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DESIGNING A CURRICULUM FOR DIFFICULT HISTORY: TEACHERS, MUSEUM WORKERS, AND WAR PHOTOJOURNALISM

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DESIGNING A CURRICULUM FOR DIFFICULT HISTORY:
TEACHERS, MUSEUM WORKERS, AND WAR PHOTOJOURNALISM

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

DESIGNING A CURRICULUM FOR DIFFICULT HISTORY: TEACHERS, MUSEUM WORKERS, AND WAR PHOTOJOURNALISM

By

Sara Clarke-Vivier

University of New Hampshire, May 2017

Educational theorists and researchers have emphasized the importance of museum spaces as sites of learning and engagement for their ability to supplement and enhance the school curriculum. These individuals often describing the importance of museums in relation to a set of progressive educational ideals such as the provision of experiences that enhance a learner's capacity to live and learn in a diverse democratic society. As interdisciplinary community teaching spaces, museums can serve as a natural nexus for socially engaged cross-disciplinary teaching and learning, fostering and supporting the investigation of questions about how to best understand, curate, and educate around difficult historical issues. This case study explore three secondary English teachers' integration of an art museum exhibition of modern war photojournalism into their Fall 2015 curricula by pursuing two research questions: *How do high school teachers' experience creating and teaching a curriculum built around traumatic historical photography?* and *In what ways does teacher-designed curriculum resonate with the public curriculum as envisaged by other cultural workers (curator, or the artist)?* Findings suggest that while teachers and museum educators envisioned their work with students in relationship to the development of critical thinking skills necessary for engaging with complex social issues, their teaching focused on the development of skills evaluating photography to ascertain argumentation or perspective that could have been applied to any photograph. Educators found it challenging to engage students with the images' content especially in relationship to topics perceived as political or biased. A further discussion of the social and professional pressures that limit engagement with difficult historical material is required for the development of robust pedagogical practices in both museum and classroom spaces.

Chapter One: Designing a Curriculum for Difficult History: Teachers, Museum Workers, and War Photojournalism

Manchester 2015 | Afghanistan, 1996

In the summer of 2015 I worked as an intern on the education team at the Currier Museum of Art in Manchester, New Hampshire. Founded in 1929 at the bequest of former New Hampshire Governor Moody Currier, the museum has developed and maintained an international reputation for both the size and diversity of its collection and the quality of its exhibitions. My previous experiences working in an array of more- and less-formal learning environments lead me to pursue a professional development opportunity at the Currier, whose reach was wide and diverse, and that took the work of engaging formal educators, schools and children seriously. With a highly skilled team of educators, curators, and administrators I shaped curriculum documents, developed tours and programs, and guided staff in curriculum design and evaluation. I experienced the challenges of evaluating learning absent the relationships and context of a classroom, and of teaching volunteer staff how to engage large groups of children in the sometimes uncomfortable an alien space of an art museum.

The special exhibition that was being finalized and hung that summer was titled *Witness to History: James Nachtwey- Afghanistan, Ground Zero, Iraq*. I found the press-release image,

which was featured on the website, in the lobby, and in the teacher emails I spent the summer sending mailing lists, to be stark and haunting. Titled simply “Afghanistan, 1996” Nachtwey’s black and white photo foregrounding a lone woman, clad in a soft, encompassing burka from which emerges one bare hand to grasp an unadorned headstone loomed large in my summer. It was awful and beautiful. I imagined that the ground, dry and cracked in the desert heat, was pushing up the graves like teeth through gums- that the woman was working against the earth to hold her loved one in and down. I guessed at the relation, the context, the death and wondered who was being depicted, obscured by both the sand and by the folds of dark fabric. Journalism scholar Susie Linfield reflected my own ambivalence when she wrote of this photo:

In this photograph, meaning and appearance fight each other at every turn. Though the burka is a grotesque, indeed totalitarian garment that imprisons its wearer behind a face grill, the loveliness of its billowing pleats cannot be denied. Though grief is a harsh master, the woman’s pose suggests a gentle humility that is very close to grace. Though the dryness of the stony earth and the pocked, misshapen graves tell us that this is a country where immiseration and violence have fatally embraced, a strange peacefulness pervades the photograph. In short, though everything we *know* about this scene bespeaks pain and devastation, their opposites are undeniably present too. (Linfield, 2010. 212-p. 213; emphasis in original).

This image, for all its complexity, would be only one of many. The exhibit was comprised of 24 large-format photographs of the war in Afghanistan, the events on 9/11 in New York (where Nachtwey, a perennial international traveler and infrequent resident of the city happened to be, just blocks from the World Trade Center attacks), the aftermath of the attacks in wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and the impact on American troops and their families. In addition, the exhibition included a large photomosaic of images from American military medical units in Iraq.

These photographs would hang in the museum’s special exhibition gallery for the first months of the school year, a period of time when local educators of all types visit with their students. As the educational staff booked tours and planned for the year to come that summer, I

wondered who would bring their students here? What sense would they make of the (trapped/beautiful) woman in the burka, mourning in the (devastated/peaceful) desert? What about 9/11? What about dead American soldiers?

When the exhibit opened, I lingered in the galleries after my shifts, working to make my own sense of the chronological narrative, the apparently explicit stance a self-proclaimed “anti-war photographer” like Nachtwey was making by pointing his lens at death and life in pre-9/11 Afghanistan, 9/11 New York, and post 9/11 war zones at home and abroad. The questions I asked myself were teaching questions. What was the “public curriculum of orderly images” (Vallance, 1995) as intended by the artist and actualized by the museum staff? What would teachers do with visceral, difficult images that centered on an act of terrorism that is described as fundamentally shifting the American experience and deeply impacting American education? How would the curriculum that emerged from these two sets of cultural workers engage with and shape the complexity of the experiences depicted? What did anyone hope was being learned?

Research Questions

The purpose of this research is to explore teacher experiences related to engagement with museum exhibits depicting traumatic history. This project foregrounds the experiences of 3 secondary educators at the 2015-2016 exhibition *James Nachtwey: Witness to History*, and answer the following research questions:

- How do high school teachers’ experience creating and teaching a curriculum built around traumatic historical photography?
- In what ways does teacher-designed curriculum resonate with the public curriculum as envisaged by other cultural workers (curator, or the artist)?

Important Terms Defined

Teacher/Educator

Though the terms teacher and educator are often used interchangeably, for the purposes of this project, I use the word “teacher” to refer to the three public school classroom teacher participants, and other school-based teachers. In turn, I use the word “educator” to refer to individuals working as pedagogues across learning sites. For the purposes of this dissertation, “educator” generally refers to both schoolteachers and museum-based educators.

Museum Educator/Museum Worker

When necessary for clarity, I will differentiate “museum educators” to indicate educators employed by the museum and working in the museum classrooms and galleries. For the purposes of this dissertation, “museum worker” is used as an umbrella term that encompasses museum educators, curatorial staff, and docents.

Docent

A docent is a person who works as a guide in a museum or art gallery. Generally, docents are volunteers who receive training related to the content, provide tours, and support other museum or gallery programs. At the Currier Museum of Art, docents are volunteers responsible for providing tours of special exhibitions, like *Witness to History*, as well as of the general collection, to schools and the public.

Cultural Worker/Cultural Carrier

Cultural workers and cultural carriers are individuals whose social role positions them to shape and propagate cultural stories. This category includes but is not limited to teachers,

educators, artists, media workers, and religious figures. In this dissertation, I deal specifically with teachers, museum workers, and artists as cultural workers. Though the terms “cultural worker” and “cultural carrier” emerge from different bodies of literature, in this dissertation, I use them interchangeably; an exploration of the theory that underpins these terms is introduced below, and explored more deeply in the following chapter.

Trauma/Cultural Trauma

The dictionary definition of trauma as a “deeply distressing or disturbing experience” remains a useful way into understanding the general concept; competing theories of trauma are explored at length in the following chapter. “Cultural trauma,” is used to describe instances where a distressing or disturbing experience occurs and is interpreted as a fundamentally shifting the identity of a cultural group. The term cultural trauma arrives to use through the sociological work of Alexander (2004, 2013) and is introduced below and explored in depth in the following chapter.

Curriculum/Public Curriculum

In following discussions of teachers’ work designing learning experiences for their students, the term “curriculum” means a course of study and its component parts; learning goals, readings, assignments, and experiences. In the museum context, I shift towards describing the “public curriculum” or the “public curriculum of orderly images.” Borrowing the phrase from Vallance (1995), I employ it to mean the artwork displayed by the museum, its display order and interpretation, and the public programming offered around the work. I explore this concept further below, and in depth in the following chapter.

Project Significance

This dissertation explores the complexities of teaching and learning that lie at the intersection of difficult history, museum studies, and teacher experience by speaking directly to those tasked with making pedagogical and curricular sense of war images in both formal and informal educational contexts. The significance of this exploration bridges teacher education and public pedagogy. Teachers, and by extension teacher educators, need guidance on the use of museum resources, particularly around the controversial, traumatic, and difficult to interpret historical moments. By exploring the ways in which different teachers undertake this work in relation to one exhibit, my research will unpack the complexity of teacher rationale and curriculum design across experiences, given the same difficult subject matter. A robust understanding of this pedagogical approach does not value powerful images simply for their ability to testify to the experiences individuals in a time or places other than our own. Rather, it is bound up with the collective future- with a “possibility of mobilizing images so that they are apprehended as expressive, transitive acts that have an impact on feelings, thoughts, and judgments” (Simon, 2014, p. 36). A focus on learning that is experienced so profoundly that we must turn outward with knowledge, “exploding toward the other” (Levinas, 1994. As cited in Simon & Eppert, 1997).

Pragmatically, an improved understanding of the ways in which teachers engage museum resources has the potential to benefit museums as well. At the most basic level, information on the impact of the public curriculum on any museum audience group is useful in making further curatorial choices and assessing the impact of programming. Partnerships with schools provide museums and other non-formal institutions with opportunities to collaborate for the development and evaluation of content, to develop relationships with communities and future visitors, and to

extend the continuum of teaching and learning outside of the sphere of formal education (Wunder, 2002). Further, collaboration amongst local cultural workers can enhance their collective voice, both through increased cultural competence predicated on a deeper and more connected sense of place, and by diverse and authentic field experiences conducive to varied and progressive teaching practices for teachers. (Gaudelli, 2011; Friedus, 2010)

Regardless of institutional affiliation or disciplinary commitment, educators occupy a central role in encouraging engagement with the complex issues that challenge societies. In order for this work to be done, sites of learning must both “offer a sanctuary and forum where [students] can address their fears, anger, and concerns” about traumatic events (Giroux, 2002, p. 1142). Because the events of 9/11 were both so immediate and present, and so interconnected with an understanding of the United States in the globalized world, they can “provide educators with a crucial opportunity to reclaim schools as democratic public spheres in which students can engage in dialogue and critique around the meaning of democratic values, the relationship between learning and civic engagement, and the connection between schooling, what it means to be a critical citizen, and the responsibilities one has to the larger world” (Giroux 2002, p. 1142). I will argue that schools do this work best when they do it in connection with museums and other cultural institutions that are equally responsible for shaping the public consciousness.

The balance of this chapter sets the context for the dissertation by describing first the impact of the attacks on the United States on September 11th, 2001 on education, focusing specifically on curriculum and teaching. Given the world’s immediate and highly visual access to the terror attacks, many educators quickly realized that they were faced with the important question of how to “make meaning of these horrific acts and how do we create spaces without our classrooms to try to interpret this tragic event” (Apple, 2002, p. 1761). Educators had to

simultaneously acknowledge their role as shapers of the 9/11 curriculum and narrative, and that that role made them vulnerable (Giroux, 2002)¹. Stepping back from the immediacy of 9/11, I will then discuss teachers as participants in shaping any culturally traumatic experience, and their shared responsibilities with other cultural workers for ensuring that the resultant narrative opens, rather than shuts down, possibilities for critical thinking, debate, and engagement with authentic, if difficult, emotional experiences. I will then describe the importance of museum spaces as sites of learning and engagement with traumatic history, before finally providing a detailed description of the balance of the dissertation, by chapter.

Curricular Context: Education after 9/11

The impact of the terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001 on education has been well explored. I will turn here briefly to highlight some of the complexities of teaching and learning in a post-9/11 world, particularly in the context of teaching about the events of 9/11 themselves. In the wake of the attacks in New York, Pennsylvania, and at the Pentagon, educational scholars were quick to comment on the peril and promise of education in the face of traumatic events. Teachers and students watched the events from the classroom, sometimes despite administrative injunctions “not to expose students to potentially disturbing images” (Hammer & Davis, 2004, p. 188). In an instant, Americans were reminded of the ways that schools function as central sites where tensions about patriotism and American identity are played out (Apple, 2002)².

These tensions are often described as a division between a conservative tendency to

¹ “Across the United States, a number of professors have been either fired or suspended for speaking out critically

² For example, see Apple’s (2002) description of the media surrounding the post-9/11 Madison, Wisconsin School Board interpretation of a law requiring acts of “mandated patriotism,” such as the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem in school; and Hammer & Davis’s (2004) description of shifts in school prayer practices.

disapprove of perspectives that appeared to critique the U.S. for its role in creating an international climate that fostered anti-American sentiment, and a leftist anxiety that the attacks would be “exploited to promote a jingoistic form of nationalism” (Hess & Stoddard, 2007, p. 231).³ Kaplan articulates what she calls a “rupture in her political persona” after the 9/11 attacks, characterized by a shift from “left positions” on American foreign policy and global capitalism to a position which struggled to reconcile America’s past political ills with the horror of the terrorist attacks. “Linking the attacks to the past actions of the United States,” she writes, “was to collapse incommensurable levels of happenings and thought” (Kaplan 2005, p. 15). While other leftists and political scholars were quick to equate the attacks to horrendous American acts of war, such as the bombing in Hiroshima, Kaplan found her self critical of those using these comparisons to intellectualize and distance themselves from the highly emotional present. “As leftists and political people, I asked, can’t we also live in the present and relate to present emotions” (Kaplan 2005, p. 15). Like many others, Kaplan struggled to make sense of an experience that at once felt deeply personal and profoundly international in the context of public discourses which, as is often the case in instances of trauma, can “be insensitive to the psychic subtleties of the experience ... either pathologizing... or absorbing it into stereotypic categories. (Salvio, 2009, p. 527).

³ International debate between European and American scholars indicated the standpoints in the public discourse on the attacks; while scholars proximal to the Towers saw “the need to deal with the horror of the attacks as a specific set of events,” those at a distance were more inclined to see 9/11 as the perhaps unsurprising result of hatred built up around the United State’s international policies. While the European discourse could be generally described as “confrontational, thorough, and critical political debate,” the American perspective tended towards the empathic, and therapeutic language of suffering, hurt, and post traumatic stress (Kaplan, 2005, 16). Kaplan suggests that both standpoints are valid, and should be considered as mediated by space; in describing them as “orthogonal” to one another, Kaplan acknowledges that these sets are oriented in similar ways, but cannot intersect. By extension, she is critical of a public conversation that cannot integrate the critical and the affective; “Can’t we have substantial political analysis that criticize the actions of the United States in the past and present, and yet welcome public discussion about trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder, vicarious traumatization, and ways to help those suffering these disorders?” (Kaplan, 2005. 16).

Teaching university education courses in the aftermath of 9/11, critical educational theorist Michael Apple described the way that this tension played out viscerally in the classroom.

He found himself asking

how could one condemn the murderous events, give one's students an historical and political framework that puts these events in their larger critical context, and provide a serious forum where disagreement and debate could fruitfully go on so that a politics of marginalization didn't occur in the classes- and at the same time not be seen as somehow justifying the attacks? (p. 1762-1763).

Released shortly after the attacks, USDOE curriculum documents encouraged teachers to “engage students in patriotic activities (e.g. singing patriotic songs, reading books about courage) and to participate in constructive activities (e.g. writing sympathy notes or stories of bravery)” as well as to conduct moments of silence in remembrance of the dead (Hammer & Davis 2004, p. 189). This relatively innocuous push towards patriotism as a response to cultural trauma within the school was buttressed by a larger cultural narrative of fear and insecurity in which individuals critical of the patriotic impulse, or inclined to ask for an analysis of terrorism within and against American foreign policy were deemed ineligible “to teach in the public schools, work in the government, and even make a speech at a college” (NPR, Kaiser Family Foundation & Kennedy School of Government Civil Liberties Poll results, cited in Giroux, 2002, p. 1139). The broad message that redefined “democracy as patriotic fervor” (Apple, 2002, p. 1771) resonated from President Bush, through media outlets, and into classrooms.

One way that the patriotic post-9/11 politics made it difficult for schools and teachers to think critically about the role of U.S. policies, international relations, and participation in war was through the framing of the events in textbooks and curriculum documents. Textbook authors quickly convened to write the terror attacks in to updated American History books (Hammer & Davis, 2004; Romanowski, 2009); non-profits and the United States Department of Education also issued curriculum documents (Hammer & Davis, 2004; Hess & Stoddard, 2007). While

there was apparent agreement on the urgent need to write these events into the curriculum, there was little agreement on how. These curricula converged around some central points; their descriptions of the events themselves adhered to a factual narrative of time, place, and locations of attacks, and the events were uniformly described as “terrorism” (Romanowski, 2009; Hess & Stoddard, 2007). Hess & Stoddard describe this approach as “attention without detail” (p. 231); while a clear timeline of events on the day of the attack was provided, curricula generally deemphasized details of the event, including the number of casualties, and of the perpetrators, including a clear and unified definition of terrorism.

Further content analysis found American History textbooks were inconsistent in providing information for the reasons of the attack, and foregrounded a perspective on the war in Afghanistan that lacked complexity and/or suggested that the war, begun in response to 9/11, could be counted as a quick victory after the defeat of the Taliban (Romanowski, 2009). Despite conservative concerns and critiques, none of the materials analyzed by Hess & Stoddard (2007) challenged students to critically examine the historical events that lead to the attacks, or to analyze American foreign relation policies. Further, textbooks did not generally present information that portrayed the complexities of 9/11, or made space for the consideration of the ethical and moral elements of the event and its aftermath. The complexities or controversies over domestic surveillance and violence against Arab Americans, Muslims and South Asians, or the war in Iraq, or the violations in Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay were not generally mentioned in the texts (Romanowski, 2009).⁴

⁴ There were, of course, curriculum documents generated and distributed in the wake of 9/11 that are less susceptible to these critiques. Hess & Stoddard (2007) include some non-profit curriculum documents in their analysis, including Facing History and Ourselves’ *Identity, Religion, and Violence: A Critical Look at September 11, 2001* (www.facing.org), and generally find that the content in the curricula adhere to the non-profit mission. Additionally, curricula by historically critical organizations like Rethinking Schools (*War, Terrorism and Our Classrooms*, http://www.rethinkingschools.org/special_reports/sept11/index.shtml) were issued in the same

Analyses of these documents lends further credence to the assertion that curriculum is not an objective text (Giroux, 1994), and that objectivity is not often the central concern in describing war, particularly if its events are to be considered traumatic (see discussion of Alexander, 2004, below). This extends to the visual depiction of 9/11, both in textbooks and in the larger media. Researchers who evaluated curriculum documents found that textbook and curriculum images centered on patriotic photographs and icons, and that these images were remarkably similar across documents. The rubble of the World Trade Center, images of dusty first responders, or the iconic image of the firefighters raising the flag, harkening back to Joe Rosenthal's 1945 image of the Marines at Iwo Jima all emphasize patriotism, nationalism, and heroism (Eppert, 2002). They largely omit the horrific and fear-inducing images of the Towers with billowing smoke, the death and dying, or the intense public grief that characterized the larger visual coverage in the media, and the impacts of 9/11 elsewhere in the world. The "militarization of visual culture and public space" (Giroux 2002, p. 1138) that was so evident in the post 9/11 media was largely absent from the formal curriculum.

Salvio (2009) notes that all scholarship that attempts to reconcile the place of trauma in curriculum "struggles with establishing a relationship to the past that can respond to charged histories which feel both excessively present and unavailable for total recall or representation" (p. 534). The excessive presence of the events of 9/11 despite a profound difficulty in describing their complexity with words is widely attributed to modern technological ability to capture, store, and replay visual memories of the events (Zelizer, 2002a). Yet, like in the textbooks described above, this wealth of images does not depict a totality of the national or international impacts of 9/11. In the face of what curriculum scholar Claudia Eppert describes as a visual effort by

timeframe as these articles, but were not included for analysis. As time elapsed, more voices, such as those from the Southern Poverty Law Center's Teaching Tolerance project (www.tolerance.org) were accessible in 9/11 curricula.

Americans to “recuperate their nation’s self-image, to re-glorify its identity and claims to grandeur in the face of physical and symbolic threat” (2002, p. 130) the image of who bore the brunt of the event’s trauma was largely incomplete. The “homogenizing responses to the disaster presented by the media” notes Katherine Baxter,

fed back to their audience a distorted view of themselves: one which told them that they were united and yet which presented only a partial image, notably excluding the presence of Arabs and Muslims (2011, p. 17).

Critical scholars are careful to remind us that what schools do not teach can be as important as what they do teach. “Ignorance,” Elliot Eisner states, “is not simply a neutral void; it has important effects on the kinds of options one is able to consider, the alternatives that one can examine, and the perspectives from which one can view a situation or problems” (Eisner, 1994, p. 97). Similarly, in his critique of the lack of attention to the visual in educational research as a whole, Fishman notes that the physical act of seeing is only part of the visual experience: “[i]n the matrix of the visual are also inscribed what is there that cannot be seen, through what lenses the visible and invisible become intelligible, and the spatial and temporal location of the observable and the observer, all of which constrain what is possible to see and not to see (Fischman, 2001, p. 29). Citing Rogoff (1998), Fischman extends his argument:

Who we see and who we do not see; who is privileged within the regime of specularity; which aspects of the historical past actually have circulating visual representations and which not; whose fantasies of what fed by which visual images? Those are some of the questions, which we pose regarding images and their circulation. (Rogoff, 1998, p. 15, as cited in Fischman 2001, p. 32)

Finally, Giroux (1994) asserts that the language of curriculum does not reflect a certain predetermined reality. Rather, “it selectively offers depictions of the larger world through representations that people struggle over to name what counts as knowledge, what counts as

communities of learning, what social relationships matter, and what visions of the future can be represented as legitimate” (p. 35).

It is for these reasons that, as academics, politicians, artists and media figures began to canonize the events of 9/11 in film, museums, panel discussions, and books, Kaplan and other media scholars became wary of the documentation. “Were people indeed beginning to exploit the events as traumatic effects waned? Was the event being fixed within certain tropes of patriotism and mal heroism that began to pall with distance? Was the “realness” of 9/11 being gelled into stock images, stock forms that would forever limit its meanings?... How could we keep the event open, fluid, specific?” (Kaplan 2005, p. 17). The provision of limited visual perspectives, as evidenced in the difference between depictions of 9/11 textbooks and the mass media, paired with the reliance of the visual in the absence of the critical or reflective, could limit the ability of educators and other public intellectuals to “translate trauma” (Kaplan, 2005, p. 18); to keep open the “wound of trauma... [in order that] its pain may be worked through the process of its being “translated” via art.” (Kaplan 2005, p. 18-19).

Teachers, Trauma & Cultural Work

Educators, broadly conceived, play an important role in shaping and mediating trauma. As evidenced by the responses to 9/11, curriculum, including engagement with visual culture has the potential to create critical and reflective opportunities for learning, or to foreclose on those opportunities. Visual images can be used to hold open an intermediate space between apparent dichotomies- critical versus patriotic, logical versus affective- in which the conditions for debate and dialogue necessary for the progressive, democratic ideal so often put forth as central to the educational project, can be maintained (Giroux, 2002).

This dissertation directs its attention to depictions of traumatic history; to historical events that invoke, in their witness, a simultaneous desire to forget and remember (see for example Salvio 2009/2014). It attends to photographs of the human devastation of modern war that, in their shocking attention to difficult and horrific realities hold the potential to greatly and complexly impact their viewer. It attends to the way that teachers, museum workers, and others positioned to be “public intellectuals” experience that role and shape those cultural stories. Specifically, my work brings into conversation two separate sets of experiences related to photographic depictions traumatic history and those who choose to interact with them; museums and teachers. As “cultural workers” (Simon 1996), curators, artists, and teachers are well positioned to devise counterdiscursive curriculum that can “contest dominant forms of cultural production across a spectrum of sites where people shape their identity and shape their relations to the world” (p. 39).

For the purpose of this project, the notion of trauma will follow Alexander’s (2013; Alexander et al, 2004) definition of trauma as a socially mediated process. Unlike previous notions trauma based in naturalistic or psychoanalytic literature, Alexander argues that the conception of an event as traumatic occurs through the symbolic construction of a cultural script that frames the event as a challenge to collective identity. “Cultural trauma,” Alexander states, “occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways” (2013, p. 6). Thus, cultural traumas do not “result from the intrinsic nature of the original suffering” (2013, 10) but rather are constructed through the persuasive performative claims of “carrier groups”, the collective

agents responsible for meaning-making in the public sphere (2013, p. 16). A deeper exploration of this particular conception of trauma grounds the first chapter of the dissertation.

Alexander's notion of cultural carriers overlaps significantly with Simon's conception of "cultural workers" (1992). Simon tasks cultural workers, including teachers and museum workers, with the project of constructing their pedagogical experiences in a way that aspires towards "ways of naming and legitimating...efforts to define complementary possibilities for progressive practice," as a means to engender hope in fraught times (1992, p. xvi). As a tool for cultural workers in narrating trauma, difficult images "impel a forgetfulness or displacement at the same time that they repeatedly return, on emotional and ethical terms, for private and public consideration" (Simon & Eppert, 1997, p. 176). While there is growing attention paid to both the curatorial process related to depicting traumatic history, and to the participation of educators in museum learning across their careers, there is little research at the intersection of these two lines of inquiry.

Museums and Difficult Historical Learning

Educational theorists and researchers have emphasized the importance of museum spaces as sites of learning and engagement in their ability to supplement and enhance the school curriculum (Kisiel, 2005; Marcus, 2007; Marcus, Levine & Grenier, 2012). Educators often describe the importance of museums in relation to a set of progressive educational ideals; specifically, ideas of active engagement as a central tenant of learning, and the importance of educational experiences that enhance a capacity in the learner to live and learn in a diverse democratic society. Dewey (1900) suggests that museums can serve as the intellectual center of a schooling experience, providing opportunities that inform and reinforce learning that happens in

other parts of life. Furthering Dewey's argument, Hein (2010) reminds us that all learning environments, whether formal or informal, "need to test their activities constantly against a criterion of their relation to the world outside the specialized setting" (p. 423) by providing access to the "stuff" of the world: museums "specialize in the objects representing both culture and nature and, therefore, become central to any educational effort when the focus shifts from the written word to learners' active participation through interaction with objects" (Hein 1998, p. 6). As interdisciplinary community teaching spaces, museums can serve as a natural nexus for socially engaged cross-disciplinary teaching and learning. Rich with their own history, and with the primary source documents to compellingly convey that history, museums can be places that foster and support the investigation of questions about how to best understand, curate, and educate around images and narratives as they emerge from modern war.

Research indicates that educators are using museum collections to engage students with difficult historical narratives (Coffey, Fitchett & Farinde, 2015; Trofaneko, 2006, 2011; Greg & Leinhardt, 2002). Similarly, a growing body of literature indicates that curators are seriously considering the complexities of social trauma as they design collections that teach about it (see for example Lehrer, Milton & Paterson, 2011). Whether and how these projects overlap becomes important to understanding their pedagogical power. The purpose of this inquiry is to better understand teachers' experience creating curriculum around traumatic historical photographs, and to better understand how that teacher-designed curriculum resonates with the public curriculum as envisaged by the other cultural workers (curator, or the artist). Though I will argue that a shared pedagogical and curricular vision between cultural workers engaging traumatic history in museum spaces creates potential to realize the progressive power of art that is otherwise challenging to engage, this project places the teachers' experience at the center.

Teacher experience is then contextualized against the curator and artist understandings of the “public curriculum of orderly images” (Vallance, 1995), the museum curriculum that includes the “work it shows, the order in which they are displayed, the information provided about them on the spot, the tours, lectures, workshops, and other programs developed around the collection, [and] the publications produced about it” (p. 4).

Dissertation Outline

Chapter two of this dissertation presents a review of three interrelated and overlapping bodies of scholarly literature; school curriculum dealing with difficult topics, particularly the ways in which photographs, as primary source documents, are used in secondary and post-secondary classrooms; the theory and application of “cultural trauma” (Alexander, 2004; 2013) in the social sciences; and the role of the visual arts, particularly documentary photography such as Nachtwey’s, in shaping American experiences with 9/11 and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Informed by the scholarship of curriculum theory, which designates curriculum as a “complicated conversation” (Pinar, 2011), and acknowledges the difficulty in assuming the transparency of language and the relationship between language and truth claims (Salvio, 1994, 2009, 2013, Taubman, 2011), the literature review foregrounds an interdisciplinary, and as such sometimes indeterminate set of relationships between teaching, learning, trauma, and visual culture.

Chapter three of the dissertation outlines the methods employed in the research. Centered on the concept of methodological bricolage (Denzin & Lincoln 2000, Kincheloe, 2001/2005), this multiple-method qualitative dissertation explores the research questions through a case study formed around in-depth interviewing, aesthetic interpretation, and critical visual methodologies.

The research is undertaken with three secondary educators, the exhibit curator, two museum educators, and five museum docents.

Results from this research are presented in the following four chapters. In Chapter four, I present the case study foundational to understanding the “public curriculum” and the experiences of museum workers in designing, interpreting, and teaching with *Witness to History*. Chapter five centers the experiences of the participating teachers through descriptions of their curriculum design as well as the presentation of first-person portraits developed from their rich interview data. Before turning to a critical visual methods analysis of the ways in which teachers and museum workers describe Nachtwey’s *Witness to History* images in chapter six, we pause in a poetic interlude designed to bring the reader into the gallery with the educators as they worked with students. In Chapter seven I conclude the dissertation, summarizing findings across chapters and providing insight into the ways in which training, collaboration, and shared pedagogical vision contribute to the transformative potential of teaching with difficult images.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explore both the conceptual frameworks upon which this project rests and the research literature from which other scholars have taken up related questions. It begins with a conceptual framework comprised of four related and sometimes overlapping theoretical concepts: a social theory of trauma, cultural carriers and cultural workers, difficult knowledge, and visual culture. Then, the literature review explores three interdisciplinary bodies of literature. First, educational research and teacher practitioner literature exploring the ways that classroom teachers include photographs in their curricula. Second, theoretical and practical perspectives on the curricular and pedagogical choices made in museums, particularly art museums. Third, I review literature that explores the intersection of visual culture and cultural trauma as it relates specifically to 9/11 and its aftermath, as well as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In conclusion I describe the limits of photography as a means of teaching difficult or traumatic history.

Conceptual Framework

Trauma: A Social Theory

For the purposes of this project, the notion of traumatic history will follow Alexander's (2013; Alexander et al, 2004) definition of trauma as a socially mediated process. Alexander argues that the conception of an event as traumatic occurs through the symbolic construction of a cultural script that frames the event as a challenge to collective identity. "Cultural trauma," Alexander states, "occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways" (2013, p. 6). This status is applied to a phenomenon not as a matter of fact but because individuals come to believe that the event(s) have disrupted the collective identity. Alexander argues that trauma is thus conceived to have disrupted the social structures which otherwise anchor a shared sense of security and capability. "These expectations and capabilities," Alexander asserts, "in turn, are rooted in the sturdiness of the collectivities in which individuals are a part. At issue is not the stability of a collectivity in the material or the behavioral sense, although this certainly always plays a part. What is at stake, rather, is the collectivity's identity, its stability, in terms of meaning, not action." (Alexander, 2013, p. 15)

This definition of cultural trauma differs from both the naturalistic or enlightenment version and the psychoanalytic versions of trauma theory. The enlightenment theory suggests that trauma is a rational response to abrupt and troubling change, and that this response emerges naturally from the event at both the individual and the cultural level through the process of clear perception of events, lucid and rational responses, and problem solving and progressive responses (Alexander et al, 2004). The logic of this can be described succinctly;

when bad things happen to good people, they become shocked, outraged, indignant...
[t]he responses to such traumas will be efforts to alter the circumstances that caused

them. Memories about the past guide this thinking about the future. Programs for action will be developed, individual and collective environments will be reconstructed, and eventually the feelings of trauma will subside” (2004, p. 3).

In descriptions of cultural or social trauma that fit this enlightenment model, it is the quality of the event itself that triggers the traumatic response. A major early proponent of this model, Arthur Neal, asserts that an event traumatizes because it is “an extraordinary event” that is so disruptive that it creates “radical change... within a short period of time” (Neal 1998, p. 3, 9-10, as quoted in Alexander et al, 2004. 4). The simple fact of the permanent changes that emerge from a traumatic event creates opportunities for innovation and change, as the collectivity attempts to remedy and resolve trauma.

Where enlightenment trauma models do not attend to intermediate processes between the event and the response to the event, cultural trauma and psychoanalytic theories describe a set of individual psychological and social processes as mediators between external events and experiences of trauma. The psychoanalytic model of trauma builds on the naturalistic model as described above, but complicates the experience of the trauma on the individual by introducing the impact of cognitive distortion and affective response to the individual’s understanding of an event as traumatic. Alexander et al describe the psychoanalytic model as,

When bad things happen to good people... they can become so frightened that they can actually repress the experience of trauma itself. Rather than activating direct cognition and rational understanding, the traumatizing event becomes distorted in the actor’s imagination and memory. The effort to accurately attribute responsibility for the event and the progressive effort to develop an ameliorating response are undermined by displacement” (2004, p. 5).

While, as in the enlightenment model, the truth of the traumatic experience is perceived as emerging from the traumatic event, it “goes underground, and accurate memory and responsible action are its victims” (2004, p. 5). As described by Cathy Caruth, this conception of trauma deems it “not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual’s past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature-- the way it was precisely *not known* in the first

instance—returns to haunt the survivor later on” (Caruth, 1996, p. 4). This assertion follows Freud’s belief that that traumatic experiences cannot be understood at the time but are “subsequently understood and interpreted” (Freud, 1958, p. 37). Thus, remedy and resolution of trauma come from addressing both the immediate impacts of the traumatic events, and from the individual effects of repression and anxiety.

Alexander et al’s theory of cultural trauma begins by identifying the central fallacy of these “lay” theories of trauma: a “naturalistic fallacy” that assumes that events, in and of themselves, can be inherently traumatic. Their assertion that events are not inherently traumatic, in fact that trauma is a “socially mediated attribution” is directly at odds with the naturalistic assumptions underlying both competing schools of thought on trauma. Alexander et al assert that the attribution of trauma to an event “may be made in real time, as an event unfolds; it may also be made before the event occurs, as adumbration, or after the event has concluded, as a post-hoc reconstruction” (2004, p. 8). For a massive social disruption to become traumatic, social crises must become cultural crises through the mediated process of trauma construction, as carried out by what Alexander et al deem “carrier groups” (2004, p. 11).

Cultural Carriers & Cultural Workers

Cultural traumas, Alexander argues, do not “result from the intrinsic nature of the original suffering” (2013, p. 10) but rather are constructed through the persuasive performative claims of “carrier groups”, the collective agents responsible for meaning-making in the public sphere (2013, p. 16). Trauma, then, is not the direct result of pain experienced by a group, but rather the impact of the resultant discomfort and dissonance on integral and core components of the collectivity’s sense of identity. This impact is mediated through social processes, led by cultural carriers, “collective actors [who] “decide” to represent social pain as a fundamental

threat to their sense of who they are, where they come from, and where they want to go” (2013, p. 15). Thus, the trauma process is defined as the gap between an event and the representation of that event as conceived by social agents.

Following Weber, Alexander defines carrier groups as potentially having both ideological and material interests in defining cultural trauma. As such, they can emerge from both elite and marginalized classes, from religious or secular motivations, as representative of generational beliefs or perspectives, or from places of nationalistic or institutional identity. Regardless of social or material interest or positionality, cultural carriers share in common a set of “particular discursive talents for articulating their claims” with the goal of these discursive actions being to “project the trauma claim to the audience-public persuasively” (2013, p. 16).

For carrier groups, the process of persuasively constructing and performing trauma begins within the group itself. If the narrative is persuasive, and the initial carriers make the best use “of the particularities of the historical situation, the symbolic resources at hand, and the opportunities provided by institutional structures,” (Alexander 2013, p.16). The carrier group members become convinced of their traumatization, and attribute that trauma to a singular event. With this success, the socially constructed traumatic message can then exceed the confines of the original group and “be broadened to include other publics within the “society at large”” (p. 17).

What, then, is the actual process by which cultural carriers conceive of and transmit a traumatic message? Alexander (2013) argues that there are four main questions upon which a “compelling framework of cultural classification” need be situated. First, the narrators must address the nature of the pain; “what actually happened- to the particular group and do the wider collectivity of which it is a part?” (p. 17). Second, the carriers must describe the nature of the victim, answering questions about who was immediately and secondarily impacted; “were they

particular individuals or groups, or “the people” in general? Did a singular and delimited group receive the brunt of the pain, or were several groups involved?” (p. 17). Third, to propel the trauma narrative into broader cultural acceptance, the carriers must address the relation of the trauma victim to the wider audience; Alexander notes that “only if the victims are represented in terms of valued qualities shared by the larger collective identity will the audience be able to symbolically participate in the experience of the originating trauma” (p. 18). Finally, a compelling trauma narrative must include an attribution of responsibility, identifying the identity of the perpetrator, and answering questions such as “who actually injured the victim?” and “Who caused the trauma?” (p. 18).

Alexander couches the trauma narrative construction in broader sociological terms, acknowledging that the institutional arenas from which cultural carriers emerge and within which they construct their narratives bears on the representational process. All linguistic action, including trauma narratives, exists within the “mediated nature of the institutional arenas and social hierarchies in which it occurs” (p. 20). These situated social arenas include religious, aesthetic, legal, scientific, mass media, and state bureaucracy.

Alexander’s notion of cultural carriers overlaps significantly with Simon’s conception of “cultural workers” (1992). Simon tasks cultural workers, including teachers and museum workers, with the project of constructing their pedagogical experiences in a way that aspires towards “ways of naming and legitimating...efforts to define complementary possibilities for progressive practice,” as a means to engender hope in fraught times (1992, p. xvi). This requires a movement away from a type of pedagogy based on truth claims and towards one that embraces an “educational practice based on the partial, situated, embodied character of knowing and the hopeful ethos of a critical, responsive imagination” (p. 11).

For Simon, the process of cultural work is grounded in the contestation of “dominant forms of cultural production across a spectrum of sites where people shape their identity and their relations with the world” (p. 39). The task of cultural work, then, is to encourage individuals to “take risks, to struggle with issues of power, to use forms of knowledge” that may not exist beyond their immediate experience to envision a world “not yet” (p. 56). In extending this work across cultural sites, educators are able to employ a variety of “texts” in service of this goal, including written works, films, music, personal stories, museum displays, television, and experiential simulations. Simon argues that, when thoughtfully presented, historical documents can become the curricular foundation upon which individual feeling and thought are moved from the sphere of the personal, affective, and reactive to a place of critical engagement, advent, and hope through the instantiation of “sustained attention, concern, and corrective action” (Simon, 2014, p. 9).

Simon’s overarching pedagogical vision is not easily achieved by formal educators alone. While teachers may believe that their work is worthwhile if it makes a difference in the life of one or two students, they also realize that counterdiscursive curriculum at the individual level is not enough to change the structures that organize our lives (p. 38). Therefore this work must be conceived as a collaborative effort of all cultural workers that transcends the boundaries between different cultural sites. To make this argument, Simon first draws upon Foucault’s (1982) notion of power, to remind us that the structure of schooling reflects social and political realities. Simon labels this work of schools “semiotic production,” (p. 37) defined as the “regulation of meaning and imagination” including all practices that control “symbolic and textual expression and “the ways that such significations are placed within systems of distribution and display” (p. 37). In this conceptualization of power, Simon acknowledges that dominant modes of semiotic

production work to normalize particular truths and ways of seeing and existing in the world that coalesce with current reality. Thus power operates by restricting the forms of knowledge that guide actions, outcomes, and possibilities for participants of different social groups within schools.

Simon recognizes that semiotic production occurs in many different locations beyond schooling and that these locations are not unitary, discursive fields but rather are multiple and often contradictory. Therefore he urges all people working within fields that engage representation in various forms to take the endeavor of cultural technologies seriously, including film makers, writers, actors, architects, religious leaders, museum curators, and librarians (p. 45). This move places education within a broader framework of cultural studies and “signals a shift from an exclusive concern with the substance and method of representation to questions such as which representations are engaged by whom, how, why, and with what consequences” (p. 46). Furthermore, by reconceiving pedagogy as “cultural work,” mutual questions in reference to semiotic production can be collaboratively addressed across sites, intentionally challenging individuals’ existing views of cultural workers, and how cultural workers can demonstrate alternative ways to explore texts and images in the classroom. By employing a variety of “texts” in service of this goal, including written works, films, music, personal stories, museum displays, television, and experiential simulations, educators broaden both the scope and the reach of their work.

Difficult Knowledge

In the literature on teaching and learning as it relates to trauma, much attention is paid to the idea of “difficult knowledge”. The purpose of this brief interlude is to provide some insight and conceptual clarity for a term that, in some instances in the following review, will be used

nearly interchangeably with the notion of trauma. Most succinctly put, Pitt and Britzman's (2003) definition of difficult knowledge is "the representations of social trauma and the individual's encounter with them in pedagogy" (p. 755). In one respect, the question of what difficult knowledge is curricular: what constitutes difficult content? What makes knowledge difficult? Considered pedagogically, the question of difficult knowledge becomes "what is it to represent and narrate "difficult knowledge"?" (p. 755). Both queries bring the notions of trauma and learning in to close relation, calling "into question the relationship between education and social justice because they assume... a kernel of trauma in the very capacity to know" (p. 756).

Difficult knowledge emerges as an interruption to an individual's coherent narrative construction, coming "to the fore when the affective force of an encounter provokes substantial problems in settling (at least provisionally) on the meaning and significance of the images, objects, and texts encountered" (Simon, 2014, p. 12). It represents a sort of personal disjuncture, where "the crisis of representation that is outside meets the crisis of representation that is inside" (Pitt & Britzman, 2003, p. 756). This crisis creates the opportunity for the learner to confront radical questions about being in the world. (Garrett, 2011, p. 323).

In the encounter with difficult knowledge, the individual loses the certainty of previously secured meanings (Simon, 2014), but is simultaneously presented with the possibility of "encountering the self through the otherness of knowledge" (Pitt & Britzman, 2003. 756). Simon calls this "inheriting the consequences of historical knowing":

in such moments one's sense of mastery is undone and correspondingly one may undergo an experience that mixes partial understanding with confusion and disorientation, the certainty of another's fear and suffering with one's own diffuse anxiety and disquiet (Simon, 2014, p. 12).

Given the intensely personal, and often unconscious, dimension of difficult knowledge, it follows that what is experienced as "difficult knowledge" is not an inherent property of a

particular artifact, image, or history. In articulating it's relationship to learning in a museum context, Simon (2014) states,

the experience of difficulty resides in the problematic but poetic relation between the affects provoked by engaging aspects... of the exhibition and the sense articulated within one's experience of the exhibit... at the heart of the matter regarding questions of difficult knowledge is the provocation of affect, and, most importantly, affect's relation to the instigation and possibilities of thought (Simon, 2014, p. 11).

The subject position of the viewer, particularly that individual's own complex history of loss and its related emotions, influences their encounter with difficult knowledge. As a teacher, the infinite variability of individual experiences makes it difficult to predict how any one student may respond, or what they might learn. Garrett (2011) reminds us that the problem of difficult knowledge is confounded when turned towards its pedagogical implications for teachers "If learning about the most terrible parts of human history were not difficult already, then the difficulty is reordered and made more complex by the demand to make it the stuff of a lesson plan" (323). Farley (2009) reminds us that "[w]hat is difficult about difficult knowledge is that it confronts teachers with feelings of helplessness, and the impossibility of undoing what has already happened. And even more, a child's startling questions about historical trauma may lift the veil on some of the illusions that drive teaching: illusions of self-mastery, or perfect authority, or enlightenment, for instance (Farley, 2009, p. 542).

In some respects, the differences between Alexander's conception of cultural trauma and Pitt & Britzman's conception of difficult knowledge are disciplinary; while both address issues of teaching and learning, Alexander is operating at the level of the sociological, while Pitt & Britzman are working at the level of individual psychology. Clearly, the definition of difficult knowledge emerges from the psychoanalytic conception of trauma. Both address what is taught, but Alexander's cultural trauma imbues the cultural carrier with the decisive ability to generate a

traumatic narrative of an event, rather than assuming that trauma will emerge naturally in response to an event without mediation. The “crisis of representation” in a model of cultural trauma happens at the social level, with individual and group actors devising a trauma narrative. While I doubt that Alexander would argue against the notion that individual prior experience impacts how one interprets the trauma messages conveyed by cultural carriers, he would reject the idea that the experience of trauma is necessarily an individual experience, or that it emerges in the disconnected relation between the logical and the affective at the level of the unconscious. That being said, I do not believe these theories to be mutually exclusive. When an individual intercepts a cultural trauma narrative, they may find that trauma to constitute “difficult knowledge.”

