

a space between

Contemplating the Post- Holocaust Subject

Dale Washkansky

A dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Fine Art

Michaelis School of Fine Art
University of Cape Town
2010

Declaration:

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature:

Date: 06-09-2010

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

Acknowledgments

My gratitude to my supervisor, Svea Josephy, for her assistance, insight and encouragement, which has guided me through this project. To my dearest Ryan van Breda and Amanda Washkansky for always being besides me. To Siona O'Connell for her strength and friendship and being a constant inspiration. My gratitude to Freddie Scotchman for his tireless support and helpfulness. I would also like to thank Orms Pro Photo Warehouse and particularly Vincent van Graan for his masterful printing. The following companies were also instrumental in bringing this project to fruition: Kimix Chemical and Lab Supplies, Castle Graphics and Craft Picture Framers. The following scholarships were awarded to me and whose financial aid assisted me in realizing this project: National Arts Council, UCT Research Associateship, Jules Kramer Art Scholarship and Irma Stern Art Scholarship.

University of Cape Town

Contents

Preface:

Entering Buchenwald and Ravensbrück pg 1.

Introduction pg 6.

Chapter 1.

Theoretical Considerations

Seeking the Subject pg 8.

A Question of Distance pg 12.

The Lost Witness and the Limits of Remembrance pg 15.

Signifying the Jew pg 22.

The Idealised Body pg 29.

Photography as Evidence and Absence..... pg 36.

Artists Who Create in the Wake of the Holocaust pg 49.

Joseph Beuys pg 50.

Anselm Kiefer pg 53.

Art Spiegelman pg 57.

Steven Cohen pg 60.

Chapter 2.

A Space Between: Visual Research pg 65.

Landscapes pg 66.

Colour Photographic Collage pg 69.

Thematic considerations within the Colour Collage Series

The Performing Body pg 70.

The Ruined State pg 77.

The Romantic Landscape pg 79.

The Springbok Hides: Printing with Cyanotype and Albumen pg 82.

Needlework pg 90.

Conclusion pg 93.

Chapter 3.

Illustration of Other Works Within: A Space Between

Landscapes pg 94.

Colour Photographic Collage Series pg 97.

Cyanotype Prints onto Springbok Hides pg 104.

Albumen Prints onto Springbok Hides pg 108.

Needlework pg 115.

References pg 117.



University of Cape Town

Preface:

Entering Buchenwald and Ravensbrück

In 2008 I travelled, with camera in hand, to Germany in order to photograph the two concentration camps of Buchenwald and Ravensbrück. These are two of several camps that Germany established during the late 1930s to house so called undesirables or those believed to be enemies of the Reich. These people were not only extracted from society within Germany, but later from all occupied territories. European Jewry was the primary target of this policy. Six million Jews were murdered during the Holocaust, but they were not the only victims. Approximately one and a half million Gypsies, at least 250 000 physically or mentally disabled people, three million Soviet prisoners of war, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, Social Democrats, Communists, partisans, trade unionists and Polish intelligentsia were among those that fell victim to the Nazis. In Germany's concentration camps, these prisoners of the Reich were set to work under severe inhumane conditions as slave labour, which was also a means of torture, as efficient production was not the primary endeavour of these camps. It was only when war broke out that policy altered and the labour was utilised by German enterprises and to aid Germany's war effort. These camps formed part of a larger system that later sought to eventually annihilate these "enemies". There were also transit camps to those camps located towards the east, in Poland – the notorious death camps, where mass murder became harrowingly efficient.

My journey to Buchenwald began with a short bus drive from the Weimar station through the towering trees of the Ettersburg forest. It was autumn, but the air was already piercingly cold and the clouds clung to the earth, obscuring perspective. Upon arrival, I entered the helpful information centre, which was located in what was one of the SS barracks. I then retrieved the site map and audio guide and began my navigation. I descended a footpath when the iconic wooden camp entrance came into view. It was by no means the grand gateway to another world of barbarism. Instead, I was presented with something more understated. The three-tiered structure of the camp entrance was almost quaint. I then took several steps forward when my attention fell upon a numbered plaque. To my right was a knee-high stone wall with a carved out pit on the adjacent side. After punching the number into the audio guide, it informed me that this area served as a bear pit. The pit was constructed to create a sense of normality and amusement for the camp guards before they passed the threshold of the camp gates. Bewildered by this absurdity, I then advanced towards the latticed gate of the camp's entrance. *Jedem das Seine*, 'To each his own,' read the inverted inscription above the entrance. This indicated that it was intended to be read by those imprisoned behind the gates.

Once I was inside the camp grounds, the land opened up to a vast empty space that gently fell down to the trees marking the camp's lower border. Large gravelled rectangular areas that were systematically laid out demarcated the absent barracks. This treatment of the terrain resembled an unmarked graveyard for giants. Silence prevailed.

Two days later, from the metropolis of Berlin, I made my way to Fürstenberg. On the outskirts of this small town was what was known as the women's camp – Ravensbrück. Fürstenberg presented itself as an idyllic town, whose inhabitants appeared to be avid gardeners. Each home proudly displayed the richness of the soil with bursts of colourful blossoms. Without warning the picturesque Germanic homes stopped and the road forked. The tar road advanced off to the left, but to the right a cobbled road continued with a sign that directed me towards Ravensbrück. Between the fork stood a memorial sculpture of three women carrying a child on a stretcher and another child clasping one of the women's dresses. This child was pulling the cloth towards herself in an attempt to shield herself from what she saw. Her other arm extends upwards, holding the woman back. The woman's hand was exaggerated and hangs limply by her side, unwilling or unable to console the child. The other sculpted woman's free hand pulls the top of her dress up to cover her face with her elbow jutting upwards. Her stance also warned the advancer an unsightly view. The figures all had large hairless heads. Their sex was indicated by two small protuberances of empty breasts.

The camp grounds at Ravensbrück were relatively small. The women's barracks have also long gone. Standing at the central spine of the camp grounds were trees that lined the path. Ribbed depressions in the ground mark what were the barracks. The fallen dead orange leaves of the trees found their way to the edges of the hollows and framed the pits. Only the original campground was accessible. At the

edges of the camp fence the black gravel that blanketed the grounds came to an end. Concrete seeped out from underneath the gravel and flowed under fence where it seemed to nourish the shrubbery that hastily concealed this site's past. I then moved towards the right border of the camp where another memorial sculpture had been placed. Atop a tall obelisk, a woman stoically stood carrying another woman in her arms. She faced the town looking over Lake Schwedt. The water tenderly lapped against stairs that were in front of the memorial that descend beneath the surface. It was from this tranquil spot that the ashes of the cremated were set afloat. From this tranquil spot I could clearly see the town and church steeple across the lake.

These camps are located in an in-between space. It is a space where one would hope that a cry could have been carried by an echo and one begins to question whether that echo could have fallen just short of being heard. The camps seem to be located dangerously close to towns, so that today, one toils in granting ignorance to the townspeople of the past. However, they also appeared to be far away enough for nature to hold them out of sight. When I visited these sites I felt nature's continued encroachment and want to return them to the landscape. But how can nature covet this silence? How can this history, a history of such magnitude, continue to be pulled underground? And how can I interrupt this process? How can I gain access to this history and make it tangible? However, having visited these sites, I know that they will forever remain unknowable to me, but it is this barrier, between what I can access and that

which will forever be denied to me, that I am compelled to fight against.

Today these spaces that were battered by the ferocious ideology of National Socialism are indeed blind spots. They are spaces where sight does not affect knowing. National Socialism robbed sight; all became blind. Man could no longer see the humanity of the man besides him and man could no longer believe in the reality in front of him. Man could not imagine the vanishing of millions. The camps are also spaces of muteness and of untold stories, where history remains yet to be told. As such, this history is marked by the murder of the witness. But this moment of death, this ultimate other, cannot be exhumed in order to give evidence. But it is also the other, the listener, who must now stand in for the dead witness, who must now endeavour to piece together the stories told and untold around these spaces of nothingness.

My inquiry begins with desire; a desire to remember, a desire to image the unimaginable and represent the unrepresentational. Those that lived through this past are becoming lost through the passing of time, and so I feel the urgency to hold onto their stories. However, my position in relation to this past is one of distance. These spaces between now and then, here and there, us and them, me and you, pull tighter as they move away from each other and strain against one another. The greater the gap widens, the greater the tension and the greater the anticipation of the final snap – an irreparable break. However, my position

of spatial and temporal distance allows me the occasion for discovery, since as the gap widens, so too does the space for exploration. This hole in memory, this Holocaust within memory, is the space of my reflection. As a traumatic memory, this past remains an indelible mark upon the skin of my presence. I am in search of these traces and these lost wounds that will tell of a story, a story that should have no ending. Upon my body I also carry an absence, an absence in knowing (which is an inheritance) and a blindness to the scene of naming, to my circumcision, to my secret sign – Jew. This absence has set in motion my need to see into the greater unseen, towards those who have been reduced to ash. This ash reminds me of my difference, a difference that is doubly inscribed and that would have been fatal markings of my otherness.

It was with this in mind that I went to these two concentration camps. It is between these two sites, between the golden hair of Ilse Koch¹ at Buchenwald and the ashes of the lost women at Ravensbrück, which performs a gap and an opening between, the destroyer and the persecuted.² |

¹ Ilse Koch was the wife of Karl Otto Koch, who was the commander of the Buchenwald camp between 1937 and 1941. She took an active role in her husband's duties and she became notorious for her cruelty. Koch allegedly ordered the murder of selected prisoners, whose skin was then tanned and made into lampshades and other household objects.

² This line is in reference to Paul Celan's poem "Death Fugue" (1948), which is a meditation on the Holocaust. It ends with the two lines:

your golden hair Margarete
your ashen hair Shulamith

Andrea Lauterweim states that this poem, "became a ritualistic poem in the spirit of Judeo-German reconciliation" (2007:89). She goes on to state that the absence of a full stop prevents judgment as "The 'music' breaks

have interpreted these two sites as displaying some sense of polarity and by moving towards them, I endeavour to bring together the destroyer and the destroyed. This act is motivated by an attempt to imagine a position of an insider. To move towards these sites of trauma is to enact a reversal of the trauma of separation, a separation that knowingly can never offer reunion. As an outsider, I can never gain access to this trauma. There is a boundary that I cannot trespass and so I can merely long for and seek out the memory of trauma. The Holocaust reveals the limitations of the imagination, because it is a space that one can never penetrate and one can never have access to. Even those who lived through the Holocaust testify to its unreality and its inconceivability. The very language used abstracted the events. The Nazis referred to the dead as *Figuren*, that is, as figures, as puppets or pieces. The term 'corpse' was never used, so there was never a sense of the individual and the dead, as such, were denied recognition. The Holocaust became a space where the boundary between life and death cross over each other, thereby potentially rendering reality as meaningless.

off over a void ...” (2007:90). Celan wrote the poem in 1945 the year when the Nazi camps were liberated, which marked the end of National Socialism. Celan is therefore already anticipating the destruction of differentiation; as being lost within the void. Lauterweim explains that Margarete and Shulamith can be interpreted as references to Church and Synagogue, respectively, which is an allegory that distinguishes the New Testament from the Old Testament. Synagogue is personified as the old and blinded mother of Christ, whereas the Church is symbolised as the wife of Christ. She affirms the beginning of the new age as she has bared witness and seen the way of the New Testament. Within my project this, at times complicated, conception of the witness, between the one who sees and the one who does not, becomes increasingly important as I try to come to an understanding of my own role within the act of remembrance.



Figure 1. Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. (2008). Berlin.

Introduction

My project is set against the impossible task of giving expression to that which cannot be expressed, and of remembering the individual within the enormity of genocide. But instead of looking outside for this individual, I turn inwards, because the very notion of the individual was violated by the Holocaust. As such, it is I who becomes my object of inquiry, as I attempt to locate myself in relation to the Holocaust and try to make sense of its relevance and impact upon me. I attempt to imaginatively repopulate the empty spaces of Buchenwald and Ravensbrück in order to make them speak out from their silence and their oppressive absences.

In the first chapter, Theoretical Considerations, I begin with a subsection titled, Seeking the Subject, where I grapple with the notion of the post-Holocaust subject. This is a subject that I interpret as being somewhat dislocated due to the historical void left by the Holocaust. This is followed by the subsection, A Question of Distance, where I explore how the Holocaust, as a crime against humanity, implicates the whole of humanity. Humanity at large therefore becomes obligated in remembering such crimes. In the next subsection, The Lost Witness and the Limits of Remembrance, I elaborate and personalise this point of obligation. I put forward the idea that the Holocaust, as a traumatic event, prevents those that were in the belly of it from attaining the distance required for an objective view from which to assemble an orientating and meaningful perspective. It therefore



Figure 2. SS officers.

becomes the task of the other to investigate and attempt to interpret this event. This is the premise upon which my entry into this project is based, as I take on this volatile role of the other. In the subsection, Signifying the Jew, I briefly contextualise how the Jew has been historically interpreted,

by looking specifically at the notion of the Jewish body. This is followed by the subsection, *The Idealised Body*, which takes into consideration the construction of the Aryan body, which is presented as the antithesis of the Jewish body. These two sections inform how I navigate between these two polarities when dealing with the imaging of my own body. I also endeavour to achieve a sense of fluidity between these two constructs. In the next subsection, *Photography as Evidence and Absence*, I look at photography as a representational medium and the contradictions associated to it. I then go on to discuss how photography was used to record the concentration camps' liberation. Photography is the primary medium that I utilize within my practical body of work, and I engage tactically with this medium. I explore how photography is both a proficient recording device as well as a device of construction, of image-making and of fragile surfaces. I conclude the first chapter with the subsection, *Artists Who Create in the Wake of the Holocaust*. Here I have selected four artists, namely, Joseph Beuys, Anselm Kiefer, Art Spiegelman and Steven Cohen, who all explore different approaches when grappling with their positions in relation to the Holocaust, which become increasingly removed from the event.

Chapter 2, *A Space Between: Visual Research*, focuses on my practical work. I first discuss a series of landscape photographs that I took at Buchenwald and Ravensbrück. This series responds to the emptiness and absences that I experienced at these spaces. The next subsection focuses on my series of colour photographic collages. Even

though this series should be viewed as a whole, as one image consisting of thirty smaller images, I will, however, be isolating certain key images and elaborating on their thematic and conceptual significance within my research. I will discuss the relevance that the performing body, the ruined state and the Romantic landscape have within this body of work. The next subsection will discuss a series in which I utilised the archaic photographic processes of albumen and cyanotype to print onto stretched springbok hides. This chapter concludes with the final series of works, where I employed the crafts of cross-stitch, tapestry and embroidery. These are quite works that reflect upon the manner whereby documentary images of the Holocaust have entered the domestic space and have possibly become less affecting.

Chapter 1.

Theoretical Considerations

Seeking the Subject

Theodor Adorno stated in 1949 that poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric.³ I propose that National Socialism was essentially an aesthetic ideology because it was an ideology that sought to reshape and reconfigure the German nation within an utopian vision of aesthetic purity. There was promise of a reformation of political, economic, social, cultural and even geographical structures. Adorno's statement could therefore be articulating an aporia buried within the beautiful and rationalism itself. The Holocaust presents the presumed inexplicable, because National Socialism corrupted the pursuit for the aesthetic which ensnared a nation. Gerhard Richter states that Adorno thought that, "... the regressive and barbaric potential of even the most enlightened thought is always the dark underbelly of what is enacted in the name of reason" (2005:111). Richter states that, for Adorno, our inability to recognise this duality, dislodges our defenses and leaves us unguarded to that which threatens us. Richter states that this misreading of reason,

Forecloses reflection on the extent to which this very threat does not simply remain a threat that signifies potential loss of something but, rather, can also be thought as a *constitutive threat*, as something

³ See: Adorno, T. (1955). Cultural Criticism and Society. In: *Prisms*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
This highly debated and often contested statement was first written in 1949 and first published in 1951 and then reprinted in *Prisms* 1955.

that not only threatens but also enables the very existence of what it threatens. The forgetting or repression of the threat as a dialectical moment that hovers uncontainably between its status as an aberration from the norm and as a constitutive category of loss is the predicament of modernity (2005:111).

Barbarism is not the external threat to civilization, but is constructed within and alongside civilization.



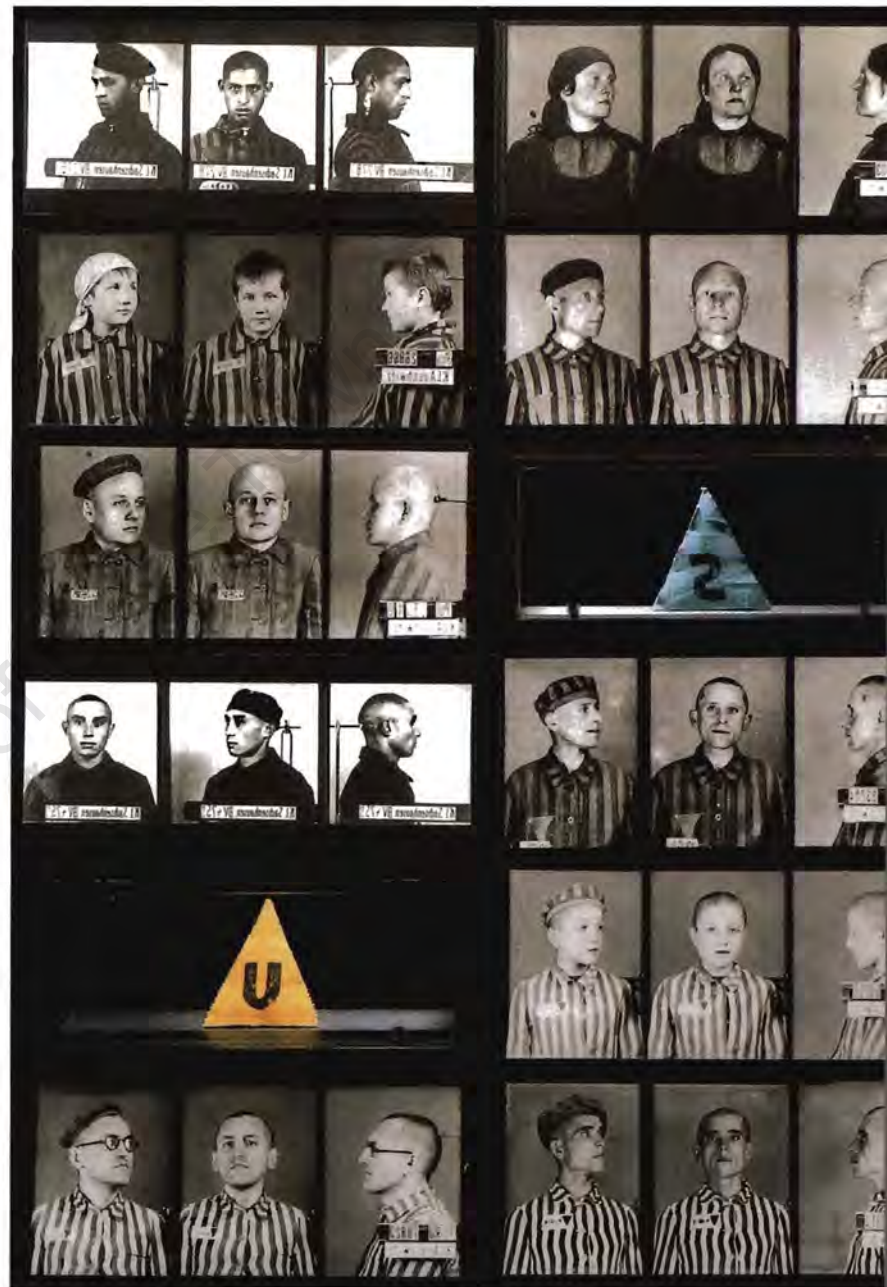
Figure 3. Brothers Zeilek and Zril Jacob, respectively nine and twelve years old, after arrival to Auschwitz.

Lisa Saltzman interprets Adorno's prohibition as being intended as a re-annunciation of the biblical prescription that one shall not make graven images. She develops this point away from the object or image itself and moves towards

the viewer's engagement with it. The proscription of making graven images is shifted towards an ethic of spectatorship. The viewer is thereby prevented from viewing with libidinal interest. According to Saltzman, this is to prevent the fetishistic gaze of desire, which is to prevent a gaze that does not view with the intention of gaining knowledge or understanding. Instead Saltzman suggests that it is the witness, the objective gaze, who views with an ethic of disinterest; a view untainted by desire. As such, Adorno was advocating a spectator intent on gaining knowledge and of bearing witness, which is the subjective, yet objective speech act, that at the time was required to give testimony. Poetics, which is an aesthetic handling of language, was at this particular time, for Adorno, an act of barbarism because it deviated from the particularity of the event and the urgency of gaining evidence and justice, albeit that this was an impossible task on account of the enormity of the crime. Adorno could therefore be questioning whether we can speak of the beautiful after Auschwitz and whether a hierarchical ordering of the world, which creates readable and meaningful structures based on difference, can still be maintained.

Adorno, however, later modified or rather clarified his position regarding poetry in *Negative Dialectics*. He stated that, "Perennial suffering has as much right to expression as a tortured man has to scream; hence it may have been

Figure 4. Photographs of Holocaust prisoners. Installation image from Holocaust Museum, Washington DC. USA.



wrong to say that after Auschwitz you could no longer write poems” (1999:23). Saltzman then refers to Adorno’s commentary on the poetry of Paul Celan. Adorno stated that, “Celan’s poems articulate unspeakable horror by being silent” (1999:20).⁴ Adorno could be claiming that the poetics can give testimony even if it must speak of its own muteness, of its own limitations and impossibilities. Adorno’s modification is not an expression of a move towards forgiveness or acceptance, but indicates a desire for a re-affirmation of life, in that we must find a way back to be able to speak of the beautiful and be able to speak of its pain.

