in that version of the poem, Kaufman moves to this parenthetical declaration, perhaps suggesting by the use of parentheses the innateness of jazz: “(So much laughter, concealed by blood and faith;/Life is a saxophone played by death.)” (“WM,” 52). Life, the saxophone, is inside us. And if life is a saxophone played by death, it is only through **JAZZ** writ large that we truly live in the context of pain and the certainty of death. And jazz is the ability to hear and express the painful sound of life, to hear music in it. Without such “playing” of music, there is no life—there is only death. Thus “What string,” the “some umbilical jazz” in “O-Jazz-O,” may be either the umbilical cord that gives us life or the vibrating string of the guitar or the bass that makes us feel and hear the sound of life, for that recognition of life rides on the moment the way sound does, the way life does as we move step by step toward death.

Unlike so many members of the Beat movement who found in jazz a kind of celebratory freedom, the finding of “it” that Dean Moriarty describes memorably in Kerouac’s *On the Road*, Kaufman conceives of jazz as an existential response to living in a world where pain is real and death is inescapable and life must at best be precarious.²² And though jazz may keep us from succumbing to despair and may even allow us to live, it hardly makes our lives carefree any

more than literature does. Rather, it captures in sound who and what we are, the glimpse of life that allows us to see ourselves in time, that allows us recognition,²³ and *that* is at the center of all art.

This reading of the connection between life and death and jazz in the various versions of “War Memoir” leaves unspoken a central component of jazz: its roots in African-American culture. The music that Kaufman alludes to and embeds in his poetry is bebop, a music created by musicians who rebelled against the so-called “traditional” jazz of the 1930s and early 1940s. In his article “The Sordid Hipsters of America’: Beat Culture and the Folds of Heterogeneity,” Robert Holton states that by mid century “white musicians and audiences had domesticated most jazz With its difficult harmonies, undanceable rhythms, complex solos and eccentric personalities, bebop seemed deliberately to refuse to charm mainstream audiences and to resist popularization”²⁴ In the view of bebop musicians, such as Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Charles Mingus and others, the jazz of Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong had been co-opted by whites. Not only did whites make Ellington and Armstrong *their* artists, while refusing to let them stay in white hotels, white artists like Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller, and Stan Kenton played jazz themselves. Bebop brought onto the music scene of the 1940s and 1950s a complicated, angry music that appealed to people outside of the mainstream, people who by virtue of skin color, sexual orientation, or a conscious rejection of mainstream culture defined themselves as alienated.²⁵ In his article “Saxophones and Smother Rage: Bob Kaufman, Jazz and the Quest for Redemption” Amor Kohli argues that Kaufman finds in jazz more than just the life and death forces implied by “some umbilical jazz.” He finds in it a “revolutionary potential” that grows out of the smoldering anger of African Americans.²⁶ The poems I am calling “War Memoir,” some of which Kohli examines in his article, support this reading.

In “O-Jazz-O,” the poem that begins with the word “Where” and then posits the source of jazz as “some umbilical jazz,” Kaufman offers another possible origin for jazz:

Or perhaps,
In memory,
A long lost bloody cross
Buried in some steel calvary.
In what time
For whom do we bleed,
Lost notes, from some jazzman’s
Broken needle.
Musical tears from lost
Eyes. (“OJO,” 93)

In this poem, Kaufman may well be positing two possible origins for jazz and refusing to distinguish between the two, suggesting that they can both be true at the same time. What if jazz is the ultimate expression of what it means to be human, caught in moments when we glimpse what life is and utter it or play it? What if we only find it in pain, a pain that our culture has a uncanny way of anesthetizing and denying and packaging for easy consumption, much in the same way that Sal Paradise wants to be black without ever considering or even knowing the real lives of black people, much in the same way that “traditional” jazz was domesticated for mainstream audiences? In his essay “Richard Wright’s Blues” Ralph Ellison famously defined the blues in these terms:

The blues is an impulse to keep the painful details and episodes of brutal experience alive in one's aching consciousness, to finger its jagged grain, and to transcend it, not by the consolation of philosophy but by squeezing from it a near tragic, near comic lyricism. As a form, the blues is an autobiographical chronicle of personal catastrophe expressed lyrically.²⁷

Thus, the "jazzman's broken needle" allows us all to live in the context of pain; the saxophone played by death allows us all to feel life in the context of death. But its source in pain might not be available to all of us, only those who have suffered and survived and are attuned to the moment of suffering so that they can "squeeze from it," to use Ellison's phrase, the lyricism of the blues.

This reading gives us the scaffolding that we can use to confront the moment in Kaufman's work that I am calling the limits of jazz. "The blues blows life, as life blows fright/Death begins, jazz blows soft in the night" ("WM," 52) writes Kaufman in the first version of "War Memoir," again suggesting the way in which the blues allows us to express and hear and confront pain and death. But there are, Kaufman's narrator insists in this poem, those who cannot hear. The sound is "too soft for ears of men whose minds/ Hear only the sound of death, of war./Of flagwrapped cremations in bitter lands" ("WM," 52) This allusion to the atomic bomb the United States dropped on Japan at the end of World War II brings into the poem a different kind of death, not the certainty of death within the context of which we all live or the living death that so many slaves experienced or even the death of Charlie Parker, in part the result of heroin addiction, which Kaufman memorably describes in "Walking Parker Home" as

Dayrooms of junk/And melting walls and circling vultures
Money cancer/remembered pain/terror flights
Death and Indestructible existence.("Walking," 5)

The death brought by the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki left for approximately 110,000 Japanese civilians no time for contemplation or utterance. They were instantly vaporized by the heat from the two bombs, the first oddly named "Little Boy" and the second "Fat Man." Kaufman seems intent on recognizing in that act, the silencing of the human voice. He continues in the first version of "War Memoir," writing

No chords of jazz as mud is shoveled
Into the mouths of men; even the blues shy
At cries of children dying on deserted corners
Jazz deserted, leaving us to our burning.
(Jazz is an African traitor.)
What one-hundred-percent redblooded savage
Wastes precious time listening to jazz
With so much important killing to do? ("WM," 52-53)

The silence Kaufman describes here exists for both those who are bombed and thereby instantly silenced and those who do the bombing, who cannot hear. And not only are the men whose minds are intent on war unable to hear jazz, but also the very act of dropping the bomb is packaged for all of us, so that we too are at least potentially made silent. It is a "flag-wrapped cremation." In these three words, Kaufman captures both the act of silencing through

vaporization—“cremations”—and the packaging or commodifying of the act—“flagwrapped”—that silences all of us.

In the press release that came thirteen hours after the first bomb was dropped on Japan on August 6, 1945, President Truman wrote, “What has been done is the greatest achievement of organized science in history.”²⁸ These words strike a hollow chord nearly sixty-five years after the event, for world cultures continue to ponder the potential for ultimate silence this “greatest achievement of organized science” has left with us. During the Cold War, when these poems were written, this pondering of silence and annihilation was daily, hourly—“killing time” to borrow Kaufman’s phrase in the poems. Nonetheless, at the time and thereafter, the justification the Truman administration considered for using such force was patriotic, “flagwrapped”: dropping the bomb would save American lives by ending the war.²⁹ In fact, in the last sentence of press release, Truman promised that the atomic power would ultimately be used to bring world peace: “I shall give further consideration and make further recommendations to Congress as to how atomic power can become a powerful and forceful influence toward the maintenance of world peace.”

The historical debate over the ethics of using the bomb to end the War continues today, but Kaufman might well sidestep that debate in these poems. Whatever the reason, whatever the justification, Kaufman puts forward the idea that in silencing those who are its victims, the bomb also deafens those who dropped it. And in wrapping the act of devastation in a flag, our government has essentially averted our eyes from what happened. The event has been packaged for us, much as the Beat movement was packaged by *Life* magazine in the contrived photograph that I referred to at the beginning of this article. Toni Morrison has observed in commenting upon slavery, “What is curious to me ,” . . . ‘is that bestial treatment of human beings never produces a race of beasts.’”³⁰ In “War Memoir” Kaufman suggests that the dropping of the bomb might well have deafened and silenced us all, making vapor of the victims and deaf and dumb beasts of the victimizers, for in the ending of the poem, Kaufman shifts the perspective, making us all complicit in this “flag-wrapped cremation.”

