BENDING THE FRAME

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Photojournalism, Documentary, and the Citizen

by **Fred Ritchin**

aperture

To all those who are doing the work.

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Preface

What do we want from this media revolution? Not just where is it bringing us—where do we want to go? When the pixels start to settle, where do we think we should be in relationship to media—as producers, subjects, viewers? Since all media inevitably change us, how do we *want* to be changed?

Do we want to know more about the world, or less? Which worlds—our internal one, the consumer-oriented one, the one concerning other people and the planet and our relationship to both of them? Do we want to know about issues and events in a timely manner, and if so, do we want others to have similar information so that we can discuss it together—and maybe do something about what we find? Or should we all be able to pursue our own idiosyncratic trajectories, making use of whatever we want whenever we want it? Do we want all of these things? (And are we willing to pay for any of it?)

What should be expected of professional photographers of the journalistic and documentary ilk? Should they be more neutral, more independent, more knowledgeable, more transparently credible than before? And should there be any similar obligations for nonprofessional photographers, now that we increasingly depend upon them to tell us about the world? Do we now need—even more than we need photographers— *metaphotographers* capable of sorting through some of the billions of images now available, adding their own, and contextualizing all of them so that they become more useful, more complex, and more visible?

The era of the photograph as automatically credible is over, for better and for worse. Photographs lied, but they were also capable of telling truths, however partial. They still have that capacity, perhaps more than ever, but now, like other media, photographs have to be employed rhetorically to build a case and to persuade. Rather than routinely indicate what *is* (as records of the visible), they increasingly point to what *might be*—with the potential for much deeper understanding, as well as for a particularly subversive simulation designed to mislead.

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Many photographs (or images that look like photographs), invoking the previous paradigm of photography—as lens-based recording—are designed to elevate the status of a subject or of their authors, or to immediately confine those they depict to convenient categories by invoking an already existing visual trope. The increasingly malleable photograph—whether manipulated before or after the shutter's release—is employed to fashion the world according to the intentions of the person making it, or of the institution for which it is being made. The world and we become one (there is no *there* there, as Gertrude Stein put it), refracted together in a self-portrait, basking in the glow of Image while disingenuously unaware of how frayed the connections have become between the photograph and the world it was once meant to signify. We are insulated (as I titled a previous book) "in our own image."

But then what can a photographer—not wanting to contribute to the pursuit of branding (of things, people, institutions) or to the image wars that hover around every significant event—do to be of more service to society? What are the possible approaches, including those emerging and those marginalized, that may establish stronger, more thoughtful, more straightforward connections with the actual and the essential? Which kinds of image-based strategies might best engage readers, and which might manage to respect the rights, and the agency, of those depicted? How does today's image-maker create meaningful media?

Vincent van Gogh saw the world differently from his predecessors (and from most everyone else): he was liberated to paint as he did partly by photography, which was far more efficient than painting as a sheer representational medium. We too can be liberated by the achievements of recent decades to make other kinds of imagery. What we produce should rely much less on photography's celebrated decade of the 1930s, when faster cameras and films emerged along with mass picture magazines; we do not need to make more *Migrant Mothers* and *Falling Soldiers*. There is an enormity of complex issues today that cannot be similarly encapsulated—how, for example, is it possible, through photography, to proactively address global issues like climate change, or to participate in the healing process for the many still living with the traumas of war?

Bending the Frame explores some of the many efforts to create different kinds of imagery, and the values that they express. Some of the models described are decades old, others are contemporary, and some have not yet been achieved. All, in one way or another, may be useful. What then happens, of course, is up to all of us.

CHAPTER 1
The Useful Photographer

It was once thought, at least in democracies, that a photographer of the documentary or journalistic persuasion who witnessed a horrific event or situation, or a painful one, would record what it looked like in order to alert society, so that society might respond. The intrepid photographer was thought to fill an essential role in providing such visual descriptions and, quite often, in provoking readers (and at times governments) to confront issues that might not otherwise have been of concern. Despite being inevitably interpreted and framed according to the photographer's own point of view, a photograph, no matter how unfamiliar or even grotesque its depiction, was considered difficult to refute given its status as a reliable trace of the visible and the "real."

The obverse was also true—*without* a photograph (or a video), it has been difficult to get people to respond; the urgency and relevance of an event, its importance, and sometimes even the fact of its occurrence might be called into question. The photographic image of a young girl being napalmed in Vietnam, of a black man being menaced by a police dog in Birmingham, and of a hooded man with wires attached to his extremities being forced to stand on a box in Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison, all led to outcries over American policies. Photographs could be effective, viscerally so, when words alone were not enough.

The photographer's sanctioned role as a societal scribe meant that the imagery was received as more than voyeurism, or what is sometimes now crudely labeled as "violence tourism." Photographs indicating various kinds of injustice were allowed and even solicited to inform both members of society and their elected representatives—even those made by soldiers, from Abu Ghraib prison, surfaced with enormous clout. Professional photographers were expected to serve as active witnesses, and for many of them their encounters with various manifestations of the human condition, some excruciating, were thought of as both necessary and central to their responsibilities.

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To borrow a term from the late John Szarkowski, longtime director of photography at the Museum of Modern Art, photographs could act as "windows" onto the world—in the case of photojournalism, windows that were able to nearly demand that one look through them, both as a prerequisite of citizenship and as a moral obligation. Although never as transparent as a window, the photograph was able to evoke a response that approximated that of actual seeing; when the photograph was published in a newspaper or magazine, the seeing became collective.

These sets of relationships, however, have become the stuff of the rearview mirror. As a cascade of screens submerges viewers with enormous numbers of images, including billions of their own photographs and videos, imagery of a larger societal significance has a much harder time surfacing, let alone demanding attention. One's Facebook page, Instagram account, and Twitter feed typically connect with various snippets and streams from other like-minded individuals, not with a menu of overriding issues (formerly a "front page") that far-flung eyewitnesses and their editors would have considered crucial to a contemporary understanding of the world.

But mainstream media has itself added to the confusion, often choosing the low road when it comes to image, in order, paradoxically, to enhance their own. By repetitively relying on imagery of celebrities (and noncelebrities treated as minor ones), on innuendos of sex, displays of explicit violence, and other forms of the spectacular, many publications have abandoned a large part of their commitment to looking as a means of engaging with events. Rather than working over a period of time as attentive observers, photographers are now frequently placed in the position of setting up imagery (as in "photo-ops" or "photo-illustrations") to get a desired result, or can be expected to act like paparazzi, on the trail of the incendiary.

While the embrace of the facile has always been a powerful tendency, and editorial imagery has nearly always been treated as illustrative, as secondary to words (although some frustrated writers may not agree), diminishing readerships and drops in advertising have exacerbated the predicament. Partially as a result, more photographers have chosen to work independently on long-term projects, applying for grants to sustain themselves in the field, or attempting to collaborate with nongovernmental organizations. Liberated from the constraints of mainstream media and able to "author" their own work without editorial interference, they now have the challenge of finding somewhere, other than their own websites, to publish—and yet another challenge: to be paid for their work.

Today nonprofessionals have found that they can post photographs and videos that are not so very different from those of mainstream media, if at times considerably quirkier and more immediate. A politician's gaffe at a private fundraiser, a somersaulting cat, or an actress working out at a gym can become the subject matter for anyone

with a camera, provided at no cost to the viewer. Work by mainstream professionals (likewise distributed mostly for free) is often more static, showing what must be seen according to an accompanying article. But these images can also be appropriated, quickly becoming part of a recontextualized mix. Information, as the saying goes, wants to be free, and the notion that professionals provide essential information that should be reimbursed has met with only modest success.

The photographic print, an object, now commands record prices, but the photograph as information has comparatively little value. In the 1970s, when I began my career, it was the opposite: one looked at documentary photographs for the vision of the world they articulated and for the details of existence that they recorded, but never thought of *buying* the prints. (If one did, each might have cost five or ten dollars.) The validation of the photographs was in their publication and distribution to a larger audience, a more extensive viewership than a photographic print could ever attract.

The photograph's documentary status has been altered, in part, by its transformation from a physical object derived from chemical processes to an expression of digital code. Rather than being viewed as the result of a recording process in which anyone present would have seen something similar, the ephemeral and easily malleable online photograph (digital-imaging software is pervasive and highly efficient) can be increasingly considered an expression of a particular point of view, a commentary on events that is more akin to writing than it is a definitive rendering.

Certainly nearly everyone working with photographs, including those in mainstream media, has always known that all images interpret rather than laying automatic claims to the truth. But photographs were also thought to contain useful information captured via the lens, including some that had escaped the photographer's control—recalling Garry Winogrand's famous phrase: "I photograph to see what things look like when they are photographed."

The rawer, first- and second-person images on social-media sites referring to "me" (the photographer) and "us" (the photographer's friends, family, and community) are viewable as at least as authentic as the aesthetically harmonious, more indirect third-person photographs made by journalistic professionals. Not only must professionals frequently produce images that fit the needs of publications—which have their own particular styles and worldviews—they also have to try to conceal, for the most part, their own personal reactions to the situations they experience. And they must attempt, despite often having little time on site, to create documents that are somehow emblematic of the unfolding situation, or at least depict several of its major components. As a result, the images they produce can seem impersonal, or borrowed from iconographies used by others in very different situations (the war in Iraq being photographed to look like World War II, for example).

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The more fluid, participatory images coming from the owners of cellphones, rather than staking a claim to being definitive, can often be easily supported or contradicted by contrasting them with the many others made of the same scene. Most important, they tap into the local knowledge and experience of the phones' owners. During the 2011 uprisings in Cairo, for example, while professionals representing international publications photographed the major conflagrations, locals made images of smaller-scale activities, such as demonstrators wearing eye patches in honor of the sacrifice of fellow protester Ahmed Harara. As *Al Akhbar* reported in November 2011: "Harara, who lost his right eye on January 28 during protests leading up to the ousting of former President Hosni Mubarak, lost his left eye on November 19, according to social media activists. 'I would rather be blind, but live with dignity and with my head held up high,' Harara was quoted as saying on Egyptian activists' Facebook pages."[1] Many protestors were similarly disabled during the demonstrations, when certain police were said to have specifically targeted their eyes.[2]

Rather than claiming a doctrine of journalistic objectivity or neutrality, the very subjectivity of nonprofessionals, their transparent self-involvement and lack of financial incentive, can be reassuring—many viewers may empathize with the motivations of these ordinary citizens, which are possibly similar to their own. These images constitute, to a certain extent, a common, diaristic dialect based on showing and sharing with cellphones—a language that is more detail-oriented and everyday, with fewer elaborately constructed attempts at the larger, synthesizing statement.

The collapsing boundaries between author and reader—a collaborative coauthoring that literary deconstructionists have been theorizing for decades—opens up the expectation that the greater media world now may function in more of a conversational rather than simply a hierarchical, mostly top-down system. With digital image-capturing devices on some one billion portable telephones (a new iPhone advertisement refers to "one billion roaming photojournalists"), and the Internet increasingly available, access to the means of production and to channels of distribution is hardly exclusive. No longer are there rigorous requirements to master the "craft" of photography. Yet the medium is easily personalized, with minimal additional costs to produce enormous numbers of new images, and software that enables the photographer to efficiently, and often undetectably, modify the initial record. In the digital environment, lens-based image making has become a form of communication nearly as banal, instinctive, and pervasive (or profligate) as talking.

