SPECTRAL EVIDENCE

The Photography of Trauma

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Introduction: Toward a Democritean Gaze

> To ask whether a photograph is analogical or coded is not a good means of analysis. The important thing is that the photograph possesses an evidential force, and that its testimony bears not on the object but on time.
> —Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*

> The gesture of photography is the search for a standpoint, for a world view: it is an ideological gesture.
> —Vilém Flusser, *Standpunkte*

This book is about photographs that force viewers to consider experiences that resist integration into larger contexts. It asks whether we can paste photography into the album of historicist understanding, as several critical approaches do. To stress the inadequacy of treating photographs as random snapshots from an imaginary continuous loop of time and life, I focus on images revealing experiences that have not been, and possibly cannot be, assimilated into such a continuous narrative. Through analyses of these photographs of events and individuals that, for various reasons, have been cast out of the forward-sweeping movement of history, I underline the urgent need for a conceptual reorientation. Only if we abandon or substantially revise the notion of history and time as inherently flowing and sequential will we recognize what we see or fail to see in these photographs.

To be sure, these images hold no revolutionary or eschatological promise to halt time. Rather, they expose as a construction the idea that history is ever-flowing and preprogrammed to produce an on-going narrative. As roadblocks to an ideology that conceives of history as an unstoppable movement forward, the photographs compel viewers to think of lived experience, time, and history from a standpoint that is truly a stand*point*: a place to think about occurrences that may fail, violently, to be fully experienced, and so integrated into larger patterns. These images, taken by scientists, artists, and amateur photographers for quite different purposes and uses,

arrest the gaze and captivate the imagination because they guarantee no way out of the photographed instant. In specific cases, this passive refusal of the image conflicts directly with the photographer's intention to cast the lived experience of time as an uninterrupted process of unfolding. I focus my analyses on this tension in order to develop ways of seeing that might be considered testimonial. All of the photographs examined in this book bring into view a striking gap between what we can see and what we know. The testimonial stance assumed here requires the strategic—though by necessity incomplete—renunciation of viewers' virtually automatic predisposition to link particular sights to familiar historical contexts and narratives. By reminding viewers that the model of history-as-narrative is a construction, the photographs in this book can visually stage experiences that would otherwise remain forgotten because they were never fully lived.

From photography's beginning in the nineteenth century to the present, critics have engaged various scanning mechanisms and theoretically anchored reading protocols to identify "historically constructed ways of seeing" in an attempt to prevent the photograph from enmeshing the viewer in the medium's illusion of a "frozen moment."[1] In the photograph, time itself seems to have been carved up and ferried, unscathed, into the viewer's present; critics don conceptual and explanatory frames like tinted lenses to master this uncanny impression, maintaining a proper emotional and cognitive distance from the subject in order to map the picture onto an epistemological grid that structures the field between viewer and photograph. The viewer is supposed to be safely grounded in the present over here, while the photograph is assumed to refer to a prior moment that can be kept safely apart over there. But photographs are unsettling. Some images bypass painstaking attempts at contextualization and deliver, straight up and apparently across the gulf of time between viewer and photographically mummified past, a potent illusion of the real. The illusion of a slice of time, as anyone who has become lost in a photograph can verify, seems to surpass what is commonly thought of as reality itself. Before we can confront the images themselves, we need to grasp theoretically how it is that photographs can seem more real than reality itself.

Certain critics have explained the photograph's impression of reality as a mere mechanical trick, an artificial and deliberately staged "effect of the real." By creating the illusion of immediacy, they argue, photographs hide the fact that the medium itself has fundamentally shaped the habits of look-

ing we employ to establish an event's veracity. In spite of this important critical debunking of photography's claim to be the most accurate, and hence most truthful, mode of representation—two separate claims that collapse into one on photography's flat surface—we continue to perceive photographs as records of what is. We might know that Trotsky was meticulously airbrushed out of a famous image of the Soviet Politburo after a Stalinist purge, that a photo of a beautiful beach has been digitally enhanced with the technical equivalent of MSG, and that a landscape shown in an advertisement was created not by nature but by binary code. Nonetheless, we relate to the depicted sights as if they were real. "Aha," we think "Stalin was actually fairly short," or "That sandy beach just swarms with blueish crabs at midday." And when we see those crabs we don't think—even though we know it—"What a clever manipulation of chemicals (or pixels)!" In spite of our knowledge, the things we see in photographs seem real to us.

> Just as the river where I step is not the same, and is, so I am as I am not.
> —Heraclitus

When we think of the reality caught in a photograph as a "slice of time" or a "frozen moment," we paste the image into a particular type of historical understanding. When viewed as frozen moments, photographs become flat, shiny squares lifted from an incessant current that surges ever forward beyond their borders. According to this understanding, photographs only artificially halt the flux of time that, in reality, carries us forward from event to event in an unstoppable stream. This is the conception of time and history as narrative, as an unfolding sequence of events, the *longue durée* of twentieth-century French historian Fernand Braudel. However, this historiographical concept dates back to a much earlier era, to the ancient Heraclitean notion of time-as-river. Heraclitus's famous metaphor occurs in a fragment I cite here in the deliberately strange translation Brooks Haxton uses to "clear away distractingly familiar language from a startling thought."

> The river where you set your foot just now is gone—those waters giving way to this, now this.[2]

Heraclitus's notion of history as a flowing river, a radical and still perplexing notion, was restricted in the nineteenth century, when major historians thought to grasp the past by channeling its events into stories of coherent, continual, consecutive epics. In keeping with this quasi-Heraclitean

model of historical time, photography can be understood as a device that mechanically freeze-frames virtual chunks of a time that is, in reality, always moving on.

> A swirl of forms of all kinds was separated off from the totality.
> —Democritus

However, because the Heraclitean conception of the world and history holds time to be always continuous, the development of automatic picture-taking in the nineteenth century—that is, the camera's ability to "stop time"—prompted considerable anxiety. The medium of photography seemed to furnish evidence—by means of magnifications, shutter speed, and lighting—that the world of appearances is not continuous, not at all flowing, not a river. Instead, it seems to reveal a world in which time is splintered, fractured, blown apart. As if to respond to the challenge produced by the invention of photography, another conception of time and history was regaining prominence. The idea of historical time as continuous was countered with a notion of history that imagines time, in a striking image, as an invisible *event*, a decisive moment that requires a new conceptual framework. Ulrich Raulff has shown that these two "incommensurate and mutually exclusive . . . notions of the nature of temporality" are really two *images*, two imagined scenarios of the way historical time happens. "Thus the conception of a 'long duration,' or a historical time that passes very slowly, must apparently be thought of in opposition to an extremely brief or explosively passing time: the *longue durée* depends on the countermodel of a fleeting moment or a suddenly erupting event."[3] The emergence of this countermodel of the "sudden event" can be traced to a particular moment in modernity that roughly coincides with the invention of photography. Walter Benjamin, in his examination of this turning point in a conceptualization of history that occurred simultaneously with the invention of photography, diagnosed it as "the end of the art of storytelling" and the overall decline of narratable history in response to modern experiences of shock.[4]

This notion of—and story about—the end of storytelling is well known. Less familiar, and highly relevant for an understanding of photography, is the fact that the countermodel of the explosive event can also be traced back to ancient Greece, to Democritus. In his *Fragments* he describes the world as a vast rainfall, with events occurring when individual drops accidentally touch one another. According to Democritus, every event is

random, contingent, and remains potentially separate from any other. All our perceptions of the world, Democritus taught—long before modern physics confirmed this view—are nothing but projections of our minds; out there, he writes, is nothing but a swirl of atoms in a void.