But what happens to the presence of a subject after Auschwitz, to the subject’s poetics, the subject’s individuation? Jacques Derrida stated that, “I call ‘poet’ the one who gives way to events of writing that give this essence of language a new body and make it manifest in a work” (2005:105 – 106). By poetics I am therefore referring to the work of the poet, who, according to Derrida, is someone who uses the spectres of language to resurrect language and put forth a mortal body. Derrida also claimed that language can never be owned, but the poet can appropriate language and speak out from within language. Derrida stated that, “the poet is someone permanently engaged with a dying language that he resuscitates, not by giving back to it a triumphant line, but by sometimes bringing it back, like a reverent or phantom” (2005:106). As such poetry is the aesthetic reshaping of language whereby

⁴ Saltzman quoted Adorno from: Adorno, T. (1984). *Aesthetic Theory*. London & Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul. p 100

one, albeit temporally, can claim authorship over language. The poet is therefore “the sign of individuation.” The poem is, ‘the language of the individual which has taken form’ (Derrida. 2005:5). As previously stated, it is this notion of the individual who becomes lost or is absent within the Holocaust. It is the individual who was taken out of society, who was stripped of all possessions, who was separated from his family, whose shaven body became transformed by hard labour and starvation and who finally became another corpse among millions to be incinerated and reduced to smoke and ash.

If one uses Derrida’s notion of poetics in relation to Adorno’s dictum, can it be said that to claim the position of a subject, of the authorship of ‘I am,’ as an exclamation that proposes knowledge of the self and having meaning of the self, as being an act of barbarism after Auschwitz?⁵ To claim knowledge of the self implies that one has an idea of the self and a frame of reference to situate the self within a past. “I am” is therefore a belief of the “I” within history and an anticipation of the self within the future. The present is thereby presented as an effect, but Auschwitz performs as a vortex, pulling towards itself this momentum of consequence, of readable cause and effect. For the meaning of Auschwitz is its meaninglessness. Auschwitz was an event unprecedented within history, so there is no reference with which to frame it and no logic or rationalism that can explain it. I will

⁵ Later in the paper I will elaborate on the notion that the Holocaust upturned the fragile balance between the subject and his witness, as the other of projection that is required as a stabilising space of difference. This therefore further complicates the notion of the subject as having agency.

also propose that since there could be no externality, no witness, the events remain incomprehensible. As such, I am in agreement with Adorno's original claim that poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. But it is due to this barbarism that necessitates and must insist upon the poetics to act against itself, to never be satisfied, to live and to die and to take us towards the unknown.



Figure 5. After arriving at a concentration camp, these Jewish inmates were required to go through a selection process.

A Question of Distance

Derrida, in *On Forgiveness*, conflates the safety of historical distance when considering events that have been identified as crimes against humanity. Defining the Holocaust as such a crime implicates all of us. Derrida stated, "here is a human race which would claim to accuse itself all at once, publicly and spectacularly, of all the crimes committed in effect by itself against itself, 'against humanity'" (2007:29). The self-accusatory nature, the conflation of the self with the other, and therefore the absence of the witness, foils absolutism.⁶ There can be no redemption for such a crime. Derrida goes on and proposed that, "forgiveness forgives only the unforgivable. One cannot, or should not, forgive; there is only forgiveness, if there is any, where there is the unforgivable. That is to say that forgiveness must announce itself as impossibility itself" (2007:32-33). The quandary that Derrida sets up is that forgiveness must be a valueless exchange between victim and persecutor. Derrida puts forward the notion of pure forgiveness, which must be unconditional, it must be granted without any preconditions. Those who are guilty of the unforgivable, those that require forgiveness, do not ask for it, nor can they ask for it because pure forgiveness must be given freely and without persuasion. This leads to the

⁶ This notion of the absent witness will be expanded upon in the next subsection when considering what happens to the witness within a traumatic event.

question, whether the unforgivable act can be separated from the person who committed this act. Can one forgive the person, but not the act itself? Surely the unforgivable act itself remains unchanged and thus unforgivable. The conflict is that there can be no meaning in the unforgivable because the unforgivable remains silent and intact. The Holocaust, as a crime against humanity, therefore cannot be forgiven, since there is no other to forgive, and so it follows that there can be no end to it. But it is this "madness of the impossible,"⁷ of the existence of forgiveness that enables humanity to move beyond trauma.

But can trauma be remembered? Derrida raises the obstacle associated with memory in that memory is an act that binds one to the past, and gives meaning to the past, but it is also affixed to loss. Derrida states, "But to speak of it, (the date) one must also efface it, make it readable, audible, intelligible *beyond the pure singularity* of which it speaks" (2005:9). Memory is therefore a re-imaging, a re-writing and a writing over the date, so that the date is both itself and other to itself. Derrida explains that memory thereby creates a doorway that opens up to the other. As such, the date only becomes intelligible when it is other to itself, when it has returned to itself as other, when it is remembered. Derrida



Figure 6.
Victims of starvation in Warsaw ghetto.

⁷ See Derrida in *On Forgiveness*. (2007:45).

goes on to say that the date, “its readability is paid for by the terrible tribute of lost singularity. Mourning in reading itself” (2005:37). Meaning is thereby connected to a loss of the original. But how are we to date and remember the Holocaust? The Holocaust must retain its singularity and remain an event that prohibits against a return. There can therefore be no memory of trauma, no dating of trauma and no meaning within trauma, because reading of the traumatic event entails a movement outside of that event.

It is to the dates 11 April 1945 and 29 April 1945, the respective liberations of Buchenwald and Ravensbrück, that the counting of those lost began, the lost that I am compelled to remember. But it is a loss too great, a loss that precludes remembrance, a loss without appropriate mourning. It is for this reason that Derrida refers to the date as ash. Intrinsic to a date is its own undoing, for the date remembers what is no more. It is not that the event which the date marks becomes meaningless, but rather that the reading of the date is constantly deferred, never singular, never stable and never absolute. This could be a way for Derrida to leave the date open, which makes it vulnerable because the date keeps slipping away, so that it constantly requires to be reinstated within the present, but it also means that the date can slip away and can be forgotten. As such, there is an ethics of remembrance.

Gerhard Richter quotes Maurice Blanchot, in *The Writing of Disaster* (1980) who when considering the act of writing after Auschwitz stated, “Learn to think with pain” (2005:113).

Richter explains that one must learn to think when one is in pain, as well as to think alongside pain. Richter states that, To learn to think with pain would thus mean to tolerate and to emulate it all at once, to continue in one’s own thinking even when that thinking is interrupted by the otherness of pain and at the same time to learn that other way of thinking, to think the way that pain thinks both when it traumatizes us and when it is off on its own (2005: 113).

Richter is proposing that pain can bring about thought and understanding. But can pain bring about new knowledge; can it be meaningful? And if so, how can one place value onto pain? Surely one must denounce pain as an intolerable otherness, an otherness that threatens to dehumanise the self. Learning to think *with pain* is therefore different to learning to think *from pain*. Blanchot is proposing that one must be able to maintain the self even when the other threatens the self. This means that one must be able to achieve distance from the self when the self is in a state of trauma, so that the self can become other to the scene of trauma.

Richter quotes Adorno from *Minima Moralia* (1951), as having stated that “True are only those thoughts that do not understand themselves” (2005:122). Richter explains that this could be interpreted that there is truth in non-understanding, or that true thought fails to show the truth to itself. I propose that Auschwitz is a truth that cannot be understood and it has meaning that can never be granted

by knowledge. Can it be possible that meaning does not have to be meaningful, that meaning does not effectuate knowing? Could the meaning of the Holocaust be that it is unknowable, that it is a history whose story cannot be told?

Richter states:

If Adorno aligns the truth of thoughts with non-understanding and by implication, the untruth of thoughts with understanding, then we might say that one of the reasons for this alignment resides in his wish to understand understanding and to inquire into the ways in which the simple arrest of understanding, along with stability of meaning and the positive facts of knowledge that allegedly underwrite it, also threaten one's ability to question understanding. For once understanding is achieved, the activities that lead to it, reading and interpretation, die. Understanding would thus be the death of reading and interpreting ... (2005:122 – 123)

Richter then explains:

what is to remain alive is the truth of the thought that is perpetually in need of understanding. Truth in this sense can be understood only as the perpetual deferral and keeping-open of itself, as the suspension of all uncovered and stable truths (2005:123).

According to Richter, one can understand truth without ever knowing it. It is this not knowing, that keeps truth active,

keeps reading alive and sustains the process of meaning. In a similar manner, forgiveness can be had – humanity absolves itself. Adorno states in *Negative Dialectics* that “Yet the need in thinking is what makes us think. It asks to be negated by thinking; it must disappear in thought if it is to be really satisfied; and in this negation it survives. Represented in the inmost cell of thought is that which is unlike thought” (1973:408). Presence exists because absence looms close by, and in beauty we see death, just as within thought there is the unthinkable. And so within Auschwitz I can see myself reflected in the victim and the persecutor, because it is I who requires forgiveness. Within my project I aim to capture glimpses of these reflections.

The Lost Witness and the Limits of Remembrance

Dori Laub states that, “the very process of bearing witness to massive trauma – does indeed begin with someone who testifies to an absence, to an event that has not yet come into existence, in spite of the overwhelming and compelling nature of the reality of its occurrence” (1992:57). According to Laub, an act of trauma remains beyond the full comprehension of those involved. Trauma afflicts the subject as a yet to be comprehended presence and so the subject “has no prior knowledge, no comprehension, no memory of what happened” (Laub. 1992:58). Laub states that,

The trauma is thus an event that has no beginning, no ending, no before, no during and no after. This absence of categories that define it lends it a quality of ‘otherness,’ a salience, a timelessness and a ubiquity that puts it outside the range of comprehension, of recounting and of mastery (1992:69).

What ensues is a process of repetition and continuation that brings the event into the present. According to Laub, trauma can be interrupted and apprehended by the constructive format of narration. This requires the externalisation of the event and a re-internalisation of it within a comprehensible structure, namely, a historical structure. The subject requires the presence of the other, the listener, who will take on the role of the witness and attempt to make sense of that which has occurred. Laub explains that the listener



Figure 7. Memorial plaque to a former resident, which has been embedded in a cobblestone pavement in Berlin. These plaques are unassuming, as they are the same size as the cobblestones on the pavements and they can be found throughout Germany. (2008).

has to play a threefold role because, while being the listener to the traumatic event and other to the speaker, he must now become the primary witness and become the external vehicle required for recognition, interpretation and narration. As such, the listener must also be other to himself, be witness to himself, while being witness to the witnessing scene. However, Laub then states that,

The historical reality of the Holocaust became, thus a reality which extinguished the possibility of address, the possibility of appealing to another. But when one cannot turn to a ‘you’ one cannot say ‘thou’ even to oneself. The Holocaust created in this way a world in which one could not bear witness to oneself (1992:82).

It is this scene of witnessing the self that I am in search of. It involves a re-inscription of myself in order to image the impossible task of re-circumcising myself, of bearing witness to the self at the moment of inscription and of bearing witness to the self within trauma and within a moment of loss. Hélène Cixous asks, "What does 'Jew' mean? Who can say 'I am Jewish,' without a shudder of the tongue and mind? Oh! This sentence and this verb *to be* in the present, always, they demand reflection" (2004:VII). One of the aspects of this *to be* is also to be without – exposing the uncertainty of presence. Cixous terms this as the "original theft" (2004:IX), the taking of the foreskin at the scene of circumcision. It is the marking of the union between man and G-d, which binds the physical to the Word, to the name of the Father and to the infinite. But it is a union decided on by another. It is also an act of becoming and naming, but it was eight days after being, of being what? Un-nameable and unknowable?⁸ To name is to have something taken away. The proclamation "I am" is a belief in presence. There is no presence without belief and no belief without the unseen. The circumcision leaves behind an exposed circumference, a circular space, a "turning around," (Cixous. 2004:68) which sets the subject in motion on a path whereby the "I" can never be attained and can never be known in its entirety. Cixous states that the circumcision is, "of entry and the exit, separation of the penis, separation of the self and subsequently separation of the world henceforth into two worlds ..." (2004:72). This leads me to question whether

⁸ Jewish circumcision, called the *Brit Milah*, is performed by a *mohel*, the circumciser, when the male infant is eight days old. It is at this ceremony that the infant is named.

the self can only be circumcised once, can only be written upon once and can only enter language once. Is the body of the Jew rewritten after the Holocaust? And if the self can be re-circumcised, how is the body marked, and what must the body give up, upon re-entering language?

James E. Young proposes another difficulty when dealing with the Holocaust, in that history can never be separated from the form or narrative construction in which it is formulated. As such, eyewitness accounts need to be regarded within their structure so that conceptions of historical or objective testimonies may need to be interpreted within their representational framework. Young is conceptualising an authorship of history, of history as a rhetoric narrative device. Young states:

Thus the Holocaust writer faces an especially painful quandary: on the one hand, the survivor-scribe would write both himself and his experiences into existence after the fact, giving them both expression and textual actuality; but on the other hand, in order to make his testimony seem true, he would simultaneously efface himself from his text (1988:10).

This is not only due to the intention to record a testimony (that being an objective and factual account of history), but Young later comments that language itself effaces the truth, in that words come to stand in for reality. Language is the means by which we make sense of reality and come to know reality, and therefore language also displaces and

veils reality. This leads Young to claim that, when we turn to literary testimony of the Holocaust, we do so for knowledge – not evidence – of events. Instead of looking for evidence of experiences, the reader might concede that narrative testimony documents not the experiences it relates but rather the conceptual presuppositions through which the narrative has apprehended experience (1988:37).

This is a way for Young to write back the subject into testimony and to give back to the witness the constructive formulation of narrative. One therefore should not only consider what is said, but how the related experience has been given formation within language.

But how does the Holocaust survive in memory, in spite of language's inability to translate and therefore communicate this event? Shoshana Felman states that, "Because our perception of reality is molded by frames of reference, what is outside them, however imminent and otherwise conspicuous, remains historically invisible, unreal, and can only be encountered by a systematic disbelief" (1992:103). The Holocaust as an unprecedented event therefore represents the truly unimaginable, a black hole, a disbelief in history and a disbelief in the real. However, according to Young even the unprecedented, via the act of naming, means that the event inevitably takes shape from events in the past and comes to gather meaning from this contextualisation. Concerning the unique event, Young states that, "even in their unlikeness, they are thus

contextualised and understood in opposition to prevailing figures, but thus figured nonetheless" (1988:88). Young goes on to state that, "naming events must inevitably deprive them of their ontological particularity" (1988:89). As such, even the supposed unprecedented or the unimaginable takes shape within the historical. The particular therefore becomes what Young defines as the archetypal. According to Young, "For even with the dangers of archetypal thinking so apparent, there are no alternatives: to think about, to remember, and to express the events of the Holocaust is either to do so archetypally or not at all" (1988:89). For Young, whether or not we intend to give meaning to the Holocaust, meaning is assigned to it the moment it exists in language. Young therefore foresees a dilemma in remembrance, in that language's utilisation of metaphor (its reliance on events other to itself) both communicates the event, while simultaneously removing the event from itself. So even though the Holocaust is an unprecedented event, according to Young, one can still access it. He states, "the Holocaust falls outside all paradigms of knowledge: it becomes unknowable. But as long as we name the events of this period, remember them, or figure them in any form, we also know them – however poorly, inappropriately or dangerously" (1988:98). But Felman regains confidence in the representational or the imaginative. According to her, it is from the imagination that one can move towards the historical reality, "as well as into the attested historicity of its unimaginability" (Felman. 1992:105).

Felman then illuminates another barrier when trying to bear

witness to the Holocaust. She questions whether the other, the listener – the now primary witness – can even hear. She claims that, to have been within the Holocaust is to have been within an Otherness. She states that, “the tongue of the Other is by definition the very nature and position, one by definition *does not understand*. To testify from inside Otherness is thus to bear witness from inside the living pathos of a tongue which nonetheless is bound to be heard as mere noise” (1992:231). She then proposes the outcome that, ‘the Holocaust reveals itself as incommensurate with knowledge, the way in which the Holocaust unconsciously and actively conjures up its own forgetting and resists – above all – its own knowing from inside” (1992:252). According to Felman, there can never be a primary witness.

The Holocaust therefore denies entry and is always inevitably other to itself. Leslie Morris describes the process of “postmemory”. This occurs when memory ceases to have access to an original. Morris states that memory therefore, “unfolds as part of an ongoing process of intertextuality and translation and a constant interrogation of the nature of the original” (2003:289). Marianne Hirsch develops this notion, which can potentially lead the outsider, inside and become witness to the Holocaust. She claims that postmemory is the second generation’s response to trauma of the first generation. She states that the second generation’s response is,

cognizant that our memory consists not of events, but of representations, repetition does not have the effect of desensitizing us to horror, or shielding us

from shock, thus demanding an endless escalation of disturbing imagery, as the first generation might fear. On the contrary, compulsive and traumatic repetition connects the second generation to the first *producing* rather than *screening* the effect of trauma that was lived so much more deeply as *compulsive repetition* by survivors and contemporary witnesses (2001:218).

Hirsch therefore does not believe that exposure to representations of events such as the Holocaust can have an anesthetising effect; instead the traumatic event becomes somewhat contained within a representational structure. She claims that when trauma has been mediated by representation and there is the element of distance, this enables the second generation to work through trauma of the first generation and their inability to apprehend the events. However this distance is then breached to some extent with what Hirsch describes as, “*retrospective witnessing by adoption*” (2001:221). This is the identification of these traumatic memories and the inscription of them into one’s own life story, while still maintaining the distance between the second generation from the first. The Holocaust, being a crime against humanity, becomes an event in our lives. It is a watershed event that changes the course of our lives, from before we knew about it and after we knew about it.



Figure 8. Buchenwald Memorial Sculpture. (2008).



Figure 9. The Nazis used photographic charts, such as this one, which was constructed to validate the notion that European races are aesthetically superior to Australian, Negro and Mongoloid races.

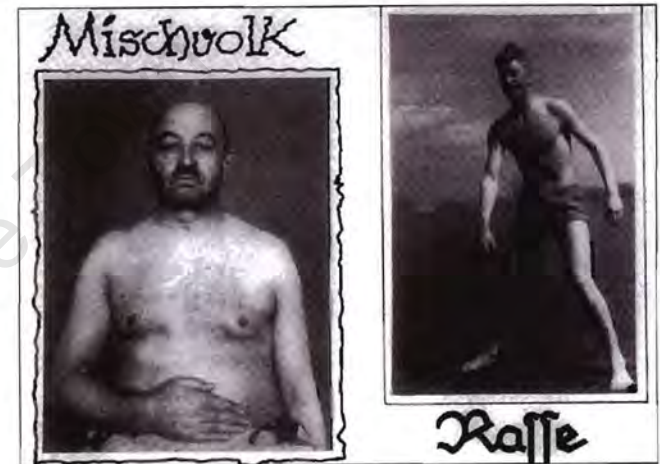


Figure 10. This image contrasts a man of supposedly mixed race, on the left, to an Aryan athletic youth, on the right. The intention was to depict the aesthetic supremacy of the Aryan and a desire to keep the "race" pure. (c. 1930's).



Figure 11. Poster for the exhibition, *The Eternal Jew*. Vienna. (1938). This was the largest prewar antisemitic exhibition put on by the Nazis.



Figure 12. An antisemitic poster from Poland, which aims to link Jews to communism and big capital. The caption reads, "Plutocracy or bolshevism- both are invented by Jews."



Figure 13. This Polish poster claims that Jews are lice and that they cause typhus.



Figure 14. An antisemitic image depicting the wealthy, urban Jew preying on the innocent rural Aryan woman.

Signifying the Jew

The Jew throughout history has been an image of both sameness and difference. This leads me to question how the Jew, since the Enlightenment, has been racially inscribed in order to construct readable signs of otherness that still endure upon the body.⁹

Although the Jews were also outsiders during antiquity, on account of their belief in monotheism and related cultural practices and laws, the dawn of Christianity galvanised a new competitiveness with the Jew. Judaism, as the parent, failed to witness the teachings of the son. Milton Shain explains that the Jews' refusal to convert to Christianity in Medieval Europe resulted in the image of the Jew being interpreted as one of degeneracy (see Shain. 1998: 21 – 43). Christianity needed to validate itself against the supposed immorality of Judaism. During this period there were accusations lodged against the Jews for deicide, desecration of the Host, murder of Christian children on Easter, as being conspirers to the Black Death as well as being perceived as the feared attendant of the Antichrist.¹⁰

9 Judaism believes that the Jewish birth rite is passed on from a mother to her child, which could have reinforced and possibly justified the interpretation that Judaism has hereditary traits.

10 For further reading refer to: Joshua Trachtenberg. (1966). *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and its Relation to Modern Antisemitism*. Trachtenberg plots how the perceived threat of Judaism was exacerbated by the development of nationalism. The Medieval coalition of the state and the Church in Europe was at certain periods antagonistic to the Jew, who was regarded as an opposition to the forging of national identities. The Jew's assumed disloyalty to the state generated hostile economic competition. The Jew as a nation without a national identity was thereby conceptualised as the eternal wanderer, who was blind to the truth of Christianity and therefore antipathetic to truth, justice, morality,

The 'rational' mind of the Enlightenment, with its faith in empiricism, required visible markers of difference in order to provide evidence for racial typing, which was then to be taken up by 'science' in the late 1800s and became of special interest within the field of eugenics. The development of theologically based Jewish hatred (termed anti-Judaism) into 19th century racial antisemitism, was supported by the notion of the body as an expression of the soul, whereby difference was a symptom of pathology. Shain explain that in the 1870s the German Wilhelm Marr coined the term "antisemitism" during a time when secularism required that the Jew be defined as different beyond outmoded religious distinctions. Shain states,

Marr's term arose from the field of philology which had labeled certain languages as 'Semitic'. The pseudo-science of the time conflated language with anthropological constructions of race and made a distinction between 'Aryan' and 'Semite' ... Jews were 'Semites' and anti-Semitism has therefore always meant hatred of the Jews. It bears no relationship to hatred of Arabs, another 'Semitic' people. Since there is no such thing as 'Semitism' the hyphen in 'anti-Semitism' is redundant (1998:5).

