Underwood and Underwood.
*The Stereograph as an Educator—Underwood Patent Extension Cabinet in a Home Library, 1901.*
Photographic print on stereo card. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.
The Archiving Machine; or, The Camera and the Filing Cabinet

JOHN TAGG

Ancient as the Greeks, it seems that archive—from arkeion, home of the archon or magistrate and resting place of the records that preserve and pronounce the law—is having its turn as one of those terms, like the body, visuality, hybridity, the aesthetic, and so on, that surge suddenly and sometimes surprisingly into fashion as the must-have accessory of the moment.¹ For a time, they then become like brand names, the focus of intense loyalties and the object of impassioned exchanges understandable only to those who belong to the code.

This struck me again recently, as I was entering an exhibition of contemporary photography, video, and performance at the Guggenheim Museum and found myself following the crowd straight into a section labeled “ Appropriation and the Archive.” The rubric was one of five “ formal and conceptual threads” around which the curators had organized their selection from what has become an institutionalized canon of recent work.² “In the early 1960s,” the opening wall panel told us,

Robert Rauschenberg and Andy Warhol began to incorporate photographic images into their paintings, establishing a new mode of art making that relied not on the then-dominant tradition of gestural abstraction but rather on mechanical processes such as screen printing. In doing so, they challenged the notion of art as the expression of a singular, heroic author and recast their works as repositories for information, be it autobiographical, cultural, or historical. This archiving impulse revolutionized art over the ensuing decades, paving the way for a conceptually driven use of photography as a means of absorbing the world at large into a new aesthetic realm.³

The “archiving impulse,” the panel went on to suggest, had set off a train of art-making intent on exploring “some of the possibilities encompassed by the idea that an artwork can serve as an archive.”⁴ This insight—appropriated or misappropriated from a 2004 essay by Hal Foster—set the agenda for the opening section of the exhibition, in which the curators, effortlessly assimilating the repertoire of terms to which something once called “Theory” has now been reduced, set out to show that, though perceived at first “as a radical challenge to the status quo,” work in this archival mode, by artists such as Bernd Becher and Hilla Becher, Sarah Charlesworth, Richard Prince, and Cindy Sherman, can now, with hindsight,
from the vantage point of the museum, be seen to describe a line of artistic development whose authentic markers are loss, trauma, remembrance, “a melancholic longing for an otherwise unrecuperable past,” and death.  

The curatorial language here is characteristically inert, drained of anything that might constitute a threat to the institution. It is a striking reversal from the time when Allan Sekula could write of “the shadowy presence of the archive” in the countless, neatly packed files, folders, drawers, and shelves where, in the years between 1880 and 1910, “the archive became the dominant institutional basis for photographic meaning.” For Sekula and for some others at the end of the 1970s (among whom I would be included), the archival mode was a political apparatus inseparable from the rationalization of information, the control of bodies, and the relegation of the photographic operator to “the status of a detail worker.” Something has clearly been lost, then, in the accommodation to the museum and the absorption of the impetus of theory into the steady institutionalization of a hardly varied canon. This may be reason enough to try to go back to recover something of the edge and point of the original arguments made thirty years ago. But the issue of the archive is also as pressing now as it ever was in the nineteenth century. So, before we try to distance its effects as endlessly fraught by melancholy and the uncanny, perhaps we should try to encounter its machinery in the full force and confidence of its operation as an apparatus of rationalization and social management—an instrumental machine that, in grasping and appropriating photography, not only absorbed the individual operator as a mere extension of its mechanism but also subsumed the camera and its peripherals, radically complicating our sense of what can be said to constitute the photographic apparatus.

This process began early—and not in some airless basement room of a department of the state, as one might suspect; it was always more domesticated than that. So let us start in the drawing room or, perhaps, a gentleman’s library— a gentleman like Oliver Wendell Holmes.

