

Western University

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2012

A Painful Labor: Photography and Responsibility

Sharon Sliwinski

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Photography and Responsibility

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1 Photography seems like an unlikely place to open an inquiry into the
2 nature of ethical responsibility.¹ Since the 1970s when Susan Sontag pub-
3 lished her caustic criticism of the medium as “an act of non-intervention,”
4 there has been an avalanche of objections regarding photography’s false
5 promise to awaken social conscience or effect political change.² This ava-
6 lanche of criticism has perhaps only bound the medium ever more tightly
7 to questions of responsibility, although Sontag’s profound sense of doubt
8 has cast a long shadow. In her last book, *Regarding the Pain of Oth-*
9 *ers*, published in 2004, shortly before her death, the critic revisited her
10 initial claims. The text both extends and revises her earlier arguments.
11 Less certain and yet more skeptical, Sontag argues that there is no longer
12 any innocence about the depravity of humanity—the current assault of
13 images of atrocity has made sure of this—but also that this awareness
14 has done nothing to alter such horrific acts. This profound sense of dis-
15 appointment falls like weight across the medium. As the psychoanalyst
16 Susan Issacs once memorably put it: “We feel we ought to be better . . .
17 because we see how much we fail; and this paradoxical but familiar fact
18 tends to make us worse.”³

19 In fact precisely when photography emerged on the world stage, Sontag’s
20 argument implicitly suggests, the notion of responsibility lost something of
21 its original meaning. Predictably, the Latin root for the word responsibil-
22 ity is *respond*, as in “to answer,” but as well *re-spondere*, which means to
23 pledge, a kind of solemn promise. This inheritance suggests that responsi-
24 bility turns on a fundamental relation between I and thou. One responds,
25 after all, to an other. But the modern definition of responsibility includes
26 something more, and perhaps here is where Sontag bristles: to be respon-
27 sible also implies “to take authority for a person or thing,” a kind of pater-
28 nalistic overtone that suggests there is a fundamental asymmetry at the
29 heart of these ethical relations. The power of this authority, Sontag’s thesis
30 in *On Photography* suggests, renders imaging-making a social practice that
31 actually reverses the code of ethical conduct: “The act of photographing is
32 more than passive observing . . . it is a way of at least tacitly, often explic-
33 itly, encouraging whatever is going on to keep on happening.”⁴ For Sontag,
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photography is inexorably a site of ethical failure. The strength of this accusation has not lost any force in the last thirty years.

In spite of the endurance of this claim, my idea here is to reopen—or perhaps simply to hold open—this question: how does photography allow us to consider the nature of our ethical obligations anew? There is no doubt that the medium has profoundly affected modern definitions of responsibility, since photographs reflect and organize our personal and public structures of attention and therefore our personal and public structures of concern. At the heart of my inquiry is an effort to articulate how photography provides a unique kind of engagement between the spectator and the photographed other. Put differently, I am curious about how this medium brokers an encounter between the self and a specific form of otherness.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Roland Barthes' influential "little book" on photography, *Camera Lucida*, offers counsel. Like Sontag's work, this text has received extensive discussion and critique since it was published in 1980.⁵ The terms that Barthes introduces in the book—*studium* and *punctum* in particular—have become common in the lexicon of photography studies. The book is made up of two strikingly distinct sections and the transition between them is marked by a "recantation," by what Barthes describes as his "palinode." At the end of the first section, he declares he must abandon his initial course because this approach failed to help him to discover "the nature (*eidōs*) of Photography."⁶ He must take another path. The second half of *Camera Lucida* opens on an entirely different note: "Now, one November evening shortly after my mother's death, I was going through some photographs."⁷ As Victor Bergin first noted, this remarkable shift of tone and subject does not simply mark a turn toward the personal, but rather entails a subtle shift of theoretical allegiances.⁸ Barthes abandons his semiotic approach in favor of a phenomenological investigation of photography's ontology. The implications of this profound shift have perhaps yet to be fully absorbed into photography studies, despite the voluminous scholarship on the book.⁹

What interests me about Barthes' move is something more narrow. In the process of sorting through the photographs of his mother after her death, Barthes arrives at what he describes as "the essential" question: "Did I recognize her?"¹⁰ Barthes seems to suggest that photography poses an inescapable obligation to its spectators: when confronted with the medium's unique presentation of the other, one cannot escape the fact that, despite its indexical lure, a photograph of the other is not identical to the Being of the other. Barthes characterizes this dilemma "a painful labor; straining towards the essence of identity, I was struggling among images partially true and therefore totally false."¹¹ Later he describes this as a "Sisyphean" task, which is to say photography sets an interminable obligation before the spectator: reaching toward the photographed other's essential identity we are obliged "to climb back down without having seen it, and to begin all over again."¹² My wager is that Barthes' description of this difficult

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and ultimately unrewarding task—this “painful labor”—offers an instructive description of the spectator’s complex relationship to the photographed other. What is at stake in this Sisyphean task is the subject of this chapter.

