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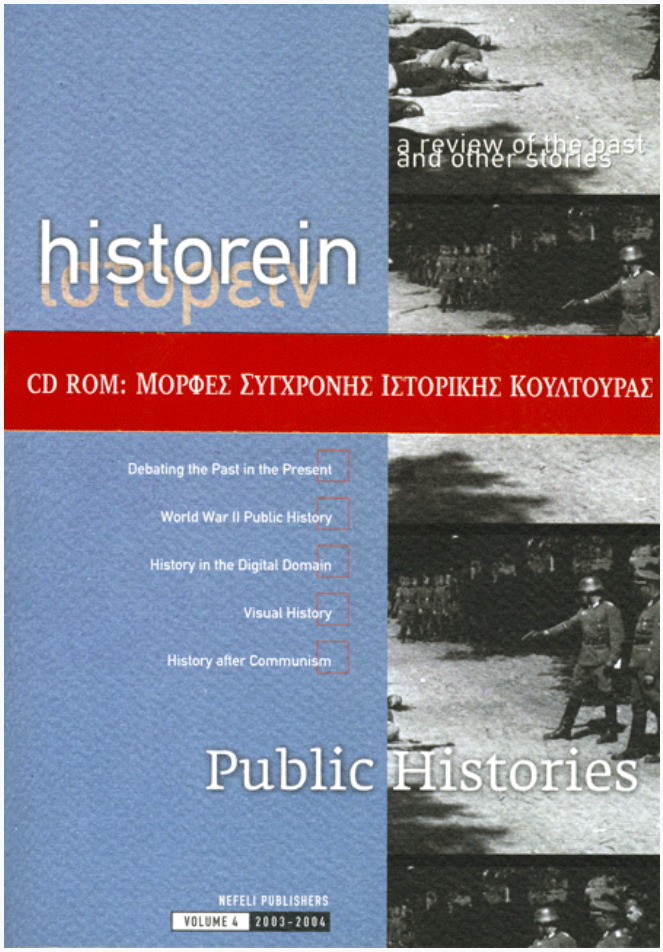

Images of History and the Optical Unconcious

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Images of History and the Optical Unconscious

Gregory Paschalidis

In the last few years we have witnessed a powerful new trend in the field of historical publications: the multiplication of photographic histories. While their onset can be traced back to the 1970s, the number of photographic histories of all kinds – whether on local, political, cultural, military or social topics – published in the 1990s is quite unprecedented. The phenomenon reached climactic proportions with a spate of photographic histories of the 20th century appearing around the close of the millenium. Next to the accounts of the century written by scholars such as Eric Hobsbawm, Mark Mazower, or William Hubbard – from whose books, it should be noted, photographs are absent – we had a wealth of "visual" or "photographic" histories of the 20th century. In such histories photographs have either a central place or even an absolutely predominant one, taking over completely, as it were, the story-telling function, with the verbal narrative reduced to a subsidiary role.

The increasing number and popularity of this kind of historical publication is not particularly surprising. To an audience long accustomed to regular doses of historical retrospectives, synopses, and documentaries – all of them drawing extensively upon old newsreel and photographic material – offered daily by television, the most prolific and certainly the most influential historiographical institution of our time, the "visual history in print" format appears quite legitimate, if not altogether natural. We are well aware that one of the central characteristics of contemporary historical culture is the protagonistic role of visual media both in the processes of recording and representing historical events, and in making historical information widely available and accessible. Thanks specif-

ically to photography, the historian of modern times enjoys a unique privilege over his colleagues specializing in more distant eras: the historical period he studies is the first to have been photographed in almost all its moments and aspects. The modern era is the only one, consequently, for whose study a historian can draw material not only from the more or less familiar repertory of historical records, archives, and documents, but also from the countless number of photographs that have been taken of its more or less exceptional events and actors – personal, family, news, artistic, tourist, publicity pictures, etc. As we have noted above, however, it seems that many contemporary historians neglect to make use of this unique archive. Their attitude is closely related to the skepticism, if not outright hostility, with which most 20th century historians have viewed the rising power and popularity of visual media, particularly when the latter took to the task of representing history – as in the case of cinema, documentaries, and television. Historians were not alone in thinking in such terms. The wider critical consensus up until quite recently has been that these media are inherently inimical to authentic historical knowledge, to the extent that they tend to restrict historicity to a shallow and spectacular surface, to neutralize or disorient historical consciousness, to promote, finally, a culture of forgetting and amnesia.[1]

