

Secular Icons

*Looking at Photographs from Nazi Concentration Camps**

CORNELIA BRINK

Few photographs have become as well known as those taken by British and American army photographers during the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps in what was then the German Reich in 1945. Wagons full of corpses in Dachau; half-dead and sick survivors in the small camp at Buchenwald; hundreds of dead bodies lined up in front of the ruined buildings at Nordhausen; open mass graves at Bergen-Belsen. The American writer Susan Sontag remembered her first encounter with this photographic inventory of ultimate horror as “negative epiphany,” “the prototypically modern revelation.”¹ Ever since then it seemed plausible to her to divide her life into two parts: into the time before she saw those photographs at the age of twelve and the time after.

Since they were taken and first published, these pictures have been reprinted countless times, and one receives the impression that the same photographs have been reproduced over and over again (although the archives contain numerous frames that are very little known to this day). The photographs of the liberation have long become part of the Western countries’ collective visual memory. They mostly impress themselves on our sentiments and conjure up a threatening, mute and nameless sense of “once upon a time.” Then as now they set off strong emotional reactions, of shock and terror, of compassion as well as rejection. Usually the pictures are accepted as straightforward and unambiguous reality, not as a specific photographic rendering of that reality open to analysis. More

than other photographs they make a moral claim to be accepted without questioning. They stand for the inhumanity of National Socialism, for an “image,” an idea of the system of concentration and extermination camps. They also stand for Auschwitz—as the most extreme expression as well as the central element of National Socialist ideology and extermination practice: the mass murder of the European Jews organized by the state and carried out with bureaucratic efficiency on the basis of a social division of labor.

Relics of the camps—barbed wire, entrance gate, watch towers, barracks, the crematories’ chimneys—and photographed scenes not only became new symbols for something hitherto unknown and unimaginable; they also structure our view of contemporary atrocities. “The scenes portrayed,” writes historian Robert Abzug,

have attained almost mythic status in a world more and more used to seeing violence every day in full color, live or on videotape, from every corner of the world. It is as if in the spring of 1945 the world lost a certain innocence, and the pictorial remains of that passage have become the leitmotivs for our reactions to all that we are presented. We see pictures of Biafra, Bangladesh, Vietnam, or even the freak catastrophe of Jonestown, but what we feel was learned by facing the camps.²

Pictures from prison camps in former Yugoslavia showing emaciated men behind barbed wire strikingly resemble the images from 1945.³ During the civil war in Rwanda, Gilles Peress photographed bulldozers scooping piles of corpses into mass graves like those at Bergen-Belsen.⁴

The photographs of Nazi concentration camps have become icons. Nowadays the term is frequently used for these and other popular pictures without there being a clear idea of what makes them icons. In this article I link the term to its historical framework of use and refer to the religious cult images of Orthodox Christianity. I am interested in identifying the precise analogies—or lack of such analogies—between the well-known concentration camp photographs and icons. My intention, however, is not to elevate my subject to a religious plane. Religiously inspired terms such as cult, ritual, symbol or icon are currently *en vogue* in the field of cultural studies, and I do not want to join this trend

without reservations either. For me, the term icon is a key to illustrating the complexities involved in dealing with concentration camp photographs. These photographs *are not* icons, but they are regarded as such. The context of my reflections is provided by the question how these photographs have been published and received in Germany, the successor state to the Nazi regime, since the time when they were taken. In the United States and Israel, in other Western and Eastern European countries, another history of these photographs and their functions within collective memory would have to be written.⁵

PICTURES THAT MAKE HISTORY

In the case of photographs the analogy with icons may appear strange at first because we are used to viewing them in political and educational, but not religious, categories, as documentary evidence and not as cult images. In colloquial language the photographs that are nowadays called icons are those that “made history,” usually in the very broad sense that they are widely disseminated and immediately recognizable. Apart from the photographs of the piles of corpses and the half-dead survivors of concentration camps, such photographs would include the images of Kim Phuc Phan Ti, the little Vietnamese girl fleeing from American napalm attacks in 1972, the hoisting of the red flag on top of the Berlin Reichstag in 1945, and the photograph of Neil Armstrong taking his first step on the moon in 1969.