It was in 1859 that the American physician, essayist, poet, and inventor published the first of his unrestrained paeans to the stereoscope and the stereograph, though at the time he might not have entirely intended his readers to think he had given himself over to hyperbole—not even in that proto-Baudrillardian moment when he declared the world of mere matter to have been overwhelmed, stripped of its forms, and rendered redundant by the triumph of stereoscopic simulation. Whatever we make of this, as an avid collector of stereo cards, as the inventor of a popular handheld viewer, and as a vocal advocate of stereographic libraries, Holmes also knew with rather more certainty that those little card mounts with their two almost identical images threatened to overwhelm in an entirely different and more mundane way.
Just a few years earlier, following the successful showing of stereographs at London’s Great Exhibition, the London Stereoscopic Company alone had, between 1854 and 1856, produced and sold half a million stereoscopic images from an inventory that, by 1859, listed 100,000 different stereoscopic views. After 1857, as card-mounted paper prints of stereoscopic wet-plate negatives began to prevail, these lucrative parlor novelties were mass-produced in millions, reaching a peak of popularity in the early decades of the twentieth century through the astute marketing strategies of such corporations as the Keystone View Company and Underwood and Underwood. Holmes took the inexhaustible exactness and “infinite charm” of stereographic images to be key to their hold on viewers. But was this enough? Clearly publishers’ warehouses would have been overwhelmed and their retail outlets reduced to unprofitable chaos if the binocular camera had not also been harnessed to another, more modest yet equally exacting, technology: the comparatively understudied technology of the cabinet, with its labeled drawers, card dividers, titles, captions, and that felicitous accompaniment, the catalogue, whose subject headings, subheadings, and thematic sets served to organize both the logic of production and the drives of consumer desire.

If Holmes saw the shock value of the stereograph as “an appearance of reality which cheats the senses with its seeming truth” as “the mind feels its way into the very depths of the picture,” he himself knew that the photograph’s mechanism of capture could not operate so irresistibly if not embedded in the entirely nonmimetic machinery of the catalogue and the file. As early as 1859, Holmes foresaw that the consequence of the proliferation of stereoscopic images “will soon be such enormous collections of forms that they will have to be classified and arranged in vast libraries, as books are now.” This moved him to call for “the creation of a comprehensive and systematic stereographic library”; indeed, for a chain of libraries at what he called the city, the national, and the imperial levels. Yet, even in the rather less grandiose spaces of the drawing room, church hall, and schoolroom, where the stereograph made its more certain home, some sort of technology of storage and retrieval and some sort of system of classification and arrangement were equally wanting. So it was that the more or less elaborate stereoscopic viewer came habitually to be found alongside another equally important piece of furniture providing a means of organizing and housing the collection, often in an order shaped by the sets and series of the manufacturers’ catalogues, which, demanding completion as they did, continually reincited the consumer’s desire while giving the profitable little commodities the aura of something more than mere entertainment.

Even on this homely plane, therefore, the cabinet, case, or humble shoe box marked the semantic space in which the singularity of the view was inserted into a more complex representation of the world that, in its aspirations at least,
offered a glimpse of a kind of topographical encyclopedia whose organization betrayed a whole geographical system. As Rosalind Krauss remarked,

The file cabinet is very different as an object from the wall or the easel. It holds out the possibility of storing and cross-referencing bits of information and of collating them through the particular grid of a system of knowledge. The elaborate cabinets of stereo views that were part of the furnishing of nineteenth-century middle-class homes as well as of the equipment of public libraries comprise a compound representation of geographic space. The spatiality of the view, its insistent penetration, functions, then, as the sensory model for a more abstract system whose subject is also space. View and land survey are interdetermined and interrelated.  

Already, then, we are dealing with something more than merely a means of coping with the problem of overaccumulation, though this remained the persistent challenge of the developing photographic economy as, in a short span of years, it modeled the evolution of capitalist production from artisanal to entrepreneurial and then on to fully corporate forms. A trade card from the mid-1860s advertising the Paris photographic studio of Xavier Merieux encapsulates this threat: The camera has become a production machine spewing forth a stream of commodities in such a promise of profusion that the somewhat consternated operator seems, like the Sorcerer’s Apprentice, to be in danger of being entirely submerged if the other cameras follow suit and the stream becomes a deluge.