Visual Culture

Visual culture is the interdisciplinary study of the visual world centered on understanding how images of all types function in a cultural sphere, and how people use those images to create meaning across contexts (Anden-Papadopoulos 2003, p. 98). Culture, or the production and exchange of meaning between members of a society or a social group (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001), often manifests itself in visual forms; paintings, newspapers, magazines, film, television, video, advertisement, and news media. These visual forms increasingly permeate culture, and are invested with an immense amount of power; “the power to conjure an absent person, the power to calm or incite to action, the power to persuade or mystify” (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001, p. 10). Thus, visual culture is a field of study that examines “all those signifying practices, representations and mediations that pertain to looking and seeing, and it allows an analysis that is not shaped in advance by the values of high culture” (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p. 14).

Visual culture studies is an interdisciplinary field of inquiry. Educational sociologist and museum theorist Eileen Hooper-Greenhill details the content of visual culture studies by outlining the interaction between related disciplines:

an encounter between sociology and fine art, or the application of theories from social and cultural studies to those artifacts and practices that would conventionally be included within art history...[as well as] advertisements, family photographs, television and film, which are conventionally encompassed by media studies. (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000. 14).

By focusing on the importance of the “social field of the visual,” visual culture has created space in academic discourses for the evaluation of journalistic images and how they function both as art objects and public pedagogy (Anden-Papadopoulos 2003, p. 102). As a concept and a methodology, visual culture “refuses to accept the distinction between high and low culture...[and] raises theoretical questions about the social practices of looking and seeing, which are related to processes of learning and knowing” (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p. 14). Theorists in this field draw the important distinction between looking and seeing: for sighted people, seeing is a passive and somewhat arbitrary act that happens throughout the course of our daily lives. Looking, on the other hand, has a sense of purpose and direction. “To look,” Sturken & Cartwright (2001) explain, “is to actively make meaning out of [the] world” (p. 10).

Understanding how the social practices of looking are constructed through cultural processes is important for this research. Following this logic, we understand that how individuals look at, and in this case then teach about, particular images can shape how they are then seen by others, in this case students. This becomes particularly interesting when thinking about photography, a visual medium that benefits from a shared belief that what is presented in a photograph is an “unmediated copy of the real world, a trace of reality skimmed off the very surface of life” (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001, p. 17). Much of photography’s power, Sturken & Cartwright argue, comes from the fact that it is still vested with the notion of objective truth.

Whether and how cultural workers explore this notion of “photographic truth” will contribute to how images like these are seen, understood, and interpreted.

Teaching with Photographs: A Review of Work in Classrooms

Out of interest, I began my literature search with a very broad term- “teaching with photographs”- in order to get a sense of the field overall. This search yielded more than 6,000 peer-reviewed journal articles from disciplines as varied as dermatology, early childhood education, English language instruction, medical and post-secondary education, criminal justice and critical pedagogy. I applied the following exclusion criteria to the results: omit non-secondary education populations, omit non-social studies and English disciplines (ELL, social skills development, math, science, medicine), omit art instruction or teaching photography, and omit photos that do not depict difficult or traumatic historical events. In addition to the remaining articles, I include in this review several lesson plans from peer-reviewed journals, as well as some literature from the field of pre-service teacher education where applicable. This yields a relatively narrow field of literature, which I will summarize thematically below.

How do students and teachers engage photographs?

Research on how teachers and students engage difficult photographs, and to what end, is limited. Having conducted their own literature review on the topic, Pearl & Sastre (2014) describe the state of the field as comprised of a great deal of research and theoretical analysis on the role and impact of journalistic images of trauma in the sphere of public pedagogy rather than in the context of the formal academic or classroom context. In the field, “careful attention [is] paid to the risks of turning atrocity photos into aesthetic objects, as well as concern with viewers getting used to seeing horror and ceasing to let it affect them” (p. 199) and expends less attention at application and understanding at the classroom level. By extension, though there are ample

lesson plans describing how educators should employ photographs in teaching, and these lessons are built upon a consistent theoretical rationale, these are not clearly linked to empirical research on teaching and learning with photography. Here I will summarize the few articles that directly address students' experiences looking at and learning from difficult images, and the research on pedagogical choice making related to the inclusion of these images in the curriculum.

In a 1999 article evaluating student ability to demonstrate historical understanding using photographs, Foster, Hoge & Rosch evaluated the ways that different-aged students responded to photographs of the American Civil Rights movement. They asked the students three questions: when do you think this photograph was taken? Why do you think it was taken? And What does this photograph tell you about these people's lives? Researchers found age-related differences in student ability across all categories, with high school aged students demonstrating the most facility in dating images, drawing inferences about why photos were taken, and making inferences about the lives of the people in the image. High school students cited a variety of contextual clues to support these inferences, including prior historical knowledge about the Civil Rights Movement and knowledge about technology, architecture, and fashion of the 1950s and 1960s (p. 180). Most important for this inquiry, high school students were more likely to acknowledge and appreciate that photographs are often taken for a specific purpose, and could sometimes acknowledge that photographs are taken with a particular audience in mind (p. 199). This demonstrated a shift in understanding from earlier grades, where students were likely to attribute reasons for taking photographs as similar to reasons they would take photos in their own lives, and would indicate that photographs provided objective historical information.

Gross's 2014 study explores Polish student's interpretations of historical images of Poland during the Second World War. Set against a national context in which Poland's role in

the war is underemphasized in the school curriculum, Gross pursues a line of inquiry that asks, given that reality, how young people “do or do not incorporate difficult aspects of the past into their broader historical narratives” (p. 442). Gross analyzed 126 student responses to a well-known photograph. Gross describes one of the photo:

It shows a civilian cutting off the beard of a Jew in front of a group of spectators which is unmistakably Polish (most of the men are wearing Polish university caps). Other spectators observing the beard-cutting include a smiling civilian, a mother and child, and German soldiers in uniform. It is not known whether the students had encountered this image before, but the setting is a familiar one in Poland, where scenes depicting the public humiliation of Jews appear in textbooks, on TV and in film. (Gross. 2014, p. 449).

Gross asked students to describe the photograph, how they felt while looking at it, and where any previous knowledge they had about the photograph had come from. Across ages, most children only saw Germans, not Poles, participating in the humiliation of the Jew. Some even misattributed the beard-cutter to a German Soldier, despite his obvious civilian garb. Students had difficulty describing why this image was strange to them, and the children who did notice the smiling Poles in the background “could not account for what they saw in the photograph... [t]hey felt a confusion that is important, because it is a start” (p. 460). Gross sees this dissonance as a place to begin teaching, filling in the stories of Polish collusion with German efforts to disenfranchise Jewish Poles, thus helping students to “reconcile new information within social accepted narratives” (p. 460).

Gil-Glazer (2015) shared photographs with difficult content, including as those dealing with war and violence, to students in her elective undergraduate education course entitled “Photography in Society and Culture: Educating toward Critical Observation.” The course included several units in which students had to confront difficult imagery, such as Lee Miller’s photos from the Buchenwald concentration camp, Nick Ut’s photos of Vietnam, and modern pictures by Moshe Silman of Israeli protesters self-immolation. In semi-structured focus group

interviews and written questionnaires with students following the course, Gil-Glazer explored a series of personal and pedagogical questions including “Were there any photographs that disturbed or challenged you in any way during the course?” and “In your opinion, what is the potential of the educational discussion of such images?” (Gil-Glazer, 2015, p. 262).

Four themes emerged from student interviews. First, students shared a complex set of feelings of attraction and repulsion to difficult knowledge photographs. The author attributes the complexity of this attraction, in part, to the popular and visual culture surrounding visual imagery of sex and violence: “such issues are not generally explored in-depth, and are sometimes still considered taboo, despite their massive visual presence in daily life” (Gil-Glazer, 2015, p. 268). Students also demonstrated an understanding the educational importance of critical discussion around difficult-knowledge photographs, both for the students in the class and for the educators who may also be struggling to articulate a response to difficult knowledge, and both in preparation for and response to the viewing. Gil-Glazer’s education students also articulated a sense that there is a use of these photographs for enhancing student critical consciousness, having felt so themselves in the context of exploring their own identities in relationship to traumatic imagery. As students at a university in Israel, several noted that they felt “especially accustomed to images of violence and atrocity” while acknowledging that they are often “exposed almost exclusively to photographs of suffering and pain on one side of the conflict” (Gil-Glazer, 2015, p. 272). Finally, students emphasized the teacher’s role in these activities, highlighting the importance of providing mediated experiences around these photographs within educational contexts.

Following Gil-Glazer’s thoughtful reflection on her role as a pedagogue, two additional articles that develop a sense of teacher choice and rationale for the inclusion of traumatic or

difficult images in their teaching demonstrate that these decisions are complex, and generally reflectively considered. For example, Swalwell & Pelligrino (2015) asked pre- and in-service teachers across grades to design a hypothetical American history unit, centered on the Civil Rights Movement, centered around images. To evaluate teachers' curricular decision making as it relates to representing difficult history related to the experiences of oppressed people, the researchers provided teachers with a bank of 25 iconic photos, and asked them to select five, and eliminate five, and then provide the rationale for their choices by describing which photos were most challenging and easiest to discard.

Swalwell & Pelligrino's teachers most often discarded an image of Gordon, "a man sitting with his back towards the camera to reveal deep physical scars incurred from years of enslavement" (p. 84). Another image that was commonly discarded across grade-levels was a photograph from Kenneth B. Clark and Mamie P. Clark's 1939 research assessing Black children's preference for White dolls; the third most common showed President Obama at a lectern. Participants gave a wide range of reasons for discarding these photographs; most often, they described the images as irrelevant (71%), too graphic (31%), or overly familiar (31%) with most teachers providing multiple rationale for their decision making. Reasons for including images were largely contingent on the context provided by the photograph. Photos that demonstrated the dangers facing African Americans and their allies, and the daily experiences of segregation and the history of segregation were most important for teachers to include; additionally, teachers wanted photos to be emotionally impactful, and fit within a timeline of the Civil Rights Movement that highlighted key figures and movement successes. Fewer teachers used developmental rationale for inclusion of photos, and very few teachers described their choices as offering "the possibility of an engaging pedagogical choice like discussion or

debate... or [inspiring] youth involvement in current human rights issues” (p. 86).

Overall, Swalwell & Pellegrino described a discrete and consistent set of rationale for making curriculum choices. These included technical logic (how to teach a photo, and whether it would be practical to use), realistic logistics (would it connect to other instructional materials), philosophical rationales (is it meaningful to include), relevance (when was the picture taken, and does it fit the chronological boundaries of the Civil Rights Movement), and appropriateness. Teachers used the logic of appropriateness in two ways; first, to describe whether a photo was too graphic, or not graphic enough (a logic the researchers call the “Goldilocks Law of Appropriateness”), then to describe whether the behavior depicted therein was “age-appropriate” in terms of modeling admirable behavior that teachers wanted to foster in students. Though these rationale are thoughtful, Swalwell & Pellegrino describe the teachers as struggling to “bring a critical or sophisticated analytical lens to curriculum design as it related to historical content addressing racial oppression in the United States” (Swalwell & Pellegrino, 2015, p. 90) presenting a historical narrative of the Civil Rights Movement that is time-bound, and as such, incomplete.

In the wake of a series of high-profile faculty decisions to include controversial images in American college courses, Pearl & Sastre (2014) sought to better understand not why, but how professors employ these images in their classroom pedagogy. They were particularly interested in how the images were framed in the context of the course content, what the professors’ selection and inclusion criteria were, and whether they were presented with choice on the part of the student as to view them or not. Conducting semi-structured interviews with a small sample of humanities and social science professors yielded the general sense that professors see the inclusion of controversial images (here largely pornographic images and photos of atrocity) as a

“balance between content and method” (p. 198). Three salient themes emerged from the interviews. First, the professors described the image as “not the event”; they included these images in their courses strategically to “demystify” them, helping students to understand that the discussions about images tend to be far more provocative than the images themselves. Professors also described an intentional framing of the images as a part of their lesson planning. Images were thoughtfully chosen with a specific teaching goal in mind, and students were prepared for the experience of viewing them. Following this, respondents asserted that the pedagogical intent was not to cause student crisis, but rather to support larger course trajectories, and to “activate the students’ consciousness of suffering” (p. 207).

What pedagogical suggestions do teaching experts make?

Lesson plans that center on integrating difficult historical photographs into lessons, such as those published in practitioner journals like *The Social Studies*, tend to emphasize the development of critical visual literacy skills. Describing the “pictorial turn” (Mitchell, 1994, as cited in Lindquist, 2012) away from a traditional conception of literature-as-text and toward an understanding of the “power of the visual arts to portray, explain, and even direct society” as a central feature of modern social studies instruction, the authors of these lesson plans foreground the development of critical looking skills. These skills are described as necessary given the visually saturated non-school contexts in which students live; in order for students to participate critically as citizens in a visual world, they “need powerful analysis tools to negotiate the deluge of visual data... that seek to activate their emotions and motivate their will to action” (Callahan, 2015, p. 57). These critical visual literacy skills generally fall into three categories: reading photographs by looking at aesthetic elements like form, lighting, background and content; understanding perspective, audience and authorship; and evaluating the broader social context in

which the photographs are taken. Less often, these lessons focus on reflecting on student emotional experience.

In general, lesson plans on historical photography encourage teachers to bring the inquiry with contextual information, such as photographer name, date, and captions, removed. Reading photographs by looking at aesthetic elements requires the development of skills such as identifying the location, lighting conditions, content, angle and background (Sampsell-Willmann, 2014; Callahan, 2015). Looking closely at these components can present information that indicates how staged or prepared the photos may be, giving a beginning sense that photographs are indicative of simple or objective truths, but like other texts are constructed by authors using particular rhetorical techniques (Cruz & Ellerbrock, 2015). Because these particular looking skills may be new to students, these lessons frequently emphasize a teacher's role in demonstrating and modeling the critic literacy process of meaningfully analyzing a historical photograph by "thinking out loud" or engaging in other direct teaching (Callahan, 2015).

Understanding perspective, audience, and authorship is generally described as the next step to understanding the intention and impact of the historical photograph. This may require adding some of the previously removed contextual information, such as photographer name and date. Questions such as "why do you think the photographer chose to photograph this subject?" (Fey, Shin, Cinquemani & Marino, 2010, p. 44) or more direct questions like "is there anything about the image that suggests it was intentionally composed?" (Cruz & Ellerbrock, 2015) can open this conversation. Reminding students that photographs relate to the perspective of the author(s) encourages them to consider how "multiple individuals producing images of the same event will likely produce different photographs that portray (and, perhaps, advance) each photographer's personal agenda" (Lindquist, 2012, p. 194).

Finally, critical visual literacy requires a broader contextual understanding of the conditions under which the photograph was taken, and those under which it was viewed. This conversation with students may begin with a question such as “what else do I need to know?” (Callahan, 2013). Encouraging students to draw on their previous historical knowledge and make connections to the context of the photo will foster this inquiry. Additionally, these lessons should remind students that photographic interpretation also requires a consideration of whether or not the photo itself could have been manipulated; this may consider introducing them to the ideas that photos can be reduced or enlarged, airbrushed or cropped, or otherwise altered (Callahan, 2015).

While these visual literacy techniques are geared towards developing skills for close and critical looking, an “ability to see, interpret, and make meaning out of images and other visual objects in the world around them” (Cruz & Ellerbrock, 2015, p. 275) they attend little to the affective experience of creating or looking at pictures. Two of the lesson plans reviewed here explicitly ask students to consider feelings as a part of analyzing historical images: Cruz & Ellerbach (2015) ask students to consider what feelings or emotions the photographer may have been trying to evoke in taking the picture. Fey, Shin, Cinquemani & Marino (2010) directly ask students looking at pictures of Native American disenfranchisement to consider “how would you feel if you were in this situation?” (44). Neither of these questions directly address the affective experience of the student viewer.

What can we learn from Holocaust curriculum development?

The issue of integrating difficult photographs into school curricula is often addressed in relationship to designing learning experiences around the Holocaust. Here, we will pause to consider several articles in which secondary and post-secondary educators explore the decision-

making process as it relates to balancing the need for students to learn about the Nazi atrocities in World War Two, the difficulty of looking at images, particularly from concentration camps, and the importance of protecting those depicted in the images. These articles should be considered review or reflection articles; though published in peer-review journals, they are not based on empirical research.

As part of preparing and evaluating an undergraduate writing course in Holocaust studies, Freeman (2005) asked herself a series of reflective questions about integrating graphic images into her curriculum; the central question being are these images instructive, or simply being used for shock value? If they are instructive, Freeman argues, graphic images move student understanding forward, elicit empathic responses, and relate to the content being presented during lectures and in other texts. If they are simply used to shock, there are potentially negative consequences. Students might be repulsed in a way that disengages them from learning, may look voyeuristically at images of human suffering, or may be distracted from other, equally important aspects of course content. For Freeman, the best way to ensure that these “best practices” are met is to integrate graphic images into a deeper contextual understanding of the Holocaust. “It is important to remember,” she notes,

that images alone do not tell the whole story of the Holocaust. Proper careful instruction is essential to put the images into context for students. Similarly, dialogue between students themselves and between the students and the instructor is necessary to allow students to become more literate in reading images. They need to be taught to see the story behind the snapshot, to see the humanity behind the grainy, black and white images. (p. 321)

Proper, careful instruction is the thrust of Lindquist’s (2008) paper outlining curriculum choices surrounding the Holocaust. In his article, he lays out a series of decision points for inclusion and exclusion, shaped largely by the guidelines established by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). Lindquist pays particular attention to the use of graphic materials in

teaching, identifying this as one of the most difficult content issues. Echoing one of Freeman's anxieties, he notes that striking a delicate instructional balance when making choices to include graphic images is predicated on the potential for students to either turn away from studying the Holocaust at all, or become attracted to the violence depicted therein. Speaking to a general audience of potential educators, Lindquist also argues for considering developmental criteria in choosing images. Considering age and maturity level, teachers can thus "present enough graphic imagery so that students understand that what happened was real, but not so much that what they see goes beyond their ability to handle such images emotionally and intellectually" (p. 32). Finally, and perhaps most importantly for this research, Lindquist articulates a central concern of teaching with difficult images; that, for all their power to teach, graphic materials "must not be allowed to keep students from seeing the humanity of the victims and what happened to them as individuals" (p. 32).

Picking up on many of the same themes, Gamber (2010) articulates the importance of getting students to think both of the broader historical context and the particularity of individuals depicted in Holocaust images in her college-level writing course. Beginning with the assumption that "it is through photographs that we have come to "know" the Holocaust" (p. 244), Gamber presents a series of assignments in which she encourages students to think critically about that knowledge, how it is constructed, and what it means. She introduces students to images without captions using a gallery-walk style activity, where they are encouraged both to write questions and comments around the images, and to indicate with an "x" images that they think should not be shown. Students frequently ask questions about the context of the photograph itself, its meaning, and its history of display. "Who took this photograph? Has it been displayed publically, and if so, where? What is the meaning of this photograph? Who are the people

imagined in it?” are common refrains (p. 245).

Students find that, without contextual information, it is difficult for a photograph to compel someone to become a witness. Gamber’s students observe that, in her words, “images ask for us to see that “this” happened but often make it difficult to understand what “this” is or was” (p. 246). As a follow-up, students are required to choose and research an image from the Holocaust. This project moves towards providing the contextual information that Gamber sees as requisite for coming to “know” the holocaust. Research better contextualizes student initial interpretation, answers their questions about purpose and authorship, and provides an opportunity to develop feelings of alliance with the individuals depicted therein. In sum, Gamber’s experiences with students remind her readers that, when analyzing these or other images of tragedy we are made aware of the photograph’s “limited ability to tell the truth, as well as our inability to repair that which we are seeing and to retrieve that which is lost, forgotten, or at the margins” (p. 244).

How might photographs contribute to a more “complicated conversation”?

This final section of articles attends to the development of a more complex and sophisticated set of skills related to looking at difficult images. At first blush, the differences between the idea posed here and those previously summarized may seem most immediately attributable to the requirements of teaching different types of students, with these articles focused on an upper secondary or collegiate population perhaps more poised to delve deeply into the epistemological and ontological questions that controversial photographs raise. Though these theorists contribute much to the conversation about teaching with images, I will focus here on their attention to the affective experience of the student in these exchanges.

While much of the literature on developing student visual literacy describes students' natural affinity for and engagement with photographs, the literature that is critical of valorizing this focus often begins with observations of student disengagement from the analysis of visual images. For example, while working through images of labor conditions in the industrial era with her high school students, Zandy (2008) observed that students were resistant to looking at the images of working class people engaged in manual labor. She attributed this disconnect to student's inability to feel that the images were personally relevant to their own lives. This simple observation served as a foundation upon which to ask questions about the development of classroom strategies that enable students to "shift from *looking* as a fast act of consumption, domination, or avoidance, to *seeing* as a slower process of reciprocity, mutuality, and thoughtful respect" (Zandy, 2008, p. 94. Emphasis in original). Framed in this way, close consideration of historical photographs becomes an opportunity to

slow down the speed of looking to engage a deeper sight... speculate on the exchange that may have occurred between the photographer and the subject... consider whether photographers engage in... "respectful not knowing," that is, a recognition of the experientially unknowable, and yet a willingness to make an imaginative leap into another's world. (p. 94)

For students, the benefit of this process is that it creates the conditions for a more complex understanding of the photograph and its context, while encouraging an attention to the personal and affective processes that occur in the relationship between the photographer, the subject, and the viewer. "This process," Zandy notes, "enables some discernment about the difference between appropriating and witnessing" (p. 94).

Similarly concerned with the problems of "looking as a consumption" is cultural anthropologist Lisa Vanderlinden. In her essay "Picturing difference: classroom explorations of Otherness through National Geographic images" she describes the process of engaging her

undergraduates in a visual cultural critique of National Geographic magazine's stance as a bastion of scientific knowledge of the wider world by exploring the enduring legacy of colonialism that can be reinforced through its photographs. Vanderlinden describes how this pedagogical engagement was difficult for her students, many of whom had fond memories of reading and saving stacks of the yellow-bound magazines in childhood and can trace much of their learning about and engagement with multicultural and racial diversity to early experiences reading its pages. When encouraged to consider the ways in which media is a "vehicle for generating ideologies, constructing identity, and producing culture" (p. 31) students came to see National Geographic photographs as "artifacts which reflect much more about United States' culture than the cultures they purport to represent" (p. 30).

This new seeing meant that students were no longer able to look in the old ways at the magazine. Vanderlinden makes an explicit point of discussing the pain and loss associated with this new perspective. She notes that students often "feel disquieted or even angry" about the loss that is often associated with critical pedagogy (p. 39). During their in-class looking, she incorporated questions about how looking at a photograph makes the students feel, and why it is compelling. These questions helped to "enlarge students' capacity for critical and ethical thinking" by challenging them to recognize "how essentialized representations of others can vitiate our understanding of their circumstances and our active concern for them as fellow humans" (p. 43) and how that reflective looking can support action beyond simple critique.

The student experiences of emotional upset, disequilibrium and discomfort that arise when Vanderlinden's students become aware of the colonial gaze as it works through a beloved media sources echo those outlined by Simon & Eppert's (1997) consideration of images of genocide: "Why did people let these things happen? Could it happen again? Could it happen to

me? Would I have survived? Collaborated? Resisted?” (p. 184). In his teacher education classroom, Garrett’s preservice social studies teachers ask the epistemological versions of Simon & Eppert’s questions when confronted with historical narratives that rub against the grain: “Why didn’t I know this before? Is this true? If this is true, then what else that I don’t know is true? What else is going on? What am I supposed to do about/with this? What now?” (Garrett, 2012, p. 6). Garrett reminds us that while these questions at first blush seem to be resultant from the uncomfortable assimilation of new information, they are better understood as a change not in what is known, but how it is known. This increasing complexity and deep ambivalence, if framed within a pedagogy of witnessing of difficult knowledge holds within it the potential to “open teachers and students to their present ethical obligations” (Pitt & Britzman, 2003, p. 756)

Simon and Eppert remind us too that these questions are symptoms that continually return in face of our inability to provide answers to them that resolve the difficult feelings aroused when we are (re)made aware of historical trauma: they force us to recognize that our concern for the past is “far from simple, that it is fraught with problems, and is never assured” (Di Paolantoni, 2014, p. xxi). Asked within a frame of possibility, however, questions like these that remind us of our connection to the past simultaneously move us to consider possible futures. Though these questions are without possible resolution, they remind us of our obligation within pedagogies of witnessing; to convey what one “has heard and thinks important to remember... [to establish] living memories and [admit] the dead into one’s moral community” (p. 187).

Garrett (2012) reminds us that history can be accounted for in a variety of different ways; difficult histories perhaps most acutely. Choosing to tell any one story requires the exclusion of other stories, other voices, visions and renderings of history. Approaching historical understanding through the lens of a pedagogy of witnessing provides an opportunity for students

of history to encounter difficult knowledge in a way that simultaneously “disturbs and provokes... a crisis of learning” (Garrett, 2012, p. 1) and situates that crisis against a hopeful vision of different future possibilities. “Crisis,” Garrett states, “now takes on a crucial pedagogical dimension and allows us to see the student crisis not only as disruptive, and perhaps felt to be dangerous or risky, but also as the prerequisite to the work of learning, the work of re-symbolizing” in an effort to make sense of our ethical obligation to act in the world (p. 7).

Finally, I’ll shift to two theorists directly addressing the pedagogical challenges of close looking at violent and traumatic photographs. Both researchers begin with a version of a central question for teaching about war, violence, human devastation and human rights: “how to educate students to care about strangers whom they may never know and whom they may assume they have nothing in common with... an ethical question that highlights a problem in articulating relations between self and other” (Stern, 2012, p. 174). In his essay “Presence, absence, and the presently-absent: ethics and the pedagogical possibilities of photographs” Michael Stern asserts that the pedagogical power of these war photographs “to haunt emerges through dissonance, not coherence” (p. 176). Stern employs this notion of “haunting” to develop a pedagogical approach that he describes as hauntagogical (haunting + pedagogical) which “engages the images not for what is visible in the frame, but as products of historical, linguistic, cultural, economic, and political spheres... the presently-absent or social fields —that remain spectral” (Stern, 2012, p. 177). This pedagogy is necessarily related to the affective experience of a viewer. For example, an educator informed by this discourse, when looking at photos of the Rwandan genocide with her student, might guide her to “use the feeling of being haunted to consider how her own life, perhaps relatively safe at the moment of viewing, has been shaped by geographical colonialism and scientific notions of race” (p. 178). In other words, centering the learning experience on an

adverse or lingering feeling can help educators to support a viewer “feel or embody the spectral weight of the social fields that led to violence and suffering in the photograph that she is viewing... to feel haunted by an image not in the sense of being scared, but to recognize that the discursive structures that haunt the image similarly haunt the viewing subject(s)” (p. 178).

In her 2014 meditation on teaching with images, entitled “Atrocity and aporiae: teaching the Abu Ghraib images, teaching against transparency,” media and communication studies theorist Rebecca Adelman further pushes the relatively simplistic emphasis on “visual literacy” as an important pedagogical aim. The goals of visual literacy, she notes, privilege the notion of transparency, positioning it as central to the pursuit of free and open democracy. The problem with transparency, however, is that it has “failed to live up to its potential” to create meaningful change; while it is assumed to be essential for holding guilty parties accountable, preventing future instances of abuse, and exposing the consequences of war and violence, the duplication and display of these images in the service of transparency creates a second set of problems.

The practices of visual literacy, which emphasize “accessing suppressed information and decoding images to discover and make explicit their ‘truth’” is problematic in that the search for truth and the resultant tendency towards skepticism in images such as those which emerged from Abu Ghraib “makes it tempting to objectify the people within them as data, and so to obfuscate rather than confront the ethical, visual, and epistemological aporiae into which their torturers thrust them, and us” (Adelman 2014, p. 32). By using the notion of aporiae which describes “a situation in which two apparently incompatible or irreconcilable things are true, correct, or right” (p. 30) Adelman is able to highlight the problems of transparency as they relate to difficult images. “Any meaning we can extract from the pictures,” she notes, “is knowledge acquired, however indirectly, through the suffering of others, a strange but significant parallel to

interrogation itself... we teach the photos, presumably, because we want to condemn such practices, but our methods pull us back into their orbit” (p. 31-32).

The notion that increased transparency, and by extension, visual literacy, is premised on the idea that students “need to be empowered to make political sense of images that might otherwise deceive or mislead them” (Adelman, 2014, p. 33). Adelman pushes the pedagogue taking up this position to think one step further in this chain of logic; “even if they are disempowered by the mass media institutions that circulate them, American students already have so much more power than the people pictured within the Abu Ghraib photographs, which are themselves documents of U.S. power” (p. 33). She offers an alternative pedagogy, one which acknowledges and engages students with the aporiae of the difficult images, noting and discussing the anxiety that can arise with the acknowledgement of the violent intrusion of photographs, and encouraging them to think about their relations to those depicted. This pedagogy also requires choice that is absent in other discussions of teaching with visual images. An ethical pedagogy of difficult photography would attend to the circumstances in which the images are shared; self-reflection as to why we, as the educator, are motivated to share them; and direct engagement with student affective reaction and response. “Making looking compulsory,” Adelman argues, “risks weaponizing the images and objectifying [the subjects] into classroom materials, which may place our students in a hostile relationship to them.”

Further,

[m]aking students look turns looking into a burden, which might lead to an aggrandizement of their own visual discomfort. Moreover, forcing them to look deprives them of the opportunity to become ethical spectators. Ethics require choices; if students can make them, then they can also critically reflect upon them. Through this process, we might collaborate with them in the construction of a classroom visuality ... that does not replicate the violence upon which it is founded, an aporetic and urgent project. (Adelman 2014, p. 35).

These authors depart from the previous literature in their description of an uncertain and deeply affective learning experience. They acknowledge that “the photograph and the viewer come into their relationship with each other as incomplete entities” (Stern, 2012, p. 184) and describe the experience of looking as an ethical one by noting both the viewers human relation to the subject, and their shared responsibility for that person’s devastation. Like the lesson plans above, these processes are modes “of engaging viewers with photographs for more than what they make visually present” (Stern, 2012, p. 190); unlike those plans, these perspectives trouble notions of viewer/viewed, and engage the difficult experience, the trauma, of learning.

Museum Curriculum and Pedagogy: Education in Public Spaces

The Public Curriculum of Orderly Images

Operating largely from the perspective of art museums and from her own experience as the director of the St. Louis Art Museum, curriculum theorist Elisabeth Vallance describes art museums as offering their visitor a text that is “more or less mysterious” (p. 7); some art hung thematically, others are collected in galleries arranged by time period, some has detained interpretive text, others have little. These images are intentionally placed, but the intention is more often implied than explicit to the average visitor. Thus, the artifacts in the museum can be thought of as “orderly” in both in the order of choices and meanings imbued in them by the artist, standing alone “as an object with its own aesthetic boundaries, offering an aesthetic experience already framed for the visitor to encounter” and in their intentional sequencing and installation by a curatorial staff (Vallance, 2003, p. 8).

The responsibilities of museum educators in creating opportunities to access the stories told by art hung on walls for viewers who may not speak art's language. The art museum's offerings can be described as a public curriculum in two senses:

[I]t is an informal, randomly accessed structure of knowledge, expressed in visual images and available... to all who enter the building...[and] its "students" are the general public, people of all ages and an astonishing variety of backgrounds, who come voluntarily for the most part and who "study" these "texts" in a million unpredictable—and unknowable, by the staff—ways (p. 4)

The challenges of designing this curriculum – attracting visitors, encouraging exploration, and translating between what visitor's are seeing and the "ordinary language" (p. 4) they have to describe it—resonate with the challenges faced generally by curriculum professionals. Some images are accessible and recognizable; these tend to be images that are themselves narrative, telling a clear and concrete story. Individuals connect to these images make sense of them through the lens of their own experiences, or in their aesthetic response to color, agreeability and "sheer visual beauty" (p. 4). Unlike "troubling images" or "difficult art," (p. 5) these images do not require skills in translation or "reading" to for viewers to engage.

Difficult art, described by Vallance largely as contemporary art that deviates from the stereotype of "Old Master works" (p. 5), can inspire in a viewer "a fear of the unknown, a fear of feeling stupid, a suspicion that someone knows something they don't, [and] a suspicion that they are out of some loop of public discourse that some "in crowd" is clearly in" (p. 5). In order to maintain openness around these pieces, a curriculum that can both challenge definitions of art while providing "translations for the novice viewer" (p. 5) is required. The explicit task of museum educators, then, is to "provide as many avenues to approaching the largely foreign language of art....to guide them to make their own connections and to form their own rewarding categories" (p. 7) employing a "silent pedagogy" that teaches in subtle and indirect ways (2003, p. 10).

Returning to her point about the unclear organization of art museum space, Vallance asserts that it is easier to translate the curricular experiences of individuals on tours, or following guides, than it is to shape the narrative of a curriculum made by individuals in their “wanderings” (p. 8). It is this problem that creates the allegory between learning in the “public curriculum of orderly images” and the work of education more generally. Vallance identifies four main points: people confront parts of their world every day without the skills to interpret them; learning is constant (individuals are constantly trying to make sense of the stories they encounter); effective learning is sometimes casual, informal, and unpredictable; and people become committed to the informal curricula they set for themselves (p. 9).

These individual variables, paired with the near infinite ways any one individual may choose to view a museum’s offerings, leave one central challenge as the responsibility of the museum educator; to “ensure that the visitor has the basic vocabulary and skills to “read” these stories, to make them accessible, to admit them to his or her repertoire, and to create a map of some kind on which these stories can be placed” (p. 12). The complexity of this project is not lost on Vallance, and as such she tasks the “teaching” to a variety of cultural workers and sites in the museum itself. Curators who select the images (created by artists with their own visions), educators and docents who lead tours and write interpretive materials, scholars and public intellectuals who present public lectures and musicians and performers who highlight and interpret themes of the work all influence the learning of the museum visitor, and their experience and interpretation of the public curriculum.

Roger Simon & Pedagogy of Witnessing

In his introduction to *Pedagogy of Witnessing*, Mario Di Paolantonio describes Simon’s project as emerging from Simon’s earlier work and marking his increased attention to the

development of pedagogical responses to historical suffering, “to a legacy of injustices, disposable lives and forlorn histories that still wound and implicate our present” (p. vii). The central argument of the text is that, when thoughtfully presented, historical documents can become the curricular foundation upon which individual feeling and thought are moved from the sphere of the personal, affective, and reactive to a place of critical engagement, advent, and hope. In this instance of learning, the past impacts, without collapsing in on, the present through the instantiation of “sustained attention, concern, and corrective action” (Simon, 2014, p. 9).

Simon’s 2014 book, published posthumously, is simultaneously a comparative study of two particular museum exhibits and a call for a public pedagogy in which historical images are presented “not simply as documents or artifacts to be interrogated as to their truth value or status as evidence, but as perlocutionary signs of entreaty, embodying an affective force compelling one to respond” (Simon, 2014, p. 37). The book details the complex pedagogical process of curating the Alan and Littlfield collection, a series of postcards depicting difficult and violent images of public lynchings of African American. These curatorial projects were undertaken at the Chicago Historical Society in Chicago, Illinois and the Warhol Art Museum in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania in the early 2000s. Simon’s research on these exhibits is predicated on the question of how these exhibits might be understood as events that embody a pedagogy of possibility, and “what exhibitions (as events) might do... [how they might inform] the possibility of an advent—an event defied by the arrival of traces of past events with potential to impact one’s present” (Simon, 2014, p. 6). The force of the images in these exhibits is undeniable. As Simon describes, the collection’s photos are not objective, journalistic images, but rather the work of commercial photographers, who would “appear to take photographs not only of the person(s) subjected to torture and death, but also the crowd who witnessed the spectacle” (2014, p. 6).

Asserting in the first that memorializing has critical pedagogical potential, Simon's description of these exhibits allows for the realization that "practices of remembrance can be accomplished in different ways with different consequences" (p. 3). This project was a comparative study of how different institutions, with different audiences, geographies, and missions, chose to present images from a shared archive, and ultimately how they succeeded, and failed, to generate a pedagogy of witnessing. Given that the lynching photographs around which the exhibits were designed and derived from the same collection, and in some instances were the same photos, Simon begins his analytic work not with the content of the exhibits, but with what he calls the "mise-en-scene." Borrowing the idiom from thematic visual design in theatre and film, Simon applies it to the understanding of a museum exhibition as an event, "a material social practice that enables (but also can obstruct) various forms of thoughts and social relationships... [that is] partially constitutive of subjectivity and sociality" (Simon, 2014, p. 6). This level of analysis requires Simon to consider a wide range of artifacts in his research: process documents from museum team and community members, media coverage, notes from public forums, gallery maps, wall text, and guests books join the material artifacts themselves as contributing factors to the "event."

Like any pedagogy of possibility, Simon characterizes the work of exhibiting difficult knowledge, of establishing curatorial practice in service of social justice, as work complex and not easily done alone. Too easily the depiction of violence can turn to spectacle, where all images are understood as interchangeable, and the viewer is easily able to turn away in silence or diffidence, refusing a sustained relation with the individual suffering depicted therein. When we read traumatic images as spectacle, "one may be horrified, but the possibility of thinking through one's relation to this image as the death of another is sharply attenuated" (Simon, 2014, p. 31).

Resting in the ease “of a thematic frame that has allowed one to settle the meaning that resides in the presentation of each of these images” (Simon, 2014, pp. 29-30), a viewer is no longer participant in the productive tension that instantiates a *mise-en-scene* that offers “traces of a singular life, subject to violence and pain, while also making apparent something of the particularity of any given image” (Simon, 2014, p. 30). In this second case, it becomes possible to “mark and maintain some of the noncomparable loneliness of a [unique and grievable] person... enforced by the extreme precariousness of life rendered by the social and political networks of power in which this body one time lived” (Simon, 2014, p. 31).

When curatorial practice is done in pursuit of social justice, a *mise-en-scene* resists a semiotic production, which limits possibility by collapsing the self into the other, or erasing the traces of individual life. When an individual looking at a lynching photograph sees only themselves, their fears, anxieties, their disorientation, they become locked in the affective, and are limited in their ability to turn outwards and transform that emotional response into an engagement. When traces of the individual life persist through the difficulty and intensity of the disorienting encounter, the possibility for shared transformational experience occurs. Like teachers, museum workers operate within established systems of distribution and display, and as such are powerfully positioned to challenge the cultural technologies that inscribe their practice and shape their pedagogies, and thus resist this symbolic collapse that undercuts radical and hopeful visions of the future.

Through the establishment of a curatorial project that displays difficult knowledge while resisting spectacle, tokenism, and self-referential symbolism, cultural workers in museums teach against the grain. A vision of the future characterized by possibility must acknowledge the concerns of the past without feeling overshadowed by or beholden to them. As Farley (2014)

reminds us, “the opposite of history, from Simon’s view, is not the future but “a repeat of yesterday or today” that cannot hold open the distance afforded by thought and time” (p. 70). A robust understanding of this “pedagogy of witnessing” does not value powerful images simply for their ability to testify to the experiences of individuals in a time or place other than our own. Rather, it is bound up with the collective future, with a “possibility of mobilizing images so that they are apprehended as expressive, transitive acts that have an impact on feelings, thoughts, and judgments” (Simon, 2014, p. 36) that are experienced so profoundly that we must turn outward with them, “exploding toward the other.” The act of witnessing these traumatic events results in what Morrison (1987) refers to as “re-memory” (as cited in Simon & Eppert, 1997, p. 189), practices that concretely encourage people to affirm life in the face of death, to hold on to feelings of both connection and disconnection, to stay wide enough awake to attend to the requirements of just recollection and the work of transforming the future” (p. 189). The attendant risk is that this work is too difficult for an individual to undertake alone and thus silence or indifference may be the resulting pedagogical stance (p. 189). Therefore, curation of this work must be conceived as political practice in community with others. As a tool for cultural workers in narrating trauma, difficult images “impel a forgetfulness or displacement at the same time that they repeatedly return, on emotional and ethical terms, for private and public consideration” (Simon & Eppert, 1997. 176).

Simon argues that if a curatorial project is successful in its pedagogy of witnessing, if it awakes passion and creates space where unchallenged and unchallengeable truths can be critically considered, it must account for the horizon of possibilities opened through its witness. Simon states that the decision to share violent historical images has built within it a kind of hope for a different future. In concluding comments in *A Pedagogy of Witnessing*, Simon dispels the naïve

notion that simply sharing history will prevent it from repeating itself: “unfortunately, there is ample evidence that an awareness and moral assessment of previous unjust violence and brutality does not automatically constitute a bridge for linking past and present” (Simon, 2014, p. 218). This, however, is not to be read as an indication of hopelessness, but rather as the opening for opportunity: a chance to envision “curatorial practice as an ethical force, opening the way to a political discourse with some contemporary currency” (Simon, 2014, p. 218).

A mise-en-scene that “organizes and disorganizes” can serve a transitive function. Just as Simon’s early work reminds us that cultural workers experience reconfigures subjectivity, *A Pedagogy of Witnessing* asks that we think of our pedagogical work as opening up “an indeterminate reconsideration of the force of history in social life” (Simon, 2014, p. 219). Despite its indeterminate nature, curatorial work is also an attempt to influence experience, and as such must have in mind a vision of the future that, while open, rejects violence and oppression. Here, too, the imposition of a particular vision works against the spirit of the project of possibility, as does the lack of vision. On lynching photographs, and all images of violence, Simon reminds us that the public presentation of images alone “gives no guarantee as to their progressive endowment” (p. 2). In highlighting both indeterminacy and reconsideration Simon echoes the call to create conditions for possibility without delimiting readings, tellings, and retellings that arise from our own situated narratives.

Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS): Looking Closely at Art

I want to pause here for a moment to explore one set of ideas about teaching and learning in art museums that provides an interesting counterpoint to the previous focus on curricular development in these spaces. Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) is both a method and a curriculum for encouraging individuals to look closely at and describe visual art; it becomes

important to understand the underlying principles of VTS as they inform much of the teaching and touring strategy employed at the Currier Museum of Art. The method, developed by cognitive psychologist Abigail Housen and expanded by art educator Philip Yenawine, was originally used in art museums to encourage people of all ages to engage with and analyze art. VTS was informed in its inception by the developmental research of Housen that indicated that there are sequential stages in aesthetic development, and sociocultural theory that emphasizes that learning that occurs through interactions with the environment and other people. These principles play out in its student-centered, interactive, and interpretive method of looking at art, and in its developmental curriculum.

On paper, the VTS method is very straightforward. VTS is an educator-facilitated, discussion based interaction in which educators ask and respond to three open-ended questions: What's going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that? What more can we find? (Yenawine, 2013). As students respond, teachers neutrally paraphrase the students responses, point to places in the images to which the students are referring, and link student comments to one another and to the visual text. The educator does not add information to the conversation; rather, she facilitates student conversation about the image and accentuates the multiple possible interpretations that the image offers. Yenawine notes that, when conducted appropriately and with well-chosen pieces of art, these conversations should last about 20 minutes, in which time not attempt to form group consensus about the image's interpretation should be made (2013).

The idea for VTS is that these three simple questions lead to the development of looking and reasoning habits that will extend for the participant beyond the facilitated conversation and into other art-looking experiences. That being said, Yenawine argues that VTS, particularly its

requirement that educators not interject factual information about the image being analyzed, is a start of a longer process of critical thinking development and skills in art appreciation. It is a way to get viewers interested, honing skills that are required for successful engagement with art across contexts and to foreground student expertise and encourage participation in the exploration of a complex subject without “expert” guidance. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it is predicated on early research that suggested that in museums, the facts that tour guides were providing to visitors tended to be forgotten. The priority is to teach thinking, not to teach art historical facts.

Visual Thinking Strategies has also been shaped into a sequential, developmentally-designed curriculum for school-based instruction. The curriculum, geared towards students K-5, includes 10 lessons per year, with several images per lesson. After second grade, VTS is designed to also include one museum visit per year. Teachers can use manuals that come with curriculum materials, or can participate in national VTS facilitation training. Unlike in the art museum, the argument for facilitating VTS instruction in schools is not anchored in learning to make sense of art images, but rather to build critical thinking and social skills. Students, Yenawine argues, learn to observe, articulate their observations, support their ideas with evidence, to listen to and explore the opinions of others, and engage with them in discussion of these differing worldviews. “Because VTS asks students to contend with open-ended scenarios with no single right answer,” Yenawine & Miller (2014) argue, “such discussions undermine students’ expectations of certainty and of the immediate availability of right answers. This is fertile ground given the all-too-common misconception... that there are universal certainties and clear right answers” (p. 7). This uncertainty and negotiation supports the development of argumentation, problem-solving, and other important cognitive and academic skills.

