

Our Brothers' Keeper: Moral Witness

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Abstract

This article considers the practice of witness in the world—witness to the world—in particular the character and temper, nature and purpose, significance and resonance of “moral witness,” a kind of ideal type, as conceived by the philosopher Avishai Margalit. It proposes that the artist plays an important role as a moral witness and that the work of art itself performs the same function, even after the fact—the phenomenon of “postwitness.” In this context, it identifies an ethics of precision or exactitude and adduces a variety of exemplars, ranging from poetry to photography, including *Shot at Dawn* (2014), a suite of landscape photographs which are also war photographs and memorial photographs, and acts of moral witness, by Chloe Dewe Mathews.

Keywords

witness, moral witness, postwitness, exactitude, terror, torture, war photography.

witness

Attestation of a fact, event, or statement; testimony, evidence; evidence given in a court of justice . . .

Applied to the individual testimony of conscience; after 2 Cor[inthians] i. 12 [‘For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity . . . we have had our conversation in the world’.] . . .

One who is or was present and is able to testify from personal observation; one present as a spectator or auditor (cf. eye-witness, ear-witness) . . .

Something that furnishes evidence or proof of the thing or fact mentioned; an evidential mark or sign, a token . . .

One who testifies for Christ or the Christian faith, esp. by death; a martyr.

Oxford English Dictionary

Witnessing shapes history and memory. Witness testimony is evidence and something more than evidence. The act of witness is not confined to the laws or the scriptures, though it smacks a little

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of both. All over the world, society is saturated in images and image makers clamoring to bear witness. What do pictures want?¹ To testify!

It is often remarked that artists bear witness. They have done so since the beginning of time. It is less often remarked that works of art themselves bear witness. The most celebrated example in recent memory may be Picasso's *Guernica* (1937), reproductions of which were worn as a badge of honor by antiwar protestors on the eve of the Iraq War in 2003: warning and witnessing at the same time. Another example is Klee's *Angelus Novus* (1920)—Walter Benjamin's "angel of history"—a survivor who bears witness to the terrible twentieth century. Ironically, when it comes to witnessing, the testimony of the author of the act is not always to be trusted. Artists and other makers of graven images are rarely explicit or programmatic; often they obfuscate their purpose. Occasionally, someone makes a statement. The mottos of Goya's *Disasters of War* (1810–1820) are legendary: "One cannot look at this." "I saw it." "This is the truth." In the Western canon, or the Western way of witness, Goya is the gold standard. He testifies from personal observation, as prescribed. His testimony is to all intents and purposes irrefutable; it is etched in the cultural memory of an entire continent. Goya is Paul Celan's Breathcrystal,

your unannullable

witness.²

Every war artist who came after him, every war photographer in particular, has Goya on his shoulder. Don McCullin, one of the best of them, made those mottos his own. In his autobiography, he recalls coming on a father and two sons lying in a pool of their own blood in a stone house in Cyprus during the conflict of the 1960s. He is riveted by the scene, as much for the tableau as the tragedy. It is as if he had been called upon to act, that is to say, to witness. McCullin is an ethical professional, with an active conscience. Still rooted to the spot when the rest of the family return, he is suddenly conscious of trespassing with his camera. But the survivors are content for him to do what he has to do. "When I realized I had been given the go-ahead to photograph," he writes, "I started composing my pictures in a very serious and dignified way. It was the first time that I had pictured something of this immense significance and I felt as if I had a canvas in front of me and I was, stroke by stroke, applying the composition to a story I was telling myself. I was, I realized later, trying to photograph in a way that Goya painted or did his war sketches."³

McCullin's counterpart James Nachtwey is perhaps the most exacting ethical professional in the business. He is remorseless. At the beginning of his signature collection, *Inferno* (1999), he quotes Dante: "Through me is the way to join the lost people." Nachtwey has been to hell on our behalf; he is intimately familiar with the place, all nine circles of it. He keeps going back to tell the tale—to bear witness—whether we like it or not. "Nachtwey's photographs are an odd, compelling combination of misery and serenity, of horrible content and stylized form," observes Susie Linfield. "But the perfection of their compositions—their so-called beauty—should not deflect us: Nachtwey's photographs are brutal, and they show us more than we can bear. But not more than we need to see."⁴