For the small minority of image makers who strive to work professionally as visual witnesses, the migration from paper to screen has created new challenges, most of them still unmet. As newspapers and newsmagazines have become less indispensable and are perceived as less credible, the photograph as societal arbiter has lost its most persuasive

platforms. There is little question, for example, that a photograph printed as a cover or double-page in a print publication once constituted a focal point in ways that the more transient, cluttered online environment does not often allow. (Photographs are rapidly replaced, and content-management systems are usually too formulaic to allow designs that highlight images or amplify synergies among them; short videos are more self-contained.) For example, the photograph printed on the front page of the *New York Post* on December 4, 2012, with the headline "DOOMED: Pushed on the Subway Track, This Man Is About to Die," was widely discussed (and condemned); prominently displayed on paper, it existed in the physical world for an entire day.

Adjusting to the digital environment has been challenging for all those professionally involved in the journalistic enterprise. A 2009 survey, "Photojournalists: An Endangered Species in Europe?," found that the three major crises for photojournalists were low pay scale, competition from nonprofessionals, and the protection of authors' rights—issues that trouble photographers in many regions.[3] The paradigm shift in thinking required to take advantage of the newer possibilities of digital media is difficult to accomplish. Even for major publications such as the *New York Times,* the *New Yorker*, and *Time*, much of the most interesting photographic work and commentary are published on blogs—"Lens," "Photo Booth," and "LightBox," respectively—rather than integrated into the main body of the publication, reflecting an unwillingness or inability to experiment with some of the ideas expressed in these offshoots.

The planning required to innovate in a digital environment can be considerable: among the challenges are allowing for meaningful interactivity and a mixing of media that is synergistic—amounting to more than the sum of its parts—creating narratives that can be sustained among all the hyperlinks, and providing sufficient context for the curious. Some innovations can be much easier to implement, such as a roll-over that allows the reader to place the cursor on a photograph to see another one underneath, augmenting or contradicting the first (the subject in her office and at home, say, or the photo opportunity as it was intended and what it looked like from the side)—for simpler strategies like this one, the hurdle is conceptual.

Potentials such as these are, for the most part, ignored. Photography, like other media, is made to continue fulfilling a role not unlike the ones it was assigned prior to the current media revolution, with single captioned pictures and a de facto adoption of the old-fashioned slide show as the preeminent presentation strategies for images online. These images and the ways in which they are presented can seem stodgy compared to the less tradition-bound work seen on social-media sites (invigorated by biting comments and "likes" by a coterie of collegial, often supportive observers). Uploaded by a wide gamut of people, including "citizen journalists" (the catchall term used for anyone ranging from Arab Spring revolutionaries to neighbors concerned about

something happening next door), whose approaches may stray a good distance from journalistic norms, the photographs and videos presented can be overwhelming in their emotional tenor, or silly, or enlightening, or distracting and addictive (it is hardly coincidental that viewers of the Web are called "users"). The vastness of the ever-expanding social-media archives feeds the perception that there is always something, somewhere, of potential interest if only one is willing to spend the time looking for it.

The word *magazine* comes from *magasin*, or store, which itself evolved from *mahsan*, an Arabic and Hebrew word meaning warehouse. It is as if we want to circumvent the filtered publications to forage more serendipitously in the warehouse of the Web—we prefer, in short, the experience of wholesale to that of retail. Certainly the Web still features brand names, but they hardly constrict one's choices—there are so many other opportunities just a click away. It is now likely that a search engine, having analyzed one's predilections, including previous searches, will lead one astray.

The very enormity of the Web, with its promise of revelation, recalls the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges's 1945 short story "The Aleph." Borges describes the protagonist's encounter with the Aleph, in the home of the cousin of a woman, now deceased, whom he had loved:

> The Aleph's diameter was probably little more than an inch, but all space was there, actual and undiminished. Each thing (a mirror's face, let us say) was infinite things, since I distinctly saw it from every angle of the universe. I saw the teeming sea; I saw daybreak and nightfall; I saw the multitudes of America; I saw a silvery cobweb in the center of a black pyramid; I saw a splintered labyrinth (it was London); I saw, close up, unending eyes watching themselves in me as in a mirror; I saw all the mirrors on earth and none of them reflected me.[4]

The Web, at this point, still has a considerable distance to go to resemble Borges's confrontation with wondrous knowledge. While instantaneously providing an impressive array of examples and answers, a cacophony of possibilities, it lacks a similar reverence for (or indeed any sense of) mystery's unveiling. A reason may be found in a rabbinical commentary on why the "aleph" itself, a letter that has no sound when pronounced, was chosen to begin an entire alphabet—because, the commentary goes, before the sound there must be the silence. Silence—visual or any other kind—is not something at which the Web excels.

What then is the difference between a professional and a nonprofessional photographer? The question was asked to major figures in the photojournalism industry several years ago at a New York University forum. The answer that slowly emerged to start the discussion, from an editor at the *New York Times*, was that one could trust a professional's work not

to be fabricated. (We also later talked about certain professionals' abilities to build more complex narratives with their images.) But given the vast number of staged events into which only professionals with press passes are allowed, for example, such trust may be misplaced (think of George W. Bush's infamous 2003 "Mission Accomplished" appearance on an aircraft carrier). It is difficult to record a photo-op without being at least somewhat complicit in a fabrication, even if that fabrication is of someone else's devising.

Today, if a photograph does emerge from the media haze with something essential to say about contemporary events, there is a growing probability that it was authored and distributed by one of the legions of amateurs with digital devices. For the moment at least, the work of these nonprofessionals—making awkward, raw, and frequently intimate imagery—is often perceived as more "authentic." (And, without even the slight hindrance of an assertive authorship that might include a claim of copyright, it may be more likely to go viral.)

Rather than advocating for a publication's worldview, the amateur may be explicitly advocating for his or her own. In 2011 computer programmer and blogger Azyz Amami, from Tunisia, spoke at the Rencontres d'Arles photography festival, pointing out several ways in which his practice and that of his colleagues during the Arab Spring differed from that of the media professional. To begin with, Amami and his cohorts were clearly motivated by their personal stake in the future of Tunisia as a democratic society. His interest, as he explained it, was not in framing a scene—taking the time to frame might mean being spotted by the security forces, and subsequent arrest. Nor was it in photographing the dead and injured—a citizen journalist would likely try to help fellow protestors who are hurt, whereas the professional is often dependent on making more shocking photographs of casualties in order to come away with saleable imagery for the international press. On the other hand, a citizen journalist might have less compunction about inflating the number of people at antigovernment demonstrations in a caption, if it might help to attract new recruits to the revolution (although, it could be added, professionals quoting official counts from ill-informed or biased authorities often get the numbers wrong as well).

That same year I curated an exhibition of photographs of the Libyan revolution by Bryan Denton, who had been working there as a freelancer for the *New York Times* over a six-month period. Denton is nearly fluent in Arabic, has lived in Beirut for several years, and had devoted himself to making imagery that explored, as best he could, the complexities of the general uprising, quite a few of which appeared in the *Times*. (He is also a former student of mine.) After a slide show of his recent work that Denton presented in a public forum at New York University, where the exhibition was held, I turned to a young Libyan woman on the panel—a student pursuing a career in health sciences—and asked her to comment. She began by thanking all who had made

photographs of her country's revolution, and then referred to a specific photograph of her grandfather in Libya that she had received only the day before as being the one that was most important to her. She described it as a cellphone image of her grandfather, posing with the corpse of former dictator Muammar el-Qaddafi in a meat locker. In the photograph, she said, her grandfather was smiling for the first time in forty years.

Aside from this photograph, there were no other specific images to which she referred. The young professional photographer next to her, who had just braved wartime violence to serve as a witness, was made to realize that a family's cellphone image, for a young Libyan woman living in New York, was apparently the most consequential. But it is also not surprising: like everything else (to borrow the title of photographer Eugene Richards's recent book), war is personal.

Of course, while there was never any assurance in photography's short history that the photographs made by social documentarians would arrive at their intended result, at times they did, and effectively. "I'm sure I am right in my choice of work," documentary photographer Lewis Hine wrote more than a century ago, in 1910. "My child-labor photos have already set the authorities to work to see 'if such things can be possible.'" Interestingly, he added: "They try to get around them by crying 'Fake' but therein lies the value of the data and a witness. My 'sociological horizon' broadens hourly."[5] Therein also lies, of course, the value of the photographs themselves—Hine's exposé stimulated legislatures to pass laws against child labor. Similarly persuaded, readers of W. Eugene Smith's 1951 photo-essay in *Life* magazine on Maude Callen, a dedicated African-American nurse-midwife serving, with few resources, a large, impoverished rural South Carolina community, spontaneously donated so much money that a new clinic was built that she said "looks like the Empire State Building to me."[6]

With the collaboration of his wife, Aileen, Smith also made a series of photographs in the early 1970s on the impact of mercury poisoning in Minamata, Japan, due to industrial pollution. The work, showing the grotesquely mangled limbs of victims, the polluted water being discharged, and government and company officials, was published first in *Life* magazine and then in a 1975 book, *Minamata*. The photographs served both as excruciating evidence of the effects of industrial waste on the local population (Smith was himself severely beaten by employees of the polluting factory) and also to spur on the larger environmental movement. Living in Minamata for three years, he and his wife had become, in a sense, hybrid citizen-journalists, both witnesses and advocates: "This is not an objective book," Smith writes in the prologue of *Minamata*. "The first word I would remove from the folklore of journalism is the word 'objective.'" He continues: "My belief is that my responsibilities within journalism are two. My first responsibility is to my subjects. My second responsibility is to my readers."[7]

Environmental concerns had been sparked a few years earlier by a man we might now call a "citizen journalist," astronaut Bill Anders. On Christmas Eve, 1968, at the end of an enormously turbulent year rife with political upheaval, Anders photographed the Earth from his perch on an Apollo spacecraft, for the first time depicting our planet as fragile and alone in the cosmos. *Earthrise*, as the photograph was called, was placed on a U.S. postage stamp and inspired Earth Day, celebrated for the first time by millions on April 22, 1970, sixteen months after Anders made the image.

Both for their impact on morale and for the damning evidence that they may gather, one of the most contested and restricted purviews of professional photographers has been the coverage of war. It is also, of course, at least in hindsight, one of the most celebrated of photography's domains. The modern turning point in war's portrayal, transitioning from the heroic to the excoriating, was that of the Vietnam War. Allowed a large amount of freedom to cover almost anything they wanted by officials who initially thought the photographs would serve a public-relations effort, the photographers in the field—by making images, such as one of a grimy, exhausted G.I.; a Vietnamese father cradling his young, injured child; a Vietcong prisoner executed at point-blank range; terrified Vietnamese children running down a road away from a napalm attack—effectively contested the U.S. government's claims about the nature and progress of the conflict.