FROM THE EYE TO THE MOUTH

In a review of Susan Sontag’s last book, the Serbian-American poet Charles Simic relayed a remarkable anecdote, his own phenomenological evidence about the essential nature (*eidos*) of photography. The anecdote begins with him as a child, thumbing through his grandmother’s stack of magazines, some which contained engravings of battle scenes. The images have a strong effect on the young boy: “They were done in the heroic manner. The soldiers charged with grim determination through smoke and carnage. . . . It was the kind of stuff that made me want to play war immediately.”¹³ The reader learns the year was 1944 and the location was Belgrade, where Simic reports that the Russian army was closing in, the Germans were digging in to fight, while the Americans and the English took turns bombing the city. As war raged on around him, he admits that he made no connection between the heroic engravings and what he witnessed in the streets around him. This observation triggers a rich set of remembrances:

Even a six-year-old has numerous opportunities to see dead people and be frightened. Still I made no connection then, that I recall, between what I saw in those magazines and the things I witnessed on the streets. That was not the kind of war I and my friends were playing. This may sound unbelievable, but it took war photographs and documentaries that I saw a few years later to impress upon me what I had actually lived through.

One day when I was in third or fourth grade our whole class was taken to a museum to see an exhibition of photographs of atrocities. . . . We, of course, had no idea what we were about to see, suspecting it would be something boring, like paintings of our revolutionary heroes. What we saw instead were photographs of executions. Not just people hanged or shot by a firing squad, but others whose throats were being cut . . . I recall a photograph of a man sitting on another man’s chest with a knife in his hand, looking pleased to be photographed. . . . I could not talk about this to anybody afterward; neither did my schoolmates say anything to me. Our teachers probably lectured us afterward about what we saw, but I have no memory of what they said. All I know is that I never forgot this day.¹⁴

Simic’s story contains all the elements of the typical first encounter with images of atrocity: shock, boredom, a sense of being emotionally overwhelmed, the memory of specific details, a moment of falling silent, and

later, afterwards at some point, a need to recount the whole experience. One of the most striking observations Simic makes is the distinction between living through war and regarding it in photographs. Seeing dead people on the streets is not the same as seeing them in photographs. The encounter with images, moreover, mysteriously enabled Simic to understand what he had “actually lived through.” So while both kinds of experiences—witnessing dead in the streets and regarding them in photographs—generated a kind of muteness, a difficulty in narrating the experience, it is the photographic encounter that appears to have returned the young man to speech.

The anecdote echoes one of Walter Benjamin’s insights from an essay called “The Storyteller.” Benjamin draws a similar conclusion about the structural difficulty of narrating the experience of war. There is a distinct relationship, he argues, between war and storytelling, between the breaking of the world and the breaking of the narrative frame:

Was it not noticeable at the end of the [First World] war that men returned from the battlefield grown silent—not richer, but poorer in communicable experience? . . . A generation that had gone to school on a horse-drawn street car now stood under the open sky in a countryside in which nothing remained unchanged but the clouds, and beneath those clouds, in a field of force of destructive torrents and explosions, was the tiny fragile human body.¹⁵

Like Simic, Benjamin seems to suggest that something about the experience of war—and in particular the experience of *mechanized* warfare—takes away the ability to speak about it. This has been a common observation of analysts working with patients traumatized by social or political violence: while survivors of violence have an imperative to tell, they are also haunted by the “impossibility of telling,” where an attempt to articulate their experiences collapses in the very effort of speaking.¹⁶

