PLEASE READ BEFORE PRINTING!

PRINTING AND VIEWING ELECTRONIC RESERVES

Printing tips:

- To reduce printing errors, check the "Print as Image" box, under the "Advanced" printing options.
- To print, select the "printer" button on the Acrobat Reader toolbar. DO NOT print using "File>Print…" in the browser menu.
- If an article has multiple parts, print out only one part at a time.
- If you experience difficulty printing, come to the Reserve desk at the Main or Science Library. Please provide the location, the course and document being accessed, the time, and a description of the problem or error message.
- For patrons off campus, please email or call with the information above:

Main Library: mainresv@uga.edu or 706-542-3256 Science Library: sciresv@uga.edu or 706-542-4535

Viewing tips:

- The image may take a moment to load. Please scroll down or use the page down arrow keys to begin viewing this document.
- Use the "zoom" function to increase the size and legibility of the document on the screen. The "zoom" function is accessed by selecting the "magnifying glass" button on the Acrobat Reader toolbar.

NOTICE CONCERNING COPYRIGHT

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproduction of copyrighted material.

Section 107, the "Fair Use" clause of this law, states that under certain conditions one may reproduce copyrighted material for criticism, comment, teaching and classroom use, scholarship, or research without violating the copyright of this material. Such use must be non-commercial in nature and must not impact the market for or value of the copyrighted work.

Electronic Reserves materials are connected to an instructor's reserve list. By accessing this password protected document, you are verifying that you are enrolled in this course and are using this document for coursework.

The complete text of the U.S. copyright law is on Reserve at both the Main Library and Science Library Reserve Desks.

2

Being a spectator of calamities taking place in another country is a quintessential modern experience, the cumulative offering by more than a century and a half's worth of those professional, specialized tourists known as journalists. Wars are now also living room sights and sounds. Information about what is happening elsewhere, called "news," features conflict and violence—"If it bleeds, it leads" runs the venerable guideline of tabloids and twenty-four-hour headline news shows—to which the response is compassion, or indignation, or titillation, or approval, as each misery heaves into view.

How to respond to the steadily increasing flow of information about the agonies of war was already an issue in the late nineteenth century. In 1899, Gustave Moynier,

the first president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, wrote:

> We now know what happens every day throughout the whole world . . . the descriptions given by daily journalists put, as it were, those in agony on fields of battle under the eyes of [newspaper] readers and their cries resonate in their ears . . .

Moynier was thinking of the soaring casualties of combatants on all sides, whose sufferings the Red Cross was founded to succor impartially. The killing power of armies in battle had been raised to a new magnitude by weapons introduced shortly after the Crimean War (1854–56), such as the breech-loading rifle and the machine gun. But though the agonies of the battlefield had become present as never before to those who would only read about them in the press, it was obviously an exaggeration, in 1899, to say that one knew what happened "every day throughout the whole world." And, though the sufferings endured in faraway wars now do assault our eyes and ears even as they happen, it is still an exaggeration. What is called in news parlance "the world"—"You give us twenty-two minutes, we'll give you the world," one radio network intones several times an

hour—is (unlike the world) a very small place, both geographically and thematically, and what is thought worth knowing about it is expected to be transmitted tersely and emphatically.

Awareness of the suffering that accumulates in a select number of wars happening elsewhere is something constructed. Principally in the form that is registered by cameras, it flares up, is shared by many people, and fades from view. In contrast to a written account—which, depending on its complexity of thought, reference, and vocabulary, is pitched at a larger or smaller readership—a photograph has only one language and is destined potentially for all.

In the first important wars of which there are accounts by photographers, the Crimean War and the American Civil War, and in every other war until the First World War, combat itself was beyond the camera's ken. As for the war photographs published between 1914 and 1918, nearly all anonymous, they were—insofar as they did convey something of the terrors and the devastation—generally in the epic mode, and were usually depictions of an aftermath: the corpse-strewn or lunar landscapes left by trench warfare; the gutted French villages the war had passed through. The photographic monitoring of war as we know it had to wait a few more years for a radical upgrade of professional equipment: lightweight cameras,

such as the Leica, using 35-mm film that could be exposed thirty-six times before the camera needed to be reloaded. Pictures could now be taken in the thick of battle, military censorship permitting, and civilian victims and exhausted, begrimed soldiers studied up close. The Spanish Civil War (1936–39) was the first war to be witnessed ("covered") in the modern sense: by a corps of professional photographers at the lines of military engagement and in the towns under bombardment, whose work was immediately seen in newspapers and magazines in Spain and abroad. The war America waged in Vietnam, the first to be witnessed day after day by television cameras, introduced the home front to new tele-intimacy with death and destruction. Ever since, battles and massacres filmed as they unfold have been a routine ingredient of the ceaseless flow of domestic, small-screen entertainment. Creating a perch for a particular conflict in the consciousness of viewers exposed to dramas from everywhere requires the daily diffusion and rediffusion of snippets of footage about the conflict. The understanding of war among people who have not experienced war is now chiefly a product of the impact of these images.

Something becomes real—to those who are elsewhere, following it as "news"—by being photographed. But a catastrophe that is experienced will often seem eerily like its representation. The attack on the World Trade Center on

September 11, 2001, was described as "unreal," "surreal," "like a movie," in many of the first accounts of those who escaped from the towers or watched from nearby. (After four decades of big-budget Hollywood disaster films, "It felt like a movie" seems to have displaced the way survivors of a catastrophe used to express the short-term unassimilability of what they had gone through: "It felt like a dream.")