There are many ways of witnessing and a degree of fuzziness to much of the thinking about it. Despite a vast outpouring of historical studies, cultural studies, memory studies, and even philosophical studies, it remains a rather elusive subject, as to the basics of who, and when, and how, and why, and larger questions of equal pertinence: to what end and to what effect? Part of the problem may be its excess baggage—juridical, ethical, and even spiritual—as the *Oxford English Dictionary* serves to reveal. "Applied to the individual testimony of conscience," it records, citing the magnificent formulation from the Book of Corinthians, "we have had our conversation in the world." Witnessing may not change the world but having that conversation marks it, tempers it, and occasionally

rubs it red raw. The act of witnessing is not a neutral act. It does not leave things as the witness finds them. It does not spare feelings. The witness spares nothing and nobody, not even the witness. That is the idea—to prick the conscience, to lodge in the memory, or to stick in the throat. Here is where art finds its place. “Art as freedom from moral narrowness and corner-perspectives,” as Nietzsche says, “or as mockery of them.”⁵ In this sense, the witness is more akin to an agitator than a bystander, but also more purposive, more principled, and more pure. If the bystander is a deeply compromised figure, the witness is a profoundly elevated one. Put differently, the witness is an historical agent with a moral purpose and a militant faith, in Avishai Margalit’s words, “that in another place or another time there exists, or will exist, a moral community that will listen to their testimony.”⁶

Margalit’s exposition of the “moral witness” is a scrupulous and suggestive treatment, deservedly influential. His moral witness has a lot to live up to, however, being at once special case and ideal type. Margalit applies strict criteria for admission to this select company. The only ones who qualify are those who have direct, personal experience of radical evil and its consequences, those who have “knowledge-by-acquaintance of suffering,” as he puts it.⁷ The paradigm case is probably a survivor of the camps, like Primo Levi or Elie Wiesel, or the Terror and the Gulag (Vasily Grossman and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn), or prolonged torture (Henri Alleg and Jean Améry).⁸ Somewhat weaker cases might include those with knowledge by acquaintance of systemic persecution and incarceration in the Eastern Bloc in its Cold War heyday (Václav Havel and Adam Michnik), or the multiple degradations of military dictatorships (Ariel Dorfman and Wole Soyinka), or—bringing it all back home—Guantánamo (Moazzam Begg and Mohamedou Ould Slahi).⁹ Astonishingly, Slahi wrote 122,000 words of his Guantánamo diary in a single-cell segregation hut in Camp Echo, in 2005, after he had been put through a “special interrogation plan” personally approved by Donald Rumsfeld. The diary was published ten years later, after a long legal battle. The author remained in captivity, but his book was free at last—though heavily redacted. Slahi’s account is untutored and surprisingly measured; often decoded by sympathetic editing, the redactions function as a kind of silent reinforcement. On one occasion, as the special interrogation plan is in full swing, he is undone by a kind word:

“How you been?” said one of the Puerto Rican escorting guards in his weak English.

“I’m OK, thanks, and you?”

“No worry, you gonna back to your family,” he said. When he said that I couldn’t help breaking in [redacted].¹⁰

We supply the tears.