In the last decade, however, we have seen a noteworthy change in this critical attitude, specifically with regard to the photographic media. What is currently denounced is the digital image and, specifically, that it involves severing the umbilical cord that used to connect the photographic image with its object. Many are particularly worried with the unique ability of digital technology to effortlessly alter the photographic image in ways that are not only imperceptible, but also virtually untraceable, thereby simplifying, to a degree previously unknown, deceitful manipulation. Uncoupled then, from their ontological link to reality and virtually unverifiable, photographic images are no longer considered reliable. In this essentially "post-photographic" era,[2] as it is called, the traditional distinctions between object and representation, truth and fiction, real and imaginary, are thought to have become unviable, even irrelevant.

The widespread perception of the digital image as a direct threat to historical truth and memory, accompanied with an unqualified defense of the documentary value of classical, analogue photography, reveals the full extent of the deeply felt but rarely openly acknowledged association between photography and history. It is an association that poses certain crucial questions regarding the epistemological status of the photographic image, but also of historical knowledge itself. The first who became aware of these questions and pursued them more or less systematically were Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer.[3] Their insights continue to provide the indispensable starting point, as well as the most fertile framework, for studying the interrelationship between history and photography and it is to them that our investigation of contemporary photo-historiographic practices owes its major guidelines.

It is a paradox, observes Barthes, that "the same century invented History and Photography," the former constructing a positive memory, rid of "mythic time," the latter providing "a certain but

fugitive testimony."[4] A rather different view is held by Kracauer. Both in his interwar writings on photography and, much more extensively, in his last book, *History. The Last Things Before the Last*, written in the 1960s, he underlines the intimate connection between photography and history. "Daguerre's invention," he points out, "raised issues and demands similar to those which played so large a role in contemporary historiography." More specifically, the realistic claims of the first photographers coincided with Ranke's desire to show "wie es eigentlich gewesen" – "how things actually were"[5]; what, in effect, subsequently became the rallying cry of the emergent "scientific history." In other words, at the same time photography was perceived and advertised as "heliography," the automatic inscription of space on the photographic plate with the help of sunlight, historiography strived after "the photography of time."[6]

During the 19th century, then, the establishment of historiography as a systematic discipline which, based on the critical use of sources and documents, proceeds to reconstruct the objective truth of the past has evolved in parallel with the establishment of photography as the most accurate and credible medium for visually recording and documenting the real. In the context of the era's prevailing naive realism, photography and historiography were both taken to be equally objective, impersonal, and authentic ways of representing the real. Their verisimilitude was founded upon their common technology of production, i.e. upon their referential apparatus, their organization as systems of citing the real. In the case of photography, this was guaranteed by the photochemical process of picture taking. In the case of historiography, it was embodied in the construction of the historical narrative as a network of references to records, documents, and testimonies.

A. The Photograph/Document

Photography was, therefore, present in historical discourse long before it became technically feasible to become actually grafted on to it. Not surprisingly, in the 20th century when historians began to include photographs in their books, they did not approach them with the critical circumspection and interpretative attentiveness they applied to other kinds of written or verbal documents. Taking photographs as factual statements, as eye-witnesses to past events, historians did not feel obliged "to question, or for that matter to corroborate, the picture's authenticity, to inquire into its provenance, or to speculate on why some figures are there and others… are not," and went so far as to forget even the fundamental rules of their trade, "such as asking the name of the photographer, the circumstances in which the picture was taken, or its date."[7] In this way, the confluence of historical discourse and photography in the pages of a typical history textbook assumed the form of an ideal complicity. Used as an illustration of the historical narrative, the photograph is sentenced to silence, its own discourse muted by an explanatory caption consisting of a declarative, epigrammatic "here it is." On the other hand, because of its use as almost co-substantial to the historical event, as an unmediated depiction of history, the photograph effectively supplements and simultaneously ratifies the historical narrative's claim of being a discursive picture of the past. Hence, the historiographical presumption of transparency and

panoramic breadth interweaves ideally with the photorealistic rhetoric of obviousness and self-evidence.