Nonstop imagery (television, streaming video, movies) is our surround, but when it comes to remembering, the photograph has the deeper bite. Memory freeze-frames; its basic unit is the single image. In an era of information overload, the photograph provides a quick way of apprehending something and a compact form for memorizing it. The photograph is like a quotation, or a maxim or proverb. Each of us mentally stocks hundreds of photographs, subject to instant recall. Cite the most famous photograph taken during the Spanish Civil War, the Republican soldier "shot" by Robert Capa's camera at the same moment he is hit by an enemy bullet, and virtually everyone who has heard of that war can summon to mind the grainy black-and-white image of a man in a white shirt with rolled-up sleeves collapsing backward on a hillock, his right arm flung behind him as his rifle leaves his grip; about to fall, dead, onto his own shadow.

It is a shocking image, and that is the point. Con-

scripted as part of journalism, images were expected to arrest attention, startle, surprise. As the old advertising slogan of *Paris Match*, founded in 1949, had it: "The weight of words, the shock of photos." The hunt for more dramatic (as they're often described) images drives the photographic enterprise, and is part of the normality of a culture in which shock has become a leading stimulus of consumption and source of value. "Beauty will be convulsive, or it will not be," proclaimed André Breton. He called this aesthetic ideal "surrealist," but in a culture radically revamped by the ascendancy of mercantile values, to ask that images be jarring, clamorous, eye-opening seems like elementary realism as well as good business sense. How else to get attention for one's product or one's art? How else to make a dent when there is incessant exposure to images, and overexposure to a handful of images seen again and again? The image as shock and the image as cliché are two aspects of the same presence. Sixty-five years ago, all photographs were novelties to some degree. (It would have been inconceivable to Woolf—who did appear on the cover of *Time* in 1937—that one day her face would become a much-reproduced image on T-shirts, coffee mugs, book bags, refrigerator magnets, mouse pads.) Atrocity photographs were scarce in the winter of 1936–37: the depiction of war's horrors in the photographs Woolf evokes in *Three Guineas* seemed

almost like clandestine knowledge. Our situation is altogether different. The ultra-familiar, ultra-celebrated image—of an agony, of ruin—is an unavoidable feature of our camera-mediated knowledge of war.

○

EVER SINCE CAMERAS were invented in 1839, photography has kept company with death. Because an image produced with a camera is, literally, a trace of something brought before the lens, photographs were superior to any painting as a memento of the vanished past and the dear departed. To seize death in the making was another matter: the camera's reach remained limited as long as it had to be lugged about, set down, steadied. But once the camera was emancipated from the tripod, truly portable, and equipped with a range finder and a variety of lenses that permitted unprecedented feats of close observation from a distant vantage point, picture-taking acquired an immediacy and authority greater than any verbal account in conveying the horror of mass-produced death. If there was one year when the power of photographs to define, not merely record, the most abominable realities trumped all the complex narratives, surely it was 1945, with the pictures taken in April and early May at Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, and Dachau in the first days after the camps were liberated, and those taken by Japanese witnesses such as Yosuke Yamahata in the days following the incineration of the populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in early August.

The era of shock—for Europe—began three decades earlier, in 1914. Within a year of the start of the Great War, as it was known for a while, much that had been taken for granted came to seem fragile, even undefendable. The nightmare of suicidally lethal military engagement from which the warring countries were unable to extricate themselves—above all, the daily slaughter in the trenches on the Western Front—seemed to many to have exceeded the capacity of words to describe.* In 1915, none other than the august master of the intricate cocooning of reality in words, the magician of the verbose, Henry James, declared to *The New York Times*: "One finds it in the midst of all this as hard to apply one's words as to endure one's thoughts. The war has used up words; they have weakened, they have deteriorated . . ." And Walter Lippmann wrote in 1922: "Photographs have the kind of authority over imagination today, which the printed word had yesterday, and the spoken word before that. They seem utterly real."

*On the first day of the Battle of the Somme, July 1, 1916, sixty thousand British soldiers were killed or gravely wounded—thirty thousand of these in the first half-hour. At the end of four and a half months of battle, 1,300,000 casualties had been sustained by both sides, and the British and French front line had advanced by five miles.

Photographs had the advantage of uniting two contradictory features. Their credentials of objectivity were inbuilt. Yet they always had, necessarily, a point of view. They were a record of the real—incontrovertible, as no verbal account, however impartial, could be—since a machine was doing the recording. And they bore witness to the real—since a person had been there to take them.

Photographs, Woolf claims, "are not an argument; they are simply a crude statement of fact addressed to the eye." The truth is they are not "simply" anything, and certainly not regarded just as facts, by Woolf or anyone else. For, as she immediately adds, "the eye is connected with the brain; the brain with the nervous system. That system sends its messages in a flash through every past memory and present feeling." This sleight of hand allows photographs to be both objective record and personal testimony, both a faithful copy or transcription of an actual moment of reality and an interpretation of that reality—a feat literature has long aspired to, but could never attain in this literal sense.

Those who stress the evidentiary punch of image-making by cameras have to finesse the question of the subjectivity of the image-maker. For the photography of atrocity, people want the weight of witnessing without the taint of artistry, which is equated with insincerity or mere contrivance. Pictures of hellish events seem more

authentic when they don't have the look that comes from being "properly" lighted and composed, because the photographer either is an amateur or—just as serviceable—has adopted one of several familiar anti-art styles. By flying low, artistically speaking, such pictures are thought to be less manipulative—all widely distributed images of suffering now stand under that suspicion—and less likely to arouse facile compassion or identification.