Slahi is insistent on only one thing: he must make himself heard. He must testify. “Please,” he tells his administrative review board, “I want you guys to understand my story okay, because it really doesn’t matter if they release me or not, I just want my story understood.”¹¹ As a witness, he has a conspicuous virtue: he is eminently capable of imagining a moral community that will listen to his testimony. He addresses that community in his summing up:

I don’t even know how to treat this subject. I have only written what I experienced, what I saw, and what I learned first-hand. I have tried not to exaggerate, nor to understate. I have tried to be as fair as possible, to the US government, to my brothers, and to myself. I don’t expect people who don’t know me to believe me, but I expect them, at least, to give me the benefit of the doubt. And if Americans are willing to stand for what they believe in, I also expect public opinion to compel the US government to open a torture and war crimes investigation. I am more than confident that I can prove every single thing I have written in this book if I am ever given the opportunity to call witnesses in a proper judicial procedure, and if

military personnel are not given the advantage of straightening their lies and destroying evidence against them.¹²

The moral witness may be memorized and memorialized. The greatest poetic witness of the terror was the majestic Anna Akhmatova: the one who meant most to her country and culture; the one who kept the word, “the great Russian word,” alive for them; the one who outlasted her persecutors—who so exasperated them, she said, that they all died of heart attacks before her. *Requiem*, the sequence of poems she composed during the late 1930s but did not commit to paper, is reported to have survived only in the memories of the poet and a few of her most trusted friends: her own moral community. “Eleven people knew *Requiem* by heart,” she recalled, “and not one of them betrayed me.” It was first published in 1963, “without the author’s knowledge or consent,” by the Society of Russian Émigré Writers, from a copy which had found its way to the West. It was prefaced by a brief note dated April 1957. The note itself became a legend:

In the fearful years of the Yezhov terror I spent seventeen months in prison queues in Leningrad. One day somebody “identified” me. Beside me, in the queue, there was a woman with blue lips. She had, of course, never heard of me; but she suddenly came out of that trance so common to us all and whispered in my ear (everybody spoke in whispers there): “Can you describe this?” And I said: “Yes, I can.” And then something like the shadow of a smile crossed what had once been her face.¹³

For Margalit, moral witnesses of this ilk are insiders rather than outsiders; they are inside the story they have to tell, unlike photographers or filmmakers or reporters, concerned or unconcerned, embedded or unembedded. They are “special agents of collective memory,” promoting “thick identity” based upon “thick relations,” that is to say a felt sense of shared ties, human, and cosmopolitan. Their moral standing is assured, not only by their fortitude but also by their resolve—the moral witness deliberately accepts the personal risk.

No one
bears witness for the
witness.¹⁴

The notion of the moral witness is a compelling one. Undaunted by the excess baggage, it succeeds in capturing the ethical impulsion that is fundamental to the very idea of witnessing. The act of witness is linked axiomatically to the exercise of conscience. The moral witness is a kind of conscientious objector. But is she alone in that? The Margalit model of moral witness is persuasive enough, as far as it goes, but it appears to impose certain limitations on the subject, in particular, as to who and when and how.

The thrust of the argument about insider and outsider is surely right—witnessing is not a spectator sport and witness tourism is no more palatable than war tourism—but the distinction is not so simple to maintain. During the occupation, for example, the artist Jean Fautrier moved in Resistance circles in Paris; his studio was a rendezvous. In 1943, he was arrested by the Gestapo and briefly imprisoned. After his release, he went into hiding in a sanatorium on the outskirts of the city, where he began work on a series of abstract, headlike forms called *Hostages* (1943–1945), a response to the sounds he could hear from his window: the screams of torture and the shots of executions. Fautrier was an earwitness. Ostensibly, he had nothing to say—he was famously closemouthed—but “Fautrier l’enragé,” as Jean Paulhan called him, was impelled to act. “One can’t be painting apples while heads are rolling,” he declared.¹⁵ His testimony, in his own idiom, was as searing as any. The *Hostages* were exhibited in 1945, immediately after the Liberation; they achieved mythic status.¹⁶

They testified eloquently to man's inhumanity to man. At the same time, they were an attestation of human dignity, claimed by André Malraux as "the most beautiful monument to the dead of the Second World War."¹⁷ They were also an affront, an outrage. The hostages demanded a response—an ethical response. "How should we respond when confronted with the idea of the *Hostages*?" asked Francis Ponge. "One might say that here is one of the fundamental questions of our time."¹⁸

Fautrier was an insider of a kind. So, too, is Sebastião Salgado, the photographer of famine in the Sahel and other battles in other wars. As Eduardo Galeano underlined in a brilliant appreciation, "Salgado photographs people. Casual photographers photograph phantoms."