As the counterpart to the model of time-as-river and history-as-narrative, the Democritean conception of the world as occurring in bursts and explosions, as the rainfall of reality, privileges the moment rather than the story, the event rather than the unfolding, particularity rather than generality. The following fragment from Democritus has an extraordinary relevance for our understanding of photography—a relevance already recognized by Benjamin in the late 1930s as the medium that endows the fluctuation of light waves and the movement of particles with the appearance of stable objects and events.[5]

> By convention sweet and by convention bitter,
> by convention hot, by convention cold,
> by convention colour;
> but in reality atoms and void.
> —Democritus[6]

Strangely enough, the Democritean model of the world has yet to be fully applied to the medium of photography, where it finds its most striking expression. Indeed, much photography criticism remains invested in the model of time-as-river and assumes that it is the shutter that fragments the world. This perspective on photography, however, fails to account for the fact that no photograph allows for any certainty about its "before" or "after." In order to stress that photographs cannot be adequately addressed through the Heraclitean gaze, I implement a more Democritean approach. I do not assume that the camera is literally capable of fracturing the world but suggest that it is possible to view each image as potentially disclosing the world—the setting for human experience—as nothing but atoms moving in a void.

To be sure, the Heraclitean and Democritean notions of the world concern the lived experience of time; they are conceptual approaches and not descriptions of actual, ontic states. The important and insufficiently acknowledged theorist of photography, Vilém Flusser, stresses that these two conceptions of the world are not mutually exclusive. "The two world views [of Heraclitus and Democritus] do not contradict one another since rain is

a thin river, and a river is dense rain."[7] Nonetheless, Flusser can identify for each of these semimythical conceptions of history a distinct "mood": "the Heraclitean is dramatic (everything is irreversible, each missed opportunity definitely lost), and the Democritean one is absurd (anything possible could happen)."[8] Flusser then relies on these two paradigmatic conceptions of the world to show how photography compels viewers to think about time. In *Towards a Philosophy of Photography,* he proposes that photography inaugurates a Democritean perspective, a perspective that recognizes photographs not as frozen moments but as "states of things [that photography] translates into scenes."[9] The task of photography criticism is therefore the decoding of photographs as *symbols* of the world resulting from the interplay of conventions, photographers' intentions, and the camera's technical programs—not as symptoms or intentionless, realistic signs that coincide with their own significance.[10] Although Flusser did not discuss it explicitly, his theory of photography is undoubtedly influenced by his experiences as a Jew who fled his native Czechoslovakia when the Nazis invaded it and who subsequently divided his life between Brazil and France, teaching and publishing in German, French, Portuguese, and English. My effort to reorient photography criticism away from a narrative model of experienced time is also an attempt to acknowledge that for uncounted numbers of individuals, significant parts of life are not experienced in sequence but as explosive bursts of isolated events. This book explores photography's tremendous potential to capture such experiences without integrating them into a mitigating context and thus denying their force.

In my analyses I attempt to read photographs from *within* the illusion of an isolated moment rather than simply regard them as interruptions in the evolution of time. The proper "mood" in which to read photography is not dramatic, to rely on Flusser's distinction, but the absurd—in the sense proposed by the surrealist visionary Antonin Artaud, who saw a chance to disrupt European culture with theatrical works produced by individuals "like those tortured at the stake, signaling through the flames."[11] Differently put, I read the photograph not as the parceling-out and preservation of time but as an access to another kind of experience that is explosive, instantaneous, distinct—a chance to see in a photograph not narrative, not history, but possibly trauma.

To be sure, photographs beckon viewers to interpret them, trigger narrative impulses, invite us to make sense by treating each shot as a building-

block in a longer story. But this connotative dimension of the photograph does not entirely drown out the purely deictic statement that each photograph makes. Photographs can capture the shrapnel of traumatic time. They confront us with the possibility that time consists of singular bursts and explosions and that the continuity of time-as-river is another myth. Undoubtedly, as Michael Bernstein points out, the Democritean, "strictly atomistic view of history presupposes a relationship to time as distorted as the deterministic one that is its mirror image." Yet to wrest photography from the deterministic grip of history and time in which most critics have embedded it, we need to include in our interpretation of any single moment "the realization that the present contains the seeds of diverse and mutually exclusive possible futures."[12] Because every photograph is radically exposed to a future unknown to its subjects, I make use of a perspective that avoids the arrogance of hindsight and the certitude of predetermined outcomes—a point of view, or *Standpunkt*, oriented toward Democritus rather than Heraclitus.

There remains one simple fact the viewer always knows about a photograph, regardless of her or his training: "Here it is."[13] The single, indisputable truth about any photograph is not its meaning or veracity but its testimony about time. "This once was," each photograph says, "and you are viewing it from a time in which the photographed object or person may no longer exist." The suddenness of the punctuating flashbulb is always coupled with an equally strong emphasis on that instant's pastness. However, photography does *not* dam up what happens next, before, or after the photograph—everything that is conjectured and surmised in implicit accordance with the Heraclitean model of time-as-river and its modern adaptation as the *longue durée*. Instead, it exposes it to the viewer as only one of several possible ways of seeing the world. In my explorations of those other ways, I combine the Flusserian reorientation of photography criticism toward a more Democritean gaze with recent theoretical work in the area of trauma studies to show how photography can provide special access to experiences that have remained unremembered yet cannot be forgotten.