At the end of the first version of “War Memoir,” the third person of the poem (the point of view reserved for the men who shovel mud in the mouths of other men and cannot hear jazz, the men who kill children) becomes the collective “we” of the poem.

Silence the drums, that we [*italics mine*] may hear the burning
Of Japanese in atomic colorcinemascope
And remember the stereophonic screaming. (“WM,” 53)

These are some of Kaufman’s most haunting lines, for they suggest that there is, after all, a music in war, a music unlike the music of living and dying that jazz captures, and it is packaged for us like all else in a consumer-driven society, packaged in the technology of sight and sound. We hear the burning in “colorcinemascope.” We remember the screaming in “stereophonic” sound. It is no accident that these words suggest television and stereo, technologies that were increasing dominating sight and sound and advertizing in the late 1950s and early 1960s, technologies that would increasingly package our news and our music, freezing time for us and denying us the ability to improvise or catch in an utterance the sound of life or death. It is no accident that the collective we of the poem includes the narrator who presumably understands jazz, he or she who heard the trumpet laughter in “her screams,” for thereby the poem captures the silencing of the very voice that narrates the poem. He or she becomes complicit in the

societal act of dropping the bomb, calling for silence that we may hear not a voice or trumpet laughter but burning and screaming in color and stereo.

In “O-Jazz-O: War Memoir: Jazz, Don’t Listen to it at Your Own Risk,” Kaufman makes this connection even clearer. We learn that those who commit the killing can hear jazz when they are not killing. In fact, they like and consume jazz after the killing:

But even the fittest murders must rest
So *they* [italics mine] sat down in *our* [italics mine] blood soaked garments
And listened to jazz
 Lost, steeped in all our death dreams
They were shocked at the sound of life, long gone from our own
They were indignant at the whistling, thinking, singing, beating,
 Swinging.
They wept for it, hugged, kissed it, loved it, joined it, we drank it,
Smoked it, ate with it, slept with it
They made our girls wear it for lovemaking
Instead of those silly lace gowns. (“OJOWM,” 94-5)

The collective we of this poem is complicit in the war, makes music—presumably in stereophonic sound—for the killers to listen to, to relax to, much as the young man in the Life article leans on his bare mattress and looks into the face of Charlie Parker. Kaufman suggests that none of us is free from being a part of this brutal act. We all are tainted. And even jazz, that music that allows us to experience life in the context of death and to know that we are alive in those moments that we contemplate death, is finally one more commodity—background music that enables the killers to relax after the killing is over, even background music for their lovemaking.³¹

The notion of jazz as a commodity appears in other places in Kaufman’s work, suggesting that he is constantly aware of the possibility of jazz itself becoming one more consumable product in a society that consumes and commodifies art just as it silences and commodifies the enemy. In “Bagel Shop Jazz” from *Solititudes Crowded with Loneliness* Kaufman carefully portrays the commodification of jazz among the hipsters of the Beat era. “Shadow people” are “eating each other/Over a noisy cup of coffee.”³² Each character in the poem “wears” jazz in one way or another. The “Mulberry-eyed girls in black stockings” smell of “mint jelly and last night’s bongo/ drummer.” They are “beat angels,” and they are “Losing their doubts in the beat.” Still, they are “Doomed to see their coffee dreams/Crushed on the floors of time.” The “black-haired dungaree guys,/Ceasar-jawed, with synagogue eyes” are “mixing jazz with paint talk.” They are “Lost in a dream world. /Where time is told with a beat.” Finally the “Coffee-faced Ivy Leaguers in Cambridge jackets/Whose personal Harvard was a Fillmore district step” are “Talking of Bird and Diz and Miles.” They are “Telling themselves under the talk,/This shot must be the end/Hoping the beat is really the truth.” Since each of these characters is a shadow person “projected on coffee-shop walls,” and they all consume or “eat” one another, jazz is something that they project rather than something that they are—as in “some umbilical jazz” from “O-Jazz-O.” When “The guilty police arrive,” the characters in the poem are “Brief, beautiful shadows, burned on the walls of night,” ultimately as silent as the vaporized victims of the bomb. They have no substance, nor do they make music—they vanish.³³

Despite the potential for jazz to become a commodity that I have outlined above, the War Memoir poems suggest that there is always in jazz that potential for life and death that we hear in Charlie Parker's saxophone in "Walking Parker Home." Jazz finally is inside us. Kaufman ends "O-Jazz-O: War Memoir Jazz, Don't Listen to it at Your Own Risk" with these lines:

When guilty we [*italics mine*] crawl back in time, reaching away from ourselves
They [*italics mine*] hear a familiar sound,
Jazz, scratching, digging, blueing, swinging jazz,
And listen,
And feel, and die. ("OJOWM," 95)

In "War Memoir: Jazz, Don't Listen to it at Your Own Risk," the final version of the poem, Kaufman gives us these lines in yet a different form. It is not "they" who sit down in "our blood-soaked garments"; it is "We." "We" are so complicit in what the killers have done that "we" become "they." And we too hear the "familiar sound":

Jazz, scratching, digging, bluing, swinging jazz,
And we listen
And we feel
And live.

Does jazz make us die or does it make us live? More specifically, in the context of a society where both nuclear annihilation and jazz become commodities, does the jazz impulse inside of us (that "umbilical jazz") make us know we are truly dead or that there is still in us the potential for life? These questions are left for us when we put the poems together and perhaps that is just Kaufman's point: to refuse the impulse that pushes the poet or the musician or any artist toward a fixed answer.

So what is a war memoir—a memory of war packaged for us: "flag-wrapped cremations in bitter lands"? Or is it the memory of what it means to be human—the "scratching, digging, blueing, swinging jazz" that is still somewhere inside us trying to get out even after we as a culture, we who are complicit in the silencing of the spontaneous human voice and the commodifying all sounds and acts, have created and used a bomb that can silence everything human? And does the sound make us live again as Kaufman suggests in "War Memoir: Jazz Don't Listen to it at Your Own Risk"? Or does its memory make us recognize that we are dead as Kaufman suggests "O-Jazz-O War Memoir: Jazz Don't Listen to it at Your Own Risk"? Or does it make us confront again those reflections of life and death that ride on every moment and every utterance as the sound of Charlie Parker's saxophone rides on the wind even after he dies? Can we return to what Yeats famously called the "the foul rag and bone shop of the heart" at the end of "The Circus Animals Desertion"? Is it still there after the bomb has been dropped and we have all become complicit in silencing the human voice, whether by vaporizing people or commodifying all around us, including bombs and art?

Kaufman leaves us with these questions when we have finished reading all of the War Memoir poems. And when we put all the poems together, we are left with two contradictory statements about jazz. In the first version "War Memoir," the narrator warns us that we listen to jazz "at your own risk." In the other two versions of the War Memoir poems that contain "War Memoir" in the title, Kaufman varies the line, placing it in the title of both poems. "Jazz Don't Listen to it at Your Own Risk." What is the risk in listening to jazz? Do we risk recognizing what life is or

recognizing what life is only in the context of having lost it: a memoir of the war that took it from us? Or is the ultimate risk in not listening to jazz? For in not hearing it we may never know that what we see around us is fixed and dead, commodified—like the “flag-wrapped cremations” that ended the war and silenced the voice?

Kaufman seems to ponder all of these questions as he riffs through these poems. And perhaps in putting into motion the sound of jazz in the context of the dropping of the bomb that would change everything, he recognizes more than any other Beat writer the fragility of the human voice as it rides on the moment—the only place it can exist—like the sound of Charlie Parker’s saxophone, wailing in a world where men insist on silence by making a commodity of art and vapor of human beings.