This danger was also felt by the architects of those great accumulations of instrumental images that began to be assembled, in sporadic ways, from the mid-1850s on but at an accelerated pace after 1870. As Alphonse Bertillon, director of the identification bureau of the Paris Prefecture of Police and inventor of the first scientific system for cataloging and retrieving photographic records, protested in 1891:

The collection of criminal portraits has already attained a size so considerable that it has become physically impossible to discover among them the likeness of an individual who has assumed a false name. It goes for nothing that in the past ten years the Paris police have collected more than 100,000 photographs. Does the reader believe it practicable to compare successively each of these with each one of the 100 individuals who are arrested daily in Paris? When this was attempted in the case of a criminal particu-
larly easy to identify, the search demanded more than a week of application, not to speak of the errors and oversights which a task so fatiguing to the eye could not fail to occasion. 14

If the professional criminal’s mastery of disguises, false identities, alibis, and multiple biographies was to be broken and if the early promise of photography as a means of detection was not to wither in the face of a massive and chaotic accumulation of images, what was needed, Bertillon argued, was “a method of elimination analogous to that in use in botany and zoology; that is to say, one based on the characteristic elements of individuality.” 15 For such a system, the integration of precisely standardized photographs with systematized anthropometric measurements and a refined physiognomic vocabulary provided the foundation, but the problem of classification was paramount. Only by inserting his individual signaletic cards into a statistically grounded system of organization was Bertillon able to file 100,000 records in a comprehensive grid of file drawers from which records could be retrieved quickly and effectively, with a minimum expenditure of labor.

As Sekula argues, Bertillon was “one of the first users of photographic documents to comprehend fully the fundamental problem of the archive, the problem of volume.” 16 Indeed, as Sekula also points out, it is at this time that leading office furniture companies such as Yawman and Erbe of Rochester, New York, began not only to produce Bertillon cabinets for criminal identification but also to manufacture ledger systems, card record holders, business files, and library card-catalogue cabinets, promoting their products through the publication of primers in business studies such as the classic Modern Filing and How to File: A Textbook on Office System, with its chapters on vertical filing, methods of indexing, card record systems, and stock record keeping. 17 Clearly, a wider process of technological dissemination is at play here, and its consequences are considerable.

These consequences began to unfold as, in the very period in which mass-produced dry plates and accessible handheld cameras also became widely available, the archiving of photographs came to play a more and more central role in an expanding array of disciplinary institutions and empirical disciplines, ranging from psychiatry and medicine to art history and military intelligence. If Bertillon had demonstrated the utility of his model for policing the mobile population of the modern city, then other disciplines, too, faced equally challenging problems in cataloguing accumulations of photographs that threatened to overwhelm. Once again, the issue was not only one of storage and retrieval. The categorical system of the instrumental archive was also absolutely central to its knowledge effect. This was the promise of the photographic archive. And, while its realization may have seemed to have been grounded on the technical refinement of strictly optical technologies, it was clear that the archiving lens produced its dis-
disciplinary effects only when integrated into a larger ensemble: a bureaucratic, clerical system whose central artifact was not primarily the camera but the filing cabinet.

Though baffling to us now, perhaps, what we encounter, right into the early years of the twentieth century, is an overbrimming enthusiasm for this new information technology, “the modern vertical file.” Invented in 1892 and first displayed at the Chicago World’s Fair the following year, the vertical file was still being hailed more than twenty years later as an instrument for organizing and handling archives that is “as near an approach to the ideal as can reasonably be expected.” 18 This is the view of H.D. Gower, L. Stanley Jast, and W.W. Topley, past and presiding officers of the Photographic Survey and Record of Surrey and authors of the indispensable “handbook to photographic record work” The Camera as Historian.19 For Gower, Jast, and Topley, while the meaning of the actual record photograph could be dealt with in little more than two pages and a single strategic plate, more than a third of their book’s 260 pages needed to be given over to the really engaging questions of storage: the relative merits of boxes, drawers, and vertical files; the mount and the mounting process; the masking and binding of lantern slides; the label; the “contributors’ schedules”; the quality of marking ink; the decimal system of classification and the subject index; the method of ordnance map referencing; vertical file guides and their proper use; and the importance of the secretary’s register of prints.20