The task of photography critics who base their work on the Heraclitean understanding of lived reality as continuous and narratable consists in reconstituting the sequence, or the invisible before and after of which the photographic image is thought to be an excerpted glimpse. There is a vast body of such contextualist and inherently melancholic criticism, and it often offers valuable information. Yet this approach is based on a problematic

assumption: that photography, with the camera as totemic object of all that is disastrous in modernity, not only reveals the world's inherently fractured constitution but, in fact, *causes* the world to shatter. Yet the camera only records what occurs, and only in bursts and explosions, whereas behind every photograph is the suggestion that the depicted scene was, not merely an occurrence, but an experience that someone lived through. The startling effect (and affect) of many photographs, then, results not only from their adherence to conventions of realism and codes of authenticity or to their place in the mental-image repertory largely stocked by the media. It comes as well from photography's ability to confront the viewer with a moment that had the potential to be experienced but perhaps was not. In viewing such photographs we are witnessing a mechanically recorded instant that was not necessarily registered by the subject's own consciousness.

This possibility that photographs capture unexperienced events creates a striking parallel between the workings of the camera and the structure of traumatic memory. The first modern, and still influential, theories of trauma were developed in the latter half of the nineteenth century. They describe trauma as the puzzlingly accurate imprinting on the mind of an overwhelming reality, an event that results in a deformation of memory yet cannot be attributed solely to the content of an occurrence or to the subject's predisposition to such mnemonic derailment. Traumatic events, in this theoretical model, exert their troubling grip on memory and on the imagination because they were not consciously experienced at the time of their occurrence. Just as the photograph "mechanically repeats what could never be repeated existentially," as Roland Barthes writes, trauma results from experiences that are registered as "reality imprints" or, as psychiatrists have phrased it, recorded "photographically, without integration into a semantic memory."[14]

The enigma of trauma cannot be explained exclusively by the particular character of the event that triggers it; it also results from its structure. Cathy Caruth explains that trauma is characterized, not "by the event itself—which may or may not be catastrophic, and may not traumatize everyone equally—nor can it be defined in terms of a *distortion* ... but consists ... in *the structure of its experience* or reception: the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of the one who experiences it."[15]

Trauma is a disorder of memory and time. This is why in his early writings Freud used the metaphor of the camera to explain the unconscious as the place where bits of memory are stored until they are developed, like prints from black-and-white negatives, into consciously accessible recollections. In his later work, Freud qualified his use of the camera metaphor, a move several critics have discussed.[16] Instead of extending that discussion of Freud's dissatisfaction with his own image, I trace the origin of the metaphor back to the photographic practice in use at Freud's training hospital, the Salpêtrière in Paris, where he first grappled with the kind of memory disorder from which psychoanalysis was born. In chapter 1 of this book, I offer an implicit critique of the pre-Freudian model of trauma as a silencing of the subject but do not necessarily assume that later theories allow the subject to speak any more successfully. I argue that Freud's disavowal of the metaphor of the camera for the unconscious remains a gesture to be read in the context of his unease with the insights offered by his teachers at the Salpêtrière—and perhaps with the very notion of the visual. Something beyond Freud's notorious caution in his use of images seemed to prompt his initial repeated use of, and then dissatisfaction with, the camera metaphor. This something, I would suggest, concerns a fundamental relationship between photography and trauma that critics who have discussed Freud's metaphor of the camera have largely overlooked. His modification of his early metaphor of the mind-as-camera begs the question of the link between photography and trauma, rather than settles it. Because trauma blocks routine mental processes from converting an experience into memory or forgetting, it parallels the defining structure of photography, which also traps an event during its occurrence while blocking its transformation into memory.

The photographs I analyze in this book isolate experiences that remained apart from lived reality at the time of their occurrence. Normally, an event becomes an experience once it is integrated into consciousness. Some events, however, register in the psyche—like negatives captured on film for later development—without being integrated into the larger contexts provided by consciousness, memory, or the act of forgetting. Caruth explains that enigmatic occurrence this way:

> Traumatic experience, beyond the psychological dimensions of suffering it involves, suggests a certain paradox: that the most direct seeing of a violent

event may occur as an absolute inability to know it, that immediacy, paradoxically, may take the form of belatedness. The repetitions of the traumatic event . . . [suggest] a larger relation to the event which extends beyond what can simply be seen or what can be known and is inextricably tied up with the belatedness and incomprehensibility that remain at the heart of this repetitive seeing.[17]

The phenomenon of trauma, Caruth suggests, challenges conventional understandings of how reference works, according to which "seeing" is assumed to translate immediately into "knowing." Yet this challenge should not lead us to an irrational dismissal of reality, or a thoughtless celebration of its heightened return in trauma. Trauma does not constitute a dimension of reality that is "more real" than experiences that readily become part of consciousness and memory. The phenomenon of trauma presents us with a fundamental enigma, a crisis of representational models that conceive of reference in terms of a direct, unambiguous link between event and comprehension. This crisis furnishes no proof that *all* experiences of reality are inherently constructed and that trauma shatters these constructions to reveal the truth "behind" them. Trauma imposes itself outside the grasp of our cognition. The encounter with reality, understood as encompassing the possibility of trauma, thus emerges as something that can bypass experience and yet register, with great force, on an individual's mind and body. The fact that traumatic experiences recur and that they attain meaning only at and through this belated repetition—like negatives that harbor an image until they are printed and emerge from the developing vats—does not invalidate their realness but should compel us to reconsider the relations between memory and reality.

Even though trauma often results from the intrusion of overwhelming occurrences of violence into the individual's psyche, exhaustive knowledge of that reality does not provide a sufficient explanation of the individual's trauma. Indeed, trauma seems to result from the mind's inability to edit and place an event within a coherent mental, textual, or historical context in ways that would allow it to become part of lived experience and subsequent memory. It is thus only of limited value to account for trauma by referring such experiences to their context, for this approach has recourse to precisely the framework whose breakdown or absence originally resulted in trauma. For trauma to be understood, its "immediacy" must be

studied as it unfolds according to its own dynamic, at once *outside of* and yet *inside of* the same moment, as a kind of index of a historical reality—a historical reality "to whose truth there is no simple access."[18]

I do not propose to decide here how to gain such access. Instead, I explore the model of trauma as a "reality imprint" because it signals the presence of unresolved questions about the nature of experience. Interestingly, critiques of the literal-imprint model of trauma are mirrored by critiques of photography's presumed "reality effect." In fact, the polemical tone that characterizes the critical debunking of photography's illusion of reality as a naïve assumption is matched, if not pitched even higher, by those who attack the model of trauma as a reality imprint. Instead of revisiting the stalemates reached by these debates, I propose to think through the model of trauma as "reality imprint" by juxtaposing it with photography's "illusion of reality" while acknowledging that these are theoretical models and visual effects (i.e., phenomenal entities) and not ontic states. Allowing these two models to mutually inform one another lets us focus on photography's role in the vexing issue of what constitutes experience under the impact of trauma.[19]

If we analyze photographs exclusively through establishing the context of their production, we may overlook the constitutive breakdown of context that, in a structural analogy to trauma, is staged by every photograph. In some photographs, the impression of timelessness coincides with a strange temporality and contradictory sense of the present surrounding the experiences depicted. To analyze images that focus on such interruptions and loss of context, therefore, it is not sufficient to refer to the extrapictorial "social and psychic formations of the [photograph's] author/reader."[20] Rather, we must consider such photographs in the light of what Eduardo Cadava has identified as the peculiar structure that lies between "the photographic image and any particular referent," which is, in fact, "the absence of relation."[21] This absence of relation may come into focus when reading photography through trauma theory—and vice versa, when reading trauma theory through the startling effect of reality created by photography. Photographs present their referents as peculiarly severed from the time in which they were shot, thus precluding simple recourse to the contexts established by individual and collective forms of historical consciousness.