Representations of the Jew's body became fragmented and fetishised. Certain aspects or body parts, such as the order and humanity at large, since, "the Jew was not human – not in the sense that the Christian was" (Trachtenberg. 1996:18). The Jew, however, still had the option of transmutation since baptism was believed to cleanse the body and the soul. During the Enlightenment, this perception altered. Difference became a biological concern and was naturalised within a hierarchical structure that sought to understand difference, while grappling with the notion of a universal and rational conception of humanity.

nose, the feet, the eyes or body odour were exaggerated and distorted in order to present 'evidence' of supposed difference. When this physical 'evidence' would not suffice, Jews were made to wear a visible emblem or garment, or isolated to a designated area of residence. Jews were also distinguished socio-economically and were paradoxically represented as either the poverty-stricken second-hand pedlar, or the opulent money-lending opportunist.¹¹ Either way, the Jew was cast as an outsider.

Historically, this perceived physical difference did not need to rely on the visible. The imagined deformity of the Jew's foot was interpreted as a hidden difference. Sander Gilman states that,

By the 19th century the relationship between the image of the Jew and that of the hidden devil is to be found not in a religious, but in a secularized scientific context. It still revolves in part around the particular nature of the Jew's foot – no longer the foot of the devil, but now the pathognomonic foot of the 'bad' citizen of the new nation state (1991:39).

¹¹ These occupations were usually considered morally suspect, such as usury, which fed back into damning stereotypes. The Jew as usurer has its own ambiguity. The Medieval and Renaissance Church considered usury a mortal sin; an act against the tenet of charity and humility, since Christ was revered for his abstinence and non-materialism. At the same time the emergence of guilds, in which entry required allegiance to the Church, meant that fewer occupations were accessible to Jews. Shain also expresses the view that at certain times there was a possibility that the state utilised the Jews surreptitiously to extract funds from its own citizens. Robert Chazan states that, 'The Jews acted as a vehicle through which funds could be extracted from the Christian population and directed to government coffers. This function, while making the Jews important to their overlords, made them hated among the populace' (Chazan, quoted by Shain, 1998:32).

What had been an objection based on the Jew's religion came to be pathologized as an objection to the Jewish body (1991:43).

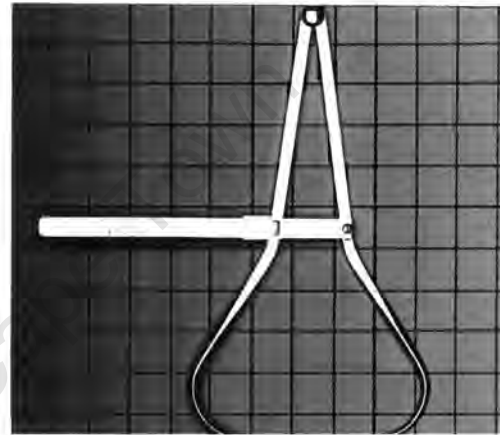


Figure 15. This image shows a caliper, which was used by the Nazi so called racial experts to 'scientifically' determine a person's race. Specific body parts were measured and these measurements were then used as supposed indicators of whether a person was a racially superior or inferior.

Gilman explains how the physical body of the Jew has been manipulated, exaggerated and distorted by a vilifying gaze in order to verify the Jew's perceived untreatable pathology. Gilman plots the transformation of medieval mythic imaginings into apparently visible markers of race, which in the 19th century, needed to be substantiated by the real. The accuser needed evidence to convict the accused. As such,

the Jew become a chimera of sorts; a shadowy collage of something known and something imagined; something seen and something concealed.

In the 19th century the medical/psychological gaze was also implemented to diagnose the Jewish mind as being ill or corrupt, which, in turn, supposedly contaminated the body, causing physical difference and malformation. Gilman details how the empirical (and assumed objective) medical gaze was used by modern science to diagnose the Jew as syphilitic and the carrier of hysteria (Gilman, 1991:60 – 103). Hysteria was traditionally perceived to be a female disease of the nervous system and a disease of visible symptoms, but it was also believed to infect the male Jew. This ‘observation’ supported the claim of the male Jew as visibly different and effeminate, which was supported by the belief in the Jew’s presumed sluggish gait. The circumcised penis was also understood as a mark of femininity. Gilman mentions that male circumcision was also interpreted as a preventative measure against sexually transmitted disease, thereby associating the Jew with uncleanness. It was also believed, albeit paradoxically, that circumcision would desensitise the penis thereby quelling the Jew’s sexual drives. In the 1930s antisemitic propaganda in Germany, the Jew was often depicted as an old man preying on the innocence of a young blonde-haired Aryan girl. Those who sought to denounce the Jew perceived the endurance of Judaism as being attributed to an incestuous appetite, so that the Jew’s degeneracy was believed to be hereditary. The circumcised penis was therefore the site of the Jew’s

femininity, illness and debasement.

Francis Galton, with his theories of eugenics, took the credence of the empirical further. He developed a notion of Jewish physiognomy by producing composite photographs of Jewish boys in order to formulate and prove a universal Jewish gaze, (See Figures 16 & 17). The unique quality of this gaze is that it is a gaze which is seen. Gilman states that, “the image of the Jew and the gaze of the Jew become one” (1991:71). This meant that the eye of the Jewish physician was not objective.¹² Difference was explained by sociological factors, namely the result of the modern and urban environment. Gilman also proposes that it was the Jew’s supposed susceptibility to hysteria, (since the ill physician – the Jewish physician, would be incapable of curing that which he suffers from) that motivated the shift in the discourse of hysteria to move more definitively towards gender. This did not necessarily undo the Jewish physician’s malady, but this was more likely to augment the feminisation of Jewish males. The camera, as utilised primarily by Galton, was a crucial tool in formulating a concept of the diseased and effeminate Jewish male body.

Linda Nochlin’s argument develops the image of the Jew within the modern era by stating that the notion of the modern Jew in Europe (and subsequently the West) as having a collective identity, is a construct of modernism itself. She

¹² It is therefore no wonder that Freud sought invisibility behind the veil of text and did not continue Jean-Martin Charcot’s extensive photographic project of visualising hysteria at the Salpêtrière hospital in Paris, as Freud’s own ‘racial pathology’ would discredit his diagnosis.



Figure 16. Francis Galton's original photographs of the Jewish students at a London school.

From: Jacobs, J. (1891). *Studies in Jewish Statistics*.

London: D. Nutt

(Source: Private Collection, Ithaca).

see: (Gilman.1991:66)

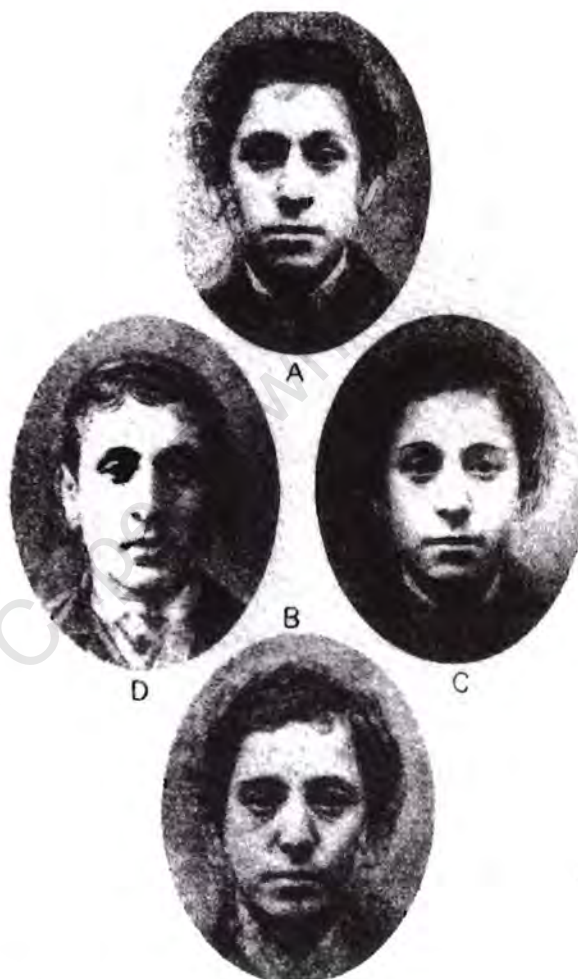


Figure 17. Galton then superimposed the original photographs to produce a form of multiple exposure and created an image of the 'essence' of the Jew.

From: Jacobs, J. (1891). *Studies in Jewish Statistics*.

London: D. Nutt

(Source: Private Collection, Ithaca).

see: (Gilman. 1991:67)

claims that Jewish identity is intricately intertwined with the formation of the ideological construction of antisemitism. Nochlin describes this process as, “the almost hysterical repetitiveness of myths and exaggerations” (1995:10). The image of the Jew therefore seems to be precariously positioned between visibility and invisibility – physical presence and myth. Here, doubt, or the unreliability of the visible, is counteracted by the reliability of the invisible – the imagined. Gilman succinctly describes the Jew’s double bind regarding sameness and difference, stating that, “The more the Jew desires to become invisible, the more the Jew’s invisibility becomes a sign of difference” (1991:192). When modernism perceived and framed Judaism as a race (as a Semite), we can interpret this as a reaction against the Jew who had become increasingly concealed within European society. The unseen Jew’s chameleon-like ability to assume the culture of the state was perhaps even more fearful as an act of trickery and deception, whereby the now ‘omnipotent’ Jew performed whiteness. The Jew’s ambiguity regarding its subject-object position places this dyadic relationship in doubt. The Jew, and specifically the secular Jew, has the ability to perform the invisibility of the seeing “I” and can therefore assume the position of a subject.

Although Jewish stereotypes may not hold the same weight today, these markers still seem embedded within Jewish tropes. Nochlin reflects upon the durability and potency of the notion of a Jew’s difference, and how she as a Jewess, gazes at herself and others like her with the same scrutiny in,

order to detect and see evidence of Jewishness.¹³ This has prompted me to consider the secular Jew’s relationship with his body and how this affects his ability to affirm presence. It is the secular Jew who seems especially susceptible to slip between presence and absence and between sameness and difference.

It is particularly interesting that Gilman begins *The Jew’s Body* with a chapter on the Jewish voice and how the Jew was thought to sound different. This was either “witnessed” audibly, on account of an accent, or by the belief that Yiddish was believed to be the secret language of the Ashkenazi Jews. This perception generated a whole discourse that positioned the Jew as antithetical to state nationalism and trade. To speak is also to announce presence. It is the “I am” of being. This notion of discursive difference positions the Jew, not simply as an outsider, but an outsider to meaning, or rather as a threat to meaning.

Gilman also commented on the biblical act of circumcision as being understood by those who sought to vilify the Jew as a “false sign, a sign written on the body of the hypocrisy of the hidden language of the Jews” (1991:18). The

13 Nochlin states, “At times, I find myself surreptitiously looking at people on the street in my neighbourhood on the Upper West Side of Manhattan or at a concert or a movie, or more to the point, emerging from the local synagogue. Some of them, indeed – the older ones mostly – bore the stigma of stereotypical Jewishness: the frog-like mouths, the large, uncomely nose, the squinting eyes, and the weak, hunched-over physiognomies of the classical anti-Semitic caricature. How delighted I was to see that the younger people, on the contrary, even the ones walking to the Orthodox synagogue around the corner, were often tall, broad-shouldered, and fit beneath their prayer shawls and yarmulkes, the young women fashionably if conservatively dressed: no hint of caricature here!” (1995:7 – 8).

Jewish body shows that the act of original witnessing marks the body with physical loss. However, this loss also has been interpreted as a blindness, of being blind to the New Testament. For Jews, this mark of loss absorbs the Jewish body embedding it within the Text,¹⁴ whereby the wound is effaced by the Word – the unutterable Name. Jews are historically known as the “People of the Book”, who inhabit a body that has meaning and comes into being through the collective (no less than ten males) utterance of the Text. This is an annunciation of being – of bearing witness to the Word. The paradox of the Jew lies within this concept, of the Jew being witness to an unseen and unknowable truth.

Tamar Garb reminds her reader about the threat posed by Jewish sight. The Jew as being blind to Christianity, is also “representing an eternal witness to the possibility of its denial” (1995:20). The sight of the Christian subject is predicated upon the blindness of the Jew. As previously stated, the Jew’s reliability as witness was again called into question in 1945 to give testimony to the atrocities of the Holocaust.



Figure 18. SA guards at the entrance to a Jewish store in order to boycott Jewish owned businesses. The sign reads, “German’s Beware! Do not buy from Jews.”

14 My use of the word Text refers to the holy Text of the Jews, the Torah, which is believed to be a transcription by Moses of the Word of G-d.



Figure 19. Hitler Youth at Party Rally. (1938). Nuremberg.

Figure 21. A Brigade of Reich Labour Service bearing spades in review before Hitler at a Party Rally. (1937). Nuremberg.



Figure 20. Male inmates at roll call.



The Idealised Body

Susan Sontag, in her essay *Fascinating Fascism*, exposes the construction of Leni Riefenstahl's film *Triumph of the Will* (1935). Through Sontag's writing, it becomes evident how this film, which could be perceived as a documentation of a National Socialist Party Congress Rally, is also a work of history as spectacle, of history as a performance and a constructed image that is utilised to fashion and consolidate the image of the state. Sontag states, "In *Triumph of the Will*, the document (the image) not only is the record of reality, but is one reason for which the reality has been constructed, and must eventually supersede it" (1980:83). As such, representation and aesthetic construction was utilised in order to mould an image of the real. Similarly, Walter Benjamin states, "The logical result of Fascism is the introduction of aesthetics into political life" (1978:241). Under Fascism the merging of art and reality, the formalising of politics and the politics of form, meant that the view granted by aesthetic distance was negated. Sontag quotes Joseph Goebbels (1933) as having stated that politics is, "the highest and most comprehensive art there is and we who shape modern German policy feel ourselves to be artists ... the task of art and the artist [being] to form, to give shape, to remove the diseased and create freedom for the healthy" (1980:92).

Riefenstahl was instrumental in fashioning the image of National Socialism in her films *The Triumph of the Will* and *Olympia* (1938), which were both financed by the National Socialist government. In Sontag's explication of these

films as works of Nazi propaganda, she states, "The Nazi films are epics of achieved community, in which everyday reality is transcended through ecstatic self-control and submission" (1980:87). She then claims that, "Fascist art glorifies surrender, it exalts mindlessness, it glamorises death" (1980:91).

In *The Triumph of the Will* the National Socialist body is imaged as a collective body. The individual is superseded by the mass and a unified identity; an identity that is activated by the formidable image of Hitler. This is evident in the rally scene (Figures 22 & 23.) where high angle establishing shots are utilised. The scene is one of stringent geometrical linearity, balance and order. The scene then cuts to individual and intense close-ups of the soldiers. This activates the wide-angle shots, which creates a scene that is restrained yet pulsing with energy. This image of unity, conformity and collective and supreme might was needed to conceal the underlying chaos and terror that came to characterise the Nazi regime and which eventually could not be maintained by this immaculate façade. The collective body of the crowd is not contained by the architectural space, but is rather an extension of it. Fascist architecture had been designed as an impressive stage upon which these mass rallies could be played out. These mass performances were pivotal to National Socialism's formulation of community, and these were events where Hitler could perform as the great orator and indoctrinator. Architecture was the primary means through which the Third Reich imaged its new aesthetic philosophy, which was based on a belief of superiority and

national excellence. Peter Adam quotes Franz Moraller as having stated that, "The great buildings of the movement are not built for their own sake. They must demonstrate unity, strength, and power of the state ... The style of the buildings must reflect the will which formed it" (1992:220).¹⁵



Figure 22. Leni Riefenstahl. *Triumph of the Will*. (1935). Film still.

The function of art within the Third Reich was of immense importance, as Hitler had to utilize art as a means to legitimize the supremacy of German culture. Accordingly, there could be no art for art's sake. Art had to be a testament of its superiority and function as an emanation of the Germanic

¹⁵ Moraller, F. (1937). *Mitteilungsblatt der RKDBK*. August 1. p.12. As cited in: Adam, P. (1992). *Art of the Third Reich*. New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc. p. 220.



Figure 23. Leni Riefenstahl. *Triumph of the Will*. (1935). Film still.

soul. The fascist reverence for classicism, particularly evident within its architecture, was a means not only to align itself to a formal appreciation for harmony and symmetry (in the pursuit of aesthetic perfection, in the name of the beautiful) but it was also a means by which they could create a historic legacy. They sought not to copy Greek classicism, but to reinforce the notion of the Germanic peoples that they traced back to antiquity. This was based within a belief of their Nordic origins, which would legitimise their racial theories and imaging of the Aryan – an image that needed to contain the promise of eternity. The conceptualization of the Third Reich (Third Empire) therefore built upon a generally understood German historiography that connected it to the lineage of the First and Second Reich. The First Reich, (800/926 – 1806) known as the Holy Roman Empire, was believed to be a continuation of the Roman Empire and covered the geographical areas that today include Germany



Figure 24. Leni Riefenstahl. *Olympia*. (1938). Film still of opening montage as camera tracks around classical figurative sculptures.

at its centre with Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, eastern France, northern Italy and western Poland, which they believed to be Germanic territory. These were the territories that the Third Reich sought to reclaim. The Third Reich therefore saw itself as the rightful heirs to Roman culture, a culture they supposedly aspired to continue to develop and refine in order to achieve the ideal form.

In *Olympia*, a film about the 1936 Olympic Games, Riefenstahl uses the camera to construct the idealised image of the Aryan body. This is a body in motion, an athletic, strong and most

use of theatrical lighting moulds around the statues and seduces their forms. The last shot of this montage is of Myron's *Discobolus*, (circa 460 – 450 BC), which is a

representation of masculine perfection and balance of form. Marble becomes flesh as the image of the statue dissolves into the Aryan male discus thrower. The camera's low-angle

often masculine body. The association of this body to the idealized Greek notion of beauty is evident within the opening sequence. The camera rotates around the ruins of Greek temples, tracking close to the ground, as it moves in closer to these structures, creating dramatic scale relationships. The camera then dissolves into tracking shots of Greek figurative sculptures (see Figure 24.) that are set against a dark background. Riefenstahl's



Figure 25. Leni Riefenstahl. *Olympia*. (1938). Film still of Aryan athlete as Roman ideal.

positions the sky as an awe-inspiring backdrop that situates the figure in a natural environment. This idealisation is naturalized in order to remove and purify the figure from its cultural context, thereby harmonises this body with nature. The grand concepts and aspirations of the Greek and Roman empires, such as beauty, truth, justice and the formulation of the citizen within the idealised state therefore also became ambitions of the Third



Figure 26. Myron's *Discobolus*.
(c. 460 – 450 BC).

Reich. The figure then begins to move, swinging back and forth, gathering momentum. This is followed by a montage of male athletes captured at moments of peaking energy. Their muscles strain and release, yet their facial expressions remain composed. The low-angle camera moves in close to the glistening skin, developing a seductive and sensuous idealisation. George L. Mosse states that the official art of the Third Reich, "symbolized a certain standard of beauty that might serve to cement the unity of the nation by projecting a moral standard to which everyone should aspire" (1991:25).



Figure 27. Leni Riefenstahl. *Olympia*. (1938).
Film still of opening montage.

Although *Olympia* is often contextualised within the genre of documentary, in the diving sequence it becomes evident to me that Riefenstahl's primary concern was formulating this idealised body. As this scene develops, the action begins to be edited in order to synchronise with the soundtrack



Figure 28. Leni Riefenstahl. *Olympia*. (1938).
Film still from montage of male athletes.



Figure 29. Leni Riefenstahl. *Olympia*. (1938).
Film still from diving sequence.

as its rhythm mounts. Certain shots have even been rewound and pieced together so that the action of the dive from beginning to end is not completed. Taken together, this indicates that continuity of the action, in its documentary sense, was of no interest to Riefenstahl. These elegant bodies that dramatically, yet gracefully, fly through the air create a montage of dynamic beauty.

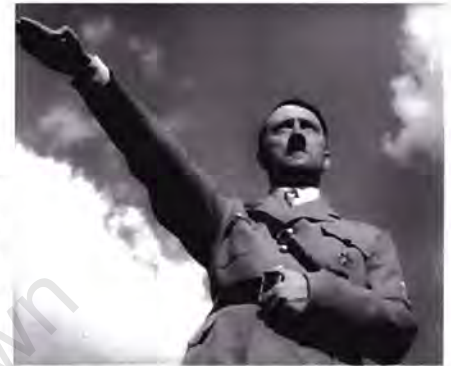


Figure 30. Leni Riefenstahl.
Triumph of the Will. (1935). Film still.

It is the male body that begins to dominate National Socialist iconography. In order to manifest the beauty of this body as being naturalised and preordained by the Germanic spirit, this body needed to be without any cultural signifiers that would locate the body to a specific moment in time and therefore to a fashion. To articulate this body's universality and timelessness it is often nude. This is most evident in National Socialist sculpture in works by Arno Breker and Josef Thorek. In Breker's *Warrior's Departure* (1942) or *The Guard* (1942) (Figures 31 & 32.) the level of stylisation is evident. The gun was replaced by the sword in order to elevate the figure from the particular and to represent an allegory of heroism. Adam explains how the humanistic gesture of sculpture from Greek antiquity had been replaced by the superficiality of the pose. He states, "The frozen pose became the ideal



Figure 31. Arno Breker.
Warrior's Departure. (1942).

was averted due to the extraction of sensuality through stylisation. He states that these male figures, “could be worshiped, but neither desired nor loved” (1991:28).