In addition to being widely used in museum contexts, VTS as a method separate from the curriculum has been implemented in a variety of classroom environments with a variety of visual texts. Research on this work tends to focus on the K-5 context, but has grown in recent years to include post-graduate work, particularly in medical and nursing fields (see Yenawine & Miller, 2014). Cappello & Walker (2016) summarize a variety of ways that elementary and middle school teachers use VTS to support and develop student critical thinking and deepen student content knowledge and vocabulary use in math, science, and social science units. Teachers used visual texts most often sourced from textbooks and companion publisher resources, as well as supplementary texts chosen for complex images that resisted easy interpretation and helped students make connections to difficult topics. Cappello and Walker share this quote, from a 5th grade teacher who included the illustrated book of slave poetry *I Lay My Stitches Down* to visually analyze with her students because it helped “make slavery more realistic... so they can visualize what actually happened rather than just reading just words. The image really broadens their understanding of the topic” (2016, p. 321). Teachers reported using VTS most often to begin units, or to build background knowledge; in turn, teachers were apprehensive about using VTS to engage students with materials where there are correct answers. In this way, school materials were framed against museum materials, which are able to be interpreted in any way by any viewer as long as evidence justifying their observations can also be provided.

This embedded critique of VTS resonates in other literature from schools and museums. Compared to other classroom-based approaches with similar constructivist orientations and goals that include the development of open and inquiring stances towards art, Visual Thinking Strategies does not include learning the specifics of works of art, including information about artist’s choices or intended meanings. In her work with pre-service art educators trained in both

VTS and Aesthetic Education methods, Chin (2017) found that teachers saw VTS as a way to build student confidence in initial interactions with art, that should then be extended into thinking and learning about specific works of art using a model like Aesthetic Education. Similarly, in their 2011 book “Teaching in the art museum” art educators Rika Burnham and Elliott Kai-Kee argue that while questions like those put forth in VTS do have a place in art education, particularly in relationship to providing a democratic, open conversation about art, they foreclose on opportunities for students to actually understand it. In their vision of dialogic questioning in the museum context, tour guides should be prepared to answer any number of questions that may arise from viewers after they are invited to make observations and share thoughts about the work they are looking at. Here, too, the conversation is student-centered and driven by the observations and interests of the participants, but it is also shaped by answers to participant questions.

Cultural Trauma, Terrorism & 9/11: A Review of Related Literature

In this section, we will look closely at those authors whose application of the social theory of trauma overlaps this research in content (identity and trauma related to 9/11, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, or Muslim or Islamic identities) and mode (the work of cultural carriers using documentary photography, film, or the arts in the construction or transmission of cultural traumas as it relates to themes relevant to this research).⁵

⁵ There is a rich body of literature that explores the intersection between cultural trauma and photography but does not overlap with the historical events depicted herein. For particularly insightful and beautiful examples of this work, consider Moller’s (2010) work on images of the Rwandan Genocide, Ashmore’s (2013) work on landscape photography and agrarian disaster, and Neath’s (2012) research on photography of absence and emptiness in relationship to human rights atrocities in Tasmania.

9/11 and Cultural Trauma

Smelser begins his epilogue in Alexander et al (2004), written four months after the attacks and entitled “September 11th, 2001, as cultural trauma,” with the following assertion:

If the screen industry’s most talented scriptwriter had been asked to draft a scenario for a quintessential cultural trauma, that script could not have surpassed the actual drama that occurred on September 11, 2001. Nineteen terrorists — none detected, none apprehended — boarded four commercial airliners at different airports, hijacked them, and turned them toward a mission of destruction and death... Occurring early in the day, the events were seen on national television or heard about by virtually the entire American population on that day and seen worldwide as well. Our imaginary scriptwriter could not have created two more symbolically perfect targets... [t]he profound symbolic significance was lost on no one. (2004, p. 264).

For the months after the attacks, a common refrain was shared across cultural groups:

“statesmen, historians, politicians, and people in the street uttered variations of the sentiment that the country will never be the same, and that both the reverberation of tragic events and the aggressive “war on terrorism”... would be without end.” (p. 265).

Smelser acknowledges the potential for myopia given the recency of the event in relation to his recounting of it, and proceeds to explore the question “what insights about the events of September 11 can be generated in light of what we know about cultural trauma in general? What implications do the national reactions to September 11 have for our theoretical and empirical understandings of the notion of cultural trauma?” (2004, p. 265). He innumbrates the ways in which the events of 9/11 adhere closely to the requisite components of a cultural trauma: initial shock and disbelief, affective and collective-behavior reactions, widespread collective mourning, an immediate sense of the indelibility of the event, a collective endowment of the events with a sacred or monumental character, deliberate attempts at public commemoration, sustained public interest, and finally, a “a culminating sense that American identity had been altered fundamentally—wounded, perhaps sobered and strengthened... but in all events, marked permanently” (Smelser, 2004, p. 267).

Though an event so intense and far-reaching as 9/11 might seem easily categorized under the naturalistic theories of trauma outlined above, Smelser reinforces Alexander's view in stating that, "no discrete historical event or situation automatically or necessarily qualifies in itself as a cultural trauma" and reminds readers that "a cultural trauma differs greatly from a psychological trauma in terms of the mechanisms that establish and sustain it. The mechanisms associated with psychological trauma are the intra-psychic dynamics of defense, adaptation, coping, and working through; the mechanisms at the cultural level are mainly those of social agents and contending groups" (2004, p. 38-39). The social agents and groups responsible for the figuring of 9/11 as cultural trauma were broad and far-reaching. From President Bush's symbolic and moralistic assertions of good vs. evil and reinforcement of notions of American exceptionalism and patriotism, quick and assertive media identification of the events as traumatic, outrageous, and as an assault on a particular modern way of life, the story of the cultural trauma of 9/11 was given shape on a national and international stage.

Smelser's recounting of 9/11 through the lens of cultural trauma is not without its critics. Jacobs (2005) notes that his identification of this event as a "simple trauma," that is one where it is immediately clear who constitutes the victims and the perpetrators, is attributable to the "bravura instant analysis" (p. 424); while it anticipates some of the "inappropriate and displaced nature" of the American response, it leans more heavily on theories of American exceptionalism than on a deep exploration of the development of cultural trauma (Jacobs, 2005, p. 424). Additionally, Bartmanski (2007) notes that, despite its placement as the epilogue to a book developing the theory of cultural trauma, Smelser's description of 9/11 as a quintessential cultural trauma "balances a bit suspiciously at the boarder of the new approach and the traditional "naturalistic" accounts that the authors seek to impugn" (146). Both critiques imply,

as Bartmanksi points out, a “deep temporal aspect to the trauma process” (p. 146) that is not explored in the essay, or in the theory that informs it.

Cultural Trauma and Visual Culture

Photographer Susan Sontag’s 1977 book “On Photography” left an indelible mark on discussions of photography and trauma. In it, Sontag describes an experience in which she, as a 12 year old girl, came across the gruesome and devastating images of the liberated concentration camps at Dachau. She describes this experience as a turning point in her life, as a “negative epiphany”: “Nothing I have ever seen—in photographs or in real life—ever cut me as sharply, deeply, instantaneously. Indeed, it seems plausible to me to divide my life into two parts, before I saw those photographs (I was twelve) and after, though it was several years before I understood fully what they were about. (Sontag, 1977, p. 20).

For Sontag, photographs of trauma and war put the viewer into a delicate and potentially problematic relationship with their subject. She writes, “[t]o photograph people is to violate them, by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed” (Sontag, 1977, p. 14). Despite this power, engagement with these images does not guarantee an outcome. For Sontag, this is fine: the notion that a viewer is “not totally transformed” by traumatic images “does not impugn the ethical value of an assault by images... images have been reproached for being a way of watching suffering at a distance, as if there were some other way of watching” (Sontag, 2003, p. 116-117).

As the quote leading this section attests, Sontag find that, for better or worse, that modern memory is highly associated with visual images; photographs thus depict and then become “what a society chooses to think about” (Sontag, 2003, p. 85). Even if they do not create radical change

in the ethical stance of the viewer, or cause a split in consciousness as the photographs of the Holocaust did for Sontag, war photographs should be shared and seriously considered for the simple fact that wars we do not see are likely to bother us less. “Let the atrocious images,” said Sontag,

...haunt us. Even if they are only tokens, and cannot possibly encompass most of the reality to which they refer, they still perform a vital function. The images say: ‘This is what human beings are capable of doing – may volunteer to do, enthusiastically, self-righteously’. Don’t forget. (Sontag, 2003, p. 115).

These “harrowing photographs” will not necessarily lose their power to shock the viewer, but they are not educative on their own; “narratives,” Sontag writes, “make us understand. Photographs do something else: they haunt us” (2003, p. 89).

The relationship between learning and pictorial depictions of trauma is a clearly a difficult one. Photographer and art historian Beaumont Newhall first applied the term “documentary” to photography in 1938, acknowledging the persuasive political power of images that, to that point, may have been considered simply technical or artistic. The documentary photographer, he wrote,

“will put into his (sic) camera studies something of the emotion which he feels toward the problem, for he realizes that this is the most effective way to teach the public he is addressing. After all, is not this the root-meaning of the word “document” (*docere*, “to teach”)? For this reason his pictures will have a different, and more vital, quality than those of a mere technician” (Newhall, 1938, as cited in Abbott, 2010. p. 10).

The tensions between documentary photography and art was also shared by famous photojournalist Lee Miller, who Salvio (2009) cites saying, in irritated response to people who tell her war photographs won’t make for interesting viewing, “I’m busy making documents, not art” (Salvio, 2009, p. 522). Of course, the documents of war are often documents of human devastation where “the suffering body functions as the founding text” (Kilby, 2013, p. 339).

What one learns from this document varies by a number of factors: the narrative context in which the picture is presented (Sontag, 1977; Anden-Papadopoulos, 2003; Simon, 2014) and individual

previous experiences, traumatic and otherwise (Kaplan, 2005; see also Falk & Dierking, 2011). Of particular interest to this inquiry are the pedagogical constructs that frame the text.

Whether these images do serve as “points of origin for political awakening (Kilby, p. 213, 339) depends in part on how they are shaped by cultural carriers. Curriculum and pedagogy, as noted in the introduction, cannot be understood as static or objective concepts. Rather, following Salvio’s (2014) of public pedagogy, it is best considered “a fluid concept that at times imposes a hegemonic force, while at other times is used to enact cultural and political resistance and counter hegemonic possibilities as well as generate critical engagement with knowledge that is difficult to recognize to come to terms with” (p. 101). Reviewing the literature, three main themes emerge around questions of the purpose of the photograph in teaching about and shaping trauma: seeing, memory, and empathy.

Seeing

Though individual experiences of trauma occur on small and intimate scales, most people experience cultural trauma through the media (Kaplan, 2005). In his essay “Photographs of agony,” written just after the well-documented Vietnam War, Jon Berger describes the experience of viewing these difficult media images:

They bring us up short. The most literal adjective that could be applied is *arresting*. We are seized by them.... As we look at them, the moment of the other’s suffering engulfs us. We are filled with either despair or indignation. Despair takes on some of the other’s suffering to no purpose. Indignation demands action. We try to emerge from the moment of the photograph back into our lives. As we do so, the contrast is such that the resumption of our lives appears to be a hopelessly inadequate response to what we have just seen. (Berger, 1980, p. 38)

For Berger, the response to a traumatic image has both cognitive and affective components, and compels the viewer to action by forcing the acknowledgement that, given this new knowledge of the world, one’s life cannot continue on the same course. The idea underlying this perspective is

that there is something about seeing, perhaps above other modes, that has great power to “interrupt the pull to deny” human trauma and devastation (Salvio, 2014, p. 105).

Part of the appeal of the visual in understanding trauma is that an image overcomes the tendency for trauma to interfere with language; by extension, teaching with that image interrupts a problematic pattern of educational reliance on the transparency of language to communicate difficulty or complexity (Salvio, 1994; Taubman, 2011). Paying specific attention to the images of modern cultural trauma, Pollard notes the oft-acknowledged sentiment that “images are inadequate to tell the story of what happened, but that they are more adequate than words.” (Pollard, 2011. 88). Pollard argues that this is why photographs become so central to trauma narratives: they emphasize seeing in contexts where language fails. Taking a useful step back, Pollard also reminds us that when photos are employed with a central focus on documentation or as a component of a trauma narrative it can become easier to overlook their unsettling and difficult to articulate affective impact. She notes that this becomes the defining problem of visual culture studies- talking about pictures using words (2011, p. 90).

In her comparison of photos taken after the liberation of concentration camps to those taken in New York after 9/11, Zeilzer found that this non-verbal communication of trauma can be seen as having a symbolic template: the same types of pictures (extensive depictions of the site of trauma, depictions of people viewing the site of trauma, depictions of people viewing the site of trauma without evidence of the trauma, and depictions of people taking and viewing photographs of the site of trauma) are presented across contexts to shape the story of the traumatic experience’s broad social impact (Zelizer 2002a, p. 706). This template is a useful reminder that seeing is not a neutral act. Kilby (2013) asserts that seeing is valorized “because it is complicit with power. What we see and how we see are governed by the mass media...what

we see is the result, in other words, of a set of ‘complex interactions of perception, space, time, facticity, consumption, and material culture’ (p. 334). Kaplan extends this complexity by introducing the impact of individual psychological variables to the problem of seeing: “how one reacts to a traumatic event depends on one’s individual psychic history, on memories mixed with fantasy of prior catastrophes, and on the particular cultural and political context within which a catastrophe takes places, especially how it is “managed” by institutional forces” (Kaplan 2005, p. 1).

Following a line of thinking that adheres to the theory of cultural trauma, Carrabine (2011) notes assertively that outrage is not a natural response to difficult traumatic images (in the case of his research, images of Abu Ghraib). Rather, he notes, “there is considerable social complexity involved in the mobilization of moral sensibilities and the obligations of conscience.” He continues,

Indignant denunciation is only one response, and the images may well appall viewers or cater to voyeuristic appetites, but the suffering remains mediated and occurs at a distance, prompting the question of how to look? Recognizing that there are degrees of complexity is a vital step towards a more nuanced understanding of meaning and morality, which then opens up the further question of how spectacles of suffering can transform the way we live with, and understand, one another (Carrabine, 2011, p. 19).

The idea of seeing has also to take into consideration who is being seen, and the relationship between those individuals. If images are to “transform the way we live with...one another,” we have to know and understand something about each other. One of the great values in documentary photography is its ability to introduce previously unknown subjects to viewers. Azoulay (2008) argues that those depicted in traumatic photographs, are given new claims for validity in difficult times. Documentary photography, she argues, becomes a civic act when photographs are taken with the eye of the viewer and the rights of the individual being photographed in mind. The spectator’s eye, she argues, “deterritorializes photography,”

Transforming it from a...tool for the production of pictures into a social, cultural and political instrument of immense power... to transcend the here and now. The reason they enjoy such status is due to the fact that as soon as they have appeared in the world, it is impossible to dismiss them. Their presence cannot be subsumed under the reign of a higher authority. They are independent. The limits of their interpretation are not determined in advance and are always open to negotiation. They are not restricted to the intentions of those who would claim to be their authors or of those who participate in their production (Azoulay, 2008, p. 129).

Thus a “photographic complaint...can produce grievances and claims that would not and might not be so easily seen” (Salvio, 2014, p. 113).

(Empty) Empathy

At the intersection of seeing and memory is the affective impact of images. Photographs are often described as useful in eliciting empathic responses from viewers. As in the Berger quote above, the idea that underlies this assumption is that by both mobilizing a strong feeling and a kind of cognitive dissonance, an individual has an empathic response to the image. Unlike sympathy, “being affected by the condition of another with a feeling similar or corresponding to that of the other,” empathy has a component of perspective taking “the ability to understand and appreciate another person’s feelings [and] experience.”⁶ Jill Bennett’s (2005) work on trauma art demonstrates that, in the fine-art context, it is possible for difficult images and traumatic visual narratives to encourage viewers to think critically about what they see, as well as how they are complicit in the conditions depicted therein. The challenge of this endeavor, however, is to maintain the specificity and the individuality of the subject presented in the image, particularly when there are wide physical or temporal spaces between the viewer and the subject. “We might question,” Bennett wrote, whether the globalization of trauma does not itself efface the specificity of experience” (2005, p. 33). Neath (2012) notes that, particularly in a post-9/11 world, “trauma has been used as a universalising force, flattening differences of experience

⁶ Definitions from Oxford English Dictionary (www.OED.com)

between First and Third worlds, and differences across race, gender and class” (p. 317). These flattened experiences are closer to sympathetic than empathetic; while they can be emotionally intense, they lack the understanding, appreciation, and motivation to enact change that comes with an empathic response.

Kaplan (2005) characterizes these flattened experiences as “empty empathy.” In her review of journalistic coverage of the war in Iraq on CNN and in *The New York Times* in 2003, Kaplan noted that the stories being told were told in fragments and slices- a group of soldiers walking on an unmarked road, an Iraqi girl crying after the death of her mother- that lacked contextual information. Viewers of these images, she argues, “are offered the position of peeking into large slices of war activity and small fragments of Iraqi life, response to the war, and occasionally, suffering. The main focus, whether when dealing with troops or Iraqis, was always on individuals. One is encouraged to identify with specific people, to enter into their experiences” (p. 99). While this emotional identification is part of the requisite experience for true empathy, it happens at the expense of a broader analysis of what is really being looked at that would support critical questions about war.

Empty empathy is encouraged by media coverage that encourages sentimentality “by presenting viewers or newspaper readers with a daily barrage of images that are merely fragments of a large, complex situation in a foreign culture about which audiences may know very little and that reporters usually omit... images of suffering provided without any context or background knowledge” (Kaplan, 2005, p. 93). Reflecting on her own viewership, Kaplan notes that the empathy she felt for individuals depicted in the Iraq war was empty because it resulted on a “focus on individuals rather than on the larger issues to do with the reason for war on Iraq, its global impact, its effect on America’s political alliances worldwide, and especially its

devastating impact on Iraqi women, children, and innocent civilians” (Kaplan 2005, p. 94-95). In this kind of media reporting, “spectators are asked to peek in on an individual’s life in war rather than to think about the ethics of the war, human rights, and other important topics. We are encouraged to identify with specific people- to entire their personal lives” (Kaplan, 2005, p. 95).

Visualizing 9/11

The primacy of photography in the cultural response to 9/11 is well established. Trauma theorist Barbie Zelizer said that, after the attacks of 9/11 “photographs took center stage in the American culture” (2002). In a NYT article written on September 12th, 2001, Caryn James described the visual impact of attack: “[Rather than words] In this visual era, the incredible live images, replayed throughout the day until their reality sunk in, defined the events . . . The [TV] images were terrifying to watch, yet the coverage was strangely reassuring simply because it existed with such immediacy, even when detailed information was scarce. (James, 2011. As cited in Pollard, 2011, p. 93). And, in the same paper on the 13th, Katukani noted that

Language failed this week. ‘Beyond comprehension’, ‘beyond our worst imaginings’, ‘beyond belief’ – these were the phrases heard again and again in the last two days. As people struggled to describe the events of Tuesday morning, they reached for metaphors and analogies that might capture the horror of what they had seen . . . words felt devalued and inadequate. (Katukani 2001, as cited n Pollard, p. 92-93)

Though there is general consensus about the trauma of 9/11, and about the role of visual culture in it’s aftermath, theorists who write about the relationship between trauma and visual culture as it relates to the attacks on September 11th vacillate, apparently unintentionally, between adherence to a psychoanalytic notion of trauma and a definition that echoes Alexander’s sociological emphasis. In this section I will explore the literature on visual culture, particularly

documentary photojournalism, in response to 9/11 by considering the themes of time and proximity that arise therein.⁷ I will then consider the tensions between psychoanalytic and sociological conceptions of trauma as they relate specifically to the 9/11 attacks.

Time

This is often considered in discussions of the traumatic impact of 9/11. The boldest statement in relationship to time again echoes Sontag's traumatic rift. Shortly after the attacks media outlets began to describe the world in pre- and post- 9/11 terms. This language is apparent in academic literature, as well. Communication and scholar Anna Lisa Tota describes the event as such:

There is an immediate sense of the indelibility of the trauma: the world's history will be divided into pre-September 11 and post-September 11 period. The terrorist attacks in Manhattan have altered American national identity forever and this circumstance is acknowledged from the beginning by the most relevant public interpreters of the event. (Tota 2006, p. 90).

As noted, this designation was applied almost instantaneously: shortly after the events, curriculum theorist Claudia Eppert noted that “[i]n marked contrast to other traumatic historical events, there has been virtually no significant lapse of time between the disaster and its representation and commemoration” (Eppert, 2002, p. 130).

Looking at newspapers dated the week of the attacks, paying particular attention to articles where images are used, Pollard asks the question of whether, given their lack of bodily harm but their intense exposure to both the language and visual depiction of 9/11 as trauma, the vast majority of the American population can consider themselves traumatised? Using the term trauma in this way, she suggests, is at odds with its traditional conceptualization of an experience

⁷ It is worth noting that this literature centers, as does the art exhibit upon which this dissertation research is grounded, on the World Trade Center attacks in New York on that day to the exclusion of the attacks on the Pentagon and in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

at the individual level. Pollard goes on to suggest that the “immediacy of the broadcast coverage of these attacks, and the elements of it that were genuinely unprecedented in the history of television journalism, created a new kind of traumatic experience that challenges the categories and boundaries within which trauma theory has previously been working” (2011, p. 84). The media coverage of the event rendered it a “moment in everyone’s history” (Erikson, 1995, p. 183. As cited in Pollard, 2001, p. 85). Thus rather than experiencing secondary trauma, individuals involved, while still not victims of the attacks, could be considered as having experienced trauma of a different (i.e. not usefully described by psychoanalytic and trauma theory accounts) type.

Proximity

By way of an introduction to the ways in which trauma differentially impacts individuals when mediated by factors such as proximity, previous traumatic experience, and the political and ideological narration of a traumatic event by cultural carriers such as news media, Kaplan offers a retelling of her experiences on 9/11, which she states “radically altered [her] relationship to New York, to the United States qua nation, and produced a new personal identity” (p. 2). As a Manhattan resident, Kaplan’s neighborhood landscape was at once dramatically physically altered in ways reminiscent of her early experiences as a child in World War II England. The collapse of the Twin Towers reinvigorated early traumatic experiences, producing anxious responses evocative of early childhood fears of loss for Kaplan on trains and in narrow hallways. “In other words,” Kaplan stated, “the new traumatic event merged with the childhood events, so that history and memory, time and space collapsed into one present time of terror; 9/11 produced a new subjectivity” (Kaplan 2005, p. 4).

Though Kaplan, like so many others, was present at the scene of the attack and as such was thus able to think of her experiences as approximating those encapsulated in a psychoanalytic view of trauma, she goes on to expand her conception in a way that allows for the inclusion of non-present others in what becomes understood as the cultural trauma of 9/11. Following Kristeva, Kaplan argues that her personal experiences support a definition of trauma that is not reserved just for large, public events like genocide; rather, it is possible to understand both large-scale military and political trauma, and personal, individual trauma as both sharing the capacity to damage “our systems of perception and representation” (Kaplan, 2005, p. 5). In the case of 9/11 much of this damage can be seen as resultant from experience with the culturally curated and endlessly repeated responses to the attacks as presented on television and in print media which disrupted viewers assurances of their own “cultural identity” (Alexander, 2004).

Pollard (2011) expands on this idea. Though she draws almost exclusively on psychoanalytic thinkers in her own work, she comes to describe the instances of 9/11 in a way that resonates with Alexander’s theories. She identifies the experiences of non-proximate viewers of the attack as having experienced a “public trauma” that results from witnessing the images that have been seen without “a real threat to their bodily safety and material surroundings” (p. 86). This “distanced, indirect witnessing,” while different from the traumatic experiences of those present at the sites of the attacks, can still be considered as “distanced” or “public” trauma, involving primarily visually-oriented experiences that fundamentally challenged the notions of national identity and security for many viewers (Pollard 2011, p. 86).

Final Consideration: The Pedagogical Limits of Photography

Much of the pedagogical power vested in traumatic images is described as change oriented. The logic is that if people could just see these terrible images, and come to know that they are a part of reality, individuals will ensure that such horror will never again occur. Simon (2014) notes that this preventative theory of trauma photography is rendered null by the simple fact that, despite decades of easily accessible photographic technology, we have not yet put an end to violence, war, genocide, etc. Riffing on Sontag's description of the split that occurred when she first viewed the concentration camp images, Marta Zarzycka reflects on the prevalence and availability of traumatic images when she asks "into how many parts are lives divided today, considering one perpetually encounters images of death, violence and poverty in the media? Do those images create ruptures in our being/knowledge or rather reassert certain continuations within ourselves? Do lives get divided at all?" (Zarzycka 2012, p. 71). Following Pitt and Britzman, Salvio (2009) notes that "naming an experience is not enough; rather, representation must also be imbued with emotional significance. But there is also the danger that emotional life might emerge as too present, that an excess of affect might undermine representation" (Salvio 2009, p. 528).

Hirsch (2008) notes that small, flat photographs have the potential to minimize the disaster that the purports to witness to, and as such shield their viewers from picturing the enormity of the traumatic circumstances. Berger notes that the moments of agony captured by a war correspondent "are in reality utterly discontinuous with normal time (1980, p. 43)". He claims that "it is not possible for anyone to look pensively at such a moment and emerge stronger" (1980, p. 43). This is because of the violence involved in the moment itself and in the

camera's capturing of it. Without context and a continuity that would bring events into our own lives, such images can only elicit empathy that in the end is "empty." Kilby argues that, in fact, the visual realism of photography may not be the best form for witnessing violence for precisely this reason, nothing that "a more complex aesthetic" or a "less direct aesthetic or privileged point of view" (2013, p. 337) may be more effective in telling the stories of violence and suffering while avoiding their potentially "seductive beauty." Similarly, Salvio (2009) warns that "documentary realism too often obscures the particularity of difficult or traumatic experiences and in turn forecloses on discussions that may in fact challenge understandings of nationhood, citizenship, and norms of social belonging" (p. 526).

Acknowledging that, despite their apparent depiction of some objective truth, traumatic photographs are interpreted within a broader narrative that shapes our interpretation of them highlights another tension. Zeilzer, a major advocate for the powerful role of the photograph in recovering from cultural trauma, notes that images that are central to understanding of trauma "act as signposts within definitive limitations, directing rememberers to preferred meaning by the fastest if not the most all-encompassing route" (2002a, p. 699). Thus, though there is power in the images, a level of detail and specificity that links trauma back to the broader narrative leveraged by cultural carriers can be lost.

Salvio (2009) reminds us that that when we consider the place of trauma in the curriculum, we are faced with "establishing a relationship to the past that can respond to charged histories which feel both excessively present and unavailable for total recall or representation" (p. 534). People and objects in museums are presented in a way that suggests an otherness about them, as well as holding them at a distance (Gaudelli, 2012) they too are simultaneously us, and not us; within and without our experience.

Particularly within the museum context, experiences with traumatic images may cause viewers to wonder about the categorical and dichotomous knowledge categories depicted therein in part because they were newly attuned to the ambiguity that emerges from the “excessive presence” and “unavailability” of difficult knowledge. Teachers have the “vulnerable privilege” (Grumet, 2010) of engaging pedagogies of witness with their students, holding onto the acknowledgment that in the curation of our curriculum, we are “pointing out the world that matters to our children” (Grumet, 2010, p. 70). Thus, telling, retelling, and reflecting critically on difficult knowledge can help to determine who is excluded, who is implicated, and how we can situate others and ourselves differently. Extending this work across cultural sites creates an opportunity to employ a variety of “texts” in service of this goal, including written works, films, music, personal stories, museum displays, television, and experiential simulations.

While there is growing attention paid to both the curatorial process related to depicting traumatic history, and to the participation of educators in museum learning across their careers, there is little research at the intersection of these two lines of inquiry. The following chapter outlines one way in which this work can begin to be taken up.

Chapter Three: Methods

Introduction: Methodological Bricolage

This project explores the following questions: What does teaching high school students look like in an art museum exhibition about war photography? How do high school teachers' experience creating and teaching a curriculum built around war photography in the museum setting? and In what ways does teacher-designed curriculum resonate with the public curriculum as envisaged by other cultural workers (curator, museum educators, or the artist)? To my mind, research in this line of inquiry requires a multi-perspectival, multi-theoretical, and multi-methodological approach to inquiry. Drawing on the research tradition of bricolage, my project weaves theory from curriculum studies, visual culture studies, phenomenological and aesthetic inquiry and qualitative methods such a case study, in-depth interviewing, and critical visual methodologies to tell the story of teaching and learning in this particular situated moment in history.

The word bricolage arrives to English from the French word bricoleur, or handyman. The concept of “bricolage” in relation to meaning-making can be traced back to early

structuralist thinkers like Levi-Strauss, who used the analogy of the craftsman to draw contrast with the engineer; crafts-people use materials “at hand” to construct new artifacts, while engineers require special procedures and tools to undertake their work (Rogers, 2012). When the concept of bricolage is applied to research, it “denotes methodological practices explicitly based on notions of eclecticism, emergent design, flexibility and plurality” (Rogers, 2012, p. 1). Bricoluers are thus required to be creative, to adeptly and artistically merge theories, methods, and techniques while acknowledging the merits and debates that come with each way of thinking, evaluating, and discussing.

For Denzin and Lincoln, the “handyman” or “craftsman” approach to research follows Levi-Strauss’s characterization as a “Jack of all trades or a kind of professional do-it-yourself person” (1966, p. 17, in Denzing & Lincoln, 2000, p. 4). This researcher uses the tools of their craft, even as they include diverse strategies, methods, and materials, in order to piece together a complex story of social experience. Kincheloe writes that the most straightforward conceptualization of bricolage is understood to involve “the process of employing these methodological strategies as they are needed in the unfolding context of the research situation” (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 324). By allowing the context of an inquiry to dictate in an emergent manner what data collection and analysis to use methodological bricolage attends to the inherent complexities of meaning-making in complex social context, often resulting in work that navigates “between and within competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 6).

The fluid and open-ended nature of bricolage works against positivist epistemological and ontological assumptions about truth and rationality in favor of post-positivist (and other “post” discourses) that center disciplinary plurality and the use of multiple methods and

theoretical perspectives in the design and interpretation of social science research. Kincheloe calls this a “deep interdisciplinarity” where divergent forms of research provide real insight and increasingly complex understanding of research and knowledge production to “uncover new insights, expand and modify old principles, and reexamine accepted interpretations in unanticipated contexts” (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 687). Finally, this deep interdisciplinarity, combined with a bricoluer’s commitment to critical and complex understandings of social experiences contribute to the strong emancipatory potential of bricolage research (Kincheloe, 2005).

It is this emancipatory undercurrent that draws me most closely into the work of bricolage. From the outset, this project was designed to be multi-method; you will see the concurrently applied methods described in detail below. After the data were collected, however, I found myself stuck between several apparently competing concerns. I had structured a project that focused on art images and personal affective experiences, yet was relying on disciplinary methods of interpretation that, even in their qualitative insistence on rich data, undercut the power of the individual voice and the centrality of the aesthetic. Further and despite the photographer’s stated intentions, the images were inherently political, depicting a long lasting and yet unresolved international conflict; despite their (often stark) personal feelings to the contrary each and every one of the teachers and museum workers I spoke with actively disavowed the political in their gallery teaching.

Thus, in an effort to craft a narrative attuned to these subtleties as well as to the broader pedagogical value of the exploration, this project draws upon multiple analytic frameworks based multiple disciplines. Framed as a case-study (Yin, 2014, Stake, 1995) the project is structured to paint a holistic picture of one particular place at one instructive moment in time.

However, bricoleurs acknowledge that the researcher's own process of interpretation and abstraction can take away from the complexity of the contextual field (Kincheloe, 2005). Employing interviews in the tradition of hermeneutic phenomenology (van Mannen, 1986, 2006, 2007; Seidman, 2012) allows for the description of teacher experiences in that space and time that connects to their own lived experiences as teachers in schools and as individuals outside of schools and as such rejects some potential for a monological interpretation of this single pedagogical experience. As an interlude, an aesthetic/poetic interpretation (Eisner, 1981, 1997; Glesne, 1997; Becker, 1999; Percer, 2002) of the words and image present in the gallery surfaces and reconstructs the resonance, dissonance and absence of conversations amongst teachers, students, and images in the museum space. Finally, an analysis of the attitudes, values and beliefs (Saldana, 2013) of museum workers allows for a comparison across cultural workers as well as to the framework of critical visual methods (Rose, 2013). Here, in the final connection between images, attitudes and beliefs and the contextual variables present in the case study an understanding of intertextuality—the complicated relationship that emerges through the connection of multiple texts—emerges.

“To be well prepared,” Kincheloe notes, “bricoleurs must realize that knowledge is always in process, developing, culturally specific, and power-inscribed” (2001, p. 689). It is with this perspective, an attention to practice that is “pragmatic, strategic, and self-reflexive” (Nelson et al, 1992, p.2, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 4) that I undertake this work.

Research Design

Justification for Case-Based Research

To better understand teachers' experiences designing curriculum around traumatic historical photography, this dissertation will employ a case study method grounded on

phenomenological interviews of three secondary educators who used the *Witness to History* exhibit in their teaching in the 2015-2016 school year. Yin (2012) points to the strength of a case study as a strategy to understand a phenomenon within a context, which in this case is how secondary educators construct curricula around war photography in the context of a particular, curated and shared museum experience. The case study seeks to answer the questions of how and why teachers develop these curricular experiences with and against the public curriculum of the exhibition. Stake (1995) emphasizes that a central concern of case study research is to generate knowledge of the particular in order to pursue understanding of issues central to the case itself. This inquiry, then, considers several teachers' experiences via interviews and document analysis in light of the museum- and artist-based curatorial and curricular decisions around *Witness to History* to provide a contextualized examination of teachers' perspective on developing curricula around traumatic history and within museum spaces.

Specifically, this study uses an embedded single-case approach. In this project, the rationale for a single-case design is the *common* nature of the case (Yin, 2012): previous research has established the fact that secondary educators use both museums and photography in curriculum design, and that museums of all types design learning experiences for secondary students. The case-study method, then contributes understanding about the social processes and experiences that emerge across cultural workers designing learning experiences in a shared museum exhibition context. For the purposes of this study, the context includes both museum and school contextual variables (i.e. teacher's experiences teaching and learning about the exhibit's content; the museum's institutional mission). These contextual variables were initially explored through review of relevant literature. Contextual variables that emerged as salient through participant interviews were then explored through further literature review, as well as

through review of museum documents. The case here becomes the *Witness to History* exhibit, explored through document analysis of the exhibit's images, written texts, press and curriculum materials. In this project, there are eleven embedded units (three teachers, the curator, two museum educators, and five docents), though the focus of the research proposition is on teacher experiences as the primary authors of student learning experiences. Interview methods combined with artifact analysis, including teaching artifacts and curricular materials provided by the teachers, as well as analysis of the photographs, print and training materials from the museum

make up the analytic material for these embedded units.

Figure 1 illustrates the embedded single-case approach. The dotted lines that separate the context, case, and embedded units indicate that though the distinctions established in the design of the research provide some conceptual categorization and delineation between the component parts of the case, they are ultimately

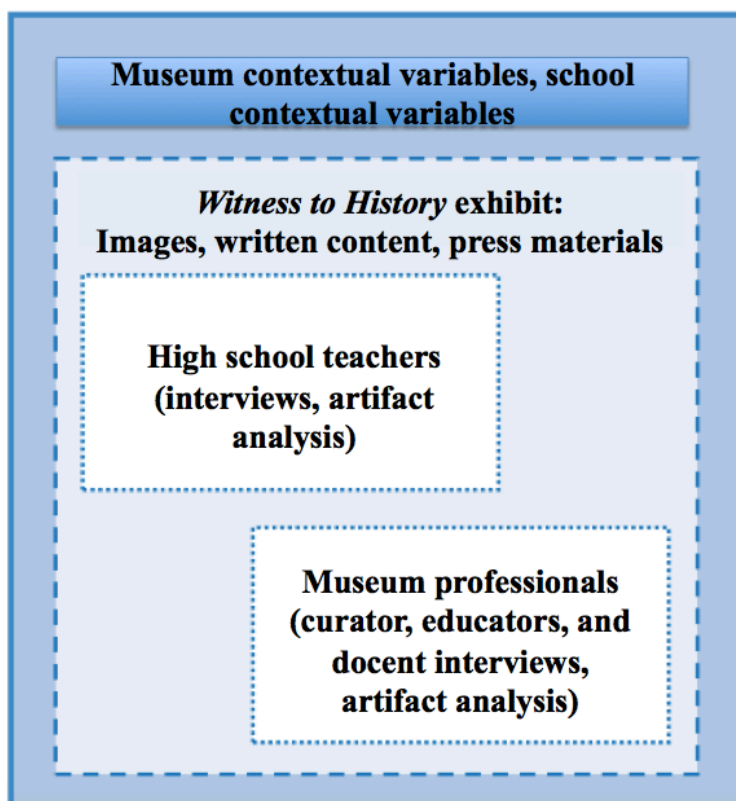


FIGURE ONE: The Embedded Single-Case Design.
Adapted from Yin (2012)

interrelated. In describing the model, Yin (2012) notes that the dotted lines signal

“that the boundaries between the case and context are not likely to be sharp” (p. 500).

Justification for a Phenomenological Approach

The word phenomenon itself stems from the Greek “to bring to light, place in brightness, to show itself in itself” (Moustakas, 1994. p. 26). As a philosophy, phenomenology is a meditation on the lived experience of human existence; as van Mannen writes, a “sober reflection... in the sense that reflecting on experience must be thoughtful, and as much as possible, free from theoretical, prejudicial and suppositional intoxications” (2007, p. 11) Phenomenological research relies on first-person accounts of experience, and it’s interpretation, to understand the wholeness of an experience from the perspective of the individual (Seidman, 2012, Moustakas, 1994).

Phenomenological research methods are underpinned by a variety of schools of thought within the diverse field of phenomenological philosophy. Seidman’s in-depth phenomenological approach to interviewing, the method which drives this research project, is predicated on the foundational work of hermeneutic phenomenologists such as Schutz, Heidegger, and van Mannen. Classical, realist, or transcendental schools of thought (see for example, Moustakas, 1994) posit that the essence of experience can be objectively understood through the valuation of an individual’s ‘ideal meaning’ of an object or experience and the object and experience itself (Grbich, 2007). Hermeneutic phenomenology moves away from an essentialist perspective on structure, instead focusing on interpretive structures, or the “mediated processes of understanding and interpretation” (Kinsella, 2006. p.1). Put more simply, while both phenomenology and hermeneutics represent interpretivist theoretical perspectives, a strict phenomenological epistemology privileges objectivism and idealism over hermeneutics’ more subjectivist and contextualized ways of knowing (Koro-Ljungberg, Yendol-Hoppey, Smith, & Hayes, 2009).

A participant's recollection and interpretation of the understanding of the researcher; while the researcher's goal is to seek out the individual's subjective understanding of the experience under inquiry, that understanding is always made as an observation of others' experience from our point of view. Tying together the notions of temporality and subjective understanding, the notion of "lived experience" as a reconstruction of a past experience emphasizes the hermeneutic nature of the work; an attempt to arrive at some essence of lived experience emerges through the negotiation and guidance of the participant by the interviewer (Seidman, 2012, p. 18). Meaning emerges as mediated through the language and other contextual variables that bring attention to the experience and the elicitation of its meaning; as such it requires close attention to both the relationship between the interviewer and his/her preconceived notions about the topic of inquiry, the relationship between the interviewer and the participant in the interview context, and the context in which the participant operates. This "hermeneutic circle" where interpretation and analysis of the whole phenomena is balanced against and irrevocably linked with the understanding and meaning of its composite parts provides a useful way of thinking about both the collection and analysis of this type of phenomenological data (Kinsella, 2006, p. 6; Grbich, 2007).

By designing a research project predicated on the values and assumptions of phenomenology, I am committed to exploring the "many sides, many angles" of the experience of designing learning opportunities around war photography in a museum setting "until a unified vision is achieved" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 59). Here, however, a "unified vision" does not mean the establishment of one story. "Truth" as Eisner notes, "implies singularity and monopoly. Meaning implies relativism and diversity... diverse interpretation and coherence" (1981. p. 9). Nor is the goal to create a tool or prescriptive model outlining how best to undertake the work

described. Rather, this project adheres to van Mannen's description of a "phenomenology of practice" whose aim is to "open up possibilities for creating formative relations between being and acting, between who we are and how we act, between thoughtfulness and tact" (2007. p. 13).

Sample & Data Collection

Setting

This project is centered around an exhibition of James Nachtwey's 9/11, Iraq and Afghanistan war photography at the Currier Museum of Art in Manchester New Hampshire that was open between September – December 2015. The show, entitled "Witness to History: James Nachtwey—Afghanistan, Ground Zero, Iraq" was comprised of 24 large-format photographs and one 32' long photo mosaic. The photos were arranged chronologically around the gallery, and were clustered around 5 main themes; Afghanistan, 9/11 in New York City, post-9/11 Afghanistan, the Iraqi war, and American soldiers returning home from war. The photo mosaic was displayed in its own room, and was comprised of 60 images of American military medical units and field hospitals in Iraq. The setting is described in depth in the following chapter

Teacher interviews

In order to address the study's first proposition, *How do high school teachers' experience creating and teaching a curriculum built around war photography in the museum setting?* I employed a phenomenological interviewing protocol. Phenomenological interviewing, as described by Seidman (2012) has a three-interview structure, with each interview lasting from 60-90 minutes. Each interview is themed, and while open and participant-centered in structure, is shaped by a series of guiding questions. The first interview is a life-history interview, used to establish a context for the participant's experience, based on the assumption that an individual's

life experiences will impact their descriptions and interpretations of topic at hand. The purpose of this interview is to gather information on the participant's life experience as it relates to the topic of inquiry; in this particular instance, then, the purpose of the life history interview would be to have participants reconstruct early experiences with museum learning, learning and teaching with primary source material, learning and teaching about difficult material, and personal experiences in relation to learning about the content of the exhibit (i.e 9/11, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan).

The second interview explored the participant's reconstruction of the present phenomenon through the recounting of details of the particular experience. The focus is on detailed description of the central events; here, this means planning for and teaching the curriculum centered on *Witness to History*.

The final interview was designed for participant reflection on the first and second interviews. The purpose of this interview is for the participant to "make meaning" by connecting what they've shared of their work and life and the experiences of interest in the research. Seidman emphasizes that this meaning making is not geared towards simply understanding satisfaction and reward, but rather requires a close look by participants on how factors in their own lives interacted with and influenced their present experiences, and also at the specifics of those experiences in context. Seidman notes that the "combination of exploring the past to clarify the events that led participants to where they are now, and describing the concrete details of their present experience, establishes conditions for reflecting upon what they are now doing in their lives" (2012, p. 22). Though the specifics of the third interview were largely contingent on what is shared in the first two interviews, the guiding general questions was "Given what you've said

about your previous experiences, and how you've described your work with *Witness to History*, how do you understand the use of war photography in your curriculum?"

Each teacher participated in three audio-recorded interviews in the summer of 2016, 6-8 months after their experiences in *Witness to History*. I allowed teachers to schedule their interview times and locations with the caveat that the final interview be within three to four weeks of the initial interview. Samantha and Cecile invited me to interview them in their homes. Collin scheduled our meetings in a study room in the University library, as he was on campus taking a summer course. Interviews ranged from 59 minutes to 1 hour 24 minutes, with an average length of 1 hour and 10 minutes.

A full list of teacher phenomenological interview questions can be found in the appendix; a table detailing the date, length and location of interviews by participant can also be found in the appendix.

Teacher Sample

In phenomenological and case study research, it is common to access a sample through formal or informal gatekeepers. In order to locate potential participants, I contacted Bridget, the manager of tours and school programs at the museum, with whom I had worked as an intern in the previous summer, and described my interest in researching how teachers used the *Witness to History* photographs with their students. I provided her with a description of my research and a paragraph of biographical and contact information and asked her to write a letter of introduction to secondary educators who had attended the museum during the *Witness to History* exhibition. She contacted 5 teachers via email, and all 5 responded to me via email stating their interest in discussing my research further.

In order to ensure that the interested teachers had attended the museum for an explicit pedagogical purpose, and had both viewed the Nachtwey photographs and designed curriculum around those photographs, I conducted pre-screening interviews. I travelled to each teacher's school to establish a relationship, and asked preliminary questions about their trip to the Currier. Questions included why they had gone, which students they had brought, whether they had spent a significant amount of time in the *Witness to History* exhibit, and, if yes, why they had chosen to view the war photography. Based on my research question, the exclusion criteria for this preliminary interview was as follows: if participants did not attend the *Witness to History* exhibit as a primary focus of their visit, or if their visit to the *Witness to History* exhibit was not tied directly to their in-class curriculum.