As in the case of Bertillon, what concerned Gower, Jast, and Topley was that, as the number of photographic survey records grew, it became impossible to handle them or access their collective record without an expandable system of storage and without what they called a “proper arrangement”—by which they meant “a systematic order.”21 This was what the “modern vertical file” made possible. Like the paradigm in Ferdinand de Saussure’s linguistics, the structure of the filing cabinet and the decimal system of classification it supported determined the system of substitutions and equivalences within which the photographic signs were disposed. But, as in the Saussurean model itself, the construction of meaning across this structure of differences could not but radically conflict with the notion of meaning as a fullness interior to the sign—a notion nowhere more firmly entrenched than in relation to the photograph. In the annals of the Survey and Record, the photograph’s function as history turned not just on the fixed yet empty indexical relation to the singularity of a temporal moment but on its relation to the machinery of the archive—a machinery in which its relation to time was endlessly displaced across an infinity of temporal vectors: the time the machinery took to work, as well as the temporizing linkages.
and distinctions it constructed. As a result, the primacy of the camera and the indexical realism of the print were unwittingly but effectively displaced, suggesting that Gower, Jast, and Topley—formalists at heart—might better have titled their work *The Filing Cabinet as Historian*.

We are it seems, in the world of Borges's Library of Babel, structured like the system of a language in its infinite extension. But it was only in the bureaucratic imagination that the "modern vertical file" of the Survey and Record could be seen as functioning like an ideal language system. And, in itself, that system could never escape its structural incompleteness, marked by the fatal shafts of emptiness that pierce the architecture of Borges's library. Beyond this, we have also learned from Michel Foucault that the space of the file is the space of a disciplinary machine: an apparatus for individuation and categorization, an instrument for regulating bodies, territories, and knowledge, rendering them the object of technocratic adjudication.

Yet, as a technology of history, the filing cabinet of the Survey and Record has also to accommodate two further, paradoxical, concerns: a concern for the time history takes to function and the labor it expends (which in the logic of capital amount to the same thing); and a concern for the durability of history, for its duration and resilience, and for the survival of history itself against the erosions of time. On the one hand, the soundly constructed cabinet offered a means to prolong the shelf life of history. On the other, at least in the imaginary of empiricism and the dream economy of information handling, its rigid structure held out the promise of closing the circuit of reading-sign-referent, which is here hardly separable from the circuit production-consumption-profit. Already, then, in Gower, Jast, and Topley’s cumbersome wood, brass, and cardboard computer, far short of the “real-time” technologies of Google and CNN, the time of history is imagined as approaching the ideal zero time of disciplinary knowledge and the cycle of capital: “exchange in the least possible time (‘real’ time) for the greatest possible time (‘abstract’ or lost time)” always assuming the technology will work smoothly and ergonomically, without wastage or malfunction.

We would do well, however, to be suspicious of this fantasy of an inexorable archival machine, beloved as it may be by conspirers and conspiracy theorists alike. In the first place, as Robin Kelsey amply shows in relation to the place of Timothy O’Sullivan’s photographs in the files and reports of Wheeler’s Geographical Exploration and Survey West of the 100th Meridian, the archive may be ruled by an internal logic that governs the production of its events of meaning, but it is still a logic whose play allows for variation, transformation, and even a skeptical reflexivity. In large part, this play is only a consequence of the
fact that the logic of instrumentalization is not given but has to be articulated and instituted, so that, at least potentially, the drive to close the semantic circuit of the archive is always open at every point to resistance and contestation. Granting this, however, what may in actuality be more telling and significant is that the circuit is never finally able to secure itself, so that the functioning of the archive—to wit, the signification of the evidential document and the computation of the archiving system—is always both excessive and inadequate in relation to itself: the instrumentalized record is always simultaneously too big and too small for its discursive frame, saying less than is wished and more than is wanted.

The cropping out of this excess and inadequacy, in order to ensure that meaning falls readily and squarely into place, is the work of what I take to be a kind of violence that is brutal enough in its own ways. Yet, it would be wrong to suggest that the repression of the internal incoherence and final indeterminacy of archival systems is all that holds their remorseless effects of power/knowledge in place. The collapse of police states and regimes of terror around the world in the past twenty years has shown us this much, in the context of a striking reversal. In the erstwhile German Democratic Republic, in post-Ceausescu Romania, in Argentina after the Dirty War, and in Cambodia after the fall of the Khmer Rouge, archives have been recovered from ransacked offices, waterlogged barns, prison camps, and garbage dumps and, with patient forensic archaeology and conservation, turned around so that they have begun to speak again, this time of the guilt of the interrogators, torturers, executioners, spies, and informers for whom the pervasive archive was an infinitely elaborated map laid point by point on the world—a map that, in a frightening reversal of another of Borges’s fictional meditations, soaked up the fluid life of the world itself, leaving it desiccated, shriveled, tattered, and drained of blood. Even in the United States, secret stores of tapes, the files of hundreds of thousands of deleted e-mails, and, more recently, a cache of countless diplomatic cables have emerged again as counterarchives of all that has been cynically kept from view—all that has been politically cleansed from the so-called public record, which in its official and media forms has become little more than a flickering shadow theater for the entrancement of the infantilized.

