An Artist and his Models

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1

In Roy Arden's archival works of the 1980s local history is depicted under the sign of catastrophe. The derailed locomotives, impounded vehicles, smashed windows and beaten protestors, the dismembered festivals, the silenced and furious citizens pronounce the lesson of the civic archive: local history is determined by the 'world-historical', that phantom of high conflict which, like plague, visits places and brands memory with their names.

For Arden, 'genius loci' is constituted of small bits and pieces of feelings of pain and loss. The emblematic event is dispossession, and one could claim that all his archival pieces are allegories of dispossession, in which the conflicts and defeats of British Columbia's past are depicted as splinters of the panorama of runaway modernity which has become the radically serious image of history and historicity established by modernist art and discourse.

In works like *Rupture* and *Abjection* (both 1985), Arden forced together two types of photograph—reprinted archival negatives and monochrome panels. In *Abjection*, the monochromes were made by exposing photographic paper directly to light; in *Rupture*, by photographing a clear blue sky. Monochromes are always emblems, and these monochromes are emblematic of the historical tempest which causes crisis and defeat, but which cannot be photographed directly, only indicated allusively and theoretically. The effect of this evocation of sublimity is to cast down the pictures paired with the monochromes onto a sort of rubbish-heap. This heap is the local, ravaged by the global. It is exemplified by the figure in *Rupture* who has been tossed into the gutter by the police, and who gazes lamely across the square on which he has been depicted toward the storm that has blown him down. The lump, the ripped and scattered remnant, the crumpled shred, are the foundation-stones of Arden's iconography and his philosophy of form. His taste for broken and ignoble shapes reflects his interest in photographers like Wols and Heinrich Zille, and in the problematic of *sachlichkeit*. The German word 'sachlichkeit' is usually translated as 'objectivity', as in 'Neue Sachlichkeit', New Objectivity, that 'cool' art movement of the later 1920s and 1930s, which contested the aesthetic of rhythmic expressivism which characterizes both Expressionism and Productivism, and which makes them seem like opposite sides of a single coin.

Interest in the sachlich, the neutral, the thing-like, implies an acceptance of the failure of rhythm in the world, and the impropriety of one of representation's grand projects, the negating of this failure in an 'aesthetic dimension', to use Herbert Marcuse's phrase. When a thing is broken and thrown on the refuse-heap, it falls off the highroads of history. The bold, fresh lines of movement no longer refer to it, its contours slump, its volumes are crumpled, its surface withers, its defeat as a part of the livingness of life and being is manifest, and it becomes an object of aversion, cadaverous and abject. It is at this moment that it truly comes into being as an object. The sachlich marks the category of things in their alienated state; that which is sachlich is that which has been expelled from a certain universe of form and rhythm and which has, possibly imperceptibly, begun its migration to another one.

That universe is something akin to the mainstream of idealist and Romantic aesthetics of modern art. On this highroad, the work of art tends to be composed as an expression of the dynamic unity of nature. In this perspective, a work whose theme might be the conflict between its elements formulates that disunity on the basis of a rhythmic ground which binds, stages and contains the conflict. The work is thus a transcendental ground of a disunity that does not envelop it, but which, on the contrary, is recovered from its potential formlessness and brutality by the dance of its own rendering, composition, and expression. This allows us to claim that, in a work of art, nothing is destroyed, even, and especially, that which is depicted as being or having been destroyed. This is the basis for the idealist tradition's claims for the healing and redemptive character of art.

But this manner of redemption is contested by the sachlich, and its corollary, the *informe*, the formless (derived in France contemporaneously with the sachlich by Georges Bataille in his critique of Surrealism).[1] The contestation is not over an aesthetic of redemption as such. Rather, the folds of the concept are deepened during this period. Arden's reworking of *sachlichkeit* moves redemptive aesthetics toward an encounter with wounds which will not heal, no matter how much care and observation are devoted to them. In incorporating the incurable and irreparable injury, an aesthetic of catastrophic facticity is able to make visible the unwitting cruelty of an art whose emphasis is on the wholistic, without thereby renouncing either the opposition to cruelty or an interest in the unity of a work. In Arden's archive, the rage of the wounded and defeated character or thing is not calmed. The sundering of the work into two irreconcilable panels, the fracture at the interior of the visibility of the images displayed, and the constant presence of an emblem of indifferent force, are the formal means by which he configures a state of pain.

1 Georges Bataille, 'formless'(1929), in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, edited and translated by Allan Stoekl (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985): 31. The photographer whose work has the closest affinity with Batailles's notion is Wols.