Photography historian Vicky Goldberg uses the term “secular icon” for photographs with intense symbolic impact:

I take secular icons to be representations that inspire some degree of awe—perhaps mixed with dread, compassion, or aspiration—and that stand for an epoch or a system of beliefs. Although photographs easily acquire symbolic significance, they are not merely symbolic, they do not merely allude to something outside themselves ... for photographs intensely and specifically represent their subjects. But the images I think of as icons almost instantly acquired symbolic overtones and larger frames of reference that endowed them with national or even worldwide significance. They

concentrate the hopes and fears of millions and provide an instant and effortless connection to some deeply meaningful moment in history. They seem to summarize such complex phenomena as the powers of the human spirit or of universal destruction.⁶

Among others, Goldberg gives the examples of portraits of Mao Tse-tung and Che Guevara, and the photographs of the testing of the atomic bomb on the Bikini atoll and of the American occupation of the Japanese island, Iwo Jima.

Meanwhile, the term icon is more and more frequently associated with pictures of the Nazi concentration and extermination camps.⁷ It is applied to photographs and films of individual camps such as Bergen-Belsen and Auschwitz, which possess “great symbolizing power,” as well as to photographs of the extermination camps in general. The physical remnants of the extermination camps—the death ramp in Auschwitz-Birkenau, the decaying barracks and crematories—and the murdered people’s personal belongings—the piles of glasses and suitcases, their hair—all these are also regarded as “icons of extermination,” remnants, that is, “in which the past is represented but which for many visitors seems to be immediately present.”⁸

Occasionally photographic “icons of terror” are distinguished explicitly from “documentary images” of the liberation, and the only pictures of dead concentration camp victims that are classified as icons are those that provide no hint of any specific time and place and “anonymize” human beings, depriving them of their individuality as much as possible and placing them within aesthetic pictorial traditions.⁹

The uses of the term I have quoted differ from one another in their specifics. They all, however, suppose that the photograph as icon, apart from its great popularity, has a special emotional impact on the observer, which some authors recognize in its presumed authenticity and/or power to symbolize. But the term icon is more appropriate than its common usage suggests.

SECULAR ICONS

The Greek word *eikon*, the etymological root of icon, simply means picture, image in the broadest sense. Originally memorial images for deceased persons akin to Egyptian mummy portraits, icons were honored by early Christians and later by the Eastern Orthodox Church as cult images. These pictures, which according to legend were not created by human hands, were regarded as authentic copies of the “original images” of Christ, the Virgin Mary, the saints or biblical scenes. A fair copy would keep the “true form” of the holy images. There seemed to be a direct causal relationship between the copy and the original image; the physical matter retained elements of the *numen*, the invisible divine. Their significance went beyond the subject represented and symbolized the heavenly sphere. Through icons, believers visualized the objects depicted.¹⁰

Authenticity

Like no other historical source, the photo is commonly—and not just in popular use—associated with authenticity, i.e. as having a special affinity to reality. In particular, the knowledge of the technical process of production secures special credibility for the photograph as an optical medium of storage—as if the camera recorded objectively, uninfluenced by its user, the object or scene before its lens. With metaphors like the “pencil of nature” (W. H. F. Talbot) or the “trace of light,” which physical and chemical processes leave on the photographic paper, photography theorists have attempted to grasp the peculiar way in which photographs captivate those who look at them. The objects depicted, some argue, are not re-presented, but they themselves leave traces, imprints, rays of light emanating from the object and stored on a surface sensitive to light. For the French literary scholar Roland Barthes, photography is “an emanation of the referent.”

From a real body, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me....
I am delighted (or depressed) to know that the thing of the past,
by its immediate radiations (its luminances), has really touched the

surface which in its turn my gaze will touch.... [In this way] the photographed body touches me with its own rays.¹¹

Barthes is well aware of the fact that he is thus ascribing outright magical qualities to photography: “Perhaps this amazement, this insistence reaches deep into the religious substance out of which I am formed ... photography has something to do with resurrection.” The technical process of production, which implies objectivity, on the one hand, and the magic, i.e. a specific meaning assigned to the technical process, on the other hand, are intimately connected. Like Barthes, sociologist Edgar Morin recognizes a moment of particular fascination which photographs can produce as the result of the strange presence of the depicted persons. Photographs are the successors of the small statues that were at the center of cults of the dead: “As fetish, memento, mute presence the photograph replaces or competes with relics ... [photographs], as a rearguard of memory, struggle against time, defend their shreds of living presence against oblivion, against death.”¹²