The less polished pictures are not only welcomed as possessing a special kind of authenticity. Some may compete with the best, so permissive are the standards for a memorable, eloquent picture. This was illustrated by an exemplary show of photographs documenting the destruction of the World Trade Center that opened in storefront space in Manhattan's SoHo in late September 2001. The organizers of *Here Is New York*, as the show was resonantly titled, had sent out a call inviting everyone—amateur and professional—who had images of the attack and its aftermath to bring them in. There were more than a thousand responses in the first weeks, and from everyone who submitted photographs, at least one picture was accepted for exhibit. Unattributed and uncaptioned, they were all on display, hanging in two narrow rooms or included in a slide show on one of the computer monitors (and on the exhibit's website), and for sale, in the form of a high-quality ink-jet print, for the same small

sum, twenty-five dollars (proceeds to a fund benefiting the children of those killed on September 11). After the purchase was completed, the buyer could learn whether she had perhaps bought a Gilles Peress (who was one of the organizers of the show) or a James Nachtwey or a picture by a retired schoolteacher who, leaning out the bedroom window of her rent-controlled Village apartment with her point-and-shoot, had caught the north tower as it fell. "A Democracy of Photographs," the subtitle of the exhibit, suggested that there was work by amateurs as good as the work of the seasoned professionals who participated. And indeed there was—which proves something about photography, if not necessarily something about cultural democracy. Photography is the only major art in which professional training and years of experience do not confer an insuperable advantage over the untrained and inexperienced—this for many reasons, among them the large role that chance (or luck) plays in the taking of pictures, and the bias toward the spontaneous, the rough, the imperfect. (There is no comparable level playing field in literature, where virtually nothing owes to chance or luck and where refinement of language usually incurs no penalty; or in the performing arts, where genuine achievement is unattainable without exhaustive training and daily practice; or in film-

making, which is not guided to any significant degree by the anti-art prejudices of much of contemporary art photography.)

Whether the photograph is understood as a naïve object or the work of an experienced artificer, its meaning—and the viewer's response—depends on how the picture is identified or misidentified; that is, on words. The organizing idea, the moment, the place, and the devoted public made this exhibit something of an exception. The crowds of solemn New Yorkers who stood in line for hours on Prince Street every day throughout the fall of 2001 to see *Here Is New York* had no need of captions. They had, if anything, a surfeit of understanding of what they were looking at, building by building, street by street—the fires, the detritus, the fear, the exhaustion, the grief. But one day captions will be needed, of course. And the misreadings and the misremberings, and new ideological uses for the pictures, will make their difference.

Normally, if there is any distance from the subject, what a photograph "says" can be read in several ways. Eventually, one reads into the photograph what it *should* be saying. Splice into a long take of a perfectly deadpan face the shots of such disparate material as a bowl of steaming soup, a woman in a coffin, a child playing with

a toy bear, and the viewers—as the first theorist of film, Lev Kuleshov, famously demonstrated in his workshop in Moscow in the 1920s—will marvel at the subtlety and range of the actor's expressions. In the case of still photographs, we use what we know of the drama of which the picture's subject is a part. "Land Distribution Meeting, Extremadura, Spain, 1936," the much-reproduced photograph by David Seymour ("Chim") of a gaunt woman standing with a baby at her breast looking upward (intently? apprehensively?), is often recalled as showing someone fearfully scanning the sky for attacking planes. The expressions on her face and the faces around her seem charged with apprehensiveness. Memory has altered the image, according to memory's needs, conferring emblematic status on Chim's picture not for what it is described as showing (an outdoor political meeting, which took place four months before the war started) but for what was soon to happen in Spain that would have such enormous resonance: air attacks on cities and villages, for the sole purpose of destroying them completely, being used as a weapon of war for the first time in Europe.* Be-

*Nothing in Franco's barbarous conduct of the war is as well remembered as these raids, mostly executed by the unit of the German air force sent by Hitler to aid Franco, the Condor Legion, and memorialized in Picasso's *Guernica*. But they were not without precedent. During the First World War, there had been some sporadic, relatively ineffective bombing; for example, the Germans conducted raids from Zeppelins, then from planes, on a number of cities, including London, Paris, and Antwerp. Far more lethally—starting with the attack by Italian fighter planes near Tripoli in October 1911—European nations had been bombing their colonies. So-called "air control operations" were favored as an economical alternative to the costly practice of maintaining large garrisons to police Britain's more restive possessions. One of these was Iraq, which (along with Palestine) had gone to Britain as part of the spoils of victory when the Ottoman Empire was dismembered after the First World War. Between 1920 and 1924, the recently formed Royal Air Force regularly targeted Iraqi villages, often remote settlements, where the rebellious natives might try to find shelter, with the raids "carried on continuously by day and night, on houses, inhabitants, crops, and cattle," according to the tactics outlined by one RAF wing commander.

What horrified public opinion in the 1930s was that the slaughter of civilians from the air was happening in Spain; these sorts of things were not supposed to happen *here*. As David Rieff has pointed out, a similar feeling drew attention to the atrocities committed by the Serbs in Bosnia in the 1990s, from the death camps such as Omarska early in the war to the massacre in Srebrenica, where most of the male inhabitants who had not been able to flee—more than eight thousand men and boys—were rounded up, gunned down, and pushed into mass graves once the town was abandoned by the Dutch battalion of the United Nations Protection Force and surrendered to General Ratko Mladić: these sorts of things are not supposed to happen here, in Europe, *any more*.

fore long the sky did harbor planes that were dropping bombs on landless peasants like those in the photograph. (Look again at the nursing mother, at her furrowed brow, her squint, her half-open mouth. Does she still seem as apprehensive? Doesn't it now seem as if she is squinting because the sun is in her eyes?)

The photographs Woolf received are treated as a window on the war: transparent views of their subject. It was of no interest to her that each had an "author"—that photographs represent the view of *someone*—although it was precisely in the late 1930s that the profession of bear-

ing individual witness to war and war's atrocities with a camera was forged. Once, war photography mostly appeared in daily and weekly newspapers. (Newspapers had been printing photographs since 1880.) Then, in addition to the older popular magazines from the late nineteenth century such as *National Geographic* and *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* that used photographs as illustrations, large-circulation weekly magazines arrived, notably the French *Vu* (in 1929), the American *Life* (in 1936), and the British *Picture Post* (in 1938), that were entirely devoted to pictures (accompanied by brief texts keyed to the photos) and "picture stories"—at least four or five pictures by the same photographer trailed by a story that further dramatized the images. In a newspaper, it was the picture—and there was only one—that accompanied the story.