As an article of consumption, poverty is a source of morbid pleasure and much money. Poverty is a commodity that fetches a high price on the luxury market. Consumer-society photographers approach but do not enter. In hurried visits to scenes of despair or violence, they climb out of the plane or helicopter, press the shutter release, explode the flash: they shoot and run. They have looked without seeing and their images say nothing. Their cowardly photographs soiled with horror or blood may extract a few crocodile tears, a few coins, a pious word or two from the privileged of the earth, none of which changes the order of their universe. At the sight of the dark-skinned wretched, forsaken by God and pissed on by dogs, anybody who is nobody confidentially congratulates himself: life hasn't done too badly by me, in comparison. Hell serves to confirm the virtues of paradise.

Charity, vertical, humiliates. Solidarity, horizontal, helps. Salgado photographs from inside, from solidarity.¹⁹

Salgado's works of witness are humanitarian interventions. They are ethical and, inescapably, political. "Like all politically effective images," argues David Levi Strauss, "the best of Salgado's photographs work in the fissures, the wounds, of the social. They cause those who see them to ask themselves: *Are we allowed to view what is being exposed?*"²⁰ This is the path to thick relations, the hallmark of moral witness, and the signature of the master photographer. "It allows his subjects to be themselves and more than themselves at once."²¹

Witnessing (moral or otherwise) may be done after the fact. Paradoxical as it may seem, the act of witness need not be instantaneous or contemporaneous. Robert Capa's celebrated dictum, "If your pictures aren't good enough, you're not close enough," does not apply, if the burden of that dictum is to prescribe a kind of action shot, a close-up in the moment. Unquestionably, "I was there" can deliver a visceral charge. Capa's D-Day landings are sufficient proof of that; and McCullin's shell-shocked soldier returns to haunt us at regular intervals. But powerful witnessing happens after the battle—after the war—sometimes long after. Simon Baker has noted "the capacity of photography to bear witness even (or especially) at removes of several decades."²²

This form of witness we might call postwitness, by analogy with "postmemory," the term proposed by Marianne Hirsch to comprehend the folk memory (or family memory) of successor generations, whose connection to the original event or source is not through recollection, as she says, but through "imaginative investment and creation."²³ Postwitness is exemplified in a recent project, which is also an anniversary project, by Chloe Dewe Mathews (born 1982), *Shot at Dawn* (2014).²⁴ Arresting alike in its clarity and its humanity, *Shot at Dawn* is not immediately recognizable as an act of witness or indeed as a morally cogent act at all. It is at first sight a suite of landscape photographs: bucolic scenes, for the most part: a path beaten through a field; a snow-covered wood; and a stream. They are plainly titled, as if marked on the map: "Vanémont, Vosges, Lorraine;" "Verbranden-Molen, West-Vlaanderen;" "Klijtebeek stream, Dikkebus, Ieper" (Ypres or "Wipers" to the Tommies who had the misfortune to fetch up there). They are big—big enough for the viewer to lose himself, or his bearings, but not his moral compass. These are the sites at which British, French, and Belgian soldiers were executed for cowardice and desertion during the Great War.

The complete series comprises twenty-three photographs, of which a sample may be inspected in various exhibitions. Inspection is invited, or incited, by a gnawing awareness of their backstory—the slow realization of their slow realization—and by the deadpan data accompanying each one.