The relationship between original image and copy would accordingly be a causal one—as in the case of the icons in the Russian or Greek Orthodox Churches. While their semblance of authenticity derives from the legend that the copy contains traces of the original image which the artist has to preserve and transmit through all but identical reproductions, in the case of photography it is the production process by means of a mechanical apparatus that provides the reason. Yet, as Patrick Maynard has noted,

testimonies about “nearness,” “contact,” “emanation,” “vestige,” “trace,” “co-substantiality” and so on, register a sense that photographs of things can [obtain] a strong manifestation function as well. It is important to emphasize that they *can*; not *must*.... It will be of little interest if the subjects of a packet of vacation snaps shown to us by an acquaintance touch us (albeit only transitively) with their own rays.¹³

Symbolization

The second element that icons and photography have in common is the similarity with the original: their reality as symbol. Like the particular semblance of authenticity, this reality primarily lies in the significance attached to photographs by those individuals or groups for whom they symbolize something. When they are understood as symbols, icons as well as certain photographs claim to condense complex phenomena and represent history in exemplary form. They create an immediate and effortless connection to particularly significant historical moments and open up spaces which would otherwise remain inaccessible. As Detlef Hoffmann has explained:

Every photograph isolates, it cuts a moment and a place out of the continuum of time and space. Through artistic translation it can enhance and direct the symbolizing power of the subject. The part may then stand for something more, perhaps for the whole, and thus gains a wider, larger meaning than the photographed object actually had or may have had.¹⁴

In a photograph of a concentration camp as symbol, a specific interpretation of history finds expression. The political philosopher Hannah Arendt, who emigrated from Nazi Germany to the United States in the 1930s, remarked:

It is of some importance to realize that all pictures of concentration camps are misleading insofar as they show the camps in their last stages, at the moment the Allied troops marched in. There were no death camps in Germany proper, and at that point all extermination equipment had already been dismantled. On the other hand, what provoked the outrage of the Allies most and what gives the films [as well as the photographs—C.B.] their special horror—namely, the sight of the human skeletons—was not at all typical for the German concentration camps; extermination was handled systematically by gas, not by starvation. The condition of the camps was a result of the war events during the final months....¹⁵

In Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald and Dachau the piles of corpses remained because the crematories in the overcrowded camps collapsed during the chaotic final months. In working concentration camps the dead were cremated right away.

The pictures of piled-up corpses and half-starved survivors in their striped prison clothes from the final phase of the camps, however, represent the reality of the camps per se until today. The men and women depicted stand for all the victims, especially the murdered European Jews; the photographs even stand for National Socialism and its crimes in general; finally, since crimes always produce guilt, they stand for the concrete guilt of those responsible or a—mostly diffuse—sense of guilt in the viewer.

Canonization

As in the case of Orthodox cult images, the supposed authentic photograph becomes typified as soon as it is shown over and over again. Indeed, the reproduction and distribution of photographic icons has served all kinds of purposes—political as well as juridical, educational or scientific. It might be assumed that the preservation of these images of horror within the collective memory has been successful, that they have been canonized like icons (the third analogy). They have been reproduced countless times, at first in newspapers and on posters, in brochures and films, and later in exhibitions, textbooks, scholarly publications and popular photography books as well. Steven Spielberg based certain scenes in his successful film *Schindler's List* on the photographs, and in Art Spiegelman's *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* we find concentration camp photographs as a comic strip. This adherence to a limited number of photographs from the concentration camps appears outright compulsive: *déjà vu*. These photographs have long become icons, in the minds of younger viewers as much as in those of older ones who saw them for the first time in 1945. One recognizes them and thinks that recognizing them implies understanding what they represent. Thus the force of the pictures has been alleviated and attenuated over time—an indirect sign that the original materials are hardly likely to endure.

The photographs, however, are not only shaped by reality (however that reality is perceived), but molded by the reality of pictures as well: they are part of a general pictorial canon. In Hoffmann's words:

We must be aware of the process of citation, adaptation, and allusion if we want to understand the ways in which pictures, especially photographs from the camps, enter visual memory... Only by becoming pictures which can be integrated into an existing, although continually changing pictorial archive, the catastrophic events can be remembered and may even become part of society's memorial canon.¹⁶

I have already noted that the scenes of 1945 are latently present whenever photographs or films of people behind barbed wire or piles of corpses are shown in Europe, the United States or Israel today. Conversely, some photographic depictions of the camps imitate postures with a long pictorial tradition. The frame of a naked man with the "loincloth" in the barrack at Buchenwald, for example, reminds us of older Christian images of the Man of Sorrows, Christ crucified with the stigmata and the instruments of his torment, or as "God and man" simultaneously, as a living dead—an image which stands for the Passion in general. The photographer may not have intended the Christian interpretation of the conditions he encountered at Buchenwald, but "the visual motif carries its interpretation, its frame of reference with it, exemplifies sacrifice and redemption. Human beings are represented as a group that can be killed, but not defeated—and through this process they gather strength from the past and are provided with an example for the future."¹⁷ The Jews, however—the majority of those imprisoned and killed—would hardly identify with this interpretation of history.