Further, when published in a newspaper, the war photograph was surrounded by words (the article it illustrated and other articles), while in a magazine, it was more likely to be adjacent to a competing image that was peddling something. When Capa's at-the-moment-of-death picture of the Republican soldier appeared in *Life* on July 12, 1937, it occupied the whole of the right page; facing it on the left was a full-page advertisement for Vitalis, a men's hair cream, with a small picture of someone exerting himself at tennis and a large portrait of the same man in a white dinner jacket sporting a head of neatly parted,

slicked-down, lustrous hair.* The double spread—with each use of the camera implying the invisibility of the other—seems not just bizarre but curiously dated now.

In a system based on the maximal reproduction and diffusion of images, witnessing requires the creation of star witnesses, renowned for their bravery and zeal in procuring important, disturbing photographs. One of the first issues of *Picture Post* (December 3, 1938), which ran a portfolio of Capa's Spanish Civil War pictures, used as its cover a head shot of the handsome photographer in profile holding a camera to his face: "The Greatest War Photographer in the World: Robert Capa." War photographers inherited what glamour going to war still had among the anti-bellicose, especially when the war was felt to be one of those rare conflicts in which someone of conscience would be impelled to take sides. (The war in Bosnia, nearly sixty years later, inspired similar partisan feelings among the journalists who lived for a time in besieged Sarajevo.) And, in contrast to the 1914–18 war, which, it was clear to many of the victors, had been a colossal mistake, the second "world war" was unani-

*Capa's already much admired picture, taken (according to the photographer) on September 5, 1936, was originally published in *Vu* on September 23, 1936, above a second photograph, taken from the same angle and in the same light, of another Republican soldier collapsing, his rifle leaving his right hand, on the same spot on the hillside; that photograph was never reprinted. The first picture also appeared soon after in a newspaper, *Paris-Soir*.

mously felt by the winning side to have been a necessary war, a war that had to be fought.

Photojournalism came into its own in the early 1940s—wartime. This least controversial of modern wars, whose justness was sealed by the full revelation of Nazi evil as the war ended in 1945, offered photojournalists a new legitimacy, one that had little place for the left-wing dissidence that had informed much of the serious use of photographs in the interwar period, including Friedrich's *War Against War!* and the early pictures by Capa, the most celebrated figure in a generation of politically engaged photographers whose work centered on war and victimhood. In the wake of the new mainstream liberal consensus about the tractability of acute social problems, issues of the photographer's own livelihood and independence moved to the foreground. One result was the formation by Capa with a few friends (who included Chim and Henri Cartier-Bresson) of a cooperative, the Magnum Photo Agency, in Paris in 1947. The immediate purpose of Magnum—which quickly became the most influential and prestigious consortium of photojournalists—was a practical one: to represent venturesome freelance photographers to the picture magazines sending them on assignments. At the same time, Magnum's charter, moralistic in the way of other founding

charters of the new international organizations and guilds created in the immediate postwar period, spelled out an enlarged, ethically weighted mission for photojournalists: to chronicle their own time, be it a time of war or a time of peace, as fair-minded witnesses free of chauvinistic prejudices.

In Magnum's voice, photography declared itself a global enterprise. The photographer's nationality and national journalistic affiliation were, in principle, irrelevant. The photographer could be from anywhere. And his or her beat was "the world." The photographer was a rover, with wars of unusual interest (for there were many wars) a favorite destination.

The memory of war, however, like all memory, is mostly local. Armenians, the majority in diaspora, keep alive the memory of the Armenian genocide of 1915; Greeks don't forget the sanguinary civil war in Greece that raged through the late 1940s. But for a war to break out of its immediate constituency and become a subject of international attention, it must be regarded as something of an exception, as wars go, and represent more than the clashing interests of the belligerents themselves. Most wars do not acquire the requisite fuller meaning. An example: the Chaco War (1932–35), a butchery engaged in by Bolivia (population one million) and Paraguay

(three and a half million) that took the lives of one hundred thousand soldiers, and which was covered by a German photojournalist, Willi Ruge, whose superb close-up battle pictures are as forgotten as that war. But the Spanish Civil War in the second half of the 1930s, the Serb and Croat wars against Bosnia in the mid-1990s, the drastic worsening of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that began in 2000—these contests were guaranteed the attention of many cameras because they were invested with the meaning of larger struggles: the Spanish Civil War because it was a stand against the fascist menace, and (in retrospect) a dress rehearsal for the coming European, or "world," war; the Bosnian war because it was the stand of a small, fledgling southern European country wishing to remain multicultural as well as independent against the dominant power in the region and its neo-fascist program of ethnic cleansing; and the ongoing conflict over the character and governance of territories claimed by both Israeli Jews and Palestinians because of a variety of flashpoints, starting with the inveterate fame or notoriety of the Jewish people, the unique resonance of the Nazi extermination of European Jewry, the crucial support that the United States gives to the state of Israel, and the identification of Israel as an apartheid state maintaining a brutal dominion over the lands captured in 1967. In the meantime, far crueler wars in which civilians are relentlessly slaughtered from the air and massacred on the ground (the decades-long civil war in Sudan, the Iraqi campaigns against the Kurds, the Russian invasions and occupation of Chechnya) have gone relatively underphotographed.