Archives still retain, therefore, a particular and perhaps privileged relation to the field of truth. Yet this relationship is always framed by the larger machinery of governmentality that works in part, as Foucault shows, by demarcating boundaries between the true and the false, by mobilizing them and by bringing them to bear, not least on the differential relations to truth within which designated subject positions are distinguished and defined. In the space of the archive, therefore, the politics of truth inevitably folds into a politics of identity through the regulation of relationships both to time, truth, and memory and to the practices and technologies of record and recollection. As a result, while the archive may
once have seemed destined for invisibility in the anonymity of its functioning, the forces of self-determination, decolonization, and their countermovements have made it a highly politicized space, as communities have come to be seen as being made and remade through the sharing of the ethical obligation of remembrance and through the claim to “collective memory,” of which the archive is now seen as the repository. The very existence of an archive has come to be viewed as constitutive of a community’s claim to identity, and what should be in the archive, who should adjudicate it, and who should have access to it have become questions of urgent social and political significance. A striking example of this is Susan Meiselas’s extraordinary historical and pedagogic work in the divided territories of Kurdistan, work that aims precisely “to build a collective memory with a people who have no national archive.”

Across the political field, therefore, the archive has become central to the political construction of community and identity, just as memory studies have, since the 1980s, come to dominate academic engagements with photography, displacing the earlier concern with the politics of representation that marked the emergence of photo theory in the 1970s. What seems to be called for now—all the more so in the face of attempts by Google, Monsanto, and others to capitalize and dispossess the commons of knowledge—is not just an archaeology of the archive but a counterpractice framed within another politics. Yet, there remains a danger in this call insofar as it conjures up a vision of the archive as a human right, just as it invites the thought to persist that truth is in the archive—even if in the form of a countertruth. What such a thought leaves intact is the intransigent function of the archive itself as a machinery of truth, a computer of everything that is the case—each case duly recorded, documented, numbered, filed, and secreted away in drawers, cabinets, drives, databases, and servers—for, in the archive of everything, something can be the case only insofar as it is subject to the entire apparatus. But what is an apparatus?

The archival apparatus at issue here is a composite machine—a kind of computer—in which the camera, with its less than efficient chemical coding system, is hooked up to that other great nineteenth-century invention, the upright file. Here we have it: the One-Eyed Man and the One-Armed Man of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, conjoining magical capture and legislative subjection as the axiomatic processes of a new information technology that rules the public and adjudicative functions of the archive. But this already suggests that an apparatus is not just a matter of machinery. Rather, it is, as Foucault insists, a specific strategic knot of technologies, discourses, legislative frameworks, coercions, and enforcements that constitutes a network of practices and relations of power and that generates a positive field of knowledge. The apparatus is, therefore, at once a discursive machinery and a discursive economy—a circuitry whose mode of
operation for Giorgio Agamben and Jacques Lacan, as for Deleuze and Guattari, is capture.

Capture is the name given to the plane of emergence of that third modality in Foucault’s technology of power/knowledge: the subject—succinctly defined by Agamben in his commentary on Foucault as the product of the conflictual relations between and among beings and apparatuses.\(^3\) Agamben, however, is also quick to point out that subjectification is not a singular process of concentration and condensation but rather a process of multiplication and dissemination, enacted in third-stage capitalism as a process of nonidentical accumulation now almost commonly embraced by its acolytes as the so-called openness of postmodern identity. Agamben prefers to say that the proliferation and accumulation of contemporary power has accelerated and multiplied the process of capture and subjectification to the point where identity is an interminable series of separations through which the apparatus instrumentalizes and in the same movement capitalizes being as subjection. There is no question of redeeming this process by a civic vigilance aimed at using the apparatus correctly. Those who advocate this, Agamben says, are merely speaking for the apparatus that has captured them.\(^3\)

This is a trenchant argument, and we might well heed Agamben’s warning before proposing that the apparatus of the archive can be redeemed and rendered pure by a civic-minded watchfulness. The view we may derive from Agamben would seem to be like the one Vladimir Lenin once held about the state apparatus, at least before seizing power: The archive, too, cannot be taken over but has to be smashed.