In response, during the first Persian Gulf War photographers were largely marginalized by governments. In an effort to avoid what President George H. W. Bush called "another Vietnam,"[8] U.S. policy was to keep photographers as far away as possible; perhaps the most memorable images from that conflict show the roof of a building in the cross-hairs of a camera linked to a bomb about to strike it. Photographs that spoke directly to the consequences of the violence were negated in the "image war" that enveloped the on-field battles. For example, the pictures of a bunker destroyed in central Baghdad by an American Tomahawk missile were quickly obscured by a cloud of questions meant to nullify their impact: Were the Iraqi dead civilians or soldiers? Who was at fault? Was the claim that the victims were civilians a propaganda ploy by Saddam Hussein? As a 1991 front-page headline in the *Los Angeles Times* put it: "Images of Death Could Produce Tilt to Baghdad." The actual death of individuals was not the focus, apparently, but the fact of the image and the ways in which it might be used.[9]

The restrictive policies for photographers were modified for the second Gulf War, but still with an eye to controlling any potential fallout: photographers were now required to be "embedded" with troops, and had contracts stipulating under what circumstances photographs could be published. The limitations of embedding, along with a facile tendency to initially see the war as a battle between good and evil,

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contributed to the circumstance that the most revelatory photographs to emerge from that conflict were those made by soldiers at the Abu Ghraib prison.

But even before the current crises in journalism and the diminished opportunities for editorial support, the approaches of many documentary photographers and photojournalists had already evolved significantly. Declining to rely so heavily on the camera's recording function, and borrowing from techniques usually attributed to art photographers, they came up with hybridized strategies to report on contemporary issues. In some ways these methods resemble the "New Journalism" first identified by Tom Wolfe in 1972, combining methods of the journalist with those of the novelist.[10] Writers such as Norman Mailer, Truman Capote, Gay Talese, and Wolfe himself speculated on the inner thinking of their subjects, or placed themselves in the situations on which they were reporting, using conventions from fiction in their own cross-disciplinary narratives. Similarly, many documentary and journalistic photographers departed from the mythic status of the photographic document as "fact" to explore reality as a much more contested and nuanced phenomenon—an implicit critique of traditional documentary function.

These photographers have enhanced the role of conjecture and intuition, some of them using a visual vernacular to achieve imagery that could be at times deceptively bland (Robert Adams, Bill Owens, Sophie Ristelhueber, Celia Shapiro, Stephen Shore, and Alec Soth, to name but a few), while others deployed evident formal flair, more explicit in their points of view (included among these are Bill Burke, Raymond Depardon, Jim Goldberg, Jeff Jacobson, Gilles Peress, Sylvia Plachy, and Eugene Richards). Some, of course, belong on both lists. Others, like Martha Rosler and Allan Sekula, have been quite explicit in their critiques of documentary activity and the ways it purports to frame and describe reality. Despite a "just the facts" appearance of much documentary work, there have always been numerous formal approaches in operation, some better concealed than others; indeed, the blandest imagery may be the most deceptive.

Photographic histories tend to conceptualize a significant divide between the documentarian and the artist without exploring overlapping strategies, whereas, when visiting contemporary galleries, one can only be struck by the variety of documentary work being shown—although one's reading of the imagery can be colored by its commercial appeal. An obvious exception to the lack of historical attention was Szarkowski's 1978 survey *Mirrors and Windows: American Photography Since 1960* at the Museum of Modern Art, in which the most interesting photographs were those that the curator could not place either in the category of art (inward-looking mirrors) or documentary (the outward-looking windows, mentioned previously), but that belonged to a third, hybridized approach—acknowledging the ongoing dialogue between inner and outer states that has always made photography, like writing, much more than a mere recording.

That overlap is evident in the work of many of the most important photographers exploring social issues, and helps to bridge some of the perceived gaps in contemporary imagery—between, for example, photojournalist and "citizen" journalist. Henri Cartier-Bresson, for one, believed that photojournalism was "keeping a journal with a camera": a diarylike, personal activity, and a way to combine his leanings as an artist (he initially aspired to be a painter) with those of a journalist. While Cartier-Bresson was not known for photographing his breakfast or other minutiae of his day, his stance straddles those of today's professional and amateur: "As far as I am concerned," he once stated, "taking photographs is a means of understanding, which cannot be separated from other means of visual expression. It is a way of shooting, of freeing oneself, not of proving or asserting one's own originality. It is a way of life."[11]

Similarly, Walker Evans argued that while his straightforward photographs of Depression-era tenant farmers in Alabama may have been taken as evidence to define a period, they were also an expression of an inner lyricism—leading him to characterize his own work as "documentary style." (Szarkowski commented in 1971: "It is difficult to know now with certainty whether Evans recorded the America of his youth, or invented it.")[12] His tenant-farmer photographs and James Agee's text, initially assigned by *Fortune* but ultimately judged too unwieldy for publication in the magazine, were instead released several years later as a book, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941), today a classic. It was a work in two distinct voices, with a section of Evans's images grouped together so that they precede rather than illustrate Agee's text (on certain points, in fact, the text and photographs strongly disagree).

Endeavoring more pragmatically for solutions to the problems they observe and depict, in recent years some photographers have chosen to work in concert with humanitarian organizations to advance the goals of these groups. (Although, as some have pointed out, certain imagery may serve more for "branding" purposes than for an exploration of what is actually occurring—a broader question concerning the operations of NGOs, as shall be discussed further.) As editorial publications suffer from reduced funding and limit their coverage of news, humanitarian organizations have taken on a larger role in documenting the world's hotspots, combined with advocacy.

Doubt as to the eventual impact of one's images has long been central for many of the most talented and committed observers. Even during that most visually explored of conflicts, the Vietnam War, the title of Don McCullin's book of excruciating war imagery—*Is Anyone Taking Any Notice?* (1973), or *The Destruction Business* in the British edition (1971)—reflected the photographer's enormous misgivings as to the efficacy of witnessing in media: misgivings, along with guilt, that still remain with him forty years later. A small 1968 book by David Douglas Duncan, called *I Protest!*, was a condemnation of U.S. military policy in Vietnam from a photographer (and former

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Marine) known for his glorifying imagery of soldiers' valor in World War II and the Korean War, as well as in Vietnam. (Philip Caputo's 1983 novel *DelCorso's Gallery*, pits a Duncan-like character named P. X. Dunlop, seeking heroes, against a McCullin-like character named Nicholas DelCorso, haunted by the horrors of war, each despising the other's approach.)

Philip Jones Griffiths's 1971 volume *Vietnam Inc.* was accomplished after two and a half years of photographing in the field with only several days of actual assignments. Griffiths, who originally trained to be a pharmacist in Wales, presents some of the expected images of heroism in war, but they are powerfully undermined with critical juxtapositions of photographs, as well as with highly sardonic captions ("U.S. combat troops arrive, outnumbering the enemy 3 to 1 and possessing the most sophisticated military hardware; the job seemed easy. Earlier, spirits were high among the troops, intoxicated as much by the spectacle of their own strength as by the cold beer delivered to them daily"). The 1966 discussion by a pilot of napalm that he cites is horrific: "We sure are pleased with those backroom boys at Dow. The original product wasn't so hot—if the gooks were quick they could scrape it off. So the boys started adding polystyrene—now it sticks like shit to a blanket. But if the gooks jumped under water it stopped burning, so they started adding Willie Peter (WP—white phosphorus) so's to make it burn better. And just one drop is enough, it'll keep on burning right down to the bone so they die anyway from phosphorus poisoning."[13]

Griffiths also included in the book what might be the first domestically published photographs of American soldiers in the act of consorting with prostitutes while fighting a war, as well as a section on young girls joining the sex trade. *Vietnam Inc.*, remaindered shortly after its publication, was acknowledged as a classic decades later—one of the earliest books of photojournalism in which the photographer effectively contextualized and recontextualized his imagery through his own editing, page design, and text.

As these and other photographic works gradually emerged, providing reference points for individuals' developing moral landscapes, photography became an increasingly compelling medium for those interested in social issues. Young people in growing numbers embraced photography as a career over the following decades, hoping to provide eyewitness testimony that might play a role in raising consciousness about social issues, if not in actually solving them. But especially among the more articulate photographers, sharing the complexity and nuance of what one had witnessed by publishing only a few selected images in magazines and newspapers was often frustrating; hence the numerous gallery and museums shows, along with the shelves of books published in recent years, by a generation of serious photojournalists and documentarians intent on providing a more comprehensive sense of what they had witnessed in their own voice (a migration that preceded the current one into the online world).

Paradoxically, however, as their images have gradually begun to play a less pivotal role in societies experiencing a surfeit of images, in a less influential journalistic media environment, some of these photographers have been plucked from behind their bylines and celebrated as heroes—the author at times overshadowing his or her subjects, the messenger supplanting the message. Society seems to find some reassurance that there are those running considerable risks to bring back strong images, even if the response may be more awestruck than effective. One European photographer, for example, having long been frustrated at not finding sufficient magazine venues for his in-depth work on serious issues, recently pointed out in a conversation the irony that, due to his growing fame, magazines are now eager to display his work—not because of the importance of the subject matter, but because he is its author.

In the current shift, publications, trying to become more consumer-friendly, have been reconceived at least in part to respond not to what editors think readers should know, but to what they think readers might *want* to know. It is a transition that diminishes the journalistic focus on policy matters, for example, and elevates that on diets, celebrity divorces, personal health, and political scandals. The potential political clout of readers/viewers is diluted in order to concentrate on arousing and satisfying their self-interest as consumers, rather than as citizens. (Undoubtedly this is what advertisers, if not readers, prefer—although many advertisers have since abandoned such publications, leaving them behind for the more selective reach of search engines plugged in to even more individualized interests.)

Images that might provoke new thinking, or that might aid in the search for even a partial solution to societal problems, tend to be displaced by those that are more vividly exotic and render problems as somewhat remote, concerning "others." Compare, for example, the intense interest in covering demonstrations by the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street—especially those involving police brutality—but the very few visual explorations of the underlying economic and political issues that gave rise to those demonstrations. What, in this country, do we really know about the diverging strata of rich and poor beyond a few easy stereotypes? Compare also the history of war photography, with an enormous number of exhibitions and books devoted to it, to that of the unrecognized genre of *peace photography*, which might be conceived of as an attempt to proactively diminish potential conflicts, to concentrate on rehabilitating individuals and rebuilding societies, and to avoid the voyeuristic spectacle of war. (We will explore these ideas further in chapter 5.)

Segments of the world, or "causes," may momentarily surface in the media. A few, like the shooting of elementary schoolchildren in Newtown, Connecticut, are just too close to home and too horrific to ignore. More distant events or issues may temporarily attract attention due to the commitments of particular celebrities (consider

George Clooney in Darfur, or Angelina Jolie as ambassador for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). Or they may momentarily emerge due to a targeted, narrowly focused video like *Kony 2012*, a controversial thirty-minute indictment of Joseph Kony, head of the Lord's Resistance Army guerrilla group operating in several African countries.[14] But without an ongoing and assured interest in the outside world, it can be difficult for social documentarians to find access to an audience. ("Your work is too depressing," or "People are not interested in that now" are standard refusals—although it is likely that, if it were solely up to the picture editors themselves, much more important and hard-hitting work would be regularly published.)

Even when there is interest from a publication, the character of the venue itself might seem to trivialize the imagery: photographer Bob Adelman once described, for example, how he had a gun pointed at him while covering the U.S. civil-rights movement for *Life* magazine, noting that he would not have considered putting himself in that kind of danger on assignment for a more celebrity-oriented magazine such as *People*. Lacking appropriate platforms, many photographers feel in a similar bind today, not wanting their work to end up only on blogs that are seen by few, and—if it is the photographer's own blog—may be viewed as both self-promotional and solipsistic.