Although this configuration is recognized as a work of art, historically legitimating the pain it displays, the experience of pain is not relieved and does not permit the beholder to assume that recognition and legitimation guarantee the transfiguration of those who suffer. The work of art brings into view the deep humiliation of the victim, but does not evoke a state beyond victimization. Arden's works reflect the difficult and unstable situation of a culture built, as it must be, on the legitimate rage of victims, and so challenge art's reputation for having curative powers. *Sachlichkeit,* in the sense he brings to it, suggests that art cannot redeem the victim, who will always be marked as such, and will bear the mark as the black glyph of sovereignty. Art's aim is to remove the victim's crown and to depict his wounds in a secular construction. In the forms thereby revealed—that of the hurt itself, and that of the work of art that makes it visible, history is evoked as a process which cannot be comprehended in terms of hurt and the joy of healing. An artist is not a doctor. In art, the past is not displayed in art as healed, but as being in the process of creating symptoms which we will experience in the present, or as the present, the present moment in which the work is looked at.

Arden's purpose in combing the civic archives, then, is to transform our experience of the city's present moment and to make that transformation visible as a symptom of our absorption in a historical process of conflict and dispossession, a process in which we have come to exist as citizens, cohabitants and reproducers of the city. This conflict is modernity and, though expressly not registered in the orthodox Romantic aesthetics which still dominate artistic thinking in British Columbia, is the great unifying and dissonant rhythm which 'rhythmic' art cannot abide. Artists and spectators in Vancouver are beginning to pay attention to our own brutal Romanticism, in which vain recreation on mountain, beach and island betrays its triumphalism, its exultation over the battering nature can take from us and still present its soothing, healing mask. This apparition of nature is the spell cast on B.C. people by the genie of the world market, who blows hurricanes of surplus value and failed sovereignty through the place. From under the spell, nature is naturally experienced as dynamic rhythm, joyful movement, dance—as the prophetic 'compulsion of rhythm' which, as Nietzsche says in *The Gay Science,* 'binds the future'. In that book he also asks, 'what could have been more useful for the ancient, superstitious type of man than rhythm?'[2] This type of man, a priest, a poet, a doctor, set cultures on the path of maya, prophecy and the sacred. Nietzsche locates the 'origin of poetry' in the use of rhythm to gain the ear of the gods. In a place farthest from that orifice are resettled those who lack this kind of rhythm, or who have lost it. Arden opens his archive somewhere in this neighbourhood, where counter-traditions are fabulated.

2 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science,* (1887), translated with commentary by Walter Kaufmann (N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1974): 140 (Book II, Section 84).

2

During the past four or five years, Arden's interest has shifted away from the archival model of photography, toward another, which could be referred to as the 'photojournalistic model'. The idea of a model of practice informs his thinking, and, in order to study the character of the new photographs, we must look at the idea of such a model, and then at the specific model or matrix of models with which Arden is involved. It is possible, analytically, to identify at least three such principal structural models in contemporary photography, or art-photography: the 'archival', the 'photojournalistic', and the 'cinematographic'.[3]

3 re: 'cinematographic model', c.f. M.M. Baktin, "Epic and Novel", in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, edited by Michael Holquist; translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).

Strictly speaking, 'archivalism' abjures the making of new photographs, and commits its practitioner the liberty only to re-present existing material. The redesign of the mode of presentation and the development of principles of selection become the central artistic problems. Arden, of course, was never a 'pure' or 'hard' archivalist, although he has made some of the most significant archivalist works of the last decade. In those works, his own photographs are not registered as pictures, but as emblematic monochromes made through a sort of 'elementalism' which emphasizes the fundamentals of the photographic process and misleads us into thinking that Arden is not 'being a photographer'.

The problem of 'being a photographer' is, of course, fundamental to any model-making thought about photographic practices, since the models propose identities for those who work within them, or even at their boundaries. From this perspective, 'being a photographer' tends to mean making pictures 'as if one were conforming to the model in question'. That is, the notion of a model of practice implies an experimental treatment of procedures, relations, and the identities conventionally associated with them. Thus, artistic work in photography involves a mimesis of prevalent concepts of what the medium is, or can be. For example, an archive is, properly speaking, the construction of an institution operating over time according to rules, protocols, and traditions. An individual photographer might hypothesize a practice which resembles the construction of an archive. August Sander in the 1930s or, more recently, Bernd and Hilla Becher are examples of this. Rather than accepting that what is being done is in fact the construction of an archive, however, we must instead focus on the act of mimesis which is taking place in order for the photographer to create a body of work. This suggests that artists are able to make photographs in a process of imitation of the overlapping institutional and generic networks by means of

which photography is known, and that their pictures are valid artistically insofar as this imitation is visible in them. Arden's work of the 1980s did set in motion this sense of mimesis, and so participated in the project of critique with which archivalism is associated. Nevertheless, concealed within this identity are others, which have emerged slowly over the past several years.