NOTES

1. Paul O’Neil. “The Only Rebellion Around” *Life*, 30 November 1959, 114-30. This essay, containing the contrived photograph I will describe in the following paragraph, is a ubiquitous reference among those who write about the Beat Movement. A good example of my point would be the quotation below from the following article: Marie Damon. “Triangulated Desire and Tactical Silences in the Beat Hipscape: Bob Kaufman and Others,” *College Literature* 27.1 (2000): 142. Damon describes O’Neil’s article as “the touchstone of every Beat-revival lecture in the past decade.”
2. *Ibid.*, 115.
3. *Ibid.*, 129.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Two examples would be the following articles: Barbara Christian. “Whatever Happened to Bob Kaufman,” in *The Beats: Essays in Criticism*, Ed. Jeffery Bartlett (New York: McFarland, 1981), 107. Jeffrey Falla. “Bob Kaufman and the (In)visible Double,” *Callaloo* 25.1 (2002), 185.
6. Jack Kerouac. *On the Road*, Fiftieth Anniversary Edition (New York: Viking, 2007), 180.
7. Marie Damon, “Introduction,” *Callaloo, Special Issue on Bob Kaufman*, 25.1 (2002), 105.
8. Christian, 114.
9. Foye, Raymond. “Editor’s Note,” *The Ancient Rain: Poems 1956-1978* (New York: New Directions, 1981), ix.
10. C. Natale Perdito. “Bob Kaufman: Jazz Poet of the Streets.” *Streetnotes Summer 1998* [Journal Online]; available from www.xcp.bfn.org/summer1998.html; Internet; accessed 2 January 2010.
11. David Henderson. “Introduction,” *Cranial Guitar: Selected Poems by Bob Kaufman*, ed. Gerald Nicosia (Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 1996), 20.
12. The first version described can be found in Winans’ article, the second in Damon’s: A.D. Winans. *The American Poetry Review* 29.3 (2000): 19-20. Marie Damon, “Introduction,” *Callaloo, Special Issue on Bob Kaufman*, 25.1 (2002), 106.
13. Bob Kaufman, “October 5th, 1963,” in *Cranial Guitar: Selected Poems by Bob Kaufman*, ed. Gerald Nicosia (Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 1996), 96.
14. Henderson, 18.
15. Damon, “Triangulated Desire and Tactical Silences in the Beat Hipscape: Bob Kaufman and Others,” 140.
16. Brian Priestley. *Mingus: A Critical Biography* (New York: De Capo Press, 1983), 143.
17. Gerald Nicosia. “Editor’s Note,” *Cranial Guitar: Selected Poems by Bob Kaufman*, ed. Gerald Nicosia (Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 1996), 6.
18. *Of Golden Sardine*, Gerald Nicosia observes in his “Editor’s Note” to *Cranial Guitar*, “The text of Golden Sardine is especially suspect, as the early City Lights books were not free of typographical errors, and it is not known who, if anyone, actually corrected the proofs.” *Nicosia*, 6.
19. All references will be to the following editions and will appear parenthetically in the text of the essay. The abbreviations I will use to identify each version of the poem appears after the endnote:

- Bob Kaufman, "War Memoir," in *Solitudes Crowded with Loneliness* (New York: New Directions, 1959), 52-53. "WM."
- Bob Kaufman, "O-Jazz-O," in *Cranial Guitar: Selected Poems by Bob Kaufman* (Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 1996), 93. "OJO."
- Bob Kaufman, "O-Jazz-O War Memoir: Jazz, Don't Listen to It at Your Own Risk," in *Cranial Guitar: Selected Poems by Bob Kaufman* (Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 1996), 94-95.
- "OJOWM." Bob Kaufman, "War Memoir: Jazz, Don't Listen to It at Your Own Risk," in *The Ancient Rain: Poems 1956-1978* (New York: New Directions, 1981), 32-33. "WMDL."
20. Bob Kaufman, "Walking Parker Home," in *Solitudes Crowded with Loneliness* (New York: New Directions, 1959), 5. All subsequent references to this poem will be to this edition and will appear parenthetically in the text preceded by this abbreviation: "Walking."
 21. Kohli, Amor. "Saxophones and Smothered Rage: Bob Kaufman, Jazz, and the Quest for Redemption." *Callaloo* 25.1(2002), 177. Kohli reads these lines in a different but an equally valid manner. He writes, "The 'umbilical jazz,' a nutrient essential for life and passed on with all other prenatal nutrients, shows up as key in the unbroken string of tradition and memory." I will return to his reading later in the essay.
 22. Kerouac, Jack. *On the Road*, 50th Anniversary Edition (New York: Viking, 2007), 206. The passage to which I refer is as follows: "'Now, man, that alto man last night had IT—he held it once he found it; I've never seen a guy who could hold so long,' I wanted to know what 'IT' meant. 'Ah well'—Dean laughed—'now you're asking me impon-de-rables—ahem! Here's a guy and everybody's there, right? Up to him to put down what's on everybody's mind. . . . All of a sudden somewhere in the middle of the chorus he gets it—everybody looks up and knows; they listen; he picks it up and carries. Time stops. He's filling empty space with the substance of our lives, confessions of his bellybottom strain, remembrance of ideas, rehashes of old blowing.'"
 23. I use the term as Aristotle did in *Poetics*: "Recognition, as the name indicates, is a change from ignorance to knowledge." (Aristotle, "Poetics," in *Aristotle's Poetics: A Translation and Commentary for Students of Literature*, trans. Leon Golden (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1981), 19.)
 24. Robert Holton. "'The Sordid Hipster of America': Beat Culture and the Folds of Heterogeneity," in *Reconstructing the Beats*, ed. Jennie Skerl (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 22.
 25. In his article "Body and Soul," T. J. Anderson quotes Grover Sales from his 1984 book, *Jazz: America's Classical Music*: "Bebop was a natural byproduct of this smoldering resentment against white copycats getting rich off black music." (T. J. Anderson, III. "Body and Soul," *African American Review* 34 (summer 2000), 330.)
 26. Kohli, 165-66.
 27. Ralph Ellison. "Richard Wright's Blues," *The Collected Essays of Ralph Ellison*, ed. John Callahan (New York: Modern Library, 1995), 129.
 28. Press Release by the White House, August 6, 1945. Subject File, Ayers Papers [govt. document online]; available from www.trumanlibrary.org/teacher/abomb.htm. Internet; accessed 8 January 2010.
 29. Henry Stimson, Secretary of War under President Truman, made this point in an article he wrote for *Harpers* in February of 1947. According to estimates provided him by the military, the fighting with Japan would continue to the end of 1946 and "cost over a million casualties, to American forces alone." (Henry L. Stimson. "The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb," *Harpers Magazine*, February 1947, 102.)
 30. Bernard Bell, *The Afro-American Novel and Its Tradition* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1987), 282.
 31. Kohli, 178. Kohli provides a very different reading of this portion of the poem.
 32. Bob Kaufman, "Bagel Shop Jazz," in *Solitudes Crowded with Loneliness* (New York: New Directions, 1959), 59. All subsequent references are to this edition.
 33. Falla, 186. Falla provides a very different reading of this poem.

FAREWELL PRIVATE SMITTON

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“Farewell Private Smitton” is a mythical look at war based on the cruel realities of this enduring human activity. Private Gabriel Smitton is a time traveler; a soldier in any war, in any land, at any time. Imprisoned by his dreams, he suffers both the physical and emotional scars of humanity’s predilection for war.

This paper examines the psychological conflicts and inner turmoil of an ordinary young man thrust into an extraordinary situation. It depicts the inherent horrors of all wars, through a narrative about the struggles of a single combatant.

Gabriel’s dreams were stoked by history. This fantasy began in a simple cow pasture during the final days of the Confederacy. The dreams of Private Smitton are not merely a fantasy but rather an artistic interpretation of the ravages of war.

FAREWELL PRIVATE SMITTON SUMMER INTO FALL

March was changing into April as the spirit of the Confederacy was changing from summer into fall. The year was 1865. The life of a gallant effort had been bled from the veins of the south. Lost wanderers dotted the countryside as a would be nation’s life breath expired. With the cries of the fallen at White Oak Road still ringing in their ears, the memories of past victories were exhumed from the hearts of the broken warriors. Defeat had lowered its dismal shroud upon the souls of the sons of the south.

Word had traveled of Lee and Grant at Appomattox. For some poor souls, the news took days, weeks and even months. But for Georgia’s 225th Regiment, the news spread quickly. It all ended in a birch grove that flanked an old cow pasture. The long ordeal had finally run its course; the war was over. Battle scarred, weary and torn by defeat, the participants still managed empty smiles. The thought of returning home was overwhelming. Their hearts beat out irregular rhythms. Their clothes, ragged and stained with death, pretended to cover broken bodies that had been pushed to the limits of endurance. Pain became anguish as their last decent meals loomed as vague memories over clouded thoughts of home. Their starving bodies ached for the nourishment of loved ones.