The fault, of course, does not lie just with the publications. Stephen Mayes, formerly a longtime recording secretary of the Amsterdam-based World Press Photo Awards (to which now more than a hundred thousand images are submitted annually for consideration), was more broadly critical in a talk he gave upon resigning his post in 2009. As Paul Lowe reported online at *Foto8*, Mayes reiterated one juror's point that 90 percent of the pictures submitted were about 10 percent of the world. According to Lowe, Mayes then went on to question

> why most photojournalism investigates a very limited series of tropes in a very limited series of visual approaches, becoming a self-replicating machine that churns of[f] copies of itself in perpetual motion, which [Mayes] described as a "feeling that photojournalism, rather than trying to reinvent itself, is trying to copy itself," and that the industry is in essence reactionary and unrealistic in its understanding of the changes in global media and society. Too many photographers are "reflecting the media not as it is but as we wish it was" and assuming that it is the world that must come to them, not they that must go to the world.[15]

There is also a wider sense from outside the photographic community that a diminished visual vocabulary is not helping. For example, in his 2010 book, *Africa: Altered States, Ordinary Miracles*, Richard Dowden condemns the repetitive kinds of imagery disseminated by journalists and aid workers alike. "Persistent images of starving children and men with guns have accumulated into our narrative of the [African] continent,"

he argues. "However well intentioned their motives may once have been, aid agencies have helped create the single, distressing image of Africa. They and journalists feed off each other." It is a criticism that has often been applied to the depiction of Africans in particular, linked to consequent distortions not only of outsiders' perceptions of the continent but of the policy making that results.

A sizeable number of photographers no longer believe that anyone can make a substantive difference; indeed, those who still strive to impact society in meaningful ways seem Old School. "I'm not going out doing campaigning photojournalism, because nobody wants that anymore," Martin Parr told Robert Walker of *Photo District News* in 2008. "There is the old approach, whereby you try to change the world. Nobody is going to obliterate war, famine, AIDS, and all the other things that are the usual subject matter that more campaigning photojournalists would be attracted to." What did one of the world's most sought-after photographers, a global expert on the history of photographic books, and a member of the Magnum Photos agency, suggest? "I shoot interesting subject matter but disguise it as entertainment. That's what people want in magazines."[16]

Do photographs still actually help anyone? Or is this an unfair expectation in the world of images?

The expectation that the subject should benefit remains at the forefront for many, although photography's impact is difficult to measure. Nor is it always predictable. For example, South African photographer Kevin Carter won the Pulitzer Prize in 1994 for his photograph of a small, emaciated girl being stalked by a vulture as she tried to make her way to a feeding station in the Sudan. After winning the prize, the photographer was roundly criticized with hundreds of letters for not having picked up the child to make sure that she made it. The messenger was lambasted for choosing, as one of the more polite notes put it later, "to be an observer rather than a participant." As photographers are increasingly viewed as being part of the story, it is a criticism one hears more often. Paul Velasco, another South African photographer, saw it otherwise at the time: "If that picture hadn't played, today we still wouldn't know how to spell Sudan. It became the catalyst for incredible awareness for change."[17] Evidently both the *New York Times,* which published the photograph, and the Pulitzer committee similarly believed in its power to evoke a horrific situation.

Previously, Carter had been covering, on a daily basis, the South African struggle to overthrow apartheid. Just after he received the Pulitzer, he lost one of his closest colleagues, Ken Oosterbroek, killed by crossfire in a town outside Johannesburg. Dealing with his own issues, including drug addiction and guilt, Carter was distraught. He felt that with numerous children starving all around him it would have been impossible

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to save them all—and as a journalist he was there to observe and report so that other, more powerful forces could be of help. Carter committed suicide in July of 1994, leaving a note explaining that he was "depressed . . . without phone . . . money for rent . . . money for child support . . . money for debts . . . money!!! . . . I am haunted by the vivid memories of killings & corpses & anger & pain . . . of starving or wounded children, of trigger-happy madmen, often police, of killer executioners." And then he added: "I have gone to join Ken if I am that lucky."[18]

Carter's stance was a reference point for several critics of the 2012 *New York Post* cover photograph of a man seconds before his death on a New York City subway track. Many people asked why the photographer, R. Umar Abbasi, had not physically intervened and attempted to pull the man up. (Abbasi's response was that he flashed his camera multiple times at the train conductor to warn him, and the man on the track was too far away to reach in time, although other bystanders might have helped—some then stood photographing the aftermath.) Earlier in 2012, the *Guardian*—reacting to the case of two journalists videotaping rather than intervening in a sex attack on a busy street in India in which no one interceded as a laughing mob of men attacked a teenage girl over the course of approximately forty-five minutes—published several responses from photographers who had been in situations where it was difficult to decide whether to photograph or to intervene.[19] "What's it like to witness a mob attack, a starving child or the aftermath of a bomb, and take a photograph instead of stopping to help?," the article begins. The collected responses express the anguish of the photographers' personal dilemmas. One in particular is striking in its resemblance to Carter's situation—while also revealing the influence of such pictures on the behavior of the subjects themselves, who now may pose for the camera. Photographer Radhika Chalasani, a New York native, wrote:

> Some photographers and journalists have a very absolute point of view that you never interfere, because your job is as an observer and you can do the most good by remaining one. I decided a long time ago that I had to do what I could live with in terms of my own conscience, so when it felt appropriate to try to do something, I would. There are certain situations you struggle with. We're interfering with a situation by our very presence, and that automatically changes the dynamic. At one point, I was photographing a woman carrying her son into a feeding centre. He was extremely malnourished, and I was photographing her as she walked along. All of a sudden, these Sudanese people started directing her for the photos. They had her sit down and were indicating how she should hold her child. I ran to get a translator, and said, "Tell her to take her child to the feeding centre. She should not be stopping because I'm taking a photograph." . . .
>
> I've been in situations where it's been a hard call, though. On one occasion, a group of photographers went into an abandoned refugee camp and found a

massacre site. There were some children who had survived. There were two baby twins in a hut: I tried to get one child to take my hand and realised it had been chopped off. We didn't know how long they had been there. And it's in the middle of a civil war, so you're not sure how safe things are.

Myself and another photographer wanted to take the kids out of there in the car. Several of the other people didn't think it was safe, in case we got stopped at a checkpoint, and they wanted to get back for their deadlines. In the end, we didn't take the children. We found the Red Cross and reported the situation to them, but I found that another photographer went there the next day and found another child who was a survivor. To this day I think that I didn't necessarily do the right thing.

I do believe that our main contribution is trying to get the story understood. And sometimes, when you think you're helping, you're actually making a situation worse. But, for me, you try to do what you can live with.[20]

A fictional version of this nightmare—one might call it the revenge of the subject—occurs in the setup of the novel *The Painter of Battles* by former journalist Arturo Pérez-Reverte. A Croatian man, who has been depicted in a prizewinning photograph seen worldwide on the cover of newsmagazines, later tracks down and confronts the novelist's protagonist, a photographer-turned-painter. The Croatian blames the image, which had been made during a desperate retreat by new recruits in Vukovar, for the unimaginably sadistic deaths of his wife and son and his own lengthy torture by Serbs, who he says were motivated by the image's fame to greater cruelty: "You took a photograph of a soldier you crossed paths with for a couple of seconds. A soldier you knew nothing about, not even his name. And that photograph traveled around the world. Then you forgot that anonymous soldier and took other photos. Of other people whose names you also didn't know, I imagine. Maybe you made them famous the way you did me. It's a strange profession, yours."

"'Why have you come looking for me?'" the former photographer asks a few moments later. "The visitor had put down his glass and was wiping his mouth with the back of his hand. 'Because I'm going to kill you.'"[21]

Too often the well-meaning motivation of those involved in the enterprise of making and publishing photographs about issues of importance is considered sufficient—whether or not the imagery has the desired effect is frequently not the focus. And, as nearly anyone in the field will admit, it can be difficult to foresee with any precision the eventual effect of particular imagery—although this is certainly not a reason to avoid such reflections. *Life* magazine readers responded surprisingly generously to the difficulties of nurse-midwife Maude Callen, and *New York Times* readers and others shocked many journalists with their vitriol for Kevin Carter.

Part of the problem is that, while advertisers spend large sums of money testing the impact of visuals on potential consumers—as politicians do with voters, and as movie producers do with films before the final cut—there is much less thought given in journalistic and documentary circles to the kinds of images that might be most helpful in particular situations. Nor, with the global reach of the Internet, do we sufficiently factor in the cultural, political, and economic differences of various potential audiences. A larger discussion of these issues is now emerging within the field, spurred on in part by the many independent photographers wanting to be of greater use to society, and by the increased adoption of such imagery by humanitarian organizations with specific goals in mind.

Yet another difficulty is that even when photographs do prompt a strong response from readers, their effect on those depicted may not always be helpful. Mary Ellen Mark's photographs of the homeless Damm family, for example, published in *Life* magazine in 1987, elicited an outpouring of monetary donations from readers totaling some nine thousand dollars, as well as two used cars, toys, and job offers. But as *Life* later reported: "It looked like the hard times were over. Four months later, the Damms were on the street again. The money was gone; the cars and furniture were gone, trashed or sold for drugs." In 1995, Mark published a follow-up photo-essay that showed how far the Damms' situation had spiraled downward in eight years. Daniel Okrent, the magazine's managing editor, addressed well-meaning readers in an accompanying editorial:

> Eight years ago, *Life* published a series of wrenching photographs by Mary Ellen Mark of Linda and Dean Damm and their two children—a homeless family in Los Angeles. Our readers rose to the occasion: You sent money, household goods, offers of help. You opened your hearts, and your wallets, to a family in need. As journalists, we try not to insert ourselves into our stories, but in this instance our human instincts took over. We sent your contributions on to Dean and Linda Damm.
>
> In this issue we publish some new photos of the Damms . . . . Things have changed for the family over the past eight years—almost all for the worse. It's now clear to us, as it will be to you, that at least some of the money sent to them was spent for drugs.
>
> An editor has a responsibility to play it straight with readers. We were wrong in 1987 to think that the Damms could handle receiving a large amount of money at one time. But you were right. Getting involved is always right. I will be sending a personal check not to the Damm family but to the National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse . . . one of many organizations that spend their money well, on children who can and must be helped.[22]

The questions that arise are diverse and increasingly urgent, with repercussions for individuals and the larger communities in which they live, as well as for the image

makers and their readers trying to help. Can photographs assist societies to transition to more just, democratic systems, as has been attempted during the Arab Spring and other recent upheavals? Can they help communities recover from, or even avoid, certain kinds of disasters? What are the rights of subjects, and how can they be protected? Is a new code of ethics required for photographers and their colleagues? Should a new form of "front page" be devised as a way to filter the enormous amounts of information now constantly available? How does one better engage the reader as a collaborating author, and the citizen journalist as a collaborating producer? Should photographs be labeled, like writing, as either *nonfiction* or *fiction*, or are they always a hybrid of the two?

More broadly, how can the digital environment be utilized for new forms of more effective witnessing and storytelling? What are the landmarks emerging for those in the field? How can an image maker feel useful?

N.B. All websites cited in this volume's notes were accessed December 2012–January 2013.