This structural relation between the experience of modern war and the structure of narration was more recently explored by another German writer, writing about another war. In his well-known lecture, “Air War and Literature,” W.G. Sebald also focused on a narrative elision, this time surrounding the Allied destruction of German cities at the close of the Second World War. Given the scope of urban devastation that Sebald describes in the opening chapter of the book, it seems inexplicable that these experiences have remained outside of German cultural memory. Sebald pushes at the question of why there are no records of the Allied bombing of German cities, himself not even sure how such a “natural history of destruction should begin.”¹⁷ Working with a handful of resources, Sebald manages to describe the great tides of people that were always on the move at the end of the war. Apart from this distraught wandering, Sebald suggests, social life revived with remarkable speed: “People’s ability to forget what they do not want to know, to overlook what is before their eyes, was seldom put to the

1 test better than in Germany at that time. The population decided—out of
 2 sheer panic at first—to carry on as if nothing had happened.”¹⁸ Mechanized
 3 war is a kind of warfare that targets the human ability to communicate
 4 and therefore to remember. Sebald’s thesis is corroborated by Simic own
 5 narrative: “People can get used to bombs, mass killings, and other horrors
 6 of warfare. Today I find it hard to believe that I once swiped a helmet off a
 7 dead German soldier, but I did.”¹⁹

8 Sebald’s hypothesis returns to the question of *how* the experience of dev-
 9 astation is narrated and how narration secures (or fails to secure) historical
 10 memory. Against such popular tendencies to rely on transcendent notions,
 11 Sebald picks out the few German writers who were trying to record what
 12 they actually saw as plainly as possible. And this sense of narration—sto-
 13 rytelling that keeps the story free from justification—is the kind that Wal-
 14 ter Benjamin also espouses: “Actually, it is half the art of storytelling,”
 15 Benjamin insists, “to keep a story free from explanation as one reproduces
 16 it.”²⁰ What makes a story memorable Benjamin argues—what commends
 17 it to memory—is a “chaste compactness which precludes psychological
 18 analysis.”²¹ This kind of storytelling is unlike “information” in Benjamin’s
 19 terms, which is always-already shot through with explanation. Storytelling
 20 as Benjamin imagines it leaves the reader to interpret things the way she
 21 understands them: “the narrative achieves an amplitude that information
 22 lacks.”²² This method of narration offers counsel, according to Benjamin,
 23 indeed, a kind of wisdom that is dying out.

24 In Charles Simic’s account, the photographs of atrocity he encountered
 25 on his school trip to the museum seemed to offer a trace of the same counsel
 26 Benjamin describes of the great storytellers: a compact description of real-
 27 ity seemingly devoid of psychological analysis. In themselves, the images
 28 offered no explanation of the events they recorded, indeed, their dry report
 29 was disturbing for precisely this reason. But as Simic suggests, this lack
 30 of explanation eventually became a kind of implicit pedagogy, a “coun-
 31 sel woven into the fabric of real life.”²³ In Simic’s case, these photographs
 32 became a vehicle for a return to speaking about his own experiences. More-
 33 over, the “painful labour” of regarding these atrocious events seemed to
 34 pave the way for recognition of his own experience—a recognition that
 35 relied on the *non-recognition* of the photographed events. Perhaps the pic-
 36 tures enabled Simic to imagine himself as he was never able to before—as
 37 witness to the witness.

38 Of course, as Sontag doggedly reminds, photographs of atrocity have
 39 also been used to help wage war: “During the fighting between the Serbs
 40 and Croats at the beginning of the recent Balkan wars,” she reports, “the
 41 same photographs of children killed in the shelling of a village were passed
 42 around at both Serb and Croat propaganda briefings. Alter the caption,
 43 and the children’s deaths could be used and reused.”²⁴ Sontag’s example
 44 certainly calls for pause, but it also underscores the power of photography’s
 45 refusal to explain. Captions—as directive, explanatory tags—are *needed* to
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accompany difficult images precisely in order to condemn (or celebrate) the violence that is depicted in them. The caption helps to steer the spectator's response because the image itself refuses to do so. The photograph, one could say, presents an impassive record of the uselessness of suffering. The caption renders that uselessness *useful*.

In this regard, the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas has marked a critical distinction which offers a compliment to Barthes' notion of the painful labor of encountering the image of the other. For Levinas, there is a "radical difference between *the suffering in the other*, where it is unforgivable to *me*, solicits me and calls me, and suffering in me, my own experience of suffering, whose constitutional uselessness can take on a meaning, the only one of which suffering is capable, in becoming a suffering for the suffering (inexorable though it may be) of someone else."²⁵ Regarding the pain of others is a process whereby meaning is necessarily made, or in Levinas' terms, where suffering becomes "justified." But the just-ness of suffering for the suffering of the other is double edged: it is both the site of an inexorable responsibility for the other and a site for rationalized means with an end in view. The latter version quickly slips into the justification of the neighbor's pain, what Levinas calls, "the source of all immorality"—evidenced in Sontag's report of the myriad uses of the photographs of dead children. Of course the suffering of others *is* used and Sontag is right to point out that photographs are particularly vulnerable to this exploitation. But the medium's mute refusal to explain what it depicts also opens the space for recognition of the spectator's painful labor, the Sisyphean task of interminably reaching toward the other's essential identity without ever grasping it.