If there could be said to be a dialectical structure for the photojournalistic model, it is organized in terms of an opposition between the prosaic and the poetic. Written journalism has consistently been thought of as the exemplar of prose, and, since Mallarmé, as the fundamental antagonist of poetry. The prosaic came to signify the regime of instrumental rationality, of means-ends calculation, in which all things obtain a fixed, positive identity through their inscription in a mechanistic system of utility and exchange. The poetic flowered through a withdrawal, a secession, from instrumentalism and positivism, and the conflict between the lyrical, intellectual poet and the cynical, effective journalist—the person Nietzsche called a 'moral prostitute'—has been staged in these terms since Baudelaire's time.

The prestige of written journalism obscured perception of the fact that its prosaic literary structure was not simply augmented by photography. Classical discussions about photography in its first half-century concentrated on the factographic, indexical nature of the image. This scientific and objectivistic concept of photography yoked it to the kind of positivism upon which what one might call journalism's 'grammatology' was constructed. This reflected the social subordination of the photographer to the writer, something that has characterized the institution of journalism throughout its history.

The 'post-classical' period of photographic theory and debate, which opened in the 1920s, emphasized the distinction between the prosaic mode of written journalism, and another mode which characterized the experience of photographs. This new mode is more and more identified as poetic, or at least, as more like poetry than prose. André Breton's novel *Nadja*, written in 1926, is one of the most incisive formulations of this new sense of the complicated relationship between photograph and text, and Breton's use of Jacques-André Boiffard's extremely 'straight' pictures to illustrate his prose-poem established a new prototype. A few years later, when Walter Benjamin contemplated the dialectical conflict between a photograph and its caption, the first

analytical conclusions were drawn from the Surrealists 'photographic' critique of prose, conclusions which determined one of the most significant directions taken by the discussion of photography for the next fifty years. [4]

4 Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer" (1934), reprinted in *Reflections*, edited by Peter Demetz, translated by Edmund Jephcott (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978) 230-31.

The distinction between picture and caption implies a distinction between the photographer and the writer of captions, a prose writer. It further implies that, since the caption is prosaic, the photograph may not be. Indeed, it implies that the photograph probably cannot be. For, if it were, the need for photography in journalism would never have arisen, since, if photography were structured like prose, it would not be likely to add anything significant to a prose account. But, photography not only added something significant to journalism, but can be said to have transformed it altogether.

In the earlier explanation of the medium's documentaristic validity, it was claimed that photography resembles controlled prosaic depiction because it is a scientific, collective production whose results are obtained by means of the setting in motion of natural processes in the form of technology. It not only participates in the increasing rationality of the modern world and culture, it is emblematic of the rationalization of what previously could only be articulated at all through the idiosyncrasies of art. This indexicality seemed to resemble the identification of prose journalism with a factual account, a genre of writing whose legitimacy is rooted in the controls it displays over idiosyncrasy, which it defines as inaccuracy. Journalism defines prose as controlled and reviewed writing, and the validity of its factual accounts is established by the structure of editorial review, which tests written material according to historically evolved (and, admittedly, continually evolving) social and political criteria, criteria which editors never tire of reiterating in their editorials.

What Breton's experimental novel revealed was that the identity of prose journalism and photography was an illusion, albeit a socially-necessary one. The striking effect of this on the level of theories of representation was the sense that photography is not structured like prose. This hypothesis suggested ways in which one could articulate the affinity of photography and journalism, based on the notion that they are fundamentally unlike processes related dialectically as a conflict and interpenetration of opposites.