Notwithstanding their novelty in eschewing the prerogative of verbal narrative and highlighting the story-telling ability of photographs, the recent wave of photographic histories is the most flagrant and consummate manifestation of the above practice. In publications such as Richard Stolley and Tony Chiu's *Our Century in Pictures* (2000), Terry Burrows's *Visual History of the Twentieth Century* (1999), Clifton Daniel's *20th Century Day by Day* (2000), as well as similar volumes published by *TIME*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *New York Times*, the long tradition of uncritical use of photographs as direct representations of history reaches its apogee. The title of the *National Geographic*'s volume, *Eyewitness to the 20th Century*, is typical of the claim all these publications make of being windows on the past and epitomizes the naive photorealistic epistemology which permeats them.

Both scholarly history books, which use few, if any, photographs, and popular publications described above, which invert the customary ratio of verbal to visual text, treat photography as a historical document of unquestionable veracity and authority, so much so that its character as a source is completely suppressed. "We do not have a way, as we would when making use of a manuscript or printed source, of putting quotation marks, metaphorically speaking, around old photographs; nor, even if we are using them to pursue an argument, of footnoting and referencing them," wrote Raphael Samuel, and the situation has not changed drastically in the decade that has elapsed since.[8] In his recently published overview of the historiographical uses of images, Peter Burke ascertains that "criticism of visual documents continues to be underdeveloped."[9] Although he furnishes considerable evidence suggesting that the present generation of historians is not as "visually illiterate," as Samuel thought of his contemporaries, the continued use of photographic images on the basis of a naïve (photo)realism leads Burke to stress that "the testimony of images, just like that of texts, poses issues of context, function, rhetoric, memory, mediation, etc."[10] Moreover, if photography is to be raised out of the sub-semiotic status to which it has been reduced within the photorealistic tradition and its semiotic intensity, density, and complexity are to be recognized and appropriately explored, it must not be approached "just like" any other kind of document. As Hayden White points out, analyzing images "requires a mode of reading rather different from that which has developed for the reading of written documents," since it presupposes knowledge of the grammar and the syntax of visual discourse.[11]

The epistemological implications of photographic images in the historical narrative are not exhausted, however, in a discussion of the precautions, the analytical and interpretative procedures required to make these images valid and fertile sources of information. Historians must stop using photographs as windows onto the past and, instead, approach them in a methodical, critical, and interpretative way. Exclusive emphasis on the critical and visual skills they should develop concerning photographs can, however, be construed as merely extending the methodological prescriptions of positivist historiography. Such stress fails to address the singularity of the photo-

graph as a historical resource, in other words, its intrinsic semantic polyvalence, its unique ability to bring the complex, contradictory and perspectival nature of historical experience into relief. On account of these attributes the photograph is, potentially, the historical narrative's most uneasy and unpredictable partner, capable of undermining its claim of constructing definitive images of the past and questioning its interpretative authority. The epistemological relationship forged between historical discourse and photographic image by positivist historiography, in which each underwrites and reinforces the realist claims of the other, is, therefore, inherently unstable, constantly in danger of the deconstructive ramifications of the photographic image. In addition, then, to extending historical literacy to include visual critical skills as well, we need to reconsider the historian's fundamental terms of engagement with the photographic image, and specifically, the epistemological prerogative of discourse over image. Just as we reject the photorealistic presumption of the photographic image's extra-discursive character, we should deny the meta-discursive privileges customarily attributed to historical discourse over the image. Text and image must be placed instead in a dialogic interaction, where neither text nor image hold exclusively all the questions or all the answers, but each interrogates the other, becoming alternately part of the question and part of the answer, in the endless interplay of question and answer which forms the interpretive process.