NOTES

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14. *Time* magazine ranked *Kony 2012* "the most viral video of all time, tallying more than 100 million views in its first six days online." "Top 10 Everything of 2012," Time.com, December 4, 2012. http://entertainment.time.com/2012/12/04/top-10-arts-lists/slide/kony-2012/.

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16. Martin Parr, "Why Photojournalism Has to 'Get Modern,'" *Photo District News*, August 2008.

17. Paul Velasco, in Dan Krauss's excellent short documentary film *The Death of Kevin Carter: Casualty of the Bang Bang Club* (2005).

18. Kevin Carter, quoted in ibid.

19. "NewsLive channel, whose journalists filmed the attack, defended its staff for not intervening. 'Some [media] questioned me as to why my reporter and camera person shot the incident and didn't prevent the mob from molesting the girl,' tweeted its editor-in-chief, Atanu Bhuyan. 'But I'm backing my team since the mob would have attacked them, prevented them from shooting, that would have only destroyed all evidence.'" Helen Pidd, "Indian Anger over Media Footage of Girl Being Sexually Assaulted," *Guardian*, July 15, 2012. http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jul/15/india-media-sexual-assault-girl.

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CHAPTER 2
A Dialectical Journalism

While their enterprise is undergoing a paradigm shift, journalists have found it difficult to evaluate the trajectories of their own profession, let alone guide them. Although they are trained as observers, a perspective may be lacking. The fish, as Marshall McLuhan put it, are the last to know about the water; they don't know it's wet, because they don't know what dry is.

Some ideas that were previously marginalized by mainstream media can be reclaimed. Photojournalism and documentary photography's last few decades offer examples, some from the fringes, that suggest other ways to report, explore, and interpret events and issues, and may be helpful to those who find conventional strategies constricting, given the wider potentials of a digital environment.

With the advent of social media (Web 2.0) and "citizen journalism," of masses of easily available data and multiple points of view (it was recently reported that there are as many photographs produced every two minutes today as were made in the entire nineteenth century),[1] the journalist's role as both chronicler and filter is resisted as a remnant of an archaic elitism (Web 1.0). Web browsing has a tendency to become, instead, an entitled form of consumerism (a low-level form of interactivity) wherein reports on contemporary events become another easily overlooked item on the menu of choices.

Journalistic expertise is disparaged by many as a manifestation more of corporate branding than of knowledge. In photography and video, likely the majority of recent news-related scoops (Abu Ghraib, the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, the execution of Saddam Hussein, the Arab Spring, and so on) have become principally the province of amateurs equipped with sophisticated portable technologies. With reduced budgets, journalism's role becomes increasingly reactive, waiting for the next eruption; its responsibility as governmental watchdog and societal glue is diminished, deemed either unnecessary or ineffective by people who no longer view an active press

as essential to their own well-being. Given the sensationalism, self-interest, and explicit bias exhibited by the so-called "fourth estate," a weakened confidence may seem, all too often, merited—circumvented, to some extent, by an emergent "fifth estate," a blogosphere disappointed in the other four.

Meanwhile, billions of images are available for viewing (some 3,500 are uploaded every second to Facebook alone),[2] and unfiltered sites such as YouTube have become a major source of news worldwide (over four billion hours of video are watched there every month).[3] In contrast to the experience of traditional media, now viewers are able to see whatever they want whenever they want it, without a hierarchy of importance imposed by the eyewitnesses who created the imagery or by their editors. The most popular news videos tend to depict natural disasters or political upheaval, "usually featuring intense visuals," according to a 2012 Pew Foundation study.[4] YouTube's internal data reports that in 2011, for four months out of twelve, news events (of varying levels of importance) were the most searched terms on YouTube: the earthquake in Japan, the killing of Osama bin Laden, a fatal motorcycle accident, and a story of a homeless man who spoke with what those producing the video called a "god-given gift of voice."

It would be naïve, however, to separate the state of journalism from that of the larger political process. The assumption of a knowledgeable, participatory citizenry interested in understanding issues and events in order to vote according to their own best interests, as well as the presumption that meaningful political choices exist, can hardly be taken for granted. In 2012, three and a half years into Barack Obama's first term of office, another Pew Foundation poll reported that 48 percent of registered voters either thought that the president is Muslim or were not sure of his religious beliefs, while 30 percent of Republicans asserted that Obama *is* Muslim (approximately double those who said that during the earlier 2008 campaign).[5] Even after a series of horrific mass murders, including one in a Colorado cinema in which twelve people died while watching a *Batman* movie and another in which a congresswoman was shot in the head during a public meeting in an Arizona parking lot, the chances of banning automatic weapons were considered remote. It took the murder of twenty schoolchildren in Connecticut, along with six members of the school's staff, for a concerted public outcry to begin to move government officials at the end of 2012. The 2003 invasion of Iraq—although protested in February of that year in at least a hundred American cities and in dozens of countries worldwide by millions of people—was nonetheless implemented the following month. Even with the enormous numbers of people troubled by climate change, the subject was never broached in the 2012 presidential debates. Why bother to be informed, many must think, if one's own potential impact on society can seem so negligible?

Many working in what is now called visual journalism have long had as their mandate the rousing to consciousness of a distracted people and a sometimes oblivious

government. But in an ever-more-preoccupied society, with increased defenses against an unrelenting barrage of vivid, often heart-wrenching imagery, there is little consensus with regard to how to amplify the strategies of visual journalism, and far too little experimentation, particularly given the array of new digital tools available.

Multimedia is often interpreted simply as *more* media, so that greater numbers of photographs are added, some parceled into online slide shows that tend to be haphazardly sequenced and captioned—and with jumbled responses by viewers unsure of what they have just seen. Short videos may be added to complement the still images, but often end up competing with them until, in the never-ceasing news cycle, both are quickly displaced. And, given the templates used by the content-management systems that dominate online news and apps, the placement and scale of the imagery is often predetermined, disallowing a hierarchy of importance or a specific visual design to emphasize underlying meanings of the imagery. (One site that uses photographs vividly, The Big Picture, simply runs many captioned pictures on the same subject in a vertical scroll, all at the same generous size).[6] Such strategies add quantity, but can make the world seem even more incomprehensible, while destabilizing any sense of authorship by the visual journalist.

Photo-reporters working with the mainstream press, cognizant of what remains of tradition in their field, are uncertain of which emerging media strategies to employ (even initial forays using their own cellphone apps to photograph have ignited much indignation by colleagues). Furthermore, they do not know whether, from their position in a fraught journalistic atmosphere struggling to survive, they even have the *right* to assert other media strategies, without straying too far from their assigned roles still entwined with the illustration of others' ideas. A strong point of view with complexity and depth is rarely what is asked of them. (Tod Papageorge has coined a twist on Robert Capa's famous maxim "If your pictures aren't good enough, you aren't close enough." In a wonderful counterbalance, Papageorge advises: "If your pictures aren't good enough, you don't read enough.")[7]

For many photographers, whether on staff with publications or freelance, surviving in the crumbling economy of the press may be a fully consuming battle with little choice but to produce what is expected, if given the opportunity. Furthermore, the major standard-setting industry awards, such as the Pulitzer Prize and World Press Photo, have been slow to reward experimentation using visual media, highlighting too many clichés—photographs that look much like other, previously praised photographs.

Photojournalists and documentary photographers working independently, on the other hand, have long had to take more risks in conceiving and implementing new strategies, especially when the parameters of their self-defined projects are set by their own ambitions. Sometimes, too, there are particularly fertile moments when photographers

who have established themselves with an idiosyncratic body of work have been challenged to create imagery that transcends the conventional—although few publications are known for their investment in experimentation, preferring to wait until such work is at least nearly completed, often at the photographer's expense, before committing to its support and eventual publication. (This is not a generalized critique of picture editors, many of whom have generously supported independent photographers with advice while pushing for their acceptance.)

In the process of producing their projects, independent photographers have had to transcend some of the traditional strategies of visual media and its limited vocabulary in order to introduce other ideas, and also to get noticed. Now, with crowd-sourced funding from entities such as Kickstarter and Emphas.is, some are trying to go directly to their future audiences for financial help. And, as conventional media have become less pivotal in setting societal agendas, there are those photographers who choose to engage as witnesses but then collaborate with humanitarian organizations that may be able to use their work to more directly help resolve the situations depicted. Some also go to museums and galleries with their pictures, or seek to publish books, create installations, or identify other strategies to provoke a larger conversation. In terms of finding the means to produce and new ways to distribute, the field is in enormous ferment.

New narratives are also possible. Just as some writers and reporters in the 1960s and '70s engaged in what Tom Wolfe and others called the "New Journalism"—traditional nonfictional strategies combined with modes that are more subjective, interior, and borrowed from fiction—so too a small number of photographers have over the last several decades experimented with what might be called a "New Photojournalism." It is a term (and a notion) that has not caught on widely, in part because there is an expectation, even more than with writers, that journalistic images will create a certain amount of excitement in the mainstream press while remaining somehow "objective"—making anyone carrying the moniker of "New Photojournalist" more difficult to employ. (It is reminiscent of Capa, the pragmatist, advising his colleague Henri Cartier-Bresson at the birth of Magnum Photos, in the late 1940s, "'Don't keep the label of a surrealist photographer. Be a photojournalist.'")[8]

Raymond Depardon's 1981 "Correspondance new-yorkaise," for the French newspaper *Libération*, exemplifies the potentials of the "New Photojournalism": every day over the course of a month, he transmitted a photograph and a short, diarylike text, which were published on the paper's foreign-affairs page; this chronicle, told in both the first and the third person, succeeded in humanizing New York, transcending the normal news filters, and presenting the photographer as both subjective and discerning.

Next to a gray-toned photograph of three men, shown from the back, hold-ing umbrellas in the rain and wind on the Staten Island Ferry, Depardon's text read (in French): "July 4, 1981. New York. It rains, it rains. It is Independence Day, a holiday, the city is empty. A visit to the Statue of Liberty. Discussion all night with a girlfriend. I want to go back to France, to let everything go. I force myself to make a photo. I ask myself what am I doing here. All is sad. A bad day. I begin to read *G* by John Berger."[9] Depardon's work allows the "camera reality" (the men on the ferry in the rain) to be contravened by a text that calls the viewing into question—would the image have been rendered as sadly were its author in a different frame of mind?

Another image in the series, of seven young girls skipping rope, wearing matching T-shirts, was accompanied by this text:

> This morning I leave with a photographer, Dith Pran, Cambodian, of the *New York Times*. In the subway that goes to 116th Street in Harlem he speaks to me of Cambodia, of the rice fields, of his four years with the Khmer Rouge. "I was not a prisoner, it was worse." He speaks to me in French with a soft voice . . . with modesty. His wife and four children live in Brooklyn, the rest of his family was killed. He has worked at the *New York Times* for one year. We speak of the photographers Sylvain Julienne, Son Vichitt, Gilles Caron. It's the first time that I go to Harlem. I am 39 years old today. We leave the subway, people look at us, the police organize games for children in the streets. Several minutes later we run to a fire 100 meters away . . . no victims. . . . We go to the Bronx for a police rally, then to Brooklyn for a Republican leader, at the end of the day to a press conference about an accident in the subway several days earlier.[10]

The happy girls shown in midair belie the conventional press coverage of Harlem at that time as a place rife with murders and drug dealers—worthy of attention only for its violence. This was a very different kind of foreign reporting, "a photographic journal of the summer," as *Libération* described it, along the lines of Cartier-Bresson's description of photojournalism as "keeping a journal with a camera." It was also a pioneering effort foreshadowing today's blog culture in which the personal and anec-dotal are given prominence. (Another European magazine at about the same time published a long series of double-page color photographs of the New York subway system, each one, as I remember it still, a vivid, glistening depiction of a murder. As someone who had been riding the subway many times weekly for a number of years, and who had never once encountered a murder or any violent crime, I was astonished. New York was rendered as a violent place I would never want to visit, let alone live in. The journalist had employed a strategy similar to the one that is so often used to depict the inhabitants of conflict areas as inhuman and irrational, making them into the "other.")