As Simic story reveals, in the spectator's effort to recognize the photographed others' pain some meaning must be produced, whether in effort to justify a particular political end or simply as a suffering for the other's suffering (what Levinas characterizes as "the ethical perspective of the inter-human").²⁶ But if we follow Barthes, the difficult task the spectator faces is to persist despite a sense of impending failure, of perpetually asking but never answering the question of "do I recognize those depicted there?" In this sense, perhaps Sontag's worry that the effect of photography's "ethical reference points" will "wear off" is unfounded. It is not images that make our compassion grow numb. As Sebald and Simic make evident, people can become remarkable inured to bombs, mass killings, and the other horrors of war. That they can also be halted into thoughtful silence by a photograph is surely a sign of hope.

THE PERPLEXITIES OF (VISUAL) RESPONSIBILITY

Regarding the Pain of Others extends and slightly revises the position first presented in the essays that make up *On Photography*. Sontag is a critic who has long been interested in the relationship between aesthetics and

ethics and her early polemic against the image is well known: “To photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed. It means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge—and, therefore, like power.”²⁷ But there is ambivalence in her argument too, and even in the early text, it circles around the impact of the image of suffering. Reading Sontag’s prose, one never quite feels convinced of her dismissal of photography as simply a distant, voyeuristic relation to the world. Taking her own writing as evidence, these encounters are anything but distant and voyeuristic; Sontag is transfixed and profoundly moved by images. Consider this oft-cited passage from *On Photography*:

One’s first encounter with the photographic inventory of ultimate horror is a kind of revelation, the prototypically modern revelation: a negative epiphany. For me, it was the photographs of Bergen-Belsen and Dachau, which I came across by chance in a bookstore in Santa Monica in July 1945. Nothing I have seen—in photographs or in real life—ever cut me as sharply, deeply, instantaneously. Indeed, it seems plausible to me to divide my life into two parts, before I saw those photographs (I was twelve) and after, though it was several years before I fully understood what they were about. What good was served by seeing them? They were only photographs—of an event I had scarcely heard of and could do nothing to affect, of suffering I could hardly imagine and could do nothing to relieve. When I looked at those photographs, something broke. Some limit had been reached, and not only that of horror; I felt irrevocably grieved, wounded but a part of my feelings started to tighten; something went dead; something is still crying.²⁸

Full of expressions of de-realization, denial, guilt, and even conflicting time registers, this passage represents one of the preeminent examples of the painful labor the spectator faces in their encounters with the photographed other.

But despite the wrenching engagement, Sontag does not change her mind much in the more recent iteration of her argument. The opening pages of *Regarding the Pain of Others* sets out a familiar position: “The photographs of the victims of war are themselves a species of rhetoric. They reiterate. They simplify. They create the illusion of consensus.”²⁹ And yet she has been struck again, wounded by more images, this time by a series of color pictures from Afghanistan by Tyler Hicks which appeared in the *New York Times* in 2001:

The triptych depicted the fate of a wounded Taliban soldier in uniform who had been found in a ditch by Northern Alliance soldiers advancing toward Kabul. First panel: being dragged on his back by two of his captors—one has grabbed an arm, the other a leg—along a rocky road. Second panel (the camera is very near): surrounded gazing up in terror as he is being pulled to his feet. Third panel: at

the moment of death, supine with arms outstretched and knees bent, naked and bloodied from the waist down, being finished off by the military mob that has gathered to butcher him. An ample reservoir of stoicism is needed to get through the great newspaper of record each morning, given the likelihood of seeing photographs that could make you cry.³⁰