B. The Photograph/Relic

The most rapidly growing category of photographic histories are not chronicles, as have been examined above, but memoirs. Much more parochial in scope, these photographic histories seem to be closely tied to both the recent surge of interest in local history and the equally recent shift from grand-scale national histories to small-scale community memories. Typical examples of this kind of publication are Francis Frith's multi-volume series of *Photographic Memories*, in which he devotes each volume to some English region or town and the many different titles published in the *Images of America* (Arcadia Press) or *Britain in Pictures* (Bracken Press) series.

The basic characteristic of this category of photographic histories is sentimentalizing the past, making it exotic. Using mainly old, black and white photographs, these histories are permeated with a powerful nostalgia for "lost time," a past represented as absolutely distinct from the present. The titles of Eric Midwinter's books, *Yesterdays: The Way We Were, 1919-39* (1998) and *Yesterdays: Our Finest Hours, 1939-53* (2001) clearly express the prevailing mood of these publications. This kind of popular historicism reflecting the characteristic tendency of postmodern culture for nostalgia and retrospection can be found in a wide variety of media and contexts: Sunday newspaper supplements, photographic exhibitions and collections, school projects, advertisements, etc. Its logic, as Samuel points out, is dominated by the juxtaposition of "then" and "now," rather than the traditional historical narrative presentation of events leading from "before" to "after." The photographs are selected and used "for their aura of pastness," presenting the past not as the prelude but as an alternative to the present, "a reverse picture of the way we live now."[12] The past is idealized by presenting its faded photographic remains as proof of an irrev-

ocably lost simplicity and innocence. In this, essentially postmodern version of the pastoral genre, old photographs serve as melancholic remains of an idyllic past, provoking the same kind of emotions that the ruins of classical antiquity inspired to the Grand Tour travellers of yesteryear.

This effective fetishization of the old, black-and-white photographs, seems to go against the grain of Benjamin's diagnosis of the anti-ritualistic effects of photographic technology. For him, it was only the photographic portrait, with its surrounding "cult of remembrance of loved ones, absent or dead," that offered the last refuge for the otherwise radically diminished by photographic reproduction cult value of the picture.[13] Using old, black-and-white photographs as relics, however, seems to extend this commemorative cult far beyond the range of the loved and the lost, to an incessantly growing "economy of mourning," encompassing even the furthest reaches of the wasteland of pastness. This phenomenon was first noticeable in the 1960s, when color photography made black and white photography obsolete, fostering its identification with the historically remote, or the artistic.[14] The subsequent consolidation of the cult of old photographs as veritable fossils of bygone days, is also visible in the prominence that photographic theories of the 1980s give to the thanatographical aspect of photography.[15] Christian Metz, in fact, went so far as to suggest that the frequent use of photography for commemorative functions derives from its intrinsically fetishistic character.[16] In the era of digital technology, the cultic status of old black-and-white photographs was further intensified, accompanied this time with their wholesale aestheticization. In the contemporary critical condemnation of digital photography for being a fictionalizing rather than a representational technology and in the simultaneous popular perception of old, black-and-white photographs as authentic remains of the past we find the same nostalgia for a past, idyllic time when images were honest, simple and true.

Noting the danger of fetishizing the old, black-and-white photographs as early as the interwar period, Kracauer suggests that "in order to make history appear, the simple, surface coherence of photography must be destroyed."[17] We find the same emphasis on destruction as a prerequisite for historical knowledge in Benjamin, for whom historiography should not merely pick its object from the continuum of historical succession, nor fasten on it, but blast it out of the reified "continuity of history," spring it loose from the order of succession.[18] This destructive moment must form an integral dimension of every non-fetishizing and anti-mythologizing historiographical use of photography. Only by breaking down the smooth, continuous surface of the photographic image, by disarticulating its apparent unity and coherence, can we hope to succeed in detaching it from the space-time continuum and the mist of nostalgia and reunite it with extra-photographic space and time, in other words, with its history and with history itself.