I excluded 2 of the 5 teachers during the pre-screening interview. These two teachers, a social studies/English team from a local regional high school, attended the Currier with their students during the time period that *Witness to History* was up, and saw 1 of the images during their tour. The overall focus of the tour, however, was "New Hampshire People and Places" and was centered in the curriculum on state and local history. Though they were excited about the research, and deeply engaged in community and museum learning, they did not meet the primary inclusion criteria for the study.

The remaining 3 teachers from the preliminary screening had designed curriculum around and attended the *Witness to History* exhibition with their students, and gave verbal agreement to participate in this study. All three are secondary English teachers from public high schools in central and seacoast New Hampshire. One teacher, Collin O'Malley⁸, is an early career English teacher at a coastal New Hampshire high school. Each year he teaches a curriculum unit around war photojournalism, highlighting the work of James Nachtwey. He attended the *Witness to*

⁸ Pseudonyms are used for all teachers and museum workers.

History exhibit with a small class of advanced junior journalism students in September of 2015.

He does not usually bring students to museums in his course, but chose to integrate the Currier exhibit given the relevance of the subject matter to both the content of the course (journalism ethics) and to students' prior experience with Nachtwey's work. A second teacher, Samantha Weber, designed a unit in her AP English course around persuasive writing, and brought 11th graders from her southern New Hampshire high school to the museum to see the *Witness to History* exhibit as an extension of their work designing and evaluating effective argumentation, and as a deepening of their reading experiences of central texts related to war. Samantha has brought students to tour the Currier in the past, but explicitly chose the Nachtwey exhibit for its ability to enhance her curriculum. Finally, Cecile Durand, a 10th grade American literature teacher at a central New Hampshire high school facilitated a trip to the *Witness to History* exhibit for her year long American Studies class, a history and English hybrid course. Cecile, a former museum educator turned high school English teacher, is a frequent visitor to the Currier, and designs course experiences for students that engage whatever the current special exhibition is at the time of her planned visit.

While phenomenological interview research tends to draw from a slightly larger participant pool, Seidman argues that sufficiency and saturation of information should be the primary consideration when outlining sampling procedures (2012, p. 58). Additionally, in its attention to the narrow inclusion criteria for this embedded unit of analysis, the small sample size ensures pedagogical relevancy of the research.

Museum interviews

In order to address the second research proposition, *In what ways does teacher-designed curriculum resonate with the public curriculum as envisaged by other cultural workers (curator, museum educators, or the artist)?* I conducted hour-long semi-structured interviews with the individuals responsible for designing and implementing the public curriculum for *Witness to History*, including the curator, museum educators and docents. The overarching purpose of these interviews is to explore their perspectives on the objectives of the public curriculum for *Witness to History*. These interviews included questions, such as:

- Describe your role in the design of *Witness to History*. What work did you do to prepare for your role? What research did you do?
- Describe one or two images from the exhibit that stands out in your memory. Why do you think these images are the ones that stand out for you?
- Who is the intended audience for this exhibit? What might different audiences gain from this exhibit?
- If you think about the exhibit as a learning opportunity, what do you think the viewers learned from seeing it?
- Several high school teachers brought their students to the *Witness to History* exhibit. What do you think this particular audience would gain from the exhibit, if anything?

I conducted the majority of museum worker interviews in the summer of 2016, approximately 8 months after the closing of the *Witness to History* exhibit. All but one interview were conducted 1-on-1 in a classroom at the Currier Museum of Art; due to a scheduling preference, I met and interviewed two docents in a group interview. Interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 1 hour and 19 minutes in length, and averaged just under one hour.

A full list of museum interview questions can be found in the appendix; a table detailing the date, length and location of interviews by participant can be found in the appendix.

Museum Sample

I conducted semi-structured interviews with 8 museum professionals responsible for designing and implementing the “public curriculum” for the *Witness to History* exhibit. This included the exhibit curator, Sean, who worked closely with James Nachtwey in the design and implementation of the exhibit and by writing interpretive and press materials and facilitating public programming. Other important museum staff included Bridget, the tour program manager, who designed the tour for school groups and advertised and facilitated school programming opportunities for the exhibit, and Susan, the museum educator who was responsible for designing the interpretive space and the public programming opportunities for *Witness to History*. Finally, I interviewed the five museum docents who were primarily responsible for leading school tours during the *Witness to History* exhibit; Tim, Sally, Christine, Ada and Noelle. Museum workers shared common demographic traits; all participants were white, and between the ages of 50 and 70 years old. All but one held graduate degrees. Museum workers held degrees in museum studies, American studies, photography, museum education, and art history. Docents, all retired from full-time careers in a variety of fields, were formerly professionals in law, mental health counseling, higher education, English teaching, and history.

Data Analysis

Teacher Interview Data

Interviews were audio recorded and fully transcribed. Data from the teacher interviews was transcribed between interview sessions, as preliminary review was necessary for preparation for subsequent interviews. In addition to transcription, I maintained a system of memos during these early analytic phases. Preliminary analysis began with an inductive reduction of the data sample size through the process of bracketing salient participant responses as they emerged. The

emphasis on inductive rather than deductive initial coding reinforces the notion that phenomenological research is not about hypothesis testing, and that the researcher must approach participant responses with an open attitude and an attention to what emerges naturally from the participant text (Seidman, 2012). I present the teacher interview data in four ways: descriptively, as it relates to the description of their curriculum design (Chapter 5); as individual portraits (Chapter 5); in relationship to descriptions of particular images (Chapter 6); and in what I am calling a collage (with the museum worker interview data; Interlude).

Descriptive Interpretation of Interview Data

In order to provide contextual information against which to situate the phenomenological teacher portraits, I highlighted teacher responses to related specific interview questions: *tell me about other times you've brought your students out of school to learn, how did you prepare for the Currier trip and follow up from the trip, what did you hope students would learn from the trip, and given the opportunity to plan it again, what would you do differently?* I bracketed teacher responses within each of these categories, and then summarized the categorical responses to provide a sense of each teacher's curriculum design rationale.

Aesthetic Interpretation of Interview Data: Portraits & Collage

van Mannen writes that the aim of phenomenology "is to transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence" (1990. p. 36). The first iterations of interview data presentation and analysis that I offer in the following chapters engage different artistic textual forms in their expression of the essence of the experiences explored in this project. Elliot Eisner has written much about the power of artistic explorations of data to capture and express meanings of great significance to researchers and educators that may otherwise be overlooked

through less aesthetic forms (Percey, 2002). Eisner (1981) draws a distinction between that which is studied artistically, and what is studied scientifically. Artistic forms of representation, he argues,

“place a premium on the idiosyncratic use of form- visual and auditory form as well as discursive form—to convey in non-literal as well as literal ways the meanings the investigator wishes to express... For the artistic, the literal is frequently pale and humdrum. What one seeks is not the creation of a code that abides to publicly codified rules, but the creation of an evocative form whose meaning is embodied in the shape of what is expressed.” (p. 6)

Eisner refers to the “embodied shape” of what is being expressed as “the power of form to inform” (1981, p. 7). In this frame, an artistic undertaking is not seen as a liability, or as an occlusion of some truth, but rather as an asset, an “essential vehicle constituting a significant part of the content of the communication” (1981, p. 7). Making things vivid through selective reporting and special emphasis occurs in all types of research writing, Eisner argues; “artistically oriented research acknowledges what already exists and instead of presenting a façade of objectivity, exploits the potential of selectivity and emphasis to say what needs saying as the investigator sees it” (Eisner, 1981. 8). Finally, Eisner argues in favor of the “productive ambiguity” of alternative forms of data representation that is more “evocative than denotative, and in its evocation... generates insight and invites attention to complexity” (1997. p. 8). For the purposes of this project, the two artistic approaches included are the creation of individual teacher portraits (following Seidman, 2012) from the teacher phenomenological interview data, and the creation of a collage, following the traditions of poetic inquiry from fields of social and health science research.

Poetic transcription, or the process of creating poem-like compositions from the words of qualitative research participants (Glesne, 1997) has a long history of blurring the boundaries between ways of knowing, between artistic and scientific endeavors, in social and health

sciences research (Richardson, 1993; Glesne, 1997; Becker 1999). Willis describes the exploration into expressive forms of presenting phenomenological data as emerging from education and health sciences as a means of producing texts that were more germane to the experience being explored rather than being reduced to a classic ‘cooled out’ and ‘abstracted’ report” (2004. p. 6). Employing poetic and autobiographical forms, these approaches to the dissemination of research findings weave researcher experience with the shared experience of participants in a way that aims to describe “comprehensively actual human experience... to convey its emotional as well as its rational richness and somehow involve the reader” (Willis, 2004. p. 7).

Saunders (2003) posits that the presentation of data as poetry offers the following to the description of qualitative research findings: poetry presents rather than argues, and offers insights rather than builds theories. It adds “to the sense of the world’s variety rather than to negotiate and refine a consensus” (p. 176) and plays with ideas rather than working to synthesize them or probe them for closure. In terms of form, the presentation of data in poetry provides the opportunity to present data by association, grouping around images for example, and as such to draw attention to ideas that may otherwise seem unconnected. Finally, Saunders suggests that poetry has the potential to “communicate something ultimately unsayable... because uniquely arising from the poet’s personal vision and interpretation” (p. 176).

Finally, artistic expressions such as poetic inquiry can serve as tools to engage emotionally and empathetically with the data. When done correctly, these modes synthesize experiences in a “direct and affective way... [helping to] uncover contradictions, missing information, and problems with internal validity” (McCullis, 2013, p. 87). The polyphony of voices that are available in artistic and poetic renderings of data gives access to what van

Mannan calls the “pathic” dimensions of phenomenological practice; “These are the corporeal, relational, temporal, situational, and actional kinds of knowledge that cannot necessarily be translated back or captured in conceptualizations and theoretical representations. In other words, there are modes of knowing that inhere so immediately in our lived practices—in our body, in our relations, and in the things around us—that they seem invisible” (van Mannen, 2007, p. 22).

Thus, my rationale for presenting qualitative interview data as individual portraits and in a poetic form is twofold. First, the data yielded in this type interview tell a story that connects individual beliefs, practices, and observations in rich contextual description in the voice of the individual participant. The portraits, written in the first person, convey that story in the using the participants’ words with little editing from the researcher. These portraits convey the individual’s experiences in their own voices, creating a space in which the participant can be presented “in context, to clarify his or her intentions, and to convey a sense of process and time” (Seidman, 2012, p. 122). Likewise, the collage relies exclusively on the words of the teachers and museum staff, as they reported them being spoken or thought directly, to re-create the experience of being in the Witness to History exhibit with students. Context is provided both through a chronological and dialogic organization of participant voices, and the integration of images as points of reference. Secondly, I echo the belief that the presentation of participant data be aesthetically pleasing, enriching, and pleasurable. In the instance of this particular project, this aesthetic aim echoes the spirit of the artistic and designs pursuits at the center of this research, and resonates with Nachtwey’s own beliefs about the centrality of storytelling as a vehicle for understanding human experience

Teacher Portrait Development

Portrait development began with a verbatim transcription of teacher phenomenological interviews. First round [V1] profile edits were line edits including the deletion of characteristics of oral speech (i.e. “You know?” “like,” and “uh”), stutters or redundancies, incomplete sentences (where deletion did not change the meaning of the surrounding text), and references to the interviewer. Additionally, I removed speech idiosyncrasies that interfered with understanding or did not do justice to the participant. Finally, I replaced pronouns with proper nouns where required for ease of understanding. Second round [V2] editing established a preliminary analytic data set by highlighting important, interesting, and relevant passages and omitting passages that were redundant or tangential to the research question or that were relevant to thematic analysis (see below) but did not fit the narrative structure of the profile. Seidman (2012) suggests a ½ to 2/3 reduction from the initial data to the final profile. On average, V1 to V2 profile edits resulted in a 30% reduction in data set size (Collin = 29%, Samantha =45%, Cecile =15%).

Third round [V3] editing resulted in a first draft profile for each teacher that retained the most salient information in service of a compelling narrative, and included omitting large amounts of Interview 1 biographical information and further condensing or eliminating redundancies. In shaping the narrative, I occasionally moved passages out of the chronological interview order in which they are otherwise presented in order to increase clarity or cohesion within the narrative. These moves are noted in the table in the appendix, but are not noted in-text. In V3 I also made minor editorial changes including omitting words and sentences within paragraphs that were unnecessary or redundant [indicated in the profile with the use of an ellipsis within a paragraph] and indicating omitted paragraphs within the narrative [indicated with the use of an ellipsis between paragraphs]. V3 edits also included further noun/pronoun substitutions where required for clarification [i.e. “Nachtwey” substituted for “his”]; these substitutions are

not indicated in the profile. Finally, though the overarching goal of profile development is to maintain the voice of the participant, there were occasions where I needed to substitute words to smooth transitions between questions and/or ideas. These changes, as well as changes in punctuation and capitalization, are noted with square brackets (i.e. “[W]hen...”). On average, V2 to V3 profile edits resulted in an 50% further reduction in narrative word length (Collin = 66%, Samantha = 45%, Cecile = 40%), making overall total reductions (V1 – V3) 61% on average (Collin = 75%, Samantha = 70%, Cecile = 40%).

First draft [V3] portraits plus biographical and descriptive information (see above) were presented to three external readers for feedback on clarity, cohesion, and readability; additionally, V3 portraits were presented to the three teacher participants for feedback, clarification, and redaction. Teacher participants made no redactions, and minor edits for clarification. Final [V4] portraits became the point of analysis.

Systematically excluded from teacher portraits was detailed background information including specifics of the individuals’ previous teaching experiences and career trajectories unrelated to the questions at hand and logistical considerations in the design of the *Witness to History* experience [i.e. permission slips, time off requests, funding, etc]. While not in the portraits, many of these details are included in the descriptive presentation of teacher curriculum design that precedes the portraits in chapter 4. The nature of the three-interview structure includes repeatedly revisiting ideas; in the portrait, these redundancies were also eliminated.

A table detailing the process of preparing and revising teacher portraits, including inclusion and exclusion decisions and word count can be found in the appendix.

Teacher Portrait Analysis

Following the lead of Dutch phenomenologists, van Mannen (1986) describes phenomenological research as “the science of examples” (p. 26). A phenomenological description, then, becomes an “example composed of examples” whose descriptive power is determined through its ability to permit a reader to see the deeper structure and meaning of the experiences as described in the words of the participant. As such, phenomenological research tends to employ a data analysis structure that privileges largely intact participant data, organized by in thematic categories that illuminate the meaning of participant experience (Grbich, 2007; Seidman 2012). Themes are then described from the perspective of the researcher, highlighting the meaning made independently by the researcher and the research participant, as well as the meaning that emerges from their interaction (Seidman, 2012).

In this process, the composition of the portraits is the first step in analysis, with the choices of what to include and exclude foregrounding certain thematic elements. I made these editorial decisions to highlight four salient teacher thought processes following the emergent strategy that characterizes phenomenological data analysis; perspective taking and critical thinking; curation and curricular legitimacy, personal politics and professional practice, and the interdependent relationship between words and images. These themes represent abstracted constellations of shared thoughts, rationales, and experiences that emerged from the reading and rereading, bracketing, and portrait development processes, and are described both in relationship to the specific experiences of the study participants, and in descriptions geared towards uncovering the more universalized and more generalizable (while not universal or generalizable) themes that emerge from those descriptions.

Museum Interview Data

Thematic Analysis of Museum Interview Data

Given a focus on ascertaining the “public curriculum” of the *Witness to History* exhibit data from museum participants were coded using first-round process coding (Saldaña, 2013) to provide insight into thematic concrete descriptions of the experience for the case context presentation. Additionally, I coded mentions of specific images by name (see discussion of visual methods analysis, below). Process codes clustered around 4 categories: preparation for *Witness to History*, exhibit content [general, as opposed to mentions of specific content], learning goals, and intended audience. Within each process category, I then compared responses across individuals, paying particular attention to how values, beliefs, and experiences varied by individual using a values and beliefs coding scheme (Saldaña, 2013).

Sub-themes emerged in each process category. In *preparation*, 3 themes: shared decision making and collaborative design, exhibit controversy, and the impact of previous exhibitions and experiences. In *content*, 3 themes: image technology and production, understanding the artist and his story, and curatorial neutrality. In *learning*, 5 themes: stated versus secondary goals, understanding art vs. history, VTS and close looking, political stance and social change, and presenting a universal message. Finally, in *intended audience*, 3 themes: broad inclusion, protecting special/vulnerable populations, and the complex importance of an adolescent visitor.

Data Analysis Across Teacher/Museum Participants

Collage Development and Analysis

First round coding consisted of searching interview transcripts for direct quotations (items presented by participants as direct quotations of speech or thoughts belonging to themselves or to specific or imagined others). Quotations that referred to speech or thoughts

directly related to the Witness to History exhibit, including preparation, gallery experiences, observations and reflections on specific pieces of art, and post-visit observations and reflections, were coded in an initial category [“museum sounds”]. Initial coding was comprised principally of the text between quotes; in a several instances, surrounding text was included where required for clarity [i.e. quote was included as an instance of what was not being said/though and where context clarified that relationship]. Each participant had quotations included in this initial coding. Initial coding yielded 212 quotes (teachers= 112, museum workers =100). Instances by participant can be found in the appendix.

Quotations were then sorted into five roughly chronological and thematic categories (pre-visit, general gallery quotes, quotes specific to images, quotes about or attributed to Nachtwey, and post-visit). Within categories, quotes were organized thematically (i.e. quotes about the same image were grouped together) and chronologically. I selected the three images that generated the most quotes (*NEW YORK CITY: South Tower*, September 11, 2001; *AFGHANISTAN: Dying Taliban in the Town of Kunduz*, November 21, 2001; *The Sacrifice*, 2006) for inclusion in the final collage. Additionally, I excluded some quotes that lacked meaning without substantial context, or that were redundant. I then organized the quotes into a gridded system that allowed me to begin to shape a collage that indicated both chronological time and the diversity of individual thoughts and experiences within on shared gallery installation. The final collage is 9 pages long, and includes approximately 190 of the original quotes as well as five photographs from the exhibition.

The collage is presented with a preface that orients the reader both to my rationale for presenting data in this way, and to my subjectivity as related to this particular interpretation; it is presented without analysis.

Visual Methods Image Analysis

In order to understand how images in *Witness to History* were talked about by participating museum workers and teachers, I employed Rose's 2012 visual methods analytic framework. This model considers the image itself, its production and its presentation to audiences. Rose refers to these three focal areas as "sites" - the site of production, the site of the image, and the site of audiencing. At each of these sites, a visual researcher can consider three different perspectives on, or "modalities" of, the image. These are the technological modality, the compositional modality, and the social modality. Each site can be considered through the lens of each modality; thus nine potential dimensions (production technological, compositional, social; image technological, compositional, social; audiencing technological, compositional, social) are available in which to categorize participant responses.

To create an analytic data set I coded museum worker and teacher transcripts at each instance where a specific image was mentioned, and described in one or more sentences. Each image in the *Witness to History* show, including *The Sacrifice*, was mentioned at least once by teacher or museum participants. I then used Rose's analytic framework to code the descriptions into each of the nine site/modality categories, making it possible to describe the findings at the level of the exhibition and at the level of the image, and separated out by participant type (museum worker/teacher).

Validity & Subjectivity

Validity

The validity of a phenomenological investigation is established "when the knowledge sought is arrived at through descriptions that make possible an understanding of the meanings

and essences of experience” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 84). The introduction of hermeneutic and artistic perspectives requires an extension of that definition of validity to, as Eisner (1981) states, consider “the persuasiveness of personal vision [where utility is] determined by the extent to which it informs... What one seeks is illumination and penetration. The proof in the pudding is the way in which it shapes our conception of the world or some aspect of it.” (p. 6). In case-based research, pursuits of validity rely on the use of multiple clearly linked sources of evidence, participation and member-checking with key informants, and clear and consistent engagement with theory (Yin, 2013). Lather (1986) suggests that validity in qualitative research that is openly values-based should be considered as emerging from research designs that contain triangulation of data, including methodological and theoretical data, evaluation of researcher subjectivity (particularly documentation of how the researcher’s assumptions are affected by the data), and the establishment of face validity through emergent analysis and member checking. These themes emerge in discussions of validity across qualitative research contexts. Lather also introduces the concept of “catalytic validity,” or “some documentation that the research process has led to insight, and, ideally, activism on the part of the respondents” (1986a, p. 78).

To Lather’s list, Maxwell (2013) adds using of rich data, searching for discrepant evidence and negative cases, and explicit comparison to the validity criteria. The design of this research addresses the validity concerns outlined above. It begins with a thorough review of three related bodies of literature (see chapter 2), as well as a conceptual understanding of both phenomenological and case-based research that justifies its use in the pursuit of these research questions. Data was collected from multiple participants across vantage points in relation to the research questions, providing a sort of triangulation. In the instance of teacher interviews, participant verbal responses are reinforced by their artifact analyses. Contextual information

provided by curriculum documents, media, and museum materials also provide a rich data set in which to evaluate the meaning making process and support or refute claims with case-based data. Member checking was conducted for teacher participants: after the portraits were constructed (see above) teachers were provided access to their documents with the instructions to edit for clarification, or to remove information that they did not want published.

Towards Lather's catalytic validity and participant insight, consider the following quote from a teacher collaborator. In our third interview, Collin discussed how he could better explain to his students the value of looking at difficult images. In the following passage, he notes the ways in which our conversation might contribute to future conversations with his journalism students:

I am probably going to be transparent... I think that there is the possibility that if a student asked me a question like this I could say "well it's funny you ask that because over the summer I was talking with someone at UNH about why I would show something like this in my classroom- and what I was saying was this, but what do you [think]?" ... You're right- it's good to think it through and talk about it, and I can just keep that barrier down [between me and my students] hopefully by saying "This is probably why I'm going to sound a little bit like I've worked through this because I did." [V0, I3, p. 42-43]

Collin was grateful for the opportunity to engage in deep reflection on an aspect of his classroom practice so integral to his daily work with students. He described our interviews as having the potential to positively influence future engagement with students, adding clarity to their conversations as well as minimizing barriers between his philosophy of teaching and his practice, as well as contributing to transparency in communication between himself and his students.

Consider also an intense moment of insight and opportunity for curricular activism for Cecile. When I asked in our third interview Cecile what she might do differently if given the opportunity to design this experience for her students again, she had a major brainstorm:

If I were to plan this again I might reach out to Nachtwey, see if he could Skype, get him to talk... [Maybe] even talk to the curator at the museum or the education director... I

would want to learn about the process. How does all this stuff work? So you go to Afghanistan and you take these pictures, what happens next? Or even to ask what is the story you're trying to tell? What's the narrative? How do you sustain yourself as a photographer? In a way, those are the things that kids are interested in. What is the Currier doing with these photographs now? What's going to happen to them? How does an exhibit like that come together? What propelled the museum to do the exhibit? [V0, I3, p. 25]

Inspired by her questions for Nachtwey and the Curator to think of a diverse set of collaborations that would be possible, Cecile continued by expanding the potential for collaboration to others in the school and the community:

“So is there something with the art teachers that we could, I don't know, get kids out taking photographs and doing something? Putting up an exhibit ourselves? Doing something that way. Or working with social studies teachers or vets who have been to Iraq and Afghanistan. There have to be people that we know in the community who could come and talk. Maybe go with us on the field trip, something like that. Try to make it a little more encompassing, I guess. It's sort of the idea that ok, this is the high point of the semester, how do we work towards it and what do we take from it? (V0, I3, p. 25).

By the end of her meditation, Cecile was imagining a pedagogical project in which the museum experience was the center of semester's work; where students were engaging with a diverse array of knowledgeable others inside and outside of the school; and where students were producing work and demonstrating their knowledge in various arts-centered ways.

Researcher Subjectivity

The hermeneutic approach to phenomenological research does not insist on the systematic disavowal of the researchers experience expected by other strands (see, for example, Mosutakas, 1994). The perspective of the interviewer is deeply implicated in the meaning-making that results from the research project. Seidman addresses the idea of validity in interviewing research by insisting on the acknowledgement of the “role of the instrument, the human interviewer” on the process of elicitation and evaluation of qualitative data (2012, p. 26).

In addition to external checks for validity, it is imperative that all researchers take into account their own subjectivity as they develop, analyze, and discuss their research. While this research departs from his perspectives on phenomenological research in many ways, Moustakas' mantra "I must first be attuned to my own being, thinking, and choosing before I consider the point of view of others" (1994, p. 62) resonates with the power and purpose of acknowledging researcher subjectivity. To that end, and though I intend to continually position myself in relationship to the data as I continue through it's discussion, I offer this researcher subjectivity statement by way of closing this methods review and transitioning into the data so generously provided by my participants.

Subjectivity Statement

I began this dissertation project by stating my personal relationship with the Currier Museum of Art. It was through my unpaid summer internship there in 2015 that I came to know both the people and the art that is at the center of this research. Though I am not a paid employee, I have become well acquainted with many of the staff, respect and admire their work, and count a few of them as friends. I both know that these professional relationships have granted me a level of access that greatly enhances the quality of the work, and acknowledge the complexity of the overlapping roles of former colleague and researcher.

As a former high school teacher whose practice was centered on project and community based learning experiences, and who was working in a trauma sensitive school, I come into this inquiry with a set of beliefs about "good" teaching in complex environments and around difficult issues. As a person who was a high school senior when my advanced writing teacher rolled a television cart into our first period class and silently turned on the news which, just moments after the World Trade Center attacks, was already looping video of those billowing clouds of

grey smoke, I have a sometimes visceral response to the ways in which teachers can/cannot or do/do not provide the required contextual information to make sense of strong feelings in the face of difficult knowledge.

I believe the design of this research and the presentation of its data embraces these points subjectivity openly and honestly, works towards naming them when they present themselves, and acknowledges the ways in which they both enhance and limit the research.

I also believe the participants in this study, a variety of cultural workers with different disciplinary, institutional, and individual identities, provide a strong foundation from which to explore the topic of curriculum design in museum spaces through a chorus of subjective voices which includes my own. My ability to engage critically in light of personally held beliefs and relationships that may influence that criticality is supported by the participants' own commitment to personal and professional growth and self-reflection. This openness is evidenced in participant's actions, including but not limited to their willingness to participate and reflect on their own work, and in their words which indicate an ability to simultaneously acknowledge the strengths of their work in teaching in the galleries, and the areas in which their work could and should improve.

It is to these voices that we now turn.

Chapter Four:

***Witness to History* at the Currier Museum of Art: Case Introduction**

Introduction

In order to understand how teachers experienced designing and teaching a learning experience centered around the *Witness to History* exhibit, contextual information is required. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the case study context; to describe, with some detail, “the public curriculum of orderly images” (Vallance, 1995) before turning to the experience of teachers which centers this inquiry (chapter five). I begin by introducing the museum and providing a brief overview of its institutional history as well as its decision to develop the *Witness to History* exhibition. I then turn towards James Nachtwey, describing his work as well as his own vision of its pedagogical purpose. After introducing the artist, I introduce the art and provide an overview of its curation. Next, I describe the development of the exhibit and programming, including collaborations with community partners. Finally, I turn towards the pedagogical vision of the exhibit, answering questions like “Who is the intended audience?” and “What were the learning goals?” from the perspective of the curator, museum educators, and

docents. I conclude the chapter with a summary of the “public curriculum” in relationship to the stated learning goals, and in relationship to the ideas of cultural trauma and cultural work.

The Museum

The Currier Museum of Art is a mid-sized art museum in Manchester, New Hampshire. Chartered in 1919 at the bequest of the Currier family, it opened in 1929. Moody Currier, an educator turned lawyer turned politician was not an artist or an art collector, but had an abiding interest in art, “on an abstract, philosophical level... [with a] deep appreciation of the role played by art in the development of human civilization” (Eaton, Zachos, & Friedman, 1990, p. 9). The bequest left few specific instructions for the museum vision; the Currier family trust simply indicated that it be established and maintained as a benevolent public institution (ibid, p. 11).

Just 20 days after the museum’s gala opening on October 9th, the New York Stock exchange collapsed, expediting the nationwide Great Depression that had already begun to affect the textile and manufacturing industries in southern New Hampshire. Under the directorship of Maud Briggs Knowlton, the Currier Museum persisted a vision and belief that a museum could play a vital educational role in a community, particularly during times of difficulty (ibid, p. 23). Knowlton also established the museum’s tradition of supporting and exhibiting the work of New England artists, and developed regular educational programming for children including art appreciation classes and gallery tours.

Because of the unique historical moment in which the Currier first opened its doors, Knowlton chose to adapt the museum’s programming to meet special social needs. In the 1930s she hosted government sponsored shows from the Federal Art Project and the Civilian Conservation Corps, as well as a travelling exhibition organized by the Resettlement Administration that included documentary photographs from iconic Depression-era American

photographers such as Dorothea Lange. During World War II, the museum presented travelling exhibitions of war-related photography and illustrations (ibid, p. 32). In the 1942 Currier Art Gallery Bulletin, Knowlton wrote

Today, more than any period in the development of mankind, do we need to uphold and sustain the finer qualities of life in order that we may, when peace is once more a reality, go forward with greater assurance that the whole world will be reconstructed on a foundation of enduring goodwill. (ibid, p. 32)

The spirit of Knowlton's early leadership persisted throughout the decades. Nearly 90 years later, the Currier Museum of Art remains committed to displaying the work of New England artists, to education, and to focusing on community and social needs. These values are reflected in the museum's current vision statement, which reads, in part:

- We envision the Currier as a vibrant cultural hub that fully engages the needs of our diverse community.
- We envision a lively educational platform, supporting a sense of discovery and learning in the intimate settings of the Currier, stimulating art-making, conversation, reflection, response and sheer joy.
- We envision the Currier as a source of inspiration, delivering content that helps our community understand the past, appreciate and evaluate the present and contemplate the future in this ever-changing global society.
- We believe that engaging with art can be transformative (Bridget, personal communication, February 12, 2017).

The focus on community engagement with transformative experience with art centers the mission and vision, and echoes through the Witness to History case data. Neither the vision statement nor the exhibit, however, is without tensions. Of particular note are the concepts of discovery, joy and the evaluation of the present in an ever-changing society. As the case unfolds, you will see that this exhibit provided ample opportunity for the consideration of these values for both the museum as an institution, as well as the individuals engaged with the development and teaching of the Witness to History exhibit.

The Artist

Internationally acclaimed photojournalist James Nachtwey has roots in New Hampshire, living in state part time and occasionally lecturing in Art History at Dartmouth College, his alma mater. Nachtwey's resume reads like a recitation of the humanitarian atrocities of the modern era. He began his career documenting IRA prisoners on hunger strike in Northern Ireland; was embedded in Guatemala, Nicaragua, and El Salvador during brutal clashes between governmental and guerrilla forces; witnessed the ethnic strife and civil wars in Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia; the violence in South Africa during liberation from apartheid, famines in Somalia, genocide in Rwanda; the Serbian attack on Kosovo, the refugee camps, the Russian devastation of Chechnya, the Romanian orphanages. Nachtwey has also taken pictures of more insidious forms of human violence; dire poverty in Indonesia, heroin abuse in Afghanistan, mass incarceration in the United States. His capture and representation of human devastation is available across the globe in both wide-reaching publications such as *Time* and *National Geographic* magazines, as well as in fine art galleries and museums.

Though he traffics in images of the most traumatic sort, Nachtwey asserts that the purpose of his project is educational. "People are moved by what they see and read," Nachtwey writes,

"they respond emotionally, intellectually, and morally, and they realize that there are millions of others who react in a similar way. Around these shared responses a constituency forms. My job is to help reach a broad base of people who translate their feelings into an articulate stance, then...bring pressure to bear on the process of change."
(Nachtwey, 1999, p. 469)

Noting that problems are unlikely to be solved without having been first identified, Nachtwey foregrounds the press' role in providing access to that initial acknowledgement: "the press is a service industry, and the service it provides is awareness" (Nachtwey, 2007).

Nachtwey positions himself as a collector and distributor of information, one that works

on behalf of those who are unlikely be able to do so themselves, giving “a voice to those who would not otherwise have a voice” (Nachtwey TED TALK) and serving to “remind us that history’s deepest tragedies concern not the greatest protagonists who set events in motion but he countless ordinary people who are caught up in those events and torn apart by their remorseless fury” (Inferno, p. 470). By introducing these voices into public consciousness and collective memory, Nachtwey’s sees his photos as stimulating public opinion and introducing new and difficult topics for discussion or debate. He acknowledges that these images are only one element in these ongoing dialogues, but notes that their ability to “record events as they are happening so that the pictures contribute to people’s awareness and help them form opinions... helps create an atmosphere in which change is possible “(Inferno, p. 496).

While Nachtwey’s position seems clearly to rest in the “war is hell for all living things” camp, his acknowledgement of his work in creating an “atmosphere” indicates that a slow rate of change comes with the deferred work of learning. Luc Sante continues, in his introduction to one of Nachtwey’s collected books, “possibly he believes that his pictures will ultimately have an effect, whether or not this effect will be very slow, maybe subliminal, never measurable, unsuspected within our lifetimes”(Sante on Nachtwey, p. 11).

Nachtwey asserts that anyone who comes to take pictures of war invariably ends up making an anti-war message. By bringing the faces of individual experiences to bear on abstract and difficult to define conflicts, the role of the war-photographer is to substitute

individual cases for statistics and to counter ideological justifications with individual costs; to enumerate the human features of the dead; to make suffering palpable so that people far removed cannot overlook or excuse it; to repeat all these things again and again in the face of the human propensity for shutting out bad news... to act as a vessel for those who cannot get the attention of the world because they have no voice left, if they ever had one; to appeal, to alert, to upset, to cry out (Sante, 1999, p. 9)

Nachtwey’s claims of pedagogical purpose are not without controversy. Some critics of his

position leverage critiques against the field of documentary war photography as a whole, questioning what to some seems like a non-interventionist, voyeuristic, sensational depiction of the most vulnerable. Others question the particular power of Nachtwey's pedagogical position. Journalism scholar Susie Linfield, for example, describes Nachtwey's pedagogy as "didactic: the stance he takes toward his pupils is like that of a brave, morally anchored teacher trying to prod his sometimes wayward pupils... His photographs' great value—their utterly uncompromising depiction of physical suffering—is also their limitation. Nachtwey's images are astonishing, but they are also inflexible" (2010, p. 214).

Nachtwey's pictures garnered immediate national attention when he photographed the earliest moments of the attacks on the World Trade Center on 9/11. Living, at the time, just blocks away from the Twin Towers, Nachtwey was close enough to see the first tower burning from his apartment window. "In the midst of the wreckage at Ground Zero," Nachtwey noted in a later *Time Magazine* interview, "I had a realization. I'd been photographing in the Islamic world since 1981...I thought I was covering separate stories, but on 9/11 history crystallized, and I understood I'd actually been covering a single story for more than 20 years, and the attack on New York was its latest manifestation" (Strauss, 2011).

These early shots of 9/11, nestled into the causal narrative implied in Nachtwey's "single story," were at the center of the *Witness to History* exhibit. Even the press release, which features the image "Sign in Times Square" begins with the drama of Nachtwey's 9/11 experience. The introductory paragraph reads:

On September 11, 2001, award-winning photojournalist James Nachtwey saw the attacks on New York's Twin Towers from his apartment in lower Manhattan, just a short distance away. While others raced away from the crumbling towers, Nachtwey ran toward them with his camera. His photographs are among the most iconic and compelling visual accounts we have of that day. (Currier, n.d.)

This dramatic story featured in many of my interactions with teachers and museum workers. Ada retold Nachtwey's story early on in our interview:

He described it like a sheet of metal hitting the ground and then he heard it was a plane. He thinks it's an accident. He has his bag packed to go to somewhere else for a trip to take pictures, a photo shoot somewhere else... hears the second impact, realizes this is not what has happened, and he grabs his bag, leaves his coffee... He walks downtown- he is midtown- he walks against a stream of people all streaming away from it. He makes it through the barriers, and suddenly he is in his home city but he is in a war scene. On his own turf. And he starts taking pictures. He was not supposed to be there, but he knew how to get in. And thanks to that we have all those images. Because the police were trying to cordon it off. He kept shooting, he kept shooting. He talks about the picture with the one tower collapsing, how he took that picture and realized "Now I have to seek shelter otherwise--" then he goes into the church, and the tower collapses. He keeps taking pictures, then he sees the second tower collapsing and realizes I don't have time to take another picture- I better get, save myself. And he runs into one of the hotels that are around there, close by around the World Trade Center and he runs into an elevator and it comes down and there is the dust everywhere. He said the only way he realized he was not dead was that he was suffocating.

Others recalled the abbreviated version of Nachtwey's 9/11 story that was shared in the ubiquitously watched TED Talk, or the lengthier video version, which was featured in the interpretive area at the end of the *Witness to History* exhibit. One thing that characterized all of the participant retellings was the visual quality of the descriptions. As teacher Collin noted, the story as presented had a cinematic quality; in telling me his version of this story, he noted, "I am imagining it probably more like an action movie in my head than it was in reality." As you will see later in the analysis of some of the exhibits most popular images, this story factored heavily into the way people interacted with, discussed, and understood Nachtwey's 9/11 photography.

Some participants, like teacher Cecile, had seen Nachtwey speak during one of the museum's public events and were transfixed by his relationship to his 9/11 story. She recalled the panel where Nachtwey spoke with photojournalist Greg Marinovich and a magazine editor, in relationship to his experiences on 9/11:

He did not want to say anything at all. He was very careful about what he said... There was that wall that was there around his personal reactions. "I'll tell you about the photographs, I'll tell you about being there, but I'm not going to tell you about how I felt and what was happening to me while I was there. That's not what it's about." I think people wanted to know, and the couple of questions that were asked he gave answers that just kind of stopped it. The editor, I think she kind of wanted [him] to go there too and he was really reluctant. She was the one that told the story of him on 9/11. How he had flown back into New York on the 10th. Nobody knew he was in the city. He woke up in the morning, figured out something was going on, grabbed his camera, and nobody knew he was down at Ground Zero until he showed up at the Time offices covered in dust... [and] sat down next to her desk. She said when he got up there was an outline on the chair because he was so dirty. He could have been killed and nobody would have known that he had even been there. (I2 V1 12-13)

Cecile's recollection reiterates both the 9/11 narrative central to so many participants'

experiences with Nachtwey's photographs, and highlights his overall demeanor, also an area of great interest for many participants. The enigmatic and heroic reluctant-to-share Nachtwey, somehow at odds with the strengths and power of his work, surfaced discussions with teachers and museum workers. Museum educator Bridget said, "There's a little bit of a Nachtwey cult, to a certain extent. Certainly if you're teaching kids to be passionate about something he is certainly a good example of somebody who is passionate about what he does."

Certainly, this passion can feel understated in his public persona. Nachtwey begins his TED Talk by saying, "As someone who has spent his entire career trying to be invisible, standing in front of an audience in a cross between an out-of-body experience and a deer caught in the headlights" (Nachtwey, 2007). In his documentary, *War Photographer*, he is quiet, almost meditative in his discussion of his work; he tells the viewer that it was a learned skill to channel the anger he felt into something "that would clarify [his] vision, instead of clouding it" (Nachtwey, 2007). It seemed to me, while listening to people describe their experiences with and around him, that the disconnect between the devastation depicted in his images and his own apparent sadness or anger made him a puzzle people wanted to solve. Museum docent Christine described him as such; "He's just so pure in his devotion to this career, and to the people of the

world... I mean the man's never married, he doesn't do drugs, he doesn't drink alcohol. He- he really tries not to use anything as a crutch to kill his pain that he has suffered. I think they should put him up for sainthood.”

The Exhibit

Though Nachtwey’s images had previously been displayed in other fine art venues, *Witness to History* was his first sole-artist gallery show. The majority of the images exhibited had been shown elsewhere, in other galleries or in mass circulation publications such as *Time* and *National Geographic*. The *Witness to History* exhibit was comprised of 24 digital prints of images from Afghanistan, 9/11 New York City, post-9/11 Afghanistan, the Iraqi War and photographs of American soldiers and their families dealing with the aftermath of war. At 30” x 40” these photographs were very large; hung on an even level in a subtly lit room with soft white walls, they created a powerful initial visual impact. Nachtwey worked with one of the nation’s most highly esteemed digital printers, Cone Editions of Topsham, Vermont, to print each of the photos for *Witness to History*. The high production quality attention to detail in the photographs contributed to their intensity: the colors were striking, saturated and bright- the grey scale in the black and white images crisp and cool. The museum worked with Nachtwey to purchase 17 of the 24 photographs from the main area of the exhibition (Currier, n.d.).

In an attached gallery space, separated by a wall, was Nachtwey’s 32-foot long photo mosaic entitled “The Sacrifice” comprised of images taken in American military units in Iraq. The Sacrifice was comprised of three rows of twenty black and white images. In the press release writing about the collage, it was described as such: “These images, taken in American military medical units in Iraq, tell stories of life and death in the aftermath of battle. While often unsettling, the images bring home the realities of war to a country that mostly received sanitized

versions of the conflict from embedded reporters. The title, *The Sacrifice*, confronts viewers with the human cost of war.” (Currier, n.d).

Nachtwey was very involved in the development of Witness to History. He worked with exhibit curator Sean to choose images, oversaw the printmaking process in Vermont, participated in designing and hanging the exhibition, and was instrumental in the museum’s public programming offerings and docent trainings. Throughout this experience, Nachtwey remained engaged in his journalistic work; curator Sean noted that one of the challenges of working so closely with a living artist like Nachtwey included pausing production as James was called away to Syria to cover the refugee crisis for Time Magazine during the final weeks before the exhibit was to open.

Nachtwey and Sean chose these images from thousands of negatives. Sean described the hours he spent in Nachtwey’s Manhattan apartment pouring over photographs of bodily and property damage that characterize Nachtwey’s war images as very difficult. “[Y]ou can’t prepare for... the emotional impact. I went into his apartment ... and spent hours looking through photographs. There are photographs that never get published just because they’re way too gruesome, and to see what happens when a person gets hit by a mortar is pretty horrifying... it’s pretty heavy.” Sean asked Nachtwey how he coped with the experience: “I asked him “How do you sleep at night?” and he said “Sometimes I don’t.” So he’s paid a price for doing this. After a few months, after the show comes down, that stuff goes away. But for the people that saw it, it never goes away.” Though none of the images ultimately selected for the Witness to History show were quite so graphic as those Sean was so impacted by, this experience and exchange shaped his vision for exhibit design and image interpretation.

Ultimately, the artist and the curator chose a series that illustrated the narrative arch suggested in Nachtwey's 9/11 reflection; the "single story." The show began with three images from 1996 in Kabul, Afghanistan. First, a shot of a woman mourning in a graveyard described in Chapter 1; second, boys playing on an abandoned tank; finally, a woman walking through the city ruins. Next, the exhibit turned towards five images from 9/11; two of the collapsing South Tower; two of firefighters searching through the rubble; and one of memorials in Times Square. Next were twelve images from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. From Iraq, the toppling of Saddam Hussein's statue in central Baghdad; three photos of bank robbers being held at gunpoint by soldiers; Iraqi children asleep in a room with American soldiers; a group of women praying; two of Iraqi families mourning the deaths of loved ones killed by U.S. bombs. Of Afghanistan, a dying Taliban member in Kunduz; a man in recovery at the Red Cross clinic in Kabul; American marines wounded in Marjah; wounded Afghan children being treated in an American helicopter. The Sacrifice, described above, hung at the end of the first gallery, separated by a dividing wall. Finally, the gallery turned left into a final room with images four images of American soldiers in various states of recovery from injuries sustained in war; one man in a hospital bed, one, a double amputee, in physical therapy; one preparing to surf with a specially designed prosthesis; and one, with traumatic brain injury, looking out of a window.

This final area, which teacher Samantha referred to as "The Recovery Room" was an important component of the exhibit's storyline. The desire to end the exhibit on a positive, hopeful note was clear. Even though the overall message, succinctly summed by Sean was "war is stupid," the exhibit closed out on images of American soldiers in recovery, surrounded by loved ones, with support. Teacher Samantha and her students were challenged and moved by these images, particularly the last. In her interview, she summed the ambivalence they

experienced beautifully: “[He] was trying to focus on the strength in people. The ability to overcome, maybe.... We were struck by the last image of the soldier with traumatic brain injury. That really made a statement. Yes, there are some people who are going to be able to strive and overcome... [but] there’s no overcoming that.”