Already tightened, Sontag now perpetually prepared, opens the newspaper with stoicism, braced for the onslaught that awaits her. There is no question that shock is journalism's goldmine; reporters and photo-editors are constantly on the hunt for more dramatic images to emblazon their dailies. But Sontag's account of herself as a spectator nevertheless provides evidence of Barthes' painful labor. Indeed, in these accounts one can discern two distinct elements—two moments of recognition: first is a kind seizure, an aching if inchoate bond with the photographed other, what might be thought of as a species of what Freud termed "identification," that most primitive emotional tie with another person which is ambivalent from the outset. The second moment is marked by a repudiation of this wounding tie, the moment that Sontag arms herself with "an ample reserve of stoicism." Readers should be suspicious of these moments in the critic's prose. As Jacqueline Rose once observed of apathy (via Freud), it takes a great deal of energy to achieve a passive aim.³¹

In a related vein, Rose has described the vexed relationship between war and our knowledge of it, or more concretely, Rose argues that war represents a moment of breakdown in knowledge. Thinking about the question of war seems to necessarily involve an evasion of its force, in this case, evidenced by Sontag's retreat into her ample reserve of stoicism. Rose's argument is that while our faith in the idea that knowledge will bring an end to war was broken during the modern period, war nevertheless continues to precipitate a crisis in our ability to think: "The theorization of war seems finally to be taken over by its object. The attempt to theorize or master war, to subordinate it to absolute knowledge, becomes a way of perpetuating or repeating war itself."³² For Rose the category of war troubles our boundaries between reality and fantasy and, at the same time, exacerbates the opposition. "How can you recognize the real enemy?" she asks: "How can you distinguish, with any absolute certainty, between your own projections and real external danger?"³³ The problem with thinking about war—and indeed this is particularly pertinent to spectator's encounter's with photographs of war—is that nothing can be known for certain, and precisely at the moment when it is vitally important to hold onto some certainty, our grasp on reality seems further out of reach than ever before. If we cannot, as Rose suggests, answer or even approach the question of "why war?" directly, then what can be known?

In lieu of an answer, let me return to Charles Simic's story of living through war and later encountering an exhibition of photographs of

1 atrocity. In his account Simic presents his own “negative epiphany,” his
 2 own “painful labor,” a realization that in looking he becomes responsible
 3 for recognizing the other’s pain and moreover responsible for recognizing
 4 that he can do nothing to alleviate it:
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6 I can recall down to its minutest details Ron Haviv’s close-up photo-
 7 graph taken in 1992 of a Muslim man begging for his life on the streets
 8 of the town of Belijina in Bosnia. I feel the horror at what is about to
 9 take place, can imagine what is being said, know well enough that
 10 these men with guns are without pity. *And yet nothing that I can imag-
 11 ine or say equals the palpable reality of this terrified, pleading face on
 12 the verge of tears.*³⁴
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14 There is no confusion here about the photograph’s inability to depict the
 15 reality of those it represents. At the same time as the photograph demands
 16 Simic imagine how atrocious and terrifying war is, it also reminds him of
 17 his failure to do so. And more: in encountering this failure to imagine the
 18 other’s experience, Simic remembers his own childhood proximity to war.
 19 So indeed, there does seem to be something to be seen and recognized in
 20 images of suffering but this is not a knowledge of the traumatic experiences
 21 of others. Rather Simic is compelled to look and to imagine the other’s ter-
 22 ror, and in so doing encounters failure: reaching toward the photographed
 23 other’s essential identity he is obliged “to climb back down without having
 24 seen it, and to begin all over again.”³⁵

25 The spectator’s encounter with photographs of atrocity illuminates the
 26 limit of her ability to imagine, to understand, and to respond. While many
 27 critics have noted the relationship between the “panoptical vision” which
 28 news agencies bring to bear on battlefields and the forms of political inter-
 29 vention upon such conflicts, they also argue that images cannot provide any
 30 guidance.³⁶ The explosion of our ability to survey human suffering around
 31 the world does not offer any guarantee that we will be able to alleviate such
 32 suffering. But this increasing vision does not produce a tyranny of non-
 33 action either. What the circulation of images of suffering does offer is a lens
 34 by which we might rethink the question of responsibility. This is no small
 35 matter—a relatively simple piece of curved glass has allowed us to register
 36 the realm of interrelationality differently. As Walter Benjamin reported of
 37 the earliest spectators of photography: “We didn’t trust ourselves at first to
 38 look the pictures. . . . We were abashed by the distinctness of these human
 39 images, and believed that the little tiny faces in the picture could see *us*.”³⁷
 40 This might seem like a ridiculous, childish anxiety, a fantastic dream of the
 41 face of the other calling out to us, as though images could see with the eyes
 42 that see them. Perhaps this is an uncanny vision one would rather avoid,
 43 but in looking at another’s pain one might rightly wonder whether knowl-
 44 edge of their suffering is a restorative act or complaisant with the violence
 45 witnessed. Can the tiny faces in the pictures see us doing nothing to help
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them? Of course not, but this interminable, painful labor of attending to—and *failing* to attend to—the other’s suffering might be the very basis of responsibility itself.