When watching Riefenstahl's films today, we need to question if it is possible to appreciate their formal beauty, despite their context and despite the claim that they can be interpreted as works of German propaganda that sought

instrument of political indoctrination, the elimination of personal freedom” (1992:200). These forms became expressions of social conformity. Could there, however, be an ironic turn within the fascist ideology and its idolisation of the male form, in that the very desire that it sought to silence, it inadvertently begins to eroticise these representations, but begin to foster a homo-erotic response? However, according to Mosse the possibility of a homo-erotic gaze

to image itself as a superior master race, which positions other races or nationalities as inferior, possibly unworthy, possibly infectious and possibly dangerous. Sontag, when discussing Riefenstahl's self-proclaimed allure to the beautiful (which has been her and her defenders stance to disassociate the content of her work from her aesthetic style) quotes Riefenstahl, who stated that she is not attracted to that which is, “purely realistic, slice-of-life, that which is average, quotidian doesn't interest me” (Sontag, 1980:85). But what this statement also reveals is that *The Triumph of the Will* and *Olympia* are indeed anything but disinterested. Her aesthetic handling of the beautiful is created around an ideology of the beautiful and an investment in the super-human. Sontag claims that adherers of Riefenstahl have viewed her photographic work on the Nuba as a means to confirm her position as a disinterested aesthete. According to Sontag, however, Riefenstahl's publication *The Last of the Nuba* (1976) is another installment of her fascist project as the fascist emphasis



Figure 32. Arno Breker.
The Guard. (1942).

of a hierarchical ordering of race, and the notion of an idealised primitive elite living within an ordered harmony with the natural not only infiltrates and informs this work, but is indeed its very impulse. The defilers of a pure race might have changed from conceptualising the Jew as being the intellectual and cultural contaminants of the Germanic race, to modernised civilisation itself as being the destroyer of a primitive Africa. The image and belief in an idealised, yet naturalised humanity remains intact. Sontag states, "What is distinctive about the fascist version of the old idea of the Noble Savage is its contempt for all that is reflective, critical and pluralistic" (1980:89). Riefenstahl's publication explicitly states in the title that her celebration of a utopian vision, presented under the façade of realism, which without a centripetal ordering force, without a totalitarian social structure towards which the vitality and endurance of a choreographed collective spirit is directed towards, is sure to die. Of her photographic work on the Nuba, Riefenstahl states, "It was a view into Paradise that will soon vanish" (1976:20).



Figure 33. Cover of Hitler Youth publication. The title reads: "Youth Serves the Führer."



Figure 34. K. Stauber. Poster reads: "Germany Lives!" (1930's).



Figure 35. Hermann Otto Hoyer. SA Man Rescuing Wounded Comrade. (1933).

Photography as Evidence and Absence

The camera's recording ability was utilized to document the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps. However, as with the medical and diagnostic camera, the documentary camera is equally problematic in gathering evidence. This compelled my interest in attempting to understand not only the relationship of the Jew with the visible, but specifically the relationship between the Jew and photography.¹⁶ This is then followed by a discussion on the relationship between photography and trauma.

Roland Barthes describes the taunting absence that the photograph presents to its viewer. Barthes, when discussing his experience of having his portrait taken, states that, "Death is the *eidōs* of that Photograph" (1981:15). As a subject to be photographed, he feels the seduction of death, which is evoked by the anticipation of the image that will solidify him as an object of the past. Photography presents the real in a manner that the real is unknowable to us; namely as a static infinite present. It is "a museum object," (Barthes, 1981:13) "always invisible: it is not it that we see" (Barthes, 1981:6). What the viewer sees is the shadow of reality that has been stopped, selected and composed. This structure supposedly encourages reflection and insight towards the apprehended incident. However, one sees something else. Instead of the real, to which the photograph owes its presence, one sees

¹⁶ When Christian Boltanski was asked why he used obituary images of Swiss in his work *Les Suisses morts* (1991) he stated that, "Before I did pieces with dead Jews but 'dead' and 'Jew' go too well together. It's too obvious" (Boltanski quoted in Marjorie Perloff, 1997:57). According to Boltanski, the Jew is a signifier of the past; coupled with photography's associations with death, it would be an exercise in redundancy.

the pathos and beauty of what was. How does one therefore propose the validity of empirical evidence when at the time of the concentration camps' liberations the primary tool for documenting the real, not only mythologises the real, but positions it within the framing of loss? The photograph is not merely the mask of death, or "the return of the dead," (Barthes, 1981:9) but it is the living dead. It is the real transformed into a mere surface effect of presence. It is for this reason that the photograph fails to apprehend the referent, but this is not to say that the photograph does not influence (at best) or produce (at worst) a concept of the real.

Carol Zemel discusses the imagery taken by the American photographers Lee Miller and Margaret Bourke-White,¹⁷ who were entrusted with the task of documenting the liberations of concentration camps in 1945. Zemel is concerned that documentary images, while informing the viewer, do not necessarily provoke the viewer towards experiencing the urgency to act upon this information. The viewer gazing into the past is positioned as an outsider. Viewers are voyeurs,

¹⁷ Margaret Bourke-White was a particularly influential figure involved in the debate concerning the ethical approach to documentary photography. Bourke-White was commissioned by *Fortune* Magazine in 1934 (along with James Agee who wrote the text) to document the effects of a devastating drought in the central parts of the United States. Agee complimented Bourke-White's use of the camera as being a "dispassionate eye" which according to him rendered the suffering she photographed with integrity and honesty (Agee quoted by John Stomberg, 2007:41). After this project Bourke-White expressed the desire to develop this approach, which was termed 'candid photography.' This was the notion of the photographer seeking invisibility behind the camera, which enabled reality to unfold unmediated before the lens. The photographer was therefore believed to be capable of capturing a concerned truthfulness.

not participants, and are therefore not ethically implicated in the scene. Zemel proposes that Miller and Bourke-White's images draw upon Christian iconographies. There is perhaps the unavoidable association of drawing meaning from physical suffering and death to a Christian ideology.¹⁸ The concept of martyrdom is also integral to a Christian theology within the belief of Jesus's self sacrifice. The very term "Holocaust" also has a religious association and is connected to the act of sacrifice.¹⁹ This has resulted in the term's disfavour on account of the associated universalising effect that is directed towards finding meaning from the genocide. According to Zemel the emotional intensity of the imagery taken at the scenes of the camp liberations, in conjunction with their formal attributes, assists in their transfiguration into icons that attain a "spiritual presence" (Zemel. 2003:204). Miller and Bourke-White's photographs are sensitive to tone and balance, which is aesthetically pleasing.²⁰ The viewer, however, is absolved from the guilt

18 Judaism's monotheistic ordinance prohibits idolatry. Typically, there is no religious iconography that images the Jewish figure. However, the Christian figure, the body of Jesus, is a body that suffered. This suffering, which although was healed and renewed at the Resurrection, this was a passage through and transcendence of the physical. The belief that Jesus suffered for the sins of humanity becomes the progression of the specific into the universal.

19 The term "Holocaust", although not a historically Christian term, does have religious origins. It is derived from the Latin term *holocaustum*, which is an amalgamation of the Greek word *holokauston* meaning wholly burned and the Hebrew word *olah*. The term "*olah*" was used to describe a certain sacrificial practice that was conducted by the priests at the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem whereby the sacrificial offering was burnt to ashes. In order to fend-off this religious association, that seeks meaning from sacrificial offerings, the term *Shoah* is preferred. *Shoah* is the Hebrew word for "ruin" or "destruction" thereby signifying the immense loss of European Jewry and emphasising the specificity of the atrocity.

20 Photography's deliverance of the real to the aesthetic will be



Figure 36. Margaret Bourke-White, *Prisoners at Fence in Buchenwald*. (1945).

of attaining visual pleasure from these photographs of horror due to this icon effect, which universalises tragedy. This absolves the viewer from a sense of immediacy and action. Zemel explains how the image as icon, is a process of symbolic abstraction, which formalizes the content of trauma and dislodges their context so that, "Incident and anecdote give way to formality and essence; rather than personality we see presence" (2003:204). Photography's stoppage of time and its presentation of the past as an

discussed as an eventuality of the photographic object. However, the influence of the aesthetic upon the photographer is often immediate – as a distancing device. This occurs specifically during events that seem unbelievable, such as the scene encountered at the Nazi camps. Photographers used aesthetic distance as a means to shield themselves from the real horror that they encountered. Zemel quotes Bourke-White, who stated that, "I believe many correspondents worked in the same self-imposed stupor. One has to, or it is impossible to stand it" (2003:208).

eternal present, seems the perfect medium for the formation of icons and is particularly adept at displaying the secular with a religious veneer.

This effect is evident in Bourke-White's *Prisoners at Fence in Buchenwald* (1945). The photograph shows a group of men standing behind a barbed wire fence. The framing shows the full length of the men at eye level, but the framing is tight and minimises foreground and background information. The composition's flatness and relative absence of environment assists in constructing a sense of timelessness. The framing also cuts off the figures in such a way that they seem to extend beyond the frame. This alludes to a somewhat endless homogeneity of victimisation. The barbed wire fence also separates the viewer from the figures photographed, presenting an us and them scenario, which prevents the viewer from identifying with the figures and seeing resemblance with them. The viewer's empathy with the prisoners is therefore curtailed.

Zemel also draws an aesthetic connection between Miller's *Daughter of the Burgomeister of Liepzig* (1945) and Bernini's sculpture, *Blessed Ludovica Albertoni* (1671 – 74) in the Altieri Chapel at Rome. The evocative lighting of Miller's image certainly does render the photographic surface with a sculptural splendour. The supine poses of both these women (with mouths slightly open and eyes shut) enters the realm of symbolic expression. The political and contextual particularity of the deceased women has been overshadowed by the more awesome description of death's



Figure 37. Margaret Bourke-White.
Inside Dormitories, Buchenwald. (1945).

ecstatic union between the human and the divine.

Sontag warns us that overexposure to images reverses their informative function, making that which is seen, more unreal, while also presenting the horrific as banal found objects. She states that,

images transfix. Images anaesthetize. An event known through photographs certainly becomes more real than it would have been if one had never seen the photograph... The vast photographic catalogue of misery and injustice throughout the world has given everyone a certain familiarity with atrocity, making the horrible seem more ordinary – making it appear familiar, remote ('it's only a photograph'), inevitable (2002:20-21).



Figure 38. Bernini.
Blessed Ludovica Albertoni. (1671-74). Altieri Chapel, Rome.



Figure 39. Lee Miller.
Daughter of the Burgomeister of Leipzig. (1945).

However, Zemel's reading of Miller and Bourke-White's images as icons can also be explained as her refusal to allow these images to anaesthetise the viewer. As 'icons' the viewer never tires of their potency and effect; however, they also point beyond their context. This is counterproductive to Miller and Bourke-White's documentary ambitions. Zemel concurs with Sontag where she claims that the documentary aspect of photography, which specifies time and place, is inevitably surpassed by its aesthetics. Sontag says, "Time eventually positions most photographs, even the most amateurish, at the level of art" (2002:21). According

to Zemel, this does not mean that the photograph fails as a document, thereby failing to provide evidence, but that the aesthetics, which supposedly obscure evidence, will also reveal information. The viewer must also be concerned with the how of representation, not only with the what of representation. By considering how a photograph of atrocity becomes an icon, the viewer can pull the image back from the eternal beyond that has rendered the past as a static presence.

Sontag comments on her experience at having seen the horrific imagery taken at Bergen-Belsen and Dachau at the time of these camps' liberation. It was 1945 and she was twelve years old. She states that, "When I looked at those photographs, something broke. Some limit had been reached, and not only that of horror; I felt irrevocably grieved, wounded, but a part of my feelings started to tighten; something went dead; something is still crying" (2002:20). Sontag describes this experience of viewing the traumatic imagery as a revelation and a negative epiphany. According to Zemel these terms invoke, "the language of Christian revelation" (2003:203). Sontag indeed makes this statement in order to mark this moment of seeing that necessitates appropriate action, since the viewer who sees these images is changed. But Sontag resists against experiencing these images against a Christian iconology because the phrase "negative epiphany" implies a reaction of collapse or an implosion – a destruction of the icon. Sontag reveals how the process of sight, which is assumed to be natural and leads to understanding, is somewhat fraught. In this instance, sight has repudiated meaning – seeing is unbelieving. Sontag recognises the failure of photography to offer adequate evidence. When she says that a limit has been reached, she has encountered an endpoint in seeing. It is at this endpoint that one stands before the void, before an inconceivable endlessness. It is also the limit or end of representation. This is her acknowledgement of the seen denoting an infinite unseen.

Sontag claims that the medium of photography is surrealistic



Figure 40. Mikael Levin. (1995). *Untitled, Buchenwald*. From: *War Story*. Munich: Gina Kehayoff.

by nature, and that this effect is most pronounced when the image resembles the real because the process of assumed duplication is surreal. When discussing the impact of photography upon the American landscape and psyche, Sontag states that, "the photographer is not simply the person who records the past but the one who invents it" (2002:67). The photograph as such is not a duplication, but an aesthetic response. Once an object is framed there is a process of selection, association and arrangement, which determines the concept of that which is recorded. Reading is therefore also an act of writing. As such, photography is surreal because of its ability to create its own presence and truth – a world of its own.

This notion of photographic truth was developed by Barthes. His investigations in *Camera Lucida* were motivated in part by his mother's death and his desire to find a photograph of her that captures her essence. He sought for a truthful image to prevent the memory of his mother from fading. Barthes came across a photograph of her taken in 1898, when she was five. She stands besides her seven-year-old brother on a wooden bridge in a winter garden. Barthes states, "I studied the little girl and at last rediscovered my mother" (1981:69). It is in this image of his mother as a young girl, which depicts her in a manner unknown to him, that he finds some truth. This image seems to heal Barthes' memory of his mother as a frail and dying old woman. It is via this unexpected inversion of roles whereby the mother becomes the child that causes the piercing of the *punctum*.²¹ Barthes does not reprint the image, so that the *punctum* remains intact because for the ordinary viewer, who does not have this personal relationship, the image once seen, will swiftly be forgotten. However, the *Winter Garden* image permeates the text and imprints itself upon the reader's mind. Barthes has torn apart the dictum of sight being an agent to knowledge, so that there is truth in the

21 Barthes continues to discuss the *punctum* as an un-nameable disturbance. The effect is not upon the photographic image but rather an effect felt by the viewer. He also states that, "the *punctum* should be revealed only after the fact, when the photograph is no longer in front of me and I think back on it" (1981:53). The *punctum*, however, is not nostalgic because this piercing effect means that the act of viewing affects itself by the act of remembering. As such, it is the viewer's body, which can be called upon to provide evidence, because it is marked by remembering that which has been seen.



Figure 41. Mikael Levin. (1995). *Untitled, Buchenwald*. From: *War Story*. Munich: Gina Kehayoff.

imagination.

Ulrich Baer investigates the idea that photography causes a physical disturbance, by claiming that photography's isolation of a moment produces and reproduces an act akin to trauma. He states, "I read the photograph not as the parceling-out and preservation of time but as an access to another kind of experience that is explosive, instantaneous, distinct – a chance to see in a photograph not narrative, not history, but possibly trauma" (2002:6). Baer makes this photography – trauma association by

claiming that the photograph's solidification of a singular moment, from possible infinite other moments, is capable of recording a memory that is unremembered by the subject photographed. The photograph and a traumatic memory, exists independently because they are both a broken-off fragment, which obstructs the narration that generates meaning, so that they are experienced as a vivid image existing in the present. The individual responding to traumatic memory is displaced from the stability of the interdependence between space and time. Baer goes on to utilise this notion in order to rescue the documentary image from ineffectual banality. He does this because he recognises that certain events, due to their immensity, have not proportionately affected the witness, whose evidence is therefore inadequate. Baer states, "Such experiences, and such images, cannot simply be seen and understood; they require a different response: they must be *witnessed*" (2002:13). The photograph therefore implicates the viewer by simulating the disconnected image of trauma. The viewer becomes the secondary witness who takes over from the primary witness. This is Baer's way of finding evidence when all the evidence has gone. Photography-as-trauma has the ability to record that which can not be remembered. Social justice can therefore be sought after the fact.

Baer discusses the imagery taken by American photographer Mikael Levin and the German photographer Dirk Reinartz, whose photographs were respectively published in *War Story* (1997) and

Deathly Still: Pictures of Former German Concentration Camps (1995), (see Figures 40 - 43). Baer states that these photographs perform modernist formal aesthetics of visual pleasure. It is only upon reading the titles that the importance of the sites are revealed. In *Deathly Still* the photographs' muteness is assisted by the placement of all titles as an appendix. Baer states that, "By representing the Holocaust in such stringently formal terms, Reinartz and Levin force us to see that there is *nothing* to see there; and they show us that there is something in a catastrophe as vast as the Holocaust that remains inassimilable to historicist or contextual readings" (2002:66 - 67). These images, as records of non-sites, as sites of loss, enact the photograph-as-trauma association by effacing context. This disjuncture between visual pleasure and the informative titles reallocates these sites as specific places of unimaginable horror that



Figure 42. Dirk Reinartz. (1995). *Deathly Still: Pictures of Former German Concentration Camps, Buchenwald*. New York: Scalo. p76.

remains unimagined and unaccounted for. The closure that is granted by meaning is therefore prevented. However, Sontag reminds us that, “the landscape of devastation is still a landscape. There is beauty in ruins” (2003:67). In Reinartz and Levin’s imagery, pleasure collides with despair and the viewer confronts the limitations of understanding.

Baer states that Reinartz’s images, “dispel the mythic status of the Holocaust’s unavoidable location, at once inaccessible and yet profusely documented, by depicting the site as landscape” (2002:73). The evidence of the Holocaust is within its void – the lost bodies and the silent landscapes. The failure of the witness to give adequate evidence does not mean that the witness has failed, but that the evidence is the witness’ failure. Levin’s photographs are of the same sites that his father Meyer Levin visited in 1945 as an American journalist. He was employed to report back on what he saw at these sites. What shocked Meyer Levin was not the horror he saw but the horror unseen. At Ohrdruf²² he writes, “On top of the hill there was a rut that gave out, and then nothing ... We were going to turn back when the Pole suddenly got his bearings and motioned to a clump of trees. We saw nothing. We drove there and got out and still we saw nothing special” (1997:129). Baer emphasises that the term “nothing” is more final than that of absence because nothing is that which is beyond the imagination and beyond conception. It is a finality.

²² Ohrdruf was one of the sub-camps of Buchenwald which was located in the Etterberg region near Weimar. It was the first camp to be liberated by American troops on April 4, 1945.

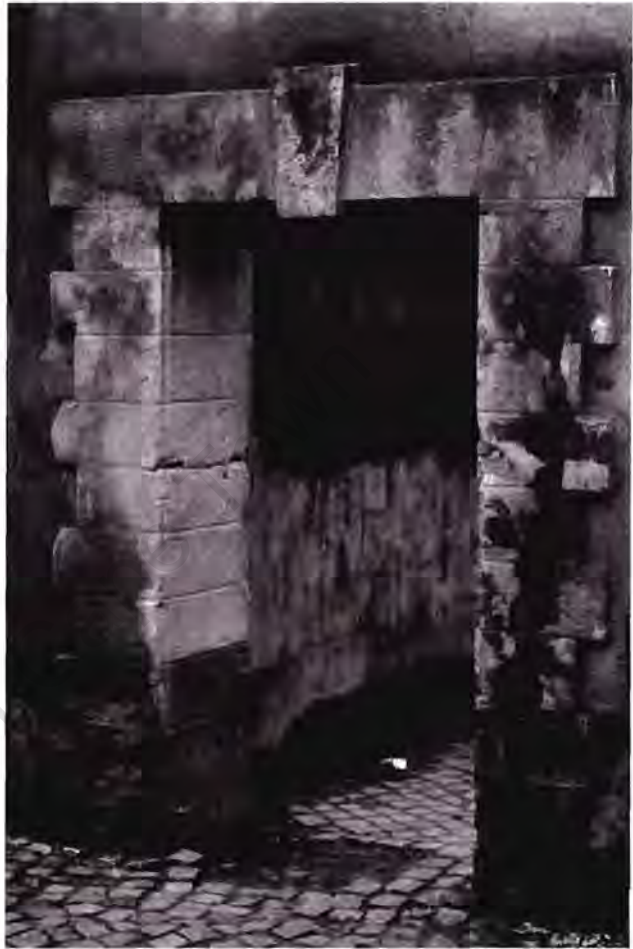


Figure 43. Reinartz, D. & Graf von Krockow, C. (1995). *Deathly Still: Pictures of Former German Concentration Camps, Ravensbrück*. New York: Scalo. p112.

Here, within a South African context, a place that has its own brutal history, the failure of landscape to reveal or retain the trauma that unfolded at certain locations is taken up by photographer Jo Ractliffe in *Vlakplaas: 2 July 1999*

(*drive-by-shooting*), (Figure 44). Ractliffe photographed the notorious Vlakplaas²³ using a toy Holga camera. The camera's crude point-and-shoot approach created gritty black and white images that makes reference to traditional documentary photography and a time in South Africa when photography was still believed to be capable of capturing a



the landscape, her use of multiple shots within the frame records her movement within the space. Instead of this movement bringing the viewer into the space, it fractures the space and presents the viewer with jarring fragments and shards of time so that the viewer becomes disorientated. This severe method of cutting up space and time enabled

Ractliffe to represent the familiar; namely, a fence, a gate or barren patch of land, in a manner that is unfamiliar, unsettling and apprehensive. Brenda Atkinson describes Ractliffe's *Vlakplaas* as, "chilling not in terms of any sensational revelation, but for

moment objectively. This aesthetic is contrasted by her somewhat poetic presentation of these images as a long strip. Individual frames with deep nondescript shadows and flared highlights bleed into each other's fuzzy edges. Instead of one moment, the viewer sees the unedited filmstrip as a long dreamscape of impressions. By presenting the images in this manner Ractliffe creates a long panorama. But she inverts this framing device because



Figure 44. Jo Ractliffe. *Vlakplaas: 2 July 1999 (drive-by-shooting)*. (1999).

instead of utilising the panorama to situate the viewer within

²³ Vlakplaas was a farm near Pretoria which was used by a subsection of the South African Police force. The farm was used to torture and murder numerous anti-apartheid activists.

its utter bland understatement. "Ractliffe's images convey the absolute banality of evil, and it is for this reason that they are so powerful" (2000:13). Ractliffe's images show the amnesia of the landscape. But there is something to be said about her methodology, for she does not use the

camera as an investigative tool. She has just driven past the site and photographed it – a circumscription of the place. She has not stopped to seek out evidence and investigate the pieces of details that have potentially been left behind.²⁴ The space therefore also remains unknown and cut off from the viewer, presenting the photograph as barrier to the real and the real as metaphor. Instead, what remains is the word “Vlakplaas” as a haunting gouge in South African history. Ractliffe as an outsider to the trauma of this site does not have access to it, so she responds to this absence and her inability of recovering the past. She forgoes an accountable and meaningful representation of this harrowing place. Instead we see elements of the car, such as the windows, the windshield and rear-view mirrors, which become additional lenses and frames that distort and obscure the real that remains out there- somewhere beyond.