Witness to History was open from September 10th through December 14th 2015. This included the 14-year anniversary of the 9/11 United States terror attacks; in remembrance of those who died on 9/11, the museum offered free admission on opening weekend. At the request of the museum’s board, this date range also purposefully excluded the Christmas holidays, a fact that upset many of the museum workers and signaled that the exhibit and its contents would be a sensitive subject. Sean expressed anger about this line of reasoning to the board: “I said [to them] “Do you think wars end through the holidays?” I mean, that does such a disservice... I thought that [the debates about timing were] pretty disrespectful to soldiers who had fought there, people who had fought there.” He went on to further illuminate a frustration with this choice;

You know we have a significant Muslim community here. Are you being sensitive about Haj? Which is in [September]? What about the Jewish community? We're opening this right around Yom Kippur... Is that being insensitive? And here we are trying to break down these walls saying we are all victims of war whether you're Muslim, Jewish, Afghani, Christian, whatever you are. And there are no winners in war. And you're trying to sanitize this by not letting it effect people's Christmas?

Though Sean and other museum workers consistently gave credit where credit was due for the museum’s willingness to leverage a show like *Witness to History* at all, these types of critiques resonated. This was due in part to another scheduling choice, pushed down from the board of directors.

To mitigate against anxieties about *Witness to History*’s reception by members and patrons, the museum’s board also made the nearly unprecedented choice to simultaneously stage a second temporary exhibition. Titled “Maxfield Parrish and the Power of the Print” it featured

Parrish's lithographic prints, ads, posters, magazines, books and greeting cards. Parrish, one of New Hampshire's most popular artists, had previously been featured in a 1999 exhibit at the museum that was one of the Currier's most well attended of all time (Sennott, 2014). In the process of making the decision, the board often used the language of "happy, colorful, and pretty" to describe the Parrish show, in was interpreted by museum workers to draw a contrast between its content and *Witness to History*. Museum educator Bridget said, "The addition of the Parrish show tells you something. It tells you that we're afraid that our core audience is maybe not going to love this exhibition, so we're going to put a little tidbit out there... whenever you see us doing something like that here you're definitely experiencing the fact that there are some doubts."

While museum workers expressed a shared irritation with having to prepare for and tour two concurrent exhibitions, there were some upsides to the choice. Bridget chose to see the positive side of what otherwise felt like an overwhelming to organize and perhaps confusing to justify choice to simultaneously mount a second show: "I was kind of anti-having two exhibitions at once, but I have to say that if the Parrish got you there and then you went to see the Nachtwey because you were already there... that's a good thing." This was particularly the case, she felt, for teachers, who would bring high schoolers to see the Parrish exhibit as a part of a standard "New Hampshire People and Places" tour offered frequently by the museum, but who would then stay and allow students time to explore the other galleries on their own.

Exhibit Educational and Interpretive Design:

When reading the museum's history, early mentions of Depression-era and war photojournalism stand out in a review of the Currier's history for their resonance with this, and

one important previous exhibit. When discussing their own relationships with the museum and their experiences with *Witness to History*, many teachers and museum educators referenced an exhibition of Vietnam War photography that the Currier had mounted in 2013. Called “Visual Dispatches from the Vietnam War,” the show consisted of more than 30 photographs, some of which were among the most iconic images of the era. Photographs, such as Don McCullin’s “Shell-Shocked Marine, Hue, Vietnam,” which shows in black and white solitary American soldier whose vacant face embodies post-traumatic stress disorder’s thousand-yard-stare, and Nick Ut’s photograph of Phan Thi Kim Phuc, “The Napalm Girl,” hung in a gallery staffed by volunteer Vietnam War veterans-as-interpreters (Feeny, 2013). Additionally, it was during a public screening of Nachtwey’s documentary “War Photographer” as a part of Visual Dispatches that the artist first spoke at the Currier Museum of Art.

Visual Dispatches becomes an important point of reference in this project for two reasons. First, it was the work of Don McCullin and other Vietnam-era photojournalists that inspired a young James Nachtwey to undertake the work himself. As a young man during what was dubbed by essayist Michael Arlan as “the living room war,” Nachtwey experienced, along with millions of Americans, the first conflict depicted in vivid reality and near-real time on television and in print publications. In his TED Talk, Nachtwey describes Vietnam’s personal impact on his experiences as a to-be photojournalist, and an American:

I was a student in the '60s, a time of social upheaval and questioning, and on a personal level, an awakening sense of idealism. The war in Vietnam was raging... and pictures had a powerful influence on me. Our political and military leaders were telling us one thing, and photographers were telling us another. I believed the photographers, and so did millions of other Americans. Their images fueled resistance to the war... They not only recorded history; they helped change the course of history... I saw that the free flow of information represented by journalism, specifically visual journalism, can bring into focus both the benefits and the cost of political policies (Nachtwey, 2007).

In the afterward to his 1999 book, Nachtwey describes his aspirations for his work, anchoring his belief in the power of his own images to make change in the world to those Vietnam-era experiences:

What allows me to overcome the emotional obstacles inherent in my work is the belief that when people are confronted with images that evoke compassion, they will continue to respond, no matter how exhausted, angry, or frustrated they become... That belief is not based solely on idealism. It has been borne out time after time. The work of the press had a demonstrable effect on ending US involvement in Vietnam (Nachtwey, 1999, p. 470).

Nachtwey's own purpose, to be in his own words a "witness to history" giving a voice to the voiceless, is tied up in early exposure to photographs from Vietnam. In public events during the *Visual Dispatches* and *Witness to History* exhibitions, Nachtwey often articulated his understandings of the power of war photojournalism in relationship to the anti-war sentiment that arose during the Vietnam War.

Because of similarities in the content between these war photojournalism exhibits, differences in interpretation and audience experience also surfaced during many of my discussions with teachers and museum workers. These emerged both in articulating the value of the shows' content for an art museum setting, and in the way community members engaged with the exhibits' design and interpretation processes. The most relevant of these divergent experiences related to the Veterans Advisory Committee.

The Visual Dispatches show was designed in conjunction with a Veteran's Advisory Committee comprised of community members who had served in the Vietnam War. Sean, who was also the curator for Visual Dispatches, assembled a group of area veterans from the Vietnam era in the hopes of ensuring that the exhibit dealt carefully with its messaging as it related to soldiers; as so many of the photographs from Vietnam were used to foment anti-war sentiment, they were also often interpreted, and misinterpreted, at the time in a way that maligned American

soldiers. The committee worked with Sean on the image interpretation for the gallery, gave lectures during public programming events, and facilitated in-gallery tours and discussions for visitors. The pedagogical power of this programming was reported to me by many of my participants; museum workers, with no experiences in war themselves, valued the input in describing the context of the images for a broad audience; docents and teachers who visited appreciated the in-gallery tours and discussions for their ability to bring a living human experience to photographs largely thought of as historical artifacts.

The Veteran's Advisory Committee was so involved and so central to the success of Visual Dispatches that the museum aspired to convene a similar working group, this time comprised of veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan, for *Witness to History*. Their goals were to have a sense of whether they were presenting the content in a respectful way, to share stories and perspectives on particular events and images, and to meet individuals who would be interested in participating in public talks or in-gallery tours and discussions. This proved nearly impossible to do. Though Sean and community programming coordinator Susan were able to make initial contact with many local veterans from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, none were able to commit to more engaged work. Susan and Sean agreed that a large part of the difficulty in recruiting participants was related to time. "It was too raw for them," Sean said. "They were a little concerned about being honest since the war was still going on and some of them didn't want to share any opinions... And then you know for some of them it was just, they'd come home, they want to put it behind them. They don't want to relive it." Susan noted that they had success in setting up initial meetings with veterans, but the museum was still met with resistance:

[W]e tried multiple times to get other veterans, particularly more recent veterans, but it was challenging to find veterans that were willing to come in. We had some folks come into the first meeting that we had, and they looked at the exhibition via slideshow and gave some feedback, or didn't give any feedback and just declined being involved for

sometimes no specific reason... I think that has to do with the fact that there isn't enough distance, not enough time has passed for the veterans who had served in the more recent wars. They haven't processed it themselves, let alone talk to complete strangers about it.” Though frustrated, the museum maintained their commitment to including veterans’ voices in the show, particularly as a way to counteract potential biases in written materials. To do so, the Witness to History team continued its collaboration with the Vietnam-era veterans with whom they had previously worked.

In addition to veterans’ perspectives, the museum team was interested in working with members of local Iraqi and Afghan communities. The purpose of this collaboration was identical to the work with veterans- to ensure a fair, balanced, and non-offensive experience for visitors arriving with different experiences. Interestingly, here too the museum met with difficulties in establishing collaborative relationships. Susan and her team were able to establish initial meetings with community members from Iraq and Afghanistan; they would come to the museum, look at and talk about the images, in some instances cry, and decline to be involved in the broader educational programming offerings. One concrete decision that emerged from these advisory sessions, however, was the decision to translate all of the written text of the exhibit into Arabic, the primary language in Iraq, but one hardly spoken in Afghanistan.

Finally, a third committee’s advice was taken into consideration when establishing Witness to History. At the Currier, a Teacher Advisory Counsel meets 2-3 times per year with the educational team to discuss upcoming shows and their relationship to school curricula. In their spring meeting, they discussed *Witness to History*. Museum educator and tour programs coordinator Bridget described the experience. The teachers, who represent a range of regional locales, grade levels, and subject expertise, looked at some of the show’s images. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most resounding reply was from elementary school educators, who said that they did not cover the content in the curriculum, did not think it would be appropriate for their

audiences to see, and would likely not choose to attend the exhibition. Bridget said that was good to hear. “I would have instinctually known that anyway,” she said, “but I think it was good because it really did help bring my focus to high schoolers and how can we package this with a sensible way.” This advisory committee observation panned out; there wasn’t an elementary school teacher who ever called while the show was open to ask if it was appropriate for their students. “This was a topic that was very clearly off the table for them” Bridget stated.

Museum Learning Goals

As with every exhibit, the educational team set forth particular learning goals for Witness to History. Museum educator Susan shared those goals, intended only for internal guidance and not for publication, with me:

1. Draw attention to the artistic qualities of James Nachtwey’s documentary photographs
2. To show that war is a sacrifice on all sides
3. Provide information/better understanding of Muslim traditions (L. Thomson, personal communication. August, 2016).

My data shows these goals were emphasized by the museum team in the order presented on this list. Both in how museum workers described their training experiences and strategies for teaching the images in the show, the focus on whether, why and how Nachtwey’s work belonged in an art museum was a central. In articulations of this goal I found a strong tendency to center the artist, his personality, and his personal experiences abroad, as described above. Visions of the second goal arose in curator and educator descriptions of the design and interpretation process, and the museum workers’ articulation of the exhibit’s goals for viewers. While museum workers strove to articulate this goal in a balanced and apolitical way, they were often oriented towards visions of social change. To my estimation, the third goal was not systematically addressed in any way through public programming, interpretation, or touring strategies offered by the museum. No mentions of this goal were made in any of my interviews with museum workers.

Rather, in its place was a general sense that one could learn historical fact from engagement with this otherwise art-centered exhibition.

Developing an audience understanding of the ways in which a media artifact like Nachtwey's photographs can be considered a piece of art was a goal many participants described. Curator Sean emphasized this theme in two different ways in his trainings for the other museum staff; first, by highlighting Nachtwey's work as it is situated in a grand tradition of art depicting scenes of war, and second by describing how the technological transitions from film to digital photograph, the digital printing process, and Nachtwey's technical expertise as a photographer position his work as separate from an average snapshot photo. Museum educator Bridget designed a classroom lesson for Cecile's large group, described in detail in the following chapter, which centered on the comparison between Nachtwey's photographs and famous conflict art, such as Picasso's *Guernica* or Goya's *Disasters of War*.

Docents frequently described the technological and compositional importance of Nachtwey's work in their tours. Sally described her touring strategy in these terms: "I tended to use the [photographs] where it was a question of perspective... that showed his skills as a photographer as much as his skills as a documentary person. Some of the ones with the Twin Towers were remarkably technical. I tended to talk about the perspective of the photographer in a number of different viewpoints." Docent Christine shared a similar approach, using comparisons between images to make sense of the artistic contribution of the work. "We went through the differences [between adjacent images]... one was black and white, and one was in color. What perspective does the color add? Why sometimes is it better to be in black and white?" Others, including museum educator Bridget, drew visitor's attention to the importance of the printing

process and the shift between film and digital film technologies in Nachtwey's own work after 9/11.

Though the majority of time in the galleries seemed to be spent engaging in Visual Thinking Strategies conversations with students (as described in Chapter 2, and described again below), or describing the artistic merit of Nachtwey's work, museum workers was most often described the overall purpose of *Witness to History* as aligned with the second goal. For some, the idea that "war is a sacrifice on all sides" was so obvious that it perhaps didn't need explicit articulation. In our interview Sean noted that what visitors have to learn from the show is "the big picture that war is stupid... that's the conclusion anyone is going to come to after seeing a show like that." The idea that there is an inherent and universal lesson to be learned from viewing the photographs aligned with Nachtwey's own notion that any good photograph of war is automatically an anti-war photograph.⁹

⁹ The observation that a photograph can transmit an inherently anti-war message is strongly transmitted in Nachtwey's own belief about the impact of his photography, and is translated in the discussion of his work by a variety of educators who participated in this study. The underlying assumption at play in this assertion is that there is something that all viewers will naturally experience through exposure to these images; a particular set of facts or feelings that are implicit in the artist's content and compositional choices. Given this assumption, which I believe is implicitly or explicitly endorsed here by both school teachers and museum workers, it seems logical to continue along a pedagogical path that deemphasizes language-based descriptions or discussions of the images' factual or contextual information in favor of instruction that assumes that the object's meaning(s) will be arrived at through the individual/groups interaction with that object. I took this topic up in my 2016 American Educational Studies Association presentation "*Docere? The Anti-war photography of James Nachtwey*" which explores the central question, "*Is the act documenting an event, however, sufficient to consider the photographer as teacher? What else might we consider in constituting documentary photography as public pedagogy, and how might that definition change when what is being documented is figured as cultural trauma?*"

Susan, taking a slightly more diplomatic stance than Sean, described the opportunity to learn about the universal impact of war both in terms of the intended neutrality of that message, and in terms of the potential secondary goals that might be achieved through its exploration;

We hope that when people come here they will leave with a better understanding or appreciation for the fact that war is war, and it impacts everybody. We definitely did not want to talk any sort of political stand, or lean more in favor of one organization or religion over the other... So that people could come with their own thoughts and opinions and then have their own experience. And then hopefully with any exhibition... we hope that the art is a dialogue starter for people. Whatever the conversation that they have is the conversation that they have, but hopefully it starts some sort of dialogue that leads to more... empathy or a different kind of thinking or understanding, or a broader understanding, or just sharing your opinion with somebody.

Susan's ambivalence about the type of conversation that might emerge upon viewing *Witness to History* is important, and is linked up with the strong crosscutting vision that this exhibit, while emotionally powerful and likely provocative, was explicitly apolitical. The vision, Susan noted, was to make sure that the museum was not taking a stand on which side is right, or who is winning, but that "People die. People. It doesn't matter where they live. People die and the impacts are long-lasting." Docent Ada noted that *Witness to History* extended the definition of what kinds of people are harmed by war. "[I]t's not just a foreign country with enemies or with terrorists coming out of it, but there are regular families there. I think he wants to tell the stories of the people through his images."

Nachtwey's own vision on his work appeared to contribute to the apparent neutrality of the second goal. Docent Noelle recalled a statement that he made in one of the docent trainings she attended:

[Nachtwey] didn't want it to have a political bent. "If you walk through it," he said, "you will at the end have a political view that war is terrible, it just will be that way, but I'm not going to say that to you. You will come to that seeing all of this tragedy, you will come to that war should be avoided but," he says, "the pictures aren't saying that." Docent Tim echoed this sensibility, noting that while all people take sides, Nachtwey's own perspective is one of a simple witness: "His view is that there is a huge cost to war, there is a

huge sacrifice involved... And he wants the world to be aware of this. So he has an agenda simply of being a witness... Trying to put the viewer in to the frame... [to] get us all thinking and talking after we look at it... I'm pretty sure I don't know what his political views are, but that's not what he's trying to interject. Other docents recalled Nachtwey's insistence during docent training that, while the images may contribute to an anti-war message, he was not anti-military. Noelle noted "[H]e wanted to make sure that that message was about how destructive war is for everyone involved. For military, for families, for countries."

Though Nachtwey's work and words demonstrate an alignment between his beliefs and the second goal of the *Witness to History* exhibit, the museum workers stated the importance of neutrality of perspective through all of our conversations. The implication of this adherence to neutrality seemed to be that one could not meet the second goal and also express political beliefs of any kind. Museum workers worked toward their vision of unbiased neutrality in perspective by including multiple editorial voices, both internally and externally (as described above) in the exhibit design and interpretation. Interestingly, and perhaps unsurprisingly, museum workers did not themselves feel neutral or apolitical about the images being shown. Early in our interview, curator Sean described how a mini-diatribes against Donald Rumsfeld which he had written into some of the exhibit text was removed in the editorial process; "Once you get really involved in these things," he said, "it's hard to keep your personal opinions out." He went on to acknowledge that it is actually impossible to work without bias, but that the counter to bias was not to work to eliminate it but to diversify it. "[W]e didn't want to hear it as a singular white male voice that is talking from a place that has never been to Iraq or Afghanistan. So we got enough people to shape the context where if it is biased there are six different biases to it."

The final learning goal, to provide information and facilitate a better understanding of Muslim traditions did not emerge in my conversation with museum workers. It was not a focus in the public programming offered by the museum, nor was it apparently taken up in how docents and educators chose to tour the exhibit with audiences. The inclusion of Arabic translations for all gallery text, however, does work towards this goal by providing a visual cue to the possibility that Arabic speaking audiences may also be viewing the *Witness to History* exhibit. I noticed some discomfort amongst museum workers talking about the Iraqi and Afghan people in Nachtwey's photographs, almost exclusively in relationship to describing the clothing of Muslim women. Though a linguistic analysis exceeds the bounds of this study, my attention was drawn toward the discomfort of participants in choosing their words.

Docent: I think the picture that was the most unconnected was the one he won the prize for, with the women in the... black, what is it? The--- [long pause]

Me: Burka?

Docent: Yes. Burka.¹⁰

And another exchange, with another docent, about the same image.

Docent: And then there was one where there are three women in their... um... I can't think of the name.... they are all in black...? [long pause]

This provides only a small window into the ways in which engaging with the third exhibit goal was clearly a challenge for museum workers, as, I believe, it is would be for the majority of Americans at this particular moment in time.

Despite this fact, museum workers did describe a broad, social purpose for the *Witness to History* exhibit that extended beyond the second goal to encompass something more universal.

Bridget summarized this shared sensibility: "The cool thing about being an art museum ... is that

¹⁰ The fact of the matter is that we could not know if this individual was, in fact, in a burka or another garment; the woman, pictured from the back is wearing a black garment that covers her head. Without seeing the type of face covering the garment provided, naming it is impossible. All this to say that for all my confidence in naming in the face of the docent's hesitation, I too could have been completely incorrect in my choice of words.

you can be talking about art and an artist while talking about the world, the social context, and everything else.” She went on to articulate the essential question that underlies this position:

“How can the art museum be a forum for change?”

Generally speaking, this potential for social change hinged on the belief that close looking at art has the potential to start dialogue. Docent Noelle noted that while people are exposed to many images, including very difficult images, on television and in magazines every day, they are not made to look at them. You can just turn off the television, or flip the magazine page. In a museum, she said, “you’re in a controlled environment where you’re forced to take a moment to explore something you find disturbing.” Museum educator Susan said that she hoped that close looking in the *Witness to History* exhibit would be a way “for teachers to have open and honest conversations with students, particularly high school students, who I think are open and honest and can ask frank questions and have a broader understanding of what’s happening in the world.”

Interestingly, the museum workers here did not seem to feel as though the potential for social change hinged on experiences with particular historical fact. This observation is held against the fact that there are both factual and political pieces of information that might be required in order to foment change in this particular context. Take this set of observations from curator Sean, for example.

During the Bush administration they said they didn't want photographs of coffins coming off, they very much controlled the story. There are political things, like if you're all going to go "Yes, let's go bomb this country" you need to make those judgments in an informed way, and you need to know that children are going to die, innocent people are going to die, and you need to know that. You can't just be isolating and say "Yes, let's go send all these people over there and bomb the crap out of them" because they are going to come back damaged. There's a cost to it, and you can't be so cavalier about going into it. I think there's no better way to get the messages about war which is something ... [for] kids that are in high school now, all they know is we've been in war in Iraq and Afghanistan. They need to know, they need to be informed about what's going on, and words don't do it.

Images do. And the museum has an obligation to educate... the museum does have a role outside of purely entertainment. This isn't Star Wars or Disney World. There's something very real going on. Museums used to take a bigger role in this in the old days. I am not saying that this should be promoting a progressive point of view or anything like that, but you can teach history through art, and we're not always doing that.

Sean, like others I interviewed, certainly held normative beliefs about what needed to be known by individuals living in the current world, as well as opinions about how those beliefs related to the images in the exhibition. There is a relationship between knowing particular facts, here Bush's restriction of images after 9/11, and making full sense of the story implied in the exhibition overall. While it is the museum's obligation to do this work in pursuit of social aims, Sean and others argue, the desire to remain apolitical in presentation prevents these connections from being explicitly made.

Intended Audience

Given the goals of the Witness to History exhibit, and my research focus on high-school curriculum development, I was interested in knowing who museum workers understood to be the target audience for the show. Generally speaking, the answer I received was that the images were for everyone, with the exception of two groups; individuals who had experienced trauma, particularly from war, and young children.

The notion that this exhibit was designed for everyone was linked to its apolitical-nature. When curator Sean described "everyone," he listed potential religious, ethnic, military and political groups he felt would find the exhibit accessible due to the ways in which it was carefully curated away from sending an overt political message. In his opinion, the inclusion of personal politics would have excluded potential visitors from experiencing the overall "war is hell for all people" message that the show offered. Despite this return to the refrain of unbiased storytelling, when asked who should see *Witness to History* several museum workers noted that

politicians and voters would ideally be among key voter demographics. Docent Tim, in reference to the show's final image depicting a soldier with traumatic brain injury, said "Politicians should look and see... the consequences of these political decisions."

For individual survivors of trauma, particularly suffered in war, the images of violence and death that comprised the exhibit were understandably described as off-putting and potentially re-traumatizing. Docent Ada noted that she viewed it as the museum's responsibility to let visitors know something of the content before coming in, "because it could bring back things we would not be able- we wouldn't want to be responsible for." Docent Noelle imagined how her mother, a holocaust survivor, might reach by saying "I've seen it, I know it, I am finally somewhat beyond it... I am not going to bring that back up." Providing information about the exhibit up front made it possible for people to self-select out of the show.

Adult's ability to choose whether or not to come separated them from the second "excluded" group, children. Museum workers tended to exempt children, generally children under 10, from their descriptions of the intended audience. Docents Ada and Tim described this exemption as being related to children's ability to connect to the images; nothing in *Witness to History* would resonate with their own experiences in a way that would make the visit meaningful or engaging; that a certain "historical sense" would be required for engagement that is absent for those under 10. Docents Sally and Christine argued the photographs were too violent for young children, and that the "particular energy" of an elementary audience would be at odds with the overall feel and intent of the show. Following her discussion with the educator advisory group, Bridget too agreed that elementary students on a class field trip may not be the best audience for *Witness to History*. She did, however, note that it would not be unreasonable for a child to view the show with a parent. "Some topics are best experienced with your parents,"

Bridget said, and she did observe multiple families visiting the exhibit with their school-aged children. “It was a great time to be there, parent and child, talking about a difficult subject together, rather than a child on a field trip navigating that,” she noted.

While the under-ten crowd may not have been ideal visitors to *Witness to History*, museum workers described nearly universally described the adolescent visitor as particularly well suited for the exhibit. Their rationale followed two lines of reasoning. First, high school students occupied an interesting age in relationship to the events of 9/11. For most of them, the attacks had happened in their lifetimes, yet before their own conscious memory of the events. They had been schooled in a world shaped in perceptible and imperceptible ways by the events of 9/11 and had lived in an America always at war, positioning them at an interesting juncture between understanding these moments as both historical and current events without necessarily having experienced the intensity and trauma of them first-hand. Noelle described this in-between relationship well; “This is in the field of current events versus long-ago history, and even for those kids, even though they don’t remember 9/11, they remember the talking about 9/11 when they were [little]; they would say “We don’t remember the actual event but we do remember it being all around us.” So for them it is still in their short-term history.” Interestingly, the anxiety evidenced by older adults in the planning of this exhibit and in anticipation about doing this work with adolescents did not manifest in the work with high school students. Bridget noted that since 9/11 has become “a history book type activity,” it made the work easier than people had expected. “It could have had a lot more of an emotional toll on someone in their 20s or 30s.”

Student age became again salient in relationship to their need to understand the events in order to make important and pressing decisions about their own lives. Docent Tim, with more than a hint of sarcasm, explains this line of thinking: “They’re like, what, two or three years

away from having the “right” or the “opportunity” or the “privilege” to join the military.”

Museum educator Bridget provided a broader look at this same idea.

Nachtwey always says that he's trying to expose the truth so that these things don't happen again. And this is what I would always leave high schoolers with because they are the people who can change this. They are the people who can change the world this way. I mean, I'm too old to do it at this point, but they can still do it.

Thus, the articulated need for adolescents to experience an exhibit like *Witness to History* was related, in part, to their ability to participate in changing the future.

Second, adolescents were described as being particularly visual in a way that is well suited to learning history, using images. One docent said, “For this generation of youth there’s no better way to try to communicate these issues than through images. They all have Facebook, they all have smart phones, they all have Instagram. This is their way.” Docent Ada noted that “most kids today see videos, they see the moving picture at all times, and [this show] brought across the power of a still picture because it takes you to that split second and allows you to stay there and really just take it in.” As a visual experience, *Witness to History* could meet students in a medium with which they were already comfortable, and challenge them to think about it in a different way.

The adolescent preoccupation with the visual was simultaneously framed as problematic and as holding tremendous potential. Consider these comments from museum educator Bridget:

I think high school students have perspective to gain from this. I think we live in a fairly narrow and narcissistic time as a high schooler where we're focused on our devices and we're focused on our social media presence, and we're focused on everything our phone tells us being the god's honest truth. And these pictures, in some ways, represent that revolution. The fact that the truth comes to us in our phone in a way like no other time, but it also is a time in which the truth can be manipulated like no other time... Here, adolescent’s relationship to technology provides a way into developing an understanding of the importance of Nachtwey’s work, and provides a justification for teaching students to be

critical consumers of imagery. The description of the narcissism of adolescents and technology resonates with the Instagram quote, above, as well as with Susan's description of the particular importance of facilitating discussions with teenagers. Susan noted that for adolescents, "thinking where they are developmentally... it's hard to think beyond yourself. And this was a good show to think bigger." Bridget continued.

It's also good for them to see that what happens in the world has repercussions not just for one set of people but for many different people... It is not just about what happens to the vet. It's not just about what happens to the people in the tower. It is also about the woman walking through the rubble in her town. It's also about those children being woken up in their home to men with AK47s. It's not just about fighting and winning a war, it's about what comes after that when you don't have a limb. It is about accepting other people's differences... And that it is important when we're so wrapped up in ourselves that- it is important to see the truth.

Here too the exhibit's overarching theme, that war impacts people from all around the world in similarly devastating ways, is described as particularly important for adolescents to understand, given their age-related difficulties making these types of connections.

Gallery Teaching Strategies

Currier Museum education and tour programming is based on the Visual Thinking Strategies model of art engagement. As discussed in the previous chapter, Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) is a teacher-facilitated but student-centered art discussion methods where students are asked to look closely at, and then describe, a piece of art. VTS uses three central questions ("What's going on in this picture?" "What do you see that makes you say that?" "What more can you find?") to engage students in image-centered close-looking, reasoning, and argumentation practices.

The Currier docents use a modified version of VTS. In a straight-VTS lesson, the facilitator guides the observations of students without making corrections, interjecting their own

observations, or introducing facts about the artist or art. This allows students to achieve the lesson goals (to look carefully, talk about their own observations, support their ideas with evidence, discuss multiple possible interpretations, and listen to others), towards the long-term program aims of developing individual student's aesthetic appreciation. At the Currier, docents modify VTS in a variety of ways; while most do include the student-centered close looking discussion in their practice, they also share facts, observations, and information about the images with which they are engaging students.

Students who visited with the high school teachers in this project would have experienced some version of this hybrid approach. When I asked docents to reflect on what it was they thought students learned in their time together, the ethos of VTS shined through in their responses. Christine said, "It's not what I want them to know about it. It's really what comes up for them that is to me more important and why they say what they're saying. I don't lecture anymore... it's more me guiding them through their observation and what do they see that supports that observation." Tim echoed this position:

[I]t's kind of a wasted opportunity if you just stand there and just feed them information- it's going to go in one ear and out the other. What you want to do, and that's why we do a lot of these VTS school tours, where you engage them to look at it. Then you start off by asking the Marvin Gaye question-- "What's going on?" and eventually, if you just hang in there and say nothing, let there be a pregnant silence, some kid will blurt out something even though they probably wish they hadn't- so you start the ball rolling. "What do you see that makes you say that?" You share, you share, and that's what you're supposed to do... So they, these little kids or high school kids can go through a museum and want to go through a museum on their own with their colleagues and have a meaningful interaction with something in the exhibition.

Despite Tim's description of a "wasted opportunity," some docents did still include a fair amount of content information in their tours with students. As noted above, the content of these tours was generally and understandably aligned with their own training and the goals of the exhibition; information about Nachtwey and why his photojournalism is art, and perspectives on why war is

terrible for all people. Following advice garnered from a consultation with the 9/11 Museum in New York, docents were encouraged neither to share their own stories about 9/11, nor to force students to participate in the discussion. This second rule is a major departure from VTS, and from the Currier's highly participatory and student-centered vision for in-gallery programming.

Public Curriculum, Cultural Trauma, Cultural Work

The public curriculum of *Witness to History* employs a narrative that follows Nachtwey's own assertion of a "single story." Without doing so explicitly through a written narrative, the organization of images in a chronology reaching back to 1996 Afghanistan, through 9/11, into wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and through to the bodily and physical repercussions of war on American soldiers implies a causal relationship between American devastation in the Middle East and the tragic loss of civilian life and property damage. This narrative overlaps one with which we are more familiar- the devastation of American property and loss of life during 9/11, and the loss of life and enduring impact of war on American veterans. In this way, the public curriculum balances the need, described by Apple (2002) in the introductory chapter, to balance an understanding of 9/11 in a larger critical context without marginalizing particular narratives or somehow justifying the 9/11 attacks.

Here, too, the public curriculum provided in *Witness to History* has the potential to fill the gaps in American textbook approaches to teaching about 9/11. While textbooks generally exclude the most fear-inducing images of 9/11, particularly images of the Towers on fire, or of individual and public suffering, Nachtwey's work includes both. In large part because most of these images were shot not for an art audience, but for mass consumer publications like *Time* and *Newsweek*, they echo the militarization of visual culture that became so salient in post-9/11 America, but was not visible in formal curriculum documents (Giroux, 2002). The photographs

and their interpretation, however, do suffer from the same “attention without detail” (Hess & Stoddard, 2007, p. 231) found in formal curricula, excluding information such as identifying perpetrators versus victims, highlighting the number of casualties, or illuminating the monetary or political costs associated with war.

Though “attention without detail” actually provides a fair summary of many of the critiques of Nachtwey’s work, sometimes characterized as lacking sufficient contextual information to make sense of the difficult images he displays, in the case of *Witness to History* this seems to have been an explicit curricular choice. In an effort to leverage the interconnected storyline and the main idea that war is terrible for all people, the exclusion of specific details may be seen as contributing to the universality of the story presented. Here, in a way that might reject some of the practices of visual literacy, the exhibit excludes some information for the purpose of avoiding the objectification of the people depicted in the story (Adelman, 2014). Instead, Nachtwey’s depiction of things that may not otherwise be seen, that are presented without details that may present a loaded or lopsided story antithetical to the exhibit’s key story, leads me to interpret the exhibit’s narrative as one that extends the conception of cultural trauma so associated with the American experiences on 9/11 to include others (non-white, non-western, non-Christian others); by including American soldiers alongside Iraqi and Afghan soldiers and civilians, the public curriculum of *Witness to History* creates an opportunity to push back against the homogenizing American identity narratives most often associated with 9/11 discourses, ones which frequently exclude the presence of Arabs and Muslims (Baxter, 2011).

The Currier clearly believes, and I am inclined to agree, that as an artist Nachtwey demonstrates some of the discursive talents required to be an effective cultural carrier; an individual able to shift a cultural story towards a vision of cultural trauma. Alexander (2013)

suggests that, to be effective, cultural carriers have to address a particular set of questions in their articulation of cultural trauma. First, what actually happened? As the story is told here, there is a connection between American devastation of Afghanistan in the 1990s and the subsequent events in the United States, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Three wars, and 9/11. The details of one story we know very well, the details of others are perhaps less well known. As Nachtwey's inclusion of a variety of victims into his visual depiction expands a sense of "what happened" both in time and in place, the details of wars are demonstrated only through the depiction of their victims, not necessarily in the violence enacted there (largely by American soldiers).

Second, Alexander suggests that a cultural carrier has to address the nature of the victim. Here, victims are not just Americans, but Americans, Afghans and Iraqis, all suffering in psychological, physical, and relational ways. This suffering is presented as equal in some way—everyone is suffering, and that suffering is universally bad. Rubble is universally rubble. Death is universally death. Similarly, the public curriculum of *Witness to History* creates a category of victims that includes women and children. Women mourn the loss of their loved ones at the graveside in Afghanistan and Iraq, and at the bedside in Army recovery hospitals. Injured Afghan children ride towards help in an American helicopter; American children look on, scared and confused, at their amputee father in physical therapy.

The trouble with this universal theme is that there is little room to think about how individual suffering is actually quite different depending on other subject positions. For example, in the "Recovery Room" there is an image of an American soldier in recovery and surfing with a high-tech and specialized prosthetic leg. In the previous gallery, a photo of an Afghan amputee at a Red Cross clinic positioned next to his antiquated prosthesis demonstrates the stark contrast between what is accessible for individuals who have suffered under this universally terrible war.

Similarly, while mourning parents are depicted in both American and non-American contexts, they are mourning the dead in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the injured, but living, in American ones.

Alexander's third question about cultural carriers and the construction of cultural trauma centers on whether or not the event and its victims can be understood in terms of a broader cultural quality and value? In order to propel the trauma narrative into broader cultural acceptance, the carriers must address the relation of the trauma victim to the wider audience; Alexander notes that "only if the victims are represented in terms of valued qualities shared by the larger collective identity will the audience be able to symbolically participate in the experience of the originating trauma (Alexander, 2013). In *Witness to History*, the valued qualities hinge on depictions of mourning, suffering, sadness, family love, and children—images that are accessible and valued across cultures. Assuming an American audience, these themes open up a space for a humanizing understanding of others who may not otherwise be included in our conceptions of loss and victimhood (and who may very well be categorized in opposition to those qualities).

Finally, Alexander states that a cultural carrier must define both who is the victim, and who caused the trauma. The message here is that each of these vulnerable groups injured one another—there is some mutuality in their suffering which is caused by violence from both sides. Though this is true on the surface, this rendering does not make it possible to ask critical questions about American involvement in Afghanistan, or about war crimes, corporate influence and their relationship to the war in Iraq. Similarly, the way that the images of 9/11 skew the exhibit timeline makes one day in 2001 seem equivalent to 14+ years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Though Nachtwey and the Currier include images of permanently injured American

soldiers, and *The Sacrifice* depicts with some abstraction the physical violence inflicted on bodies in war, there are no dead American soldiers beside the dead Taliban fighter, no American graves next to the Afghan ones. Though these facts may be essential to a critical reading of this exhibit, they would interfere with the work of a cultural carrier aiming to cast a broader net in terms of defining cultural trauma as it relates to modern war.

In the following chapter, I will present data that deepens and enriches our reading of the *Witness to History* exhibit as a learning experience, and explores the ways in which secondary English teachers participated as cultural carriers in cultural work.

Chapter Five

Teachers in the Art Museum: Life Histories, Lived Experiences

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to deepen the exploration of teaching and learning in Witness to History through a presentation of the participating teachers' firsthand accounts of the development of their own work. I have chosen to present their interview data in two ways; first, descriptively in my own words, and then as individual portraits, preserving participant voices with little editing in service of detailing the richness of their rationales, perspectives, and lived experiences. Thus, the chapter is structured as follows: for each teacher, I will present a description of their lesson planning and implementation at the museum, and a brief description of our interview experience to set context. These introductions are each followed by the teacher portrait. Finally, the chapter closes with an exploration of the themes that emerge across teacher data; perspective taking and critical thinking; curation and curricular legitimacy, personal politics and professional practice, and the interdependent relationship between words and images.

As explained in the methods section, these portraits are largely presented chronologically, following the three interview structure that traces participant experiences from their earlier lives, through their work with Nachtwey's images, and ending on reflection on their thoughts, feelings, and values as they related to the experience under investigation here. I have included ellipsis where text is omitted with a paragraph, and between paragraphs where significant amounts of text have been excluded. I use parenthetical notation in places where I have changed words for clarification. In order to maintain the narrative flow of the portrait, I have moved some interview parts together where they complement or deepen the understanding offered; these adjustments are not denoted in the text.

To explore the experiences of secondary educators teaching with the images from Witness to History, I conducted in-depth interviews with 3 New Hampshire high school teaches. As you recall, I was introduced to potential teacher participants via email by the museum educator, and conducted pre-screening interviews that eliminated art teachers and teachers from all subject areas who visited the museum during the Nachtwey exhibit but did not center their trip on Witness to History. As such, the three teacher participants, Collin, Samantha, and Cecile, and their Witness to History lessons and experiences, share some commonalities; of principle importance was that they each designed a learning experience that centered on the modern war photojournalism of James Nachtwey and included an in-person visit to the Currier to spend time in the Witness to History exhibit. All three teachers shared demographic characteristics as well; they were all white, with graduate degrees in education. All taught at medium-sized suburban high schools in central and southern New Hampshire.

Worth probing more deeply are two additional similarities. First, all teacher participants were affiliated with English departments. While I was both initially surprised by this fact, and

assumed it was coincidental, the longer I spent with these educators the more I came see that the relationship between teaching English and exploring out-of-school learning was clear. Each teacher described the ways in which the high school English curriculum is particularly well suited to the use of museum learning in general, and art museum trips in particular. For Collin, the English curriculum is open for exploring any content. Early in our interviews he reminded me that “there are books about everything,” and as such, any topic could be on the table for an English teacher. For Samantha, engaging with museums and live theatre, for example, brought life and dimension to texts that may otherwise have been difficult for students to make sense of or connections to. “I have a hard time,” she noted, “reading a play with students in class because that’s not the way it was intended.” Cecile’s rationale was slightly different; the flexibility of what might be counted as a product in an English classroom made it possible to justify all different types of learning experiences; “In a lot of ways in English it’s easier [than in other subjects] because [I can just say] “Ok, you’re going to write something.”

In part because of the affordances of English curriculum, all participating teachers valued out of school learning opportunities and worked to integrate them into their teaching throughout the year. Each of these teachers had brought their students to the Currier Museum of Art in years past, and described at length other formative learning experiences that they had facilitated for students outside of the classroom. Finally, despite their commitment to learning of this type, neither Samantha, Collin, nor Cecile received formal training in their undergraduate or graduate teacher preparation to do museum or arts-based instruction.

Samantha Weber: 12th Grade AP Language & Literature

Samantha is a mid-career English teacher at a high school in southern New Hampshire.

Samantha left college interested in pursuing graduate studies in clinical psychology, with a particular focus on working with people with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. After a change of heart, she shifted her ambitions towards education and earned a Master's degree in English teaching. Samantha teaches a wide variety of English courses, and incorporates a lot of film and theatre experiences into her curriculum. A recent College Board course preparing her to teach AP Language and Literature rekindled a long-held interest in integrating art objects into her teaching.

Samantha attributed her interest in visual analysis to her internship cooperating teacher, who modeled it often as Samantha was learning to teach. Her cooperating teacher would show multiple versions of films, stopping in the middle of key scenes or upon the delivery of important lines and encouraging students to consider their composition, content, and meaning. "They would accuse her," Samantha said, "as they accuse me, of ruining film for them for the rest of their lives. They will never be able to just watch. My students say that about photographs now, too. That they will never be able to just look at the photograph" (I1 V1 p. 3).

A sharp focus on critical analysis as it applies to consuming the English curriculum characterized Samantha's work with her students. As Samantha shared her defense of this style, I could hear echoes of many past conversations with students:

Students think that I am overanalyzing. They don't understand that in order to really think critically about [literature or] whatever it is you have to dig way down... They don't like to do that because it takes work and it's not something they're used to. They say "Aww, you're over-analyzing this" ... [but] then by the end of the year, they are right there with me, and they're doing it without my prompting. (I1 V1 p. 5).

Fortunately for Samantha, she was afforded the opportunity to refine this skill set for visual analysis in a summer AP teacher preparation institute at a local art museum. In a visit

focused on analyzing images using the tools of rhetorical analysis, an art museum educator taught Samantha and her classmates to look for lines, frames, color, contrast, focus and composition in an effort to gain perspective on how these different components can effect a viewer. Samantha drew the comparison between this work and standard rhetorical analysis by saying “when a writer uses a metaphor he or she is doing that on purpose to have some particular effect on the reader. Photographers do the same thing, but they use different tools.” It was this experience that set the stage for her work with students at the Currier.

Samantha’s museum visit was most deeply integrated in the curriculum with direct connections drawn between the overarching course goals and an introductory AP Language unit on the theme of war. Samantha articulated a two-part vision for the Currier trip. First, she wanted to introduce students to the skills of rhetorical analysis by beginning with images rather than text. Though textual analysis was ultimately the skill evaluated on the AP exams, Samantha believed that beginning with an image made most pedagogical sense. This skill set, which she called visual rhetorical analysis could serve as an early proxy for these later, more complex skills; Samantha linked this pedagogical choice to a belief that adolescents are “so visual” but are uncritical of their visual habits. Thus, using images before words is engaging and speaks to their preferences while also teaching them, perhaps, to be more thoughtful and critical consumers of the visual world.

As a secondary goal, Samantha wanted students to have access to a bank of images of war that would enrich their experiences with written texts. This supplementation with photographic images was to make up for the fact that students may otherwise struggle to imagine the reality of war. “Students are not forced to make the image in their mind,” Samantha said, “so I wanted them to have some images in their mind associated with war.” Samantha also identified

this inability to create mental images to student passive consumption of the visual through television and mobile phone technology.

The AP class would have a unit comprised of a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts on the topic of war. Samantha's curriculum plan was centered on a reading of Tim O'Brien's Vietnam War novel "The Things They Carried." The unit also included historical and non-fiction pieces such as Cicero's "On War" and Eisenhower's farewell address. Samantha also integrated the biographical Iraq war drama "American Sniper" (2014) and Eugene Jarecki's 2005 documentary about the U.S. military-industrial complex "Why We Fight" into the unit plan. The topic of war, Samantha said, was perfect for exploring skills of rhetorical analysis and argumentation. "There are so many varying opinions," she said. "Everyone wants to weigh in." While putting finishing touches on the unit plan, a colleague recommended Nachtwey's TED Talk. As she began to study the artist and his work with the hope of integrating it into the AP course, she happened upon the museum's exhibit website. "The planets aligned," she said, "and it was a perfect scenario" (I2 V1 p. 14).

With the curricular materials lined up, Samantha described her pedagogical vision for the war unit as an "unfolding." By beginning with the historical pieces, such as "On War," Samantha introduced ideas and textual styles with which students did not feel an immediate connection, and from which they felt disconnected. Then, *The Things They Carry* brought students to something "more modern... they relate a little bit more." Then, the introduction of Nachtwey brought them into the modern moment. Samantha's choice to hold the modern content back from students was intentional; since the overarching skill development was oriented towards understanding and evaluating argumentation, she did not want them to come to consensus too

quickly, to arrive at a belief about war that was not well reasoned. “I let them think about war in general and their initial reactions to what they think about war,” Samantha said,

Then I introduced the Things The Carried, we [talked] about the Vietnam War... and then WHAM. Here they are face to face with Nachtwey images that correspond to what Tim O’Brien is talking about. There, at that moment, they are shocked. Then the process is for them to take what I am showing them and to match it up with what they thought about war.

Before bringing students, Samantha previewed the show with colleagues. Her goals were twofold; first, to design the worksheets that would frame the rhetorical analysis, and to look out for what she called “trigger spots”- particular images that might evoke particularly strong emotional reactions from her students. In classroom preparation and in the gallery, Samantha had high demands for student production. In preparing to attend Witness to History, she had her students closely watch Nachtwey’s TED Talk with the purpose of ascertaining his central argument about the cultural value of his work. This attention to argumentation and detailed also characterized her in-gallery activities. Borrowing heavily from her own AP preparation summer course experience Samantha designed two guided visual rhetorical analysis worksheets for students to complete in the Witness to History exhibit. In addition to this, Samantha’s students had a scavenger hunt activity to complete that brought them out of the Witness to History exhibit and into the general collection.