As these wretched beings of the 225th huddled about the ashen remnants of a campfire, a half hearty voice boomed through the dank gray atmosphere, “What price we pay for our pride.” This less than musical sound reverberated through the body of a barrel of a man clad in a torn gray coat with one, maybe two, maybe three insignificant yellow stripes sewn on to the arm. Hovering closest to the warmth of the fire’s dying embers was another man with a blood soaked bandage, crudely tied around his head. With the taste of this so called pride still burning his tongue, he sank violently to one knee. He looked toward the owner of the striped arm and struggled to push out a word, maybe two. As his lips pursed together to form a sound, they cracked red from dryness and thirst. Red life bearing liquid splattered through a mutter and

then a groan, as his lips pushed outward. With a larger effort, his lips drew back in and out again. Still, the effort ran short. Still, no definable word could be heard. The muscles in his neck tightened as beads of sweat ran freely down his face. And again the lips drew back and again he spit them out. A staccato of movement seized his parched mouth. The vibrations ran up a twitching cheekbone and settled on two squinting lids which half covered two madly dilated and wildly oscillating orbs of blue, laced deeply with red. Again there was a moan; a gasp. All his remaining strength gathered together. A breath from deep within tried to push forth the words. It wheezed through his lungs and chortled through his throat. That breath was his last.

As the life expired from his body, he fell, face down into the mud and muck of the cow pasture. The sun, in its desperate effort to cut through the heavy gray clouds, could not dry the mixture of blood and sweat that saturated his shirt. His comrades barely raised their slumped heads from their weary shoulders as the barrel spit forth a disgusting mouthful of phlegm, sand and death from between his teeth.

A tall lanky soldier dropped to the ground in a heap. The pretense of a red stubble barely showed upon his face. Born scarcely at mid-century, he was all too young for this. With tears running down his cheeks, he violently pounded the earth. These were not tears that swell from sorrow, but rather tears that gnaw at the pit of a void. As mere droplets at the origin of a great river, they collected to cast an unstoppable flow. His fellows watched his emotional fit with varying reactions. The coward turned in fear. That fear had devastated his legs and he could not run. The indifferent one shrugged, anxious to start for home. The brave one flashed his heroic smile and joined the barrel in a laugh. And the one that they called Graybeard, the one with the deepest wound of all, the one who had tasted of life's pleasures and had suffered its pains, looked around, gazed piercingly into the eyes of his comrades and proclaimed, "What price we pay for our survival."

The barrel, unimpressed with the wisdom and philosophical bent of the grizzled old man spewed forth his own brand of wisdom as though it was the punch line of a cruel joke, "You'll soon be in that ground Smitton, why beat it so?"

The barrel's words, and only the barrel's words, brought the youthful percussionist's fists to a screaming halt. A newfound tranquility ensued. This eerie silence was broken only by the young soldier's soft query, "Why?" and again, with more emphasis and perhaps urgency, "Why? Why? Why do you mock me?"

And now, with emotion still building, the lanky southern boy looked at the barrel and blared the word, "Appomattox." And once again, twice, three times more, "Appomattox, Appomattox you fool." And on he went, "Appomattox, the war is over! We're safe, we've survived! There's peace."

Graybeard countered with a cynical yet benevolent laugh, "Peace? Ah peace. It's just a shadow lad. Peace is just a shadow. A shadow cast by the wind."

"Graybeard's right Smitton," bellowed the rotund sergeant. "Dam this scar here above my eye . . . got that in '47. End of the damn Mexican skirmish. No older'n you Smitton. And my old grandpappy, the old lunatic nearly lost his damn brains in 1812. My daddy said the son of a bitch loved it." The boy looked at fat sergeant Johnson with a desperate gaze. And then, with a

laugh that nearly cut the young boy's soul at its core, the sergeant proclaimed with a sneer and a spit, "And I love it too."

ANTEBELLUM, BUT A MEMORY

Darkness came quickly that night. The battle weary remnants of a once proud battalion of confederate soldiers lay bleary eyed with just the full moon for a companion. On that night, a sleepless, cold night, Gabriel Smitton pondered the events of the past few years. His youth was lost. His way was lost; and so too, his spirit was lost. The cow pasture that doubled as his bed was of little comfort as he thought of the long march home to Georgia. What would he find there? Would he find emptiness among the ruins? Would he discover a wealth of nothingness on his father's modest but respectable plantation? Was the great state of Georgia anticipating his return? His father was so much in favor of the war; and why not? He only had one son to sacrifice for the grand cause. Surely the gain would be greater than the loss. Clearly the rewards outweighed the risks. He had heard that old Jeb Harthwaite lost three sons and his plantation to boot. The Yankees took Josh and Jess at Vicksburg and James early on in the war in some remote corner of Virginia. And if that wasn't enough, the dreaded Sherman and his band of marauders burnt his plantation clean to the ground.

An overwhelming feeling of loss clutched tightly to Gabriel's heart as he thought back to the winsome days before the war. Memories of what he had witnessed in the past few years far overpowered any visions of the genteel distortions of Antebellum. The thought of returning to his father's farm revolted him. He remembered those weeks before the war. At such a tender age, barely in his teens, he was an anomaly. All of his young friends clamored at the prospect of war; the glory, the excitement, the pride. There was a stirring in the towns and a churning in the fields. He resisted the passion of his peers. Their overwhelming zeal, however, had the power of an opiate. Its fingers stroked his cheeks and ultimately grabbed him by the throat. And finally, he too donned the cloak of insanity. Together, they rejoiced under the loose stones of an imminent avalanche. They danced in the foothills of a force that was much larger than they ever could have imagined. And as they danced, the rock above shifted in place. And as they set off to war, the mountain started to move.

The rock had fallen. It crashed with a force that lay waste to anything in its path. A huge cloud enveloped all images of home as the air was laden with cinders and debris. And yet, Gabriel thought of his return. No, he didn't watch his friends die for tracts of land and a way of life. He was born into that way of life by a mere function of chance—an accident. And by his own choice, he wasn't going to return. But as he tossed uncomfortably to his other side to relieve his stiffened shoulder, he thought that he must return. And then he tossed again. The war was over; the conflict was done. Its end however, brought a new conflict, an inner conflict. And the young soldier tossed again.

One heart, alone, divided; one mind with two directions. Antebellum was but a memory. With an unsteady hand, Gabriel removed his pistol from a holster that he wore under his coat. He held it in both hands as he watched it reflect the light of a thousand stars. This cold, spiritless metallic object, shined brighter on this cloudless, starlit night than it ever had before. Gabriel both loved and hated this magnificent weapon. He loved it intensely for the prize trophy that it was and he hated it intensely for the manner in which he came to own it. It happened during his first skirmish with the enemy. He remembered every detail of that day as it left a cruel and indelible impression on his fragile psyche. What he remembered most was the confusion, the

fear, and the overpowering and lingering odor of gunpowder. What he tried most to forget was the carnage, the blood, the screams, and the death. His comrades fell, almost indiscriminately, all around him. He wondered if it was pure chance or the grace of some divine master plan that allowed him to survive on that brutal day. And survive he did.

When the smoke cleared, there were more young men dead on the ground wearing blue coats than those clad in gray. With surprise and an incredible sense of exhilaration, Gabriel and the other southern boys looked up to see the Yankees making a hasty retreat to the safety of the nearby woods. Three rounds of raucous cheers echoed through the fighting fields as the Confederates raised their arms in celebration. Their exhilaration soon gave way to an overwhelming feeling of relief and thankfulness; the Yankees were on the run and they were alive to see it. Then the joy soon turned to horror as the scene before them was surveyed. Most of the dead did not die easily. Loosened body parts lay cut off and removed from hemorrhaging torsos. Bone chilling moans filled the air and then gave way to a piercing and sickening silence. Gabriel walked among the dead, eyes moving wildly from corpse to corpse until he came upon a dark haired Yankee officer sporting a single and clean gunshot wound to the center of his forehead. He was the enemy, but he was a man. He wore the wrong coat, but he was a man. Gabriel would later wonder what made him stop over this man. Was it the simplicity of his mortal wound, or was it the gleaming pistol holstered to his side? Gabriel picked it cleanly off the body. He loved that pistol for the trophy that it seemed; he hated that pistol for the indictment that it was.