A similar approach to photography forms the radical kernel of John Heartfield's photomontages.[19] Most of the accounts of Heartfield's work has tended to focus on the principle of provocative re-assembling, neglecting to appreciate the equally provocative and logically preceding procedure of systematic dis-assembling, of the systematic destruction, in other words, of the coherence and autonomy of the photographic image. In dis-assembling, as much in re-assembling, every

photograph is always revealed to already be a montage, a composite of visual codes and relations – perceptible or imperceptible – and discourses – conscious or subconscious.

C. The Photograph as "History from Below"

In photographic histories such as Bruce Bernard's *Century* (1999) and Nick Yapp's seven volume series, *Decades of the 20th Century* (1998) we find a different use of photography. In contrast with the photographic chronicles of the century discussed above, we do not see here the regularly publicized, iconic pictures most of us know. Bernard's selection of 1,000 pictures and the more than 3,000 pictures selected by Yapp focus on everyday life and people, on different aspects of material and cultural life, on the social heterogeneity of historical experience. In effect, this constructs a history "from below," an essentially "popular" history. These two photographic histories are inspired by the same desire that motivated many of the practitioners of new social history back in the 1970s to use photographs systematically: to make visible what was hitherto invisible in the context of official historiography; to give "names and faces to the until then anonymous crowd – the 'masses'" and thus escape from the traditionally exclusive focus on the public sphere, on the glorious arena of world-historical events and personalities, bringing to the fore "what we call 'common people' and 'everyday life.'"[20]

Using photography to construct a history "from below" seems to vindicate what Kracauer considered to be the essential characteristic of the reality captured by the photographic camera: all the tangible, undetermined universe of the everyday life-world, which contains "the inanimate objects, the faces, crowds, people who mingle, suffer and hope… life in its fullness… as we experience it."[21] Focussing on the everyday experiences of anonymous, common people helps form an alternative historical knowledge no longer based on the abstract, annalistic memory of history's timetables or archival memory, but on the lived, popular memory. The major shortcomings of this kind of photo-history are the same as those with which both new social history and the common ancestor of all such projects, the documentary photography (and cinema) of the interwar years, have been charged:

First, the photographs are presented as being equivalent to live history, direct and authentic experience, the past "as it was." Both Bernard's and Yapp's predilection for pictures with an unstaged, informal, candid-camera kind of feel is symptomatic of their effort to create a sense of immediacy, intimacy, and authenticity. This sense is reinforced by the unfamiliar, pristine, never-before-seen quality of the photographs they chose. Taking the value and meaning of these photographs as documents for granted, they establish another iconography, alternative to the dominant, but equally shadowed by an unproblematic equivalence to historical truth.

Second, the meta-narrative of overcoming war, misery, and oppression dominates both the tone of the accompanying text and the choice and sequence of the photographs. In both Yapp's and Bernard's book the photographs are enveloped within a highly elaborate textual framework that determines their meaning. An introduction explains the book's principles and aims; short pas-

sages open every chapter; captions explain and, more significantly, interpret the event or moment shown in each photograph. In addition to including a detailed historical background for each photograph, Bernard has a section he calls "Contemporary Voices," consisting of extracts from various texts written at the time the photographs were taken, thereby providing a particularly potent means of contextualizing them and determining their reception. The meta-narrative informing both these projects is neatly expressed in the subtitle of Bernard's book: "One hundred years of human progress, regression, suffering and hope."[22]

D. Photography in Modern Historical Culture

We have so far identified three basic kinds of photo-history. In the first, photographs have a clear, straightforward value as witnesses to historical fact. Professional historians tend to supplement their narratives with photographs for the same reason tourists bring home photographic souvenirs: proof of their journey to the past; evidence of their visit to sights. The popular versions of this practice may be seen, in this light, as the truest descendants of 19th century panoramas and dioramas, offering, as they had, "an immense 'point of view,'" giving their audience "the impression of being at the heart of an imposing representation,"[23] the spectacle of history itself! The second kind consists of photographs-relics, before which we are asked, from the perspective of an "after" synonymous with loss and disaster, to indulge in the bitter-sweet reminiscence of time past, to participate in the pathos of ritual commemoration. The third kind is characterized by the predominance of photographs of people who are not normally visible, photographs that suggest history as a *theatrum mundis*, the tragedy and comedy of human life governed by some universal providential principle. As do their politically committed predecessors, these self-consciously anti-photo-histories aspire to serve as an alternative public sphere. These three kinds of photo-history far from exhaust the influences photography exercises upon how we think about history.