A selection of Gilles Peress's photographs from Iran were published in the *New York Times Magazine* in 1980 as "A Vision of Iran"; I was the *Magazine*'s picture editor at the time. Peress's kaleidoscopic images of the country's postrevolutionary chaos became the first glimpse for most Americans of the unknown and perhaps unknowable. The word *vision* in the title seemed an acknowledgment (remarkable for the *Times*) that no one knew what was happening in Iran at that moment, including the State Department and journalists; in this case, photographs were not being utilized to confirm a certain version of reality — instead, Peress's intuitive grasp of the situation, his vision, would have to be relied upon. Peress's work from Iran was later honored with the Overseas Press Club Award. As I was on my way, alone, to the ceremony at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel to accept Peress's award, the *Magazine*'s editor in chief confided in me that neither he nor the top editor of the *New York Times* liked or understood Peress's photographs. It seemed to me an odd response to winning one of journalism's major awards, and an apparent sign of the distress that the unconventional images had caused.

A larger selection of these photographs were later published in book form as *Telex: Iran*, with a caution from the photographer himself: "These photographs, made during a five-week period from December 1979 to January 1980, do not represent a complete picture of Iran or a final record of that time." (Cartier-Bresson gave a similar warning in his 1952 book *The Decisive Moment*.) The reader is forced to see the photographs as inquiries into Iranian reality by a photographer who described his own position as that of a kind of foreign-media mercenary, taking the unusual step of explicitly detailing in the accompanying telexes (messages typed on a special machine that are then transmitted to another machine that prints them out) many of the business arrangements involved in being a freelance photojournalist.

The book's first photograph, a nearly double-page image of Farsi writing, is unreadable by most foreigners; the second, of a hand-drawn sign, is in English: "As an Iranian I want you corresponders + journalists + film-takers [to] tell the truth to the world." The following photograph, made partly through Peress's magnifying loupe, depicts a table covered with a contact sheet, telexes, an identity card, and front pages from the New York tabloid press: "Khomeini's Cowards Humiliate Hostage," "100,000 Shriek Hatred," "Mideast Madness." The subsequent spread presents, more calmly, two consecutive images on a contact sheet, with the film numbers and dark frames still surrounding them, helping the reader understand that the photograph is part of a mediation, and is not to be read as asserting a definitive reality. (See page 82.)

Peress describes his own role in a series of telexes with his agency, Magnum, that are scattered throughout the book beside photographs (all *sic*): "Gilles has a small minimum ex Paris Match and keen interested from Now . . . "; "Jon Kifner of New York Times will bring cash. He lives at Intercontinental. Do you need film. Please specify

what kind and how many rolls. Bises. Natasha"; "Attention say to the lab to watch out particularly for a roll that might be in part ruined since the Revolutionary Guards opened my camera and tried to expose film after I shot heroin smokers. I hope they can save them. Thanks, Gilles."[11]

Similarly, Richard Avedon's sixty-nine portraits for *Rolling Stone* magazine of the U.S. power elite at the time of the 1976 Bicentennial went far beyond the conventional portraiture found in the press, much of which (both then and now) attempts to be either neutral or flattering, and rarely probes the subject's psyche (page 81). Created on assignment for *Rolling Stone*'s publisher, Jann Wenner, the forty-eight pages of imagery featured portraits of three future presidents (Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and George Bush Sr.; secretary Rose Mary Woods was a substitute for her boss, Richard Nixon, who had recently resigned the presidency), Defense Department head Donald Rumsfeld, consumer advocate Ralph Nader, civil rights leader Julian Bond, and media titans Abe Rosenthal of the *New York Times* and Katharine Graham of the *Washington Post*. The series was called "The Family," disturbingly suggestive of imprisoned killer Charles Manson's "Family" of followers. Posed and abstracted to be studied against a seamless background, the subjects are both enlarged and diminished as if under a microscope, hands occasionally cut off, the dark edges of the negative visible.

"At the outset, Avedon decided to approach the project from the perspective of an objective observer," writes curator Paul Roth (for a time director of the Avedon Foundation) in Avedon's 2008 book *Portraits of Power*. He continues:

> While he told his subjects where to stand, positioning them within the camera frame, he generally gave only subtle direction. For example, he sometimes mirrored their posture, standing and moving as they did: he found that this subsequently induced them to mimic his gestures. He was thus able to subtly direct their pose. Typically he encouraged his subjects to appear as they were when they arrived, their hair and clothes unadjusted. If they brought items to the session, these often became "props" of a sort in the finished image. "I try to allow the people really—if that's possible—to photograph themselves." Avedon later stated that the process "was an attempt at real reporting . . . it [was] the first time I have functioned as a journalist."[12]

"I just popped in and did it and left," Rumsfeld said of his session for the "Family" series, according to Blake Gopnik in the *Washington Post*. And Julian Bond, chairman of the NAACP, recalled: "All of the photos were rather matter-of-fact—minimal instructions and minimal posing by him. Just look in the camera and click."

But there was more to it than that. Avedon too was quite affected by the sessions, Roth observes, describing "how such interactions, or 'exchange of feelings,' left him

uneasy," with "almost a kind of embarrassment" when it was over. Roth writes: "The subjects pose as though submitting to a visual interview. A performance is recorded: 'They present the image that they choose,' Avedon told a reporter. 'I do the editing.' The portraits are not entirely—or even principally—objective. They are the result of strategic inquiry; they engender permanent interrogation." But finally, for Avedon, the reality is in the photographs: "The photographs 'have a reality for me that the people don't. It's through the photographs that I know them.'"[13]

Like the work of Depardon and Peress, Avedon's endeavor combines first- and third-person narratives, the explicitly political, and an emphasis on the intuitive that is only partially camouflaged by the use of the machine. The resulting work—a performance—reframes the conversation among photographer, subject, and reader. It includes a questioning (and even an amplifying) of the authority of the professional as a unique image-maker, and also rethinks the creation of the photograph as a hybrid of artistic and documentary strategies. While many postmodern artists and critics have focused on deconstructing and making visible the limits of the documentary mode, these "New Photojournalists" were embracing, if at times ironically, the photograph's credibility while asserting its eternal subjectivity, as well as their own presence.

The work of the New Journalists, appearing in *Esquire*, *New York*, *Harper's*, *Rolling Stone*, and other publications, as well as in a number of books, such as Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* (1966) and Norman Mailer's *Armies of the Night* (1968), used "the imaginative resources of fiction," as one reviewer put it, to amplify the reporter's palette, inviting readers into the process of authorship while displacing a more conventionally distanced, authoritative reporting. The work was controversial; it was attacked as unreliable. Some, like Gay Talese, felt it was, and had to be, as credible as conventional journalism. Introducing a collection of his own writings, much of it from the pages of *Esquire,* Talese stated: "The new journalism, though often reading like fiction, is not fiction. It is, or should be, as reliable as the most reliable reportage although it seeks a larger truth than is possible through the mere compilation of verifiable facts, the use of direct quotations, and adherence to the rigid organizational style of the older form."[14]

Cartier-Bresson, in an interview with Byron Dobell of *Popular Photography* magazine in 1957, said something very similar:

> We often photograph events that are called "news," but some tell the news step by step in detail as if making an accountant's statement. Such news and magazine photographers, unfortunately, approach an event in a most pedestrian way. It's like reading the details of the Battle of Waterloo by some historian: so many guns were there, so many men were wounded—you read the account as if it were an itemization. But on the other hand, if you read Stendhal's *Charterhouse*

of Parma, you're inside the battle and you live the small, significant details. . . . Life isn't made of stories that you cut into slices like an apple pie. There's no standard way of approaching a story. We have to evoke a situation, a truth. This is the poetry of life's reality.[15]

As with the work of the photojournalists cited above, the vantage point of the personal was critical for the New Journalists: "The important and interesting and hopeful trend to me in the new journalism is its personal nature—not in the sense of personal attacks, but in the presence of the reporter himself and the significance of his own involvement," author Dan Wakefield wrote in 1966. "This is sometimes felt to be egotistical, and the frank identification of the author, especially as the 'I' instead of merely the impersonal 'eye' is often frowned upon and taken as proof of 'subjectivity,' which is the opposite of the usual journalistic pretense."[16]

For some photojournalists, the explicit introduction of the "I" over the "eye" was an ultimately productive leap. It involved presenting the photograph as dialectical, as a representation first constructed by the subjective photographer, with input from those both within and outside the frame, re-presented by a publication, and then reconstructed by a reader made wary of its actuality by the photographer's contextualizing thoughts and unconventional style of image making. The photograph stood less chance of being, on its own, perceived as an objective, automatically credible witness, nor could photographers escape their role as "authors"—opening a more extensive reconsideration of photography's nonfictional pedigree, while making it evident that such reporting, as was the case for writers like Mailer and Talese, involves considerably more sophistication than just being at the right place at the right time. The "imaginative resources" of fictional photography or of the photo-based artist also had been considered off-limits for serious photojournalists. Now, given the enormous shifts as to what is acceptable and where, one may see the work of photographers of the ilk of Depardon, Peress, and Avedon as easily in a museum as in the press.

The New Journalism's most relevant legacy to today's challenges may be its enthusiastic experimentation in the face of what was seen then as a constricting paradigm. As Tom Wolfe wrote: "What interested me [about New Journalism] was not simply the discovery that it was possible to write accurate non-fiction with techniques usually associated with novels and short stories. . . . It was the discovery that it was possible in non-fiction, in journalism, to use any literary device, from the traditional dialogisms of the essay to stream-of-consciousness, and to use many different kinds simultaneously, or within a relatively short space . . . to excite the reader both intellectually and emotionally."[17]

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To experience the application of fictional techniques to the nonfictional, one might consider the opening paragraph of a 1966 Gay Talese *Esquire* piece, named by the magazine as the greatest story ever published on its pages, titled "Frank Sinatra Has a Cold":

> Frank Sinatra, holding a glass of bourbon in one hand and a cigarette in the other, stood in a dark corner of the bar between two attractive but fading blondes who sat waiting for him to say something. But he said nothing; he had been silent during much of the evening, except now in this private club in Beverly Hills he seemed even more distant, staring out through the smoke and semidarkness into a large room beyond the bar where dozens of young couples sat huddled around small tables or twisted in the center of the floor to the clamorous clang of folk-rock music blaring from the stereo. The two blondes knew, as did Sinatra's four male friends who stood nearby, that it was a bad idea to force conversation upon him when he was in this mood of sullen silence, a mood that had hardly been uncommon during this first week of November, a month before his fiftieth birthday.