At Vanémont:

time 06:30/date 07.09.1914

Soldat EUGÈNE BOURET Soldat FRANCISQUE JEAN AIMÉ DUCARRE Soldat ERNEST
FRANÇOIS MACKEN Soldat BENOÎT MANILLIER Soldat FRANCISQUE PITIOT Soldat
CLAUDIUS URBAIN

time 07:45/date 12.09.1914

Soldat JULES BERGER Soldat GILBERT GATHIER Soldat FERNAND LOUIS INCLAIR

At Verbranden-Molen:

time 17:00/date 15.12.1914

Soldat ALI BEN AHMED BEN FREJ BEN KHELIL Soldat HASSEN BEN ALI BEN GUERRA
EL AMOLANI Soldat AHMED BEN MOHAMMED EL YADJIZY Soldat MOHAMMED
OULD MOHAMMED BEN AHMED

At Klijtbeek:

time 05:50/date 10.04.1918

Private HENRY HUGHES

In an era of the “global war on terror,” the naming itself is an act of witness. *Shot at Dawn*, it transpires, is a resurrection—not a body snatching but a revisiting, an investigation of the record, and an invitation to think again.

The record was deliberately concealed for a long period; the story remained untold until very recently. In 2006, the Ministry of Defence announced that 306 soldiers convicted of desertion in the face of the enemy and executed during the Great War were to be posthumously pardoned. Each of the countries immediately involved is wrestling with its own painful history, though in each case the brutality of summary justice was leavened with a certain residual compassion (or caution). In Britain, the vast majority of those sentenced to death were pardoned at the time; of over 3,000 convictions for capital offences, 346 were carried out. In Belgium, the proportions were somewhat similar: of 220 convictions, 18 were carried out. In France, of 412 convictions during a summer of mutinies in 1917, 55 were carried out. The names, dates, and times of these executions appear in courts-martial proceedings. The locations, however, are difficult to establish with precision. Dewe Mathews is the first person to explore them systematically, camera at the ready.

Shot at Dawn is a documentary project, first and foremost, but there is more to it than that. The photographs bear witness, one hundred years after the event. Like her distinguished forebears, Dewe Mathews is not merely a shutter operator but a thinker photographer. “These places have been altered by a traumatic event,” she reflects. “By photographing them, I am reinserting the individual into that space, stamping their presence back onto the land, so that their histories are not forgotten.”²⁵ Every photograph is a certificate of presence, as Roland Barthes pointed out. Fundamentally, this is a moral position. Dewe Mathews is a moral witness. *Shot at Dawn* is excavatory, testamentary, and perhaps even reparatory. In every sense, the plot is subject to scrutiny. Those bucolic scenes, soaked in meaning, are sites of memory, certainly, but also sites of self-examination, for spectators of all sorts. In the final analysis, these photographs are little histories of conscience—a centenary of conscience—inventories of its excitation and reinterpretation over time.

They are also examples of exactitude: an ethical attribute.²⁶ Witnessing imposes its own exacting requirements. For Paul Celan, it was the date—he urged “a concentration that remains mindful of all our dates.”²⁷ In the case of *Shot at Dawn*, an approximate location or an approximate time of day

would nullify the core concept. *Shot at Dawn* is the very opposite of shoot and run. Similarly, for Simon Norfolk, a photographer who follows the wars and the massacres, inspecting the ground and the guilty secrets sown there, precise knowledge of the gravesites and the killing fields is of vital importance, for the credibility of the work and the veracity of the witness.²⁸ As Mr Cogito knew, in these matters, accuracy is necessary. From “Mr Cogito on the Need for Precision,” in Zbigniew Herbert’s *Report from a Besieged City* (1983), which is among other things a witnessing of Warsaw under martial law:

a spectre is haunting
the map of history
the spectre of indeterminacy
...

we count the survivors
and an unknown remainder
neither known to be alive
nor definitively deceased
are given the bizarre name
of the lost
...

how hard to establish the names
of all those who were lost
battling against inhuman power
the official data
diminish their number
once again mercilessly
decimating the fallen
...

eyewitnesses
blinded by gas
deafened by gun salvos
by fear and despair
are inclined to exaggerate
...

but in these matters
accuracy is necessary
one can’t get it wrong
even in a single case
in spite of everything
we are our brothers’ keepers

ignorance about those who are lost
undermines the reality of the world²⁹

The work of witness stands against indeterminacy and ignorance. “An evidential mark or sign” offers the *OED*, “a token.” On the battlefields of the Great War, the lost are still missing. The Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme (1928–1932) is one such sign, inscribed with the names of the 72,195 officers and men who died there between 1915 and 1918, who have no known grave. Memorials, too, bear witness. Lost and found, we have need of this token. Witnessing does not right wrongs; it makes possible their reappraisal.

