5. Taking pictures—Photography and Film

> "For men at war, the function of the weapon is the function of the eye."
>
> Paul Virilio[1]

Whenever a film depicts photographs, it says something about its own preconditions. A photograph in a film acts like a flashback in which the medium is projected back onto its history and takes its own background into consideration. Reduced to its technical requirements, film is nothing other than a succession of physically and chemically produced single images—of photographs placed in a series and set in motion. Cinema, as has often been remarked, is the demonstration of a paradoxical form of movement consisting of the simple addition of frozen moments. Zeno's question, formalized by Henri Bergson and taken up again by his exegete Gilles Deleuze,[2] as to how a continual flow of time can emerge from a succession of moments, is answered technically by film—an answer, however, that on closer inspection turns out to be a tricky displacement of the question, as the effect is created simply by outwitting the slowly reacting eye:

> The movement that is "depicted" by the apparently cinematic hyperphoto is a false one, based on the classic paradoxical principle that prevented Achilles from catching up with the tortoise: the minimization of the time differential between the continually divided static elements propels the respective gap/dark zone towards a limit. By contrast to the factory conveyor belt, which spits out complete cars, for example (by projecting divided labor onto the axis of abstract time), the cinematographic-image

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1   Paul Virilio, *War and Cinema. The Logistics of Perception* [1984] (London: Verso, 6th ed. 2000), 20.

2   Deleuze has described the problem, which in 1907 Bergson called the "cinematographic illusion," as follows: "On the one hand, you can bring two instants or two positions together to infinity; but movement will always occur in the interval between the two, in other words behind your back. On the other hand, however much you divide and subdivide time, movement will always occur in a concrete duration [*durée*]; thus each movement will have its own qualitative duration." Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image* [1983], trans. Hugh Tomlinson, Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 2009), 1.

conveyor belt does not have a complete image as its end product: the result is strictly speaking only a relationship.[3]

It is only this differential quality that allows cuts to be made between discrete frames, thus enabling the montage of different images and strips of film. What looks like a continual visual flow then becomes a discontinuous leap from one image to the next that can only be understood as a relational element. For this reason, the film image is always an abstract "interim image," and in this sense Eisenstein located the montage principle on all levels of filming—from the connection of individual frames into flowing movement ("the stage of micro-montage"), to the actual montage of separate sequences, to the combination of entire image clusters: "Thus montage pervades all 'levels' of film-making, beginning with the basic cinematic phenomenon, through 'montage-proper,' and up to the compositional totality of the film as a whole."[4]

Assigning film and photography to the "universe of technical images"[5] has two dimensions: one systemic, one historical. The systemic dimension concerns the dialectic of individual frame and moving image upon which every film is based: every image is in itself immobile, so the movement of a film must lie "in between" the images, in the editing, in the darkness between two frames, with the brain synthesizing a transition and making something visible which can't be found in the material itself. In this sense, cinema is in fact, prior to any semantics, a medium of deception and follows in the long history of optical illusion.[6] Aside from the tension between stasis and movement, which operates tacitly in every film, the relationship between photography and film also concerns the historical emergence of the medium of film as the result of a linking of physics and chemistry. From this perspective, film, as André Bazin writes about the

3   Rudolf Kersting, *Wie die Sinne auf Montage gehen. Zur ästhetischen Theorie des Kinos/Films* (Basel, Frankfurt am Main: Stroemfeld 1989), 53f.

4   Sergej Eisenstein, "Laocoön," ibid., *Selected Works*, vol. II, *Towards a Theory of Montage*, eds. Michael Glenny, Richard Taylor (London: BFI 1991), 109–202: 109.

5   Vilém Flusser, *Into the Universe of Technical Images* [1985], trans. Nancy Ann Roth (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 2011).

6   See the many examples in Werner Nekes's Film Before Film. What Really Happened Between the Images? (BRD 1986) and the exhibition catalogue *Die Wunderkammer des Sehens. Aus der Sammlung Werner Nekes* (Graz: Johanneum 2003/04). Ideological suspicion of film, be it in Adorno's judgment of the medium as an illusion machine, or in the label "dream factory," or in the French criticism of the ideological preconditions of the cinematic apparatus, has often been ignited by its aspect of illusion.

realistic character of the medium, seems to be the fulfillment of "objectivity in time."[7] The disinterestedness with which the camera eye "records" reality is also expressed in the German language, in which the word for that decisive part of the apparatus, the lens, is *Objektiv*. And it can be seen as an apt depiction of film's line of descent that the Lumière brothers, the "inventors" (along with others) of the medium, were the proprietors of a factory for photographic instruments. As plausible as this historical derivation may be, in its characterization of the "movie" as moving (single) images, it is also problematic. For the apparent line of descent levels out the media differences more than it brings them out. If, on the other hand, one takes individual films in which photographs play an important structural role, the threshold between the two media is given a theoretical value and once again marks the point at which film can make the transition from depiction to theoretical statement. The boundary between film and photography is therefore another place at which a theoretical determination of each media results—from an oscillation between their two poles.

Even though this oscillation is latent in every work of cinema, there are films that explicitly deal with photography and use the tension between both media to define cinema. Such a definition equally occurs from within—from within the individual image—and without—from the other medium. And as with the cinematic recourse to painting, the fact that the theoretical approach to film takes a detour through a different, related medium in order to obtain a view of "itself" has to do with the impossibility of *self*-reflection in film in the strict sense. An examination of film from the point of view of photography produces a second level of observation from which the filmic subject can become the analyzed object. "As soon as you stop the film, you begin to find the time to add to the image. You start to reflect differently about film, about cinema,"[8] is how Raymond Bellour describes the effect of stills in films. And Stanley Cavell has a similar phenomenon in mind when he writes that the rigidity of a photograph in the context of a film is a shock that destroys the dramatic illusion.[9] Freezing an image ironically sensitizes the viewer to its qualities as a moving image.

7   André Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," trans. Hugh Gray, *Film Quarterly*, vol. 13, no. 4. (Summer 1960), 4–9: 8.

8   Raymond Bellour, "The Pensive Spectator" [1984], trans. Lynne Kirby, *Wide Angle,* 19:1 (1987), 6–10, 10.

9   See Stanley Cavell, "What Photography calls Thinking," *Camera Austria* 19/20, 1985, 32–43: 35f.

To put it differently: only when an image stands still can it be recognized as a moving one.[10]

The photographic detour to cinematic self-reflection seems to be shorter than the one through painting, as both media are defined by the same automatism of depiction, as Susan Sontag notes: "While a painting, even one that meets photographic standards of resemblance, is never more than the stating of an interpretation, a photograph is never less than the registering of an emanation (light waves reflected by objects)—a material vestige of its subject in a way that no painting can be."[11] Both the manner of creating images and the relationship between image and reality are similar in film and photography, and give rise to the possibility of speaking in the one medium about the other.[12]

The search for films in which such reflection is particularly evident again leads to many works usually classified as essay films. Chris Marker's LA JETÉE[13] appears in almost every text on the relationship between film and photography, as Marker takes the linking of the two media to an endpoint early on by almost entirely organizing the visual level of his film as a sequence of stills.[14] However, LA JETÉE strikingly shows that the sequencing of photographs is already film. Through the procedure of montage, Marker carefully arranges the images to produce a narrative flow with varying speeds and rhythms. Not for nothing had Hitchcock's VERTIGO and Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* been two central points of reference

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10   The hitherto little theorized image type of the still—whether utilized for commercial purposes or in contemporary art (by Richard Hamilton or Cindy Sherman, for example)—is the subject of a book by Winfried Pauleit, *Filmstandbilder. Passagen zwischen Kunst und Kino* (Frankfurt am Main: Stroemfeld 2004).

11   Susan Sontag, "The Image World," ibid. *On Photography* (London: Penguin 1977), 151–180: 154.

12   Morgan Fisher combines the media of film and photography in a particularly simple but fascinating way in his film PRODUCTION STILLS (USA 1970): eight Polaroid photos are shown one after the other in a fixed shot, and become gradually recognizable as stills from the set on which the film PRODUCTION STILLS is being made. On the soundtrack, the noises of the camera and discussions between the participants can be heard, and photo by photo we are given a clearer visual impression of the shoot. The creation of the photographs is at the same time as that of the film; the material of the film is a roll of film and a package of Polaroids. See Morgan Fisher, "Production Stills," ibid, *Writings*, eds. Sabine Folie and Susanne Titz (Cologne: Walther König 2012), 29–32.

13   LA JETÉE, F 1962, director: Chris Marker.

14   The film departs from the principle of sequencing stills at one point only, when the female protagonist wakes from sleep and slowly, almost imperceptibly opens her eyes.

for Marker since the 1950s.[15] The still photo not only stands for the past tense but also becomes an allegory for time as a whole. So La jetée can jump between present, future, and past, and the resulting threads are connected by the narrator into a vertiginous temporal texture: "Time is not represented indirectly here, but directly, for its own sake."[16]

With Marker, as in Michelangelo Antonioni's Cortázar adaptation Blow Up and numerous other films,[17] the photographs are part of a fictional context, but there is a second group of films that speak about photography from a documentary angle: an integral part of any historical documentation, aside from written documents, is the use of photographs and films—as far as they exist—to reconstruct events. Photographic depiction is then understood as a window that can provide a more undisguised view of the past than is the case with written sources. Blending historical and juridical discourse, which aim to discover the truth, the photograph becomes a piece of evidence that stands for something that can't be seen directly.[18] While in the fictional "photo films," reflection is often concerned with the abstract principle of time and related complexes (memory, melancholy), the documentaries usually draw their strength from the unbroken referentiality of the photograph: what you see here actually happened in this way. For this reason, Roland Barthes—at the same time as Godard was working on The Carabineers—summarized the function of the documentary photograph as follows: "Certainly the image is not the reality but at least it is its perfect *analogon* and it is exactly this which, to common sense, defines the photograph. Thus can be seen the special status of the photographic image: *it is a message without*

15   See Birgit Kämper, "Das Bild als Madeleine. 'Sans Soleil' und 'Immemory'," *Chris Marker. Filmessayist*, ed. ibid., Thomas Tode (Munich: Cicim 1997), 142–159.

16   Christa Blümlinger, "'La Jetée.' Nachhall eines Symptom-Films," *Chris Marker. Filmessayist*, eds. Kämper, Tode (Munich: Cicim 1997), 65-72. In the same volume see also Jan Christopher Horak, "Die Jagd nach den Bildern. Fotofilme von Chris Marker," ibid., 73–86.

17   See, for example, Hitchcock's Shadow of a doubt (USA 1943), Max Ophüls' Letter from an unknown woman (USA 1948) or, more recently, Brian de Palma's Femme Fatale (F 2002), or Mark Romanek's One Hour Photo (USA 2002). Memento (USA 2000, director: Christopher Nolan), in which the (lost) memory is completely substituted by a "prosthetic" Polaroid camera, also belongs in this category. See also the December 2005 edition, on "FotoKino," of the Internet journal *nachdemfilm*, which contains a series of short reviews of "photo films" alongside the contributions to a conference on the genre: www.nachdemfilm.de, August 2005 [accessed February 1, 2015].