My concerns with photographs of trauma explode the strictures of both historicist and formalist analysis: I am interested in how photographs go beyond extrapictorial determinations, and how the excess we find within

the image points to something that, though not properly outside it, none-theless unsettles the relations between picture and context. My readings part company with the historicist approaches to photography currently domi-nating both academic discourse and museum practice; they recognize that photographs can do more than tritely confirm the modernist cliché that per-ceptions of reality are shaped by the viewer's historical and social position. The images I consider in this book remain outside what Benjamin, in his definition of the modern experience as an experience of shock, calls the lost "context of experience" or, in the German word that practically performs coherence itself, *Erfahrungszusammenhang* (literally, "hanging-together of experience"). [22] In these photographs, the shutter's click allows certain mo-ments to be integrated *for the first time* into a context (of experience, of mem-ory, of meaning). Such images stage not a return of the real but its first appearance: an appearance of a meaning that, as the ongoing debates about the causes and manifestations of trauma indicate, continues to defy com-prehension and that, although it concerns the past, did not exist there.

Postmodern critics moving confidently from "image to frame, from . . . form and style (the rhetoric of art) to . . . function and use (the practice of politics)"[23] frequently displace attention from the image to the context whose structuring *absence* defines the experiences in the images I discuss. While antiaesthetic critics have usefully dismantled the mannered argumentative patterns of earlier psychologistic, contemplative, and rever-ential forms of image analysis, in their iconoclastic fervor they have often failed to own up to the curious fascination with photographic images that presumably prompted their own looking. The potentially rewarding, but often cheerless, emphasis on context and *studium*, or prior knowledge, might be read as a phobic repression of photographs' unsettling effects—and affect. Clearly, we need to study the act of looking to locate its blind spots; yet we must also remain aware that an uncompromising reliance on extrapictorial information can lead us to overlook experiences that become traceable and assume their meaning only after their occurrence. Trauma theory becomes important at this impasse. It helps us grasp how a particu-lar photographic image can show a scene that becomes meaningful only in and as its representation. Yet even the discourse of trauma theory, finally, can only testify to, without rendering fully intelligible, what assails the self from within without constituting a proper experience—even though it might be captured on film.

In addition to the inadequacy of contextualist approaches, I was motivated to write this book by a further conceptual difficulty. The photographs discussed in it preempt viewers' attempts to identify with, and imaginarily project themselves into, the image as a way of gaining access. Here is another parallel, on the phenomenological level, between photography and traumatic experience, which unambiguously concerns one individual without allowing that person to identify with the experience as her or his "own" past. Nor can listeners or viewers identify with ownerless experiences that—although they are neither invented nor imaginary—can so easily appear to have been fabricated by a disturbed psyche. A response to them requires that we analyze photographs in light of their claims to represent moments that are at once radically ahistorical yet undeniably part of the past. These moments put critics in the position of facing realities to which there is nothing to add or to explain; in order to go beyond them, to verify their occurrence, or to understand them they must open their gaze toward events that promise neither manifestation nor revelation, but merely facticity.

The photograph's deferral of an experience from the occasion of its registration may affect not only the viewer but also the photographed individual, who is preserved undergoing an event to which he or she can only later attach a meaning. When viewers face the traces of experiences that bypass memory and cognition, the ordinarily reassuring mechanisms of identificatory looking reach their limit. As I show in chapter 3, empathic identification can easily lead us to miss the inscription of trauma because the original subjects themselves did not register the experience in the fullness of its meaning. The apparently inexhaustible fascination of photography partly originates with this difficulty of relating to images of experiences that have irreparably dislodged the self-image of those depicted—pictures that are constituted *by and as this split*. The viewer must respond to the fact that these experiences passed through their subjects as something real without coalescing into memories to be stored or forgotten. Such experiences, and such images, cannot simply be seen and understood; they require a different response: they must be *witnessed*.

The photographs I discuss result from the conflict and cooperation between the photographer's intentions, the photographed person's lived experience, the viewer's perspective, and the technical effects of the camera. They show experiences that, although *immemorial*, outside of memory, directly shape memory, because they are not owned by the people undergoing

them. We respond strongly to such photographs because they can make us, as viewers, responsible *for the first time* for a past moment that has been blasted out of time.

I begin, therefore, with the first full pictorial explosion of trauma in the medical photographs of the nineteenth-century French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot. Charcot's contemporary fame, rivaling that of opera singers and vaudeville acts, resulted from his on-the-spot, publicly performed diagnoses of mostly female patients. At Salpêtrière, his sprawling, garrisonlike hospital in Paris, the master-physician reigned over thousands of hysterical women and men obsessively and desperately attached to his promise to cure the enigmatic sufferings that painfully affected their bodies but originated, it seemed, in their minds. Charcot listened, classified, and, spectacularly, cured. But above all, the doctor *looked*. "Il était un visuel," Freud wrote in a eulogy, using the ambiguous French word to characterize Charcot as both precise observer and visionary.[24] Charcot, dissatisfied with the way he had been taught to see, recognized that he nonetheless saw more than anyone, including his patients, could know. As a way to demonstrate this split between seeing and knowing, Charcot systematically employed the medium of photography. He hoped to capture the experience of hysteria in photographs and thus to demystify it—for science, for fame, and for the "hysterics" themselves.

A theory of trauma was thus born from the will to see. In Charcot's work, the first theorization of trauma coincides with the first use of photographs as something more than palm-sized proofs in the form of visiting cards, a sort of individual defense against the anonymization of mass society. Photography emerges as the medium of authenticity in a culture that, as Nietzsche noted at about the same time, had begun to celebrate its own decline. Charcot was among the first to recognize what that means: that photographs show more than either photographer or photographic subject may have intended. Charcot looked for what remained invisible to his patients and, unlike many of the theoreticians and clinicians who followed him, he had the courage to look at this spectral residue. Sometimes, however, even while in the grip of apparently agentless suffering, the photographed hysterics return Charcot's clinical gaze.