Witnesses seem to whisper among themselves. “I should have liked to call you all by name,” recorded Akhmatova in *Requiem*, “but they have lost the lists.” Ingeborg Bachmann salutes Anna Akhmatova:

To create a single lasting sentence,
to persevere in the ding-dong of words.
No one writes this sentence
who does not sign her name.³⁰

Zbigniew Herbert salutes Jean Améry:

The torturers sleep soundly their dreams are rosy
good-natured genocides—foreign and home-grown
already forgiven by brief human memory³¹

Witnessing is intimately bound up with suffering. Loss is the common currency. “And so they are ever returning to us, the dead,” as W. G. Sebald reminds us.³² Bearing witness is good, it appears, but on occasion it is too much. After 9/11, public witness to the “jumpers” from the World Trade Center was disallowed, and the photograph of the famous “falling man” effectively suppressed; the deaths are recorded as homicide due to blunt trauma. Suicide (on our side) is indeed more than we can bear. The reality of the world is difficult to stomach. “We cannot bear reality,” muses David Levi Strauss, “but we bear images—like stigmata, like children, like fallen comrades. We suffer them. We idealize them. We believe them because we need what we are in them.”³³ Sometimes, we refuse them. Yet they have a way of getting under our skin. In the preamble to the remarkable work of witness to the lives of the poor sharecroppers of Alabama in the Great Depression, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941), in collaboration with the photographer Walker Evans, the writer James Agee poses a series of unforgettable questions. “Who are you who will read these words and study these photographs, and through what cause, by what chance, and for what purpose, and by what right do you qualify to, and what will you do about it?”³⁴

Every act of witness asks the same.

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Notes

1. A question famously posed by W. J. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), subtitled “The Lives and Loves of Images.”
2. Paul Celan, “Etched away,” in *Selected Poetry and Prose of Paul Celan*, trans. John Felstiner, ed. John Felstiner (New York: Norton, 2001), 247.
3. Don McCullin, *Unreasonable Behaviour* (London, UK: Vintage, 2002), 47.
4. Susie Linfield, *The Cruel Radiance* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2010), 211.
5. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1968), 435.
6. Avishai Margalit, *The Ethics of Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 155.
7. Margalit, *The Ethics of Memory*, 149.