Remembering that day, Gabriel gently stroked this implement of death, as the power of its fury magnified before his eyes. He caressed the barrel of the weapon and then ran his hand down the long shaft to the chamber. One by one, he emptied the chamber of its contents, placing each bullet on the ground. He then took the impotent weapon and placed its barrel to his head. He felt the cold metal press gently against his beating temple. An eternity passed within the span of a single second as he pulled the trigger. In the instant that followed, he imagined a hot projectile ripping through his brain. He could almost feel his skull shattering into gray matter gone red. With the next click of the gun, Gabriel realized how easy it would have been had the gun been loaded. With his hand trembling uncontrollably, he picked the bullets off the ground. He steadied himself with a long breath of air. Then one by one, he loaded the bullets back into the chamber. As each shell went into place, he rose to a new level of exhilaration. With an unholy anticipation, he then laid metal to flesh. Four years of devastation flashed before his eyes as his finger tightened on the trigger. The frantic screams of the dying, beat upon his ears, as the muscles in his hand tensed. Visions of tomorrow possessed him as he prepared for his demise. Suddenly the haunting prophecy of Sergeant Johnson resonated through the night and cascaded off the trees, "You'll soon be in that ground Smitton . . . You'll soon be in that ground . . . You'll soon be in that ground . . . in that ground . . . that ground . . . that ground . . ." and his body went limp. He collapsed to the ground as the trigger went unpulled.

It wasn't the opulence of another place or the joy of another time that kept Gabriel from squeezing the trigger on his life. Certainly, it wasn't the bleakness of this land or the sorrow of this moment that urged him to go on. In the absurdity of this bloodied cow pasture, Gabriel chose to live in spite of the grimness of reality. Though cast into depths that were too deep to chart, Gabriel chose to live. Ironically, it was the power of defiance over Johnson's cruel prophecy that enabled Gabriel to draw his next breath.

FAREWELL SERGEANT JOHNSON

Gabriel's sleepless night was coming to an end as the first rays of morning sun glimmered over distant hills. The ominous shriek of a crow's first call sent an eerie chill through the thick damp air. Shafts of light slashed the atmosphere and knifed through the morning's misty shroud. Rivulets of dew refracted brilliant beams through webs of disarray. And yet, the road that led north and the road that led south, received the light in equal allotments, as the early sun rose higher in the sky. Gabriel's sleepless night was transformed into a daze. In this daze, that was a dream, he rose to his feet and was drawn toward the ascending sun. There was an awakening all around, as his companions were rising and preparing for the long march. The aroma of a small amount of coffee, mixed with a large amount of chickaree, filled the air. Even the weariest of soldiers were shaking the blood through their wretched veins. The thought of home was enough to start the coldest blood to flow. All but Gabriel's; his blood and his thoughts lay stagnant and suspended in space.

Men readied themselves for the march as Sergeant Johnson grabbed young Smitton by the lapels. He shook him with his clenched fists and assaulted him with a barrage of powerful southern curse words.

"We're pullin out in ten minutes you miserable bucket of slime." These empty sounds passed right through Gabriel with no effect. Ten minutes, ten days, ten years, what matter?

"Move it Smitton."

With eyes cast toward the sun and feet dug deep into the earth of the barren cow pasture, Gabriel answered in quiet simplicity, "Sir, I've come to sit by the Cathedral."

Two thick gray black brushes of bristling hair drew close together with one arching high on Johnson's brow. His forehead tensed as furrows ran deep. His lower lip curled to a sneer as his eyes bulged with disdain. Sergeant Johnson had no love for Private Smitton. He didn't share Johnson's views on war, valor and gallantry. When told to advance on the enemy he would ask why. When told why, he would ask again. He was at best a source of irritation for Johnson. He was at worst a traitor. He hadn't fought with the reckless abandon of the other boys. While early on, he too sang the praises of the cause, of late he could barely pull the trigger of his musket. Of late, Gabriel even spoke of the Yankees with a touch of compassion. But compassion wasn't in Sergeant Johnson's mind this day. Compassion had no place on Johnson's battlefield; not before, during, or after the battle. And so, on the field of this lost battle, Johnson drew his side arm. In his mind, Smitton and his type had sabotaged the honor of the men in gray. His icy eye lined the gun's sight directly at Gabriel's heart. Gabriel didn't flinch as the weapon cocked. Still dazed, one had to wonder whether he cared if he lived or died.

Then as Johnson's finger began to pull back, he sneered, "Goodbye you miserable..."

"Wait," screamed Graybeard. "Let him be Johnson. The war's over. Leave him for the Yankees."

"You're right Graybeard, the stinking war is over. It's a perfect time to shoot a sniveling deserter." With fire in his eye, the Sergeant scowled, "Say farewell Private Smitton."

"Don't shoot," howled Graybeard in a frantic yelp. Don't . . ."

Before Graybeard could finish his plea to the enraged Sergeant Johnson, there was an explosion and a cloud of smoke. The piercing shock waves of the gun reverberated through the pasture and echoed off the decrepit white clapboard farm building some two hundred yards away. When the smoke cleared, Sergeant Johnson's grotesque body lay face down in the mud. His life's blood, once contained within his violent veins, was being soaked up by the depleted earth. Gabriel's gun was still warm beneath his coat as he whispered, "Farewell Sergeant Johnson."

Gabriel stared for a moment at Johnson's lifeless body. Then, in the split of a second, he turned and ran. The remnants of his leather boots kicked through a quagmire of mud as his tattered trousers splashed ankle deep in dung. His shredded gray coat rippled in the air as a proud banner of his freedom. The other soldiers, their hatred for the dead sergeant notwithstanding, fired a round of obligatory, though misdirected shots in the direction of the fleeing private. A nearby stand of birch trees provided refuge as no one brought chase.

The last gunshot was reported. Georgia's 225th Regiment pulled out. They left without a song but with a single purpose, to return home. They left that God forsaken place and they left Private Gabriel Smitton behind. After a long while, Gabriel rose to his feet and left the refuge of the birch grove. As he stepped onto the road, he started aimlessly on a march of his own.

**NARRATIVITY, BEAUTY, ATROCITY:
STEVE OKAZAKI'S *WHITE LIGHT/BLACK RAIN***

**Janet L. Larson
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Art has always followed war – articulating and making indelible the shadow it leaves behind.

-- *New York Times* review 12/30/07

Until Steven Okazaki's *White Light /Black Rain* (HBO 2006), "no comprehensive film had been made, in the United States or Japan," to document the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and their aftermaths (Okazaki, "Park City"). The US Strategic Bombing Survey's extensive color footage had been deep-sixed for 40 years, the seized Japanese black and white film for 25 (Mitchell). Earlier directors had only sampled what was available. For most of his 26 years in indie film, Okazaki, a Japanese American Oscar-winner, had dreamed of making an ambitious historical film on the bombings, but, unable to find a backer "with the resources, commitment and fearlessness" required, had made only modest attempts with the subject. After HBO approached him in 2005 with the idea of doing "a big historical film on Hiroshima and Nagasaki" using more of the graphic archival material, they pushed him to "go deeper" and tell the story "as fully as possible," holding nothing back (Okazaki and HBO's Shiela Nevins, quoted in Guthmann).

But how was it possible to make a film that brings atrocity home to the imagination without either falsifying it or alienating viewers? The white flash, inferno, blast wave, black rain, and radiation could be reproduced only by another a-bomb. Its magnitude of scale and "ruthless logic" are incomprehensible to the senses and prompt disbelief in their reality (Treat 8, 38). The consequences—physical, physiological, psychological, ethical, social, political, cultural, military, historical, and global—extended far beyond Japan and a long-ago war. The bombings' scope and complexity "def[y] ... domestication" (Treat 3) in a "story" and other familiarizing modes, like disaster movie spectacle, the educational history film, righteous polemic, or sentimentalizing about the resilience of the "human spirit," a tiny comfort amid potential catastrophe for the human race. The artistic, cultural, and political pressures to reduce the bombings' unimaginable excess for the sake of gaining an audience are compounded by general public ignorance of 'what happened' in Japan on August 6th and 9th, 1945, and by most people's "emotiona[l] refus[al] to believe in" nuclear annihilation (2). Living in the shadow of the bomb has become normal.