The memorable sites of suffering documented by admired photographers in the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s were mostly in Asia and Africa—Werner Bischof's photographs of famine victims in India, Don McCullin's pictures of victims of war and famine in Biafra, W. Eugene Smith's photographs of the victims of the lethal pollution of a Japanese fishing village. The Indian and African famines were not just "natural" disasters; they were preventable; they were crimes of great magnitude. And what happened in Minamata was obviously a crime: the Chisso Corporation knew it was dumping mercury-laden waste into the bay. (After a year of taking pictures, Smith was severely and permanently injured by Chisso goons who were ordered to put an end to his camera inquiry.) But war is the largest crime, and since the mid-1960s, most of the best-known photographers covering wars have thought their role was to show war's "real" face. The color photographs of tormented Vietnamese villagers and wounded American conscripts that Larry Burrows took and *Life* published, starting in 1962, certainly

fortified the outcry against the American presence in Vietnam. (In 1971 Burrows was shot down with three other photographers aboard a U.S. military helicopter flying over the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos. *Life*, to the dismay of many who, like me, had grown up with and been educated by its revelatory pictures of war and of art, closed in 1972.) Burrows was the first important photographer to do a whole war in color—another gain in verisimilitude, that is, shock. In the current political mood, the friendliest to the military in decades, the pictures of wretched hollow-eyed GIs that once seemed subversive of militarism and imperialism may seem inspirational. Their revised subject: ordinary American young men doing their unpleasant, ennobling duty.

Exception made for Europe today, which has claimed the right to opt out of war-making, it remains as true as ever that most people will not question the rationalizations offered by their government for starting or continuing a war. It takes some very peculiar circumstances for a war to become genuinely unpopular. (The prospect of being killed is not necessarily one of them.) When it does, the material gathered by photographers, which they may think of as unmasking the conflict, is of great use. Absent such a protest, the same antiwar photograph may be read as showing pathos, or heroism, admirable heroism, in an

unavoidable struggle that can be concluded only by victory or by defeat. The photographer's intentions do not determine the meaning of the photograph, which will have its own career, blown by the whims and loyalties of the diverse communities that have use for it.

3

What does it mean to protest suffering, as distinct from acknowledging it?

The iconography of suffering has a long pedigree. The sufferings most often deemed worthy of representation are those understood to be the product of wrath, divine or human. (Suffering from natural causes, such as illness or childbirth, is scantily represented in the history of art; that caused by accident, virtually not at all—as if there were no such thing as suffering by inadvertence or misadventure.) The statue group of the writhing Laocoön and his sons, the innumerable versions in painting and sculpture of the Passion of Christ, and the inexhaustible visual catalogue of the fiendish executions of the Christian martyrs—these are surely intended to move and excite, and to instruct and exemplify. The viewer may commiser-

ate with the sufferer's pain—and, in the case of the Christian saints, feel admonished or inspired by model faith and fortitude—but these are destinies beyond deploring or contesting.

It seems that the appetite for pictures showing bodies in pain is as keen, almost, as the desire for ones that show bodies naked. For many centuries, in Christian art, depictions of hell offered both of these elemental satisfactions. On occasion, the pretext might be a Biblical decapitation anecdote (Holofernes, John the Baptist), or massacre yarn (the newborn Hebrew boys, the eleven thousand virgins), or some such, with the status of a real historical event and of an implacable fate. There was also the repertoire of hard-to-look-at cruelties from classical antiquity—the pagan myths, even more than the Christian stories, offer something for every taste. No moral charge attaches to the representation of these cruelties. Just the provocation: can you look at this? There is the satisfaction of being able to look at the image without flinching. There is the pleasure of flinching.

To shudder at Goltzius's rendering, in his etching *The Dragon Devouring the Companions of Cadmus* (1588), of a man's face being chewed off his head is very different from shuddering at a photograph of a First World War veteran whose face has been shot away. One horror has its place in a complex subject—figures in a landscape—

that displays the artist's skill of eye and hand. The other is a camera's record, from very near, of a real person's unspeakably awful mutilation; that and nothing else. An invented horror can be quite overwhelming. (I, for one, find it difficult to look at Titian's great painting of the flaying of Marsyas, or indeed at any picture of this subject.) But there is shame as well as shock in looking at the close-up of a real horror. Perhaps the only people with the right to look at images of suffering of this extreme order are those who could do something to alleviate it—say, the surgeons at the military hospital where the photograph was taken—or those who could learn from it. The rest of us are voyeurs, whether or not we mean to be.

In each instance, the gruesome invites us to be either spectators or cowards, unable to look. Those with the stomach to look are playing a role authorized by many glorious depictions of suffering. Torment, a canonical subject in art, is often represented in painting as a spectacle, something being watched (or ignored) by other people. The implication is: no, it cannot be stopped—and the mingling of inattentive with attentive onlookers underscores this.

The practice of representing atrocious suffering as something to be deplored, and, if possible, stopped, enters the history of images with a specific subject: the sufferings endured by a civilian population at the hands of a

victorious army on the rampage. It is a quintessentially secular subject, which emerges in the seventeenth century, when contemporary realignments of power become material for artists. In 1633 Jacques Callot published a suite of eighteen etchings titled *Les Misères et les Malheurs de la Guerre* (*The Miseries and Misfortunes of War*), which depicted the atrocities committed against civilians by French troops during the invasion and occupation of his native Lorraine in the early 1630s. (Six small etchings on the same subject that Callot had executed prior to the large series appeared in 1635, the year of his death.) The view is wide and deep; these are large scenes with many figures, scenes from a history, and each caption is a sententious comment in verse on the various energies and dooms portrayed in the images. Callot begins with a plate showing the recruitment of soldiers; brings into view ferocious combat, massacre, pillage, and rape, the engines of torture and execution (strappado, gallows tree, firing squad, stake, wheel), the revenge of the peasants on the soldiers; and ends with a distribution of rewards. The insistence in plate after plate on the savagery of a conquering army is startling and without precedent, but the French soldiers are only the leading malefactors in the orgy of violence, and there is room in Callot's Christian humanist sensibility not just to mourn the end of the independent Duchy of Lorraine but to record the postwar

plight of destitute soldiers who squat on the side of a road begging for alms.