18   For the interplay of aesthetic and judicial questions in 19th-century discourses on photography, see John Tagg, "A Legal Reality: The Photograph as Property in Law," ibid., *The Burden of Representation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1988), 103–116.

a code."[19] However, this apparently pure denotation of the photograph, leaving no space for interpretation or ideology, is contaminated by numerous more hidden elements that connote it otherwise. This is exactly what makes up the "photographic paradox": the "co-existence of two messages, the one without a code (the photographic analogue), the other with a code (the 'art' or the treatment, or the 'writing,' or the rhetoric, of the photograph.)"[20]

In their debate with photography, the films of Harun Farocki and Jean-Luc Godard can be understood as elaborations of this paradox; but above all, they examine the rhetorical function of photographs. They are directed against the freedom of connotation and the idea of evidence with which photography appears in the public discourse (particularly in newspapers and on television), and they follow the ambiguities that characterize every photograph—and every film. These films should therefore be seen as a critique of a "rhetoric of evidence" with which photography frequently operates in politics and journalism. For the automatization of image production that characterizes both photography and film, and seems to minimize the subjective influence of their respective producer, in no way results in unambiguous images. On the contrary, it is the apparently self-evident images that require particular study and critique.

Various questions need to be addressed in order to determine the significance of photography in the work of Godard and Farocki: What is the relationship between photography and war reporting, an issue that interests both filmmakers in different ways? What is the status of "the image" that becomes the focus of attention in this use of photography? In order to clarify these questions, I will examine individual films and analyze them in their specific use of photographs. With Godard, this is initially THE CARABINEERS from 1963, which places a special form of commodified photography—the postcard—in the context of colonialist warfare and appropriation. The referential character of the photograph and the magical belief in an identity between the depicted and depiction are taken to an extreme here and used to comic effect.

From Farocki's work, I will single out two films that disrupt the visual flow of the medium and discuss cinematic practices via photography. BEFORE YOUR EYES VIETNAM—a film that in 1982, quite late, looked

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19   Roland Barthes, "The Photographic Message," *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press 1977), 15–31: 17.
20   Ibid., 19.

at the Vietnam War—focuses on press photos to ask questions about the proper, appropriate view of war. How were and are photographs instrumentalized for propaganda purposes, and how is it possible to develop alternative ways of reading them? Six years later, Images of the World and the Inscription of War, probably Farocki's best-known film, raises the question of visibility and adequate forms of representing war and annihilation on the basis of aerial photographs of Auschwitz taken in 1944. At the intersection of various surveying practices, the photograph is thematized as an intermediate link between the mathematical logic of central perspective and the image-recognition software of the late twentieth century. The historical line that Farocki draws from the photograph to the electronically processed images of today will also necessitate a renewed examination of the concepts of abstraction and theory.

Displacing: The Carabineers

> "A photograph is both a pseudo-presence and a token of absence. Like a wood fire in a room, photographs—especially those of people, of distant landscapes and faraway cities, of the vanished past—are incitements to reverie. The sense of the unattainable that can be evoked by photographs feeds directly into the erotic feelings of those for whom desirability is enhanced by distance."
>
> Susan Sontag[21]

When The Carabineers, Godard's fifth feature film, was released in France in 1963, it was greeted with sharp criticism from reviewers, and the public didn't show much interest in it either. In Paris, only 2,800 people went to see the film.[22] The story of the two naive protagonists Michel Ange (Albert Juross) and Ulysse (Marino Masè), who are drafted by certified mail from the king and sent to an unnamed war in which they mechanically and coldly rape, murder, pillage, and plunder, was not only felt to be carelessly shot and badly photographed, it was also accused of trivializing war: death and horror were banalized; the wooden figures were lifeless.

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21   Susan Sontag, "In Plato's Cave," ibid., *On Photography* (London: Penguin 1977), 1–24: 16.
22   According to Enno Patalas in "Godards Film vom Krieg," *Filmkritik* 5/1965, 259–266: 262.

From today's perspective, it is easy to discern the opposing critical positions on The Carabineers, particularly because Godard himself reacted to the polemic tone with a no less polemic reply in the *Cahiers du cinéma*.[23] At the core of the discussion were questions of realism and representation. Godard responded to the basic problem of how war—in more general terms one could say: reality—can adequately be depicted in film from a Brechtian, exaggeratedly comic perspective,[24] in which the plot is schematically simplified and didactically generalized, while the critics demanded psychology, conventional realism, and empathy. In his discussion of the film at the time, Enno Patalas contrasted the "realistic" war film and Godard's approach and described The Carabineers as the first film to apply the fragmentary, discontinuous, chaotic qualities of war to the composition of the film itself:

> "Realistic" war films revere war in that they profess to depict it objectively. They pretend that the shot of an exploding grenade is comparable to an exploding grenade. They should be accused less of showing the exploding grenade than of only *showing* it exploding. The greater the impression of realism, the more complete the deception.[25]

Patalas's exaggeration directly links to Brecht's complaint that a photograph says nothing about its structural background. It therefore follows—just as Godard and Farocki would claim—that war can only be dealt with through deliberate alienation or construction.

Godard's thoughts about how war can adequately be brought to the screen start from the relationship between concrete image and general content, from the possibility of using mise en scène and montage to create abstraction. The director defends his approach by pointing out the generalizing function of his montages: "In dealing with war, I followed a very simple rule. I assumed I had to explain to children not only what war is, but what all wars have been from the barbarian invasions to Korea and Algeria by way of Fontenoy, Trafalgar and Gettysburg."[26] Godard thus relies on simplicity and the reduction of complexity. He attempts to depict war

23   See Jean-Luc Godard, "*Les Carabiniers* under Fire" [1963], *Godard on Godard*, trans. and ed. Tom Milne (New York/London: DaCapo 1972), 196–200.

24   One of the texts to which The carabineers obviously refers is Alfred Jarry's play *Ubu Roi*—the famous "merdre" is often quoted. See Robert Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature. From Don Quixote to Jean-Luc Godard* (New York: Columbia UP 1992), 186–191.

25   Enno Patalas, "Godards Film vom Krieg," 261.

26   Godard, "*Les Carabiniers* under Fire," 197.

not as a historically specific event with numerous details but schematically as a general formula in its invariant mechanisms, structures, and relations. In this simplification, there is also a movement towards abstraction that turns the concrete image into an example of any imaginable war. But how is this abstraction achieved? The answer is that Godard addresses the concept of war through the montage of different visual levels, in this case through the use of archive material. When the two soldiers' combat is shown in monotonous succession, Godard draws on existing newsreel footage rather than shooting his own material. The remaining scenes were then matched to the quality of the newsreels through repeated duplicating in which the gray tones disappear. Once again, although different from the montage of painting in PIERROT LE FOU, the aim is to create a break—the change of level is easily noticed, as the war footage is recognizable as quoted newsreels despite the qualitative adjustment of the other material—but to make this break appear to be an extension rather than a discontinuation of the action.

The recourse to existing film material has different implications. The device can be translated into the statement: "Because there is 'real' war, as a director I don't need to restage it (and thus duplicate it). War *is* real." Authenticity isn't produced through the filming of "genuine" scenes but is "accessed" through the incorporation of documentary, "authentic" material. At the time of the film's release, the blurring of fiction and reality was criticized as an immoral belittlement of real suffering. Yet this argumentation can easily be reversed if we acknowledge the preconditions of Godard's technique. He was only able to insert the anonymous newsreel sequences seamlessly into his film because the documentary footage itself abstracts concrete individual suffering and omits the victims of war. We see airplanes, tanks, exploding bombs, and so on, but no "real" death. It is this that made it possible to combine the "objective" footage of war with its "subjective" opposite, the story of Michel Ange and Ulysse.

A movement towards abstraction can also be seen in the characters' names: Ulysse and Michel Ange not only stand for a somewhat arbitrary "disparate couple stubbornly set on storming the world," for which Barthélemy Amengual sees models in Sancho Panza and Don Quixote, Laurel and Hardy, Ole and Aksel;[27] they also almost archetypically evoke the media of literature and painting, producing an ironic distance through their contrast to the naivety of the characters. If the odyssey in this film

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27   See Barthélemy Amengual, "Jean-Luc Godard et la remise en cause de notre civilisation de l'image," *Jean-Luc Godard au-delà du récit*, ed. Michel Estève (Paris: Minard 1967), 113–178: 132.

corresponds to anything at all, it is war, the violence of which is seen as a continual accompaniment to human history, as something outside of historical time.[28]

Many examinations of photography define the medium through its relationship to time: "[T]here is always a defeat of Time in them: *that* is dead and *that* is going to die," [29] is how Roland Barthes describes the confusing superimposition of different times present in every photograph; the photographed motif, whether person or thing, will disintegrate over time or no longer exist at the time of viewing. The "presence" of the photographic moment, from the point of view of a future viewer who is always implied, is also an anticipated absence.[30] It is this aporetic breaking up of the continual experience of time that has always associated the medium of photography with the phenomena of death, memory, and melancholy:[31] "All photographs are *memento mori*. To take a photograph is to participate in another person's (or thing's) mortality, vulnerability, mutability. Precisely by slicing out this moment and freezing it, all photographs testify to time's relentless melt."[32] However, such a characterization of photography as a medium of presentification and sorrow is usually the result of a preoccupation with private photographs, with souvenir images to which the viewer establishes a personal relationship. In THE CARABINEERS, by contrast, Godard is interested in public images, which in the broadest sense come from the area of advertising. Images that promise something, and therefore don't capture a moment from the past but are intended to awaken the desire to possess what they depict in the future. The film is characteristically framed by commercial photographs: in the scene in which Michel Ange and Ulysse are recruited by the king's emissaries, the suggestive power of photography is already set against the sobriety and ineffectiveness of the written word. The conscription order, a carelessly filled-in form on which the name M. Ange, a recruitment number, and the words "la guerre" can be seen in Godard's handwriting next to the royal seal (ill. 51), is skeptically received by the two protagonists and their wives: "A letter from the king?

28   It should be added that Godard's idiosyncratic adaptation of Homer's *Odyssey* in LE MÉPRIS, which transfers the motif to film production, was made in the same year as THE CARABINEERS. A close connection can be seen here—and elsewhere—between Godard's various films, blurring the boundaries of the finished "work" and making the director's output readable as film series in communication with one another.

29   Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida. Reflections on Photography* [1980], trans. Richard Howard (London: Vintage 1993), 96.