The first Japanese a-bomb writers faced peculiar challenges in struggling to convey their urgent truths. Many people scattered across their nation of islands did not really know what had happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki: the Japanese photography was confiscated, the Occupation Authority imposed censorship, and the victims were shamed, shunned, and denied by their government. How could a writer break through layers of blackout and resistance to expose a monstrous obscenity and still make art? Japan's standing literary traditions could not accommodate their truths. Because, like the death camps, the atomic bombings were at once "real and unreal" (Treat 38), neither modern literary realism nor surrealism could convey them and seem true. What description of "the facts"—and which ones? from what point of view?—could convey the magnitude of the destruction?

And how could any story be told about it? What Mary McCarthy called a “hole” blasted in history cannot be ‘narrated’ (qtd. in Minear 7). Martin Amis’ quip, “The A-bomb is a Z-bomb” (38), captures the impossibility of narrating events that were over the instant they began, without duration, as “[e]ffects overwhelmed causes” and “eclipsed comprehension,” giving “closure” new meaning (Treat 3). To “tell the story” with a beginning, middle, and end would foster the illusion that narrative containment is possible for events that marked the end of signifying narrative order and coherence by effecting a permanent “rupture (rui o zessbite) in culture” (Abe Tomoji, qtd. in Treat 19-20). How could an artist “find one place to begin, or end, without repressing that knowledge” (Treat 18)? The first a-bomb writers were challenged, moreover, to convey “the discontinuity as well as continuity of history” in the nuclear age (19), for the “two days that changed the world” marked civilization’s long-developing surrender to the “‘logic’ of modernity ... to systems both bureaucratic and technological ... for which no one person or ... group of persons maintains some sense of ethical obligation” (12-13). The “revolutionary increase in destruction” President Truman hails in the film as “the greatest achievement of organized science” marked the arrival “not [of] inhumanity, which has existed all through history, ... but ahumanity ... ” (Truman qtd. in Treat 11; Erich Kahler, quoted, 12).

In order to project ‘sincerity’ and avoid distracting from the urgency of preserving their historical truths, early a-bomb writers strove for an unadorned, ‘nonliterary’ style (Treat 34). The commonplace that what happened was “beyond description (gengo ni zessuru, ‘cut off from language’ [146]) meant that even using words and sentences would confer false order on rampant disorder. Flourishing the artist-survivor’s special gifts in the shocked face of unspeakable horror for so many was itself obscene. How could one convey the profound absence left by the bomb except by remaining silent? Atrocity produced by civilization cannot be tamed by art. Yet silence was a form of complicity, and truths had to be told.

THE FILM

In this paper, I want to explore how Steve Okazaki faced parallel challenges of representation, narrativity, and aesthetics in making this major work. Besides conducting the interviews with survivors in Japan and the US, producing the film, and directing it, he edited all the images himself, a wrenching experience that reduced him to weeping (“Park City”). Yet in *White Light /Black Rain: The Destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki*, which has won multiple awards, he managed make a work of terrible beauty that helps us peer into the depths of atrocity.¹ This acute paradox drives the film’s fascination, even apart from its riveting portraits of survivors and archival footage most viewers have never seen before.

Okazaki dealt with his subject’s inherent dilemmas by exploiting the peculiar capabilities of his cinematic medium for manipulating material and narrative structure, while translating to the screen aesthetic principles kin to those of the best early Japanese a-bomb poets. I am thinking especially of their artistic use of silence through ellipsis, innuendo (Treat 28), pared-down statement, blank space, deadpan expression; their laconic storytelling, restrained narrative commentary, ‘breaking-up’ of scenic description, telling juxtapositions and shifts in point of view; poetic repetition and the refusal of closure through recursive construction.

To represent the double dynamic of continuity and discontinuity, Okasaki follows an overall chronological order tracking causes and consequences of the bomb before and after August 1945 up to the present, while using other kinds of cinematic logic and movement through his

material that undermines belief in progression as the signifying structure of history. The film constantly moves laterally (from personal testimony to 'objective' photography, individuals to crowds, Japanese locations to the States); it also builds cumulatively, with delays, from the pathetic to the terrifying and the monstrous, and unfolds recursively, as images and witnesses return to invite re-seeing, re-imagining, re-thinking, re-responding. Supported by techniques like cutaway shots and montage, Okazaki's many nonlinear modes of telling create narrative lacunae and work up a sense of the magnitude, excess, and bewilderment of an atrocity beyond images and words.

The film proceeds in three large movements, framed by contemporary scenes. A long colorful prologue shows 'Japan today' as a society returned to 'normal' but in denial. People are strolling and mall-shopping in Hiroshima, rock musicians in red face paint are performing their youthful angst in a park, and an off-screen interviewer asks schoolgirls and boys, "What happened on August 6, 1945?" They giggle self-consciously, puzzle, ask each other ("an earthquake?"), don't have a clue.

Then comes Okazaki's first round of interviews with 14 hibakusha (literally, "those who were bombed"; Berrigan), witnesses who belong to this Japanese present but are burdened with the past. In this first section, "The Survivors," ample personal testimony is interspersed with shorter newsreels and propaganda films that convey the a-bomb's ideological pre-conditions in Japan and the US, and, through ironic juxtaposition, imply criticism of both countries.

The second movement, "The Bomb," suspends time on August 6/9. Here we meet four men who were involved in making the bomb, manned the three planes, made scientific measurements, and took the aerial footage of the cloud thrusting 45,000 feet upward. These interviews are intercut with color clips—of Los Alamos scientists, the first testing, Little Boy and Fat Man being rolled out and autographed, the *Enola Gay* crew decorated—which indicate in seconds that a huge state apparatus had moved the atom bomb from concept to weapon. The normal look of these military routines crashes and burns when Truman's boast in a newsreel about "harnessing ... the basic power of the universe" for American might, with "even more powerful [bombs] ... in development," trumpets the lethal megalomania of the whole project.

The story then shifts back to the *hibakusha*, who tell what they were doing that day and describe the blast with animated gestures. Their testimonies also voice-over drawings and paintings by survivors, especially children, until the Japanese black and white pictures, of skulls, appear on screen for the first time. Over them the bare facts are projected: the 1000 mph winds, the 9000 degree F temperatures on the ground, the 140,000 instantly killed in Hiroshima. On Aug. 9th "Fat Boy exploded over a Catholic Community on the outskirts of Nagasaki," killing 70,000. In grainy Japanese films, accompanied by a warped sound recording on slow speed of distant religious music that sounds like a ghostly choir singing an interminable requiem for the dead, we see crushed churches and grislier photos—blackened bodies, carbonized babies. Then the film jumps to Truman announcing Japan's "unconditional surrender" and Times Square in ticker-tape delirium of "Total Victory." This section concludes by returning to the *Enola Gay* team. Says the navigator: the bomb "ended the war It did what war does, destroys people."

His matter-of-fact commentary, a kind of segue, is damned by juxtaposition with the third movement, "The Aftermath," which documents the a-bomb's strange effects on the dead and the living: not just war's standard work. We follow an old camera's eye into crowded hospitals to

examine incomprehensible injuries to skeleton patients who are inconceivably still alive, not for long. Streams of pictures show seared bodies and heads, absent eyes, ears, mouths. A survivor tells how her father peeled her face off, “all black.” A health worker pokes at an empty eye socket. Another man voices over his child-self posing savage wounds and enduring grueling surgery filmed in color by the US Army.

As time passes, radiation’s effects get stranger. Bewildered Japanese doctors page through their medical books, putting stethoscopes to listless bodies. Then the narrative shifts to psycho-social effects—the lost, disoriented, and hungry wandering across rubble landscapes, amputees hauled in crude carts, orphans bearing infant siblings on their backs. This section comes to one memorable crescendo with a survivor’s family story: One girl stops talking after the mother’s death, falls into despair, and throw herself in front of a train. Her sister goes to same spot on the tracks, but becomes afraid and jumps aside. “I realized,” she remembers, “there are two kinds of courage. She had the courage to die. I chose the courage to live.”