Others are looking, too. Anxious about the influence of Charcot's powerful teachings, Freud banishes visual images, and eventually most cor-

responding metaphors from "psychoanalysis," the brand name of his newly minted practice of the "talking cure." He accentuates this policy by deliberately positioning patients in a way that prevents them from seeing the analyst during therapy. He then issues the imperative to both analyst and patient to read and reread the patient's verbalizations of lived experience without dismissing even the slightest detail as insignificant.[25] Charcot's case records, on the other hand, provide an abundance of visual evidence relegated, not only by Freud, to a remote episode of "prehistory." The ownership of this haunting pictorial record is still hotly contested. Important feminist critics such as Elaine Showalter fall in line with orthodox Freudians and avoid looking at Charcot's images when they, in otherwise salutary readings, produce text-driven analyses of hysteria in an attempt to rescue Charcot's female patients from the doctor's darkroom misogyny.[26] Yet the depicted experiences cannot be simply wrested from Charcot's proprietorial gaze and returned to the women as the rightful owners. Many of these experiences were never grasped in the fullness of their potential significance; they bypassed memory and cognition but remain visible, phenomenologically, in the photographs. Because Charcot's patients suffered from experiences they themselves did not fully own, a corrective, and posthumous, reading that restores these experiences to them "on their behalf" risks not recognizing, and indeed glossing over, the source of their suffering. It presupposes that these women can simply be reunited with their experience as long as it is analyzed from the right perspective; this rescue mission paradoxically ignores the tremendous force of trauma that shackled these women to experiences against their will and rendered them all but immune to outside address.

To extend studies that keep Charcot's images at bay by focusing on the institutional and discursive forces of production and reception, I look for the kernels of experience that allow these images to outlast their origins. The splinter of experience that survives beyond, and often in spite of, Charcot's intentions—the appeal from within the photographs—is linked to the photographic flash. The flash is a paradigm of the type of experience potentially captured in every photograph: a remnant of experience that those pictured may never have fully owned at the time. "The incapacity to name is a good symptom of disturbance," writes Roland Barthes. In his book on photography, he asserts, in one of his characteristically epiphanic seizures—though without explicit reference to hysteria—that "the effect is certain but

unlocatable, it does not find its sign, its name; it is sharp and yet lands in a vague zone of myself: it is acute yet muffled, it cries out in silence. Odd contradiction: a floating flash."[27] Charcot's photographs of hysterical women illustrate the machinations of nineteenth-century medicine and culture. Yet, like Barthes's nameless distress, they also allow a precise reading of this enigma of the "floating flash," the unsettling experience of trauma that latently confronts the viewer in every photographic image.

The fear that photographs usurp and displace memory—the flip side of Kodak's promise that authenticity can be canned—stems from a sense that the medium can record experiences that then enter memory only long after they actually occurred. Charcot, however, ordered his henchmen to wield a camera because he believed photography capable of capturing experiences that had never entered memory in the first place. Yet he recorded more than he bargained for: the photographs of his patients capture something elusive that goes beyond what his theories explain, something extra. Today, from deep within the archives, these photographs compel us to bear witness to a record of experiences that bypassed not only the women who experienced them but also the filtering systems of Charcot and his followers, including his recent feminist critics. In these photographs, something beyond the iconography of suffering endures, something that these critics can only confirm. Beyond Charcot's medicalizing gaze, beyond Freud's prohibition of images, beyond the self-appointed rescue squads of historicist critics, and—finally—even beyond the Benjaminian-Barthesian theorists of photography who see the referent's death lurking in every image, the women captured by a flash at the Salpêtrière continue to look back.

Like phosphorescent specimens pinned in velvet boxes, Charcot's women float in the soft darkness of early photography. These women are not simply detached from the space around them. They are radically separate from their own experience and life-world, and their suffering results from the impossibility of turning the space in which they are embedded— any space—into a habitable setting. When Charcot is faulted today, rightly, for incarcerating the victims of trauma in his medical wards and arresting their likenesses on photographic plates, a tiny spark of redemption in his admittedly harsh program is overlooked. By placing hysterics into his photographs and amphitheater, Charcot intended to control and frame their experiences in ways these women could not do for themselves. With the camera he fashioned a mechanical framing of reality in an attempt to gen-

erate a sense of place for those who were violently unmoored from their own experience. Through his aggressive, and invasive, photographic practice, Charcot inadvertently placed individuals who had lost their bearings back in relation to the very reality that had usurped their sense of a world. Although for his patients this practice did not constitute a "cure," today it makes it possible for us to read hysteria as genuine suffering.

Since Charcot used the camera to capture photographically and arrest the hysterical subject, other photographers have preserved for later decoding experiences that were not apprehended as reality at the time of the click. Their photography cut holes out of reality, holes in which we can sometimes refocus the relations between presence and absence to help the viewer resituate those archived experiences in relation to the world. In chapter 2 I analyze one such image, an art photograph by Dirk Reinartz that emblematically performs this process. The picture, which appears in his 1995 collection, *Deathly Still: Pictures of Former Concentration Camps*, locates the viewer in reference to a place that was the setting for radically dispossessing experiences. Those experiences, recognized today as part of the historical rupture of the Holocaust, were not at the time of their occurrence necessarily and easily experienced as a historically significant event or as "the Holocaust." For those subjected to them, in fact, they were suffered as brutally separate from any such larger explanation or sense of being in the world. Reinartz's photography explicitly and intentionally eschews the production of shock, the museumized iconography of mutilated and maimed corpses seen in other photographs of the Holocaust. It eerily illustrates what it means not to be in the world and yet to have an experience. In Reinartz's print the viewer is placed in relation to a site that stubbornly refuses to become a "place."

His image, I argue, is not a picture of death, but, paradoxically, of an unexperienced experience of a death that was taken, along with all the material objects they owned, from those who suffered it. The photographer shows viewers the setting of the experience without permitting them to posthumously appropriate it through empathic identification or voyeurism. By strategically isolating a single image from a book containing several hundred full-page prints, I attempt to underline the traumatic sense of radical singularity that is inherent to the Holocaust experience and that dictates Reinartz's photographic practice.

In this chapter I also discuss photographs that represent historical trauma in terms of the Romantic conventions of landscape art. I argue that

by relying on those conventions the photographers can give viewers access to an event that they, like those whose destruction was its aim, might otherwise find impossible to fully apprehend.