These assignments, paired with time spent on a docent-led tour, meant that students’ time in the gallery was highly scripted. Students had to answer questions about the overall argument presented by Nachtwey in both the organization of the exhibit, and the choices of images. They then were asked to participate in a close looking activity that centered on The Sacrifice, the large collage-like series of images of American military field hospitals in Iraq. Upon reflection, Samantha did share some regret about how scheduled students were in their gallery time, noting

that one way she might change her approach would be to ask students to do less writing and more looking. Additionally, she suggested that, were she to plan this event again, she would do so without the docent-led tour, believing that her specific instructional goals could be best met through her pre-visit planning process, and her own touring strategy.

Samantha's students returned to their Currier experience all year. She attributed the experience's traction to students' ease with visual over word-based rhetorical analysis. Given that the underlying analytic skills were presented in the same way, Samantha could direct students back to their *Witness to History* work as a guide to doing more complex work later in the semester: "Remember you looked at this, this and this, and all those pieces fit into the message that you got from this image he created.... Remember how he started here, and he walked us through this. And he walked us through that idea. Then he walked us through this idea, and he left us with this idea. What was his message?"

Samantha invited me into her large, brightly lit suburban home for our interviews. We sat at a dining room table piled high with the summer projects of her three school-aged children; collages, workbooks, found-object recycled works of art. Summer vacation was in full swing and our early morning times together were often punctuated with the life of her home; children passing notes about what to eat for breakfast, a huge grey cat hopping onto my lap to sit in the sun, guitars strumming in the living room.

Samantha presented her ideas with an energy that I found contagious. Listening back to our interviews, I heard it mirrored in my own excited voice; reading my field notes I see it in the scribbled questions, lists like "Things to ask Samantha after the interview." Also engaged in

doctoral work, Samantha took a serious and studied approach to our time together. At our first meeting she brought notes, curriculum documents, and her AP Language and Literature work binder, three inches thick and so heavy that the sound of it opening on the table scrambled my audio recorder. This attention to detail carried through our time together. In moments it was turned toward her students, to James Nachtwey and his vision, and ultimately towards thoughtful engagement with the purposes of her own practice.

Samantha's Portrait

I think, today, students are so visual. I don't think that they read and make pictures in their mind the same way that students did before. If I think about why people read in 1800 it was to have this imaginative experience. I don't think people read for the same reason today. We have TV, we have movies, we have Internet, we have all of this other stuff that gives us the pictures, so we don't have to do the work for ourselves. I don't think that students do that work. They're reading *The Things They Carried*... but I don't think that they make the picture of the soldier in their mind. I don't think they make the picture of the suffering villager in their mind. So when I show them the image it makes it real. Even though they're removed, even though they don't live in that area, they haven't experienced that for themselves. It gives them that ability to connect.

Sometimes I think the more graphic the image the more they are shocked that that I would show it, or that we would be talking about this in school... I think that these pictures are useful because it gets them engaged... If I just showed them a bunch of soldiers walking down the street they wouldn't care. But you show them the image with the Taliban fighter soldier in the middle of dying and just part of a soldier, now I have their attention. This is what a soldier does..... That's shocking. [That] gets our attention. I think that's how the shock value helps.

I think it has to be timed right. You can see the evolution of their thinking. I think that that's one of the reasons I show shocking images, but not at first. I feel like if I showed the Nachtwey photographs first that would solidify for students where they think they are on the spectrum of belief about war and I don't know if they would be as willing to think about a different perspective. So I let them get their feet wet and then really show them the heavy duty stuff,. That lets us take the whole second half of the unit to really talk about the full range of possible reactions or ideas that go along with war. When is it ok to do one thing? When is it not? When is it ok to do something else? When do the rules change? How do you change the rules back? All of these sorts of big questions that people should be asking before they decide to go to war.

They engage because it's real. In my classroom I don't shy away from the hard stuff.... These are not contrived topics, and part of their engagement may be the way that I frame it. I tell them that they're at this age where they need to start to think about some big things; death penalty, assisted suicide, big things that maybe sometime in their life they're going to have to deal with. We have the death penalty as a possible punishment in New Hampshire. They could be on a jury some day and have to think about this topic. I feel like it's my job as an educator to help prepare them for experiences that they're going to have to have in their life... [I]n a fictional setting, we can hash it out. That's sort of safer, and it gives them that chance to think about it. That's how I frame it to them, these are real topics....I think of it as an invitation to think about things that they don't think about in their daily life is important.

...

It gets messy, because people have their opinions and their parents have their opinions. It gets especially messy when they start to ask my opinion. I'll say "Ok, as your teacher this is what

I will say." and they say "well as a PERSON?" they want to know what I think. And I say, "alright, you're asking as a person, not as a your teacher who has any influence over you, but as a person this is what I think. " Sometimes we talk about the difference between the two. What I have to say to be careful and what I can say as an individual. We talk about how teachers have influence over students and have to be careful, I want to help them understand that.... I think I am most leery [about religion and politics]. But the messy life stuff? I don't usually have much trouble navigating through carefully. I am always aware of the range of responses that people can have. I think that's one of the reasons students who have those sort of outlier ideas are willing to talk because I try really hard not to let them come to consensus too quickly. It would be really easy for them to think about a difficult topic and five people say something and everybody else just agrees. I don't let them do that. I push and push and push and I play the devil's advocate and I offer different views...

...

The whole goal of the AP class is to explain that whether we are looking at something visually or something written or we're listening to a speech, each choice is made for a reason. Whether it is conscious or unconscious. Each choice has an effect on the audience... What is the effect on the audience? What are the choices made, what effect does it have? That is what led me to want to go to the museum. I wanted to be able to show students visually, and I think they're so visual that they have a much easier time understanding that way, then we can take those skills and apply them to the written text after they get good at it.. [In the AP class] we were talking about war in general, not specifically the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, and trying to find the similarities and to talk about the warnings. In Eisenhower's Farewell address he warns about the military industrial complex and how it could take over and become a monster in itself. And then

the Jurecki film ["Why we Fight"] talks about how Bush and Cheney had this plan from the very beginning and they played certain cards and did certain things in a certain time frame in order to engage in war. And it is interesting to look at those pieces, ask and where does Nachtwey fit in? I think he has an anti-war message. Look at the cost and is it worth it? What is it for? For oil? That's what Jurecki says., What is it for? Eisenhower talks about power, is it for power? Why? It's not necessarily just one war that we're thinking about and talking about, but war in general.

The first thing that I did with them to prepare them to go to the museum was to have them watch the Nachtwey TED talk and do a worksheet I designed to go along with it. It has some quotes from him, then some questions... [Watching the TED Talk] they were just shocked....They were really moved by the humanity in his pieces. He said that he wanted to be the voice for the people who don't have a voice... They were really struck by the people. We spent a lot of time talking about that quote that he says, "I am a witness and I want my testimony to be honest and uncensored. I also want it to be powerful and eloquent and to do as much justice as possible to the experience of the people I am photographing." ... What is he focused on? Where does he put his subject? How does he frame it? We talked about what the pictures would look like if it was a government agency taking them. How would the perspective be different depending on what your goal was? If there's a government agency trying to supply medicine or aid then they're going to find the people who look like they're getting better, or are not suffering so much. ... And then we went for the field trip.

[At the museum] all of the students I had with me were engaged, focused, their attention is directed to exactly what the docent was talking about. ...They all wanted to have that inside scoop. When the museum educator came up and was talking about how Nachtwey had a hand [in how the exhibit was designed] and they were asking questions... Somebody asked how long

would the exhibit be there, what do they do with the images after? [The educator] was talking about how the Currier purchased some of the images, but some Nachtwey wouldn't sell, some were from his private collection that he was letting them borrow. They thought that was interesting. Where do the photographs go? She talked about how they could only hang for a certain period of time, and then they have to put them away because of the light.

At some point students were moved and they had no words. You could see on their face, maybe it lost some of its color. They were shocked and you could see it. They were not lively and laughing anymore. They were much more subdued. It became very quiet at some points, particularly in front of the image with the Taliban guy who died. Very quiet. Nobody says anything and they're not making eye contact with anybody. They're very much in their own reaction. It was extremely powerful, more so than I expected. Figuring out that their reaction was pretty intense I was like "oh- I think I am going to have some more work to do here... debriefing." Making sure that they were ok, that they would have an outlet, a way to manage the emotions that were coming up for them.

...

[In the classroom] I am careful in how I present information to them. I am careful in making sure that we talk about this extreme to this extreme. I try to include everybody's perspective. Same with when we're walking around looking at these images. There are some people who have siblings in the military. When we were talking about [the image of the dying Taliban fighter, and how] the soldier being anonymous and getting away with killing I come up with the other end. "Ok, but, you have orders. Your commanding officer says if you find a Taliban fighter you need to kill them. If you don't, you're not following orders." So while students are on this side, I try to bring it to the other end of the spectrum so that I'm including the

range of reactions that students could have, maybe opening up that safe space that invites a range of responses. Very early on, the second day of school, I talk about how crucial it is in our classroom that we allow the range of responses. It is only when we listen to the range of responses that we can really be educated about what we believe and why we believe it. It is not ok with me that they just say "I think war is wrong. Period." They have to be able to explain why... That's my job. First to make sure that they're ok emotionally and to make sure that there is a wide range of experiences and responses that are seen as acceptable, that are validated, and to allow that space.

...

A lot of the students chose to analyze... images in the Recovery Room... [T]hey were drawn to is the one with the balloon. The father's on the bed and he's a double amputee, and his kid is sitting in the back and is holding a balloon. They thought that was an interesting juxtaposition; here the kids are going to see daddy and the look on this man's face was so not, "Oh my kids are coming to see me!" I think the girl was smiling but the boy had a sort of a scowl or a frown on his face. They thought it was interesting how different people can have different reactions to the same situation. What's the little girl going to remember? What's the boy going to remember? How is their dad going to be different for them now? Those were the images that students seemed to congregate around.

Rather than focus on the pain and the suffering and the negativity the students felt that in laying out the exhibit [with the Recovery Room images at the end] Nachtwey was trying to focus on the strength in people. The ability to overcome, maybe. We all talked about how he really takes us through that whole journey in showing the loss and then showing the pain and the suffering a little bit with the couple of images, that was like enough. Then he kind of left us, and

we were struck by the last image of the soldier with traumatic brain injury image. That really made a statement. Yes, while there are some people who are going to be able to strive and overcome, you have the surfer who can surf with the prosthetic leg, the last image you have is the traumatic brain injury, and there's no overcoming that.

...

When I asked them what was missing from the exhibit, they talked about how Nachtwey left out the whole patriotic piece. "I am a proud American soldier," or anything that was celebrating the violence of war. The students were struck by this because I asked them to think about his argument- it's not celebrate American soldiers, or celebrate soldiers, it's not to celebrate war and our triumphs or anything like that. We talked about how his presentation of war and soldiers' experience is very one-sided. That was frustrating for them. They wanted soldiers to be held accountable but they also feel that patriotic feeling, that's sort of crammed down our throat constantly. "Thank a veteran! Celebrate your veterans!" That's what we're told all the time, so that's what students think they should be doing. So when Nachtwey doesn't do that they have a sort of negative reaction, until we start to really unpack why does he do what he does.

I think an exhibit like this challenges the museum-goers to think about this issue of war from a broader perspective, maybe not so much that "Hip hip hooray, we won we won!" kind of mentality. I think what we learned from the Vietnam War is there's no "We won." Nobody wants to say "We lost" but didn't we? Did we win in Iraq and Afghanistan? I'm not even really sure Americans know what we're fighting for. I think they thought we were fighting because Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. Well, Saddam Hussein is dead, and there are no weapons of mass destruction, so what are we doing now? Then it was Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda. Well, Osama bin Laden's dead, and we haven't really heard a whole lot about al Qaeda.

So now we're there... because of ISIS? So this weird transition for why we're- or we're there because they can't govern themselves? Or we're trying to impose democracy? Maybe they're not a democratic country? It's very ambiguous.

...

In my classroom I work so hard from the very first day to make it a place where everybody expresses their ideas. That's the expectation. You sit down in the seats in my classroom, you're going to talk about what you think and you're not going to be ridiculed for expressing your opinions... But I think the safe space that the museum offers is a different safe space. It's an internal safe space. It's a quiet that we don't have in my classroom... I think it's safe because we're with each other and they're with me.. But it's also safe because nobody put them on the spot when they were looking at the images. At least not initially. When we were walking around with the docent she asked very benign questions. Even the questions that I asked when we were on the tour were more about composition than emotional response... they had had that quiet to check in with themselves and think for themselves.

I think the museum gives the images more credibility. By that I mean they go through a vetting process, right? There's a curator who says "hey, this person's work is worthwhile." While I know that's all subjective, sometimes it is who you know, and just because the art is hanging in a museum doesn't mean that it's any more valuable than art that's not hanging in a museum, I clearly know that on a logical reasonable level, but I think when the art is hanging in a museum it adds credibility. Somebody has identified it as being meaningful, worthy of hanging up, changing people to see it. People feel it is worthwhile and they pay to see it. I think hanging in a museum gives it something. That's one piece. But I think also when it's clean and quiet and white or stark and then there's the image on the wall, and a placard with some information, that lends it

credibility too....In my classroom I have the screen pulled down and I'm showing them the image projected from my computer. The bell rings, the announcement comes on, somebody walks in the classroom. It doesn't get it the same level of respect.

[Visiting a museum] gives students an opportunity to see that what they're learning in school is not separate from life. I think a lot of times students think that what they're doing in school is separate from what they do outside of school. I work really hard at showing them that that's not true- it's not true. What we're doing in school is absolutely relevant to everything that goes on around us. So whenever you take them out of school, to a museum or to a theatre to see a show or even gone to the movies, it shows them. "Oh, so you mean when I go to watch a movie I should be thinking about the same things that I think about when I'm in school? Oh." Or "Oh, you mean the museum is free on Saturday mornings and I could come in here anytime I want to and look at this stuff and appreciate it? Oh." ... When you look at an image on the computer, it's the likeness of an image. It's not the real image. You have to go to the museum and stand in front of the piece of art for real... [M]aybe when you offer them the quiet space and they find something in it that they don't see when you just present it in the classroom.

Cecile Durand: 10th Grade, American Studies

Cecile is in her twentieth year teaching, and currently works at a small high school in central New Hampshire. Before teaching, Cecile worked as a museum educator at a local living history museum, an experience that dramatically influenced her later public school teaching experiences. Cecile consistently brings her students to learn in the community, often citing that the opportunity to leave the school and break away from the patterns that form in day after day of classroom learning is enough justification to take a field trip.

As was the case with each of the participating teachers, Cecile noted the curricular flexibility of the high school English classroom as a major facilitator for field trip planning. “We really try to teach the basic skills of English,” she said, “reading, writing, speaking, listening.... There's actually a lot of freedom in what we do. We have curriculum maps- we do a research paper in 10th grade, a lengthy argument paper in 11th grade, personal narratives in 9th grade. But how you get there is your choice. (I1 V1, p. 2)

Though Cecile currently teaches sophomore and junior English classes, she designed the Currier trip for her sophomore American Studies students. Unlike Samantha and Collin, who made explicit connections between the content of their course curriculum and *Witness to History*, Cecile articulated a largely social and cultural vision for her visit. Cecile’s rationale followed from her own out-of-school experiences that had created new opportunities for students and teachers to interact. Outside of the classroom, students are freed up to interact differently with one another and to think about and see their teachers differently. For Cecile, this crucial opportunity for students to see adults interacting with one another, a social experience not easily achieved within the structure of school days.

“The aim of these trips is to get out of the building,” Cecile stated plainly in our first interview, “[t]he experience is social. It’s a change. I know I’m not supposed to say this but I think we do a disservice to kids, especially high school kids. You come in, you sit in the building, you do the same thing every single day? It’s boring.” Despite the social nature of the planning, and the desire to leave the school, Cecile’s classroom still provides her students with the structure and space necessary to discuss and connect with their experiences. After these trips, they return to school to have a conversation about their experience. This conversation may not be immediate; in fact, Cecile consistently demonstrated comfort with the notion that learning

was often deferred or delayed. Students will remember these experiences, she argued. “If its not the day after it maybe it is a couple days later, it may be a month later, it may be the next year when they take a history class. That does happen” (I1 V1 p. 4). Cecile’s flexible conception of learning allowed her to interrupt a cycle of thinking that she sees as interfering with other teacher’s willingness to leave the classroom to learn: “Logistics is... one of the reasons that people give for not wanting to take a field trip. "Well it doesn't fit in with what I'm doing right now." Or "It's going to take a whole day and I am going to lose time to do, whatever, xyz."” It’s easier than that, Cecile argued, to integrate these experiences into meaningful English learning. ““OK, you're going to write something. Write a critique, write a response... a letter. Make something up.” This mindset was manifest in her own planning for *Witness to History*, as explored below.

Cecile’s overarching focus on developing a social experience included clear curricular connections between her American Studies reading list and the content of the exhibit. In the course, students have a war unit in which they read the English WWI poems of Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, and the American war poetry of Brian Turner and Yusef Kohmenka. Additionally, they read the Vietnam War novel *The Things They Carried* and watch the 2010 Afghanistan War documentary *Restrepo*. The following year, in World Studies, Cecile’s students would complete a unit on Middle-Eastern literature, reading *The Kite Runner* or *Swallows of Kabul* and watching the 2003 Afghan film *Osama*. To prepare her students, she had them watch Nachtwey’s TED Talk, and required that their parents complete an additional permission form, alerting them to the exhibit’s content.

Like Samantha, Cecile previewed the *Witness to History* exhibit before bringing her students. For her, the purpose of this preparation was to get a lay of the land, and to hear

Nachtwey speak. Having students come to understand who Nachtwey was as an artist and a journalist was the central academic goal of Cecile's fieldtrip. This goal dovetailed with a secondary focus on developing student understanding of the way that wars impact a wide range of people, including civilians and children.

Because the group of students that Cecile brought to Witness to History was so large, and came from several classes, her experiences at the museum were structured differently than Samantha and Collin's. One group of students were in small group docent-led tours in the gallery, while another group worked in the museum classroom. The classroom-based lesson was not a part of other teachers' visits to the Currier. In the classroom experience, designed by Bridget and described in detail in the previous chapter, Cecile saw a prime example of the achievement of her largely social goal:

When the kids were in the classroom, groups of friends would be sitting together but they weren't necessarily in classes together. It was interesting to see how they responded to each other in terms of what they had to say...what they wrote about. A couple of the class-clowny kids made comments that were pretty insightful, that the honors kids wouldn't have expected the goofs to say. Again it's another instance where it gives the kids a chance to experience things differently, for the honors students to look and say "Just because John is a goofball and doesn't do his homework doesn't mean he's not a smart kid." He's just choosing to not do school the way you do school. If you actually talk to him and get him out of that box that you've put him in he's really a bright kid. (12 16)

As a follow-up activity, Cecile had students write a critique using a format with which they were familiar from other class assignments. She asked them to choose a single photograph and write about it: a one paragraph summary, ("just the facts"), one paragraph of analysis ("focus on one element and give two or three examples of that element"), and one paragraph of evaluation ("what's your opinion, how did you feel about [it]?"). Cecile described this writing assignment, key to her curriculum year-round, as an opportunity to assess student skills in these three areas, as well as their overall expression.

Cecile's assignment choice resonated with her assertion that the flexibility of the English curriculum meant that a variety of experiences could be integrated, and then justified through writing. Upon reflection, Cecile did describe ways that she could have re-engaged her American Studies students with the exhibit differently in her classroom. Her questions for this hypothetical discussion ranged from explorations of the photographs themselves, their elements, composition, and content, to explorations of Nachtwey's vision for the exhibit, and the world. "What," she might ask, "is he trying to get us to think about?"

Cecile hung the slides from Bridget's classroom lesson up in her own room, leaving them there for much of the rest of the year. In the end of the semester Socratic seminar, students drew on their museum experiences as they worked to integrate their learning across content and theme, connecting it to a mid-semester viewing of Restrepo and their readings of Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* and Brian Turner's *Here Bullet*.

It was difficult to find Cecile's house down the long windy roads of her central New Hampshire town. Ultimately I found her, smiling and waving from the front door of a charming historic colonial at the top of a small hill. In our time together we worked alternatingly between an old, soft leather sofa near the ancient hearth and the kitchen table, under a newly-added skylight. Cecile was preparing for her sabbatical during this summer, taking online writing courses and scheduling a variety of museum visits in New England. We spent our introductory and concluding moments exchanging trip suggestions and talking about local must-see gallery installations.

Compared to Collin and Samantha, Cecile was quiet. There were moments when I worried that my technology would not pick up on the subtleties of her sharing. What I initially interpreted as early reticence fell away in later interviews; Cecile talked animatedly about her time at the museum, her questions about Nachtwey as an artist and a person, about the value of teaching and learning outside of school. The final moments of our discussion, where Cecile describes a collaborative, interdisciplinary and arts-based curricular vision were among some of the entire projects most exciting for me as a researcher. I found this set of ideas, which centered the museum and its content in the development of a semester-long course plan to resonate strongly with some of my own ideas about the potential for this kind of work.

Cecile's Portrait

I taught small groups and reading intervention. Small groups. I was doing reading workshop and bringing in young adult literature, getting the kids to just read... I coached field hockey for a little while. I took over the student council. But I also spent some time doing trips with the Outing Club. I worked with a teacher who was just amazing. You know, we went to California and did Yosemite. We went to the Grand Canyon. He would organize these trips, for years he did it... he'd just take kids wherever. And each semester he also would do a field trip, something that came up. Whether it was going to see a show, or going to the Currier, or whatever. I followed in his footsteps and saw that teaching isn't about just staying in your classroom and covering these books and doing these papers .. I think I have a different perspective on what teaching is, different from what a lot of people do. Maybe people who have had a more traditional, go to college, become a teacher, stay in my classroom, shut the door so nobody bothers me experience. I think that [Outing Club experiences] combined with being a

tour guide at Shaker Village, shaped my teaching. You're talking about the history, you're getting people to be interactive, going into the buildings, looking at the space, thinking about the people

...

The aim of these trips is to get out of the building. To experience some different things. There are some kids that don't even go to Manchester. I guess that's it. The content is what compels me to organize. When [the feature film] *Lincoln* came out I was teaching American Studies, we don't particularly focus on the Civil War necessarily, but it had gotten good reviews, it had great actors, it's an amazing story. Would the kids have chosen to have gone and seen it on their own? Maybe some of them would have. But probably not. And what a great experience to be able to go with your classmates, even if you are fooling around in the back eating popcorn or whatever. Just doing the whole thing... The experience is social. It's a change. I know I'm not supposed to say this but I think we do a disservice to kids, especially high school kids. You come in, you sit in the building, and you do the same thing every single day? It's boring... We can go see *Lincoln* and we can "Ah! We're going to the movies, we're getting out of school!" But then we come back and have a conversation about what they thought about it. If it's not the day after it maybe it is a couple days later, it may be a month later, it may be the next year when they take a history class. That does happen.

As a teacher it's fun. You get to see kids in a different way. They get to see you in a different way, not standing in front of the classroom or giving them a grade... When the routine is a little different the kids might see [their teachers] differently. I think that's interesting for them. It's part of that growth, when they start to realize we're just human beings too. We're a teacher, we're in a position of authority, but we like to get out of the building as well. We like to have a change... [On trips students are] seeing you at moments where you might not ever have

conceived that you wanted kids to see you. Going to an exhibit like the Vietnam exhibit¹¹ and becoming emotional about it, that doesn't happen a lot in the classroom. I think a lot of people make sure that that doesn't happen at all. And when you think about the content, English or history content, how can you not? Or you know, in the last ten or fifteen years when you think about the numbers of kids that you know that are serving in the military, and that craziness that's happening in the world, how can you not?

...

Kids have asked me why we are doing depressing stuff. I tell them it's good for you. It's like broccoli. Kids don't ask a lot because sadly I think they are resigned to the fact that this is schoolwork and so we just have to muddle our way through it, or pretend that we're muddling our way through it. "Why do you have to read it? Because we don't want you to forget. Even though it's a cliché it's true that people repeat history all of the time. And maybe your generation will be the one to figure it out." ... I have to say I struggle with it because I know I've had conversations with colleagues who have said, "I don't want to teach that book. It's too depressing." or "I don't want to teach this other book because I don't think it's appropriate." And we've certainly had parents call and say "I don't want my child reading that."

It is about personal influence and personal information. [When a parent complained that a comment I made in class was too political], I can remember talking about it with the headmaster. He's an older guy, he fought in Vietnam, he had a PhD in English Lit. He was a smart guy but always very welcoming and willing to talk. He said to me "I always try to make sure that the kids don't know my political affiliation when I was in the classroom." And then last year a social studies teacher said the same thing to me. I understood where the headmaster was coming from,

¹¹ *Visual Dispatches*, as described in Chapter 4.

but it was also interesting to hear the teacher say it, especially as a younger teacher. "I have to be unbiased in the classroom." I don't think I'm that way. I think there have been times when I've walked into that but I certainly have become more conscious of it. You want kids to be able to try out their ideas and to figure out what it is they really think. And if you judge them, if you tell them they're wrong, they're not going to participate. It takes them a long time to come back around if they ever even do come back around because a semester or a year goes by really fast.

...

Somewhere along the line, at home or at school I got some promotional stuff from the museum about [*Witness to History*]. In our American Studies and our World Studies curriculum we have a units on war and the Middle East. In the World Studies curriculum we read Kite Runner or The Swallows of Kabul, so we talk about Afghanistan, but also try to hit on Iraq and the Middle East and everything that's happening there. Doing the field trip made sense. Plus we had a great experience going to the Vietnam exhibit. ... The logistics can be difficult - you have to jump through so many hoops, it's as if somebody out there doesn't want teachers to take kids places, you know? Getting the bus, lining up chaperones, getting teachers themselves to follow the deadline that we need money by, to pay attention to when I have to turn in the roster so the nurse can look at the roster to make sure if there's anybody with bee sting allergies. You have to figure out the timing, because the bus can only leave after they've done their bus runs, but they have to get back to town so they can go and do their bus runs. There's my end, but then there's also dealing with the museum...

...

My husband and I went before I brought the students. We went to the member's open house and we saw Nachtwey. He was there. It was him, his editor from Time, and somebody else

he worked with. He did not want to say anything at all. He was very careful about what he said. It was really interesting. Almost as if he wanted to talk about making photography but he didn't want to talk about the specifics of being in Afghanistan. There was that wall that was there around his personal reactions. "I'll tell you about the photographs, I'll tell you about being there, but I'm not going to tell you about how I felt and what was happening to me while I was there. That's not what it's about." I think people wanted to know, [and the] former editor, I think she kind of wanted to go there too and he was really reluctant to. [The editor] was the one that told the story of him on 9/11.

I also wonder about his personal life. Is he married, does he have any kids, has he ever been married? Why did he choose this path? Does he feel like this is his responsibility? To continually remind us of what we're doing to each other? I am not sure he's passing judgment but it's sort of out there. "Do with this what you think."... Maybe he is passing judgment on the viewer. What do you do with those photographs? Do you hang this in your house? Do you save those Time Magazines? Because I am sure a lot of people have. I think I have a New York Times from 9/12. But what happens to that body of work? It's not like a Monet which is soothing and beautiful to look at. They're not going to go away. Certainly the museum will find another purpose for them somewhere along the line. Hopefully it won't be in relation to some other horrific event. Maybe it will be historical- "this is what we used to do. This is what the world used to be." I think about Natchwey, there are a lot of people like that, who witness, reminding us that we have to be the witness as well. Sometimes I feel like that's why I feel justified in exposing kids to this kind of stuff because I know it's not pretty and I know 10th graders are young. 15 years old. But it's what is happening, and we have to start thinking at some point about the choices that we make and what we're doing to each other. And sometimes I think young

people can have more of an influence than older people in their role as a witness, making it known that this is wrong. That we need to stop this. That's not the world that they want to live in. It's certainly not the world that we want to live in either, but you know you get older and it's like "what are you going to do? What are we going to do? I don't know what to do." You think about the whole political situation, like "Man, oh man what a mess."

We saw Nachtwey talk, and then we went and looked at the photographs. It was a little busy and there were a lot of people talking.. I listened to people talk, I looked at the response section. I wondered, "What are other people thinking? How are they going to respond to this?" In the Vietnam exhibit I just remember feeling very emotional, and the history teacher who came with us both times cried while looking at the Vietnam photographs. I was sort of thinking "Oh god, am I am going to be able to make it through this?" And then going with the kids, I remember thinking "We need to be aware of how they respond and just be on the lookout for anybody who may feel overwhelmed."

...

To prepare the class watched the TED Talk and we talked a little bit about Nachtwey. What to expect, why 9/11 in particular has just changed the course of the world. The idea that most of them were two, three years old maybe when it happened. They think they remember it, but I'm not sure how much they really do... I wanted them to come to understand who James Nachtwey was. That experiencing war isn't just about being a soldier, or being a civilian in a war zone. That there are all of these other people who are affected and get involved in some way... Yeah, it's depressing and it's overwhelming and the kids are always complaining, but it's what's going on around us. And it affects us every single day whether we think about it or not or whether we want to think about it or not. Also there was value in the experience itself. "Wow, we

have this museum that's 15 minutes away from our house. And whether it's seeing war photographs or looking at paintings or hanging out in the atrium there and having a cup of coffee and just people watching, this is a place where we could go.”

We brought about 150, there were two busses. One bus went immediately into the gallery; the other bus went downstairs into the classroom... You know what docents can be like - sometimes they sort of fixate on minute details that maybe high school kids might not necessarily be interested in, and then others were trying to have kids interact a little bit more, and asking the kids questions. "What do you see?" Some students were being lectured at while others were being asked to respond, which was kind of interesting. "This is what Nachtwey did. Look at this. Look at the color. Look at the composition. Look at the angle. This is what I know about the photograph. Where it was taken, when it was taken." Those background details which I think are important and helpful, but sometimes with you have to read how they are behaving and how they're responding.

There was the one photo where the guy had he been executed. Blood on the ground. I mean kids are drawn to things that get the most reaction. "Look at how gory that is, oh my god that's so cool." They also maybe were interested because they're supposed to be the bad guys, so somebody's gotten one of the bad guys.... The 9/11 Ground Zero pictures were especially interesting to them... they know them and recognize them. One of the photographs there's a sign, there's a piece of paper with something written on it. "Believe" or something like that. Again it's one of those pictures where you've seen it 1000 times but until somebody says "Take a look again" Let's look at the composition of this. "I never noticed that! I never saw that before! I never saw that before!" Having somebody show them how to look at the pictures and see what's really going on, what are all the things you can see. I think it's helpful in that small group situation

because they talk about it together. "Did you see this? Look at the color here." And then somebody else says "I was noticing this" and they begin to piece it all together. Thinking about it now, we could have certainly spent more time afterwards at school talking about it. "So we've got these individual photographs, the elements within each photograph, and then the exhibit. What's the exhibit really about? What is Nachtwey really about? What's he trying to get us to think about?" ... I think Nachtwey's purpose is about the humanity. Who are we as people and what are we, why do we do this to each other?

...

When I think about the challenges of integrating difficult images into the curriculum what keeps coming to mind is that photograph of that Syrian boy on the beach, the boy that died. That's not a picture I would show. Because I'm a mother. Or because to me that feels like it crosses a line. Even though there are dead people in Nachtwey show there are no children. Maybe that's what it is. It's just sort of visceral. The kids were certainly aware of the Syria picture it when it came out, and I feel like we may have had conversations about it. The emotional reaction to seeing it is what I worry about... I worry about everyone's emotional experience, but mostly the students' because that's part of our job. We forget. Teenagers can be so bratty and obnoxious sometimes, but they're kids too. You forget how sensitive and tender they still are. 15 years old. That's young, really young. So even though they say "Raaaah! I play Call of Duty and I've seen worse than that! My mother won't care!" we're still going to talk about this and try to be sensitive to what surrounds the issues that surround it.

There's also that part of you that feels like they're in a bubble; because they're teenagers, because we live in New Hampshire, because we live in the United States and this is what's going on. "Yes it's depressing but you have so many more opportunities than you will ever know. So

you need to see.” I feel like, “Grrrr” but you need to see. This is when I get on my soapbox.

“This is what's going on in the world. And if you're going to join the military, you're going to see this. Or, you're going to do a semester abroad, or you're going to go to school in New York or wherever, you're going to see differences and experience difficulties. How do you want to deal with it? How can we talk about this in a safe place and try to wrap our heads around it?” Maybe not feel overwhelmed by it, or try not to feel overwhelmed by it, but negotiate it somehow so that it makes sense for the kids

Nobody responded the way I was worried or were too overwhelmed. That didn't happen, which I am glad about because I didn't have to deal with that. You wonder how they're really feeling and what they're really thinking and if it resonates later on with anything.. I was worried that somebody would need to leave. And now that I think about it, I remember them saying “That wasn't as bad as you said it was going to be.” Are they overexposed? I don't know. Do they see so much violence? Have they seen similar pictures so much that it doesn't really affect them? I wonder.

As much as we try to find the balance for kids between written text and visual text. I think we can't help but use it. We have to use visual texts for them because, I don't know if it is a generational thing, or if that's where they're at or if that's a cliché or stereotype, I'm not really sure. There's something different about the emotional power in a photograph and in written text. I think you know if you want to try to get the point across that's something that you need to use... Showing an image is another way too to teach analysis, to think and look at the pieces and think about the whole, and to think critically and not just accept things for what they seems to be on the surface... How does the composition work? How does that work? What's going on? Talk about the context. Where does the painting come out of? Where does the photograph come out

of? And then how does that help us think bigger, think more critically about these things? What's the artist trying to say? Where does it fit in a continuum of art or history or story narrative?

...

I think the museum would choose to host an exhibit like this for a couple of reasons. It seemed pretty clear to me after the Nachtwey talk that this guy's a pretty significant photographer, and contributor to our cultural history... Because you can't think about 9/11 without thinking about Nachtwey's photographs. I think there's that aspect there, that it's important that we recognize people who are doing such cool things in the face of all this insanity that's happening in the world. I think also there's like the public education part. That we think we might know what the story is but we don't know the whole story, or we don't know every story, and so Nachtwey's got an angle on the story that will give us a different view. It's art. I guess too to understand art, to understand photography as a type of art, a genre or a medium... [We] can provoke questions like is that art? Is that montage of all those hospital scenes, is that art? Or what is that? What's your response to it? Maybe to promote some kind of understanding, at some level, of that question. To help kids know kids that there are different ways that you can understand things. And that's ok. You may understand it on an emotional level, you may understand it on a technical level. It's the same picture we're seeing but how great it is that we can all see it differently? There's no one answer.

There is a difference between looking in the museum and in the classroom... They could learn different things in each place. Museum people can give context and interpretation of photographs, talk about the process... Just being in a museum space and having that artwork in front of you, that's just incredible in a positive way. I can remember when I went to the National Museum in London with my sisters, and my sister Leanne went up to a Van Gogh, somebody

who painted with big globs of paint, texture, she was like "I want to touch that!" We were like "Get away from that painting! The guards are going to kick us out!" But having the physicality of the art, seeing it. I am showing it from a projector, my terrible projector that I've been trying to get changed for there years, that has a green halo in the middle of it no matter what you see. I have to ask is the internet working today? Is it not? Logistical things... There's a different atmosphere in a museum. It's quiet. It may not be totally quiet but there just seems to be this calm. We're going to just take our time here and reflect.

Students experience that calm. They might not quite know what it is, what's going on, but they certainly know the space is different. And for those kids who have never done that before it's certainly important to just get out of the classroom space. Again another cliché - you don't learn everything you need to know in school, so going to the museum, it's big.

...

What does integrating museum learning do for the curriculum? It forces us to make space for other things and not be so rigid about what we're teaching. To remember that there has to be time to do things out of the classroom. But it also can open up connections. We get stuck in our classroom. I'm teaching English, you have to do what you do with English... but thinking about cross-curricular options and opportunities. How cool would it be to plan, to know this exhibit is happening in the spring, so let's take that and make that the central piece of the curriculum. How can we build a course around that? Could we develop some sort of Socratic seminar? Maybe more creative responses? ...Take your own photos. Do a drawing, write a poem.... how else can you show me that you've taken something from this? That you understand something broader than just "We went on a field trip"? Even thinking about where can this fit in somewhere else in your learning?

You've got to be a radical. Most teachers, Type A, "We want the answers right here- tell us how to do it!" [I say] "Are they reading? Are they writing? Are they sharing experiences? Are they coming to understand each other and the world? That's what our job is. I am not an English teacher. You're not a chemistry teacher? We're teachers. That's what's important. You can get away with it. Break all the rules you can. Get them all the books that they can get their hands on." Take the risk- go see some tough photographs. They're going to find them, right? They're going to watch those crazy R rated movies or whatever insanity that people post on the Internet. Or they're going to go to Afghanistan as a soldier.

Collin O'Malley: 11th and 12th Grade Journalism

Collin is an early career teacher at a coastal New Hampshire high school. His interest in being an English teacher stemmed in from both his belief that the study of English was the best way to "help other people love learning things in a way that empowers them" [V0, I1, p. 1] and by a particularly influential high school philosophy course in the English department. At the time of our interviews, Collin was in his seventh year as a full-time high school educator, and was primarily responsible for two journalism courses. In his introductory course, Journalism I, Collin consistently used the work of James Natchwey as a way in to studying photojournalism and ethics. It was his advanced course, Journalism II, with which Collin travelled to the Currier. Journalism II is a course geared towards the production of a quarterly school journal.

Though Collin had taught other English courses in his career, he described his work in journalism with an engagement and animation that conveyed his belief in its value. The overarching goals of both journalism courses are to encourage student engagement with the guiding question, "What is ethically acceptable and unacceptable in multimedia journalism?" Both the subject matter, and this approach to teaching, means that students in Collin's courses

are frequently in contact with difficult ideas and photographs. These images are useful for teaching, Collin notes, because they have a natural hook:

You have a gut feeling, you're like "That's ok-- that's not ok". But then when you're asked "Why is that ok, why is that not ok?" it gets in to what should journalists be doing. Why would you take a picture of someone who is starving to death? Why would you take a picture of someone who's just been shot? That's kind of a crazy thing to do, so what are you doing? Why? And then instead of just a gut reaction like "You shouldn't do that!" it's more about what do journalists do that, depending on your opinion, other mediums can't do? Things where there would be a vacuum if it weren't for journalists? (I3 V1 p. 22-23)

Here too one can see the appeal and connection of Nachtwey's work. Collin screens Nachtwey's documentary, *War Photographer*, each semester in his introductory Journalism course in a unit on journalistic portraits. For Collin, the documentary serves two purposes; first, it is a strong example of a journalistic portrait, documenting the life and experience of Nachtwey in relationship to the challenges of his career, and his own vision. Second, it engages the questions of journalistic ethics in real, applied, first-hand accounts with Nachtwey and the editors with whom he works.

When we first met, Collin had just returned with his advanced journalism students from an overnight trip to a student journalism conference at Columbia University in New York City. He described the purpose of this trip, quite labor- and capital-intensive in its planning and execution, as having great social, academic, and professional value. Students workshopped ideas for their own publication, participated in networking and team building opportunities, and left the experience with energy and enthusiasm for their work. Collin saw the value of this trip as extending further; something about being at a prestigious university in a city like New York left students feeling in awe, and also reminded of the importance and reach of their own work.

The notion that leaving the classroom to learn lent legitimacy or "real"-ness to the school curriculum featured prominently in Collin's rationale for the Witness to History visit. The idea of

external validation, both in terms of professional skill development and the value of journalistic work, paired with the overarching course essential question, “What is acceptable and unacceptable in multimedia journalism?” were his guiding principles when articulating his vision in our interviews. “I want them to take themselves more seriously [as journalists],” he said. “Going to an exhibition like that... it’s a reminder that journalism can be one of the most serious undertakings” (I2 V1 p. 17). Interrupting an adolescent tendency not to understand how seriously their work might be considered by others, Collin continues by saying,

“No, what you can do can actually be really meaningful story telling- so you should take yourself seriously, or at least acknowledge that you have that power and that you're choosing to not do that. Be able to explain yourself, but take what you're doing seriously. Know that you now have this responsibility as a journalist” (I2 V1 p. 17).

Collin chose to bring his advanced journalism students to Witness to History, justifying the choice to bring them over the introductory students who would be encountering Nachtwey for the first time in Journalism I along several on several dimensions. Some of the concerns were logistical and behavioral; without knowing how large the exhibition was, he was concerned that his large combined introductory classes, totaling more than 60 students, would overwhelm the space, and as such would have a less powerful viewing experience. Some of them were tied to student ability to engage in meaningful learning in such a large and heterogeneous group. “Something happens to field trips,” he said, “when you get to a certain size... [Students are] like ‘Yeah, we don’t have to be at school today!’ They’re with their friends... or with someone they are trying to date. You just can’t control those things.”

Most importantly, however, Collin felt as though the eleven Journalism II students would get more out of the exhibition, and would be able to “engage with it in a different way.” Their investment in journalism was evidenced by their choice to take the advanced class. Like the Columbia trip the year past, Collin also saw this as an early-year opportunity for the group to

connect to one another over a social, engaging and course-related learning experience. Several students had expressed interested in taking up careers in journalism and photojournalism, or had journalists in their families.

Collin required very little from his Journalism II students in terms of preparation for the visit. He facilitated an informal preparatory discussion, one that he characterized as very much in keeping with the informal nature of the largely production-oriented course. He had happened upon the exhibit on the Currier website when doing an annual Google search for Nachtwey's updated work experiences, in anticipation of student's yearly "Where is he now?" question after watching the documentary. Because the advanced students had all previously viewed "War Photographer" and as such were already familiar with the content of his work, the discussion focused on the new material covered by Nachtwey since the film's 2001 debut; namely, American-involved wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the World Trade Center attacks on 9/11.

Additionally, one student had just finished a piece for the journal that dealt with difficult student response to the Syrian refugee crisis. It was this article that made up much of the classes' preparation for the visit. Collin tied his student's Syria work to this geo-political discussion, and to the voice and vision of Nachtwey himself. The article, titled "Why we should care" centered on high school students' responses to the image of Alan Kurdi, the 3 year-old Syrian boy whose body was photographed on a beach in Turkey. The student's argument followed a line similar to Nachtwey's own logic; "[He] focused on the political side of things, what was going on and why it matters to people and how we should see and be aware of and then, depending on how we feel about it, act on the plight of others... his argument that, "We should be there even though it can be really overwhelming to be there, mentally" [was inspired by Nachtwey's]" (I2 V1 p. 13- 14).

Collin's approach to debriefing after the visit was structured similarly to his preparatory lesson. Though his students' close looking and conversations in the gallery space impressed him, he was underwhelmed by the informal discussion in the classroom when students returned to school. This seemed particularly frustrating to Collin in part because his commitment to out-of-school learning was predicated on a notion of easy and impactful student engagement that could then be translated into meaningful school-based discussions.

Despite the opportunity offered by reuniting in the classroom after the trip, Collin was disappointed with his students' post-visit discussion. Though they said some "good stuff" they weren't as engaged as he had hoped. The discussion did not run itself, as he had anticipated it would given the power of the images. Collin attributed this in part to the complex lives of adolescents: "I think it's a lot to take in when you're a teenager. There's just a lot in your brain at the same time all the time" (I2 V1 p. 18). In a similar vein, he also suggested that the students found the content difficult to discuss because of its affective impact; "Maybe it was more emotionally draining than I understood it to be for them and they were just like, 'I can't talk about this anymore.'"" He also mentioned that they might have been tired, or ready to get back to their work in the fast-paced deadline-focused journalism course.

Collin did attribute the lack of student engagement in post-visit discussion in part to his teaching, acknowledging that were he to do it again, he would have facilitated a more structured learning experience. This would include preparing students differently, first by reminding them of their experiences with *War Photographer*, and their views on the ethics and importance of Nachtwey's work, and connecting his work to their own burgeoning journalistic efforts. This preparatory work would provide a sense of purpose for the visit that he thought may have felt

lacking in this instance. A follow-up conversation shaped by student reflection on specific questions and observations would also, in Collin's estimation, have yielded more robust results.

I met Collin in the basement of the University library, a cool respite from the otherwise oppressive July heat. He was on campus participating in graduate classes at the summer literary institute. Energetic and thoughtful, Collin seemed at ease even in our earliest conversations. To our initial interview he brought a stack of his student's publications, all glossy covers and edgy, thoughtful art and a hand-thrown clay mug with a cartoon drawing of himself paired with the phrase "Insert bad pun here." Collin noted that students often remarked on his sense of humor, and in what seemed to me like somewhat diametrical opposition, his tendency to "remind them of their race all the time." This attention to the relationship between social and cultural forces, the work of journalism, and the experiences of individual students was an important thread throughout our interviews.

As our conversations unfolded, Collin presented himself as a thoughtful practitioner, balanced on an edge between pushing students to engage deeply and creatively with the world around them and maintaining a "professional" and somewhat apolitical approach to the highly polarizing topic of modern multi-media journalism. Below, Collin describes his teaching life, experiences with Nachtwey as a journalist and topic of study, time in the Currier galleries with Journalism II students, and thoughts and feelings on the purpose of museum education.