30   See Volker Pantenburg, "Phantombilder. (Barthes – Kracauer)," *Arcadia 37* (2002), no. 2, 327–343.

31   See also Susan Sontag, "Melancholy Objects," ibid., *On Photography*, 49–82.

32   Susan Sontag, "In Plato's Cave," ibid., 15.

What garbage!" Only when, a little
later, the emissaries break down the
general term "war" into concrete
objects that can be appropriated
during combat without punishment
is the spark of enthusiasm ignited.
The film is introduced with a quote
from Borges,[33] and the following
catalogue of possible belongings
does indeed recall the Argentine
author's encyclopedic lists:

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Emissary:	First you'll enrich your mind by visiting foreign countries. And then you'll get very rich. You'll be able to have everything you want.
Ulysse:	Well, all right, but where?
Emissary:	Where the enemy is. You just have take it from the enemy. Not only land and livestock... but also houses, palaces... towns, cars, cinemas, supermarkets, stations, airfields, swimming pools, casinos, theaters, bunches of flowers, triumphal arches, cigarette factories, print shops, lighters...[34]

Though this enumeration—particularly in its grotesque intensification—
invokes a magic of naming that identifies denomination with possession,
the use of photographs is even more explicit at this point: when the emissary
pulls out a photograph of a girl in a bikini to the words, "The women of the
world!" there is more in it than an ironic denunciation of the erotic desires
of Michel Ange and Ulysse (ill. 52).

The suggestive power of photography is in fact deployed as a kind of
trump card against language. The promise of photography as concrete
depiction is superior to oral or written enumeration. In its self-evidence,
the photograph appears not only to be a constative description—on this

33   The English subtitles read: "More and more... I strive for simplicity. I use worn metaphors.
It's what's basically eternal. For example, stars resemble eyes... or death is like sleep."
34   Jean-Luc Godard, "Les carabiniers" [1963], *L'Avant-scène cinéma*, 1976, no. 171–172, 5–38: 13.
In the following section, all quotes from the film are taken from this transcription and will
only be referenced by indicating the page. In its heterogeneity, the list recalls Foucault's famous
introduction to *The Order of Things* three years after Godard's film. While Foucault's quote from
Borges takes taxonomic thinking to its limits, here the list is a kind of grotesque catalogue of
goods.

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level there is an ironic difference between description ("of the world") and what can be seen ("in a bikini")—but also a performative enunciation: the image says, "This will belong to you," and anticipates possession in the present: what is photographed is also available. The way in which Godard incorporates the photograph into the recruitment merges three different areas: war, photography, and advertising. In the picture of the girl in a bikini, the politically expansive act of "conquest"—a term that can equally be used in a sexual or political context—combines with a medium of promise and the commercial aspect of sale and purchase. In theoretical terms, the film thus thwarts the medium's established association with the past, melancholy, and memory. Godard is concerned with the future promise of the image—instrumentalized by every form of advertising—which treats the photographed object as potential property.

Removed from context and continuity, the image becomes a shiftable fragment of the world that can be instrumentalized commercially or politically at will. Susan Sontag also emphasizes this point: "Through photographs, the world becomes a series of unrelated, freestanding particles; and history, past and present, a set of anecdotes and *faits divers*."[35]

The idea that photography has led to a fragmentation of historical processes and contexts and to a leveling of meaning comes from Susan Sontag's book *On Photography*, which opens with Godard's THE CARABINEERS.[36] The film can in fact be described as a conglomerate of particles and episodes that are held together intellectually by the overall concept of war and in narrative terms by the postcards the two soldiers write home. The brief

35   Susan Sontag, "In Plato's Cave," 22f. Jonathan Crary describes something similar from the point of view of the *viewer* of photography: "The photograph becomes a central element not only in a new commodity economy but in the reshaping of an entire territory on which signs and images [...] circulate and proliferate. [...] Photography and money become homologous forms of social power in the nineteenth century." Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer. On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press 1990), 13.

36   In her exploration of photography, Sontag often turns to films, supporting the idea that a medium can most productively be analyzed from the point of view of its "neighbor" but must remain "blind" to itself.

reports of the war[37] appear as the first level of conquest, as a form of linguistic colonization, in which suffering and the everyday banality collide.

That Godard does indeed see consumerism and war as two sides of the same coin is made clear even before the recruitment scene: when the two emissaries of the king arrive at the protagonists' poor remote hut, there is a hint of what the officer's luring photograph will zero in on: Venus (Geneviève Galéa) is combing her hair in front of a simple mirror; yet she doesn't go by her reflection but tries to adjust how she looks to a magazine photograph, which she repeatedly compares to what she sees in the mirror. Identificatory desire has been transferred from the object to its depiction. Whether this shift from the represented onto the level of representations can be described as a "new" phenomenon of the 1960s, as the popular idea of a decade of increased prosperity accompanied by more widespread advertising suggests, is not important. What is certain is that at this time the potential for any arbitrary item to become an image or a commodity was increasingly noticed in art and theory. Any consumer object, however trivial, whose depiction was previously reserved for advertising, was now a potential subject matter for art— PIERROT LE FOU is not least the product of this extension of the image space. Likewise, art began—for the first time deliberately—to project itself as a commodity, oriented less to classical aesthetic standards than to the laws of the (art) market. During the 1960s, no other artist employed this dialectic more consistently than Andy Warhol, who began creating his famous paintings of Campbell soup cans or multiple Coke bottles[38] in the same year as Godard's THE CARABINEERS. If Pop Art (and here I mainly refer to Warhol's serial works) increasingly made use of photographic originals, it was only making explicit something that had already applied to Impressionist painting: Edouard Manet drew on photographs for his work, with the difference, however, that his visual source remained invisible in the final painting. Warhol's series, on the other hand, blatantly refer to their origins in press photography and thus reveal themselves as reflections on

37   Some examples of the travel impressions of Michel Ange and Ulysse: "The war has entered its third spring here and offers no prospect of peace from now on."; "We execute people in series by firing a bullet through their heads. When the pit is full of corpses, we cover it with earth."; "Yesterday we stormed the town of Santa Cruz. The girls threw flowers after us. In the evening I went to the cinema for the first time."; "We leave a trail of blood and bodies behind us. We kiss you tenderly."

38   *Big Torn Campbell's Soup Can*, *Vegetable Beef*, 1962, acrylic on canvas, 183 x 137 cm, Kunsthaus Zürich; *Green Coca Cola Bottles*, 1962, oil on canvas, 209.6 x 144.8 cm, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

the transformation of world into image. It is no wonder, therefore, that the development of Pop Art was an important impulse for the work of both Harun Farocki and Jean-Luc Godard.[39]

The increasing overlay of "world" by "image" was also perceived in the theory of the 1960s and led to various discursive and aesthetic strategies. While Pop Art and Godard responded with a euphoric embrace of the image cosmos, a skepticism about the image began to develop on the theoretical level that sometimes bordered on iconoclasm. A text that particularly polemicized against the way everything was becoming an image, and that is likely to have influenced both Godard and Farocki on its publication in 1967, is Guy Debord's manifesto *La Société du Spectacle*.[40] Almost no other text more excessively contrasts the image as an agent of illusionary dazzlement with the "actual" thing, which it causes to disappear in depiction and duplication. Debord introduces his proposition, which he then runs through many different areas, with a quote containing the core of his argument: "And certainly our time [...] prefers the image to the thing, the copy to the original, representation to reality, the appearance to being." Ludwig Feuerbach wrote this in 1843 in the forward to the second edition of his text *The Essence of Christianity*.[41] So his diagnosis that the copy was now generally preferred to the original and visual depiction to reality coincides almost exactly with the invention of photography. However, what Feuerbach diagnosed as a mere tendency only came to completion in the course of the nineteenth and

39   In a conversation with Ulrich Kriest and Rolf Aurich, Harun Farocki indicated that Bertolt Brecht and the Pop Art of the 1960s had had the greatest influence on his work: "I noticed with *How to Live in the FRG* how strongly I've been influenced by Pop Art. I think it's my strongest influence, along with Brecht. I don't know if this has been much theorized: Brecht's alienation and that of Pop Art; the avoidance of naturalized depiction is an impulse in both cases. The difference is of course that Brecht wants to develop a form of portrayal, while Pop Art adopts one. Advertising images are inappropriate images, and they are adopted because there is a truth in this distortion." Rolf Aurich, Ulrich Kriest, "Werkstattgespräch mit Harun Farocki," *Der Ärger mit den Bildern. Die Filme von Harun Farocki*, eds. ibid. (Konstanz: UVK Medien 1998), 325–347: 346f.

40   Guy Debord, *Society of Spectacle* [1967], trans. Ken Knabb (Wellington: Rebel Press 2006). For a discussion of Debord's iconoclastic project and its implications, see Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes. The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: California UP 1994), 426–434.

41   The English translation of Feuerbach's work reads: "But certainly for the present age, which prefers the sign to the thing signified, the copy to the original, fancy to reality, the appearance to the essence, this change, in as much as it does away with illusion, is an absolute annihilation, or at least a reckless profanation; for in these days *illusion* only is *sacred, truth profane*." Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Chrisitanity* [1841], trans. Marian Evans (New York: Calvin Blanchard 1855), 10.

twentieth centuries. What Debord brings to the idea is his linking of it to an ideological critique of the economic model of capitalism. In 221 aphoristic sections, he parallels the circulation of commodities and the circulation of images, observing a mutually dependent "separation" between them: there is as great a distance between producer and product as there is between image and observer. It would be possible to speak of a "two-world theory" that postulates an autonomous world of goods and images against which the consuming and seeing subject is powerless. In such a model it is not difficult to see the pessimistic notion that a direct and undisguised perception of the world has become impossible through its mediation in images and (or as) commodities. This is summed up in one of Debord's first sentences: "Everything that was directly lived has receded into a representation."[42] Life and representation (of life), directness and distance are irreconcilably opposed, and in the rest of the book this guiding difference is re-described and repeated.

The thought suggests itself that in THE CARABINEERS Godard follows a similar model of the Platonic splitting-up of "world" and "image," by which the "actual" threatens to disappear behind the world of images and needs to be rescued. But even if this is the case, the point is a different one. There is no space untainted with images or ideology in THE CARABINEERS, no utopian sphere behind the images; the problem is localized within the images themselves and reformulated into a question of appropriate image production.[43] The fact that there is nothing beyond the images that needs rescuing in an iconoclastic gesture is dealt with on several layers. The already mentioned use of existing film footage is a part of this strategy. Apart from the above-described generalizing intention, the use of archive material suggests that a cinematic critique of war can be effectively articulated only as a critique of war images.[44]

The substitution of the world by the photographic image becomes more explicit in a scene at the end of the film. I have already referred several times to the naive visual gullibility of Michel Ange: in the cinema, he holds his arms in front of his face in fear of the approaching train, and climbs up to the

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42   Guy Debord, *Society of Spectacle*, 7.

43   A further comparison of Debord and Godard should at this point also include Debord's film work. It is noticeable that in its radical image critique, the book *La Société du Spectacle* is cast as a visual desert without illustrations. Debord's films, some of which are compiled in the programmatically titled *Contre le cinéma*, follow an iconoclastic impulse. See Guy Debord, *Contre le cinéma* (Aarhus: Institut scandinave de vandalisme comparé 1964).