NOTES

1. Parts of this chapter appeared in *Visual Studies* 19, 2 (October 2004): 148–159.
2. Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Delta, 1977), 11. The critical literature on what has been called the “aestheticization of suffering” has ballooned in recent years, no doubt spurred by the publication of Sontag’s last book. I cannot do justice to the intricacies of the ongoing debate here. A brief list of the literature includes: John Berger, *About Looking* (New York: Vintage, 1992); John Taylor, *Body Horror: Photojournalism, Catastrophe and War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998); David Campbell, “Horrorific Blindness: Images of Death in Contemporary Media,” *Journal for Cultural Research* 8, 1 (January 2004), 55–74; Lilie Chouliaraki, *The Spectatorship of Suffering* (London: Sage, 2006); Mark Reinhardt, Holly Edwards, and Erina Duganne, eds., *Beautiful Suffering: Photography and the Traffic in Pain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press and the Williams College of Art, 2007); Frank Möller, “The Looking/Not Looking Dilemma” *Review of International Studies* 35 (2009): 781–794; and Susie Linfield, *The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010); Mark Reinhardt “Painful Photographs: From the Ethics of Spectatorship to Visual Politics,” in *Ethics and Images of Pain*, ed. Asbjørn Grønstad and Henrik Gustafsson (New York: Routledge, forthcoming).
3. Susan Isaacs cited in Jacqueline Rose, *Why War? Psychoanalysis, Politics, and the Return to Melanie Klein*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 36.
4. Sontag, *On Photography*, 12.
5. The literature discussing *Camera Lucida* is extensive. Some of the most recent entries include Geoffrey Batchen, ed., *Photography Degree Zero: Reflections on Roland Barthes’s Camera Lucida* (Minnesota: MIT Press, 2009); James Elkins, *What Photography Is* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2009); Shawn Michelle Smith, “Race and Reproduction in *Camera Lucida*,” in *Photography: Theoretical Snapshots*, eds. J.J. Long, Andrea Noble, and Edward Welch (London: Routledge, 2009), 98–111.
6. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 60.
7. Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 66.
8. Victor Burgin, “Re-reading *Camera Lucida*” (1982), republished in Batchen, ed., *Photography Degree Zero*, 31–46.
9. See Batchen’s introduction to *Photography Degree Zero*.
10. Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 65.
11. Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 66 italics added.
12. Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 66.
13. Charles Simic, “Archives of Horror,” *The New York Review of Books*, May 1, 2003: 8.
14. Ibid.
15. Walter Benjamin, “The Storyteller” (1936) in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1988), 84.

16. See Dori Laub, "Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle," in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1995), 61–75.
17. W.G. Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, trans. Anthea Bell (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 33.
18. *Ibid.*, 41.
19. Simic, "Archives of Horror," 9.
20. Benjamin, "The Storyteller," 89.
21. *Ibid.*, 91.
22. *Ibid.*, 89.
23. *Ibid.*, 86–87.
24. Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2003), 1.
25. Emmanuel Levinas, "Useless Suffering," in *Entre Nous: On Thinking-of-the-other*, trans. Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 94.
26. *Ibid.*
27. Sontag, *On Photography*, 4.
28. *Ibid.*, 19–20.
29. Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, 6.
30. *Ibid.*, 13–14.
31. Jacqueline Rose, *On Not Being Able to Sleep: Psychoanalysis and the Modern World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 218.
32. Rose, *Why War? Psychoanalysis, Politics and the Return to Melanie Klein* (London: Blackwell, 1993), 23–24.
33. *Ibid.*, 28.
34. Simic, "Archives of Horror," 8, emphasis added.
35. Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 66.
36. See Paul Virilio, *Strategy of Deception*, trans. Chris Turner (New York: Verso 2000); Thomas Keenan. "Publicity and Indifference (Sarajevo on Television)" *PMLA* 117, 1 (2002): 104–116.
37. Cited in Walter Benjamin, "Little History of Photography" (1931), in *Selected Writings Volume II*, eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1996), 512.