Callot had his successors, such as Hans Ulrich Franck, a minor German artist, who, in 1643, toward the end of the Thirty Years' War, began making what would amount to (by 1656) twenty-five etchings depicting soldiers killing peasants. But the preeminent concentration on the horrors of war and the vileness of soldiers run amok is Goya's, in the early nineteenth century. *Los Desastres de la Guerra* (*The Disasters of War*), a numbered sequence of eighty-three etchings made between 1810 and 1820 (and first published, all but three plates, in 1863, thirty-five years after his death), depicts the atrocities perpetrated by Napoleon's soldiers who invaded Spain in 1808 to quell the insurrection against French rule. Goya's images move the viewer close to the horror. All the trappings of the spectacular have been eliminated: the landscape is an atmosphere, a darkness, barely sketched in. War is not a spectacle. And Goya's print series is not a narrative: each image, captioned with a brief phrase lamenting the wickedness of the invaders and the monstrousness of the suffering they inflicted, stands independently of the others. The cumulative effect is devastating.

The ghoulish cruelties in *The Disasters of War* are meant to awaken, shock, wound the viewer. Goya's art, like Dostoyevsky's, seems a turning point in the history of

moral feelings and of sorrow—as deep, as original, as demanding. With Goya, a new standard for responsiveness to suffering enters art. (And new subjects for fellow-feeling: as in, for example, his painting of an injured laborer being carried away from a building site.) The account of war's cruelties is fashioned as an assault on the sensibility of the viewer. The expressive phrases in script below each image comment on the provocation. While the image, like every image, is an invitation to look, the caption, more often than not, insists on the difficulty of doing just that. A voice, presumably the artist's, badgers the viewer: can you bear to look at this? One caption declares: One can't look (*No se puede mirar*). Another says: This is bad (*Esto es malo*). Another retorts: This is worse (*Esto es peor*). Another shouts: This is the worst! (*Esto es lo peor!*). Another declaims: Barbarians! (*Bárbaros!*). What madness! (*Que locura!*), cries another. And another: This is too much! (*Fuerte cosa es!*). And another: Why? (*Por qué?*).

The caption of a photograph is traditionally neutral, informative: a date, a place, names. A reconnaissance photograph from the First World War (the first war in which cameras were used extensively for military intelligence) was unlikely to be captioned "Can't wait to overrun this!" or the X-ray of a multiple fracture to be annotated "Patient will probably have a limp!" Nor

should there be a need to speak for the photograph in the photographer's voice, offering assurances of the image's veracity, as Goya does in *The Disasters of War*, writing beneath one image: I saw this (*Yo lo ví*). And beneath another: This is the truth (*Esto es lo verdadero*). Of course the photographer saw it. And unless there's been some tampering or misrepresenting, it is the truth.

Ordinary language fixes the difference between handmade images like Goya's and photographs by the convention that artists "make" drawings and paintings while photographers "take" photographs. But the photographic image, even to the extent that it is a trace (not a construction made out of disparate photographic traces), cannot be simply a transparency of something that happened. It is always the image that someone chose; to photograph is to frame, and to frame is to exclude. Moreover, fiddling with pictures long antedates the era of digital photography and Photoshop manipulations: it has always been possible for a photograph to misrepresent. A painting or drawing is judged a fake when it turns out not to be by the artist to whom it had been attributed. A photograph—or a filmed document available on television or the internet—is judged a fake when it turns out to be deceiving the viewer about the scene it purports to depict.

That the atrocities perpetrated by the French soldiers in Spain didn't happen exactly as pictured—say, that the victim didn't look just so, that it didn't happen next to a tree—hardly disqualifies *The Disasters of War*. Goya's images are a synthesis. They claim: things *like* this happened. In contrast, a single photograph or filmstrip claims to represent exactly what was before the camera's lens. A photograph is supposed not to evoke but to show. That is why photographs, unlike handmade images, can count as evidence. But evidence of what? The suspicion that Capa's "Death of a Republican Soldier"—titled "The Falling Soldier" in the authoritative compilation of Capa's work—may not show what it is said to show (one hypothesis is that it records a training exercise near the front line) continues to haunt discussions of war photography. Everyone is a literalist when it comes to photographs.

○

IMAGES OF THE SUFFERINGS endured in war are so widely disseminated now that it is easy to forget how recently such images became what is expected from photographers of note. Historically, photographers have offered mostly positive images of the warrior's trade, and of the satisfactions of starting a war or continuing to

fight one. If governments had their way, war photography, like most war poetry, would drum up support for soldiers' sacrifice.

Indeed, war photography begins with such a mission, such a disgrace. The war was the Crimean War, and the photographer, Roger Fenton, invariably called the first war photographer, was no less than that war's "official" photographer, having been sent to the Crimea in early 1855 by the British government at the instigation of Prince Albert. Acknowledging the need to counteract the alarming printed accounts of the unanticipated risks and privations endured by the British soldiers dispatched there the previous year, the government had invited a well-known professional photographer to give another, more positive impression of the increasingly unpopular war.

Edmund Gosse, in *Father and Son* (1907), his memoir of a mid-nineteenth-century English childhood, relates how the Crimean War penetrated even his stringently pious, unworldly family, which belonged to an evangelical sect called the Plymouth Brethren:

> The declaration of war with Russia brought the first breath of outside life into our Calvinist cloister. My parents took in a daily newspaper, which they had never done before, and events in picturesque places, which my Father and I looked out on the map, were eagerly discussed.