Okazaki’s story can’t end with reassuring portraits of human dignity because both governments must be held accountable. The US military crushes bones to make an airfield, monitors radiation effects without helping the bewildered Japanese doctors, and hands out candy. One survivor echoes a poem inscribed in stone at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park: “I asked [the GIs] why did you kill my family? ... Give them back to me! They didn’t know Japanese. They just smiled” (cf. Sankichi, “The Prelude,” in Minear 305). Another remembers how angry young patients “became activists” demanding their government’s attention. Japanese officials handing out checks are just “waiting for us to die,” one man says; “then they’ll be rid of us.”²

“The Aftermath” carries on to American and Japanese responses 10 years later. Newsreels fanfare the Maidens Project, which brought over 25 Hiroshima women for free plastic surgery at Mt. Sinai Hospital in 1955, when most Americans were embracing the nuclear age but still in the dark about the magnitude of the bomb’s human toll. In a segment of the TV show *This is Your Life* featuring the Japanese pastor who led this project, *Enola Gay*’s co-pilot comes from behind the curtain, choking on his words (“I looked down and thought—my God, what have we done?”), and presents the nervous clergyman with a check “on behalf of the bombing team.” Two maidens are exhibited in silhouette behind a screen—to avoid causing “embarrassment,” explains the host, Ralph Edwards, in the grating voice of the newsreels, ‘sympathetically’ softened. After this episode of black humor, Okazaki’s most engaging witness, a former “maiden” who endured 30 operations, remembers, sparkly-eyed, “Everybody so nice to us,” then explains that the US hid its bomb tests from the world. Another woman is more blunt: “We were guinea pigs.”

The third movement presses on to show ongoing contradictions in Japan, discrimination against the *hibakusha*, who “live with the bomb every day” even if “they look alright,” and their general avoidance of each other. A grandmotherly teacher tells of tumors that “pop up everywhere.” Katsuji Yoshida, a leader in the Japanese peace movement and a baseball enthusiast wearing a mask over one side of his head, says, “I must accept this and be part of the world.” An unsmiling former postman with deep surgical chest gashes, a “melted” arm, and a brutally seared back that has never healed, explains: “I have shown you my wounds so this never happens again.” The film’s conclusion is long in coming, but these people have been living beyond the end for six decades.

REPRESENTATION: THE *HIBAKUSHA*

The testimonies of Okazaki's victim-witnesses cycle throughout the film, returning again and again, none telling their "whole story" but throwing out flashes of hot "white light" on this pitch-dark subject, even as their embodied human resilience casts another kind of glow. Their moral authority is intensified by the almost unbearable *pathos* of their mixed emotions, relived in the telling—guilt, shame, grief, loss, family love, horror, revulsion, disbelief, and the "numb[ness]" after being "overwhelmed" by catastrophe, confessed by a professional cartoonist dressed in black. In deadpan, Keiji Nakazawa "recreate[s] the film set" of his house collapsing on his family; then we see sequences from his famous animation film, *Barefoot Gen*, in which the "tiny, fragile human body" is flying wide-eyed "in a force field of destructive torrents" (Walter Benjamin; quoted in *Treat 18*).

This cartoon contributes to the movie's gallery of stylized testimonial art. The screen appearances of Okazaki's witnesses are potentially more problematic for contributing to what Roland Barthes has called the "referential illusion," the impression that these human referents are speaking without mediation. Many *hibakusha* are first introduced in silence as portraits by a camera at a 'respectful distance,' framing the whole person in a characteristic milieu; then it slowly zooms in until the face, scored by age and sorrow, with the eyes of the witness, almost fills the screen. Those who stand as unflinching and silent as the child-self in the small black and white photograph they hold are filmed straight on to convey "sincerity." So represented, and detached from any interviewer's voice or image, these dignified Japanese subjects are endowed with a sense of virtually unmediated presence, discursively produced as 'authentic' eye-witnesses even before they speak.³ The 14 individuals Okazaki finally chose out of 500 he initially interviewed are generously representative—in class, gender, ages in 1945, family circumstances, station in life, work, personal style, mode of discourse, tone, and 'look': but none is insane, vindictive, or disfigured beyond human recognition. They become the viewer's human anchors amid "ahumanity" and, as Tadao Sato, a leading Japanese movie critic, put it, project an "aura of ... beauty and gracefulness" (quoted in Guthmann).

This presentation of inward "beauty," enhanced by the meticulous, respectful camera work, visual symmetries, beautiful settings like Japanese gardens, and home ancestor altars behind some witnesses risk placing the *hibakusha* into a rarified aesthetic memorial frame. As the camera leans into their time/space of remembering, replicating the film's movement deeper into the meanings of the past, redundant markers of time in their aged faces, in old photos, in spoken childhood memories, confer "elder" authority with its own risks, inviting the enclosing of even their horrific truths 'elsewhere,' in the relatively safe zone, not ours, of "the past." The viewer of course has no way to 'check' their virtually self-authenticating accounts, while their screen immediacy invites one to forget they've been edited. If their remembering is malformed by instant trauma and reshaped by hindsight in extended traumatic time, their speeches must be understood, "at least partially, as ... work[s] of the imagination," like other survivor memoirs (Langer xii). But it is just this quality of "approximate truths in texts of witness" (Douglass 56) that Okazaki carefully conveys. They choke back words, look away from the camera, close eyes to 'remember,' react to what they are saying, double back on it, confess the difficulties of expression, laugh nervously, nod to confirm the unspeakable, and lapse into silence. These lacunae, emphasized by the editing and sequencing, invite viewers to experience absences and reconstruct inconclusively in the gaps between and within broken testimony and images. Through such means, "not telling the whole story" becomes "part of the story" (*Treat 146*) while drawing us into imagining history unimaginably ruptured by the bomb.

Paradoxically, too, what these witnesses have to say persistently challenges the viewer identification the intimacy of these portraits, with their ‘family values,’ invites (Renov 2). Sakue Shimohira, beautifully framed by glass Japanese doll cases in her home, haltingly tells of searching through debris with her sister, crying, “Mommy! Mommy!” They finally recognized her gold tooth: but when they reached out, her body “crumbled to ashes.” Such testimonies collaborate with other strategies to ‘train’ viewers in a delicate balancing-act between self-projection, imaginative engagement, aesthetic appreciation, and the estrangement that helps to preserve the radically alien experience of atomic trauma.

REPRESENTATION: THE BOMBING TEAM

These Americans cycle through the film for fewer repeat appearances, contributing to the back story of the bomb and limning the mentalities behind it. Lawrence Johnston, a Los Alamos civilian scientist who helped develop the detonators, explains chain reaction with a pleased little smile. Harold Agnew, who worked on the Manhattan Project at Chicago and Los Alamos and was the “scientific observer” whose home movie camera captured the boiling Hiroshima cloud (“Subject Bios,” *hbo.com*), reflects, “I guess I wasn’t learned enough or sophisticated enough to appreciate what it meant...for the future of the world.” *Enola Gay*’s navigator, Theodore “Dutch” Van Kirk, reports he “never had a nightmare about this particular subject.” Okazaki, who wanted these men to have their say, comments that “in their recollections they stayed in that airplane in their minds and tried not to think about what was happening down on the ground” (“Interview,” *hbo.com*). Near the end Johnston says, “We’ve opened Pandora’s box and the genie can’t be stuffed back in the bottle.” But projecting ahead is also a way to evade accountability for the past, just as staying up “in that airplane” in their recollections kept their minds from looking down; and as “old school World War Two gentlemen” of advanced age, they can hand the future they created to *others*.

All four hew to the official line that the bomb hastened the end of the war and dwell on the means to their success, “on time and on target”: the thorough preparations, the technology’s efficiency, the precision of their “scientific instruments.” Unlike the co-pilot whose face crumbles on TV (and who, like the pilot, Paul Tibbets, isn’t interviewed in the film), overall these men come across as functionaries who, without understanding the effects of radioactive weapons, had dutifully carried out ‘rational strategic actions’ scripted by superiors who knew more but had surrendered to the a-human “logic” of the bureaucratic, technological, political, and cultural systems that produced these “weapons of aggression, of surprise and of terror” (Robert Oppenheimer, quoted in *Bird and Sherwin*).⁴ Their co-presence in the film with the Japanese survivors adds more than ironic tension: without stepping in to reconcile their differences or make “particular political points” (“Interview,” *hbo.com*), Okazaki confronts his viewers with a cultural and human chasm, the film’s most provocative gap.