Charcot, too, employed the conventions of late-Romantic painting to portray his hysterical patients as hieroglyphs to be deciphered in the search for the truth of an enigmatic memory disorder. A successful diagnosis entailed visually pinning the figure, with the help of the flash, against the background of her surroundings. This technically achieved differentiation of figure and ground, without which no vision is possible, aimed at the heart of a disease resulting from the traumatized patient's inability to distinguish properly between her self and the world. In the wake of the Holocaust, Reinartz's very different photography directs the viewer's gaze to places designed to efface the individuals deported there and remove all traces that could betray this purpose. We can understand these places as settings designed to obliterate the contrast between human beings and their surroundings and thus to level the symbolic distinction between figure and ground that is equally necessary for vision, experience, and knowledge. The Nazi camps were intentionally designed to preclude the possibility that their victims would see or experience anything that would give rise to understanding. This realization allows us to perceive Reinartz's quiet photographs as the true legacy of Charcot's project: they identify historical trauma as the collapsed relationship between individual and surrounding space that cannot be represented according to a traditional schema of figure and ground. Instead, the artist must depict space as the framing of an absence that engulfs and absorbs viewers without creating illusions of belonging or destination. They are not rewarded by seeing but lured into a void, while the nonfigured background serves as the empty destination of their gaze. In these highly stylized images, the conventions of perspective are employed to present to view a nontranscendent emptiness.

This is only one of several possible narratives that lead from Charcot's seminal theorization of trauma as an aberration of memory that leaves a body without context to Reinartz's high-modernist images showing the absences of the Holocaust as the result of the collapse between the symbolic and the literal, figure and ground. Another possible trajectory also bypasses the voyeuristic, the deceptively sublime or up-lifting, and the commercially viable aestheticization of shock. This second access code to trauma created by Charcot has been largely neglected, perhaps because of the neu-

rologist's penchant for exploitative showmanship. It begins with Charcot's presumably imperturbable and disaffected gaze and leads toward the ways a belated witness came to see experiences that were not fully accessible even to those who lived through them.

This second analysis of the relations between trauma in photography turns on the work of Mikael Levin, a contemporary American photographer whose 1995 book, *War Story*, faces one of the twentieth century's defining traumas at a double remove. His father, the American writer and war correspondent Meyer Levin, was among the first to enter the death camps at the end of the war. Meyer Levin struggled in his prolific postwar writings to come to terms with what he had seen. Yet he never mistook his firsthand encounter with the sites of Nazi atrocities and their survivors as an experience he could claim as his own. Mikael inherited his father's story, with its explicit warnings against overidentifying with survivors, and set out to mark his father's work explicitly as an act of *testimony* to a significant historical event. From the beginning, and long before the recent theoretical interest in testimony, Meyer Levin perceived the unbridgeable distance that lies between the witness and the experiences he records. In his photography, Mikael Levin highlights this rift in his father's testimony, identifying it as a fundamental effect of being the witness to great suffering. His photographs are not illustrations of the Holocaust; they afford no knowledge that could not be gleaned from other sources. Their significance lies in the younger Levin's brilliant focus on transforming the act of bearing witness—which initially consists in the mere registration of an event without understanding it—into an act of testimony that recognizes the Holocaust as a crisis of witnessing itself.[28] His photographs illustrate how the knowledge of trauma may be constituted in its transmission from one person to another: the knowledge of the Holocaust in Mikael Levin's work emerges in the relations among his complex photographs, their viewers, and his father's text.

Mikael Levin's pictures obey the logic of a kind of "double-haunting" in which the son returns to places that were not properly laid to rest in his father's memories of the end of the war. The photographs illustrate that a fundamental distance from the experience of trauma is shared, strangely enough, by witnesses and survivors; they also make it clear to the viewer that the difficulty of overcoming that distance is inherent in any confrontation with trauma. In a brief essay on Charcot's photographs, Jean-François Lyotard attributes this distance to the issue of whether a traumatized individual

can be "the addressee of a question bearing on [her] ability to be the addressee of a question."[29] Traumatic experiences not only distance and estrange the onlooker but are inherently marked by a rift between the victim and his or her experience; the shattering force of trauma results from precisely that brutal expropriation of the victim's self. Thus, because trauma is dispossession and radical self-estrangement, it defines the traumatized individual through something that he or she does not own.

In another discussion of representations of the Holocaust, Lyotard suggests that every such representation must bear witness to the unending search for an adequate means of representation.[30] Levin's probing images carry out this obligation. Instead of identifying an original experience in his father's testimonial writings and attempting to represent it in a photograph, he creates images that bear witness to the difficulty of gaining access to a loss that itself corrupts the means of representing it.

Although Reinartz and Levin both focus on a twentieth-century historical catastrophe—Levin through his father's personal encounters—their representational concerns originate with Charcot's pursuit of the causes of individual trauma. And, in spite of some differences between them, both photographers conclude their exploration at the contradictory endpoint of high-modernist pictorial expression where ground seems to become figure, and figure ground, and where abstraction hovers on the brink of arbitrariness. They successfully invoke and, simultaneously undermine, the problematic claim for transcendence and purity that lurks within abstract representation. Although their images are abstract, they borrow from documentary photography and from various artistic traditions. Not at all accidentally, Reinartz and Levin shoot in black and white. Together with their high-modernist insistence on the photograph's self-sufficiency and their repudiation of extrapictorial references, their avoidance of color gestures toward what Primo Levi, speaking of the destruction of conventional morality in the camps, called a moral "gray zone."[31] Their images arrive at a symbolic and conceptual "gray zone" where looking is not easily distinguished from blank staring, where radically expropriated experiences cannot help constitute a solid identity for individuals or groups, and where absence surfaces not as spiritually charged "Nothingness" but as a useless, ashen voiding of reference. At this endpoint of modernism, where photography focuses its radically voided gaze to record the world abstractly—without assigning it significance or meaning—the viewer is made to bear belated

witness to experiences that expropriated and deconstituted those who suffered them.