War was and still is the most irresistible—and picturesque—news. (Along with that invaluable substitute for war, international sports.) But this war was more than news. It was bad news. The authoritative, pictureless London newspaper to which Gosse's parents had succumbed, *The Times*, attacked the military leadership whose incompetence was responsible for the war's dragging on, with so much loss of British life. The toll on the soldiers from causes other than combat was horrendous—twenty-two thousand died of illnesses; many thousands lost limbs to frostbite during the long Russian winter of the protracted siege of Sebastopol—and several of the military engagements were disasters. It was still winter when Fenton arrived in the Crimea for a four-month stay, having contracted to publish his photographs (in the form of engravings) in a less venerable and less critical weekly paper, *The Illustrated London News*, exhibit them in a gallery, and market them as a book upon his return home.

Under instructions from the War Office not to photograph the dead, the maimed, or the ill, and precluded from photographing most other subjects by the cumber-

some technology of picture-taking, Fenton went about rendering the war as a dignified all-male group outing. With each image requiring a separate chemical preparation in the darkroom and with exposure time as long as fifteen seconds, Fenton could photograph British officers in open-air confabulation or common soldiers tending the cannons only after asking them to stand or sit together, follow his directions, and hold still. His pictures are tableaux of military life behind the front lines; the war—movement, disorder, drama—stays off-camera. The one photograph Fenton took in the Crimea that reaches beyond benign documentation is "The Valley of the Shadow of Death," whose title evokes the consolation offered by the biblical psalmist as well as the disaster of the previous October in which six hundred British soldiers were ambushed on the plain above Balaklava—Tennyson called the site "the valley of Death" in his memorial poem "The Charge of the Light Brigade." Fenton's memorial photograph is a portrait of absence, of death without the dead. It is the only photograph he took that would not have needed to be staged, for all it shows is a wide rutted road studded with rocks and cannonballs that curves onward across a barren rolling plain to the distant void.

A bolder portfolio of after-the-battle images of death and ruin, pointing not to losses suffered but to a fearsome

exaction of British military might, was made by another photographer who had visited the Crimean War. Felice Beato, a naturalized Englishman (he was born in Venice), was the first photographer to attend a number of wars: besides being in the Crimea in 1855, he was at the Sepoy Rebellion (what the British call the Indian Mutiny) in 1857–58, the Second Opium War in China in 1860, and the Sudanese colonial wars in 1885. Three years after Fenton made his anodyne images of a war that did not go well for England, Beato was celebrating the fierce victory of the British army over a mutiny of native soldiers under its command, the first important challenge to British rule in India. The arresting photograph Beato took in Lucknow of the Sikandarbagh Palace, gutted by the British bombardment, shows the courtyard strewn with rebels' bones.

The first full-scale attempt to document a war was carried out a few years later, during the American Civil War, by a firm of Northern photographers headed by Mathew Brady, who had made several official portraits of President Lincoln. The Brady war pictures—most were taken by Alexander Gardner and Timothy O'Sullivan, though their employer was invariably credited with them—showed conventional subjects such as encampments populated by officers and foot soldiers, towns in war's way, ordnance, ships, as well as, most famously, dead Union and Confederate soldiers lying on the blasted ground of

Gettysburg and Antietam. Though access to the battlefield came as a privilege extended to Brady and his team by Lincoln himself, the photographers were not commissioned as Fenton had been. Their status evolved in a more American fashion, with nominal government sponsorship giving way to the force of entrepreneurial and freelance motives.

The first justification for the brutally legible pictures of dead soldiers, which clearly violated a taboo, was the simple duty to record. "The camera is the eye of history," Brady is supposed to have said. And history, invoked as a truth beyond appeal, was allied with the rising prestige of a certain idea of subjects needing further attention known as realism—soon to have more defenders among novelists than among photographers.* In the name of realism, one was permitted—required—to show unpleasant, hard facts. Such pictures also convey "a useful

*The deflating realism of the photographs of slain soldiers lying about the battlefield is dramatized in *The Red Badge of Courage*, in which everything is seen through the bewildered, terrified consciousness of someone who could well have been one of those soldiers. Stephen Crane's piercingly visual, mono-voiced antiwar novel—which appeared in 1895, thirty years after the war ended (Crane was born in 1871)—is a long, simplifying emotional distance from Walt Whitman's contemporary, multiform treatment of war's "red business." In *Drum-Taps*, the poem cycle Whitman published in 1865 (and later folded into *Leaves of Grass*), many voices are summoned to speak. Though far from enthusiastic about this war, which he identified with fratricide, and for all his sorrow over the suffering on both sides, Whitman could not help but hear war's epic and heroic music. His ear kept him martial, albeit in his own generous, complex, amatory way.

moral" by showing "the blank horror and reality of war, in opposition to its pageantry," Gardner wrote in the text accompanying O'Sullivan's picture of fallen Confederate soldiers, their agonized faces turned to the viewer, in the album of pictures by him and other Brady photographers that he published after the war. (Gardner left Brady's employ in 1863.) "Here are the dreadful details! Let them aid in preventing such another calamity from falling upon the nation." But the frankness of the most memorable pictures in *Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the War* (1866) did not mean that he and his colleagues had necessarily photographed their subjects as they found them. To photograph was to compose (with living subjects, to pose), and the desire to arrange elements in the picture did not vanish because the subject was immobilized, or immobile.