44   This position is further elaborated in Godard's next films and reaches its climax in his contribution to FAR FROM VIETNAM, the collective film coordinated by Chris Marker in 1967.

Ill. 53 and ill. 54

screen in order to take a look at the woman lying in the bath. Now, at the end of the film, Godard brings several strands of his image critique together. At the start, the photograph of the "woman of the world" had lured the two recruits into the war, as a representative of the promise of wealth and the power of control over any object or person. When the two men return from the war and are asked by their wives about the promised booty, they come full circle. Godard doesn't have them return empty-handed; they do in fact bring home rich spoils, which they finally hand over after the women's impatient questioning.

But the qualitative leap from image to "reality" does not occur. The baggage contains, neatly categorized and tied in tidy parcels, hundreds of postcards (ill. 53 and 54): "We're bringing back all the treasures of the world," (29) Ulysse boasts, and flips them onto the table a little later like trumps or banknotes. While doing so, he begins to systematically spell out the world in the image, gradually working himself up into a deliriously taxonomic rage:

Ulysse: The monuments. The means of transport. Shops, works of
                art, industries, riches of the earth – coal, crude oil, and so
                forth. Wonders of nature: the mountains, the rivers, the
                deserts, the landscapes, the animals, the five continents,
                the planets, and... of course...
Michel Ange: Of course, every group is divided into several others.
Ulysse: ... which are divided into others in turn. (30)

In Godard's fiction, this scene ought to mean the disillusionment of his figures. They have "only" brought images home, not a single "real" object corresponding to them. The war—according to a possible first interpretation—has had the status of a holiday from which the soldiers have brought

back postcards as souvenirs. But neither the women nor Michel Ange and Ulysse appear to be disappointed. On the contrary, they enjoy their mindless enumeration of and categorizing self-assurance in the images. From antiquity to modernity, through all the various categories, Ulysse and Michel Ange, soon enthusiastically accompanied by their wives, chant an inventory of the (image) world. In its implied completeness, a power of control, defined solely by images, is claimed over the entire globe and its history.

> The mindlessness of these enumerations, which the despisers of the film believe they may ascribe to its author, quotes the mindlessness of the idea that abundant happiness lies in the total availability of things. It is the idea of an enlightenment freed from dialectics, that governs museums and commercial advertising.[45]

When Cléopâtre (Catherine Ribeiro) complains a little later, "All right, but none of these are real things," and then asks, "When will we have them?" to be assured by Michel Ange, "Whenever we want," (34) it becomes clear that Michel Ange and Ulysse haven't yet lost their belief in the image and its authority. Both men have a magical understanding of the image that doesn't categorically distinguish between image and object. Signifier and signified are thought of as identical; in an almost legal sense, possession of an image also means possession of the thing. If the two carabineers are shown as indiscriminately murdering, naive perpetrators, they are also victims of a naive understanding of the image that Godard exaggerates satirically:

> Heroes who believe in images, who are formed by images and directed by them, who have retained nothing of their lives apart from a series of images, who will die in search of the real-absent which these images guarantee. More than a meditation on cinema, *The Carabineers* is a questioning of our civilization of images. Behind us (motor) is the image as ancient myth, before us (goal) the image as future myth, and we are no longer very far away from a philosophy of the omnipotent imaginary; the imaginary as human destiny.[46]

Independent of whether, like Barthélemy Amengual, we see a step towards a philosophy of the imaginary in this, Godard's film is about the confusion of world and image, about an illusionism represented by both cinema and

45   Patalas, "Godards Film vom Krieg," 260.
46   Amengual, "Jean-Luc Godard et la remise en cause de notre civilisation de l'image," 145.

photography. The mistake that Michel Ange and Ulysse make when they equate depictions with the things they portray is the same as the one made by viewers who see a real war in Godard's film. "Realism," as Godard's position can be paraphrased here, is at best a deceptive effect of the medium and should be presented as such. The cinema as a projective apparatus (both literally and figuratively) functions according to the same principles of desire and promise that lured the two soldiers into the war. Parts of the film can therefore be understood as statements about filmmaking.

But something else becomes visible if we also take into account the relationship between word and image, which was at issue before Ulysse and Michel Ange's journey. In the tautological naming of the triumphantly presented objects, the linguistic authority loses its persuasiveness in the same way as the images do. What appears to signal ownership in language and image is in fact common property and consists of standardized formulas lacking any autonomy. The labels that name the things portrayed do not adhere to the objects but, in their stereotypicality as general terms, at best invoke an exchangeable relationship. However, it should be recalled here that it is not mere photographs that Ulysse and Michel Ange bring home but postcards. Here, too, Godard's decision conforms to his preference, recognizable on other levels, for already existing material, which he simply recombines and imbues with meaning: with the postcard—as with the newsreel footage—the originator of the image retreats behind the information content of what is depicted. The images are anonymous and standardized, but they are above all—just like the paintings in PIERROT LE FOU—single copies of visual motifs that have been reproduced thousands of times. The idea of ownership of the respective object collapses ironically in the face of the fact that thousands of other viewers "possess" it in exactly the same way.

In THE CARABINEERS, the struggle between text and image is ironically decided in favor of photography: where the written induction order lacks authority, the photograph of the woman in a bikini is enough of an incentive to go to war. Godard shows the confusion of image and reality, of signifier and signified, as a delusion that not only affects Michel Ange and Ulysse but also the viewers and critics who demand from a "war film" an unambiguous criticism of real war. The question of war is thus shifted to that of its images, and political issues become visible as those of visual politics. The apparently "transparent" medium of photography is presented as a wall from which Michel Ange and Ulysse rebound with their desires for ownership, along with audiences who expect a view of war through the cinema screen. In this respect, THE CARABINEERS should be read as an allegory of the viewer,

who in his laughter at the protagonists sees himself called into question about his naive grasp of photographs.

Rendering: BEFORE YOUR EYES VIETNAM

Like THE CARABINEERS, Harun Farocki's film BEFORE YOUR EYES VIETNAM also has to do with the circulation of photographs. However, this is no nameless and generic war but the American intervention in Vietnam and its proliferation through press photos. More than with his other films, in BEFORE YOUR EYES VIETNAM Harun Farocki conveys his reflections on images through a storyline. The film is Farocki's most "narrative" work, together with BETWEEN TWO WARS and BETRAYED, and the one most firmly in the tradition of the auteur film. His stylized black-and-white images recall the rigid framing of Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, who along with Godard are an important point of orientation for Farocki.[47] Like Straub and Huillet, Farocki also adopts a strategy of paradigmatic alienation and disallows a narrative form calculated to arouse empathy in the viewer. And as in 1969 in INEXTINGUISHABLE FIRE, images from Vietnam are the film's central point of reference.

THE CARABINEERS and BEFORE YOUR EYES VIETNAM overlap in several ways, even though they adopt quite different cinematic registers. In Godard's film, comic elements predominate.[48] The view of photography as a displaceable image frame that replaces reality and supplants actual objects follows the logic of the burlesque and uses established means of exaggeration and characterization. Two naive country bumpkins, through whose eyes the viewer is presented with war as a tourist leisure program, are on an expedition from which postcards are brought home as trophies and "acts of ownership."[49] The film presents photographs as a visual medium that organizes the desires of those confronted with it. Farocki's film dispenses with the comic element to take up some of the basic questions lying beneath the surface of Godard's film. What image of war is portrayed by television and photographic reportage? How can images of war be read, reformulated, and related to an entirely different situation? What does "Vietnam" mean in West

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47 In 1983, Farocki played the role of Delamarche in KLASSENVERHÄLTNISSE and made a short film about the rehearsal process with Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet (JEAN-MARIE STRAUB AND DANIÈLE HUILLET AT WORK ON A FILM BASED ON FRANZ KAFKA'S *AMERIKA*, BRD 1983, director: Harun Farocki).

48 "The commedia dell'arte digresses and almost escalates into burlesque." Amengual, "Jean-Luc Godard et la remise en cause de notre civilisation de l'image," 130.

49 Godard, "Les carabiniers," 34.

Berlin in 1982? How can this be meaningfully rendered eight years after the Saigon armistice? What role does the spatial and temporal distance between photograph and viewer play in the interpretation of the events? More than the images themselves, looking at them is central to Farocki's film. At one point, the program not only of this film but of Farocki's overall guiding inquiry is summarized in a succinct formula: "The philosopher asks: What is man? I ask: What is an image?" The film reaches a provisional answer in repeatedly portraying the image as something located in between other images and seeking to decipher its meaning in the tension between them.

Before Your Eyes Vietnam is a Vietnam film that differs from its American counterparts, which were in vogue during the 1970s, in almost every respect. The story of Robert (Marcel Werner) and Anna (Anna Mandel), a couple who are trying to bring love, work, and politics together in a meaningful way, doesn't pretend to be set in Southeast Asia, like Coppola's Apocalypse Now, or the USA, like Hal Ashby's Coming Home and other "returnee" films: Farocki instead transfers the problematic to Germany.[50] The Vietnam he is interested in is perceived in West Berlin via television and photographs, and was recreated for the shooting—with simple means and immediately recognizable as a staging—in rural West Germany. "We have to replace the images from Vietnam with images from here, express Vietnam here" is one of the central axioms of the protagonist Robert and also reflects the stance of the author Farocki. Photography is the most important medium in this act of transfer; it should be understood as a metaphor and an appeal to a particular kind of reading, not as unambiguously readable "evidence" of acts of war.

Three levels can be distinguished on which (image) theory is staged in Before Your Eyes Vietnam. First, that of the characters: the film tells a love story that overlaps with the history of the Vietnam War, is called into question by it, and also questions the images of the war, including numerous photographs. The couple meet at a demonstration against the war and try to establish a relationship to it through a study of texts and images. In contrast to a conventional love story, the attempt to communicate through images, and to articulate similarities and differences through looking at the war photographs, is in the foreground here. "The couple's difficulties are, however, present in the film only in a very muted form, insofar as their own central preoccupation is to understand the relation between the personal and the political, dramatized in their anti-Vietnam war protests

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50   See also Rembert Hüser, "Etwas Vietnam," in eds. Aurich, Kriest, *Der Ärger mit den Bildern*, 215–230.

and their encounter with this war through its media representations.[51]"
Much of the deliberation that in Farocki's later films is spoken in a voiceover
commentary is incorporated into the diegesis here and divided between
the two protagonists Anna and Robert:

> *Before Your Eyes Vietnam* dissolves the elements that an essay film usually
> assigns to the commentary level. This equally includes theoretical discus-
> sions about possible explanations for the differences between American
> and North Vietnamese society or the equipment and motivation of the
> GIs and the Viet Cong, and the (often radically) changing opinions and
> attitudes of the German left in relation to the war, both during and after.[52]

Secondly, alongside these dialogically distributed theoretical fragments,
theory is articulated on the level of the images themselves, which in their
juxtaposition develop a dynamic that is taken up by the characters and
translated into dialogue. And third, Farocki's extended text "Dog from the
Freeway" contains additional material and further develops ideas from the
film, putting them in a different perspective.[53]

Problematizing the representation of war in photographs particularly
suggests itself in the case of the Vietnam War. It isn't necessary to belabor
the truism "first television war" in order to realize that not only the percep-
tion but also the moral indignation of the war's opponents was primarily
directed by images. Even if television was a factor in the politicization that
took place in Europe and America, in retrospect the photographs of the
war seem to have impressed themselves on people's minds more strongly
than the television sequences.[54] Before Your Eyes Vietnam addresses
both media; to a certain extent, the film "remembers" the time of the war
and repeatedly uses this memory as a means of distancing and reflection.