Jillian Edelstein also photographed Vlakplaas in 1998, and depicted a very different view. Edelstein goes inside the site, but instead of cold gritty detention cells we see a child’s bedroom with a fluffy animal-like toy abandoned on the bed. We also see a young girl standing on the banks of the Hennops River. It was here that the victims’ bodies

24 Michael Ignatieff recalls his experiences at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in 1998. He came to realise the importance of details to fill in the painful gaps of absences, which fractures the imagination and distorts memory. Joyce Mtimkulu went to the commission with a clump of her deceased son’s hair in order to finally hear the truth of her son’s death. Ignatieff recalls, “Joyce made me realize that you want every last detail ... You want every last detail as it really was” (2001:18). These are the details that would offer Mtimkulu, and too many mothers like her answers that would enable them to gain some understanding and closure from the past. The details are what will give expression to the particularity of the event.



Figure 45. Jillian Edelstein. *Inside Vlakplaas, March 1998*. (1998).

Upon reading the title, it becomes evident that the bars on the windows were not intended to keep people from breaking in, but rather from keeping people from breaking out.

were discarded in order to maintain the farm’s secrecy. It is this incongruity between the past and the present and the rapidity of erasure that is so shocking. Upon reading the text and realising the place, the peaceful tranquility that she captures, which is partly due to the oblique and heavy afternoon light, is re-seen as an approaching ominous silence and erasure. The heavy shadows recast the innocence depicted as being somewhat sinister, if not a perverted form of denial.



Figure 46. Jillian Edelstein, *Children Playing by the Hennops River, Vlakplaas*. (1998).

University of Cape Town



Figure 47. Rudolf Herman, poster for *Entartete Kunst*, an exhibition of 'degenerate art.' (1938). Lithograph. Hamburg.

Figure 48. Works of modern art that National Socialism termed "degenerate," by artists Karl Schmidt-Rottluff and Amedeo Modigliani, which were juxtaposed against photographs of people with facial deformities in order to discredit these artists.

Artists Who Create in the Wake of the Holocaust

Joseph Beuys, Anselm Kiefer, Art Spiegelman and Steven Cohen are all artists whose work references the Holocaust, some more explicitly than others. I have chosen to discuss these artists because they represent a progression away from the event, either through time or geography, and so their work communicates within this gap. They illustrate different responses to the Holocaust that becomes increasingly reliant upon other representations and the experiences of others in order to explore their distance and closeness to the Holocaust.

Beuys, a German artist, had first-hand experience of the war. I will propose that Beuys's art had not entirely broken away from the Germanic iconography utilized by the Nazis. His art is less self-critical of his national identity. It has traces of nostalgia and still adheres to certain grand ideologies that were inherent to the philosophies of Nazi Germany. Kiefer, also a German artist, was born just after the war, in 1945. He is one generation removed from the war and has the distance to question the involvement of the first-generation. His is a generation that seems to be left astray, a generation that sought to disassociate themselves from their Nazi legacy, but floundered to find and fashion replacement representations. This generation also had the burden of inherited guilt. Spiegelman, an American artist, is a second-generation survivor. It would appear that his geographical distance seems to make his father's memories more opaque, the places he spoke of, more remote. Spiegelman seems

to rely more heavily on his imagination and the notion of postmemory in order to access this past. It is, however, a past that weighs heavily upon his construction and attempt at understanding his own sense of self. The South African artist Steven Cohen was born in 1962, so he can also be thought of as a second-generation artist. However, although he is an Ashkenazi Jew (those Jews that originate from Western and Eastern Europe) he is not a direct descendant of a survivor. Cohen's Jewishness is one of the facets of his identity that he confronts and critiques. This is an aspect of his identity that requires, at times, quotations from Nazi iconographies of Jews. I will discuss how his identity is an identity in conflict with historical imaging, so that although his art is not a direct response to the Holocaust, the Holocaust inescapably infiltrates his work.

Joseph Beuys

Beuys' utilization of fat and felt, in works such as *Chair with Fat* (1963) and *Felt Suit* (1970) are materials that supposedly reference an autobiographical occurrence, which is a tale of rebirth that draws heavily on mythological symbolism.²⁵ Beuys' notion of Social Sculpture is an anthropological conception of art, which proposes that art has the ability to perform freedom and that it is an evolutionary endeavor. Beuys stated that art, "certainly cannot be about something that has already been perfected. In certain circumstances such predetermined views of how things should be could even be the death of art" (2004:12). According to Beuys it is through art that we can develop from a place of supposed certainty to uncertainty. This is evident in Beuys's installation *The Pack* (1969) (Figure 51), which consists of a Volkswagen van with twenty sledges trailing it. Each sledge carries provisions of a felt blanket, fat and a torch for an undisclosed journey. It is a journey that anticipates wounded bodies and offers the promise of rescue and healing. Beuys is proposing that art needs to efface preconceptions of what art should be. Art therefore needs to wound itself and sacrifice itself. It is from this position that art can then heal, renew and advance. It is for this reason that warmth, for its transformative properties (with its ability to evolve from states of being that are a low in energy towards

²⁵ Beuys was a fighter pilot during the Second World War, and his plane went down in 1943 in the Crimea region. According to Beuys, he was saved by the Tartars who nursed his wounded and frozen body back to life by wrapping him in fat (for its properties of warmth) and felt (as an insulator). It was from this narrative that Beuys constructed his shamanistic persona, utilising art for its healing potential. The important factor is the transformative creative act.



Figure 49. Joseph Beuys. *Chair with Fat*. (1963).

higher energy levels), and myth, for its connectedness to the past, play essential roles in Beuys's work. His use of totemic objects enables him to move beyond a mere retinal perception towards a more inclusive sensory and material perception. His concentration on materiality could also be interpreted as being motivated by a mourning of language, a turning away from language to the testimony of material presence.

Beuys's thematic refashioning of specific objects within his Actions and his investigations into their materiality was considered alchemical. John Muffitt explains Beuys's belief that beneath material form there is a spiritual essence. This is a perception based within Germanic myths that emphasise race and an allegiance to nature.²⁶ The animals that Beuys incorporates within his artistic practice are also intended to develop this affiliation and communication to a spiritual realm, where instinct, as an innate and intuitive knowledge, is privileged over analytical thought, in order to reconnect body and soul. Muffitt also explains Beuys's occultism as being based within a theosophical belief in a life after death and the possibility of the two communicating with each other. The dead as such possess a secret knowledge that needs to be accessed and deciphered. In my project the dead are expressed as a chasm and as a space that I can never enter. The dead remain unable to speak from their graves. They remain invisible and unknowable. The corpses, exhumed and burnt away, have left no remains. The body in my project is therefore not merely in danger of dying, but of disappearing.

26 Muffitt also discusses Beuys in relation to the notion of neoprimitivism, which was a reaction against a consumerist and increasingly technological state that was perceived to alienate mankind from each other and nature. The neoprimitives intended to access a consciousness of connectedness by concerning themselves with the concept of sacred knowledge and a longing for a time when the distinction between art and life was more fluid and interconnected. Muffitt quotes Kim Levin, who refers to this sensibility as a "return to Nature". Artists explore this by either "returning materials to their natural state, subjecting them to natural force, sending art back to the land, or internalizing it within the body" (see Muffitt, 1988:62). As such Beuys's Actions often exist beyond the gallery and occupy a blurred space between that which one considers to be art and non-art. His own persona as shaman can be interpreted as an extension of his artistic practice.



Figure 50. Joseph Beuys. *Felt Suit*. (1970).

The bee forms a central image in Beuys's oeuvre because the bee utilises warmth to convert form from fluid to crystalline structures, with wax being an in-between state. The beehive also has significance for Beuys, who was greatly influenced by Rudolf Steiner's theory of Anthroposophy. Muffitt refers to Steiner's belief that the temperature in the beehive is comparable to that of blood in the human body (see Muffitt, 1988:136). The beehive becomes a symbol for the alchemical potential imbedded within the human body and exhibits

sacred qualities. Beuys's *Honey Pump at the Workplace* (1976) examines this connection. Beuys constructed an installation at the Museum Fridericianum in Kassel for Documenta 6, consisting of Plexiglas tubes that extended from the basement to the ceiling, through which honey was pumped. In the ceiling the flow of honey was blocked. This blockage caused the honey to solidify which became

a symbol for the brain. This system was illustrative of the circulatory system within the human body, whereby blood feeds thought, where a physical substance is transformed into consciousness. At the same time, however, the beehive is a symbol of the collective body. Bees have a specific function within the beehive that works in harmony in order to maintain the wellbeing and strength of the hive. The workings of the beehive echo Hitler's call for a national body and a body of service and self-sacrifice. Beuys's call for a healing of the body, a body, which had become ill and weak on account of external pollutants, seems uncomfortably familiar.

Beuys's work can be interpreted as a project to heal the wounded German psyche and to investigate, explore and extend the realm of art. His motif of healing, however, is itself problematic because it proposes a desire to renew and regain strength in that which has been wounded. The present it thereby positioned in a state of pain and the past as one of vitality, a vitality that one desires to return to in the future. His work also reinforces aspects of ideologies that were manipulated by Nazism. The idea of a connectedness to nature, a nature with secret and sacred knowledge that will heal the soul from culture, is analogous to the Nazis' conviction of blood and soil. Perhaps Beuys is not merely trying to heal the German psyche, but to return to, reinforce and regain belief in the notion of the *volk*, of a unified, healthy and strong Germania.



Figure 51. Joseph Beuys. *The Pack*. (1969).

Anselm Kiefer

Kiefer, as a second-generation German artist dealing with the aftermath of the Holocaust, is part of a generation that tried to speak out from the silent void left in the wake of the genocide and whose burden it was to make sense of the traumatic past left by their parents. This void is not only a result of those lost to the genocide and the Nazis' incineration of evidence, but it is also due to the incomprehensibility of the events themselves and the ideological infection that preceded these events.

Kiefer grapples with this traumatic past and the mythology of the German nation, a nation that allowed themselves to be lead astray. In 1975 he published the black and white photographic series *Occupations*. The images were taken between the summer and autumn of 1969 and they depict the lone figure of Kiefer at various landmarks around Europe. He is dressed in riding boots and jodhpurs while giving the Nazi salute. Lisa Saltzmann explains the significance of the title stating that,

Occupations, in German *Besetzungen*, shares the military connotations of the English word. But in German, it is the word as well for the psychoanalytic concept of the amount of psychic energy invested in a given object. The Freudian term *Besetzung* translates into English as 'cathexis,' a concept that plays an enormous role not just in describing emotional and psychic attachments, but in the theorization of loss, trauma and mourning (1999:60).

Saltzmann claims that Kiefer's work is intricately identified with the loss of the father imago that has destabilised the *Nachgeborenen* (meaning those born after) generation.²⁷ He cannot negate the past, but has to reconstruct a German identity from the ruins left by the father.

Kiefer's performances cannot simply be reduced to belligerent reenactments of iconoclasm, since as Saltzmann reminds us, the Nazi salute was outlawed in Germany after 1945. His performances indicate that Nazism was anything but mere performance, although performance and parading played a prominent role within the visualisation of the Nazi programme. Instead of Nazi propaganda images of pageantry and national unity, Kiefer is a solitary displaced figure within these former Nazi occupied territories. The salute of allegiance seems absurd and disrupts these spaces. Andrea Lauterwein quotes Kiefer, regarding these images, as having said that he wanted to question his own position against fascism. For him it is not a simple answer,

27 Traudl Junge, Hitler's secretary from 1942 up until his last days in his bunker in Berlin also develops this notion of Hitler possessing paternal significance. She stated that, "I think I had a very subservient attitude towards him as a father figure. But that can easily be transformed into hatred if your father disappoints you." She later elaborates on this emotional shift stating, "You know I felt such hatred towards Hitler because he abandoned us. A very personal hatred because he had simply gone off and left us stuck in that trap. Suddenly the other people were like lifeless puppets when the person pulling the strings lets go. None of us had lives of our own" (2002). Although she was referring to her last days in Hitler's bunker after he had committed suicide, this sense of abandonment and disillusionment can be descriptive of the German nation at that time. Instead of realising the great Aryan ideology, Germany was a country ravaged by war. It was this state of utter disillusionment that impelled the silence that followed the war. It was a silence that even the proceedings at the Nuremberg Trials between 1945 and 1949 could not alleviate. If anything the trials amplified the incomprehensibility of the crimes.

not a simple disavowal. This somewhat ambivalent position disallows the historical ossification of Nazism. For indeed, could these ideals that were so unrelentingly orated to the German nation simply vanish once the father figure abandoned them? Lauterwein proposes that one of Kiefer's *Occupations* photographs references Casper David Friedrich's *Wanderer Above a Sea of Mist* (1818). Lauterwein states that Friedrich's painting, "had been interpreted as a memorial to the soldiers who had died during the wars of liberation against Napoleon, and it was therefore seen as patriotic propaganda – hence its posthumous exploitation by the Nazis" (2007:36). Kiefer mimics the man's pose in Friedrich's painting, whom stands on a rocky shore with his back to the viewer. The man gazes over an evocative and mysterious sea, as it bulges within the frame with hazy mountains in the distance. Kiefer, however, stands facing a considerably less dramatic view of the sea, and with its monochromatic rendering, makes the scene all the more bland while he stands giving the Hitler salute. By referencing Friedrich, Kiefer is commenting on the history of propaganda within German art and therefore his own deeply rooted entanglement within this historic legacy. Kiefer questions the uniqueness of Nazi iconography and reflects on how the Nazis made use of already existing tropes. As a second-generation German citizen after the Holocaust these tropes are still intrinsic to his own conception of his identity. Nazism cannot simply be contained and explained within its historical time frame. Kiefer is negotiating the availability of iconography that he can access in order to formulate



Figure 52. Casper David Friedrich. *Wanderer Above a Sea of Mist*. (1818).



Figure 53. Anselm Kiefer. *Occupations*. (1975).

his self-image. Kiefer is asking whether there needs to be a massive purging of German art. But where does one draw the line? Which artworks are safe and without any incriminating evidence of *volkisch* persuasions?

Kiefer laments this position of historic uncertainty in *To the Unknown Painter* (1983), (Figure 54).

Saltzman states that Kiefer utilised Nazi architecture to depict sites of self-commemoration. She claims that Kiefer

uses the artist's pallet as a symbolic reference to himself. The pallet is reduced to a simple oval shape balanced upon a thin dark line. According to Saltzmann, these architectural spaces are psychological spaces of repressed memory, which precludes the act of mourning. She states that,

The repressed memory is so traumatic that even in its revealed state it 'encrypts' itself, it walls itself off, leaving memory as inaccessible and as remote as before ... Kiefer in the form of the palette, places himself in the darkness of this psychic tomb. He becomes a victimized dweller in this temporal and spatial netherworld that is at once his traumatic history and his deferred inherited psychic trauma (1999:69).

I am in agreement with Saltzmann's notion that Kiefer's painting is self-reflective, but it is not as determinately identified with a passive sense of victimisation and entombment. Kiefer's imagery is more actively self-critical. I would argue that these imposing and monumental interior spaces are crypt-like, but also self-effacing. The absence of the Aryan body within these impressive, but austere spaces is a requiem to the idealised Nazi aesthetic and ideology. I am less inclined to describe Kiefer's position as victim, but instead observe his struggle against the tomb left in the wake of Naziism. In the painting *Shulamith* (1983) (Figure 55.) the ceiling of this immense chamber has been blackened. It is as though the smoke and ash that spewed from the crematorium chimneys has soiled this space.



Figure 54. Anselm Kiefer. *To the Unknown Painter*. (1983).

Oil, acrylic, emulsion, shellac and straw on canvas
208 x 380 cm

Kiefer's paintings also engage with a ruined state by using symbolically potent materials such as straw, ash, hair, salt and lead to create wounded surfaces, even if it is at times one of burial and material overload. Lauterweim claims that his paintings thereby take on a physicality and a bodily sense of presence. She states that, "The introduction of these material 'substances' coupled with references to Celan expands the Beuysian concept of matter

as the seat of consciousness into new forms of memory matter" (2007:18). It is with the use of these potent materials that Kiefer reconstructs the Germanic landscape. In *Nuremberg* (1982) (Figure 56.) his composition places the horizon line right at the top of the canvas creating a claustrophobic space. This high-angle vantage point is an inversion of the low angle used by Riefenstahl in her dramatic compositions of Hitler and the Aryan body, whom she positioned against an awe- inspiring sky. This high angle forces the viewer to look at the earth and to confront the trauma imbedded within these landscapes.



Figure 55. Anselm Kiefer. *Shulamith*, Oil, emulsion, woodcuts, shellac, acrylic and straw on canvas. 290 x 370cm (1983).



Figure 56. Anselm Kiefer. *Nuremberg*. (1982).
Acrylic, emulsion and straw on canvas
280 x 380cm.

Art Spiegelman

Spiegelman's *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* (2003) is a graphic novel of a different sort. Form pulls against content because *Maus* is in the style of the comic book, but narrates and imaginatively images Spiegelman's father Vladek's memories of his experiences that lead up to and include time spent in Auschwitz. Spiegelman constructs various characterisations, so that, while representing his father's story, he is acknowledging that his access to the past is simply that, a story, a narrative construction, which is formative and informative of his present. Spiegelman conducted interviews with his father, and these interviews drive the narrative, which is thrust between the past – the events themselves and the

C H A P T E R O N E



Figure 57. Chapter 1, to second instalment of Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, titled: *And Here My Troubles Began*.(2003).

C H A P T E R T W O



Figure 58. Chapter 2, to second instalment of Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, titled: *And Here My Troubles Began*. (2003).

Notice how is allegory is beginning to show its weakness. It is unable to sustain itself as history becomes increasingly palpable.

present – the telling of the events. The scene of his father's telling of the story intercepts and fragments the historic narrative that takes place through Vladek's perspective. *Maus* is therefore a complex engagement with the notion of the palimpsest because the past is represented as construction within the present – history as a living narrative. Andreas Huyssen states that this “points in a variety of ways to how this past holds the present captive independently of whether this knotting of past into present is being talked about or repressed” (2001:31).

Spiegelman uses animals as the means to carry his human subjects. He depicts Jews as mice, Germans as cats, the Polish as pigs, the Americans as dogs and the French as frogs. Spiegelman employs the cat and mouse idiom, which is expressive of a predator's insatiable desire to catch its prey; but due to cunning and swiftness, the prey escapes capture. His usage of the mouse in representing the Jew not only reference the Nazi's association of the Jew with filth and vermin, but it inverts this image thereby refusing to represent the Jew as a victimised nation.

In Chapter 2, titled *Time Flies*, Spiegelman begins by informing his reader that Vladek has died. In this opening page he parallels dates in his own life with dates and death statistics from the Holocaust. The reader questions the relevance of bringing these seemingly unrelated facts together. The last panel depicts him slumped over his desk with piles of dead mice beneath his chair while he comments on the commercial success of his first instalment. For Spiegelman, the passage of time has not diminished the effect of the Holocaust upon his life story. The dead, for him, have not turned into ghosts. Even though they are out of view, they are still present and still motivate his need to represent his father's story.

Within this panel, one notices that instead of Spiegelman representing himself as a mouse, he now wears a mask of a mouse. Huysen states that, "The mask reveals the limits of his project. The ruse does not work any longer" (2001:38). As such, this is a moment of vulnerability, because he can

no longer conceal himself behind his characterisations. His persona as mouse – as Jew, and now with the mouse as a mask – with Jew as mask, also questions his relationship towards his Jewish identity. His identity as a mouse remains historical. The issue of Judaism as a religious system does not come to the fore within his project; however, it does set him apart from his national identity as an American. His Jewish identity therefore remains a characterisation. It is not a visible sign of difference, since Spiegelman's Jewishness remains unreadable behind his mask.

Time flies...



Figure 58. Art Spiegelman. *Maus*. (2003). First page to Chapter 2, of the second instalment.

Steven Cohen

Like Spiegelman, Cohen utilises the idea of masking, but his response is more extreme and he takes it out of the representational frame to explore what happens when masks and costumes enter real spaces. He performs various outrageously constructed characters that challenge social norms and gender identification. These characters attack the historical and ideological construct of hetero-normative society. His performances are monstrous and burlesque, whereby labels and symbols that define him as 'other' – namely, a white South African Jewish homosexual man – are often frightfully materialised. His compounding of markers of difference has caused a chaotic explosion, a hyper-visualisation and an over-signification. Gilman reminds his reader that, "there is no hiding from the fact of a constructed difference. There is no mask, no operation, no refuge" (1991:193). Cohen becomes an assemblage and a bricolage. Instead of constructing a whole image, he remains a fractured, fragmented and displaced figure. Shaun de Waal and Robyn Sassen describe his performance as "monster drag" creating figures defined by Cohen akin to a *golem* (2003:13). Cohen's identification with a *golem* is significant because this character from Jewish folklore was a being created from the earth and animated by inscribing or pronouncing the secret name of G-d. Adam was called a *golem* prior to being given a soul. Perhaps Cohen in costume is not the *golem*, but Cohen unmasked: Cohen as a shapeless body prior to its positioning within the repeatable and therefore readable system of cultural normalization. His performances allude not only to the

malleability of the body, but also the potential disfigurement of the body by culture. His misuse and gross exaggeration of recognisable stereotypical signifiers is what makes his performances seem so threatening. This symbolic excess could also make the viewer become suspicious of the unseen – the ideological construction of the normal that promotes docility.