Photography is neither a recording apparatus nor a medium of representation of incidental interest for historians. In light of Kracauer's observation about the ties between early photography and historicism, we need to consider photography as an integral part of the rise and evolution of modern historical culture. Photography is part of the modern apparatus of technologies, institutions, and practices involved in representing, remembering, and administrating the past – along with such things as museums, monuments, archives, commemorative rituals, and national narratives. As Peter Burke points out, widening the interests of contemporary historiography into such areas as the history of mentalities, of everyday and material life, and of the body would not have been possible without making extensive use of visual documents,[24] among which, we should add, the most crucial category is photographic images. This is because photography, much more than simply providing an additional kind of source-material for the past, radically modified both our powers and our habits of perception. This is precisely the meaning of Benjamin's insight that the camera "introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses."[25] By "unconscious optics" Benjamin meant the totality of that substratum of behavioral patterns and practices, social codes, and rituals that comprise the usually unnoticed, and hence

effectively invisible, form and fabric of everyday social action and interaction. A similar view was held by Kracauer, who claimed that photographic images make possible the "redemption" of physical reality, i.e. re-claiming from oblivion into presence, into consciousness, of the contingent world of material and cultural objects, of the teeming multitude that comprises all those seemingly unimportant, inconspicuous minutae of the life-world.[26]

The historiographic turn referred to by Burke, consequently, is not simply aided by the photographic archive, but is itself, at least to a significant degree, the result of the growth of photographic culture and, more specifically, of the increasing availability of the past in the form of photographs. We must take this development into account in order to explain the much more wide-ranging shift of contemporary historical culture from the historical to the remembered and the commemorative noted by Pierre Nora.[27] The huge popularity of the photographic histories discussed above as well as the centrality of old photographs in the modern practices of collecting, commemorating, and preserving heritage,[28] demonstrate that photography has been both a critical catalyst for and, quite often, the object itself of the "commemorative bulimia" which, according to Nora, characterizes the postmodern era.[29]

For the generations before photography, history was synonymous with ruins. From the middle of the 19th century, however, the nascent modernist consciousness perceives and apprehends history primarily through photographs. What has been collected, since then, as historical traces, like the relics and debris collected by 18th century tourists, are photographs. In the 20th century, and above all, in the post-war period, the knowledge and experience of history is mainly mediated by photographs. In contrast to fluctuating aesthetic values in the field of visual arts, the fundamental and perhaps the only indelible value of each photograph is the time elapsed since it was taken. This is the source of every photograph's essential and ineradicable aura, which only increases with age: in what it shows, even when it has stopped functioning as a souvenir, as an image of some familiar people, place, or event; the passing of time. In contrast to what the photo-historiographic practices we examined seem to suggest, however, photographs do not represent history, they represent *in* history. They form part of history, are part of the way we make sense of and give form to history. Moreover, they make history and, above all, they make us all historians by confronting us with the question of the meaning of the past and our relation to it. From this point of view, photography has made a unique contribution to the development of the reflexive and polycentric character of contemporary historical culture.

In recent years, more and more historians have seemed to heed Benjamin's warning that "the past can be seized only as an image," an image that threatens to disappear irretrievably if it "is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns."[30] The rapidly expanding use of photography for historiographical purposes and its extensive use by a variety of social, cultural, and political agents have instigated a systematic reflection about personal and collective history. Every photographic collection, from the family album to various community, professional, political, trade-unionist, administrative or museum archives, has become the linchpin for constructing

a multitude of either personal or collective narratives and identities. The basic factor common for all these has been bringing the "optical unconscious," the systematically unseen, disregarded dimensions of our cultural environment into full view. This is why the visual field, the field of visual representation, has become the combat zone par excellence for modernity. In this sense, modern history is inherently visual. It is, we might say, photographic even before we constitute it as such.