Yet a third response to the phenomenon of trauma in photography could also be traced back to Charcot's hospital. (At this point, it should be clear that the designation of the Salpêtrière as the birthplace of trauma theory identifies no stable origin but names a scene that is inherently split).[32] Instead of following Charcot's efforts to situate and ground traumatic experience visually through representational conventions, as Reinartz and Levin implicitly do, this third response traces trauma's uncanny hold on the body as the site of experiences that are not fully experienced. Although it differs from Reinartz's and Levin's work by refocusing attention on the human body, this approach—like their efforts to bear witness to the traumas of modernity—refuses to confuse images of dead bodies with representations of trauma. It recognizes that in the wake of a vast trauma like the Holocaust, the destruction is so absolute that it often appears as if nothing at all has been touched, that the state of things within the catastrophic environment—the catastrophic reality of trauma—constitutes the traumatized subject's only understanding of the world. Maurice Blanchot has described this paradox of absolute devastation that destroys any means of assessing it from an "outside:" "The disaster ruins everything, all the while leaving everything intact."[33]

In the book's last chapter, therefore, I discuss strategies for re-seeing historical images to break through the effects of traumatic events that usurp the individual's sense of the world. I focus on a little-known collection of startling slides taken between 1942 and 1944 by a Nazi accountant in the Łódź ghetto. They are startling not only because of their disturbing content but also because they were shot entirely in color. The effect of color, in a context in which we are accustomed to seeing black and white as the code for authenticity, is to bar these images from serving as evidence of what we already know. In view of the Jews' experience of being trapped in sites built by the Germans exclusively for the purpose of their exploitation and eventual annihilation, it seems disingenuous to consider the concept of a "world" when speaking of the traumatic history of ghetto existence. Yet one of the terrible effects of trauma is precisely the replacement of the normal lifeworld with a suffocatingly hermetic violent universe—a constricting web of forces that ensnares everything with senselessness, contingency, fear. In cases of prolonged trauma, victims appear unable to envision a different

universe or question their violent surroundings. In the historical event of the Holocaust, this web originates and seems to coincide with the position and authority of the perpetrators, who do not constitute an "outside" because they largely remain for the victims beyond the possibility of genuine address. Historians frequently assume that photographs of the Holocaust taken by the Nazis originate from such a place of absolute power and portray the viewfinder as the unreachable center of the victims' apparently exitless universe.

Nonetheless, we may be able to dismantle this sense of the tightly sealed universe within the perpetrators' photographs. Each photograph, as I show in chapter 4, results from what Flusser terms the "co-operation and conflict between camera and photographer."[34] In the context of the Nazi photographs, the camera's conflicts with the photographer's intentions allow us to retrieve a dimension of the Jews' experience that the Nazis almost totally hid from view. In his documentary film *Fotoamator* (*Photographer*), the Polish filmmaker Dariuzs Jablonski discovers details overlooked by commentators who dismiss the color slides of the Łódź ghetto as seamless illustrations of Nazi ideology and fail to notice that occasionally the camera itself redirects the photographer's intentions. The film's technique draws on a philosophical understanding of photography that regards images not as events but as recodings of theoretical concepts, or points of view, about the state of things.

My reconsideration of the Nazi slides corresponds to Fatimah Rony's analysis of a potentially redemptive reappropriation of images photographically "stolen" from minority ethnic communities by ethnographic filmmakers.[35] I draw on this fascinating study of the political and aesthetic reappropriation of stolen images and on Rony's powerful suggestion that we may be able to re-see images of victimhood from positions that break with the photographer's perspective of mastery. My readings extend her work by showing that modernist film techniques and formal juxtapositions—in addition to the postmodern methods of ironic subversion that have allowed other filmmakers to reappropriate racist images—can reclaim a visual history stolen from the victims of historical violence. Through close examination of historical photographs in search of a history still unknown—because it was experienced as traumatic—we can wrench the fragile pictorial testimonies of historical violence from their entombment in the ideologies and ways of seeing where they originated.

Daring to look closely at scenes in which historians and historicist critics, replacing visual analysis with moral righteousness, have seen only the Nazi gaze, Jablonski succeeds in reframing the Łódź photographs. In his hands, they become as if organized around and by the Jewish faces the Nazis wanted to efface and to which they wanted to deny the formal position of the looking subject. He discovers in these images heretofore invisible patterns that enable us to respond to the Jews' long-overlooked return of the photographer's gaze. On the level of photographic content, focusing on elements the Nazis, too, overlooked, he dismantles the sense of a traumatically constituted universe where nothing points beyond the barbed-wire "world" instituted by the perpetrators. I link this practice of re-seeing to a claim that is implicit in every photograph: that the image carries its referent into the uncharted future. When this Barthesian, melancholic understanding of the photograph's future confronts the historical reality of the Łódź ghetto, it becomes possible, and urgently necessary, to move beyond its limitations. Jablonski's film reminds us of just how radically photography retains its referent to *any* future—a future that might include us, as viewers, in the present. The split time dwelling in every photograph—between an immobile past moment and its possibilities for redemption—are not governed by the photographer's intentions. The figures in the Nazi's photographs may be looking into his lens, but they are also seeing past this apocalyptic end, beyond that blinding site, into a future from which they solicit a response. Dismissing this possibility now in the name of our historical knowledge of the ghetto amounts to surrendering the people still alive in those images, again, to the ideological perspective that would end their lives.

The figures in the Nazi photographs examined by Jablonski cannot be equated with the figures in Charcot's images. Yet their radical incomparability does not result exclusively from our knowledge of the historical events in which the individuals lived. Rather, it stems from the fact that the individuals in both sets of images are cut off from any larger system of signification that would allow us to make such comparisons. The photograph creates the illusion, not only of arresting time, but also of authenticating each moment's existence; the photographic print, as one critic puts it, seems to distill "the eternal present in time's every moment."[36] In films, however, a different regime holds sway: there the retina abandons each shot to take in the next image. Film spectators are irreverent and unfaithful, for pious adherence to a single image would ruin the greatly pleasurable illusion of

continuous movement. Yet films fail to fascinate in the same way as photographs do, because they invite the viewer to speculate on the future—even when irresistibly tempted to do so—only on the level of plot or formal arrangement. Photographs compel the imagination because they remain radically open-ended.

In my analysis of the color slides, I develop this openness by following a suggestive comment by Benjamin, that, as proposed by Eduardo Cadava, might define photography as a medium that "embeds" the subject's "afterlife."[37] I explore this definition of photography as a medium of a *salvaging, preservation,* and *rescue* of reality—an approach generally absent from the narrowly melancholic contemporary readings of Benjamin. The photographs from the Łódź ghetto testify to a refusal to give up on the possibility of a future. Recognizing this potential requires us to depart from dominant readings of Benjamin that stress the melancholic over the open-ended. Those readings effectively force his theory to give up on the future, as Benjamin himself tragically did, just before reaching safety in his flight from the Gestapo.

It is true that photographs contain the possibility that there will be no linkage, that an image will remain a dead-end where neither revelation nor resolution will ever occur. One can follow Benjamin, Bazin, and Barthes and emphasize, like Cadava, that "the survival of the photographed is . . . never *only* the survival of its life, but also of its death."[38] But we must also focus on this "mere survival of its life" in the photograph as an occurrence from which we cannot easily avert our eyes. This responsibility extends to the task of not readily assuming—even if negatively—the photographer's perspective. Precisely because photographs do appear immutable, we carry the burden of imagining what could occur beyond the boundaries of the print.