The experience of a photograph is an experience of the immediate and the simultaneous. Any occurrence, recorded photographically, is seized in the process of its development or unfolding and made available as a synchronic construct, a single condensed phenomenon in which all the unconcluded energies of movement and interaction are arrested as a pattern. This patterning is the means by which photography resembles earlier forms of pictorial art, in which the illusion of an occurrence or event was constructed by means of an act of composition. As a synchronic phenomenon, it has a necessary, and necessarily dialectical, relationship to the phenomenon of the event, to the diachronic, to the narrative, the chronicle, the account. It cannot, fundamentally, formulate an account; a photograph can be interpreted as having a relationship with an account or a narration only by means of an analysis of its technical incapacity to encompass such structures. This analysis might be called a 'narratology' of photography. The experience of photography is associative and simultaneous, and in this respect it resembles basic modern concepts of the poetic employment of language. In poetic writing, meaning is not built by means of a consistent pattern of controlled movements along lines organized as sentences; rather, the poem is made of lines which typographically may resemble sentences but which lift the requirement to be read the way sentences are read. This is a form of writing and reading which relinquishes any necessary relation to the chronicle and to the chronological concept of an act of writing or reading. For example, when Roland Barthes developed his concept of photography in the opposition of 'studium' and 'punctum', he was formalizing aspects of a 'poetics' of photography. [5]

5 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, translated by Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981).

It is this sense of the structural unlikeness of photography to prose which established a deep foundation for the dramatic antagonisms which have characterized the history of photojournalism, or at least the history of the photojournalist's path to self-recognition as an artist, an artist maybe of a new type, an artist in a new social position, whose life and career constitute a new social or cultural drama.

This new drama is rooted in the inner conflicts of photojournalism as an institution, in the context of the other autonomous institutions of modern society and its culture. The new form of artist or artist-figure which emerged in this process was the photographer-employee who for various reasons abandons his employee status, strikes out on his own and confronts the market for pictures directly, as a free agent, a free-lancer, a picture-maker who works 'on spec' for a variety of possi-

ble clients or purchasers. The career of Walker Evans is exemplary here. Evans did much of his major work in the context of assignments from magazines like *Fortune*, and from the US government during its most liberal period. His situation was extraordinary because of the experimental attitude of his editors, and, consequently, the relative freedom he was permitted. For Evans, it was a short step from magazine work to open, personal experimentation, supported by other employment or government grants, that is, into the economic situation most characteristic of the fine artist in the free market.[6] Evans, and others like him, identified the open situation of the speculative picture-maker with the poetic condition of photography as art, and, working across the hazy boundary between employee and independent agent or contractor, enacted once again a fundamental social condition of modern art. At the beginning of the modern period, the traditional fine artist also passed through this development, breaking from the state-academic system out into the uncertain world of capitalist culture, ruled by public opinion, fashion and anxiety, that is, ruled by the press.

6 See *Walker Evans at Work*, 745 Photographs together with Documents Selected from Letters, Memoranda, Interviews, Notes. With an essay by Jerry L. Thompson (New York: Harper & Row, 1982).

So, ironically, the photojournalist, having discovered that he, or his forebears, was instrumental in bringing into existence the modern art world and shaping the lives and characters of its occupants, must himself pass through this same development, but, historically speaking, for the second time. Here we recognize that the journalist-photographer is in a mimetic relationship to the modern artist, and must experience the passage from employee to speculative producer at second hand, that is, dramatically. He follows a path trodden once before. Photojournalism's path to self-consciousness involves its mimesis of the idea of the artist as it was constituted by the aesthetic thought of the 19th century, and later brought under intense critical scrutiny by the avant-garde of the 1920s and 1930s.

Thus we can see that, around 1930, there had come into being an art-concept of photojournalism, which is something quite different from photojournalism itself. This concept was the outcome of the experiences of people like Evans, who expressed their own ambivalent sense of self-identity by playing with the boundary between photojournalism as such and photojournalism as a concept within the context of modernist art theory and practice. This play of ambivalence is the new form of answer to the question, Is photography art?, framed as it was by avant-guardists like Benjamin, who recognized the ways in which photography's development and increasing sophistication reconstituted the concept of art altogether.

This art-concept of photojournalism, we can call, along with Roy Arden, the 'photojournalistic model', which takes its place as one of the fundamental manners in which photography operates as modernist art. We recognize it, then, as one of the most significant productions of the avant-garde of the earlier part of this century.

Our relations to that first avant-garde, or 'historical avant-garde', as Peter Bürger calls it, seem to have been changed historically to the point where it is not possible anymore to re-enact the avant-gardist mimesis of modern art by means of photography. The art-concept of photojournalism, as it was popularized by successive generations of photographers and became one of the principal arenas for lyrical expressive activity in the work of people like Brandt, Klein, Frank or Friedlander, subsequently underwent a 'second critique' at the hands of the generation of the 1970s and 1980s, a critique animated by new political suspicions about the culture which sustained and valorized avant-gardism, and by Derridean and Foucauldian concepts of representation and writing.