Farocki utilizes photographs at two hinge points of his film in order to set
in motion ideas about the relationship between images and politics. In the

51   Thomas Elsaesser, "Political Filmmaking after Brecht: Harun Farocki, for example," *Harun Farocki. Working on the Sight-Lines*, ed. ibid. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam UP 2004), 133–153: 140.
52   Rainer Rother, "Das Lesen von Bildern. Notizen zu Harun Farockis Film *Etwas wird sichtbar*," in eds. Aurich, Kriest, *Der Ärger mit den Bildern*, 231–244: 233f.
53   Harun Farocki, "Dog from the Freeway" [1982], *Harun Farocki. Working on the Sight-Lines,* 109–132.
54   The photograph of the burning monk Thich Quang Duc, who doused himself with gasoline and set fire to himself on the streets of Hue in 1963, the napalm-burned screaming children running towards the photographer, the photograph of the execution used in Before Your Eyes Vietnam: as frozen moments in time, these photographs seem to have a greater effect than film.

Ill. 55

first, he quotes one of the most important photographic icons of the year 1968 (ill. 55). The image shows the police chief of Saigon executing a Viet Cong suspect. The Associated Press photographer Eddie Adams took the picture on January 2, 1968, shortly after the North Vietnamese Tet Offensive, which took the war from the country's rural areas into its cities. It is one of the most frequently published war photographs ever and shocks because gun and camera have shot almost simultaneously. Although in a deliberately artless way, Farocki deals with the photograph much as Jean-Luc Godard approached the famous paintings a year before in PASSION:[55] he translates the two-dimensional image back into motion and turns it into a tableau vivant—a scene that no longer shows the representation itself but rather the act of representation. The photograph is reenacted by children; the boy holds a wooden pistol instead of a revolver. The simulation differs from the original in that here the photographer himself appears in the image. Farocki puts an additional frame around the scene, opening up the act of representation. A further step back, which would encompass the act of filming, becoming ever more inclusive and never coming to an end, might also be conceivable. The film image of the shooting of the Viet Cong guerrilla therefore consists *in itself* of two images: the photographic original and its reenactment; it can only be understood in this difference. The superimposition contains two pieces of contradictory information: "This is an image from Vietnam" and "This is not an image from Vietnam," the common denominator being "'This is an image," whose visibility and readability can't be taken for granted but have to be determined through interpretation.

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55   See also Thomas Elsaesser: "The tableaux in which the 'visual motifs' of the Vietnam War are are in a certain sense presented similarly to the short narrations in Godard's *Passion* (F/CH 1982) or the collaged stories of Raul Ruiz, but they are not concerned with elaborateness or mimetic meticulousness and instead concentrate their deliberate artlessness on bringing forth certain abstract and abstracting aspects, which require a non-referential space, while nonetheless pointing out that they are images of West Berlin." Thomas Elsaesser, "'Mit diesen Bildern hat es angefangen.' Anmerkungen zum politischen Film nach Brecht. Das Beispiel Harun Farocki," in eds. Aurich, Kriest, *Der Ärger mit den Bildern*, 138f. This passage seems to be missing in the English version of Elsaesser's text.

This scene, which makes the familiar but worn-out Vietnam photo visible once again through deviation, is immediately followed by a second, much more explicit reflection on the possibilities and limitations of photography. In place of the deadly shot, Farocki cuts back to everyday life in West Berlin. A forced interpretation allows this edit to be understood metaphorically: the identification of the Vietnam War with West German reality—through the cut, which places them so close together—is itself an act of violence. The principle of simple—political and visual—representation, as exemplified by Rudi Dutschke's succinct phrase "In Vietnam, we too are crushed day by day"[56] is

Ill. 56 and ill. 57

superseded by an awareness of incomparability. In this respect, the cut from the Vietnam photograph to West Berlin illustrates the ambivalence within every montage decision: montage establishes a comparison and constructs an equivalence that is undermined and questioned in the same moment: "Politically, metaphorical thinking is criticised in the film because the Vietnam experience teaches that concepts such as struggle and resistance, in order to be effective, have to be thought differently, as a relational dynamic of non-equivalent entities, such as strong and weak, machine and tool, centre and margin, the visible and the representable."[57] The film seeks abstraction and transfer, only to decide on the singular and concrete.

How the film achieves this is shown in the scene after the photograph of the execution. We see the two protagonists in a sparsely furnished apartment, which has two functions in the film. It is a private place of love but also of study—one of the central problems of the film is the question of how both the private and the political, love and work, can be brought together. Like an

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56   Dutschke's speech to the Vietnam congress of the Free University in Berlin in February 1968.
57   Thomas Elsaesser, "Political Filmmaking after Brecht: Harun Farocki, for example," 151.

exhortation not to forget, Anna and Robert have hung press photos of the Vietnam War on two of the room's walls. The camera takes in these photographs in a long tracking shot: in one of the first there is a row of imprisoned Vietnamese men; the next shows women and children being guided by soldiers across a river or paddy field. After the camera has passed the backs of Anna and Robert, who can be seen in an embrace in front of the wall of photographs, it looks over Robert's shoulder into a mirror. The faces of the couple can now be seen from the front (ill. 56 and 57). We see them looking at the photographs and hear Robert commenting on the one to the right of the mirror:

> The American soldier has a stethoscope to hear whether there are tunnels under the ground through which the Viet Cong are moving. Like a doctor. And the image says: the Viet Cong is a sickness that has befallen Vietnam. The American soldier is the doctor who will bring the country back to health. And it says something else too: The Viet Cong is the blood flowing through Vietnam's veins. The heartbeat.[58]

In "Dog from the Freeway," Farocki takes on Robert's role and interprets the photograph of the two American soldiers. His reading is introduced with the sentence: "A photograph from Vietnam. An interesting photo. One has to put a lot into it to get a lot out of it."[59] What can be read out of the photograph is anything but unambiguous, however. Over and above the denotative level, there are two possible, diametrically opposed interpretations that also stand for two differing ideologies: different conclusions can be drawn depending on how the metaphor of the soldier as doctor is seen: whether he is diagnosing an illness or bringing his patient back to health. Here, too, the decisive thing is not in the photograph itself but in Brecht's sense has slipped into the functional and needs to be reconstructed by relating it to one's own attitude or to other photographs.[60] The fact that Robert and Anna, framed by the mirror, are also included in the series of photos has several consequences. For one thing, it directly expresses the phenomenon of reflecting on images and illustrates the necessity of establishing a relationship between the self-image (here, now, in Berlin) and foreign images (there, then, in Vietnam). Anna comments on the series' danger of leveling out

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58   Anna and Robert's conversation is reprinted in Aurich, Kriest eds., *Der Ärger mit den Bildern*, 240–243: 240.

59   Harun Farocki, "Dog from the Freeway," 109.

60   For a more detailed discussion of the connections between Brecht and Farocki, which become clear in Before Your Eyes Vietnam and other films, see Elsaesser, "Political Filmmaking after Brecht: Harun Farocki, for example," 133–153.

with the words: "How illegitimate
it looks. An image of us between
images of war," and Robert adds:
"Like in a war film. An exciting
love story against the background of
war and genocide." Farocki counters
the classical dramaturgy of the war
film summarized in these words
with the following discussion
between the couple. Talking about
the photographs on the wall, Anna

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says: "It began with these images. They started to appear in 1965, first in
the USA, Sweden, France, then here as well. Captioned 'Torture in the name
of freedom' or 'America's dirty war'." In answer to the question as to why
there are so many photographs of individual shootings and abuse from the
Vietnam War, Robert gives a historical explanation:

> What was new was Americans killing personally, like sadists, robbers
> and murderers, jealous maniacs. In the Second World War they had killed
> like the law. They enforced it. They gunned down everything in front of
> them, made their motorized advance, fired again. Like a machine, an
> enforcement machine. In Vietnam the soldier is so close to his victim
> that both fit into one photograph.

The photographs that aroused such moral indignation and gave rise to
political action during the 1960s also set in motion an ideological struggle
about their use that understood them as evidence and instrumentalized
them as advertising for one's own moral integrity: a photograph showing
American cruelty hangs next to one showing a Viet Cong atrocity (ill. 58).

Despite their opposing ideologies, the proximity of these two photographs
therefore indicates a closeness between the rhetorical strategies from which
they derive: "The images were so close together. We pointed to one and said
'Americans, get out.' They pointed to another and said 'Viet Cong, get out.'
It was like advertising. It was a competition for the worst cruelty. It made
me feel ashamed," is how Anna summarizes the use of photographs during
the Vietnam War, and Farocki reduces the problematic to a systematic
common denominator: "These discussions are not about pictures, but about
what a picture represents. If it is representative, one may take an interest in
what is shown. If it is not sensitive, one has to be able to see through what

is actually depicted."[61] What Farocki calls for here, and articulates through the figures of Anna and Robert in the film, is a moral attitude towards the image that mistrusts the representational claim of photography (an image stands for a political conviction) as much as its apparent evidence (an image stands for what it shows). The image should not be understood as an answer but as a question whose context and interests need to be reconstructed. A photograph carries a temporal and subjective index. It is defined by a distance from the viewer, the implications of which need to be pursued. Images of the World and the Inscription of War takes up these issues and extends the question of images to that of the connection between military and civilian image production and processing. The focus is no longer on rendition but on survey.

Surveying: Images of the World and the Inscription of War

"The preserving photograph, the destroying bomb, these two now press together."
Harun Farocki[62]

A digression: in 1988, Manfred Blank and Harun Farocki made a trip to the Cine City Paris.[63] The two former contributors to *Filmkritik*, who had taken the roles of Robinson and Delamarche in Straub/Huillet's Kafka film,[64] made a documentary that doesn't conjure up the stereotypical cinematic myth of the city but revisits actual traces of the cinema in contemporary Paris.[65] The films of Jean-Luc Godard are present in Cine City Paris in many ways. In a department store, the filmmakers stumble on Godard's video installation

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61   Farocki, "Dog from the Freeway," 131.