REPRESENTATION: THE ARCHIVAL PHOTOGRAPHY

The referential illusion is peculiarly opaque in historical war films that rely heavily on archival footage with graphic content. When such self-authenticating images, grounded in the dubious ontological status of the realistic image as “the object itself” (Renov 23), are intercut with first-hand testimony detached from any narrator, immediacy is enhanced while the discursive construction of events and witnesses is doubly concealed and the possibility of other interpretations effaced.

The eyewitness authority of the detailed photographic record is also potentially problematic as representation because a “hole” blasted “in history” cannot be filled with data. In reviewing John Hersey’s *Hiroshima* (1946), Mary McCarthy wrote: “Hell is not the journalist’s sphere. Yet is it precisely in this sphere—that is, in the moral world—that the atomic bomb exploded. To treat it journalistically ... is, in a sense, to deny its existence’ ” and make “ ‘it familiar and safe . . . ’ ” (quoted in Minear 7). “Historical” pictures on screen can also seem to domesticate atrocity by presenting it to the eye as knowable by the senses: one instinctively squints at the morass in her visual field, trying to make it out. Then phrases like “piles of rubble” and “mushroom cloud” spring to mind as our brains try to place the images we see into familiar categories. The a-bomb poets recognized that analogy and simile only make atrocity familiar (Treat 32), yet they are a perpetually tempting supplement to “the facts.” A doctor who saw it all from a safe distance reaches for a biblical metaphor: “It wasn’t a ‘mushroom cloud.’ [It was a] pillar of fire.’ ” “Data” is never enough: it *will* be discursivized, even if alternative figures offer no comfort.

As a student at the San Francisco State film school during the 1970s “semiology craze” (Okazaki, “Park City”), Okazaki is well aware of the constructed nature of doc films, their conventions and commerce with cultural sign systems. If the military’s “raw footage” had itself been discursively constructed by the purpose of monitoring America’s a-bomb “experiment,” Okazaki’s reconstruction does not try to efface its built-in interpretations but preserves them for his oppositional purposes. But he also had to reconstruct the images to avoid the response-deadening monotony of corpses piled up and strewn about in the awkward postures of violent death, “form[ing] a seamless mass of unrelieved and depressing detail” (Treat 147). No single image can convey this suffering’s magnitude, yet how many can one look at and still see them? Besides mixing different kinds of pictures, in black and white or technicolor, interspersed with survivor testimony or ‘illustrating’ their words, Okazaki’s camera keeps the eye fresh for more horrors by moving across the stills, pulling in for close-ups and back for wider views of devastation, then cutting away, only to return to even more grisly pictures later on. In the end Okazaki doesn’t seem to have pulled many punches with his archival material, but it is carefully disposed throughout this carefully-constructed film. He also shapes response through the ear with ‘ticking’ strings and minimalist music, electric guitar-and-drum sets, and jazz. And sometimes a soundtrack gone dead invites us to enter into the silence left by the bomb.

In the movement chronicling Ground Zero day, the film cuts from old black and white photography distancing events to the immediacy and expressivism of survivors’ artwork conveying internal states. Atrocity and beauty converge with painful intensity in these stylized paintings in lovely pastels, orange, reds, and shades of black, depicting skin dripping off bodies, thin arms raised in horror and alarm, stunned parents holding lifeless forms, crying faces lifted to black raindrops, crowds drowning in fire or water, falling down or aslant, blown by an immense wind. As the survivors speak and the camera pans over these non-realistic figures, they ‘come alive,’ and even viewers who have seen such drawings before experience anew the shock that children made them.

Perhaps even trying to document the bomb is to imply human beings can order its chaos. But while *White Light /Black Rain* uses visual materials to make connections, they constitute no coherent whole. In white light, black, and color they tell the story, over and over, in flashes of retrospective narration. Between them, invisible dark falls.

Ending. Because many in Japan’s “postmodern” generation regard the bombings as “old history,” “represent[ing] the equivalent of a cultural ‘game-over,’ ” and “dwell more on the

future than the past” (Ito),⁵ Okazaki had to take special care not to make his film just another ‘memorial.’ His survivors are clear that it is precisely for the sake of the future that they dare to talk about the past. In their testimony about the prospect of nuclear warfare, their “‘words are omens,’” inviting us to imagine their memories not just of the past but “of how the world may end” (Sankichi, qtd. in Minear 298; Treat 1).

If Okazaki has invested most in the atrocity-with-dignity model of a-bomb representation, he has poised his film on contradictions, paradoxes, and discontinuities that make synthesis impossible and resist closure. In the final sequences, the story is reopened again and again. We see today’s memorials in Nagasaki and Hiroshima, young people staging a “die-in” at the Peace Park. In the summing-up statements, a survivor says, “All this pain ... it must end with us.” Then a caption spans the screen: “There are now enough nuclear weapons in the world to equal 400,000 Hiroshimas.” Which statement is ‘final,’ the film implies, depends on us.

As the credits start rolling, Okazaki reprises his opening images of Japanese crowds, in trains and shopping malls, crammed with the consumer goods that have driven Japan’s “peace economy.” Teens are furiously absorbed in rock music; girls are laughing—again. On the pop-music soundtrack a rising cacophony, drowning out memory, crescendos as their lively images slow to blackout. These final frames inject dramatic irony by returning today’s Japanese, especially children, to the extreme vulnerability of their compatriots on August 6, 1945, when more than time stopped. And the “familiar” look of this contemporary Japan includes “us” with “them” in a world of 400,000 potential Hiroshimas.

In the penultimate sequence, a performance artist at the Peace Park images in smeared paint the physical and psychological blast, fire, and black rain while a lone jazz horn howls. More mushroom cloud photos flash on and off the screen, enacting the repetitive visualizations of atomic trauma, while the canvas is built up in shades of red, white, yellow, and black paint. The artist’s hands, like a clawing victim’s dripping with blood, work layer after layer of atrocity into a canvas of terrible beauty. As the film’s representationalism is being translated into artistic and musical abstraction, the viewer’s encounter becomes visceral. This sequence is also a metaphor for Okazaki’s inspired method of replay-with-variations. “What we can do,” said actor Koji Yakusho on the film’s opening in Japan, “is to keep telling the story, over and over, until we have blisters on our eyes and ears” (quoted in Guthmann).

NOTES

1. *White Light*, which debuted at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2007, had its New York premiere at the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival in June, and was first aired on HBO (in the US) August 6, won the Primetime Emmy Award for Exceptional Merit in Nonfiction Filmmaking and three top international prizes at the Banff World Television Festival’s Rockie Awards in Alberta, Canada, including the Grand Prize (Best History and Biography Program), and the NHK Best Asian Program prize (“News”). In September 2009, for a new documentary about the Cambodian genocide, *The Conscience of Nhem En*, Okazaki received his fourth Academy Award nomination. In 1990 he won an Oscar for *Days of Waiting*.
2. Such criticisms drew the government’s ban, later dropped, on showing *White Light* on Japanese television. In August 2008 it was aired on NHK in Japan and was released by Zazie Films and Siglo for a successful box office run (“News”). Although a cause célèbre in Japan (Guthmann), it wasn’t shown in American movie theaters. HBO sells the DVD on its web site.

3. With thanks to Jen Kosakowski, a student in my spring 2008 graduate “War Stories” course at Rutgers University in Newark, NJ, for her analyses of Okazaki’s film techniques to authenticate his witnesses and of truth issues in texts of trauma and witness.
4. For a discussion of why the a-bomb was used and the rationales for it, see Franklin 149-54. He also discusses the scientists working on the project who expressed cautions as well as naïve hopes that the bomb would ‘abolish war’—afterwards, solemn warning and condemnation (see 158).
5. At the Human Rights Watch Film Festival, Okazaki said that young Japanese, glutted with commercialism and taught denial by their government, do not have the knowledge or desire to reject a new military, which the U.S. wants built up in order to cast Japan as “our U.K. in the East.” It seems likely that Okazaki sought to reach this younger audience by featuring them in the frame sequences and using popular music by (his own favorite) Japanese bands and composers.

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