In this process, the injunctions brought to bear against unmediated expressivism in art in general were focussed intensely on the art-concept of photojournalism, or what has been called 'art photography'. The deconstruction of the creative aspects of art photography in the work of critics like Craig Owens, Allen Sekula, or Abigail Solomon-Godeau emphasized photography's inscription in systems of power and control, of commerce, disinformation, and the fetishism of technology. The Foucauldian thesis of 'power-knowledge' invalidated the notion of a radical poetics of photography as Breton or Rodchenko had articulated it, and left-Benjaminian critics began their project of an immanent critique of the metaphysical presumptions of western avant-gardism.

The most striking artistic reflection of these critical ideas was, of course, appropriationism, or, technically speaking, rephotography, as practiced by people like Sherrie Levine or Richard Prince in New York. Rephotography proclaimed that all the photographs that could mean anything not only had already been taken, but that the process of institutionalization to which they had necessarily been subjected had already falsified their meaning and invalidated the emancipatory projects upon which the ethical world of their poetic project was founded. The new project was to drain the aura of meaningfulness from photographs in general, and reveal them as generic products of a network of systems of power.

This effect could be most strikingly achieved in a demolition of the special aura of art photography. The frailness of this aura, its roots in the ambivalence of the earlier avant-garde, meant that the new critique would be extremely effective because it reiterated the doubts held by that earlier vanguardist generation, doubts which had set the whole process of art photography in motion in the first place. Although some of the more spectacular effects of this new critique were achieved in relation to the mass media, as in the work of Barbara Kruger, the dismantling of the poetic basis for art photography is the more profound problem.

In his response to this, Arden has been guided in part by the example of Dan Graham, whose entire photographic oeuvre is a central point of reference for an understanding of the historical evolution of the photojournalistic model since the mid-1960s. Graham has been influential in turning attention away from a subjectivistic interpretation of photojournalism and, to that extent, in recovering important aspects of the vanguardist problematics of Walker Evans' work. [7]

7 see the catalogue for the exhibition, *Walker Evans and Dan Graham,* Witte de With Centre for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam (and tour), 1992-93. With essays by Jean-François Chevrier, Allan Sekula and Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, 1992.

Graham's strictures on his own photojournalism have guaranteed that it exists always on the kind of boundary established by the ambivalence of figures like Evans, that it be art only in a negative and self-dramatized way—but that it be art unequivocally in that way.

Graham draws from photojournalism proper the category of utility, linked with that of investigation and witness. In foregrounding the practical and socially-informative aspects of his photography, he is able to establish conditions for picture-making which, while involved with pictorial issues, avoid any re-engagement with pictorialism. The problematic sense in which Graham's pictures are and are not ends in themselves, the feeling that they serve some social purpose, some new productivist program, is at the root of any validity they achieve as a critical statement, 'text', or expression. Graham's work reveals the poetic character of photography's usefulness. Arden is taking this notion further into the domain of aesthetic appearance and the autonomous condition of the picture, a point somewhere between Graham and Andreas Gursky.

Graham's casualness and rough technique are aspects of his project of destablizing genres and institutions, and reveal the counter-cultural and vanguardist legacies in his work. In contrast, the enlargement and

formalization of Arden's images reflect his awareness of the new pictorialist tendencies of the 1980s. As his pictures are made slightly grander, sharper, and more strictly composed, they approach the generic boundary of the poetic utilitarianism mapped out by Graham and his photojournalistic precursors. They seem to wish to appear as autonomous pictures, thereby reminding us of Atget, Sander, or Robert Adams. But, where Gursky or Thomas Struth take their photographs over the divide, into the realm of the Salon, Arden, like Graham, halts at the threshold. His photos hover just at the point of resembling autonomous works of pictorial art. They reflect both the moment at which photojournalism becomes art, and the last one in which it remains lyric, miniature, and utilitarian—that is, in which it remains reportage.

Arden has troubled himself about this maybe more than any other artist. This concern has animated his evolution from a rigorous archivalist position toward one which re-grounds itself in a practice of representation, and of art as fundamentally representational. But his sense of representation is one which articulates itself, its own criteria of validity, by means of his deliberate, experimental refunctioning of the art-concept of photojournalism. This movement was anticipated in what we could call the 'photojournalistic elementalism' of the monochrome panels of his archival works.