Collin's Portrait

I knew that I wanted to be a teacher, and I thought that English was the best for me... I'm a generalist, and English I think lends itself the most to generalists than any other subject.... You get to have discussions and the skills you teach the content at least for me, is more flexible. It's critical thinking, communication, writing, reading. There are things you do that are really important in an English class that don't require that you memorize specifics.

[In English classes] nothing is off limits as far as I'm concerned, because you can approach it educationally. I'll swear and then talk about Germanic roots of swears and the Norman invasion. I think the more you make something taboo, the less students feel like there's any sort of way to intellectually or emotionally come to terms with it, own it, or even just acknowledge that it's out there. I don't think abstinence only education works in terms of sex or difficult topics. I think you have to safely go through the thing.. ... That being said, there are probably two things that I'm most aware of. One is political views.... What I'm most worried about is doing it subconsciously, because I can't know that I'm doing it. I probably err on the side of trying to make sure that things are balanced. It's not just that I'm worried about my job, it's just I don't ever want to impose my political views on students. I want them to think for themselves and critically. At the same time though, when you teach journalism you point out that there is a false objectivity in media.

This year's the first year I've started using this example, because I would have been a more wary of it in the past, but now I'm behind this. I stand for this. I tell students that when the news covers climate change, the idea that we're going to give 50% of the time to the side that says it's not happening and 50% of the time to the side that says that it is because that's balanced is insane. That's not balance. If you're going to base it on the scientific community, you're going to give 99% of the time to the people who say it is happening and 1% of the time to the people

who say it isn't, and you're going to know that they're probably sponsored by an oil company.

When I said that to a couple of classes they were like "Ah!" - I don't think they see that side of me sometimes because that's getting political... My point for them is sometimes people look bad or things look bad because the facts are the facts. And when you know those facts, in context, with all the surrounding facts, they still look bad.

I am hyper critical of the news industry by saying "What's the point of that story?" ... In journalistic settings the goal is to have them first ethically think what is acceptable and unacceptable, and that's an easy one because it's usually the hook. You have a gut feeling, you're like "That's ok-- that's not ok". But then when you're asked "Why is that ok, why is that not ok?" it gets in to what should journalists be doing. Why would you take a picture of someone who is starving to death? Why would you take a picture of someone who's just been shot? That's kind of a crazy thing to do, so what are you doing? Why? And then instead of just a gut reaction like "You shouldn't do that!" it's more about what do journalists do that, depending on your opinion, other mediums can't do? Things where there would be a vacuum if it weren't for journalists? Which, to go back to James Nachtwey would be bearing witness to people whose story is not being told. Nachtwey comes in as a white dude who has publications who buy his work, and because of that he can take someone's story who is otherwise just passed by every day and make it known to hundreds, thousands, millions of people. So having students look at images that are traumatic, or difficult, that's going to give you that initial reaction, that visceral reaction. I don't think anyone would disagree. ...

So that's one part, to be able to talk about what journalism does. The other part is the actual thing that is happening. If we're looking at James Nachtwey's work, and you want to be able to understand or learn more about the effects of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, those images

are going to give you a sense of what is happening in a way that no story can. And if you want people to see that it's real, and understand that it's real, and it's not just numbers on a page, you often have to give them something that's going to potentially upset them. It upsets them because it rattles what's going on. And that's tricky because a lot of things rattle what's going on. A horror movie rattles what's going on when I see it. That is not a reason in and of itself - to just shake students out of their comfort zone... The world has a lot of traumatic challenging difficult things in it, and when it's well done that can be a better way to understand that difficult thing then to just read a factual article. Especially if you talk about it afterwards,

...

I don't know why it stood out to me so much, but this year I had one of the stronger student reactions [to an image brought into class]...I have 60 or so students each semester who take journalism one, three different classes. During the multi-media unit... I show the documentary of Nachtwey's *War Photographer*, and that's also when I show examples, usually of some harder stuff to look at...The students are also assigned to find a professional example that has won the Pulitzer Prize, analyze and critique it in small groups... There are no feel-good stories that win the Pulitzer Prize for photojournalism. And their photos, so they're visceral. A student brought in a series from a New Hampshire photojournalist who followed a family where the mother was diagnosed with cancer, and it was assumed terminal, and died.. This photojournalist kept following the family afterwards. Students were tearing up... One girl was like "Why?" and it really hit me hard. She was like "Why would you show this to us?" I never had a student ask directly. She wasn't accusatory- that sounds like an accusatory question- it was almost rhetorical. She was like, "I am so emotionally distraught by this, why bring it in?"

She was asking "What educational purpose does this serve?" I had to think "How am I going to fully articulate the journalistic purpose of this, in a content sense, like why would someone go and take pictures? Also, why would the family let this person take pictures. But then also why publish it? And then why look at it? And then, why look at it in a high school classroom?"

My initial response when she asked that question was protective. You don't ever want your students to be hurt... I feel a sense of guardianship. You are not only trying to help them learn but you want them to have a good experience, you want them to feel safe, you want them to feel that this is a community that they belong in. I don't want my students to be sad ever.... But first of all you have to feel uncomfortable to learn. It's like when you work out: unless you're sore, you're toning stuff, but you're not growing any new muscles. And then you also are going to need to feel uncomfortable because not only will like the brain as a muscle need to do stuff it hasn't done before, but the thinking needs to hurt you a little bit because you need to move outside of your comfort zone, in a safe way....

I will remember that moment for a long time in teaching, if it isn't just one of the things I will always remember because it was a very disarmed honest response. She looked to me as the person running the classroom who is supposed to maintain a safe place to be like "Make sense of this for me." Part of it was, "Explain why it's here," but another part was like, "Please guide me now, please be the teacher because at this moment I am just hurt and I need to get something out of this." That was the other thing I thought- "I need to intellectually give her and the people sitting around here meaning to what she's experiencing right now, and help her hopefully grow from it." .. I think students should always ask, "Why are we doing this?"

...

I brought my journalism II students, which was only a group of 11 rather than all 60 of my Journalism I students, to the Currier. The bonding experience of attending the museum with Journalism II was important. It was early on in the year and I think a lot of them were genuinely interested... The preparation was pretty minimal because the journalism II students had already seen the "War Photographer" documentary. So we talked about the documentary ...and how the really interesting thing about the exhibition is that a lot of the stuff that Nachtwey is really known for at this point happens after that documentary was made. September 11th happens, we invaded Afghanistan, we invaded Iraq.

I talked about that to prepare them to see new things, but also to remind them of the type of pictures he takes and the nature of those pictures. I also connected the content to my student's article about Syria. It came out in the second issue of the magazine. We were at a time in the news cycle where that was the biggest story.... I think it was around the time of the photograph of the boy on the beach. Obviously the Syrian civil war had been going on for a long time, at that point, years, and the things that were happening weren't really news anymore. People knew Assad was committing acts of terrorism against his people, but that was this ongoing thing. So I think that's why the student wrote the article. It's easy to say, "Oh well that's just happening over there," but here's why we should care... that was the student's point. It's hard... He quoted some students saying, "It's overwhelming." I think someone like Nachtwey would say "the reason I'm taking these photos so that people will know what's going on but also so that they can be there, or I'll be there because they can't be there." And I think that the student was trying to make a similar argument- "We should be there even though it can be really overwhelming to be there, mentally."

My journalism students are not taking pictures of victims, but they still have many ethical things to consider, like unflattering pictures, or even just someone feeling uncomfortable because you're in there with a camera. So, technically, I like what Nachtwey does with showing sometimes the worst experience of someone's life in a way that in terms of perspective, is up close so you feel like you're there with them, and you feel the humanity of it. If you're further back, it can seem - not voyeuristic- but like you're detached a little bit, like you're this person just walking by and see it happen. I wanted them with their photos to be able to think about how they can better tell the story in a way that doesn't objectify people, but subjectifies them- makes them make subject a person who's in the story rather than an object.... Another thing I want them to understand is how the sequence of images can affect a story. It was interesting when we got into the gallery to see the exhibit was chronological... There has to be some decision about "Do we use this shot of this thing happening, or do we use this shot" and a lot of the decision is going to be "What are his most famous most acclaimed images?" You do have to think "Are we beating down the viewer by going through it?" And that's sad, the content, it's hard, but that doesn't mean that that's all that you can take away from it...

...

In the gallery I basically left them alone. I was curious too... I was modeling how to walk around and look at stuff... I would go from image to image and if a student was just standing there looking at an image I would stand next to them and talk about the image and ask what they thought... For example, how did Nachtwey get in close, how did he frame these shots, why did he wait for this moment- why did he choose this moment? ... I would say that the average student in there didn't have that mental process worked out in advance. They wouldn't be able to look at it and have the photographer's way of seeing a picture. I would try to teach them to do

that, but of course when you see someone suffering in a picture their initial response is like “Wow, this person is suffering” and they would have an emotional reaction... So when a student and I would talk we would acknowledge, "This is really intense" then we would get into the technical side.

The one conversation that I remember having with the girl standing by the photo of the dying man on the ground was probably one of the stronger responses. She said, "I keep coming back to this one.” Then it attracted other people. She was not vulnerable in the way the student in the classroom was. The other student was pretty raw. She was pure feeling. The difference between feeling it versus analyzing it- the girl looking at the cancer photo was not analyzing it at all... I think the student in the gallery was putting it in the context of all these other images, but this one had the biggest emotional impact on her. That's why she went back to it. But it wasn't the same type of rawness... In the gallery we talked about what the emotional impact of the image was, and how that emotional impact given the context makes you think about how in war you can feel like what you're doing is right or wrong but at the end it's still human suffering.

What's the point of talking only about the technique? That's just an exercise. That's why you do that kind of thing in a photography class or an art class... They want you to understand in photography how to make a shallow depth of field. They don't care what you're taking a picture of. In that case, it's just technique. But the reason you do that, say, is to have better portraits. So you focus more on the person's face so you get more of the human connection rather than being distracted by the thing in the background. Every technique exists specifically for an affect that you're creating.... If you say “Why did they chose these colors?” I think the implication of that question is what mood are they going for? Or what does that do to the figure in the image?

...

We can hear about all the news that was coming out of Afghanistan and Iraq from the US side, the number of casualties, suicide bombings, civilians, the military decisions, the new strategies, but there really weren't that many images in the media that I remember seeing. I picture a soldier with a desert behind him, or one getting ready to go into a building. I didn't have a lot in my head, speaking as an individual private citizen of the United States, not a teacher. So if I were to walk into *Witness to History* it would give me a chance to understand those parts of US history and present and help the two connect in a way that I can't get otherwise. Nachtwey has a combination of photographic talent and storytelling and the bravery and ability to go in there and do that.

It is one story though. He's only [telling] one story and he tends to focus on certain things. He's sharing one other perspective on the story of the US war in Iraq and Afghanistan and the things that led up to it, but I think it's a pretty American perspective. Even though there was the soldier who was an Iraqi insurgent and there were people who were Iraqis struggling with what the war was doing to them... he shows it all through an American perspective. It's not like he's an Iraqi in Iraq, documenting what it is like to be an Iraqi in Iraq experiencing this. I think Nachtwey tries to show the story that isn't already being told, or show what he thinks is the whole story, but at the end I think it is especially important for Americans to see it because it is an American perspective. It would probably also be really interesting for an Iraqi to see it, to see what the American perspective is.

....

School can just become a game for a lot of people. The more you can take students into the real world (which is in air quotes because it's a museum with framed pictures on the wall) -- the more you can take them out of the classroom where certain blinders can come up for them as

far as how much does this matter, how much does this connect to what I'm going to actually do, to what's actually going on? ... [In the museum] they might see other people walking around, and say "Oh - this isn't just at school." A lot of the time students are resigned to say "Well I don't know why we're doing this but I guess it's what you have to do because you're in school." But if ... you go into a museum and there are a bunch of people taking time out of their day and thinking seriously about these images students may think, "It's not just Mr. O'Malley saying 'we need to look at these now because it's part of the curriculum! It's an actual thing!'"

The field trip can get them out into the real world and bonding and all of those other things. The other would be that a good exhibit or exhibition presents it to you in hopefully the ideal way-- it's the space. Your classroom is your classroom and I shape my classroom to be me. I love the plants and tea in the back. I have stuff that creates my classroom as a certain type of space. When I bring in images it's just yet another thing that I'm showing. The classroom is not dedicated to that thing. When you go to a museum, even if it's a traveling exhibition... it's there. It is a physical space that is dedicated to presenting these things to you so that you have a certain response or so that you can get into a certain frame of mind or emotional state or whatever it might be. It is a space that's sole purpose is the thing that you're there to see. Yes, students might feel more comfortable in my classroom with a difficult image. They might feel like it's a safer space. But is it different? Will it have a different impact? I definitely think it will because the museum is giving it more importance. As much as I can say whatever I want I'm just showing them another thing during another class...[Other] people are going to the museum because it is important. And a museum is going to have an exhibition because they think it will draw people, so it has some sort of significance.

Thematic Analysis

Perspective Taking and Critical Thinking

Teachers were interested in *Witness to History* as a way to encourage the development of a particular set of critical thinking skills, centering mainly on perspective taking. In Samantha's pedagogical pursuit of understanding argumentation, she encouraged students to consider Nachtwey's stated relationship to war images in the context of the argument being made in the exhibit's curatorial choices. Was what he said he believed about war manifested in the individual images presented in *Witness to History*, or in its overall narrative arc? What might look different if Nachtwey wanted to take a pro-war photograph, or present himself as a pro-war photographer? Collin took up the work of perspective taking and critical thinking by encouraging his students to reflect on Nachtwey as a professional photojournalist and artist in relationship to their own potential in the field. How does he take a picture, and also, how does he justify it's taking? What is happening before this particular moment in time, or just outside of the photo's frame? Though Cecile's own values as an individual meditating on Nachtwey's work encompassed a critical perspective taking on war and it's impact on the lives of individuals, her pedagogical focus centered on perspective taking of a different type. How could students come to see one another, or to see their teachers, differently? How can leaving the classroom and encountering difficult cultural material facilitate these shifting interpersonal views?

Critical thinking was related to close looking at individual images, to comparing different types of conflict art, and to understanding the broader narrative intent of the exhibit. Critical thinking, however, is practiced in a "fair and balanced" way that precludes engagement with some critical issues. Though Samantha's students are looking closely at individual images to ascertain why and how Nachtwey chose to take them in light of his own broader story about the universal negative impacts of war, they are not engaging the historical facts that might contribute

to developing a different, more critical and political perspective on the arguments they are analyzing. Though Collin's journalism students are thinking about the ethical implications of depicting vulnerable people, they are not asking questions about their vulnerability, or what more might need to be known in order to make real sense of their precarious situations and perhaps intervene upon them. While Cecile's vision for the visit includes supporting students' ability to develop a sense of the world outside of their own "bubbles" in preparation for a future right around the corner, it does not include a critical engagement with the geopolitical forces that shape either of those uniquely American experiences.

Curation and Curricular Legitimacy

Samantha and Collin described the museum as lending legitimacy to their own curricular efforts. For Collin, the legitimacy was twofold. First, the *Witness to History* exhibit reinforced his annual decision to bring the work of Nachtwey into his exploration on journalistic storytelling and ethics. Second, the Currier's choice to display the work of a photojournalist in a special exhibition validated his perspective on the value and power of photojournalism, a perspective he aims to imbue in his work with Journalism II students. For all three teachers, the ability to leave the classroom and have students experience content similar to that which the teacher presented in school was important. This connection reinforced the importance of the content and lent credence to the act of schooling itself by demonstrating that what teachers are requiring students to think about in the classroom has manifestations in the "real world."

Additionally teachers describe the work of Nachtwey in general, and of the museum more specifically, as contributing a sense of authority and legitimacy to the content. That a museum would choose to show these difficult images and tell this particular story using the work of this particular artist creates a shared social space in which the ideas can be taken up by teachers

separate, perhaps, from the allegations of doing political or controversial work (see below).

Though these teachers clearly chose to attend *Witness to History* and did not report pushback in relationship to this choice, this external validation contributes cultural legitimacy to their classroom exploration of difficult issues.

Teachers described themselves and their students as interested in the curatorial process. First, they discussed their own observations about curatorial choices made, such as how things were hung chronologically and the way that choice contributed to the exhibit's story. Teachers attributed these choices to Nachtwey, which although not completely incorrect, does exclude from consideration the team of people (including curator, museum educators, community members) whose influences, experiences, and disciplinary perspectives also shaped the exhibit. Second, they expressed interest in the exhibit design process. Part of this too was related to knowing more about Nachtwey himself, but in addition teachers were curious about how the museum made its decisions related to the "public curriculum." Why was the exhibit chosen in the first place? What does the museum think Nachtwey wants people to learn? Where do the images go when it's over? Why did Nachtwey hold some images in his personal collection? Why did he chose to sell others?

Personal Politics and Professional Practice

All teachers described the difficult relationship between balancing a desire to teach about complex or controversial issues and sharing their own personal beliefs. It was clear in our discussions that these educators held and were motivated by sets of political beliefs that related to the content of *Witness to History*, and that were separate from what they shared with their students. This was particularly true for Collin and Samantha, who both seemed to argue that there has to be a neutrality in teaching. Though there are few topics that are totally off limits,

attempts at reducing bias or excluding teacher personal thoughts or feelings from discussion both allows students to develop their own beliefs and perspectives and mitigates against potential upset from those outside the classroom (parents, administrators).

Interestingly, it was only Cecile who did not describe a desire to hide her beliefs from her students. In our second interview, Cecile shared a story about a time when a student misinterpreted a statement she made in class comparing then-presidential candidate Mitt Romney's financial status to the ultra-wealthy characters in *The Great Gatsby*, and the student's parent complained. Both Samantha and Collin shared their willingness to discuss more personal matters with students, and to broach difficult subjects like sex in the classroom, but adamantly drew the line at talking politics or religion. Thus, it is perhaps unsurprising that the content of *Witness to History*, inextricably linked with both politics and religion, was not the focus of these English teachers' work.

Teacher's choice to remove their own political beliefs from discussions of *Witness to History* also relates to their beliefs about developing student critical thinking. A teacher's power in influencing the beliefs of students may foreclose on their ability or willingness to engage in critical thinking practices; instead of practicing perspective taking and argumentation, for example, simply adopting the position of the teacher. Since each participating teacher valued critical thinking and saw it as linked to their students' future success in life separate from school, it makes sense that they would not want to interfere with that process given the stakes attached to their student's potential future ethical and political decisions (Should I join the military? What does it mean to be patriotic? What is my ethical responsibility as a journalist?)

Interdependent Relationship Between Words and Images

Finally, teachers articulated the pedagogical power that emerges from pairing words with images; this shared acknowledgement noted the power of images to convey information in general, but difficult information in particular. Samantha's students have struggled to use words to describe their experiences when confronted with the dying Taliban soldier, an indication of what Samantha described as the shock-value power of integrating photographs into a largely text-based curriculum. Collin talks about the role of photojournalist images not as placeholders but as central pieces of a storytelling project, often in conjunction with written text. His recollection of the difficult classroom encounter in which his student asked, "Why are you showing me this?" also demonstrates the way a difficult picture alone may not suffice in answering questions or illuminating its own pedagogical purpose. Cecile, like many others, attributes the power of Nachtwey's photographs to the questions they engender in the individual, separate from the stories that are printed in the museum's interpretation. However, in her own descriptions of his images she relies on the stories told for meaning making.

For all teachers, in fact nearly all participants across sites, something about working with adolescents means that photographs are a more powerful medium for sharing information than written text. In addition there is a particular need for individuals to critically evaluate visual life given how much people (teenagers) are exposed to images on a daily basis.

Teachers as Cultural Workers?

Simon argues that teaching is cultural work when it is tied by with a sense of a collective future; that powerful images, engaged in a particular pedagogical practice, can be understood as "expressive, transitive acts that have an impact on feelings, thoughts, and judgments" (Simon,

2014, p. 36). When thoughtfully presented, images can serve as a curricular foundation upon which personal experience is turned into social attention, social concern, and then corrective action. This shift happens in relation to an individual's expanded sense of moral community, and the concomitant responsibility to act on behalf of those with whom they are related.

Teachers were all interested and invested in the stories told in the *Witness to History* exhibit; stories of Nachtwey as a journalist who shot dramatic images of the Twin Towers on 9/11; his investment in the concept of "witnessing" and the idea that he has an obligation to share a particular perspective on difficult and problematic pieces of the world. Though Nachtwey's own vision of witnessing includes the notion that after looking at his images his viewers in turn become obligated to address the problems depicted, neither this obligation nor its implications are taken up directly by these teachers.

Teachers' experiences were geared toward the establishment of skills and attitudes that might be considered requisite preconditions for engaging in images in the way Simon outlines. Teacher attention to the development of life-long skills is most often described in reference to their value for individual development. Samantha's students need to learn to analyze arguments because they may be faced in their impending adulthood with difficult moral issues about which they need to make well-reasoned decisions. Collin's students should come to understand that journalists are both subjective and have power, things students need to consider as they position themselves within the field. Cecile's students should think critically about difficult issues, like war, as they are likely to be America's future soldiers. Though it could be argued that each of the foundational concepts articulated by teachers in this study work towards the type of critical engagement to which Simon aspires, it would be overstating the fact to say that these curricula were designed to elicit that type of transformative experience.

Similarly, though teachers did not engage directly in the aspirational, future-focused progressive pedagogy outlined by Simon, they did design experiences that engaged with partial, situated ways of knowing. While Nachtwey leverages a narrative that expands the conception of 9/11 related cultural trauma to include individuals outside of stereotypic categories, explicit exploration of this broadened conception was not a focus of teacher designed experiences. However, teachers centered their interests on the artist himself, attending to the argument he set forth in his work and how that argument was manifest through photographic technique and curatorial choices. In so doing, the focus of their explorations did not rest on the content of the images, or the content of the story itself. Approaches that foregrounded the development of critical thinking as a technique to be applied separate from the content at hand meant that if students were to experience the kind of activation of their consciousness of human suffering that was at the core of the public curriculum, it would happen incidentally.

It is interesting to think about whether the focus on skill building rather than consciousness raising (to paint with a broad stroke) reflects teacher anxieties about classroom engagement with political content. Cecile's experience using a technical lens to overcome her desire to turn away from more difficult content and Collin and Samantha's focus on the relationship between technique and storytelling shed some light on this decision making process. Perhaps by highlighting the prerequisite skills for deeper, more critical viewing practices, teachers assuaged their anxieties about being perceived as biased with the assumption that student criticality would naturally emerge from closer more thoughtful looking practices.

Interlude: A Gallery Collage

A Brief Interpretive Guide

This collage is built upon the words and thoughts interview participants attributed to visitors in the space of the Currier gallery in response to preparing for, attending, and reflecting on the *Witness to History* exhibit. Though I approached this aesthetic inquiry systematically and its methods are detailed in the previous chapter, I do not pretend that this represents an objective undertaking. I began a poetic approach to my interview data when more traditional coding approaches left me feeling stifled and left my data, so rich and thick from the mouths of my participants, so dynamic and colorful in describing images on the wall, flat and lifeless on the page. I read through the voices of my participants, sorting them chronologically, centering them around the images that elicited intense emotion, careful reflection. How, when viewing data in this particular way, might we encounter resonance between cultural workers, dissonance in their reflections on their feelings and description of Nachtwey's work, or critical absences in the

discussion? Which theoretical voices, echoing throughout my own consciousness, could illuminate these strands?

Thus, with a more aesthetic vision, I re-entered the data with other interlocutors in mind. Susan Sontag, whose essay “Regarding the pain of others” reminds us that a photograph’s meaning and its’ viewer’s response depend on “how the picture is identified or misidentified; that is, on words” (25). Sontag, who speaks back to Nachtwey’s assertion that the purpose of an exhibition is to demonstrate that war is hell for all living things by reminding us that “to designate a hell is not, of course, to tell us anything about how to extract people from that hell, how to moderate hell’s flames” (2003, p. 89). Roger Simon, who wrote in 2008 upon reflection on the 5th anniversary of 9/11 “if there is anything to be learned from the... outpouring of various forms of remembrance of the attacks on the United States it is that the event... is not over. Rather than something past, it is a social experience still in process, very much a present occurrence, something that we are still living through (p. 354). Simon, who also reminds us that “witness” can be a problematic pedagogy, “not something accomplished by merely enduring... demanding images and/or stories” but instantiated in the way an individual and their relations are changed, shaped, and informed by the living memory presented therein (2014, p. 19-20). Finally, I bring Jonathan Silin, who illuminates the tensions between education’s vision for initiating the youngest among us into an already existing world, and a cultural tendency to “modulate the distance between people, to keep us safe from the more chaotic emotions that lie beneath the surface of our daily encounters” (1993, p. 82).

Now introduced, please read, look, listen, and consider.

Before they looked

I am a witness and I want my testimony to be honest and uncensored. I also want it to be powerful and eloquent and to do as much justice as possible to the experience of the people I am photographing.

"Some of the images you are going to see during this exhibition are graphic. If you feel uncomfortable, please feel free to look someplace else, and please feel free to let somebody know if you don't feel comfortable being in the exhibition anymore."

[war is a major subject in art-
this is nothing new]

If you're all going to go "Yes, let's go bomb this country" you need to make those judgments in an informed way, and you need to know that children are going to die, innocent people are going to die, and you need to know that

It's graphic, it's all images that are of real life, but you should let them know that head of time.

War is graphic. It is images of war. This is what you're going to see

(War is hell for all living things)

Would you bring your child to this? [All the elementary teachers said no. We don't even cover this in our curriculum. It wouldn't be appropriate]

You don't want to take your children to see this exhibition [no its too violent, it's too intense]

We'd better really sell this one hard

[good art is provocative]

Why did I have to have my parents sign off? [I play Call of Duty and I've seen worse than that- my mother won't care]

99.9% of the parents said
"Yes, go. It's important. We support what you're doing."

I don't want to see this. I've seen it, I know it, I am finally somewhat beyond it, I am not going to go bring that back up

Too close to home. Too many old memories churned up

I can't do an audio tour for you, I can't talk to the public about this, what I am telling you I haven't even told that many people. [It isn't about opinions. We're asking you to help us. We just want you to read the text panels and the labels and tell us, are we presenting this neutrally enough]

Let's go the Currier! Ok, we're going to bring 150 kids,
oh my
god!

"Do you want to go to this?" [this will either help them
understand or be the kind of story or image that is
controversial- will this get us into the ethical thing.]

It's easy to say "oh well that's just happening over there" but
here's why we should care.

why you should care

We need to be aware of how they respond and just be on the lookout for anybody who may feel
overwhelmed [You're not going to look at the dead Taliban guy and point and laugh "ha ha ha."
You're going to look at it and be quiet, because there are other people looking at it at the same
time]

"When is violence
acceptable?"

"Is a dead body acceptable?"

"Is someone about to die
acceptable?"

(An educated populous is the only way to a democracy)

Seeing

“Holy crap”

Then you see some more
things then

“Holy crap.”

[one picture is worth....]

“These are really beautiful.”

[... a thousand]

[...words]

What’s going on? What do
you see? What do you see that
makes you say that?

[Well you can add
times ten for these images!]

Here we are in Afghanistan, oh look 9/11

[This is 9/11. After this is when the camera goes digital. Now
you can walk around and look at the ones that interest you the
most.]

Very quickly it became a “me, me” thing....

“Where was I when it happened?

Where were you?”

[Be sure your docents don’t tell their stories.].

“We don’t remember the actual event, but we do remember it
being all around us.”

Wow. It’s overwhelming.

This is a picture of 9/11. I want you to take a minute and really look at it.

NEW YORK CITY: Collapse of the South Tower, September 11, 2001.

First published on Time.com, "Revisiting 9/11: Unpublished Photos by James Nachtwey," September 7, 2011.

The south tower collapsed at 9:59, less than an hour after being hit by a hijacked airplane.

In my mind it all went in slow motion. Everything was floating. I thought I had all the time in the world to make the picture, and only at the last moment realized I was about to be taken out.

James Nachtwey

مدينة نيويورك :

البرج الجنوبي

11 سبتمبر 2001.

رجل أعمال يشاهد الدخان المتصاعد من البرج الجنوبي.

متحف " كورير " للفن مشتراه صندوق هنري ميلفيل 2014 . 5 . 22

"Under that much pressure you still got this shot. I'd be two blocks away from you running."

[Holy crap. I could never do this.]

Remarkably technical.

The one where he's shooting it and he just barely got out with his life

It was his last shot on the whole roll.

You know, the cross was probably just there. He didn't, I doubt he had that much time to like, move around, and that's a well-framed shot. [Now I have to seek shelter, otherwise...]

Oh, everyone's going to think
it's about Christians being
attacked [How symbolically
ironic. The cross, a sign of
hope in front of a building that
is collapsing.]

They had seen this stuff in the
newspaper, but they were

very young

on September 11th.

What's going on in this
picture? What do you see?
What do you see that makes
you say that?

"I like this." "Why do you like
it? What do you see that you
like?"

Look at the ones that, look at what you want to look at but if
you see something that really catches your eye for some reason,
stop and spend longer with that one. [They can read that if
they're interested but I saw a lot of the girls walk past that
image. I am not going to force feed it to them.]

They can watch the nightly news to see that
[The power of a still picture]

[It takes you to that split
second and it allows you to
stay there and really take it
in]

Wow
That's really intense.

[Make them think about
everything that just passes on
all the time]

Geez, how would you decide that you're going to use this image, and not this image? [What effect does it have?] Alright, how does Nachtwey bring us through this? Where do we walk?"

What's he saying? What's he saying about war?

I was driven by the inherent sense that a picture that revealed the true face of war would almost by definition be an anti-war photograph.

["If you walk through it," he said, "you will at the end have a political view that war is terrible, it just will be that way, but I'm not going to say that to you. You will come to that seeing all of this tragedy, you will come to that war should be avoided but," he says, "the pictures aren't saying that."]

Here we are in Afghanistan,
oh look 9/11, then there's Iraq
[Afghanistan....]

I don't think he's going to make it.

AFGHANISTAN: Dying Taliban in the Town of Kunduz, November 21, 2001

Coalition forces led by the U.S. invaded Afghanistan in November 2001 with the objective of forcing the Taliban from power and destroying al-Qaeda. Important, strategic cities, including Kabul, fell quickly leaving Kunduz as the last major Taliban stronghold. Negotiations for a peaceful handover of Kunduz provided safe passage to those Taliban fighters who surrendered.

افغانستان :
مقاتل "طالبان" في مدينة كندوز يحضر.

21 نوفمبر 2001

قامت قوات التحالف بقيادة الولايات المتحدة بغزو أفغانستان في نوفمبر 2001 بهدف اسقاط " طالبان " والقضاء على "القاعدة".

سقطت المدن الاستراتيجية مثل " كابول " خلال فترة وجيزة. وكانت " كندوز " احدى المدن الأقل أهمية من الناحية الاستراتيجية. وتم التفاوض على استسلام مقاتلي " طالبان " في كندوز مقابل السماح لهم بخروج امن. صمم بعض جنود " طالبان " على مواصلة القتال. وتحركت قوات التحالف للقضاء على فلول المقاتلين في كندوز. واندلع قتال شرس اثر وصول القوات الى المدينة. وفي الصورة مقاتل " طالبان " جريح سوف يموت بعد لحظات من التقاطها.

متحف " كورير" للفن مشتراه صندوق هنرى ميلفيل 2014 . 10 . 22

[At what point you say "I'm not going to show that person's face because they're in such agony" or "They're in such agony, and that's a vulnerable thing and that's what needs to be understood- that this war is putting people in this situation?"]

I keep coming back to this.

Jeez, I feel bad for that guy. [An extremist. He's been shot]

[Isn't their reaction so interesting because the Taliban is the enemy.

That's the bad guy. You know?]

And they're like "Well, no he's a person."

Some Taliban soldiers chose instead to fight. Northern Alliance troops in turn moved into Kunduz to eradicate the last remaining fighters. As they entered the city an intense firefight ensued. The wounded Taliban fighter seen here died moments after the picture was taken.

Look at how gory that is.

I don't like that you can't see the soldier's face.

[He can't be held accountable]

If you have this soldier proud, holding his gun,
and he's proud about his kill-
that's a pro-war image.

[The soldiers in their finest dress, shiny boots and everything.
Iwo Jima. It wouldn't be an anti-war message.]

You can see the barrel of the
gun, but you don't see the
perpetrator because it's all
about the suffering of the
humanity person's about to
expire.

Oh my god, that's so cool.

Someone's gotten one the bad
guys.

[Would you like to say
something about that?]

Oh right. That's what a
soldier does.

Ok you have orders. Your commanding officer says if you find
a Taliban fighter or soldier [I don't know what they're called]
you need to kill them. If you don't you're not following orders.

Here's what I'm thinking.
I was noticing this.

"Jim this is effing miserable."

And he said "*I know.*"

"How do you sleep at night?"

And he said "*Sometimes I
don't.*"

"So how can you deal with
it?"

And he said
"*Well sometimes you can't but you just do, and you go on.*"

Is he married, does he have any kids, has he ever been married? Why did he choose this path? Does he feel like this is his responsibility? To continually remind us of what we're doing to each other? I am not sure he's passing judgment but it's sort of out there. "Do with this what you think."

[I'll tell you about the photographs, I'll tell you about being there, but I'm not going to tell you about how I felt and what was happening to me while I was there. That's not what it's about.]

"How many people know someone in the military or have them
in your family?"
Somebody in the military?
[Yes my uncle was injured]

The Sacrifice, 2006

These 60 individual photographs taken at combat field hospitals in Iraq, are organized seamlessly allowing for one photograph to lead into another. The horror and chaos of individual images and the overall composition are tempered by the medics' focus to save lives under incomprehensible circumstances.

I'll give you a few minutes if you wish to look at this. There's not one bit of this collage I could pick. It's meant to be a total view of what happened, I'll just give you a few minutes.

Collection of the Artist

التضحية 2006 :

ستون صورة أخذت في مستشفى ميداني في العراق مرتبة بحيث تقود كل منها الى الأخرى. اتسمت الصور الفردية والتشكيل العام بالرعب والفوضى بسبب تأثير الفريق الطبي الذي تركز اهتمامه على توفير جو مريح وهادئ تحت ظروف تفوق الوصف.

من مقتنيات الفنان

Let's just take our time and see what happens. There's no need to rush. Let's stop for a minute and think and compose our thoughts and see what your response is to the art.

[Why was Sacrifice behind the wall. Why, what would be the reason for that?]

"I don't think you should go
in"

And he was like

"Okay."

Ugh.
That's just
too
real.

[Then I sort of analyzed it from a technical standpoint and was like, "Ok, I can look at this now."

"Does anything change for you when you move from right to left?"

[This is one of the ironies or hypocrisies of war; we will destroy your house, we will kill the soldiers, but if you are hurt, we will fix you.]

Oh god, am I am going to be able to make it through this?

[It's amazing how some people are mesmerized by it and other people walk out of there as fast as they can.]

[they were being helped, there was hope]

What were other people thinking? What are they, how are they

going to respond to this?

Wow.

Wow.

That's ok. That's not ok.
[Why is that ok? Why is that
not ok?]

Are you ok, do you need to have a break, do you need to go sit
in the other room?

No, I am ok, I'm just upset. I don't need to go somewhere else.
[I think I am going to have some more work to do here.]

Stop filling out the chart. Just go around and look. Have you looked as Sacrifice yet?

Go stand in front of it.

Is this a montage of hospital
scenes?

Is this art? What is that?

What's your response to it?

I am telling a story that is actually doing good for these people. I am bringing attention. I am their voice. I am the voice of the voiceless.

This is what Nachtwey did. Look at this. Look at the color. Look at the composition. Look at the angle. This is what I know about the photograph. Where it was taken, when it was taken.

Take a look.

Look again.

What's the composition of this?

[I never noticed that! I never saw that before!]

Did you see this? Look at the color here.

"That's where the art comes in. That's why it's here as art, because the process is an art process. The subject matter, the composition, is photojournalism."

[I mean, the pictures go through a vetting process, right? There's a curator who says 'Hey, this is worthwhile'?]

What's going on. What do you see.

What strikes you about this picture?

[Why are the signs in Arabic?
Why aren't they just in
English?]

What strikes you about this picture?

What are we looking at here? What's going on?

And Then

People are moved by what they see and read. They respond emotionally, intellectually, and morally, and they realize that there are millions of others who react in a similar way. Around these shared responses a constituency forms. My job is to help reach a broad base of people who translate their feelings into an articulate stance, then...bring pressure to bear on the process of change.

How did you feel?

What was it like?

What do I think?

I was going to cry too but I
didn't.

[I didn't get a lot of "this was
disturbing."]

That wasn't as bad as you said
it was going to be.

Well, I was going to cry too.
Really powerful.

Wow, that was intense, right?

\

[What was that exhibit really about? What is Nachtwey really about?]

As journalists what you can do can actually be really
meaningful story telling- so you should take yourself seriously,
or at least acknowledge that you have that power and that
you're choosing to not do that.

When is it ok to do one thing?

[When do the rules change?]

When is it not?

[When do they change back?]

Alright, now what? What can I do? This is so much. What do I
do with it all now?"

What are you going to do? What are we going to do? [I don't
know what to do.]

Enough [?]
Time to act [?]

I don't want to be a part of something like that.

Every war photograph is an antiwar photograph.

"Well, what do you do with a picture like that once you own
it? Are we going to walk into the Currier one day and just see
some 9/11 picture hanging in the contemporary gallery?"

[Maybe it will be historical- "This is what we used to do. This is what the world used to be."]

Chapter Six: Qualities of Close Looking- Comparing Teacher and Museum Worker Image Descriptions Using a Visual Methodology

Introduction

The teachers and museum workers interviewed for this project all described their work with high school students as developing the practice of close and critical looking. The purpose of this chapter is to explore how close looking was enacted by evaluating interview data from these participants using a critical visual methods lens. My intention is to compare how different participants emphasized aspects of the *Witness to History* photographs when describing them. Stated as question, it seeks to understand when cultural workers focus on the same images, what, in particular, do they bring to the attention of their audiences, and why? Would teachers, for example, be more likely to focus their students' attention on the narrative arch of the exhibit as installed, while docents draw a viewer's attention to an image's technological production, or its artistic composition?

Below, I briefly reintroduce the idea of critical visual methods to orient the reader to the chapter's analytic frame. Then, I summarize findings across images to present an overview of

teachers' and museum workers' pattern of engagement with Nachtwey's photographs. Finally, I provide an in-depth analysis of four images from the collection. By comparing individual descriptions of the images and the viewing practices they inspired, I draw distinctions and comparisons between the teachings that happened across cultural carrier groups. These are organized around Gillian Rose's three sites; the site of production, the site of imaging, and the site of audiencing. These different focal points, in turn, create an opportunity to explore how discussions of these images render visible, and conversely invisible, critical issues of power, position, and privilege.

Visual Methodologies- A Review

In her 2012 book "Visual methodologies: an introduction to researching with visual methods," Gillian Rose puts forth a framework for analyzing visual materials that takes into consideration the multiplicity of approaches, theories, and values that shape the field of visual research methods. This philosophical and methodological synthesis yields a model that considers the image itself, but also its production and its presentation to audiences. Rose refers to these three focal areas as "sites" - the site of production, the site of the image, and the site of audiencing. At each of these sites, Rose posits that a visual researcher can consider three different perspectives on, or "modalities" of the image. First, there is the technological modality, which considers how images are made, how they travel, or how they are displayed. Second, the compositional modality, which considers material qualities of the site: this might include strategies such as color, organization, content, the references or genre of the image, or how the relationship between the image of analysis and other images or texts is designed. Finally, and perhaps most broadly, Rose puts forth what she calls the social modality, the "range of economic, social, and political relations, institutions, and practices that surround an image and

through which it is seen and used” (2012, p. 20). Each site can be considered through the lens of each modality, shifting the analytic focus across nine potential dimensions (production technological, compositional, social; image technological, compositional, social; audiencing technological, compositional, social. Figure 2 (below) provides a visual orientation to these nine dimensions, as well as offers insight into some of the questions that may arise at each site/modality. Each dimension frames the image in a particular light, draws attention to a particular set of considerations, and yields a different set of questions.

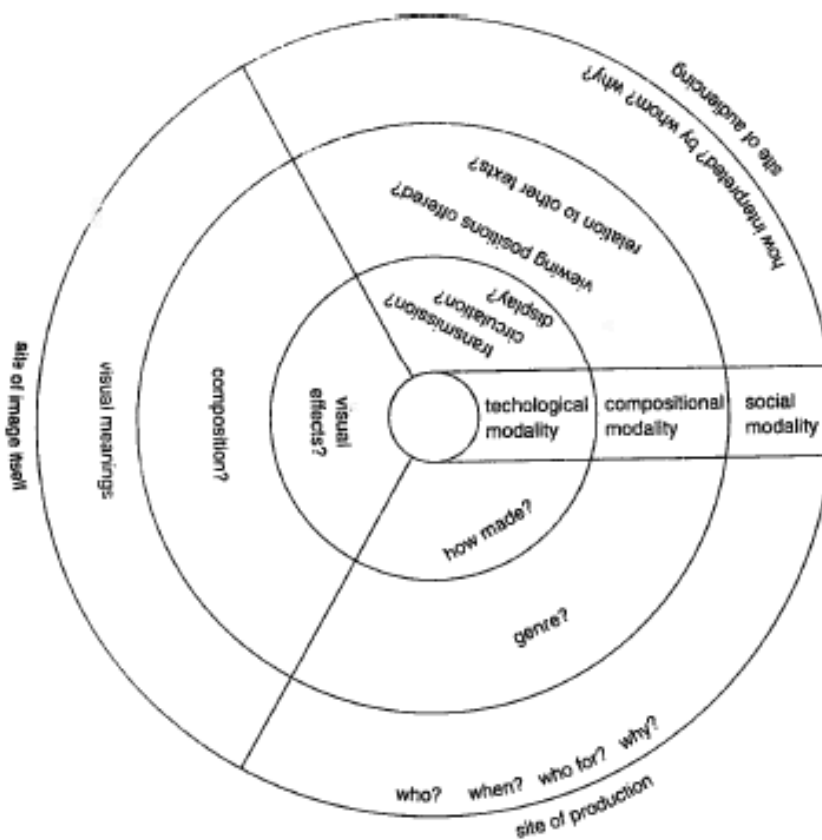


FIGURE TWO: Rose's (2012) Visual Methods

Examples of critical reflections on museum pedagogy, Simon’s 2014 work, for example, pay closest attention to the differential design of an exhibit’s mise-en-scene, the site of audiencing. To understand the pedagogy of these exhibitions, one must consider the production

of the individual images, situating the photographs in the historical moment of their manufacture, and explaining how they were made and to what end. This information is essential to understanding the rationale for displaying these images in different museum sites, and for constructing a pedagogical experience upon them. However, exploring a pedagogical experience means centering his attention at the visual curriculum at the site of audiencing. How are the images displayed? What viewing positions are offered to visitors, what intertextual comparisons are offered? How are images labeled? How are they positioned in relationship to one another? How are images interpreted? Who is responsible for authoring those interpretations? Who is the intended audience? What is the instructional purpose?

It seems logical that an evaluation of the teaching and learning in the context of a museum exhibit would attend most closely to the social modality; to questions of who, when, why, and what for as they relate to an image's production, to visual meanings that emerge at the site of the image, and to questions of interpretation (by whom? For whom? To what end?) at the site of audiencing. Given the pedagogical focus of this research and the types of questions asked, I anticipated that cultural workers from schools and museums would attend largely to the social modality, and further to the site of audiencing in their description of the images in *Witness to History*. Also, given the attention placed on Nachtwey's importance as an artist, and the exhibit's emphasis on the value of photojournalistic images as art images, I expected some talk of the technological production of the images in relation to both photographic and digital printing technology at the site of production, and the composition and visual meanings at the site of the image itself in reference to their art historical context.

Summary Findings

Table 1 shows the tabulated data for all respondents across images, with museum worker (curator, museum educator, docent) responses in the top set, and teacher responses in the bottom set. Rows represent Rose's sites, and the columns modalities. Cells are colored to indicate frequency of responses, with the darkest colored cells representing the highest frequency. Totals by site are summed in the furthest right column for each set of respondents; totals by modality are summed in the bottom most row for each set of respondents. While reading this table and the following comments, keep in mind both the uneven sample sizes between groups and the different amount of time allotted for interviews and the differences in interview focus.