Showing and veiling

Siegfried Kracauer has suggested that "[w]hen we see—and that means: experience—the piles of tormented human bodies in films about Nazi concentration camps, we redeem the horrible from its invisibility behind the veils of panic and imagination."¹⁸ If we analyze more closely how these pictures have been used since the time they were taken, the

opposite seems to be true as well. While they do keep something visible—the depicted object as well as the history of its perception—at the same time looking at these photographs reproduced over and over again weaves the veil of fear and imagination ever more tightly. These pictures have pushed themselves between ourselves and reality like a “protective layer.”¹⁹ The visible makes us blind.

Out of this combination of showing and disguising we can construct a fourth and final analogy between the ways in which concentration camp photographs and religious cult images work. The icon’s place is the pictorial wall, separating the altar from other parts of the church. The pictorial wall presents Christ and the saints to the believers while at the same time it hides the chancel behind it from their view. Even if the religious connotations of the icon are still effective in the photographs—the “belief,” for example, in the photograph’s power of pure denotation—a very sharp distinction has to be made here as well. The invisible element of the icon is something that is not produced but metaphysically presupposed. What photographs represent, however, is purely from this world—even though the depicted object seems to suggest otherwise. There is no absolute “evil” equivalent to the “inner sanctum” which the icon wall represents and hides—no “evil” which could be illustrated in the photographs from concentration or extermination camps. Such a “negative theology” of Auschwitz would be nothing more than an attempt to create meaning where no meaning can be discerned. “Auschwitz is the source of the universalization of fear—the name stands for the suspicion that the individual is worthless, that nothing and nobody will come to help him.”²⁰ This, however, is hard to endure. The longing for meaning finds an expression in the perception of concentration camp photographs as “icons.”

The deeds in the camps confront the viewer with a reality that cannot be grasped spontaneously. “The person forced to look at the mass murder and the piles of corpses must force himself to transform the immediate perception of the cold death of thousands and thousands into a consciousness of the coherent whole.”²¹ In fact, looking at these pictures paralyzes us and makes us fall silent. The result is often a remarkable “inviolability” which seems to preclude a detailed pictorial analysis and only seldom leads to questions concerning the origins and use of the photographs. A picture, so the saying goes, is worth a

thousand words. But this kind of alleged immediacy—of reality’s photographic representation as well as of the emotions it creates—soon turns out to be a myth. The act of falling silent before these photographs reproduces this myth as much as the constant use of the same pictures as symbols for the “entire” history of the camps and National Socialism.

ON THE RECEPTION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHIC “ICONS” IN GERMANY

The pictures from 1945 have been and still are viewed as “icons of extermination” in many countries. Only an analysis of the photographs within the specific contexts in which they have been published will reveal which memories they preserve, which they curtail, what different meanings they assign to the events, what kind of knowledge they transmit and how meanings change over longer periods of time. The “inviolability” of the photographic icons always corresponded to specific strategies of using them, and always the numbness has been accompanied by superior eloquence. From the beginning, viewers have integrated the pictures into their perceptions of the events and questioned them accordingly.

What the public actually sees when presented with these photographs is the result of several stages of reception. At first there is the picture as a picture; then it is viewed through different systems of thoughts and arguments, each of which has approached the photograph with its own specific interests and which overlie one another in various strata. A photograph is not always the same: its impact depends on the accompanying comment as well as on the place where it is confronted. Which questions are the photographs supposed to answer, which arguments to support, which effects do they produce in whom? The answers are also influenced by the point in time at which the photograph is viewed. A person looking at photographs from the concentration camps today will not for the most part be able to relate what he or she sees to his or her own experiences in the way that a liberated inmate, a member of the SS or a sentry in the camp or a bystander would. Last but not least, therefore, the photographs tell us about the needs of those who took them and look at them. The camera and the hand pointing

out something work in similar ways. While one finger is pointing at the object, the scene, the person, three fingers point back at the pointer.