62   Images of the World and the Inscription of War, BRD 1988, director: Harun Farocki. The commentary is published in *Harun Farocki: Diagrams. Images from Ten Films*, ed. Benedikt Reichenbach (Cologne: König 2014), 273–286: 278. In the following section, all quotes from the film are taken from this transcription and will only be referenced by indicating the page.

63   Cine City Paris, BRD 1988, directors: Manfred Blank, Harun Farocki.

64   Klassenverhältnisse, BRD 1983, directors: Jean-Marie Straub, Danièle Huillet.

65   The film includes a mythical place like the Cinémathèque française along with Michel Dela-haye, one of the most influential critics of the *Cahiers du cinéma*, the film collector René Charles, and the anthropologist Marc Augé. But Blank and Farocki also document peripheral forms of cinema—such as women who provide "erotic services" via Minitel, or the robot-controlled image archive in the Forum des Images.

ON S'EST TOUS DÉFILÉ,[66] a short montage that was made as part of a series of
television adverts for the Swiss fashion designers Marithé and François Girbaud.
However, another scene is more interesting in relation to Farocki's involvement
with photography, and introduces Godard as if his films hadn't only entered
the real or imaginary city of Paris but also the unconsciousness of Farocki and
Blank. The two exhausted filmmakers sit at a café table, snoozing after a series
of interviews and visits to various cinephiles. On the voiceover we hear the
words: "We sleep and dream. We sleep and dream of the images." The dream
shown in the following shots is about different ways of organizing images.
We see the large robot in the Vidéothèque de Paris (later renamed Forum des
Images) that at the touch of a button can fetch video cassettes from the shelves
and play them for interested viewers. Another sequence is blended into these
images, proposing a second cinematographic archive: the scene from THE
CARABINEERS in which Michel Ange and Ulysse show their wives their booty of
photographs. Two ways of collecting and systemizing images—as the spoils of
war and by robot in a prestige institution from the Mitterand era—are brought
together and provoke the general question of the addressability and availability
of images. This scene is not only a further example of the many paths leading
from Godard to Farocki; it also marks the specific interest of both filmmakers
in the medium of photography, locating it at the intersection of destruction and
war on the one hand, and of preservation and archiving on the other.

IMAGES OF THE WORLD AND THE INSCRIPTION OF WAR, which starts from
this ambivalence and provides us with a complex discussion on the medium
of photography, was made at the same time as CINE CITY PARIS. Outside Ger-
many, the film was also noticed in the United States—primarily in academic
circles—and did much to increase Farocki's popularity there.[67] It theorizes
technical images much more explicitly than THE CARABINEERS and does so
not by delegating this to the characters in a storyline but through the images
themselves and their montage, and also through a commentary, which is a criti-
cal text in itself.[68] Farocki's analysis of the photographic images is influenced by

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66   For ON S'EST TOUS DÉFILÉ, in connection with Godard's motifs of procession and projection,
see Christa Blümlinger, "Prozession und Projektion: Anmerkungen zu einer Figur bei Jean-Luc
Godard," *Zwischen-Bilanz. Eine Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von Joachim Paech*, www.uni-
konstanz.de/paech2002 [accessed February 1, 2006].

67   Kaja Silverman, "What is a Camera? or: History in the Field of Vision," *Discourse* vol. 15, no.
3 (spring 1993), 3–57; Tom Keenan, "Light Weapons," *Documents* 1/2 (fall/winter 1992), 147–153;
Nora M. Alter, "The Political Im/Perceptible," ibid., *Projecting History. German Nonfiction Cinema
1967–2000* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 2002), 77–102. Farocki was himself a visiting
professor at the University of California in Berkeley from 1993 to 1999.

68   It makes sense that the commentary was published in 1993 in the journal *Discourse*: Harun
Farocki, "Commentary from *Bilder der Welt und Inschrift des Krieges*," *Discourse* vol. 15, no. 3

phenomenology, and attempts to develop arguments from within the material itself. The frequently still images of his film are therefore not confronted with an elaborated visual theory: it is the images themselves that imply or evoke particular thoughts. Nora Alter succinctly describes IMAGES OF THE WORLD as "implied/applied theory"[69] and lists the heterogeneous topics that are held together and focused in it through the medium of photography: "The film interrogates photographic processes of image making and the surrounding disciplines that use these images: fine arts, engineering, architecture, artisanal and assembly-line production, city planning and urban renewal, military science and practice."[70] The photographic image—in more general terms one should say the photogram—represents a link here between various fields of activity and discourse. It connects the sphere of art with that of the architectural survey and air reconnaissance; in the form of image-recognition software, it is used in automobile production and police work. The wide-ranging title of IMAGES OF THE WORLD AND THE INSCRIPTION OF WAR acknowledges this comprehensive organization of all areas of life by images and can be related back to the film itself, which is simultaneously an analysis and an aspect of this image world. In Farocki's film, "reading" images—metaphorically alluded to in the title—appears as a basic practice determining civilian and military activity, and needs to be fostered by schooling the eye.

In order to establish the theoretical aspects developed in IMAGES OF THE WORLD, it is useful to describe the film's various levels in more detail. An inventory of the complex of motifs brought together by the spoken commentary and through repetitions of individual image clusters allows several layers to be distinguished: the story of Albrecht Meydenbauer, one of the pioneers of photogrammetry; a female face being made up; women in a nude drawing class; aerial photographs of Auschwitz taken by American reconnaissance planes in April 1944; deliberations on aerial photographs in general; aerial photographs of various bombing raids; photographs of the empty premises of the last metal-printing company in Berlin; sequences of electronic image processing and pattern recognition (in automobile production and police searches, for example); sketches and drawings by the concentration-camp prisoner Alfred Kantor; photographs from the

(spring 1993), 78–92. A transcription of the film is also included in Harun Farocki, *Diagrams. Images from Ten Films*, ed. Benedikt Reichenbach (Cologne: Walther König 2014), 273–286.

69   Alter, "The Political Im/Perceptible" 81. Despite this apt formulation, Alter mostly discusses Farocki's films as examples of the problematic category "essay film."

70   Ibid.,82.

Auschwitz extermination camp taken by the SS; police composite draw-
ings; meditations on the development and adoption of perspective in the
Renaissance; thoughts about the camouflage of potential military targets
to protect them from airstrikes; the story of the prisoners Rudolf Vrba and
Alfréd Wetzler, who succeeded in escaping from Auschwitz; a volume of
photographs of Algerian women who were photographed unveiled for the
first time in 1960. Some of these images are interpreted in a voiceover—as
in STILL LIFE, this only happens during the non-moving sections of the film.

The first shot of the film is strictly observational and concrete, but it also
opens up the film for an allegorical, abstract reading:

> When the sea surges against the land, irregularly, not haphazardly, this
> motion binds the gaze without fettering it and sets free the thoughts.
> The surge that sets the thoughts in motion is here being investigated in
> its own motion—in the large wave channel at Hanover. The motions of
> water are still less researched than those of light. (274)

This open beginning, in which the film differs from its shorter precursor IM-
AGES–WAR,[71] uses the image of waves to describe the desired effect of IMAGES
OF THE WORLD: to attract the eye without constraining it. But the image of
light also speaks to the central metaphor of the film and is followed in two di-
rections: its place in the history of ideas as a symbol for "enlightenment," and
empirically as the precondition for—and in a sense author of—a new type
of image, the photograph. Moreover, the shot of the wave channel introduces
a third element: that of experimental measurement and evaluation, whose
special case of image analysis Farocki both examines and continues. In this
context, the photograph should be understood as a medium that is itself the
result of measurement and evaluation—an image that owes its existence to
various formulas rather than direct transfer. Elements can be seen here from
the photographic theory of Vilém Flusser, whose books Farocki reviewed
and with whom he did an interview for the television channel WDR in the
preparatory phase of IMAGES OF THE WORLD. "Like all technical images, pho-
tographs are concepts encoded as states of things, including photographers'
concepts, such as those that have been programmed into the camera,"[72]

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71   IMAGES–WAR, BRD 1987, director: Harun Farocki. Lasting 45 minutes, IMAGES–WAR is half
an hour shorter than IMAGES OF THE WORLD. Among other things, it lacks the central shot of
the woman photographed on her arrival at the concentration camp.

72   Vilém Flusser, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography* [1983], trans. Anthony Mathews (London:
Reaktion Books 2000), 48. The discussion with Vilém Flusser, in which he and Farocki analyze
the front page of the current tabloid *BILD-Zeitung*, was broadcast by WDR on May 1, 1986 under
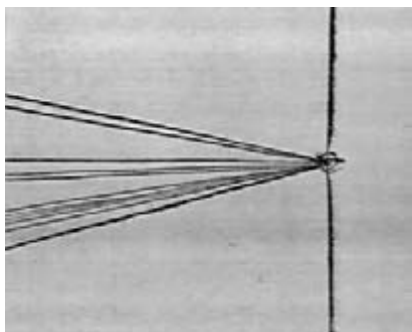
Ills. 59-61

says Flusser in a radical departure from a realistic interpretation of photography. His statement draws attention to the distance between depiction and reality: only after the multiple conversion of an impression of light by chemical and physical formulas can a representation appear that denies its conceptual origins in its apparent accordance with reality. Itself the result of the measurement of the world, during the nineteenth century the photograph began to be used as an instrument of measurement and survey: in criminology, military reconnaissance, and architecture, to mention only a few of the areas covered in IMAGES OF THE WORLD.

It is difficult to reduce the different visual levels of the film to a single concept. But through rhythmization and repetition they are combined into image clusters, whose boundaries and transitions enable a leap from the individual shot to an abstract image or concept—a leap, that is, that has to take place in the viewer's mind if he or she is to bridge the gap between the film's different areas of interest. This can be illustrated by the frequent appearance in the montage of a puzzling image: at various points in the film—for the first time immediately after the shot of the wave channel—the face of a woman being made up can be seen. "Enlightenment—that is a word in the history of ideas. In German,

the title of SCHLAGWORTE – SCHLAGBILDER. EIN GESPRÄCH MIT VILÉM FLUSSER. A text on Flusser's theory of photography also appeared in the journal *Der Schnitt*: Harun Farocki, "Das Universum ist leer," *Der Schnitt* no. 24 (2001), 18–19 [special issue on Vilém Flusser and film].

Aufklärung" (274) says the commentary, introducing the guiding concept of the film (ill. 59–61).

This apparently isolated image comes from a film that Farocki had made fifteen years previously[73] and shows a woman's closed eye. In IMAGES OF THE WORLD, it is embedded between a drawing of an eye struck by a conically ordered series of rays and a photograph of Wetzlar Cathedral. In the first image, seeing is presented as a subject of investigation, with historically different explanations, while the face refers to changes to which *the seen* can be subjected through human intervention. The face is "disguised" in the same way that the surface (the "face") of the world is camouflaged during wartime to prevent it being recognized from the air.[74] The image of the face is thus a prologue to the film's later discussions of aerial photography. With the third shot, the film switches to the modus of historical argumentation and marks the starting point for an examination of photographic surveying.