Cohen's props and costumes often handicap his body. His over-exaggerated paraphernalia often make movement difficult. At times he has to pull himself across the ground, or he walks perilously with unstable lofty footwear. The fictitious deformity of the Jew's feet is made dysfunctional by altered over-fetishised shoes, thereby inadvertently indicating the normality and functionality of his real feet. One of his characters, *Jew*, (Figure 59.) which he performed in various places, including the Johannesburg Zoo in the Run for Life event in 1998, sees Cohen wearing an exhaust-pipe gas mask and attached to his one shoe is an elephant bull's foot and to the other, a bull's hoof. He also drags a taxidermy impala head behind him. Due to his elevated and impaired mobilisation, he slowly and clumsily pulls himself forward using oversized crutches. The participants in the Run for Life race hastily move past him and leave him behind. He visualises an image of the outcast, the dejected and rejected. He is utterly incongruous to his surroundings.

Cohen also responds to the confusing and contradictory nature of the Jewish circumcised penis. No longer an object to be concealed, the real penis is often exposed and visible



Figure 59. Steven Cohen. *Jew*. (1998). "This work parodies and challenges anti-Semitic stereotypes by using hunting symbols to address social persecution. The Star of David is worn on the chest, but is obscured by the Mercedes car crash wig. In addition to a corset made from a dressmaker's dummy, this work includes a gas mask, with an exhaust pipe and tusks attached to it, and an elephant foot and a bull hoof, attached to a pair of shoes. *Jew* uses crutches as a balancing device. Because *Jew* is less overtly sexual than other works in Cohen's oeuvre, the public response was closer to curiosity and warmth." See: De Waal, & Sassen (2003: 51).

during his performances. This is evident in a performance he conducted in France titled *Dancing Inside Out* (2004). In this performance, a huge Star of David is attached to his head and he holds the skeleton of a human backbone while he dances on a street corner with a magnifying lens over his penis. In Cohen's performances, his penis is also often bound to assume erection, but at the same time presenting it as wounded and vulnerable. He also places emphasis on the anus, which is often penetrated by a dildo. By doing this he draws the viewer's attention to this taboo site of desire on the body, thereby questioning the moral codification of the body and how society comes to regard this site of the body as impure. This questions the power



Figure 60. Steven Cohen, *Jew* (detail). (1998). The Star of David, stuck to Cohen's chest with blood. See: De Waal, & Sassen (2003: 16).

dynamics set up by a system of heterosexual patriarchy by framing the masculine body as penetrable, as being not only the aggressor, but also subservient. His body becomes the site of an intense conflict, between the imagined, the constructed and the mythic to the real and material body. Cohen also draws attention to the Jewish nose, which is perhaps the most enduring site upon the Jew's body used for racial identification and stereotyping, but instead of imaging it as a site of discrimination; he adorns his nose with delicate and intricate jewelry.

De Waal and Sassen also describe the Star of David which Cohen attaches to his skin as a brand. Cohen is therefore commenting on the positioning of the Jew within the realm of commerce and capitalism, as well as critiquing identification as a system of assigning value. Traditionally, branding was also used to mark livestock as a means to identify the owner, by burning the animal with a hot iron insignia. The term "branding" is therefore particularly apt, as Cohen externalises his markings. Cohen's work is at times challenging because it is unclear as to whether he is rejecting or claiming ownership of these markings; whether his so called 'otherness' is being contested, or merely reinforced.

Performance is a forceful way for Cohen to transgress regulatory normalcy (the idealised notion of hetero-normativity) because performance is a transgression between art and life. This leads me to wonder what Cohen wears when he gets home after a day of performing. Out of "monster

drag" is Cohen able to move freely and unnoticed, thereby performing his hidden otherness as a secular Jew? De Waal and Sassen explain the double threat that Cohen presents, stating, "the homosexual, like the Jew has frequently featured as the image of a secret, subversive presence undermining social stability from within" (2003:18). Cohen utilises the photographic document and video to record his performances. When exhibiting his videos within a gallery, there is often an accompanying portrait of the character placed within a timeless and de-contextualised white space. It is when these characters enter a real space that a rupture happens. He is therefore implicating the viewer. He asks of the viewer, "What are your fears, your repressions and your unspeakable desires?" "How does the other look to you?" The viewer must also question as to why Cohen's performance work, which enacts the deconstruction difference, seems to be viewed as threatening. One witnesses the clash between the masculine and the feminine, the human and the animal, the material and the theatrical, the accusatory and the condemned, all condensed within this singular figure. His work can be interpreted as intending to attack difference, to render the other as the same, yet inevitably he remains the quintessential other and an outcast to definition.



Figure 61. Steven Cohen, *Ugly Girl at The Rugby*. (1998). "Its public interventions include going to buy a ticket for a rugby match at Loftus Versveld stadium in Pretoria, as well as attendance at the Durban July horse race. *Ugly Girl's* costume plays with drag."

See: De Waal, & Sassen (2003: 46)

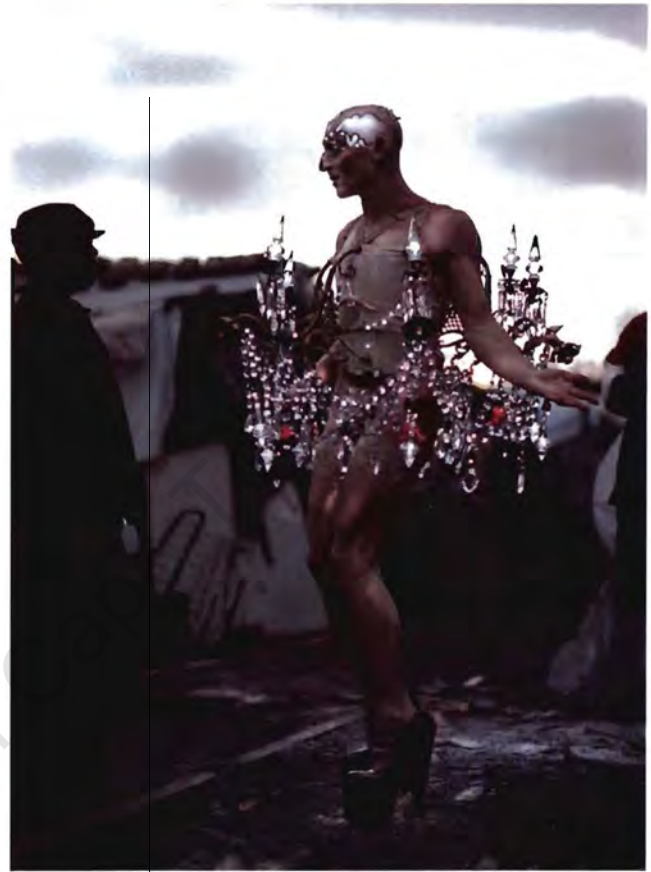


Figure 62. Steven Cohen, *Chandelier*. (2001-2). "Cohen interacts with inhabitants of an informal settlement as well as the men colloquially known as 'red ants'- red overalled men employed by the government to demolish the makeshift homes of squatters. Cohen wrote of his own performance, 'a white man in high heels wearing an illuminated chandelier tutu and improvising movement amidst a community of black squatters whose shacks are being destroyed by the city council workers, in their own ballet of violence, is very South African... I felt displaced (hectic is heels and a strange placeto be near naked).'"

See: De Waal, & Sassen (2003: 71)



Figure 63. Ravensbrück Memorial Sculpture. (2008).

Chapter 2.

A Space Between: Visual Research

My visual research consists of four distinct series of works, which are framed by my response to having visited Buchenwald and Ravensbrück and it navigates between what I expected to find, what I saw when I arrived there and my emotional reaction to these sites. It was from this experience that I inquired about my own role within remembering the Holocaust and how can I approach this past. I could then query as to how I might image and represent this past and represent myself within this past so that I could consider how this past has come to influence representations of me. I also considered how the imagination can function within history and how history can be approached by the imagination.

By utilising different techniques, I engage with various aspects associated with the construction of the photographic image. Within the medium of photography, there exists a tension between the notion of the photograph as a document or record and the photograph as a subjective response by the photographer. This is a tension that I investigate by creating images that are apparent constructs and ones that are seemingly neutral. The Jew is a construction of sorts, as a body that has been formulated primarily by others, (since Judaism traditionally prohibits against representational art forms as a means to prevent idolatry) and so hovers between the imagination and the real. It is for this reason

that the process of collage has played a prominent role within my project.

The first series of photographs are landscapes. These images, although un-manipulated, can be viewed as constructions of the eye and the camera in the manner that the landscape has been composed to restrict information. The next series consists of manually collaged images that have then been re-photographed. The collages are overt constructions, as one can clearly see the cut lines and they operate as narratives, which although imagined, begin to make sense within themselves. I then printed onto springbok hide using historical photographic processes, namely, the cyanotype and albumen, which were developed in the early days of photography. These images were first digitally collaged in order to compose a negative from which I then made a positive print. I thereby incorporated new technology with old technology. At the time when these processes were being explored, photography was praised for its objectivity and believed to be a medium of truth-telling, because it was the first time that reality could be so realistically represented. I therefore attempted to draw on this 'objectivity' in order to give an assumed credibility to the images, which was assisted by the digital process that rendered a more seamless construction in relation to the colour collage series. The final series consists of needlework images, where I have used embroidery, the cross-stitch and tapestry. They are re-constructions of historical documentary images taken during the Holocaust, which I then reinterpreted with these craft techniques so

that the images enter the realm of the domestic. This series is primarily concerned with the lost subjectivities of the figures depicted, even though they have become somewhat familiar images within the corpus of Holocaust imagery.

Landscapes

The landscape series consists of several photographs that I took at Buchenwald and Ravensbrück. In relation to the other works within this project, their large scale is dominating; however, this functions in opposition to their extreme banality. Instead of the scale opening up these space for the viewer to enter into, the viewer is pulled out of them and is confronted with the finality of a statement. The compositions are balanced so that there is little tension within the frame and there are no formal vectors that lead to a sense of space continuing outside of the frame. These factors contributes to the photographs' quietness and containment.

In images such as *Wall: Buchenwald* (2008-2010), *Gravel: Ravensbrück* (2008-2010) and *Absent Barracks: Buchenwald* (2008-2010) and, (Figures 64 – 66 respectively) the viewer encounters an absence as he sees that there is nothing much to there. The sites remain unspeakable and inaccessible. This sense of absence has come to suffocate these places so that they offer up no relic to sustain belief and no other onto which identity can be projected. There is no object potent enough that can link these sites to their traumatic history, no photograph that can portray the extent of what happened and no amount information can



Figure 64. *Wall: Buchenwald*
(2008-2010)
Lightjet photographic print
101cm x 115cm



Figure 65. *Gravel: Ravensbrück*
(2008-2010)
Lightjet photographic print
101cm x 115cm

sufficiently describe or explain their past. When one looks at the gravel that now covers the grounds of both Buchenwald and Ravensbrück, one can not imagine that this is the ground upon which thousands of inmates stood and that this is the ground upon which thousands died. Instead there is a quiet blanket of gravel. It is this position between pain and numbness, between belief and disbelief and between remembrance and forgetting, that the visitor encounters at these camps. The visitor becomes confronted by the limits of thought, because one cannot piece together their past. There is acute pathos in my landscape images' emotional detachment, a harrowing non-encounter. Unlike Ractliffe's images, of the aftermath of trauma, in *Vlakplaats: 2 July 1999 (drive-by-shooting)*, which are primarily concerned with her presence within the space as it records her movement, my images are intensely static. They hover in an in-between space. They are not close enough to see fine detail, yet not far away enough to get a sense of the environment. They have also been composed so that perspective has been foreshortened, resulting in a certain amount of flatness. The viewer's sense of orientation in relation to the scene is hindered so that they become inhospitable to the viewer. As such, they share similarities with Reinartz's and Levin's photographs, in that, as Baer states, "their works challenge our understanding of the nature of proof by presenting a staged and self-conscious refusal of information – a framed emptiness – as evidence of the crime's enormity" (2002:81).

In *Bench: Buchenwald* (2008-2010) (Figure 66.) a bench and



Figure 66. *Bench: Buchenwald*
(2008-2010)
Lightjet photographic print
101cm x 115cm

a bin are positioned just below the centre of the frame with the camp's barbed wire fence in front of it. In this image one comes into contact with another element of these sites, which is that of spectatorship. These places attract people from around the world, who come in order to see these spaces where an unimaginable atrocity has occurred. However, in *Bench: Buchenwald* the landscape as a whole remains unpopulated and deserted. One can barely make out two small figures that have been obscured by the fencing. In this image, the bench does not offer itself up for the function of meditation, but the bench itself becomes the object of meditation. In this image it also becomes

evident how these spaces have been altered in an attempt to memorialise them. The fencing of the front entrance to the camp is a reconstruction in order for visitors to gain a sense of how the site might have been. There is therefore a surreal merging between fantasy and reality.

One image operates slightly differently within the series and that is *Absent Barracks: Buchenwald* (Figure 67). The photograph shows a solitary person walking up the

pathway. The figure has been dwarfed by the landscape and his tan-coloured clothing is similar to that of the gravel so that he is not obtrusive within the environment. White clouds cover the sky, which occupies just under half of the image space. This large pale area contributes to the image's stillness. However, in the sky, slightly off centre to the left, one can see a reflection of what looks like a barred window. This reflection situates me within the space and evokes the presence of the camera lens through which the scene has

been captured. In this open area of the now absent barracks, the reflection triggers the viewer of the photograph to ask, "Where is this window?" "Which building is still standing in this space and why?"



Figure 67.
Absent Barracks: Buchenwald
(2008-2010)
Lightjet photographic print
101cm x 115cm

Colour Photographic Collage

The smaller colour photographic collage works explore my desire, yet my inability, to exhume the sites of Buchenwald and Ravensbrück. On top of images that I photographed there, I have crudely adhered images of myself, architectural elements from antiquity and/or animals as allegorical devices. This enables me to visualise the breakages and slippages that I imagined and felt at these two sites. This methodology assists in my attempt at collapsing the distance that exists between the sites' history and myself and possibly re-activating the sites' trauma. The presentation of this series as a large grid further extends their collage aspects because the images seem to break off and spill into one another. It is as though one can see collages within a collage; a whole made up of fragments. The effect is that one experiences an overload of visual information that further destabilises the images and aids in my desire to approach the scene of trauma. One can also start to see connections and relationships between the images so that viewing and interpreting or reading them is not linear or prescriptive, but rather multi directional and individualized. The imagery retains a hard-edged quality, as indicated by the white cut line that surrounds the additions and the shadows that some of them cast onto the background image, which clearly indicates the assembled components. The naivety of this collage method insists that these additions remain disjointed and disconnected to the backgrounds, above which they seem to float. The images of the camps remain as backgrounds or backdrops upon which these added elements perform. The landscapes become impenetrable

spaces, so that they, along with the additions, are handled as surfaces, or as membranes that deny and prevent access. My imaginative repopulation of these landscapes re-images them as fractured spaces in order to try and pull apart their silence. The method of collage is also one of addition and this seemed to express my experience at the camps. The longer I stayed there, the more I wanted to know and construct an image of the past, but at the same time I felt the need to let the land lie quietly. The sites' muteness prevents one from breaking through them and getting beneath their surface. Instead any interpretation (and especially from someone as removed as I am from these sites) is an imposition onto these spaces. However, by re-photographing the collages I have presented the image as a unified surface. The original collage remains unseen. Instead, I present a copy of the original, which becomes an original in its own right. These collages therefore engage with the notion of postmemory, of creating a new and unique experience, a lived experience, from other sources.

By re-photographing these images I also came into contact with another surface, namely the surface of the negative. This surface was also acted upon, by scratching, puncturing and erasing areas, which created abrasions and wounds. When the emulsion side of the colour negative is scratched away, this appears as layers of yellow and then red on the printed image. If the emulsion is completely removed from the negative, this reveals an empty and vacuous black space. The viewer is thereby reminded of the fragility of the image, of the image as a mere surface – a surface that conceals a

void. Below the thin image layer the viewer glimpses into an interior space of nothingness. This aggressive handling of the negative was a performative gesture in order to traumatise the images as well as being a gesture that materialises the photographic surface. The photographic image is thereby denied any act of mimesis. These images are clearly fictional constructions. This withholds the act of mourning that the viewer encounters at a photograph, which is due to the loss of the real that a photograph inevitably signals. When printing these images, the saturation and contrast has been enhanced and exaggerated as a superficial attempt to re-enliven these spaces, but instead, it further denaturalises the imagery, creating an unnatural vitality whilst denouncing the sombre and melancholic.

Thematic Considerations within the Colour Collage Series

The Performing Body

Within my photographic imagery I too make use of the notion of performance. I utilise authentic and overtly inauthentic props that reference a German as well as a South African history. My intention with this confusion of signs is to signal a dissension with the perception of historical distance. My imagery prohibits the position of being outside of history. They also attempt to show a view turned outside in, which is an implosion that shatters. It is for this reason that my history and my presence become entangled within the history of the Holocaust. The safety of my temporal and spatial distance becomes threatened. However, the distance between me and the past must prohibit any undisputable essentialisms. The present therefore needs to be more aggressively unearthed while deconstructing historical narratives and images. The more I can dismantle and become entangled within the past, the nearer my approach to the scene of trauma. The lost other as witness has turned into a multiplicity of the self, where the self becomes other to itself and where difference can be imaged as the same. Instead of identifying solely with the Jew, as victim or survivor, in certain images I also take up the position of perpetrator.²⁸ In an image such as Figure 68

28 The very notion of the victim within the Holocaust also became blurred. At the death camps in Poland the Germans established the *Sonderkommando*, which were made up of Jews whose job it was to assist in the processing of the mass murders. In return, their lives were spared, albeit only temporarily, and they were given better living conditions. It was the members of the *Sonderkommando* who removed the corpses from the gas chambers, took any valuables from the dead and placed the bodies in

I am wearing an authentic German trench coat and a Nazi officer's hat; however, I am pulling on an artificial swastika armband. In Figure 69 I am wearing a South African Police uniform typically worn during apartheid. By playing a variety of roles, which confuses my position, I become my own object of desire. However, there can be no actual return, merely repetition. Instead the scene of multiplicity plays itself out as a fragmented sense of being, which is never totalising and always incomplete, so that the self becomes increasingly obscured.

There is also only one image, Figure 70, in which I am not the only figure that performs within these photographs. The background to this image was taken at the execution cellar and mortuary below the crematorium at Buchenwald. The two close-up heads in the foreground are that of my mother and myself. Her presence alludes to my initial intention of bringing the persecutor and the persecuted together, which specifically motivated my decision to visit Buchenwald and Ravensbrück. Her presence within this series, although somewhat covert, assists me in my intention to give imaginative expression to these sites. Our pose is a re-creation and a reversal of Man Ray's *Noire et Blanche* (1926). I have taken the position of the docile closed-eyed female, except in my remaking, my eyes remain open and stare out towards the viewer. My mother has taken the the crematorium ovens. The world within the camps was incomprehensible to those inside. Laub states that, "it was inconceivable that any historical insider could remove herself sufficiently from the contaminating power of the event so as to remain a fully lucid, unaffected witness, that is, to be sufficiently detached from the inside, so as to stay entirely outside of the trapping roles, and the consequent identities, either of the victim or of the executioner" (1992:81).



Figure 68. From: *Colour Collage Series*. (2010).
Lightjet photographic print. 44cm x 53cm.



Figure 69. From: *Colour Collage Series*. (2010).
Lightjet photographic print . 44cm x 53cm.

place of the fetishised African sculpture with her eyes remaining closed. Instead of just the woman's hand that appears in Man Ray's image, which holds up the mask, in my image several hands enter the frame and touch both my mother and myself. My open eyes prevent the formalisation and objectification of Man Ray's image by bringing the viewer into this moment of intimacy. There is also a certain amount of tension between myself playing the feminine subject, a subject that stares back, and my mother as the mask, as the object.²⁹ This image is an attempt to entangle the subject-object relationship.

In Figure 72, I perform various athletic poses on the gravelled grounds of Ravensbrück in order to create a disturbance, or friction and a tension in playing the role of the Aryan athlete at this location. The idealised Aryan male is an image that opposes the absent and persecuted women of Ravensbrück. These figures are not stripped down like Riefenstahl's athletes in the opening sequence of *Olympia*, but instead wear sporting attire. The Riefenstahl dramatic sky has also been covered by gold, creating an icon effect, which also obscures the site by concealing its

29 It is my mother, as object, as other, that I seek a conceptual re-unification. She stood outside of the room at my circumcision, at my inscription as a male Jew, which is also my scene of loss and naming. It is she who was blinded from this scene and therefore potentially has knowledge of that which cannot be seen and that which is beyond the living and beyond meaning.



Figure 70. From: *Colour Collage Series*. (2010).
Lightjet photographic print. 44cm x 53cm.



Figure 71. Man Ray. *Noire et Blanche*. (1926).

identification. Cutting through the image there is a large low-angle view of a naked male. The legs form a V-shape that comes together at the centre point of the buttocks. This figure stands with his back to the viewer, but at the top central point of the image, the head is turned so that one eye looks out at the viewer. This dominating naked figure imposes itself into the clothed figures' space, while offering itself up to the viewer's gaze, which looks up towards the buttocks. The low angle of this figure places the viewer in a vulnerable position; however, by exposing the buttocks, the male figure is also rendered vulnerable and exposed. But the eye holds the viewer's gaze, so that this pose of exposure, becomes one of defiance. This figure illustrates my intention to return materiality back towards the idealised image of masculinity within Nazi representations.