The ways in which photographs are used hints at the expected viewer and his/her involvement in the events. In the Federal Republic of Germany they are mostly regarded as *memento mori* for the anonymous victims—without much thought being given to the humiliating way in which those victims are often depicted. They document the consequences of violence but save the viewer the sight of killing and being killed. For the majority of National Socialist society (and even for their posterity) the pictures served as an *alibi*. They show who was present at the time and scene of the crime and who was not. They remove the events to vaguely defined places and show a picture of human brutality from which the majority of the population could distance itself. But the alibi cannot hold for long. As catalysts of memory, the pictures from the concentration camps not only preserve the past, they threaten the memory through the history which they represent. Whenever the photographs from the camps are discussed in the Federal Republic, the subject of guilt comes up. People reject the notion of collective guilt of which the Allies accused the Germans when first releasing the pictures, but which they dropped very soon afterwards. In German collective memory, however, the accusation has remained inextricably connected to the photographs until the present day.

Photographs of trusted and loved persons may promise consolation—something has survived, even if it is only in a picture. In the case of photographs of piles of corpses, the association that the photograph might hold a “trace” of those who were murdered must trigger terror and fear. The world that has been fixed photographically is not subject to transitoriness; something transcends death, the event has been preserved for eternity. This is the irrational power of photography, and it can create an eerie sense of a visual return of the dead. Because the dead themselves, so it seems, could demand settlement of the unsettled debt, the viewers tend to reject their images. The objects reproduced in the photographs are repressed and replaced by the photographs themselves. It is not the fact represented by the photographs that is rejected—the power of their authenticity has hardly ever been challenged—but their projective tendency, the moral appeal connected to them since their first publication in Germany.

In 1945, when Germans were first shown the photographs of the concentration camps, two elements were brought together which did not fit into the Germans' perception of reality. They realized that what they saw was morally wrong, but they were also called upon to identify with the morally and militarily defeated nation. The camera position invited people to identify both with the gaze of the surviving prisoners who seemed to be crying out for compassion and with the shocked or punishing gaze of the Allies. This was impossible for most Germans because on looking at the photographs they found themselves among the culprits. For the Germans, in this case, seeing was identical to being seen. It was as if they themselves had suddenly been found out. They saw the guilt and in doing so were seen to be guilty. It was too much to cope with. Their stereotypical answer was: We do not recognize ourselves in those pictures.

FINAL REMARKS

Photographs install an ordered transition from paralysis to revival.²² Forms of such revival are the ways in which photographs are used and perceived. In analyzing these forms we open up the field in which the social use, the cultural functions of photographs can be reconstructed and the pictures stripped of mythology. It is not the photograph that is lifeless "but the photographed past whose only chance consists in the use somebody has for the picture."²³ Looking at the photographs turns out to be a symptom of a continual process of making sure of one's own present. The questions that the observer directs at the photographs, the attempt to imagine what happened in the concentration and extermination camps, are triggered off by the depicted objects, but at the same time they lie beyond those objects.

The photographs represent a difficult discrepancy. On the one hand they depict the crimes themselves. The Nazis themselves carefully attempted to obliterate the traces of their crimes, destroying clear evidence of the mass extermination and murdering the witnesses. The events and our knowledge of them, however, explode our power of imagination precisely because of the monstrous character of the organizational structure, the extent and the brutality of the crimes.

Crimes of this sort demand evidence. This may be the reason why the characterization of “photographs as traces of something which actually existed” seems so convincing and why photographs of the concentration camps or pictures actually or potentially relating to the crimes in general were and still are endowed with a special power of evidence (or, for that matter, are particularly severely attacked by revisionists). On the other hand the photographs show only a fraction of the actual crimes committed. The medium’s “objectivity” continues to come into conflict with the “unreal,” the “incomprehensible” character of the events which they represent.

Hardly anyone has described more impressively the way in which precisely this “unreality” of events creates the need for pictures than writer Jorge Semprun, a survivor of the Buchenwald concentration camp. When visiting a local cinema in Switzerland in December 1945, Semprun found himself unexpectedly confronted by the Allies’ concentration camp pictures. In his book *L’Écriture ou la vie* Semprun follows the movement of the camera’s eye, penetrating the interior of a barrack, focusing on exhausted deportees, bowed on their plank beds, emaciated to the bones, staring with wide-open eyes at the intruders who brought them freedom. The camera’s eye, so the author continues, registers the movement of the US army bulldozers pushing hundreds of emaciated corpses into mass graves, it traces the slow steps of a group of deportees stumbling across a parade ground, in sunlight, to a place where food is being distributed. The pictures had been taken in Bergen-Belsen, in Mauthausen, in Dachau.