The fact that Arden made his monochromes by purely photographic means suggests that they were conceived to function as boundary-markers in which his ideas about art-photography and its poetic, even allegorical, nature could be tested out. Undoubtedly, the monochrome as a form of art is by nature a boundary phenomenon. For Arden, the threshold is that between the extinction of active photography in the melancholic, splenetic scrutiny of past as catastrophe, and a resumption of representation in the 'now' of accelerating modernity. This was expressed in *Rupture,* where the archival photos are the 'then' and the blue squares of sky the 'now', and this bifurcated organization repeats itself in several other works of that group. So, the reasoning goes, if the monochrome is 'now', and it is a photograph, it cannot be different, as such, from any other photograph of 'now'. Later, as the mantle of historicity, or 'historification' enfolds it, it will become a 'then', and then its difference from the 'then' of its other panel will be weakened. The monochrome panel becomes identifiable as the mode of photojournalism resorted to by people committed to scrutiny of the kinds of images made by the generation for

whom the art-concept of photojournalism was a means of liberation, that is, the generation of 1938, the year in which the archival photos in *Rupture* were made, the year the Museum of Modern Art exhibited and published Walker Evans' *American Photographs*.

Arden's movement from scrutiny to representation implies that, in the 'now', the legitimacy of practices of representation as a concept of art, derives from their historical origins in practices of critical scrutiny, in critiques of representation. It is in this sense that a contemporary assumption of a practice of representation cannot be seen as a 'return' to anything which precedes the critiques elaborated first by the historical avant-garde, and then by those who have subjected avant-gardism to a 'second critique'. Arden's photographs enter into mannerisms necessitated by the peculiar relations between representation and its critiques. Representation, as an institutionalized practice, or concept of practice, can be thought of as being consituted by this relationship. One could put it more strongly, and say that what now can legitimately be called representation is *only* that which is consituted by this relationship.

Despite the rhetorical and politicized character of much of the discourse of the past ten or fifteen years, the critiques of representation that have been developed in that time did not accomplish their apparent aim of invalidating the practice. That aim, however, may only have been an apparent one, an effect of the inevitable exaggerations of political rhetoric. The statist, patriarchal and phallocentric characteristics of the cultures which invented and sustained both classical representation and its modernist successors have of course been brought out emphatically by the new critiques, and the current state of research and debate continues these projects. Such essentially political and ideology-critical analyses, however, have not disturbed the cultural or aesthetic validity of the practice of representation as such, and have had only a limited effect in the area of reception-theory.

One of the factors in this is the fragility and limitedness of the contestatory artistic models put forward by the champions of the 'new iconophobia'. Rephotography, contextualism, and new, more suave versions of productivist strategies have worked out their problematics very quickly, lapsed into epigonism, and have lost the angle of attack they enjoyed at the beginning of the 1980s. What persists at the centre of the debate are not, paradoxically, the recent 'alternative' forms, but the representational forms which can uniquely sustain over time the intensity and sophistica-

tion of the theoretical and critical energies which were released, apparently, against representation. This, and the complexly-flawed structure of the critiques themselves, suggests that their most significant consequence is the increased self-awareness of the practice of representation itself. Thus, the famous 'crisis of representation' cannot be thought of as one in which the legitimacy of representation as such is at stake, but rather as a new stage in the development of that practice, one which interrogates it profoundly and experiments with alternatives, often in the name of postmodernism and of poststructuralism. These alternatives lead in new directions, but do not succeed in disturbing the foundations for the centrality of representation in modern culture and art. The crisis is comprehensible primarily as an immanent dialectical condition of representation itself, one which emerges under some new historical conditions and imposes new priorities. What might be called the 'iconophobic critique' of domination signifies a new sophistication of modernist cultural and critical thinking, a widening of thought into realms of volatile negativity and dialectical method, but not a dissolution of representation and its corollary, law. In fact, it does not yet signify anything more than a recognition of the law-like character of representation, its kinship with the legalistic spirit.[8]

Arden is an artist who has recognized himself as one of those who, struck by the disappointing results of 'new critical' art forms or styles, has been obliged to investigate anew the validity of representational practices. His new photographs put into play the problematic status of the art-concept of photojournalism, and thereby, mimetically, in a conscious dramatic action, carried out in a specific, and politically-charged local context, re-establish a poetic notion of photography as a mannerism with truth-value.

8 The most developed discussion of the issue is by Gillian Rose in her books *Hegel Contra Sociology* (London:The Athlone Press, 1981), and *Dialectic of Nihilism: Post-Structuralism and Law* (London: Besil Blackwell, 1984).