Notes

Introduction

1. For a genealogy of these ways of seeing, see Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990).

2. Heraclitus, *Fragments. The Collected Wisdom of Heraclitus*, tr. Brooks Haxton (New York: Penguin, 2001), 27, 96 n41.

3. See Ulrich Raulff's discussion of these opposing and complementary conceptions of time in *Der unsichtbare Augenblick: Zeitkonzepte in der Geschichte* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 1999), 9.

4. Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller," in *Illuminations*, tr. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken , 1968), 83.

5. Benjamin refers to the Democritean notion of *eidola* in the section on photography in "Das Passagen-Werk," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 12 vols., ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982), 22: 828.

6. Attributed to Democritus, in *The Atomists: Leucippus and Democritus. Fragments*, ed. and tr. C. W. W. Taylor (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 9.

7. Vilém Flusser, *Standpunkte: Texte zur Fotografie*, 10 vols., ed. Andreas Müller-Pohle (Göttingen: European Photography, 1998), 8: 152.

8. Ibid.

9. Vilém Flusser, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, tr. Anthony Mathews (London: Reaktion, 2000), 9.

10. Flusser, *Standpunkte*, 8–16.

11. Antonin Artaud, "Theater and its Double," in *Antonin Artaud: Collected Works*, 4 vols., ed. Victor Corti (New York: Riverrun Press,), 4: 6.

12. Michael André Bernstein, *Foregone Conclusions: Against Apocalyptic History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 31, 32.

13. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, tr. Richard Howard (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1981), 5.

14. Ibid., 4; Bessel van der Kolk, Alexander C. McFarlane, and Lars Weisath, eds., *Traumatic Stress: The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body, and Society* (New York: Guilford Press, 1996), 52; Bessel van der Kolk, Nan Herron, and Ann Hostetler, "The History of Trauma in Psychiatry," *Psychiatric Clinics of North America* 17 (1994): 589.

15. Cathy Caruth, "Trauma and Experience: Introduction," in Caruth, ed., *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 4.

16. Important discussions of Freud's use of the metaphor of the camera are found in Geoffrey Batchen, *Burning With Desire: The Conception of Photography* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1997), 187; Sarah Kofman, *Camera Obscura of Ideology*, tr. Will Straw (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 21–29; Kaja Silverman, *World Spectators* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), 75–101. I thank my son Raphael for alerting me to Kofman's book during a visit with Gerard Aching.

17. Caruth, "Traumatic Awakenings," in *Violence, Identity and Self-Determination*, ed. Hent de Vries and Samuel Weber (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997), 208.

18. Caruth, "Introduction," in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, 6.

19. Allan Sekula offers a spirited critique of the photograph's "intrinsic significance [as] bourgeois folklore." "On the Invention of Photographic Meaning," in *Photography in Print*, ed. Vicki Goldberg (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 454. Ruth Leys criticizes the model of trauma as the imprinting of reality on the mind without, however, offering an alternative perspective or synthesizing view of debates she sees as "fated to end in an impasse." Ruth Leys, *Trauma: A Genealogy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 305.

20. Victor Burgin, "Something about Photography Theory," *Screen 25* (January-February 1984): 65 (cited in Batchen, *Burning With Desire*, 10).

21. Eduardo Cadava, *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 7.

22. Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," in *Illuminations*, 198 n.11.

23. Batchen, *Burning With Desire*, 12.

24. Sigmund Freud, "Charcot (1893)" in *Collected Papers*, vol. 1, ed. James Strachey, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1950), 18–19.

25. Freud's writings on the visual arts attest to the fact that the power of images remains a stumbling block in psychoanalytic theory. See Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, tr. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), esp. 284.

26. Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady* (New York: Pantheon, 1985), esp. 147–154.

27. Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 51–53.

28. For a discussion of the Holocaust as a crisis of witnessing, see Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (London: Routledge, 1992), xvii.

29. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, tr. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press 1991), 129.

30. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, tr. Geoffrey Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

31. Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, tr. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Viking, 1990).

32. For a systematic deconstruction of various myths of an "origin of photography," see Batchen, *Burning With Desire*, esp. 17–50.

33. Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, tr. Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 1.

34. Flusser, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, 46–47.

35. Fatimah Tobing Rony, *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996), 24. I have benefited greatly from discussions about this book with Michael Lobel, who first brought it to my attention.

36. Wright Morris, "In Our Image," in *Photography in Print*, ed. Vicki Goldberg, 536.

37. Cadava, *Words of Light*, 13. Benjamin's comment was originally made in a discussion about the published correspondence of letter writers. See Gershom Scholem and Theodor W. Adorno, eds., *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin, 1910–1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 149.

38. Cadava, *Words of Light*, 13 (emphasis added).

Chapter 1

1. Walter Benjamin, "A Small History of Photography," in *One-Way-Street and Other Writings*, tr. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter (London: Verso, 1997), 243. ["Kleine Geschichte der Photographie," in Tiedemann, ed., *Gesammelte Schriften* II/1 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982), 370.]

2. D.-M. Bourneville and Paul Régnard, *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière: Service de M. Charcot*, 3 vols. (Paris: V. Adrien Delahaye, 1876–1880 (hereafter cited in text as *IPS* 1–3: page number). All translations of Charcot's writings are my own unless otherwise indicated. Photographs in figures 1.1–1.9 are from the first edition. Figure 1.10 was published in the second issue of the *Nouvelle Iconographie de la Salpêtrière* (1889).

3. Geoffrey Batchen, *Burning with Desire: The Conception of Photography* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997).

4. Freud, *Collected Papers*, trans. supervised by Joan Rivière (London: The Hogarth Press, 1950), 1: 11.

5. Jacques Derrida refers to Benjamin's and Barthes's works as "the two most significant texts" on the question of the referent in "The Deaths of Roland Barthes," tr. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, in *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy since Merleau-Ponty*, ed. Hugh J. Silverman (New York: Routledge, 1988), 264 (translation modified).

6. Charcot, *Oeuvres complètes*, cited in *Charcot, the Clinician: The Tuesday Lessons*, ed. and tr. Christopher G. Goetz, (New York: Raven Press, 1987), xxiii. In 1928, fifty years after the peak of Charcot's fame, Louis Aragon and André Breton paid homage to his prurient practice with stark sarcasm by republishing some of his photographs, praising them as "the greatest poetic discovery of the late nineteenth century" (Breton and Aragon, "Le cinquantenaire de l'hystérie [1878–1928]," *La révolution surréaliste* 4 [1928]: 21–23).

7. Pierre Marie, cited in Georges Guillain, *J.-M. Charcot, 1825–1893: His Life–His Work*, tr. Pearce Bailey (New York: Paul E. Hoeber, 1959), 136: "Living in this way among the epileptics, checking them in their falls, and taking care of them during the seizures after they had fallen, the young hysterics were susceptible to powerful impressions and because