Not surprisingly, many of the canonical images of early war photography turn out to have been staged, or to have had their subjects tampered with. After reaching the much-shelled valley approaching Sebastopol in his horse-drawn darkroom, Fenton made two exposures from the same tripod position: in the first version of the celebrated photograph he was to call "The Valley of the Shadow of Death" (despite the title, it was *not* across this landscape that the Light Brigade made its doomed charge), the cannonballs are thick on the ground to the left of the road, but before taking the second picture—

the one that is always reproduced—he oversaw the scattering of cannonballs on the road itself. A picture of a desolate site where a great deal of dying had indeed taken place, Beato's image of the devastated Sikandarbagh Palace involved a more thorough arrangement of its subject, and was one of the first photographic depictions of the horrific in war. The attack had taken place in November 1857, after which the victorious British troops and loyal Indian units searched the palace room by room, bayoneting the eighteen hundred surviving Sepoy defenders who were now their prisoners and throwing their bodies into the courtyard; vultures and dogs did the rest. For the photograph he took in March or April 1858, Beato constructed the ruin as an unburial ground, stationing some natives by two pillars in the rear and distributing human bones about the courtyard.

At least they were old bones. It's now known that the Brady team rearranged and displaced some of the recently dead at Gettysburg: the picture titled "The Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter, Gettysburg" shows in fact a dead Confederate soldier who was moved from where he had fallen on the field to a more photogenic site, a cove formed by several boulders flanking a barricade of rocks, and includes a prop rifle that Gardner leaned against the barricade beside the corpse. (It seems not to have been the special rifle a sharpshooter would have used, but a

common infantryman's rifle; Gardner didn't know this or didn't care.) What is odd is not that so many of the iconic news photos of the past, including some of the best-remembered pictures from the Second World War, appear to have been staged. It is that we are surprised to learn they were staged, and always disappointed.

The photographs we are particularly dismayed to find out have been posed are those that appear to record intimate climaxes, above all, of love and death. The point of "The Death of a Republican Soldier" is that it is a real moment, captured fortuitously; it loses all value should the falling soldier turn out to have been performing for Capa's camera. Robert Doisneau never explicitly claimed snapshot status for a photograph taken in 1950 for *Life* of a young couple kissing on the sidewalk near Paris's Hôtel de Ville. Still, the revelation more than forty years later that the picture was a directorial setup with a woman and a man hired for the day to smooch for Doisneau provoked many a spasm of chagrin among those for whom it is a cherished vision of romantic love and romantic Paris. We want the photographer to be a spy in the house of love and of death, and those being photographed to be unaware of the camera, "off guard." No sophisticated sense of what photography is or can be will ever weaken the satisfactions of a picture of an unexpected event seized in mid-action by an alert photographer.

If we admit as authentic only photographs that result from the photographer's having been nearby, shutter open, at just the right moment, few victory photographs will qualify. Take the action of planting a flag on a height as a battle is winding down. The famous photograph of the raising of the American flag on Iwo Jima on February 23, 1945, turns out to be a "reconstruction" by an Associated Press photographer, Joe Rosenthal, of the morning flag-raising ceremony that followed the capture of Mount Suribachi, done later in the day and with a larger flag. The story behind an equally iconic victory photograph, taken on May 2, 1945, by the Soviet war photographer Yevgeny Khaldei, of Russian soldiers hoisting the Red flag atop the Reichstag as Berlin continues to burn, is that the exploit was staged for the camera. The case of a much-reproduced upbeat photograph taken in London in 1940, during the Blitz, is more complicated, since the photographer, and therefore the circumstances of the picture-taking, are unknown. The picture shows, through a missing wall of the utterly ruined, roofless library of Holland House, three gentlemen standing in the rubble at some distance from one another before two walls of miraculously intact bookshelves. One gazes at the books; one hooks his finger on the spine of a book he is about to pull from the shelf; one, book in hand, is reading—the elegantly composed tableau has to have been directed. It is pleasing to imagine that the picture is not the invention from scratch of a photographer on the prowl in Kensington after an air raid who, discovering the library of the great Jacobean mansion sheared open to view, had brought in three men to play the imperturbable browsers, but, rather, that the three gents were observed indulging their bookish appetites in the destroyed mansion and the photographer did little more than space them differently to make a more incisive picture. Either way, the photograph retains its period charm and authenticity as a celebration of a now vanished ideal of national fortitude and sangfroid. With time, many staged photographs turn back into historical evidence, albeit of an impure kind—like most historical evidence.

Only starting with the Vietnam War is it virtually certain that none of the best-known photographs were setups. And this is essential to the moral authority of these images. The signature Vietnam War horror-photograph from 1972, taken by Huynh Cong Ut, of children from a village that has just been doused with American napalm, running down the highway, shrieking with pain, belongs to the realm of photographs that cannot possibly be posed. The same is true of the well-known pictures from the most photographed wars since. That there have been so few staged war photographs since the Vietnam War suggests that photographers are being held to a higher

standard of journalistic probity. One part of the explanation for this may be that in Vietnam television became the defining medium for showing images of war, and the intrepid lone photographer with Leica or Nikon in hand, operating out of sight much of the time, now had to compete with and endure the proximity of TV crews: the witnessing of war is now hardly ever a solitary venture. Technically, the possibilities for doctoring or electronically manipulating pictures are greater than ever—almost unlimited. But the practice of inventing dramatic news pictures, staging them for the camera, seems on its way to becoming a lost art.

4

To catch a death actually happening and embalm it for all time is something only cameras can do, and pictures taken by photographers out in the field of the moment of (or just before) death are among the most celebrated and often reproduced of war photographs. There can be no suspicion about the authenticity of what is being shown in the picture taken by Eddie Adams in February 1968 of the chief of the South Vietnamese national police, Brigadier General Nguyen Ngoc Loan, shooting a Vietcong suspect in a street in Saigon. Nevertheless, it was staged—by General Loan, who had led the prisoner, hands tied behind his back, out to the street where journalists had gathered; he would not have carried out the summary execution there had they not been available to witness it. Positioned beside his prisoner so