Today classical or analogue photography seems to be passing into history, quickly becoming a photograph of its past presence, while historiography itself is going through a crisis. Lest we forget, the most common kind of photo-history is the historical narrative, which, although perhaps not including a single photograph, is presented as a photograph. The post-photographic era will also be a post-historiographic era as well; the revelation of the optical unconscious made possible by the photographic media and further intensified by the post-photographic media will be accompanied by simultaneous revelation of the historical unconscious. Perhaps this is the era in which, precisely because every photographer functions as a kind of historian, historians themselves must – to recall Benjamin's emphatic admonishment to the writers of his day – "take up photography."[31]

[1] For some characteristic formulations of this position see Vilem Flusser, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*. London: Reaktion Books, 2000; Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," in Hal Foster (ed.), *Postmodern Culture*. London: Pluto Press, 1985, pp. 111-25, and Jean Baudrillard, *The Evil Demon of Images*. Sydney: Power Institute Publications, 1987.

[2] See William J. Mitchell, *The Reconfigured Eye: Visual Truth in the Post-Photographic Era.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992.

[3] For an extensive presentation and discussion of Benjamin's and Kracauer's ideas on the interrelationship between photography and historiography, see the excellent studies by Eduardo Cadava, *Words of Light. Theses on the Photography of History*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997 and Dagmar Barnouw, *Critical Realism. History, Photography and the Work of Siegfried Kracauer*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.

[4] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida. Reflections on Photography*. NewYork: Hill & Wang, 1981, p. 93.

[5] Siegfried Kracauer, *History. The Last Things Before the Last*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1969, p. 49.

[6] Siegfried Kracauer, "Photography," *Critical Inquiry* 19 (2), 1993, p. 425.

[7] Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*. London and New York: Verso, 1994, p. 329.

[8] Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, p. 329.

[9] Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing. The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*. London: Reaktion Books, 2001, p. 15.

[10] Burke, *Eyewitnessing*, p. 15.

[11] Hayden White, "Historiography and Historiophoty," *American Historical Review* 93 (5), 1988, p. 1193.

[12] Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, p. 322.

[13] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*. London: Fontana, 1973, p. 228.

[14] In the same period, the ascent of color film in the field of cinema led to establishing the still widely used narrative convention of using black-and-white film for "flashbacks," i.e. to represent events that long precede the events of the story.

[15] See, for example, Philippe Dubois, *L' acte photographique*. Paris and Brussels: Nathan and Labor, 1983 and Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida,*1981.

[16] Christian Metz, "Photography and Fetish," in Carol Squiers (ed.), *The Critical Image*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990, pp. 155-164.

[17] Kracauer, "Photography," p. 427.

[18] Walter Benjamin, "On the Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress," in *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, 1999, pp. 474-5 (N9a, 6/N1a,1 & N1a,3).

[19] Just as it does for all those contemporary artists who, under the influence of Heartfield's work, utilize the more recent digital technologies, such as Esther Parada, Nancy Burson, Pedro Meyer, Roshini Kempadoo, etc.

[20] Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, pp. 319-320.

[21] Kracauer, *History*, p. 58.

[22] See also, in this context, the prevalence of a similar metanarrative in the documentary series, *The People's Century* (1997, BBC).

[23] Laurent Mannoni, *The Great Art of Light and Shadow. Archaeology of the Cinema*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000, p. 176.

[24] Burke, *Eyewitnessing*, p. 9.

[25] Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," p. 239.

[26] Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1960, chap. 3, "The Establishment of Physical Existence."

[27] Pierre Nora, "General Introduction: Between Memory and History," in *Realms of Memory. Vol. I: Conflicts and Divisions*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

[28] See e.g. Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, part V, "Old Photographs."

[29] Pierre Nora, "The Era of Commemoration," in *Realms of Memory. Vol. III: Symbols*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988, p. 609.

[30] Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*. London: Fontana, 1973, p. 257.

[31] Walter Benjamin, "The Author as a Producer," in *Selected Writings* vol. 2, 1927-1934. Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, 1999, p. 775.