8. See Primo Levi, trans. Raymond Rosenthal, *The Drowned and the Saved* [1986] (New York: Vintage, 1989); Elie Wiesel, trans. Marion Wiesel, *Night* [1958] (London: Penguin, 2008); Vasily Grossman, trans. Robert Chandler, *Life and Fate* [1980] (New York: NYRB, 2006); Alexander Solzhenitsyn, trans. Thomas P. Whitney, *The Gulag Archipelago* [1973] (London: Fontana, 1976); Henri Alleg, trans. John Calder, *The Question* [1958] (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2006); Jean Améry, trans. Sidney Rosenfeld and Stella P. Rosenfeld, *At the Mind's Limits* [1966] (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1980).
9. See Moazzam Begg, *Enemy Combatant* (London, UK: Free Press, 2006); Mohamedou Ould Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (Edinburgh, UK: Canongate, 2015).
10. Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary*, 228–29. The editor, Larry Siems, notes: “It seems possible, if incredible, that the US government may have here redacted the word ‘tears.’”
11. Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary*, xix.
12. Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary*, 369. Slahi’s interrogation was led by Richard Zuley, a former Chicago detective with a long record of alleged brutal interrogation techniques. See, Spencer Ackerman, “Bad Lieutenant,” *Guardian*, 19 February 2015, theguardian.com. Accessed August 12, 2015.
13. Anna Akhmatova, “Requiem,” in *Selected Poems*, trans. D. M. Thomas, ed. D.M. Thomas (London, UK: Penguin, 1988), 87. Nikolai Yezhov was head of the NKVD from 1936 to 1938, at the height of the Terror.
14. Paul Celan, “Ash-Aureole,” in *Selected Poems and Prose of Paul Celan*, trans. J. Felstiner (New York: Norton, 2001), 261.
15. Brigitte Hedel-Samson, “Les révoltes de Fautrier,” in *Jean Fautrier* (Paris, France: RMN, 1996), 24.
16. A status undiminished, perhaps enhanced, by the paucity of documentary evidence on the precise circumstances of their creation. Even after the war, there does not appear to be any mention of the executions in Fautrier’s personal correspondence. He seems to have given a detailed account to Palma Bucarelli, *Jean Fautrier* (Milan, Italy: Saggiatore, 1960), but to no one else.
17. André Malraux, *Jean Fautrier* (Paris, France: Musée d’art moderne de la ville de Paris, 1989), 222.
18. Francis Ponge, “Note sur les Otages, peintures de Fautrier” (1945), in *Atelier contemporain* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), 23. Ponge’s ruminations on Fautrier are celebrated ethical examinations (and self-examinations); so much so, that they may perhaps be considered secondary acts of witness.
19. Eduardo Galeano, “Salgado, 17 Times,” in *Sebastião Salgado: An Uncertain Grace*, trans. Asa Zatz, (New York: Aperture, 1990), 11.
20. David Levi Strauss, “The Documentary Debate: Aesthetic or Anesthetic,” in *Between the Eyes*. D. L. Strauss (New York: Aperture, 2003), 7. The sentence in italics derives from Avital Ronell, who contends that every photograph poses itself as such a question.
21. David Levi Strauss, “Epiphany of the Other,” in *Between the Eyes*. D. L. Strauss (New York: Aperture, 2003), 42, a propos Salgado.
22. Simon Baker, “Armageddon in Retrospect,” in *Conflict Time Photography*, ed. Simon Baker and Shoair Mavlian (London, UK: Tate, 2014), 200.
23. Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 21.
24. Chloe Dewe Mathews, *Shot at Dawn* (Madrid, Spain: Ivory Press, 2014).
25. Dewe Mathews conversation with Shoair Mavlian, May 23, 2014, in Simon Baker and Shoair Mavlian, *Conflict Time Photography* (London, UK: Tate, 2014), 211.
26. On the importance of exactitude, see Alex Danchev, *On Good and Evil and the Grey Zone* (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), which contains another version of this essay.
27. John Felstiner, *Paul Celan* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 188. Cf. P. Celan, “The Meridian,” in *Selected Poems and Prose of Paul Celan*, trans. J. Felstiner (New York: Norton, 2001), 408.
28. See his testimony in Paul Lowe, “The Forensic Turn,” in *The Violence of the Image*, ed. Liam Kennedy and Caitlin Patrick (London, UK: Tauris, 2014), 223–26.
29. Zbigniew Herbert, “Mr Cogito on the Need for Precision,” from *Report from a Besieged City* (1983), in *The Collected Poems*, trans. Alissa Valles, ed. Alissa Valles (London, UK: Atlantic, 2008), 404–8.

30. Ingeborg Bachmann, "Truly," in *Darkness Spoken*, trans. Peter Filkins, ed. Peter Filkins (Brookline, MA: Zephyr, 2006), 615. Bachmann met Akhmatova in 1964 and published this poem the following year.
31. Zbigniew Herbert, "From an Unwritten Theory of Dreams," in *New York Review of Books*, trans. Alissa Valles, June 20, 2013, 37.
32. W. G. Sebald, *The Emigrants*, trans. Michael Hulse (London, UK: Harvill, 1997), 23.
33. Levi Strauss, "The Highest Degree of Illusion," in *Between the Eyes*. D. L. Strauss (New York: Aperture, 2003), 185.
34. James Agee and Walker Evans, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (London, UK: Penguin, 2006), 7.

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