Figure 72. From: *Colour Collage Series*. (2010).
Lightjet photographic print. 44cm x 53cm.

Figure 73 is reminiscent of a *pieta*. Instead of the Virgin Mary and Jesus, there is a man dressed in a generic army uniform, who does not cradle the naked and wounded male figure in his lap, but lets this figure slump down between his legs. The uniformed figure's hands do not touch the man, but rather hover above him. It is an image of hesitant martyrdom and restrained intimacy. This image is set in the mass grave site of victims from the Special Camp No. 2 at Buchenwald. This camp was utilised by the Soviet Secret Service for the internment of Germans from August 1945 until February 1950. In Special Camp

No. 2 Soviet records indicate that 7 113 people died there. This grave site has been commemorated since 1990 with numbered, yet nameless steel poles that emerge out of the earth and recede into the forest. The Soviets kept no records pertaining to the motivation for the arrests, and the family members of those who died at the camp, were not informed. I have utilised the generic army uniform in order to disassociate the figure from any context so that it becomes a universalising gesture, whereby the commemoration of martyrdom becomes problematic. In this site the liberators also became the persecutors, the oppressors became the victims and where the innocent were punished for the evil

committed by others.

The background to Figure 74, was taken at the crematorium courtyard at Buchenwald. It was here that the US Army, who liberated the camp on 11 April 1945, saw the gruesome scene of piles of corpses. In the courtyard I have inserted a sleeping pig. The image of the *Judensau* appeared in Germany around the 13th century. These defaming images depicted the Jew engaged in obscene activities with a sow, which most commonly shows the Jew suckling at the sow's teats. The *Judensau* was utilised by Nazi propoganda in order to dehumanise the Jew and associate the Jew with filth. The material excess of the corpses that littered this courtyard is concentrated in the presence of the pig. The pig, in this now barren courtyard, does not read as excess filth, but rather as a docile sacrificial animal. A naked figure crouches behind the pig with his arms crossed over his chest. This mimicry of the pig's crossed hind legs is an act of empathy as well as being a re-enactment of a woman from a documentary image (see Figure 78), who covers herself during a scene of demoralisation. There is also an owl perched on the crematorium wall. In Greek mythology, the owl was associated with the goddess Athena, and became a symbolism of wisdom and secret knowledge. As a nocturnal bird, it also became associated with the spiritual realm and a watcher and guardian of the



Figure 73. From: *Colour Collage Series*. (2010).
Lightjet photographic print. 44cm x 53cm.

spirits. These associations are contrasted with the closed eyes of the pig and the scratched-out eyes of the figure, which questions the presumed associated actions of seeing and knowing.

Figure 80 shows a disproportionately large naked figure in the foreground. The figure is boxed into the image by the tight framing. On the top right-hand corner one can see the Tower of Freedom, also called the Bell Tower, that



Figure 74. From: *Colour Collage Series*. (2010).
Lightjet photographic print. 44cm x 53cm.



Figure 75. Members of an American congressional committee viewing a heap of corpses in the courtyard of the crematorium. (April 24, 1945).



Figure 78. Documentary photograph of women forced to undress by SS soldiers.

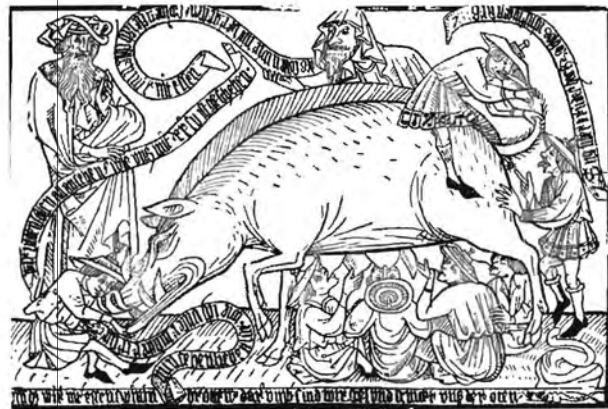


Figure 79. *Judensau*

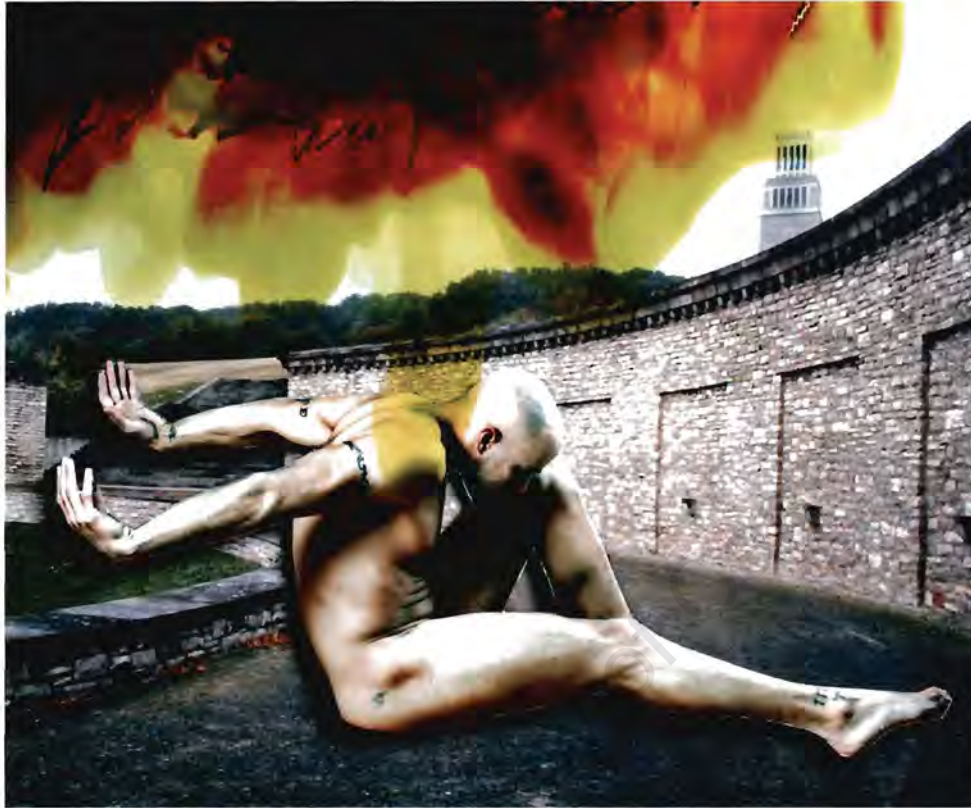


Figure 80. From: *Colour Collage Series*. (2010).
Lightjet photographic print. 44cm x 53cm.

forms part of the Buchenwald Monument, which is situated outside the Buchenwald camp. On the lower left hand corner of the image, one can make out one of the circular ring tombs. Three of these depressions in the landscape have been incorporated in the monument. It was here that the SS had at least 2 900 people buried between March

and April 1945. The figure's pose is mimicking one of the poses that was formulated by Charcot in order to supposedly identify and diagnose hysteria. The connection of the male Jewish body to hysteria was mentioned in the previous chapter, which constructed an image the Jewish body as being ill and effeminate. My mimicry of this pose and my willingness to take on its defamatory associations, alludes to the staging involved within Charcot's photographic project and also questions appropriate or inappropriate forms of remembrance. The figure opposes the Monument because a monument, as a space for reflection and mourning, relies on memory and the act of remembrance. An hysterical figure, however, is in

a state of trauma and cannot remember. The repressed traumatic memory was believed to cause the body to contort. This figure therefore refuses the safety granted by memory that contains and delimits the past.

The Ruined State

Within certain of my photographic collages of the camps I have included elements from Greek architecture so that I can problematise the Germanic lineage to the theory of the First Reich. The images propose the question that; if fascist architecture is a reference to Greek and Roman classicism, then how does this classicism respond to the architecture of the camps? My inclusion of these architectural elements is also a means through which I can ask more general questions around the concepts of rationality and civilisation that were developed by Greek philosophy. These concepts were taken up by the Nazis and carried to the extreme, to a place where it had deadly consequences, where beauty and horror, truth and lies and the living and the dead were crushed together. I also reference these structures as they stand today – as ruins. The ruins stand in for the absent camp structures. They represent a dismantlement of the idealised architectural spaces of the Nazi regime, which sought to control bodies within these spaces, where the idealised and the demonised went hand in hand. Saltzmann states that the ruined object, although a dead object, is also potent with possibility. It is an object that can be decoded and it can therefore facilitate a process of interpretation. She states that this is a, “palimpsestic process”, whose, “objects may be seen, other works may be read, and, perhaps in the end, history may be witnessed, confronted, if only through the acknowledgement of its ultimate inaccessibility” (1999:87). This notion of the palimpsest is important to my project because it is a means for me to write over and interpret history.

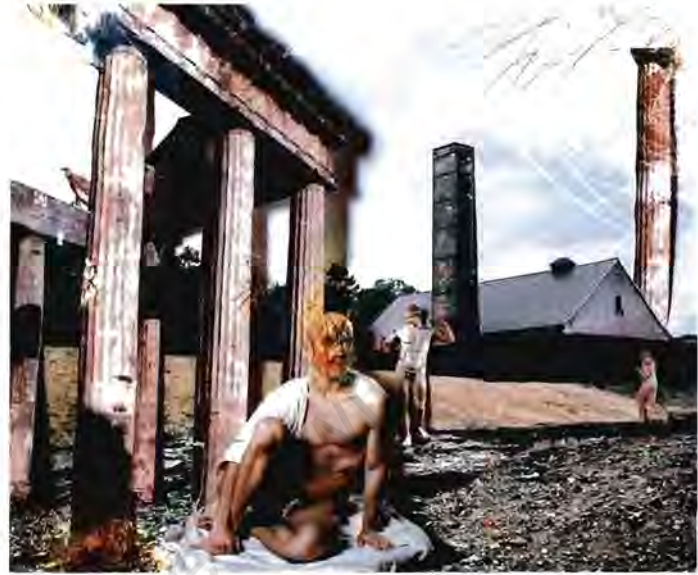


Figure 81. From: *Colour Collage Series*. (2010).
Lightjet photographic print. 44cm x 53cm.

The background to Figure 81 was taken outside the crematorium at Buchenwald. A Greek column has been added behind the crematorium building and in the foreground there is another columned structure, which creates a skeletal framing of a demolished building. In the foreground there is a large, nude, male figure that sits on drapery. His penis is flaccid and it has been concealed and protected from sight by having stitched over the print before it was re-photographed. The figure's face has also been concealed, but this is due to having scratched the negative. The crematorium chimney and the columns can be read as phallic symbols. However, seen within the ruined environment, as indicated by the rubble in the foreground, they become failed and impotent ideological structures. It

is the central figure who remains stoic and enduring in this environment.

The same concerns are taken up slightly differently in Figure 82. The background of the image is the grounds of Buchenwald and I have added a large fallen column on the left side of the photograph. On the right side of the column there are two naked male figures. The one figure is hunched over the other and gently elevates his head. It is implied that the lying figure is wounded. On the other side of the column there is a ram. According to Judeo-Christian scriptures, Abraham slaughtered the ram in place of his son Isaac on the Jewish New Year on Mount Moriah. The Jewish faith also believes that the prophet Elijah will blow the ram's horn, three days before the arrival of the Messiah, thus signalling the rebirth of the dead. At the head of the column there is Myron's *Discobolus* – an iconic image of masculinity. Above the border of trees, one can also make out the entrance pinnacle to the Castle of Good Hope. I have inserted this building to allude to the European colonisation of South Africa. This building becomes means for me to reconnect with the foreign territory of Europe as the origins of my ancestry. This image represents my own sense of impotence in remembrance, my own self-sacrifice. The ram on the other side of the fallen column has been spared its fate.



Figure 82. From: *Colour Collage Series*. (2010).
Lightjet photographic print. 44cm x 53cm.

The Romantic Landscape

Within the colour collage series, certain images are not constructed with Buchenwald and Ravensbrück environments. Instead I have utilised images associated with German Romanticism. Perhaps the most revered artist from this period is Casper David Friedrich. In characterising Friedrich's art as such, Joseph Leo Koerner states that German Romanticism is,

a heightened sensitivity to the natural world, combined with a belief in nature's correspondence to the mind; a passion for the equivocal, the indeterminate, the obscure and the faraway (objects shrouded in fog, a distant fire in the darkness, mountains merging with clouds, etc); a celebration of subjectivity bordering on solipsism; an infatuation with death; valorization of night over day, emblematising a reaction against Enlightenment and rationalism; a nebulous but all-pervading mysticism; and a melancholy, sentimental longing or nostalgia which can border on kitsch (1990:23).

The Romantics promoted an autonomous subject whose relationship with the divine or spiritual was particular and personal.

The National Socialists admired the Romantic landscape's sense of longing and its perspective of dramatic wide-open spaces. Connecting the soul to the land was instrumental in conceiving of the notion of the *volk* – a unified sense of community and a spiritual allegiance. Adam quotes Robert

Scholtz as having stated that,

The desire of the Germans to create always grew from the two roots: a strong sensuous feeling for nature and a deep metaphysical longing. The capacity of the Germans to make the divine visible in nature, and to illuminate the sensuous with spiritual values fulfills Wagner's demands for art to become religion (1992:130).³⁰

However, National Socialism disapproved of the element of fantasy in the German Romantic paintings because the spaces were imaginative. National Socialist painting needed to be more deceptive- it needed to be fantasy concealed as realism. Adam explains that,

The Nazis themselves claimed that their paintings had nothing to do with 'realism;' however realistic their style. The word 'realistic' figured only rarely in the vocabulary of art critics in the Third Reich. A realistic rendering of the present would give a limited picture. The new German artist was creating for eternity ... The restful composition, symmetrical design were supposed to evoke feelings of unchanging universal truth (1992:138).

As such I, utilise the Romantic landscape as a means to reconnect the German landscape to a time when it was an image of national pride, but still one of mystery and where nature was imaged as a space of the unknown.

³⁰ Scholz R. (1939). *KiDR: April*. p.122. As quoted in: Adam, P. (1992). *Art of the Third Reich*. New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc. p 130

In Figure 84 I have used, as the background, the painting *High Mountains: View of the Mont Blanc Group from Montenvers near Chamonix* (1821 – 1824) by Carl Gustav Carus. Although this painting belongs to the Romantic school it can be interpreted as appealing to a National Socialist sentiment. Sontag, when discussing Riefenstahl's rising success as a film actress, in films predominately directed by Arnold Fanck during the late 1920s and early 1930s, comments on how the Alpine landscape became a powerful symbolism within these films. Sontag states that, "Mountain climbing in Fanck's films was a visually irresistible metaphor for the unlimited aspiration toward the high mystic goal, both beautiful and terrifying, which was later to become concrete in Führer-worship" (1980:76). She then states, "the mountain is represented as both supremely beautiful and dangerous, that majestic force which invites the ultimate affirmation of and escape from the self-into the brotherhood of courage and into death" (1980:77). The film *Avalanche* (1930) was Riefenstahl's first sound film where she played the heroine, and it was set on Mont Blanc. On either side of Carus's painting of the mountain, I have collaged trees from a painting by the South African painter Jacob Hendrik Pierneef. Pierneef's paintings have become iconic within the genre of South African landscape art and in forging visual representations of Afrikaner nationalism. His images are known for their dramatic renderings of the sky and sublime mountain scenes. Carus's mountain replaces Pierneef's creating a hybrid landscape. Although Pierneef's paintings are stylistically different to German Romanticism, their sentiments are very similar. There is the same sense of



Figure 83. Documentary photograph taken in Lvov or Lijepaja. (c. 1942)

awe and reverence for the natural, with man being dwarfed by its grandeur. There is also the same idolisation of nature untainted by culture. The spiritualism found in both Pierneef and the Romantic's landscapes have been interpreted as being illustrative of a divine rite over the land, thereby functioning as a symbol of nationalism. Within this union of blood and soil there is a marking of territory, and with this marking a need to protect and defend. In the foreground of my collage there are several male figures wearing only their undergarments. The stance of these figures was copied from a documentary image taken in Poland, probably dated 1942, where women were forced to undress outdoors in an open field, (see Figure 83). The women stand huddled together in their underwear. Behind them one can make out SS officers and piles of clothes. This image was most likely taken moments before their execution. By copying these women, I intended to show them as incongruous to this landscape, while the image simultaneously becomes a homage to them.



Figure 84. From: *Colour Collage Series*. (2010).
Lightjet photographic print. 44cm x 53cm.

The Springbok Hides: Printing with Cyanotype and Albumen

Within this series of images I have utilised digital collage techniques to create the negatives from which I made the final print. The effect is that, unlike the colour collage series, the inserted figures, animals and architecture are integrated more believably within the spaces. The majority of the landscapes that I utilised are ones that I also recorded at Buchenwald and Ravensbrück. However, I have also included found photographic images so that different moments in history are brought together, thereby collapsing time and place. Figures other than myself are also used within the images, which includes people from my family album and figures from historical photographs.

Before I printed onto the hides with albumen or cyanotype I stretched them over an oval frame. The oval was a traditional framing device used for portrait photography during the mid 1800s. In conjunction with the process of albumen printing, the framing creates a nostalgic quality that alludes to photography of a bygone time. This framing is thereby intended to remember the individual within these spaces. It is also a means to bring back what Walter Benjamin (1978) defines as the aura of a work of art, which is a quality of art that he claims has retreated in the age of mechanical reproduction. These archaic processes therefore arouse sentimentality. Benjamin states that the authority of the art object is compromised by reproduction, as it lacks presence in time and space. Benjamin proposes that the cult value of a work of art, which is its value in the service of ritual (of its

use value), has been replaced by its exhibition value. With regards to early photography, the cult value was not readily abandoned. Benjamin states,

It is no accident that the portrait was the focal point of early photography. The cult of remembrance of loved ones, absent or dead, offers a last refuge for the cult value of the picture. For the last time the aura emanates from the early photographs in the fleeting expression of a human face (1978:226).

I return to early photographic techniques to evoke this cult value in order to express mourning and loss.

The springbok, as a South African national symbol, becomes a substitute for my body. It becomes a sacrificial animal that stands in for me. By printing onto these hides with albumen and cyanotype, the springbok also becomes a material that initiates the transgression of boundaries, the boundary between human and animal, the present and the past, the South African and the German, the living and the dead. The German landscape is thereby rendered more recognisable and hospitable to my foreign body. The nostalgia and romanticism of the cyanotype, and particularly the albumen process, is intended to conflict and contrast with the materiality of the springbok hide, which references the tanned human skins found at Buchenwald after liberation.³¹ This tanned human skin was used to fashion lampshades.³²

³¹ Shrunken heads were also found which were produced from the scalps of murdered prisoners and was given as presents to the SS.

³² During the Holocaust, the bodies of the prisoners became in a sense raw material to be exploited by the Germans. One such example

The stretched springbok hide over the oval frames, a framing device that is associated to the domestic, connects these hides to the gruesome human lampshades. The springboks were also culled, which is an allusion to the human 'culling' that took place at these sites, which dehumanized their victims.



Figure 85. Jacques Rancy with a 'shrunken head' found in Buchenwald in the house of an SS physician. (1945).

is that the shaven hair of prisoners was collected and sent to Germany where it was used as stuffing for cushions. Gold fillings were also removed from corpses' teeth.

These prints are also rendered as damaged surfaces. In certain areas, the images have become stained and darken. There are also traces of the fluidity of the albumen, which was painted onto the hide. In other areas there are holes in the hide, which are markings of the animal's death and are reminders of the body as being penetrable and vulnerable. The materiality of the skins is a means to evoke the abject. Julia Kristeva theorises the abject as that which transgresses borders and therefore endangers the subject's conception of self. Kristeva (1982) explains that the abject has qualities of the object in that it is not the subject, but it is the object within the subject. It is that which threatens the subject and that which the subject will eventually succumb to. Kristeva states of the abject that, "It is something rejected from which one does not part, from which one does not protect oneself as from an object. Imaginary uncanniness and real threat, it beckons to us and ends up engulfing us" (1982:4). The abject therefore forms part of my project as the desire to move towards the space of nothingness, the space where objects and persons vanish. But within my project there is an additional element that makes it all the more desperate. These images do not simply encounter the border between the living body (my body) and the corpse (the other's body), which is the ultimate object of abjection, but between the living body and the murdered body. This is the body that was desired to the point of annihilation, since murder is a total transgression of the boundaries set up by desire.

Kristeva puts forward the notion of the deject as one who is mindful of his abjection. The deject questions place instead

of being, because the deject's sense of place is non-object based and is therefore in constant motion, never secure and undefinable. Kristeva states that the abject is a place where meaning collapses. This leads her to describe the deject as a stray. She states, "The more he strays, the more he is saved" (1982:8). Kristeva is proposing that the more the deject positions himself away from the abject, by positioning the abject as object, the greater his potential to constitute his own position as subject. But this positioning is in constant threat as the abject returns the subject to himself. The imagery on the hides, as well as those of the collages, exhibits this act of turning around, of attempting to locate that which is lost, that which has no place. Kristeva states, "The abject is the violence of mourning for an 'object that has always already been lost'" (1982:15).