There were pictures from Buchenwald, too, which I recognized. Or rather: of which I knew for certain that they were from Buchenwald without being sure of recognizing them. Or rather without knowing for certain that I had seen them myself. Yet I had seen them. Or rather: I had experienced them. The difference between what I saw and what I had experienced was confusing.

Becoming a spectator of his own life, Semprun felt as if he were escaping from the wrenching uncertainties of memory:

As if—paradoxically at first glance—the dimension of the unreal and the fictional component, which is inherent in all cinematographic pictures, even the most documentary ones, would burden my most intimate memories with an irrefutable load of reality. On the one hand, I found myself deprived of them, but on the other I saw their reality confirmed. I had not dreamed Buchenwald.²⁴

Photographs showing the Nazi crimes have to be unequivocal—for the sake of historical truth and for the sake of memory. It is deeply confusing if these photographs, these “photographic icons,” become readable, if their meaning shifts according to the context in which they are shown and looked at. The documentary value of a photograph is not always reliable, nor is its reception just as one would like it to be. However, the ambiguity of photography does not exclude the struggle for accuracy. Both of these elements—what a photograph shows and what the viewer sees—are part of the photograph’s history.

NOTES

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1. Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, 4th ed. (New York, 1978), 19.

2. Robert Abzug, *Inside the Vicious heart* (New York, 1985), 171.

3. *Daily Mail*, 7 Aug. 1992; *Der Spiegel*, 12 Aug. 1992; *The Guardian Weekend*, 10 Apr. 1993.

4. Gilles Peress, *The Silence* (New York, 1995).

5. For the United States, see Barbie Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera’s Eye* (Chicago, 1998); Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA, 1997); Dagmar Barnouw, *Germany 1945: Views of War and Violence* (Bloomington, 1996).

6. Vicky Goldberg, *The Power of Photography: How Photographs Changed Our Lives* (New York, 1991), 135.

7. See Cornelia Brink, *Ikonen der Vernichtung: Öffentlicher Gebrauch von Fotografien aus nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslagern nach 1945* (Berlin, 1998), 233–34.

8. Peter Reichel, “Steine des Anstoßes,” in E. François, H. Siegrist and J. Vogel, eds., *Nation und Emotion* (Göttingen, 1995), 184.

9. See Manfred Tremml, "'Schreckensbilder'—Überlegungen zur Historischen Bildkunde," *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 48, no. 5/6 (1997): 279–94; Yasmin Doosry, "Vom Dokument zur Ikone: Zur Rezeption des Auschwitz-Albums," in idem, ed., *Representations of Auschwitz: Fifty Years of Photographs, Paintings, and Graphics* (Oświęcim, 1995), 95–104.

10. See Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art* (Chicago, 1996).

11. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York, 1981), 80–81.

12. Edgar Morin, *Der Mensch und das Kino* (Stuttgart, 1958), 22, 27.

13. Patrick Maynard, *The Engine of Visualization: Thinking through Photography* (Ithaca, 1997), 247, 234. See also idem, "Secular icon: Photography and the Functions of Images," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 42 (1983): 155–69.

14. Detlef Hoffmann, "Auschwitz im visuellen Gedächtnis: Das Chaos des Verbrechens und die symbolische Ordnung der Bilder," in Fritz Bauer Institut, ed., *Auschwitz: Geschichte, Rezeption und Wirkung* (Frankfurt/M., 1976), 247.

15. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York, 1958), 446.

16. Hoffmann, "Auschwitz im visuellen Gedächtnis," 229, 224.

17. *Ibid.*, 238.

18. Siegfried Kracauer, *Theorie des Films: Die Errettung der äußeren Wirklichkeit*, 2d ed. (Frankfurt/M., 1993), 396; *Theory of Film: Redemption of Physical Reality* (Princeton, 1997).

19. See Christina v. Braun, *Die schamlose Schönheit der Vergangenheit: Zum Verhältnis von Geschlecht und Geschichte* (Frankfurt/M., 1989), 118.

20. Detlev Claussen, *Grenzen der Aufklärung: Die gesellschaftliche Genese des modernen Antisemitismus*, 2d ed. (Frankfurt/M., 1994), 19.

21. *Ibid.*, 181.

22. See Herbert Hrachovec, "Fotogene Enttäuschungen," *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 43, no. 3 (1995): 457.

23. *Ibid.*, 458.

24. Jorge Semprun, *L'Écriture ou la vie* (Paris, 1994), 208–10 (my translation).