The film traces the development of photogrammetry back to a hazardous situation experienced by Albrecht Meydenbauer, a pioneer of the technique, while surveying Wetzlar Cathedral. In Farocki's film, this occurrence becomes the primal scene of a specific type of photography closely connected to the aspect of distancing. "In the year 1858 in Wetzlar, the local governor building officer Meydenbauer had the task of measuring the dimensions of the cathedral façade. To save the costs of erecting scaffolding he traversed the length of the façade with a basket hanging from block and tackle, the same method used for cleaning windows." (274) Meydenbauer luckily averted a fall on climbing out of the basket and had the idea of replacing the dangerous act of personal surveying with photographs. Farocki comments on this decision as follows: "The idea of obtaining measurements through photography came to Meydenbauer after he was suspended between life and death. That means: It is dangerous to hold out physically on the spot. Safer: to take a picture." (274) This sequence can be seen as a blueprint for the rest of the film, as it contains the essential motifs that will be developed. One of them being the aspect of distancing, a "modern fate" that combines with the photograph "to relate to the world by viewing it, taking views of it, as if at a distance to it, as from behind the self."[75]

73   MAKE UP, BRD 1973, director: Harun Farocki.
74   For an interpretation of these images, see also Kaja Silverman "What is a Camera?" 16ff.
75   Cavell, "What Photography Calls Thinking," 33.

Ill. 62

Aside from the disciplining function of photographs, but closely connected with it, the link between photography and death is central to IMAGES OF THE WORLD. While Meydenbauer's photographs were intended to avoid danger to life, photography has repeatedly revealed itself as death's accomplice—as in the photographs taken by members of the SS in the concentration camps, for example. Comparatively late in Farocki's film it becomes apparent that his lines of argumentation have been organized in relation to a hitherto concealed center. A photograph from Auschwitz occupies a prominent position in IMAGES OF THE WORLD. It shows a woman photographed by an SS man after her arrival in the camp: she glances at the photographer (ill. 62), who captures her movement from right to left:

> A woman has arrived at Auschwitz; the camera captures her in movement. The photographer has his camera installed and as the woman passes by he clicks the shutter, in the same way he would cast a glance at her in the street, because she is beautiful. The woman understands how to pose her face so as to catch the eye of the photographer, and how to look with a slight sideways glance. On a boulevard she would look in the same way just past a man casting his eye over her, at a shop window, and with this sideways glance she seeks to displace herself into a world of boulevards, men and shop windows. Far from here. The camp run by the SS shall bring her to destruction, and the photographer who captures her beauty for posterity is from this very same SS. How the two elements interplay, preservation and destruction! (280)

The photograph and its commentary, whose interpretive collision of banality and murder have provoked dissent and protest[76] (as Godard's montage of Elizabeth Taylor and the images from Auschwitz in HISTOIRE(S) DU CINÉMA can also seem scandalous), introduce the most important theme of IMAGES OF THE WORLD: the dialectic of belligerent genocidal destruction and simultaneous photographic preservation. In their *Dialectic of Enlightenment*,

76   See, for example, Dietrich Leder, "Begegnungen in Duisburg und anderswo," eds. Aurich, Kriest, *Der Ärger mit den Bildern*, 57–72: 66.

Horkheimer and Adorno call rationality into question in the face of the systematic killing carried out by the National Socialists, maintaining that "the wholly enlightened earth is radiant with triumphal calamity."[77] In Farocki's film, photography epitomizes this ambiguity like no other medium.

The example of the Shoah shows the possibilities and deficits of photography in a particularly drastic way. Auschwitz represents the boundary of all visual depiction. That the annihilation of the Jews cannot be directly portrayed without making light of it through individual narration is a view that Godard and Farocki share. Godard has repeatedly criticized Schindler's List, even saying

Ill. 63 and ill. 64

that Steven Spielberg should have been prevented from making the film, which obscenely individualizes the horror of the camps into an object of the viewer's empathy.[78] Where Spielberg subordinates the reality of the camps to the concrete story of a single person, Godard uses abstraction and alienation to capture an idea of horror in his contrasting montage of Elizabeth Taylor and images from Auschwitz. Images of the World is also directed against individualized narration; the film often refers to the television series Holocaust, which was broadcast with great success in the United States and Germany in 1978 and 79, and distances itself from the series' sentimentalizing narrative scheme. In Images of the World, this diagnosis gives rise to two strategies. A first step in the direction of alienation is to draw on existing visual material. This corresponds to Godard's use of newsreels instead of shooting his own material for the acts of war in The Carabineers. Farocki interprets publicly available photographs and relates
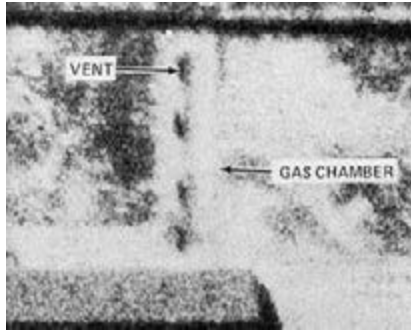
77   Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* [1947], ed. Gunzelin Schmid, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford UP 2002), 1–34: 1.
78   Jean-Luc Godard, "Godard/Amar. Cannes 97" [1997], *Godard par Godard II*, 408–422: 416 and "Résistance de l'art" [1997], *Godard par Godard II*, 443–446: 446.

them to one another. He prefers montage and commentary to a dramatic mise en scène. Aside from photographs from inside Auschwitz, a group of aerial photographs of the complex taken by Allied reconnaissance planes in August 1944 (ill. 63 and 64) is the most important basis of his montage.

Death cannot be seen directly in these images, but it is recognizable at a distance. The photographs are Allied intelligence with which it would have been possible to find the camp a year before the end of the war—something that was only discovered in the 1970s, because during the war, interest was concentrated on the nearby Buna plant. In discussions,[79] Farocki has explained how these photographs gave him the chance to speak about the extermination camps in the first place, because they already contain an alienation effect that enables one to give form and language to something that actually cannot be portrayed. A woman on arrival, photographs from 23,000 feet: in each case, the image stands for a different one, which the viewers themselves create or can supplement with their own historical knowledge. But at the same time, the two images belong to different categories: "They embody the technical and the narrative mode of historical writing."[80] Thus they stand for two poles of the tradition of which cinema is also a part. As witnessed by nine out of ten films, cinema is primarily a narrative medium, which can recount individual people and their stories. But film is also a surveying technique and is able to abstract from the singular. Farocki summarizes both tendencies as symptoms of a crisis in the photographic image: "[T]his is somehow a turning point in human history. Both types of narrative, both types of images are inadequate, both are inappropriate."[81] Showing the photographs from Auschwitz despite this expresses the hope of finding some kind of adequate portrayal through the combination of two images that taken in themselves are inapt.

The film pursues the dialectic of preservation and destruction through a number of areas that illuminate the field of image production in various facets: the individual sections of the film initially appear to have little to do with the subject of Auschwitz; only a repeated reading of the film and its complementary text uncovers a subterranean reference system that makes up a complex "dialectic of the survey." As already mentioned, a first line of argumentation concerns the surveying of buildings, which was made less

79   For example in February 2003 at an event on "Political Film after Brecht" at the Brecht-Haus in Berlin.
80   Harun Farocki in conversation: Thomas Elsaesser, "Making the World Superfluous: An Interview with Harun Farocki," *Harun Farocki. Working on the Sight-Lines*, 183.
81   Ibid.

hazardous for the surveyor through the use of photography from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Photography was intended to reduce danger here, but it allowed for destruction at the same time, as the photographs were intended as an aid for reconstruction should the building be destroyed. This results in a first line of connection between labor, war, and image production. The film historically extends this to the aerial photographs from the Second World War and introduces the ambiguous term *Aufklärung* (Ger. "enlightenment," "reconnaissance," "solution") as an argumentative hinge between the individual levels. *Aufklärung* doesn't just stand here for a concept from the history of ideas that Adorno and Horkheimer consider to have always been one of the surveying and dominance of the world; it is also a concept in criminology and military language and is closely connected to the medium of photography through mug shots, composite images, and reconnaissance photos. In the nineteenth century, photography introduced a type of image that uncouples seeing from the seeing subject and thus also optical knowledge from the knower. The mistrust of photography felt by Farocki and Godard feeds from this tendency to give the photograph a dynamic of its own and to create a world of technical images which evades human responsibility. Against this background, it can be seen why painting and not photography is Godard's permanent reference point in HISTOIRE(S) DU CINÉMA. On the other hand, it also becomes clear why Farocki—since IMAGES OF THE WORLD at the latest—insists on the particular theorization of technical images, which for their part have become theoretical objects that are beginning to detach themselves from spatial and temporal determinations.

It is due to a historical innovation that the Second World War and the Nazi extermination camps mark the center of gravity around which the other types of images in IMAGES OF THE WORLD revolve: in the warplane the camera is directly linked to bombardment for the first time; the destruction of the world and the record of this destruction converge within the photograph. Farocki's argumentation here evokes Paul Virilio, who has examined the military "logistics of perception" like no one else. In fact, IMAGES OF THE WORLD should be seen as the cinematic continuation of Virilio's book *War and Cinema*. Where Virilio associates historical photography and cinema history with the history of war, Farocki applies his argumentation to the aerial photographs of Auschwitz. In a book that appeared at the same time as Farocki's film, Virilio sums up the new type of warfare made possible by the collaboration between technical images and military technology:

It is a war of images and sounds, rather than objects and things, in which winning is simply a matter of not losing sight of the opposition. The will to see all, to know all, at every moment, everywhere, the will to universalized illumination: a scientific permutation on the eye of God which would forever rule out the surprise, the accident, the irruption of the unforeseen.[82]

In this context, photography is assigned an intermediate position in Farocki's film. Without developing an explicit historical thesis leading in a straight line from A to B, the photographs are nevertheless related to the surveying techniques of the Renaissance, which led to the development of central perspective and to a new type of technical image that began to interest Farocki in the mid-1990s. This type of image, for which Farocki himself has coined the term "operational image," is central to the three installations entitled EYE/MACHINE and the television film compiled from them, WAR AT A DISTANCE.[83] "Operational" in this context means that the image no longer stands "for itself" in any way but is merely an element of an electro-technical operation in which aesthetic standards are detached from functional criteria. Since the 1990s, operational images have increasingly permeated both the military and the civilian sectors: iris scanners facilitate clear identification; infrared cameras register movements, image-based navigation systems guide missiles and automobiles—all these are examples of our daily contact with such images. Even in IMAGES OF THE WORLD, the image-recognition programs that operate the robots in the car factory are both a counter image and a civilian equivalent to the flight simulators and software used in air reconnaissance. The term "operational" is also apt because these images are completely absorbed into the process of the respective operation. They aren't intended to be released separately, and strictly speaking don't need to appear as images at all but emerge as the intermediate product of a wider technical process.[84] In this respect, they are

82 Paul Virilio, "The Vision Machine," ibid. *The Vision Machine*, trans. Julie Rose (Bloomington/ London: Indiana UP, BFI 1995), 59–77: 70. Virilio writes in more detail about the simultaneous birth of film and aviation in *War and Cinema. The Logistics of Perception*. Here, he expounds the idea—also taken up and elaborated by Farocki—that aerial reconnaissance, not the equipment of airplanes with bombs, marks the beginning of military aviation. See Virilio, *War and Cinema. The Logistics of Perception* [1984], trans. Patrick Camiller (London: Verso 1989), 17ff.