The cyanotype was invented by John Herschel (1792 – 1871) in 1842. He also happens to have coined the terms "positive", "negative", "photography" and "snap shot". He was an astronomer, and was investigating a way of copying his notes, when he formulated the cyanotype process. The cyanotype is a contact printing method in which the image is exposed under ultraviolet rays and so creates a negative copy of the original. The cyanotype was the primary method for photocopying until the mid 1950s and was frequently used for architectural plans. The process results in an image of intense Prussian blue – hence the term blueprint. Anna Atkins, (1799 – 1871), a botanist, was one of the first people to use this technique, to record algae, ferns, feathers and waterweeds. She produced the first photographic illustrated book, *British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions* (1843). This

history, which ties the cyanotype to the representation of the natural, is an important consideration within my project and my interest in notions around life and death. Potassium ferricyanide is the reactive chemistry of the cyanotype. I also made use of this process in order to allude to the implementation of Zyklon-B (hydrocyanic acid) in the gas chambers at the death camps, which was used to efficiently murder millions of people. Zyklon-B is a poisonous substance, traditionally used as a pesticide, that kills by binding cytochromes, which are enzymes vital to respiration at a cellular level, thereby preventing them from functioning. The cyanotype and Zyklon-B both produce a Prussian blue pigment.

The cyanotype series is differentiated from the albumen in that all the images contain an element of a family photograph that I discovered by chance.³³ In this way my family history is suggested within the Holocaust history, which is due to the context in which this series is viewed. Although my grandparents were not imprisoned within the camps and left Europe before the war, I still interrogate and question the Holocaust's relevance and impact upon my family. It is therefore a means to critique my closeness and distance to the Holocaust. Within this series of eight images, only three of the environments are of Buchenwald. The rest of the images are not located within a former concentration camp.

33 In May 2008 a fire destroyed my mother's home along with all its contents. These family photographs I discovered by chance in a box in my apartment. They are therefore the only photographs I have left of my family.

Figure 86 is located at Buchenwald, although the buildings are not particularly specific and they could even be read as somewhat domestic. They are, however, the buildings of the crematorium and the pathological facilities. The image in the foreground is of myself as an infant. The two figures of children in the background are taken from a historical documentary image from a ghetto. The gap between an image of my childhood and that of the children behind me is given expression by the hole in the skin that is located in the area of the sky within the image.



Figure 86. From: *Cyanotype Series*. (2010).
Cyanotype print onto Springbok Hide. Approx. 56cm x 40cm.



Figure 87. From: *Cyanotype Series*. (2010).
Cyanotype print onto Springbok Hide. Approx. 56cm x 40cm.

In Figure 87 the image in the foreground is of my grandfather, who came to South Africa in 1923 from Lithuania. Although he is waving to the camera, he is in a hospital where he was to die 18 days later, after an operation. Behind him there is a family portrait of my father with his mother and father at his Bar Mitzvah. In this image my grandfather is witnessing the passage of his son from a boy into a man, while at the same time he is witness to his own death. The birth of the new, therefore, signals the death of the old. Similarly, it is due to the Holocaust, as an event of death, that I endeavour to forge an image of myself within the present.

The albumen process utilises frothed egg whites and it has been used as an emulsion for both negatives and paper. Originally it was developed by Abel Niépce in 1848 as a means to improve upon the paper negatives used by William Henry Fox Talbot. The albumen was coated onto glass and acted as a binder for the sensitiser. It resulted in a considerably crisper image and was able to retain fine detail; however, exposure times were considerably longer. It was therefore most suitable for architecture or the still life, as the figure would blur on account of its movement. Albumen was therefore not a process that could capture candid moments, instead elements needed to be composed for the camera. The majority of the images within this series engage with this idea of the pose, of being conscious of the presence of the camera and therefore performing for the camera. This process reminds one that the camera does not record objects, or persons, but rather ideas that we have of these objects or persons. This notion of

presenting oneself in anticipation of becoming a static object, is carried through by the skin itself. The skin, having been pulled tight and immobile over the frame, spills over the frame into formlessness. Although retaining a sense of fluidity, it has hardened and appears frozen in motion. The sepia colouration of the albumen process is sentimental; however, on the skins, the images become smudged and murky. There is not a great tonal variation between the skin and the image, so that the image, at times, becomes faint and gets lost within the skin.

Figure 88 is a group portrait in which I depict myself dressed in the Captain's uniform from the South African Medical Service. The middle figure is an African man dressed in a Western suit, which was taken in approximately 1913³⁴ and the man was unnamed. The figure on the right has been extracted from a photograph of naked imprisoned Gypsy boys who had suffered from starvation due to their detention in a concentration camp. Buchenwald camp is the background to my image. The three-collaged figures are standing on the ruins of a building, and behind them one can see what was the storehouse. It is an unlikely grouping of figures in an unlikely setting. One could assume that, on account of the dating of the photograph for the African man, and the circumstances of the boy, that they are both deceased. My wearing of the Medical Service uniform is

³⁴ 1913 was the year that the Native Land Act was passed. It ratified that 87% of the land in South Africa be reserved primarily for the minority white population. Only 13% of the land was allocated to the black population, which constituted some 80% of the total population. This man dressed in European formal attire is therefore particularly affecting and caustic.

a means to bring these two bodies together and attempt to heal them because they were two bodies that were mistreated and transformed by racist regimes.

In the foreground of Figure 89 there is a group of women concentration camp prisoners. Behind them is the Hall of Honour in Nuremberg, which was completed in 1929 and built by the German architect Fritz Mayer. This structure was to commemorate the dead of the *Hitlerputsch*, the so called Beer Hall Putsch of 1923. Today, it acts as a monument to those who fell during World War I and World War II. This site was used during Nazi Party rallies, and it is typical of fascist architecture, with its austere, linear and intimidating façade. Behind Hall of Honour, one can make out the pillars of a Roman ruin. Although fascist architecture did not have the same embellishments as classical architecture, it was clearly influenced by classicism's sense of balance and order to create imposing structures. Both ideologies had great colonial desires and valorised male heroism. There is therefore a certain amount of tension that results from bringing these women prisoners into this site that is also to some extent in conflict with their remembrance and memorialisation.



Figure 88. From: *Albumen Series*. (2010). Albumen print onto Springbok hide. Approx. 56cm x 40cm.



Figure 89. From: *Albumen Series*. (2010). Albumen print onto Springbok hide. Approx. 56cm x 40cm.

Needlework

The images used within the needlework series are all sourced from documentary photographs from the Holocaust that have been found on the Internet. Needlework is a domestic and somewhat kitsch medium and therefore incongruous to what has been depicted. These works comment on the domestication of these images, on account of their accessibility, which could have begun to drain them of their potency. These photographs begin to get lost among the barrage of images that has become typical of an age of sensationalist journalism. Saltzman states that the history of the Holocaust is a product of the cultural industry, which offers us access to this history, but at the same time makes it more remote and obscure. She states,

But if cultural representations have been employed in mediating that history, configuring that history, bearing witness to that history, so too have cultural representations been implicated in normalizing that history, neutralizing that history, trivializing that history, commercializing that history and exploiting that history (2001:55).

My access to the historical is also inevitably one seen through a lens whereby images are refracted, distorted, bounced off mirrors and inverted in order to bring into view the semblance of the past.

This sense of distortion is explored within my remaking of the found documentary photographs with the craft of cross-stitch. This process replicates the image in small squares,

which is associated with the pixelation of contemporary digital media, and this in turn refers to its Internet source. This pixelation acts as a further screen distancing the viewer from the image. By interpreting two images in cross-stitch, I have also had to re-examine these images and scrutinise them. At the same time, on account of the process, detail become lost, the image becomes somewhat abstracted and begins to slip away. The cross-stitches are both small in scale so that they retain an intimacy with the viewer. The repetitive motion of puncturing the surface and concealing the underlying canvas with the thread is labour-intensive and thereby becomes an almost ritualistic act.

Figure 90 is a cross-stitch of prisoners, from a photograph taken at the time of liberation at the Ebensee camp, which was a sub-camp of Mauthausen in Austria. Certain sections of the cross-stitch have been left incomplete, so that the canvas remains visible as an empty space, a space of projection and absence. The image has been rendered in shades of brown so that it takes on a sepia quality, which also references the colouration of the albumen images. This nostalgic response to the image seems inappropriate and brings into question the complexities of memory and memorialisation.

The other cross-stitch, Figure 91 has been constructed in shades of blue in order to make reference to the cyanotypes. This image was taken from a documentary image of a mass execution in Lijepaja, Latvia, (Figure 92). The women are naked and are covering their breasts. Three of the



Figure 90. Cross-stitch, from documentary photograph from Ebensee, a sub-camp of Mauthausen, Austria. (2010). 40cm x 56cm.



Figure 91. Cross-stitch, from documentary image of a mass execution in Lijepaja, Latvia. (2010). 18cm x 26cm.

women are holding onto one another, but the other woman advances ahead of them, alone. The image is reminiscent of Masaccio's fresco of the *Expulsion from the Garden of Eden* (1426-27) in the Brancacci Chapel in the church of Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence, (Figure 93). Masaccio's fresco depicts Adam and Eve's expulsion in which Adam covers his face in shame while Eve conceals her genitalia. It is an image of anguish and humiliation. As such, the themes within this biblical story, which is that knowledge causes self awareness, which causes shame and leads one into the unknown, becomes a frame of reference from which I re-read and re-interpret the documentary image. I have subtly stitched strands of hair from my body into the cross-stitch as a means for me to connect with the scene. As such, I become implicated within the scene, so that I can bear witness to it.

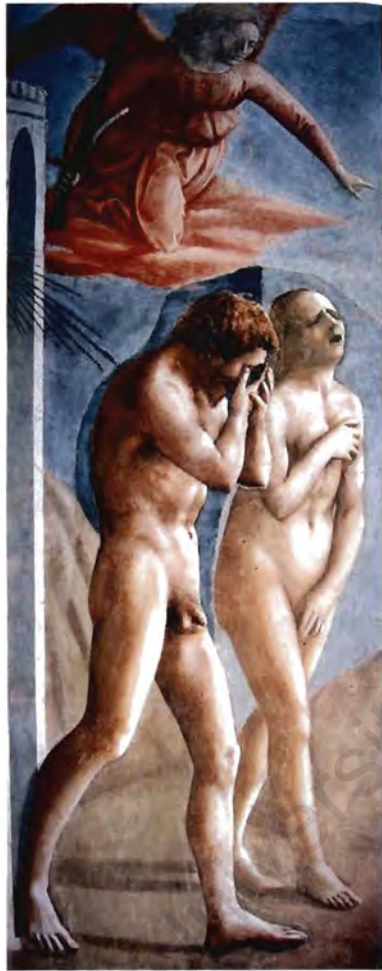


Figure 93. Masaccio, *Expulsion from the Garden of Eden*, (1426-27). Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence.



Figure 92. Mass executions in Lijepaja, Latvia.

Conclusion

My inquiry into the Holocaust leaves me searching for the wounds that it has left upon my body, for I know that they are there – they have to be. By imaging and imagining my body within the spaces of Buchenwald and Ravensbrück, I still could not make these wounds visible. And so my desire remains unsatisfied and unabated. And because I could not encounter this re-inscription, I must still search for that which is lost. I am also still entangled within the aporia of visualising and imagining that which exceeds cognition and that which will forever remain unseen and unable to be represented. There are no words or images that can take us into this past and hold onto its memory. However, I have constructed visual representations that may offer me glimpses – perhaps only momentary, but glimpses nonetheless, into this space of nothingness, by allowing me to imaginatively enter into these spaces. Although this past continues to retreat, the nothingness that it has left, is not only behind us, but all around us, as nothingness has no space or time. This project is therefore not one weighed down by memory and the duty of remembrance, but is about being in the present and about the shifting positions of the witness. This project has attempted to give expression to the constantly shifting space between the Holocaust and myself, while simultaneously struggling to position myself within the volatile role of the witness. This is a role that I can never fully grasp. As such, I need to continue to question my role as witness and the manner in which I can give testimony.

Chapter 3.
Illustration of Other Works Within
A Space Between

Landscape Series



Figure 93. *Shop: Ravensbrück*
(2008-2010)
Lightjet photographic print
101cm x 115cm



Figure 94. Quarry: *Buchenwald*
(2008-2010)
Lightjet photographic print
101cm x 115cm



Figure 95. *Urns: Buchenwald*
(2008-2010)
Lightjet photographic print
101cm x 115cm

Colour Photographic Collage Series

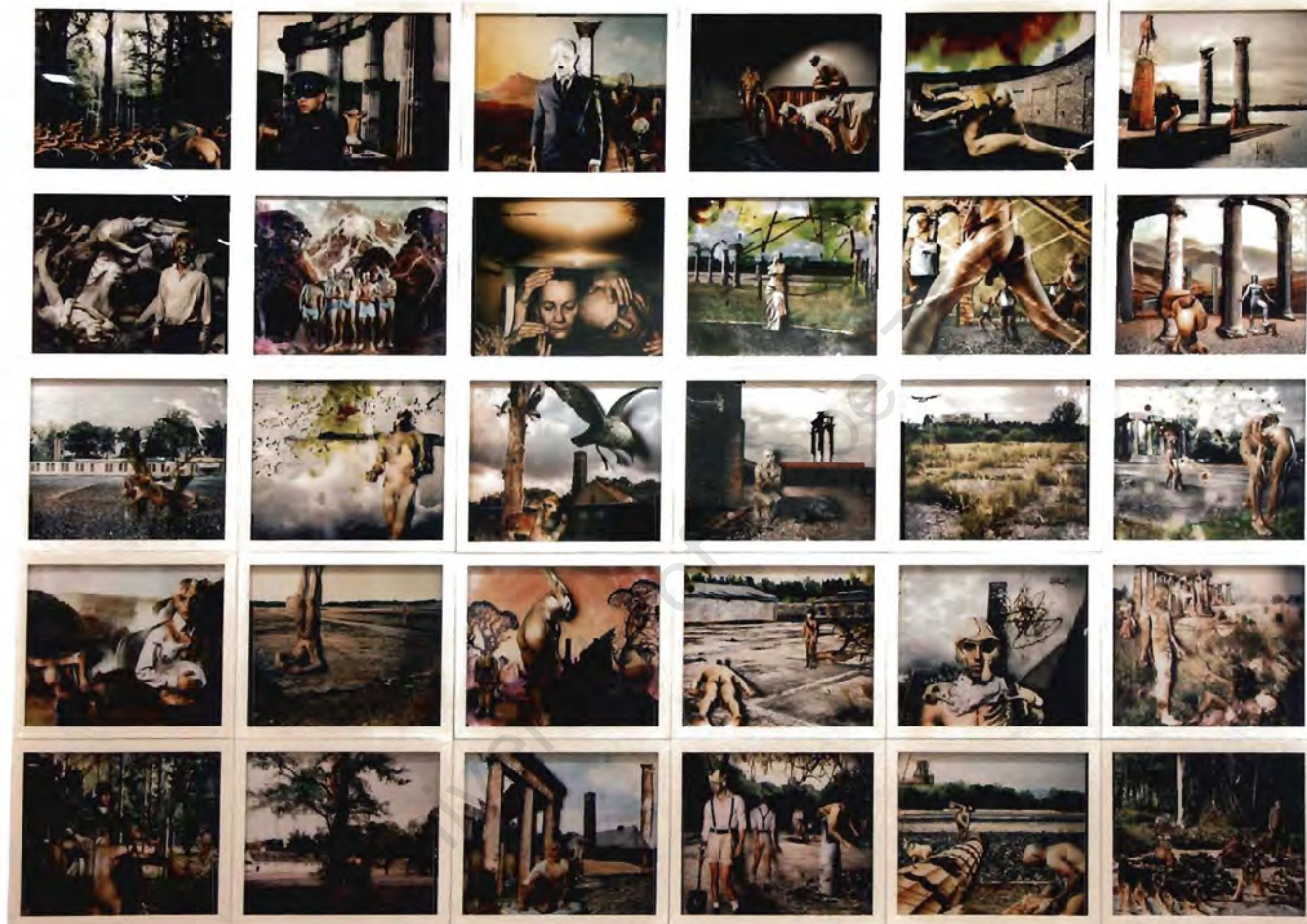


Figure 96. Installation View of *Colour Collage Series*
(2010)

Lightjet photographic print
220cm x 318cm



Figure 97. From: *Colour Collage Series*
(2010)
Lightjet photographic print
Each image: 44cm x 53cm











Cyanotype Prints onto Springbok Hides



Figure 98. *Cyanotype Series*

(2010)

Cyanotype prints onto Springbok Hides

Each print approx. 56cm x 40cm



University of Cape





Albumen Prints onto Springbok Hides



Figure 99. *Albumen Series*

(2010)

Albumen Prints onto Springbok Hides

Each print approx. 56cm x 40cm







University of Cape Town







Needlework



Figure 100.
Tapestry
(2010)
63cm x 79cm



Figure 101.
Cross-stitched Springbok Hide with Gold Leaf and ink
(2010)
Approx. 56cm x 40cm



Figure 102.
Embroidery on Gauze
(2010)
37.5cm x 35.5cm



Figure 103.
Embroidery on Gauze
(2010)
60cm x 44cm

References

Adam, P. (1992). *Art of the Third Reich*. New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc.

Adorno, T. (1973). *Negative Dialectics*. Trans: E. B. Ashton. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Atkinson, B. (2000). *Jo Ractliffe: Artist's Book*. Johannesburg: David Krut Publishing.

Baer, U. (2002). *Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma*. Cambridge, Massachusetts & London: MIT Press.

Barthes, R. (1981). *Camera Lucida: Reflections of Photography*. Tr. Richard Howard. New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux.

Benjamin, W. (1978). The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction. In: *Illuminations*. Ed & Intro by Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken Books. pp 217-251.

Beuys, J. (2004). *What is Art: Joseph Beuys*. Ed with Essay by Volker Harlan. Stuttgart: Clairview.

Cixous, H. (2004). *Portrait of Jacques Derrida as a Young Jewish Saint*. Trans. Beverly Bie Brahic. New York: Columbia University Press.

Derrida, J. (2005). *Sovereignities in Question: The Poetics of Paul Celan*. Ed: Thomas Dutoit & Outi Pasanen. New York: Fordham University Press.

Derrida, J. (2007). *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*. Trans: Mark Doolye & Michael Hughes. New York & London: Routledge.

De Waal, S. & Sassen R. (2003). Surgery Without Anaesthetic: The Art of Steven Cohen. In: *Steven Cohen*. Ed. Jillian Carmen. Johannesburg: David Krut Publishing.

Garb, T. (1995). Introduction: Modernity, Identity, Textuality. In: *The Jew in the Text: Modernity and the Construction of Race*. Eds. Linda Nochlin & Tamar Garb. London: Thames & Hudson. pp 20-30.

Gilman, S. (1991). *The Jew's Body*. New York & London: Routledge.

- Hirsch, M. (2001). Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory. In: *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*. Ed. Barbie Zelizer. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press. pp 215-246.
- Huysen, A. (2001). Of Mice and Mimesis: Reading Spiegelman with Adorno. In: *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*. Ed. Barbie Zelizer. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press. pp 28-42.
- Ignatieff, M. (2001). Introduction. In: *Truth & Lies: Jillian Edelstein. Stories from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa*. Milpark: M&G Books. pp 15-21.
- Junge, T. (2002). *Blind Spot: Hitler's Secretary*. Dir: André Heller & Othmar Schmiderer. Sony Picture Classics [DVD].
- Koerner, J.L. (1990). *Casper David Friedrich and the Subject of Landscape*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- Kristeva, J. (1982), *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Laub, D. & Felman, S. (1992). *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History*. New York: Routledge.
- Lauterweim, A. (2007). *Anselm Kiefer Paul Celan: Myth, Mourning and Memory*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Levin, M. (1997). *War Story*. Text by Meyer Levin. Munich: Gina Kehayoff.
- Mosse, G. L. (1991). Beauty without Sensuality: The Exhibition Entartete Kunst. In: *Degenerate Art: The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany*. Ed: Stephanie Barron. Los Angeles & New York: Los Angeles Country Museum of Modern Art & Harry N. Abrams Inc. pp 25-31.
- Muffit, J. F. (1988). *Occultism in Avant-Garde Art: The Case of Joseph Beuys*. London: UMI Research Press.
- Morris, L. (2003). Berlin Elegies: Absence, Postmemory, and Art After Auschwitz. In: *Image and Remembrance: Representations and the Holocaust*. Eds. Shelley Hornstein & Florence Jacobowitz. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. pp 288-304.
- Nochlin, L. (1995). Starting with the Self: Jewish Identity and Its Representation. In: *The Jew in the Text: Modernity and the Construction of Race*. Eds. Linda Nochlin & Tamar Garb. London: Thames & Hudson. pp 7-19.

Reinartz, D. & Graf von Krockow, C. (1995). *Deathly Still: Pictures of Former German Concentration Camps*. Translated from the German by Ishbel Flett. New York: Scalo.

Richter, G. (2005). Nazism and Negative Dialectics Adorno's Hitler. In: *Unmasking Hitler: Cultural Representations of Hitler from the Weimar Republic to the Present*. Ed: Peter Lang. Bern: European Academic Publishers. pp 105-145.

Riefenstahl, L. (1976). *The Last of the Nuba*. London: Collins.

Saltzman, L. (1999). *Anselm Kiefer and Art After Auschwitz*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shain, M. (1998). *Antisemitism*. London: Bowerdean.

Spiegelman, A. (2003). *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*. London: Penguin Books.

Sontag, S. (2003). *Regarding the Pain of Others*. London: Hamish Hamilton.

Sontag, S. (2002). *On Photography*. London: Penguin Classics.

Sontag, S. (1980). Fascinating Fascism. In: *Under the Sign of Saturn*. New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux. pp 73-105.

Stomberg, J. (2007). A Genealogy of Orthodox Documentary. In: *Beautiful Suffering: Photography and the Traffic in Pain*. Eds. Mark Reinhardt, Holly Edwards & Erina Duganne. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp 37-56.

Trachtenberg, J. (1966). *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and its Relation to Modern Antisemitism*. New York: Harper & Row.

Young, J. E. (1988). *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Zemel, C. (2003). Emblems of Atrocity: Holocaust Liberation Photographs. In: *Image and Remembrance: Representations and the Holocaust*. Eds. Shelley Hornstein & Florence Jacobowitz. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. pp 201-219.