To say this—under the shelter of the archive itself, as scholarship always is—may seem churlish and perverse. Yet the point of invoking and extending Agamben’s cautionary critique is to make us ask what we have lost of our being to archival machines—just as, on a more parochial level, it may also make us wary of “the archival turn” in scholarship over the past ten or fifteen years; by which I mean the turn to the archive as the ground of historical recovery and the starting point for scholarly research grown weary both of modernist historicism and of the kind of theory for which the historical text is only, at best, an allegory of its own modes of operation. We might contrast this with the equally recent discovery of the archive as itself an object of study—indeed, for the history of photography, an essential and inescapable object of study. These two turns toward the archive are not at all the same kind of thing. For the one, the archive is not only given but is the frame of knowledge production itself. For the other, the archive has to be constituted as an object of knowledge whose workings are part of the historical and, indeed, the political problem. Here, then, is a very different sense in which, not least for histories of photographs, one might say that the archive must and must not be the horizon of our future thought.
Notes

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3. Wall panel for “ Appropriation and the Archive,” in Haunted: Contemporary Photography/Video/Performance, Guggenheim Museum, New York, 2010. An earlier rehearsal of the same inflated conception of “the archival impulse” was offered in Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art, curated by Okwui Enwezor for the International Center of Photography, 18 January to 4 May 2008. This exhibition, described as a “widespread investigation” of “the archive as both a conceptual and physical space in which memories are preserved and history decided,” also centered on “works by leading contemporary artists who use photographic images to rethink the meaning of identity, history, memory and loss.” International Center of Photography, media release for Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art, 17 January 2008.

4. Wall panel for “ Appropriation and the Archive.”

5. Hal Foster, “ An Archival Impulse,” October 110 (Fall 2004): 3–22; and Blessing and Trotman. The Guggenheim curators depart from Foster who, in his discussion of the work of Thomas Hirschhorn, Tacita Dean, and Sam Durant, concludes that the partial recovery of a utopian demand in their “archival art” “suggests a shift away from a melancholic culture that views the historical as little more than the traumatic.” Foster, “An Archival Impulse,” 22.


7. Sekula, 58.


13. Rosalind Krauss, “Photography’s Discursive Spaces: Landscape/View,” Art Journal 42, no. 4 (Winter 1982): 315. Sekula argues that, while companies such as Keystone Views or Underwood and Underwood did publish short pictorial groupings of stereograph cards organized according to a narrative logic, “one sees clearly that the overall structure was informed not by a narrative paradigm, but by the paradigm of the archive. After all, the sequence could be rearranged; its temporality was indeterminate, its narrativity relatively weak. The pleasures of this discourse were grounded not in narrative necessarily, but in archival play, in substitution, and in a voracious optical encyclopedia. There were always more images to be acquired, obtainable at a price, from...
a relentlessly expanding, globally dispersed picture-gathering agency.” Sekula, 58.

15. Bertillon, 331.
21. Gower, Jast, and Topley, 94, 96–97 (emphasis in original). Of the authors, Jast was deputy chief librarian of the Manchester Public Libraries and honorary secretary of the Library Association, while Topley was a member of the Croydon Libraries Committee. For the influence of bibliographical science on photographic archive organization, see Sekula, 56–57.
22. Jorge Luis Borges, “The Library of Babel,” in Ficciones, ed. Anthony Kerrigan, trans. Anthony Bonner (New York: Grove Press, 1962). In All the Names, José Saramago writes of the inescapable incompleteness of the archive, undone not only by error, decay, and the work of unseen parasites but by the fallibility of its very system, marking, in Saramago’s terms, the triumph of sense over meaning, irresolvability over instrumentalization, irreducible difference over absolute fixity and the bureaucratic closure of the state. See José Saramago, All the Names, trans. Margaret Jull Costa (New York: Harcourt, 1999).
30. On this, see Jonathan Long and Edward Welch, introduction to Photography: Theoretical

31. On the central function of “accumulation by dispossession” in contemporary capitalism, see David Harvey, The Enigma of Capital: And the Crises of Capitalism (London: Profile, 2010).


35. Agamben, 21.