And the article's conclusion:

> Frank Sinatra stopped his car. The light was red. Pedestrians passed quickly across his windshield but, as usual, one did not. It was a girl in her twenties. She remained at the curb staring at him. Through the corner of his left eye he could see her, and he knew, because it happens almost every day, that she was thinking, It looks like him, but is it?
>
> Just before the light turned green, Sinatra turned toward her, looked directly into her eyes waiting for the reaction he knew would come. It came and he smiled. She smiled and he was gone.[18]

Anyone can write—amateurs and professionals alike—but very few can take us to visit worlds external and internal, tie them together, melding facts and suppositions while creating a narrative flow that functions like a great piece of fiction, and base it all on an out-of-sorts famous singer who refused to be interviewed.

Similarly, nearly anyone can point a camera at people or events of importance. But few could emulate the sustained, confrontational gaze of Avedon's portraits, taking in, as if with an oversized microscope, those firmly ensconced within the shielding aura of power, or Peress's restless frames in search of details intimating the forces at work within a dizzying revolution. Today's journalists, looking toward their own past, would find a moment of the "new" in journalism that combines some of what is being searched for now: the anarchy and spontaneous first-person approach of contemporary citizen journalism with the third-person élan of the seasoned observer, and a sense that subject matter both intimate and public should be in their purview.

However, there have also been, and continue to be, productive approaches that are radically different from those described above. Peress, for example, later embraced a more matter-of-fact style in his 1990s work in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. "I work much more like a forensic photographer in a certain way, collecting evidence," he told *U.S. News and World Report* in 1997. "I've started to take more still lives, like a police photographer, collecting evidence as a witness. I've started to borrow a different strategy than that of the classic photojournalist. The work is much more factual and much less about good photography. I'm gathering evidence for history, so that we remember."[19] Depardon, for his part, has concentrated on film, making dozens of important documentaries in a cinéma vérité style on subjects such as a psychiatric hospital in Italy, the Paris police, photo-reporters, the judiciary, and French peasants. His first fictional film, *Empty Quarter*, about a filmmaker's relationship with a young woman while traveling through Africa, was released in 1985. Avedon continued in the documentary vein with *In the American West*, a rare five-year commission from the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, which depicted working-class people in ways that were monumentalizing (the seamless background gave no sense of place), sometimes empathetic, and also somewhat perverse, seeming to magnify their foibles. Responding to the controversy surrounding this work, first exhibited in 1985, Avedon said: "All photographs are accurate. None of them is the truth."[20]

To find other truths, given the increased quantity of imagery recently available while sensitive to the contested role of the photographer, there are others who have moved into a role not unlike that of an archivist, or a "metaphotographer," gathering work from people who, from direct experience, may know the most about a situation. Consider, for example, Geert van Kesteren's 2008 *Baghdad Calling*, a collection of cellphone images and testimonies from Iraqi refugees that testify to the profoundly unsettling and long-lasting impact of the war on their personal lives, or Susan Meiselas's akaKurdistan website, for which Kurds were asked to participate in creating their own collective history by contributing their photographs and helping to identify each other's imagery.

The largest archive now to be found, of course, is in the ever-expanding social media, a potential source of enormously rich imagery. The diverse experimentation to be encountered in the billions of images now available, from the strident activism of citizen journalism to the playful, diaristic YouTube videos and exchanges of family albums to the commentaries by a generation of homegrown experts (media literacy is hardly taught in schools) to the banal imagery detailing the everyday, should eventually prove an essential reservoir of social documentary alongside the work of a much smaller group of professionals.

But while there are overlapping goals shared by professionals and amateurs, there are also significant differences in the media environments they now inhabit. With the

advent of "user-generated" sites, the public's role as producer and disseminator of media resembles a conversation in which people share, in words and pictures, the details of their own lives with every expectation that others will do the same. It is as if imagery is presented, as in an older oral tradition, to incite discussion and attract attention —success, if it is to be, is in the confirmation by the group. The photo-reporters working for conventional media, with some exceptions, have been allowed, or have taken, few such liberties; they are outsiders, and as such their imagery must somehow penetrate the purview of the larger, social-networked public, rather than surfacing from within it. (This helps to explain a recent interest by professionals in using cellphones, rather than more sophisticated cameras, to cover major events.)

Along with efforts by individual practitioners, a number of emerging movements attempt to address, or at least to recognize, contemporary concerns; there is as well a surge in photography collectives that have been founded in various countries. There are practitioners of Slow Journalism (the philosophy of which is similar to that of the Slow Food movement) whose work is a response to the twenty-four-hour news cycle and the need to constantly churn out imagery without much reflection. In a similar vein, some photographers are sticking to analog practices, more comfortable with their less frenetic pace. Carles Guerra and Thomas Keenan's 2010 exhibition *Antiphotojournalism* interrogated what they see as the clichés of classical photojournalism, arguing for "an image unleashed from the demands of this tradition and freed to ask other questions, make other claims, tell other stories," while concluding: "And sometimes the question is simply whether we even need images at all." They cite Allan Sekula's commentary from his 1999 project "Waiting for Tear Gas" as an inspiration: "The rule of thumb for this sort of anti-photojournalism: no flash, no telephoto zoom lens, no gas mask, no auto-focus, no press pass and no pressure to grab at all costs the one defining image of dramatic violence."[21]

Recalling, if sometimes only vaguely, the worker-photography movements of the earlier part of the twentieth century (such as those in the Soviet Union and Germany, and the Photo League in the United States), or the Farm Security Administration, in which the group had primacy over the individual, there are more photographer- and artist-driven collectives forming today.[22] The group called Facing Change: Documenting America, for example, describes itself as "a non-profit collective of dedicated photojournalists and writers coming together to explore America and to build a forum to chart its future."[23] A recent opening screen on the Facing Change website had photographic reports on an attempt to organize a union for those who wash cars, another on the various impacts of Hurricane Sandy on New York City communities, and one on the housing crisis in the U.S. West. Other collectives, some with only a handful of people in them, are created for a variety of reasons: a desire to collaborate and to

have a community within which to work; a shared political ideology; the advantages of sharing business tasks, studio spaces, and financial risks; and a sense that working in a group is a better way to get messages out, along with "the feeling of being part of something greater than myself," as one former member put it. In Amsterdam, a September 2012 conference sponsored by the Dutch Doc Photo Foundation on the growth of collectives was called, somewhat optimistically, "End of Ego."

Many are also acknowledging that conventional media may no longer be the best publishing venues—print magazines, for example, do not constitute the photographers' paradise they once sometimes did. (Five hundred thousand copies of Avedon's issue of *Rolling Stone* were printed; some 1.6 million copies of the *New York Times Magazine* featured Peress's "A Vision of Iran.") Photojournalist Ed Kashi noted that his adolescent children remained unmoved when he had the cover story of *National Geographic,* but were much more impressed and engaged when he published a project on the same subject in multimedia form (his "Iraq Kurdistan," online at MediaStorm since 2006, is an enormous crowd pleaser).

In both old and new arenas, photographers are redefining their roles, experimenting with new narratives and strategies of dissemination while attempting to broaden the photographic enterprise even further. Less focused on the priorities of the mainstream press, they employ strategies that may be more arcane and are often more complex, offering to engage the reader differently.

There are many such projects that have taken place in recent years or are ongoing, although they are not always widely known, even in the photographic community. A few examples (some of which will be revisited in later chapters):

- In James Balog's "Extreme Ice Survey," begun in 2006, cameras are positioned in remote arctic and alpine areas, automatically photographing the melting of the ice to help calculate precisely the impact of global warming, and to create a visual record of a planet in crisis (page 83). According to the Extreme Ice website: "Currently, 34 cameras are deployed at 16 glaciers in Greenland, Iceland, the Nepalese Himalaya, Alaska and the Rocky Mountains of the U.S. These cameras record changes in the glaciers every half hour, year-round during daylight, yielding approximately 8,000 frames per camera per year."[24]

- French artist JR, in his "Inside Out" project, has created photo-booths that print oversized portraits of subjects. In one of many such installations worldwide, at the 2011 Arles photography festival the prints floated down from a processor high overhead, after the visitors signed a pledge to use the photographs to impact society in a positive way. The self-representation is meant to increase the impact of individuals and their stories on their own societies, with the stipulation that

the images are not to be used for publicity for any organization, including NGOs. For JR's 2008–9 project in Africa, "28 Millimeters, Women Are Heroes," photographs were used to document the faces of individual women living in modest dwellings in Kenya, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Sudan—the large prints were used as roof coverings for their houses as well (page 84). As JR's website notes: "Most of the women have their own photos on their own rooftop and for the first time the material used is water resistant so that the photo itself will protect the fragile houses in the heavy rain season."[25]

- Sebastião Salgado's "Genesis" project, which began in 2004, focuses on the planet's primal past and is intended to encourage environmental efforts. Images from the series are featured on Brazilian bank cards from Banco do Brasil, with a small portion of the proceeds from client transactions regularly going to Instituto Terra, founded by the photographer and his wife, Lélia Wanick Salgado, for the reforestation of the Mata Atlantica forest. (Since reforestation began, in 1999, some 162 bird species and 25 species of mammal are said to have returned to the area, and more than a million trees have been planted.)[26]

- Laurie Jo Reynolds is working in "supermax" prisons (segregated, maximum high-security units) in Illinois, Maine, and Virginia, asking people held in long-term solitary confinement what it is that they would most like to see—real or imagined—and then, along with others, providing photographs, such as of the view outside the prison, or of volunteers advocating for prison reform. Among the requests posted online in late 2012: "the Masonic temple in DC"; "what's left where the Robert Taylor Homes used to be"; "a heartsick clown with a feather pen"; "my mom in front of a mansion with money and a Hummer"; "Michelle Obama planting vegetables in White House garden"; "any Muslim Mosque or Moorish Science Temple in Chicago or Mecca or Africa"; and "fallen autumn leaves (which we do not have access to in the 'concrete box' which is deemed a yard here)."[27] Working with the activist groups Tamms Year Ten and the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, Reynolds has used the photographs as part of a larger campaign for more humane prison conditions. (And with some success—in January 2013 the Tamms Supermaximum Security Prison in Illinois was closed.)[28]

- Swedish photographer Kent Klich has created a series of images over several decades of Beth R., a former prostitute and drug addict living in Copenhagen (he first chronicled her life in *The Book of Beth*, published in 1989). More recent photographs of Beth were presented in his 2007 book *Picture Imperfect*, with case histories and photographs from her family album as a child (page 85). The photographs are paired with a DVD of Beth's daily life for which Beth herself was the primary filmmaker; the DVD is enclosed within the book. That short film, *Beth's Diary*, won the Best Short Documentary award from the Copenhagen International Documentary Festival, while Klich's book about Beth was named Best Photography Book by the Association of Swedish Professional

Photographers. A smaller, third book, *Where I Am Now*, was published in 2012. Klich and Beth R. have now known each other for more than thirty years.[29]

- Over the course of several years, Jennifer Karady has collaborated with soldiers and veterans from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, restaging aspects of traumatic war events within their civilian lives (the day a soldier almost died; finding a prone teenage girl with a badly stitched Caesarean; a Native American female soldier calmed by the spirits of her tradition; being fired at by a sniper, etc.). The work is intended to be helpful and even therapeutic for the soldiers, and as a documentation of a performance that may help others, including those nearby, to understand what they experienced overseas (page 86).