83 EYE/MACHINE (three parts, D 2001–2003), WAR AT A DISTANCE, D 2003, director: Harun Farocki.

84 This line of argumentation is also found in As You SEE (FRG 1986, director: Harun Farocki): "Through the use of computers ('In dialogue with the computer'), products are already being developed to production standard without recourse to a single plan. A drawing, a depiction, or

difficult to place in the usual categories—their aesthetic value is anyway irrelevant. In contrast to the classical image types that in the 1970s and 80s were the obvious subject of an ideological critique of their manipulative content and the overt way in which such images pervade everyday life (advertising, television, and so on), the interpretation of operational images is more primarily concerned with the technical precision and mathematical exactness that make them into the constituents of military and economic operations. If the advertising image still belongs to the industrial era of the production and sale of commodities, the operational image is part of a postindustrial world of hardware and software that threatens to abolish the laboring hand and eye entirely.

Operational images are tied to a digital medium whose only concern is to capture and process the visual material as a data volume, in order to be able to pass on the corresponding information and initiate the next steps. They were first widely deployed during the Gulf War of 1991, when—in place of independent reporting—the images from the projectiles themselves, shown and interpreted by the American military, attested to the precision bombardment. Farocki sees a new visual logic in this:[85]

> Warfare and war reporting coincided. Such images are produced and controlled militarily. Cameras are built into the projectiles for the purpose of remote control. The aim is to avoid enemy fire, which causes the enemy to become indistinct. Today's highly technical war does not reckon with people, and only takes the human victims grudgingly, even flippantly into account.[86]

The images from the Gulf War structurally follow the same logic as Albrecht Meydenbauer's photograms: in both cases, in order to avoid direct danger, the photographer creates a distance between himself and the photographed object. However, the aim of this distancing separates the civilian endeavor of architectural surveying from the military one of bombardment. The abstraction of photogrammetry serves a human interest, but in the case of the Gulf War bombardment, though protecting the aggressor, it causes the

a master is only made if the client wants one. Only the client still wants to see a picture." Harun Farocki, "Wie man sieht," *Die Republik*, no. 76–78, September 9, 1986, 33–106: 104.

85   Here, too, there is a text by Virilio that might have inspired Farocki to create his installation EYE/MACHINE: the sequel to *War and Cinema*, published in Germany as *Krieg und Fernsehen* in 1993 and in English as *Desert Screen. War at the Speed of Light* (London: Continuum 2002).

86   Harun Farocki, "Material zum Film ERKENNEN UND VERFOLGEN," on the website www.farocki-film.de [accessed July 15, 2014].

victims to disappear. While the image results in a theorization of depiction in both cases, the abstraction brought about by the images from the missile warheads doesn't lead to a critical distance. On the contrary, the "overview" they enable causes the distinction between reality and simulation to collapse. Writing about his immediate impression of the Gulf War, Klaus Theweleit has described this as follows:

> The people who died in Iraq in real time under the filming bombs were treated by the apparatus like human simulations. The military censor has decided to show us only this type of image, if possible. What we have here is the abolition of both the "authentic image" (of the famous image with the "dog tag," of the location and time around the neck) and the abolition of the eye as the organ of historical witness.[87]

This reference to the distancing function of "intelligent weapons" explains why the installations EYE/MACHINE I–III and the film WAR AT A DISTANCE, which are entirely concerned with operational images, can be seen as a consistent follow-up of IMAGES OF THE WORLD. Albrecht Meydenbauer's idea of replacing the direct survey with photographs in order to minimize his own danger can be updated to the remote-control weapons of the late twentieth century in which the original surveying function turns into its opposite. The step from the photograph to the electronic processing of images is only a gradual one, if Vilém Flusser's remark that even the photographic image represents a calculated image, and thus one that can be calculated and processed, is taken seriously:

> In accordance with its deeper structure, the photographic universe is grainy; it changes its appearance and color as a mosaic might change in which the little pieces are continually being replaced. The photographic universe is made up of such little pieces, made up of quanta, and is calculable (calculus = little piece or "particle")—an atomized, democratic universe, a jigsaw puzzle.[88]

Because of this quality, Farocki had already characterized the photograph as a calculable image, as an intermediate position between Jacquard's loom

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87   Klaus Theweleit, "Neues und Altes vom brennenden Busch. Zum Golfkrieg" [1991], ibid., *Das Land, das Ausland heißt. Essays, Reden, Interviews zu Politik und Kunst* (Munich: dtv 1995), 71–86: 85.
88   Vilém Flusser, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, 66f.

and the pixelated images of television and computer monitors,[89] in As You See. The production of operational images is based on the calculability of images and, following the replacement of the manual worker by machine production, leads to the increased decoupling of seeing from the subject, as the most important function of the eye can likewise be delegated to an image-recognition program.

What relationship does this type of image, whose industrial integration is seen in Images of the World, have to the complex of film as theory? On the one hand, it can be argued that these images are quite literally "practical images" that aren't intended for viewing and have no self-reflexive potential. They are built into contexts of production, destruction, and security that entirely absorb them. On the other hand, this hidden character results in an increased necessity to examine their implicit preconditions. This is all the more urgent because none of the usual disciplines—art history, visual anthropology, media studies—feels particularly responsible for operational images. One could say that they are images that don't want to be seen but themselves see (and act); images that suspend the eye from its work in the same way that automation does with the hand; images "devoid of social intent, not for edification, not for reflection," as they are described in Eye/Machine I. While the hand—and thus the gestures of labor—belongs to the industrial era, in the postindustrial media world the eye is in the process of disappearing and is being superseded by technologies of image recognition, which are finding their way into a wide range of areas. The first part of Farocki's installation—proceeding from and framed by images from the "intelligent weapons" of the Gulf War of 1991—covers the civilian and military sectors in which electronic image recognition and processing are playing an increasingly important role: industrial production, medical examinations, traffic control, GPS, and above all the arms industry, which deploys these functions for military reconnaissance and precise destruction through high-tech control engineering.

89   See Farocki, "Wie man sieht," 62–64. See also Farocki's text "Reality Would Have to Begin," in which he goes in greater detail into the connection between the techniques of Renaissance painting and surveying photographs: "The mathematical artists of the Renaissance stretched transparent papers in frames and traced on the plane the outlines of the spatial objects shining through. With the invention of photography, these founders of the perspectival method seem to be the precursors of photographers; with the invention of scale measurement, they seem to be early scale-measurement engineers," Harun Farocki, "Reality Would have to Begin," trans. Laurent Faasch-Ibrahim, *Nachdruck/Imprint. Texte/Writings*, eds. Susanne Gaensheimer and Nikolaus Schafhausen (Berlin: Vorwerk 8 2001), 186-213: 198.

The third part of Eye/Machine takes up visual material from the military sector that was already partly shown in the first two installations and connects the individual points to draw a historical line. In 1942, an instructional film about the V1 rocket was primarily aimed at technicians, and in this sense doesn't argue propagandistically but didactically. A PR film for the company Texas Instruments, however, which praises the efficiency of a missile series that has been continually improved since the Vietnam War, is intended to both advertise and entertain. Wagner sounds accompany images of bombarding airplanes, and the voiceover argues in economic terms: experience has shown that up to 200 bombs are needed to destroy a target; with computers, this figure can be reduced to forty. The laser guidance system of this new type of missile finally brings the rate down to one on one: "With Paveway, it's one target, one bomb." In contrast to these two film clips, the operational images of the 1990s no longer require a viewer; they aren't intended as either instruction or propaganda. Image recognition represents itself within them in a kind of "cinematography by devices." The installation suggests that the economic principle of efficiency enhancement also requires a new type of war: "If each bomb hits its target, fewer bombs can be sold. Lost turnover. To compensate, more guidance systems must be sold. [...] The economy calls for wars of the highest precision, such as wars declared humanitarian."

The triad of displacement, rendition, and surveying that is highlighted as a characteristic of photographs in this examination of three films by Godard and Farocki necessitates a differentiation of the images' potential for abstraction. For what the three operations have in common is that the technically produced image is detached from both author and referent, and attests to an abstract, mechanical gaze. The abstraction associated with this has both possibilities and dangers. On the one hand, the distancing potential of the aerial photographs of Auschwitz and the operational images from the Gulf War, with their implicit alienation effect, present an opportunity to talk about the genocide in the first place; on the other hand, the photographs are in themselves the result of a coldly observing camera eye lacking all vividness. If we see the photograph as a decisive step on the way to calculated and calculable images,[90] it becomes clear that abstraction per se shouldn't be understood as a means of acquiring

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90 The difference between pressing a shutter release and the gradual emergence of a woven image on a punch-card loom brings about an acceleration in production that leads in the long term to an autonomization of the image through sheer quantity.

knowledge but can only be profitably employed by a knowing subject. The distancing element of operational images is that of a cynically "objective" gaze that disregards what it "sees." It recalls what Béla Balázs called "murderous abstraction," which completely ignores the specific—here the human—case. We thus need to distinguish between two types of abstraction articulated within these images. There is the one with positive connotations which takes the image beyond itself and enables a qualitative leap to a conceptual level. It arises through the possibilities of montage or the multiplication of differing levels within an image. It is also linked to a seeing subject, who actively reconstructs the theory of the image from within the image itself: reading, editing room, "author as receiver" are the key words for this form of abstraction. On the other hand, certain abstract images have completely detached themselves from the sensibility of an observing and analyzing subject. Examples can be seen in the aerial photographs from IMAGES OF THE WORLD, and even more so in the operational images from Farocki's works since 2000. The decisive thing is that here abstraction becomes a vacuous principle in which the image abolishes itself. Compared to the "powerful" images of the cinema or painting, operational images—at least for the moment—have no aesthetic effect. They aren't interesting as images but as data that control processes of production and destruction.

Jean-Louis Comolli's remark, quoted in chapter one, that the photograph means both the triumph and the grave of the eye—both a celebration of visibility and the relinquishment of the eye, which now successively delegates its functions to the machine—is strongly confirmed by the operational images analyzed by Farocki. The link between mechanical and mathematical knowledge (between polished lenses and programmed software) has now made it possible to substantially detach the physiological act of seeing from the human being. This development repeats another historical phenomenon of cultural relinquishment: just as the act of visual perception is being increasingly automated today, the gestures of the hand were subject to a fundamental change during the twentieth century.