- Several artists, including Celia A. Shapiro and James Reynolds, have undertaken projects re-creating the last meals of inmates on death row, as a way of drawing attention to the prisoners' social backgrounds, personalities, and their executions (page 87). Reynolds's series "Last Suppers," from 2009, contains a photograph of an unpitted olive on a plastic tray, with the explanation: "Victor Feguer asked for an unpitted olive because he thought it might grow into an olive tree from inside him. It was supposed to be [a] symbol of peace." The text for Shapiro's photo-essay, published in *Mother Jones* in 2004, begins: "When Arkansas executed Rickey Ray Rector back when Bill Clinton was governor, the mentally impaired inmate famously set aside half of his last meal—a pecan pie—for after the execution."[30]

- Susan Meiselas, in a project she called "Reframing History," returned to Nicaragua in 2004 with nineteen murals created from her own photographs made during that country's Sandinista Revolution twenty-five years earlier (page 88). She placed the murals at the sites where the imagery was originally made as a way of collaborating with local communities in visualizing their own collective memory, and to help better acquaint Nicaraguan youth with their own past.[31]

- For Jim Goldberg's "Rich and Poor," an older but still influential project published in book form in 1985, wealthy and poor people in San Francisco were photographed and then asked to comment on the images portraying them, in their own handwriting. Their notes are often telling: next to one portrait of an older couple, the wife, Regina Goldstine, writes: "Edgar looks splendid here. His power and strength of character come through. He is a very private person who is not demonstrative of his affection; that has never made me unhappy. I accept him as he is. We are very devoted to each other"; she ends by addressing the photographer with her wish: "May you be as lucky in marriage!" Her husband, on the other hand, is rather more phlegmatic: "My wife is acceptable. Our relationship is satisfactory."[32]

- Photographer Azadeh Akhlaghi's extensively researched restagings of pivotal, often violent moments in Iranian history point to a diverse and tumultuous past. For example, in Akhlaghi's 2012 *Mirzadeh Eshghi, 3 July 1924, Tehran,* the events leading up to the killing of the dissident writer and poet Mirzadeh Eshghi are

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recounted thus: "On June 30th, Mirzadeh's servant encounters two strangers in the street. They want to see Mr. Eshghi, and they insist that it is an important issue. The servant tells them that the poet is out. The strangers leave but they stand at the corner of the street. The servant spends two whole days to get rid of them, but anyway, they are sure that the poet is in his home."

- Ariella Azoulay's recent tracings in pencil of photographs from 1947–50 were created both as documentation of the early years of the Israel-Palestine conflict and as a protest against the International Committee of the Red Cross, which did not allow her to exhibit the original photographs due to the points of view expressed in her accompanying texts. Introducing the project, called "Unshowable Photographs/Different Ways Not to Say Deportation," Azoulay argues: "Because I insisted on my right to describe the photograph in a civil way that suspends the national paradigm of 'two sides'—namely, Israeli and Palestinian—I was not authorized to show them publicly."[33]

- "Question Bridge: Black Males," a 2012 project led by photographers Chris Johnson and Hank Willis Thomas, in collaboration with Bayeté Ross Smith and Kamal Sinclair, is a five-screen video installation in which African-American men ask questions that others—filmed separately over the course of several years—answer; thus conventional subjects are empowered as both interviewer and interviewee (page 89). Among the provocative questions: "My whole thing is, first and foremost—and I should have said this from the beginning, but I'm going to sum it up with this: Why didn't y'all leave us the blueprint?," and "This may seem like a silly question, but I want to know. Am I the only one who has problems eating chicken, watermelon, and bananas in front of white people?"

- Trevor Paglen's *sousveillance* (surveillance from below) imagery of spy satellites, CIA aircraft, and military installations—pictures that are often blurry and remote—make the nearly invisible liminal, mapping an approach to that which is frequently ignored and hidden (page 90). Paglen's books include *Blank Spots on the Map: The Dark Geography of the Pentagon's Secret World* (2009) and *Invisible: Covert Operations and Classified Landscapes* (2010). His most recent project and publication, *The Last Pictures* (2012), concerns the communications satellites orbiting the Earth that Paglen, a geographer by training, contends will become the major ruins left behind from our era, potentially for billions of years, outlasting the pyramids of Giza and the cave paintings of Lascaux.[34]

A few of these individuals (Karady and Klich, for example) work directly with their subjects in relationships that can be supportive and at times possibly even healing, enabling their collaborators to revisit difficulties from their past. For her project "Riley and His Story" (page 91), published at the end of 2009, Monica Haller had the therapeutic in mind, but she also emphasized the project's potentially disruptive impact on the reader—"I want you to see what this war did to Riley."

The all-type cover of the book—which the author argues is *not* a book—disputes any conventional reading while calling for a "tactical reader":

> This is not a book. This is an invitation, a container for unstable images, a model for further action. Here is a formula: Riley and his story. Me and my outrage. You and us.
>
> Riley was a friend in college and later served as a nurse at Abu Ghraib prison. This is a container for Riley's digital pictures and fleeting traumatic memories. Images he could not fully secure or expel and entrusted to me. . . .
>
> Pay attention. This experience happens right in your lap. To make it happen you must read compassionately, then actively. Then the experience happens wherever you take this container and whenever you respond to my invitation.
>
> You and us, yes. Then you and another. This invitation is a model for veterans, families and friends to speak and share openly with each other. The artwork and artist are adaptable; you, the tactical reader, can use this object for your own devices, or you can attend to another archive in need of careful attention. This is not a book. It is an object of deployment.[35]

Haller's project, the first of several similar interventions that she has attempted (including one with Riley Sharbonno's parents), is intended to help him resurrect buried memories and deal with some of what he went through in a war that, despite his efforts to resist it, destabilized his life. Like soldiers, it also "deploys," attempting to show to others the effects of war's environment of violence. There are pictures that Riley does not remember taking of events that he does not remember witnessing. Photographs, once rediscovered, sometimes assuage his guilt because they give a reason for what happened, even if he might have forgotten it. The volume's mass of particulars, over the course of its 480 pages, including small texts by Riley, distill the enormous archive of imagery about the Iraq War to the life of one individual during a single tour of duty. Some of the grand half-truths that guide our understanding of that war, or any war, are diminished.

Conceptual artist Alfredo Jaar, who often deals with both photography and violence, cites a line from the poet William Carlos Williams when one first visits Jaar's website: "It is difficult to get the news from poems yet men die miserably every day for lack of what is found there." Given the enormity of what they have personally witnessed, as well as their desire to engage, it's not surprising that so many have enlarged their documentary practices, sensitive to "what is found there."

NOTES

1. See Paul Caridad, "Smile for the Cellphone," *Visual News*, June 11, 2012. http://www.visualnews.com/2012/06/11/smile-for-the-cell-phone-new-photography-trends/?view=infographic.

2. Ibid.

3. See YouTube statistics at: http://www.youtube.com/t/press_statistics.

4. "YouTube and News," Journalism.org (The Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism), July 16, 2012. http://www.journalism.org/analysis_report/youtube_news.

5. "Pew: Many Americans Don't Know the Religion of Either Candidate," "Belief" (blog), CNN.com, July 26, 2012.http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2012/07/26/pew-many-americans-dont-know-religion-of-either-presidential-candidate/.

6. The Big Picture, Boston.com, ongoing. http://www.boston.com/bigpicture/.

7. Tod Papageorge, quoted in David Campbell's blog "Visual Storytelling: Creative Practice and Criticism," which also features Campbell's own trenchant commentaries. http://www.david-campbell.org/.

8. See Henri Cartier-Bresson, cited in Fred Ritchin, "What Is Magnum?," in *In Our Time: The World as Seen by Magnum Photographers* (New York: Norton, 1989).

9. Raymond Depardon, "Correspondance new-yorkaise" *Libération* (Paris), July 2–August 8, 1981.

10. Ibid.

11. From Gilles Peress, *Telex Iran: In the Name of the Revolution* (New York: Aperture, 1983).

12. Paul Roth, introduction to *Richard Avedon: Portraits of Power* (London and Washington, D.C.: Steidl/Corcoran Gallery of Art, 2008).

13. Ibid.

14. Gay Talese, *Fame and Obscurity: A Book About New York, a Bridge, and Celebrities on the Edge* (New York: Doubleday, 1970).

15. Cartier-Bresson, cited in Ritchin, "What Is Magnum?"

16. Dan Wakefield, "The Personal Voice and the Impersonal Eye," *Atlantic*, June 1966. I am indebted to an especially thoughtful and well-researched Wikipedia article on "New Journalism." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_journalism.

17. Tom Wolfe, "The Birth of 'The New Journalism'; Eyewitness Report by Tom Wolfe," *New York*, February 14, 1972.

18. Gay Talese, "Frank Sinatra Has a Cold," *Esquire*, April 1966. http://www.esquire.com/features/ESQ1003-OCT_SINATRA_rev_.

19. Gilles Peress, "I Don't Care that Much Anymore about 'Good Photography,'" *U.S. News and World Report*, October 6, 1997.

20. Richard Avedon, in *In The American West* (New York: Abrams, 1985).

21. Allan Sekula, cited at http://antiphotojournalism.blogspot.com/.

22. For examples, see Pete Brook, "7 Budding Photo Collectives You Need to Know," Wired.com, May 14, 2012. http://www.wired.com/rawfile/2012/05/photo-collectives/.

23. See http://facingchange.org/.

24. See James Balog's "Extreme Ice Survey" at http://extremeicesurvey.org/.

25. See JR's projects at http://www.jr-art.net/projects.

26. See the Instituto Terra website, http://www.institutoterra.us/.

27. "Photo Requests from Solitary," Tamms Year Ten website: www.yearten.org/2012/10/photo-requests-from-solitary-display-and-discussion-nov-17/.

28. In January 2013, Tamms Supermaximum Security Prison in Illinois was shut down after years of campaigning by Reynolds and others. See the extraordinary responses of family members and others at "Tamms Supermaximum Security Prison Now Closed," Amnesty International, January 10, 2013. http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/latest-victories/tamms-supermaximum-security-prison-now-closed; see also http://www.yearten.org/.

29. See Kent Klich, *The Book of Beth* (New York: Aperture, 1989); *Picture Imperfect* (Stockholm: Journal, 2007); and *Where I Am Now* (Munich: Bellyband, 2012).

30. Clara Jeffery and Emilie Raguso, photo-essay by Celia A. Shapiro, "Last Suppers," *Mother Jones*, January 2004. http://www.motherjones.com/photoessays/2004/01/last-suppers/.

31. See "Reframing History" at http://www.susanmeiselas.com/nicaragua/index.html. See also the film *Pictures from a Revolution* (1991), made by Meiselas with Richard Rogers and Alfred Guzzetti, documenting her attempt, a decade after the publication of her book on the Sandinista Revolution, *Nicaragua: June 1978–July 1979* (New York: Pantheon, 1981), to track down the people in the book's images.

32. Jim Goldberg, *Rich and Poor* (New York: Random House, 1985).

33. See Ariella Azoulay, *Different Ways Not to Say Deportation* (Vancouver: Fillip Editions, forthcoming 2013).

34. See Trevor Paglen's website: www.paglen.com.

35. Monica Haller, *Riley and His Story* (Paris and Värnamo, Sweden: Onestar Press/Fälth and Hässler, 2009/2011).

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