Similar patterns emerge across cultural carrier groups. The social modality was the most often discussed by teachers and museum workers, (139 comments by museum workers, 63 by teachers). This modality was taken up most frequently at the site of audiencing for both teachers and museum workers with most comments on the interpretation of images in the gallery (audiencing/social). This focus on the site of interpretation is not surprising given that the thrust of this project is to speak to educators about teaching. Teachers and museum workers also spoke often about the visual meaning of an image (image/social), both in their interpretation and in the interpretation offered by others. In this way, discussions of an image that included the visual meaning of the image often touched on the audiencing and interpretation of that image, bridging the site of the image and the site of audiencing. For example, discussions of *The Sacrifice*, the collage of images Army medical units in Iraq, frequently highlighted its position as a transition point between photos of war experiences and the final set of photos which focused largely on the post-war recovery of American troops. This presents the image in the larger context of the gallery, positioning these comments in the audiencing/compositional category. Similarly, people

discussed the choice to put *The Sacrifice* behind the wall, noting audiencing choices both in terms of their composition and the meaning imbued in the collage in so doing.

TABLE ONE: Visual Methods Coding Results for All Images

Sites/Modes	<i>Technological</i>	<i>Compositional</i>	<i>Social</i>	TOTALS
Museum Workers (n=8)				
<i>Production</i>	3	3	23	26
<i>Image</i>	5	71	29	105
<i>Audiencing</i>	3	18	87	108
TOTALS	11	89	139	
Teachers (n=3)				
<i>Production</i>	2	0	14	15
<i>Image</i>	2	35	10	47
<i>Audiencing</i>	3	13	39	55
TOTALS	7	48	63	
(n= 23 images, from an exhibition of 27)				

Finally, teachers and museum educators both spoke with some frequency about the site of production (production/social); specifically, they retold stories about Nachtwey and his work that were a major part of the interpretation of the exhibit narrative. As you will see in the detailed image descriptions below, this was most frequently the case when discussing his photographs from 9/11. This was undoubtedly partially attributable to the amount of attention this story was given in both the gallery itself on the audio tour and in the video, in community events that featured Nachtwey and his editor discussing his experience of 9/11, and in the TED Talk that many participants viewed in preparation for this exhibition. Separate from their discussion of the individual images is a large body of interview data from all participants that speaks at great length about Nachtwey himself, which is discussed in the introduction to this case.

After the social, teachers and museum workers were most likely to then discuss the compositional modality (museum workers = 89, teachers = 48). These discussions were usually

comprised of more and less detailed descriptions of the component parts of an image, largely focusing on the people depicted therein.

Finally, participants were least likely to discuss the technological modality (museum workers 11, teachers 7). This is particularly interesting given museum participant's overall focus on the production of these high resolution digital images and the relationship between film and digital photography in their discussions of why this exhibit belonged in an art museum. As discussed in the case introduction, much of the museum's justification for "why this is art" hinged on Nachtwey's transition from film to digital photography (production/technological) and the high-tech specialty printing process with which the gallery photographs were produced (technological/audiencing). Though this theme emerged in the museum workers' description of the exhibit overall, it was not often linked to the exploration of an individual image, hence its absence in this discussion. The critical implications of these categorical and other specific omissions will be discussed in this chapter's conclusion.

A Closer Look: Findings by Image

To explore the ways in which these different interpretive approaches shaped thinking and seeing in the gallery, we will now turn to individual descriptions of images in the *Witness to History* exhibit. Included here are explorations of four of the most-often discussed images from the exhibit. I have chosen these images for several reasons. First, they represent different moments in the exhibit's chronological narrative; *In Kabul a Sister Mourns her Brother Who was Killed by a Taliban Rocket, 1996*, from pre-9/11 Afghanistan; *Collapse of the South Tower, September 11, 2001*, from 9/11 in New York; *Dying Taliban in the Town of Kunduz, November 21, 2001*, from post-9/11 Afghanistan; and *Injured Soldier Private Andrew Bouwma, Visited by*

his Parents and a Priest at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, 2006 of post-9/11 impact on the United States. Second, these images were taken up and described in some detail by both museum workers and classroom teachers. Finally, these images provide insights into different sites and modalities of interpretation both within and across images. Below, I present these images in the order a participant following the intended path through the exhibit would see them in the gallery. I will begin each section with my own description of the image, including any written interpretive text of the image offered under the image. I will then turn to the descriptions offered by participants, interpreting them through the critical visual methods lens, and then discussing the patterns across participants. Finally, I will offer a synthesis across images.

Image 1: AFGHANISTAN: In Kabul a Sister Mourns her Brother Who was Killed by a Taliban Rocket, 1996.

First published, Time magazine, "Death of a City," June 24, 1996.

This black and white image was featured in much of the publicity material produced for the exhibit, and was printed on the exhibit sign in the museum's lobby. Upon entering the gallery, this was the first image that a visitor would see. A lone woman in a dusty burka is kneeling in the immediate foreground with one exposed hand reaching out to a slab headstone. The stone has a white piece of fabric tied loosely around the base, and is emerging from dry, cracking earth. Behind the woman are other burial mounds, which near her appear to be a uniform size and shape, but look more variable in size and placement as they recede further in the background. Approximately 70 other headstones of varying sizes and shapes mark the graves and disappear into the uppermost edge of the frame.

With the title and previous publication information (above), the museum offered this additional interpretation: "A sister grieves at the grave of her brother who was killed in a Taliban

rocket attack. The cloth around the headstone may identify the deceased. At this time the civil war for political supremacy of Afghanistan was already in its fourth year.” Under this description, the image credit read “Currier Museum of Art Purchase: The Henry Melville Fuller Acquisition Fund, 2014.22.1.” Below all of this text was the same information, translated and printed in Arabic. This photograph was followed by another image of a woman, dressed in a similar garment, pictured at a distance walking through a street of rubble in Kabul.

Six participants, 4 museum workers and 2 teachers, described this image in their interviews. This image elicited most participant description of composition at the site of the image itself, as well as at the sites of audiencing. For some, its position in the show was of note. One docent noted that she used this image to get a read on her audience; “People take a different amount of time to process what they’re seeing, and this one was fairly early in the show, so I learned a lot from just watching people and gauging when it was time to move and when it was time to give them more processing time.” Samantha’s students were struck by the intensity of this piece given its location in the show’s beginning, and its relationship to another photograph, titled “*Ruins of Kabul*” depicting a lone woman walking amidst collapsed buildings in the crumbling city. Of her student’s reactions, Samantha said

They were struck by [the fact that] that he chose to start the show with the women suffering, because the men will go off and fight and the women are left behind. Well, they go off and they fight, and they die. You have the one woman with her hand on the gravestone, then the other one, the image of the woman all in white walking through the rubble. We talked about how that really sets a tone of the negative consequence of war. From the outset, Samantha and her students attended to the compositional aspects of audiencing in *Witness to History*, particularly as they related to the exhibition’s broader narrative about the impacts of war. While chronology dictated the choice of image location, Samantha attributes, here to Nachtwey himself, the choice of placing these two images from Afghanistan at the beginning of the show to center the vulnerability of women in war.

Sean, the exhibit curator, spoke at length about *In Kabul a Sister*. He began his description not with the location of the image in the broader scheme of the exhibit, but with its composition and visual meanings and the resultant emotional impact.

There's that image of a woman at her brother's grave. It's just so moving, but at the same time it is so beautiful and I think it illustrates really well that it's a very fine line... if you shoot something in color and it is a blood bath, people are not going to look at it. But if you shoot it in black and white and you know there's blood, but it's not red, it's blackish, and it is at the right moment where it pulls compassion, goes right to your heart, it's huge.

At first, Sean describes Natchwey's ability to make artistic choices in service of his broader goal of engaging people with difficult images in a way that moves them. Here, it is both the overall beauty of the image, paired with the artist's technical choice to print it in black and white, to which Sean attributes its power to rouse a compassionate emotional response in a viewer. Similarly, Sean describes the viewer's proximity to the woman, a virtue of the framing of the image, to its empathic reach. Because you feel so close to the woman, he suggests that you are drawn next to her and made a participant able to eschew the charge of voyeurism. Here, the power of the image is described in terms of its composition.

Collin recalled his docent's description of *In Kabul*, which also focused on the production choice of black and white photography. Of his docent, Collin said

This was one she said was her favorite, or was most powerful to her. The black and white shot of the woman, I believe in Afghanistan, she's all in black in a complete, what is it? A burka? She's reaching out. It is a famous image. We were at that one for awhile. I think she asked why he would choose black and white versus color. I think she asked why it would be so famous, and so powerful for people.

Though Collin does not tell us the answer to the question of why this image is so famous, others have attempted to answer this question (see introduction; Linfield, 2010). In further reflection, Sean spoke to the image's power.

At the same time she is there, obviously she's is weeping, she's holding on the tombstone or the grave marker... it's so immediate you almost feel like you're invading her space. Rather than being a voyeur you are actually a participant. Because it is so beautiful it

draws you in. You are almost standing with her. And rather than being repelled by it you want to put your arm around her. I think that's what he has the ability to do. Sean noted the feeling of being drawn towards the woman in both a physical and an empathic sense. Like Linfield (2010), he is attuned to both the beautiful and the horrible aspects of the photograph. Sean goes on to note that this composition collapses the space between the grieving sister and the viewer. She becomes available to the empathetic touch of the newly connected museum onlooker. This connection is further fostered, he notes, by her anonymity:

That's one thing that's good about her—her face is covered, which is kind of cool, so you can't identify with the face. You are drawn in there because he does break the picture plane. He also shows it's a mass grave, so you can identify that. Then also we gave some context like "this woman's brother was killed in a mass shooting." So she becomes the representation of all those who are mourning in that image, if you present it in the right way. If you say "This is Mary Joe, she is 21, she is from New Jersey" then you see her suffering as an individual person suffering."

The curator goes further in describing the effect of the image's composition by zooming in to the woman herself; shrouded, she could be any woman, in a graveyard that might be any graveyard. Though there are elements of the image that seem foreign when compared to a graveyard in our own town, for example, Sean extends her relative anonymity to the details of the interpretation, highlighting how the social site of audiencing extends the effect of her shrouded face by including only general details about the woman's identity and her brother's fate. She is allowed to become a vector for suffering and mourning of all people.

Ada, a museum docent, echoed Sean's sentiment. "Sometimes, with the woman in the graveyard," she said, "we compared it to a graveyard here. It's not that different, because it has also just slabs. But the soil is of course bare and not grass covered, so that was good." Ada also found utility in drawing parallels between the experiences of death and grieving in Afghanistan and in the lived experience of the viewer. There is a universal appeal to the image's content and composition, yet enough difference that some generative discussion might emerge in comparing the experiences of the person in the photo to the experiences of an American viewer.

Image 2: NEW YORK CITY: Collapse of the South Tower, September 11, 2001.

First published on Time.com, "Revisiting 9/11: Unpublished Photos by James Nachtwey," September 7, 2011.

This color photograph depicts the South World Trade Center tower collapsing. In the foreground and slightly off center is a rusty cross on the top of a building, the top edge of which runs parallel to the edge of the frame. Behind the cross is a grey plume of smoke and debris. To the left and right of the cross are two buildings. On the left, a brick building with sets of double windows and a fire escape on the façade. On the right, a shorter grey building with windows and star and stripe details along the top. Behind this building is the South Tower. Orange flames and black smoke are coming from the Tower at the top right edge of the frame. An American flag in the uppermost right corner of the photo is blowing in a strong wind. Between the plumes of smoke and the buildings clear blue sky is visible.

This was the fourth image in the show, the first image in the series of 9/11 photographs. It was hung between a black and white image of a woman walking between bombed out buildings on a street in Kabul, and another photo of the south tower on 9/11, which depicted a businessman gazing up at the smoke billowing out of the destroyed building, and a color image of flags in Times Square on 9/11. Below *Collapse of the South Tower* the museum offered the following descriptive text: "The south tower collapsed at 9:59 am, less than a hour after being hit by a hijacked airplane." This was paired with a statement from the artist: "*In my mind it all went in slow motion. Everything was floating. I thought I had all the time in the world to make the picture, and only at the last moment realized I was about to be taken out.*" James Nachtwey" (italics in the original). Under this description, the image credit read "Currier Museum of Art

Purchase: The Henry Melville Fuller Acquisition Fund, 2014.22.3.” Below all of this text was the same information, translated and printed in Arabic.

This image was one of the most often cited specific images in the data with 8 participants (7 museum workers and 1 teacher) referencing it in their interviews. Of all of the images described by participants, this elicited the richest description of the social site of production, with both the teacher and museum workers focusing much of their attention there. This likely due in large part to the highly dramatic nature of the story told by Nachtwey about this image, both in gallery talks and trainings for the museum staff, and also in an in-gallery video. This brief video, located in the interpretive space at the end of the exhibit, told the story of Nachtwey’s experiences photographing at Ground Zero on 9/11. Docent Tim sums up the spirit and urgency of the story when he says, “the photograph that he takes as he's walking up the streets in Manhattan, after the devastation, after he miraculously gets indoors just before the building would have toppled on him- one of the towers was going to topple on him.”

Explorations of perspective and point of view were important in descriptions of this photograph, and were taken up in multiple ways. For Collin, the story of Nachtwey’s harrowing experience shooting this photo was essential to interpreting it. He began by describing the image, from the perspective of Nachtwey taking the photograph; “There's the image of him looking up at the second tower... the glass was raining down. It wasn't quite at him yet, and you could see the smoke and the glass exploding.” Collin notes both Nachtwey’s point of view, as he is situated at the social site of production, and also the perspective in the image, where as a viewer you too are looking up at the explosion and collapse (image/technological). Museum educator Bridget describes it as an image, where, “you can almost feel the pieces flying out at you from this

picture.” She positions the viewer’s perspective as nearly inside the frame, the force of the image so strong that it can almost be felt. Museum docent Christine talked about perspective as well:

I probably use the word perspective from every possible way you can do that in front of many of the pictures. The rubble one offered me a lot of opportunities to open up the question of perspective. The perspective of the viewer who was never there, the perspective of the people who had to go into the site, the perspective of the fact that there was clearly the cross in it, what did that mean? The perspective of being lower in elevation, the perspective of the artist photographer who did it. You could talk about the word perspective in that one more than any others. So I found that a very teachable one. For both Christine and Collin, part of the “teachability” of this image arrives from an exploration of the actual physical position of the photographer in relationship to the collapsing tower. Collin continued his description by shifting his focus to the rusty cross in the image’s center.

That one stood out to me because it’s easy when you’re an English teacher to try to overanalyze anything. Especially if there’s a cross in it. So with that one was it was actually kind of nice because I was like “You know, the cross was probably just there. I doubt he had that much time to move around, and that’s a well framed shot.” I’m pretty sure he talked about it, or there’s a quote in the placard where he said it was just there and it wasn’t trying to say this is like Christianity under attack or something. That one stood out to me because of its potential symbolism.

Bridget, museum educator, had noted in her interview that the inclusion of this piece was not without controversy. “This particular picture,” she said, “was kind of a controversial one for us to include, because everyone thought “Oh, everyone’s going to think it is about Christians being attacked” and James [Nachtwey] was very clear that it had nothing to do with that. It just happened to be where he was standing when he took the picture.” Museum docent, Noelle, picks up on the symbolism of the cross in her description as well, echoing Collin’s sentiment and highlighting an interpretation of the image that likely contributed to its controversy. “I am not a religious person,” Noelle, noted

but a lot of people were moved by this one with the cross... [Nachtwey] didn’t even see the cross when he was taking the picture. It was only afterwards when he looked at it that that cross happened to be there and that building actually survived... obviously when he saw that image as a viewer of it rather than as the producer of it he then had some kind of

reaction that he said "How symbolically ironic. The cross, a sign of hope in front of a building that is collapsing." ... For the viewer, it does mean something. It just is that he didn't intentionally put it in there. For religious people, people who are Christians and religious, a lot were moved by that picture.

Noelle linked interpretation to individual beliefs, identity categories, and experiences, creating a space in which it is acknowledged that different meaning will be made around a single site. She said, however, that there is a reality to the image that favors one interpretation over the other; while religious people might be moved by the symbol of the cross, it was not Nachtwey's intention to center it as a religious symbol; its inclusion in the dramatic image of the second tower collapsing is, according to Noelle's interpretation, happenstance.

Because Collin entered the photo with students by talking about perspective, noting that the rubble was likely raining down on Nachtwey as this photo was shot, he is able to trouble the culturally situated impulse that Noelle describes to look to the cross for symbolic meaning. His interpretation, which centers Nachtwey's experience at the site of production, does not allow for the cross to reference "Christianity under attack." Collin does not, however, preclude the possibility that others may interpret this image in that way. In his continued description of *Collapse*, Collin references the Nachtwey video featured in *Witness to History*.

Then there's the video at the end of the exhibition where he talks about his experience, and he explains how he had to run into a hotel lobby that was across from where the tower was collapsing because he was close to it and all the smoke was coming towards him. He ran into the lobby and went into an elevator and closed the elevator doors- I am imaging it probably more like an action movie in my head than it was in reality- so that he wouldn't get hit by the debris and the smoke and everything. He said the power was out, or like it was just so clouded that you couldn't see anything for a couple of days. I think because I have that story to go with it, that narrative, that image connected more. Here, we see the story of Nachtwey's experience, the focus on the social experience at the production-level, take on more power in the interpretation of the piece. Like Noelle's description, Collin notes that the situation that Nachtwey finds himself in, here retold with the

drama of an action film, contributes significantly to both his memory of the image and understanding of its meaning.

Citing too the intensity of the moment of production, Sean, the exhibit curator, described *Collapse of the South Tower* as evidence of Nachtwey's skill as an art photographer:

[In the show] we focused heavily on what makes a photograph art, the difference between an art photograph and a snapshot. I think that for Nachtwey, it's very evident. You look at it and "Holy crap. I could never do this." With that tower coming down, literally on top of him, he captures the flag on the right, the other tower burning, the cross in the middle, I mean it's just, you know. It was his last shot of the whole roll. You feel the air pushing at him and think "Under that much pressure you still got this shot. I'd be two blocks away from you running."

Sean described the composition of the image in relation to Nachtwey's ability to work under pressure, noting that in a moment where he, who is not a war photographer, felt completely overwhelmed, Nachtwey was able to capture a photo rich with symbolism and urgency. Museum docent Ada described this urgency in relationship to the historical violence depicted therein. For her, this photograph "is 9/11."

[It] is the unthinkable that happened. That's what you would have expected to see in a movie. I think people thought "Oh that's just some movie that is on television." One was used to seeing images like that from film before thanks to certain effects. One wasn't as shocked maybe but then [they realized] that this is happening and that that made the big difference.

Ada's reflection brings the viewer back to the moment of the 9/11 attacks where, because of the special-effects quality and drama of the event, one might have questioned the reality of what was being shown on television. In the first moment of looking, then, it may be unclear to the viewer that what they are seeing is actually happening. Ada goes on to describe the split-second nature of this photograph as way of interrupting the seamless viewing of 9/11 that is readily available by watching film. In recounting how she described this image to high school visitors, Ada noted:

I think that is an excellent picture because it's just such a split second picture. I also like to talk with that picture about the power of photography over film... most kids today see videos, they see the moving picture at all times. I think this brought across the power of a still picture because it takes you to that split second and it allows you to stay there and

just really take it in. I thought that was a good- just a perfect image to talk about that, and make them think about everything that just passes on all the time. It doesn't give you the pause to think, whereas those pictures allow you to pause and think. Ada emphasized the temporality of this moment, encouraging her viewers to linger in a moment that would be un-seeable in a different medium. This time permitted a closer look, but also encouraged a reflection on the relationship between time, seeing, and critical reflection. Museum educator Bridget describes the ways in which physical proximity to and extended close looking at *Collapse of the South Tower* enhance the experience of this split-second photo:

This was a photograph that I encouraged people to get close to because the way you experience this frontage on the building you suddenly realize there's no faking this. This is 100%. So I was both in awe of it as a photograph with detail, but then also when you stepped back and thought about what it was about, it was this visceral POW of everything coming to you.

Here, Bridget brings attention to the way that close looking, particularly an attention to detail at the site of the image composition, contribute to the understanding of the reality of a historical moment.

Image 3: AFGHANISTAN: Dying Taliban in the Town of Kunduz, November 21, 2001.

The focal point of this black and white image is a man lying on the ground next to a floral printed blanket. He is wearing a military-style jacket and baggy trousers; a taqiyah-style hat lies next to his head. He is facing the camera, with his eyes closed and an open mouth, an expression of extreme pain on his face. One arm is under his body, and the other reaches out in front, a closed hand pushing against the ground and stabilizing him. His knees are pulled in, his feet bare. Extending from his chest across the ground and towards the lower left corner of the image is a dark pool of blood. Another bloodstain is in front of his feet. The back corners of the image show wooden furniture, some chairs in the left and a stall or table on the right. In the front right corner of the photo the barrel of a gun points at the man on the ground. A sling clipped to a rail

on the barrel attaches the gun to a person outside of the frame.

This image was the first of Afghanistan offered after the 9/11 photographs. On one side was photograph of fire fighters searching through the rubble in Manhattan. On the other, a photograph of soldiers toppling the statue of Sadaam Hussein in central Baghdad, just hours after U.S. troops entered the city. The museum offered a lengthy description below this image; it was one of the longest descriptions in the whole show. It read as follows:

Coalition forces led by the U.S. invaded Afghanistan in November 2001 with the objective of forcing the Taliban from power and destroying al-Qaeda. Important, strategic cities, including Kabul, fell quickly leaving Kunduz as the last major Taliban stronghold. Negotiations for a peaceful handover of Kunduz provided safe passage to those Taliban fighters who surrendered.

Some Taliban soldiers chose instead to fight. Northern Alliance troops in turn moved into Kunduz to eradicate the last remaining fighters. As they entered the city an intense firefight ensued. The wounded Taliban fighter seen here died moments after the picture was taken.

Below this passage, the image credit read “Currier Museum of Art Purchase: The Henry Melville Fuller Acquisition Fund, 2014.22.10.” Below all of this text was the same information, translated and printed in Arabic.

Seven study participants described this image in their interviews. It is most worthy of note, however because of the significant attention paid to it by the participating teachers, each of whom included it in their discussions of *Witness to History*. This was the only image that was salient for all three teacher-participants. Both museum workers and teachers discussed the composition of the image, but as in other cases, the focus of their discussion drew heavily on a social analysis. Teachers spoke at length about the diverse interpretations that arose at the site of this image (audencing/social), but also dwelled on its composition, describing (and sometimes struggling to describe) what it was depicted therein.

Docent Tim again provided a pithy introduction to many of the themes that emerged as others described this photograph:

There is one where you see a victim, an extremist, and he's about to die. He's been shot... you can see the barrel of the gun but you don't see the perpetrator because it's all about the suffering, the humanity, of the person who is about to expire.... Struggling at first for an appropriate identifier for the dying man, Tim begins by describing him, and quickly summarizing his situation. Moving away from the particularities of the image itself, Tim tells the listener what the image is "all about," both how he interprets the theme, and how he links that interpretation to the work of the artist. He continues

[Nachtwey's] got a great perspective... the guy has a masterful eye. And yes, he's using the modern technology of photography, but it could be a painting and it would be equally as powerful... Nachtwey believes that society needs to be informed, especially about what happens when we invade a sovereign nation under false pretenses."

Tim identifies the technology of production, but then negates its importance, suggesting that the framing of the image itself is as powerful as how it is rendered. He finishes the description by restating Nachtwey's pedagogical intent, albeit in decidedly more political terms than the artist himself might use.

Cecile also commented on the image, as she found herself and her students drawn to it in the gallery. She describes *Dying Taliban* first from her point of view, and then provides an alternative reading.

There's one where the guy has been executed. Blood on the ground. Students responded to the truthfulness of it. The reality that this is what is really happening. But I also wonder if it's a photograph, so it's not really happening? And blood. Kids are drawn to what gets the most reaction. "Look at how gory that is, oh my god that's so cool." Maybe because they're supposed to be the bad guys. Somebody has gotten one of the bad guys. Samantha sees the violence of the image as an indication of its truthful reflection of the experiences of war, and assumes that part of her students' interest in the photograph has to do with its ability to picture the reality of the situation. She then takes a critical step back, however,

by challenging the assumption that what a picture shows is, in fact, real. An alternative reading suggests that her students may actually be responding to the violence in a more celebratory way.

For Collin, whose express purpose in visiting *Witness to History* was to get students to think critically about ethics in multimedia journalism found this image to be particularly interesting to teach with. He described his approach to teaching with this image:

Technical skills of photography that include how distance can affect how you see a subject, understanding faces and when you say- “I’m not going to show that person’s face because they’re in such agony,” or “They’re in such agony and that’s a vulnerable thing and that’s what needs to be understood- that this war is putting people in this situation Collin began his description more abstractly, at the site of production, by focusing on the technological skills and questions that inform the artist’s composition of an image as it is made and shared. Collin offers two sides of the same ethical question to illustrate the tensions inherent in displaying an image of a suffering person

We were saying how it made you feel bad for the guy because he’s showing how much pain he is in but you have to read the context because as it said on the placard he was an enemy combatant- not just an enemy like “we don’t like you because you’re this”- he was doing something violent... So we talked about how the way you take a photo can change the way someone receives it. So you look at him and think “Jeez, I feel bad for that guy” but maybe a photo a couple minutes earlier would show him with a vicious look on this face trying to kill somebody.”

Collin recalls a conversation that explores the tension between what he and his students see when looking at the photograph (a person in pain) and what they come to know about that person through reading the interpretive text (that he has just committed some a crime).

Collin also reminds us of the impact of the interpretive context, the audiencing that illustrates something of value in deciding the “truth” of the photograph. This dying Taliban fighter was not just an enemy because of some categorical group membership, but rather because he had done something violent in the moments preceding this image. Presumably, given Collin’s reference to the interpretive text, this violence was related to the firefight that ensued after the Northern Alliance entered Kunduz. Collin’s introduction of a line of inquiry that calls into

question the timing of the photograph positions his students to think about what falls outside of the frame, and how that might shape a fuller understanding of what is depicted therein.

In a later interview, Collin returned to this image to highlight what he described as a telling interaction with one of his students:

I was standing with a student and talking about how hard it was to look at the guy who had been shot. I think he's looking at the camera, maybe not, maybe he's looking at the person who Natchwey is behind. Then we talked about how it shows in a time of war, the person's the enemy, it seems ok (in air quotes) to ethically do this to him. But at the same time he's a human being... and suffering in a terrible way.

Where earlier, the knowledge of the dying man's prior violence lead the interpretation of this image, Collin returned to it with a student still struggling to make sense of its difficulty. Here, the difficulty seems partially attributable to the dying man's eyes, his own point of view. When Collin shifts the discussion to ethics in time of war it is unclear whether he is noting the actual violence of killing the man, or the symbolic violence of depicting him so vulnerably, in such pain.

Samantha's students also responded to the pain in this image, a fact that surprised her. She had previewed the show before the fieldtrip in part to try and anticipate which pictures might be most difficult for her students, where the "trigger spots" would be. "I expected them to be moved more by the 9/11 photographs," she said. "The stuff that was here in the United States. They couldn't stop talking and thinking about the image with the Taliban guy who had just been killed, and the American soldier...and the gun." She continued:

There were actually a couple of girls who cried when they saw it. They had a hard time explaining what was so moving to them. First of all they felt like it crossed a boundary- photographing somebody... who had just died. You could tell by the pool of blood... They were also moved by the fact that you couldn't see the soldier. That his identity was, his he was kept anonymous... They were upset by that. That you can kill somebody without any consequence. What's the consequence?

Samantha begins with the emotional immediacy at the social site of audiencing. Though they initially struggle for words to describe their feelings, the visceral details of the image itself

provide opportunities for her students to ask important ethical questions about the ethics of war photography. I asked her, “[Your students] felt that the photograph, if they had seen him he would have been held accountable in some way?” She responded,

They did. And they didn't like that he was allowed to get away with that. And so I said well isn't their reaction so interesting because the Taliban is the enemy. That's the bad guy.... And they're like "Well, no he's a person." "Oh, well how do you know he's a person?" "Well he has that big pool of blood around his head. What are you talking about!?"...I talk a lot about the effect on the audience. What's Nachtwey saying... about war? And one of his quotes... "I was driven by the inherent sense that a picture that revealed the true face of war would almost by definition be an anti-war photograph." ..., What would that have to be if it was going to be a pro-war photograph? And that's where they were saying "if you have this soldier proud, holding his gun and he's proud about his kill" that that would be a pro-war... We talked about the effects of war on a soldier and that's what Nachtwey is doing in that exhibit. He's talking about the effects of war on soldiers and families and human beings.

Here, students use the absence of the soldier to both explore the meaning of the image as shown, and consider Nachtwey's own intention in taking this shot. As was so often the case for many participants, Nachtwey's words become a way in to understanding his meaning making process, and shape the image's interpretation.

Image 4: *GERMANY: Injured Soldier Private Andrew Bouwma, Visited by his Parents and a Priest at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, 2006.*

First appeared in National Geographic, “The Heroes, the Healing: Military Medicine from the Front Lines to the Home Front,” December 12, 2006.

This black and white photograph depicts a young man, lying in a hospital bed. He is wearing a neck brace and is on a ventilator: two thick plastic lines supply oxygen to a slimmer tube in his mouth. EKG wires attached to leads on his arms lay on the bed encircling his head. Because of how the photo was shot, it looks as though the young man is lying at a 45-degree angle, his blanketed legs leaving the bottom left corner of the frame, his head and shoulders towards the upper right. On the far side of the bed, a woman with a serious expression on her face leans in toward the young man. She is wearing a university sweatshirt. Towards the foot of

the bed on the far side, a man with a shaved head and sunglasses presses his palm to his face and looks distraught. Emerging from the bottom right corner of the picture, an arm in a long-sleeved black shirt emerges, the hand reaching out towards the young man's arm.

This image was the first in the second part of the gallery show, after the walled-off photographs that comprised the Sacrifice collage. Samantha referred to this as the “recovery room” because, with one exception, it showed images of American soldiers, all male, in differing stages of recovery from injuries sustained in war. On the other side of this image was a photograph of another soldier, a double amputee completing physical therapy while his young family looked on at Walter Reed Army Medical center. The text under the image read:

Parents Kandi and Jim Bowuma, who travelled from Racine, Wisconsin, visit their son Andrew Bouwma at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center. A chaplain rests his hand on the arm of the wounded Army infantryman and provides comfort to the family.

Private Bouwma, 20, was shot in the hip by a sniper while on patrol in Mosul. He had been in Iraq only 13 days.

Under this description, the image credit read “Collection of the Artist.” Below all of this text was the same information, translated and printed in Arabic.

Four participants (2 museum workers, 2 teachers) described this image. I have chosen to include this image in this analysis because it presents an opportunity to see different ways of making sense of a photograph that, both conceptually and compositionally, is difficult to look at. Both the teachers and museum workers who described this image paid close attention to its composition; it was not, however, the composition that drew them there. Museum docent Ada and teacher Samantha both connected their high school viewers to the image first because of the age of the soldier depicted therein. Ada said “The American soldier in the German hospital- there he was. Age-wise very close to student groups, the parents look just like everybody's parents-- I

thought that was a very powerful shot.” Samantha’s students made a similar observation; “They were first struck by how young the parents looked. One of them was wearing a college sweatshirt. You think that your child is going to go on this certain life path, and then here they are- here is the child in the bed. They talked about how the father looks like he is losing it, but the mother is the strong one...”

Both sets of observations consider the individuals who compose the image in relationship to those who are looking at it. Ada suggests that adolescent viewers may connect to this image because of their age; for Samantha’s students, the age of the parents was a signal of the age of the soldier in bed. The emotions of the parents were important for the students, as was the presence of the chaplain. Samantha’s students described the chaplain’s hand, resting on the man’s arm:

They thought it was interesting that you didn't know that was a chaplain's hand unless you read the description. One student was saying "Oh I just thought that was another family member- maybe one of his soldier buddies" and the other one was like "No, that's a chaplain. "What does that mean? Why is the chaplain there? Is the guy about to die? What's going on?"

For this student, the presence of the chaplain moves them from oriented to disoriented. While making sense of upset parents may have made the image relatable, the chaplain introduces a level of meaning to the picture that is harder to parse.

Contributing to the disorientation and the occlusion of the chaplain’s identity was the way the photograph was shot. Ada described: “[I]t was diagonal, you could talk about that. He's laying in the hospital bed- it almost seems like he's sliding off that bed because Nachtwey didn't frame the picture at a 90-degree angle, but he tilted it so you feel he's sliding away... You saw just the hand of the priest that came there.” The composition of the image, particularly its slant, becomes a point of discussion at the site of the image, both for the way it makes the picture look,

but also for the social meaning it contributes; why, as Ada suggests, may Nachtwey want us to feel as though he is sliding away?

For Samantha and her students, that compositional choice, while of interest, was difficult to interpret. “They felt disoriented because the bed is at an angle,” she said. “I don’t know what Nachtwey did with his camera but he did something, and it sets us off balance. It’s the same sort of technique that he used in the black hawk helicopter one where the kids are like this, and you’re sense of up and down and left and right is messed up.” Here Samantha is referencing another photograph from earlier in the show. Titled *Two Wounded Afghan Children are Treated En Route to Camp Dwyer located in the Helmand River Valley, 2011*, a black and white image showing two children lying head to head but in opposite directions on the floor of a medevac helicopter. The comparison between two images in the same show indicates an attention to the compositional aspects of exhibit design, a perspective that Samantha continued to describe:

Students talked about how [Nachtwey] didn’t focus as much- especially in the recovery room, he was trying not to focus as much on the... pain, but rather the strength that it takes to overcome. So when you’re looking at the image with the hospital bed at an angle, there you have that mother’s strength, standing beside her child. You have the chaplain’s strength. Though the kid in the bed is the primary part of that image, the focus doesn’t seem to be on his suffering.

Here, students discuss both focus in terms of image composition and in terms of image meaning. Nachtwey puts the chaplain into the frame, and focuses the attention of the image on the recovering soldier, Samantha’s students suggest, to tell a story of hope; to focus the viewer’s attention on the broader social story of hope and overcoming.

Cecile, the American Studies teacher who previewed the show before bringing her large group of students, brings the themes of image content and composition into interesting conversation in her description of *Injured Soldier*:

There's the one photograph of the soldier in the bed, and his parents are on either side of him. The docent was talking about the way it's angled. "Look at the angle of this, and how your eye is drawn to him and how his parents seem to be leaning in and whatnot." The art of taking photographs, how you might not think about how a photographer is going to be thinking about those kinds of things. My first go around I was like "Ugh, that's just too real" because the pictures are so big. It was this kid, with his parents, these soldiers, these young guys. Right there. Suffering or dying or whatever. But then I analyzed them from a technical standpoint, and was like "Ok. I can look at this now." Cecile offers a brief description of the image, then offers a memory of how the image was interpreted by a docent on her tour with students. The docent interpretation focused on the composition of the image, namely the angle of the bed, the perspectival choice of Nachtwey when taking it. Cecile then shifts to describing her first encounter with *Injured Soldier*, in her preparatory visit, when the emotional intensity of the photograph made it impossible to look at. The technical interpretation offered by the docent allowed Cecile to return to the picture, and alleviated the emotional intensity by providing another way to look.

This comment is particularly interesting in that it provides insight into the way that a focus on the content of an image may be foreclosed by a more comfortable discussion of its composition. Cecile's comment offers insight into the relevance of critical visual methods in conversations about cultural work. It is both undoubtedly important and unsurprising that an art museum docent would incorporate these more technical explorations of an image and its composition in their gallery discussions. These skills are foundational for both art appreciation and critical viewing practices. However, these skills become more powerful when used together.

Conclusion

By looking at the ways that cultural workers describe particular images in the *Witness to History* exhibit, we can make inferences about the ways in which images may have been engaged by students and other visitors. In so doing, we can ascertain what interpretations were made most salient for individual viewers of the show. Because every individual approaches each image with

their own set of beliefs and experiences that invariably shape their interpretation, it is impossible to infer what an one viewer's experience of any one image might be. However, given the power inherent in the position of cultural worker to shape and foreground particular narratives, we can look at what they include, and conversely what they exclude, and make some pedagogical sense of the gallery experience.

Overall, teachers and museum workers focused much of their image description on the compositional and social modalities, asking and answering questions like who took the picture, how is it composed, what does this picture mean, and how is it interpreted? At the site of production, these analyses frequently focused on the artist himself. Always unseen by the camera, Nachtwey's presence looms particularly large in each of these four photos, due in no small part to how close he is perceived to what is being depicted therein. Nachtwey's absence in *Collapse of the South Tower* and *Injured Solider Private Andrew Bouwma* creates a space in which the viewer is immersed in the photo and at the center of intense and emotional experiences. As the tower collapses the moment in time is made available for the individual to experience, or through which to imagine the drama of Nachtwey's own experiences at the site of production. Similarly, in the *Dying Taliban* image, Nachtwey's decision to include only a part of the American soldier in the frame makes his absence a major part of what is then discussed. In the hospital bed, the chaplain whose hand graces the bottom of the frame is easy to overlook, but his presence is central to interpreting what may be happening in the image. What is not seen but implied matters.

Much of the interpretation along these social dimensions centers around developing stories about the images. In part, this attention may be a vestige of the VTS approach to looking, the open-ended questions geared towards the establishment of particular critical thinking skills

and viewing practices. In some moments, those stories, like the perspective described above, brought the viewer into personal relation with the photograph. Alexander argues, familiarity of content is important to translating experiences as cultural trauma-- something universal should be articulated that connects the victims to the ideals and values of others. This is the case with both the grave and with the image of the soldier in the bed. Comparing gravesites across cultures, for example, or understanding the soldier's youth in relationship to his young parents provides a way to engage with a photo but may also preclude conversations about important differences between the woman depicted at the gravesite, the seriously injured soldier, and the viewer. These are not the viewers' lives. How can relating to them bring people in to better understanding, or potentially alienation?

Despite the museum's commitment to understanding Nachtwey as an artist for whom both camera and print technology are very important, there was a general inattention to the technological modality in image descriptions. In part, these omissions may relate to the fact that the technological importance of the show was something ascribed to it as a whole, rather than linked with particular images. However, apart from interrupting conversations about the role of technology in the museum's figuring of Nachtwey as a fine artist, a lack of emphasis on the technological forecloses more critical perspectives. At the site of the image, a focus on the technological may provoke questions about digital effects, filters, and editing. More relevant to understanding the content, technological perspectives attend to point of view; tilting the camera up or down the change the way something seems or is seen, perspectives that contribute to understanding something like power relations.

Similarly, little attention was paid to the technological components of audiencing. This omission is particularly interesting given the artist's association with print journalism, a fact that

was clearly indicated on many images whose titles noted that they had been first published in either Time or National Geographic magazine. Were audiencing perspectives taken up in the technological or compositional modality, viewer attention may have been drawn to the fact that all but one of the American soldiers were men, and that all of them appeared to be white; or, perhaps, that the only people shown in identifiable, non-abstracted ways who were suffering, were not American soldiers.

Chapter Seven: ***James Nachtwey: Witness to History: Afghanistan, Ground Zero, Iraq***

In review

In the fall of 2016 the Currier Museum of Art in Manchester New Hampshire staged an exhibition of photojournalist James Nachtwey's most recent photography. It traced what Nachtwey called the "single story" of events from Afghanistan in the late 1990s, to the 9/11 attacks on the Twin Towers, through the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the physical and psychological devastation experienced by American veterans of those wars. While both Nachtwey and the museum disavowed a political position on the events depicted in Nachtwey's story, they focused their attention on helping visitors understand that war impacts a diverse array of individuals, above and beyond the soldiers and terrorists upon whom we often focus our attention. By showing sadness, suffering, grief and loss as it is experienced in different countries, by different people, all in relationship to a shared set of global events, *Witness to History* shapes a story that is different than those to which American viewers may have become comfortable and accustomed.

The way that Nachtwey's photographs are taken, and how they were installed in this particular exhibit contribute to a broader understanding of what might constitute the social trauma of 9/11. By reaching back to early American involvement in Afghanistan, through 9/11 and foreword to the devastation caused by Americans and its repercussions, *Witness to History* casts a wide net in terms of identifying and humanizing victims, and by extension expanding who can get counted as experiencing cultural trauma. However, in both the artist and the museum's effort to avoid politics, contextual information that would contribute to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of this narrative was not included in the exhibition. Given that the museum is a fine art museum, it is perhaps not surprising that this interpretation, which pivots towards history and geopolitics, was not taken up.

As is the case with all Currier Museum of Art exhibits, *Witness to History* drew in teachers who were interested in sharing both the images and the experience of seeing them in the museum context with their students. Here, I discussed the ways in which three secondary English teachers designed curriculum around Nachtwey, his images, and the museum learning experience by exploring their own thoughts, feelings, and rationales. Though each teacher came with a different set of students, and worked in a different set of curricular contexts, their experiences in *Witness to History* shared some common features. Teachers saw this experience as having both social and curricular value. Socially, visiting a museum presented students with an opportunity to engage with their teachers, peers, and community in a way that they may not have before. In addition, teachers understood the content of the exhibit to provide students some insight into the ways that war affects people around the world. In relationship to their curricular goals, teachers found *Witness to History* to be a good way into developing critical thinking skills, such as understanding argumentation and exploring the ways in which a series of images, when

considered together can tell a particular story. Additionally, teachers described the relationship between museum learning and curricular legitimacy. When students are able to see something that they are learning about in the classroom in a cultural institution like a museum, teachers argued, it contributes to their understanding of the real-world value of their schoolwork.

Though some version of critical and reflective thinking factored into each teacher's curricular vision, it is hard to argue that they were engaged in what Simon might consider progressive practice. Though skills like understanding authorial intent, argumentation, and perspective are important aspects of decoding visual culture, they should be considered necessary, but not sufficient conditions under which students may come to understand the ways in which their own lives and experiences are linked with the experiences of those depicted therein. Further contextual information, including information that I would imagine would be considered by participants as abutting the political content that each was trying to avoid, would be required to further these skills to an applied understanding of the complexities of American involvement in the Middle East.

Reticence on the part of teachers and museum workers to insert their own beliefs, perspectives, and opinions on the topic was consistently related to their understanding that as cultural carriers, that is people with power to shape the experiences and interpretations of others, they were responsible for withholding that information in service of the development of student independent critical thinking skills. Because students were not asked to interact with these images in relationship to their own identity positions, the opportunity for the type of personal disjuncture that often supports confrontation with uncomfortable and therefore potentially transformative questions about being in the world did not (apparently) occur.

Teachers as Cultural Carriers: The “Vulnerable Privilege”

Characteristic qualities of difficult images manifested themselves in subtle ways in the discussions of teacher and museum worker experiences with *Witness to History*. The excessive presence of political and cultural content inherent in work like Nachtwey’s was not taken up by any of the individuals working with students in the gallery or in the classroom. Instead, teachers used the language of professional practice, in the case of Collin, or of critical thinking and skill development, in the cases of Samantha and Cecile, to bring students to the photographs in an apparently neutral way. The “unavailability” of language to bridge the divides between individual beliefs about teaching and learning, the purposes of engaging with war photography, and educators’ personal motivations for valuing the work demonstrates the tensions and ambiguity inherent in teaching “difficult” knowledge. Teachers described themselves and their work in ways that resonated with Simon’s notion of cultural carriers; they wanted their students to think carefully about photos-as-texts, to consider some of the conditions of their production, to challenge the apparent objective authority of photographs by learning something of the artist who created them and his own pedagogical vision. They thought about student affective experience in planning and implementing their lessons, and described the relationship between personal and emotional experiences and attention and engagement with content.

However, though they oriented themselves towards some of the critical notions that underpin Simon’s conceptions of cultural work, teachers in this project did not actualize their visions in the description of their curriculum or pedagogy. Teachers did not take up the opportunity presented by Nachtwey’s photographs for students to think about and contest dominant cultural narratives in relationship to 9/11, or the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Though I do not have data to make casual claims about this choice, the strong resonating theme of

teacher anxiety about interjecting personal political beliefs, or of being perceived as biased in their work, appears to relate to these decisions.

Grumet (2010) reminds us that teachers manage the “vulnerable privilege” of designing curriculum and pedagogy that shapes student consciousness and in so doing point out “the world that matters” to students (Grumet, 2010, p. 70). Thus, telling, retelling, and reflecting critically on difficult knowledge can help to determine who is excluded, who is implicated, and how we can situate others and ourselves differently. This is Simon’s cultural work, work that Grumet brings into tension with standard conceptions of teaching and educational authority through her introduction of the notion of vulnerability. Both teachers and museum educators in this work were attuned to their own vulnerability in relationship to the content of *Witness to History*. Their perception of their own attenuated positions made it possible to point out themes such as the shared misery of war while also making it more difficult for them to orient themselves or their students towards a critically engaged vision of a changed future or towards the strong current of geopolitical strife and national identity that Nachtwey’s images easily evoke. This future orientation and critical self-reflection would require an acknowledgement of each educators’ own complicity in the events depicted by Nachtwey above and beyond the comfortable stories individuals are used to telling about where they were on 9/11. What work needs to be done to move towards a conception of teachers, of all educators, as cultural carriers? I believe one place to begin is in teacher education.

A Visual and Collaborative Vision for Teacher Education

If teaching is a vulnerable privilege, then the role of teacher education is to orient future teachers towards the risk and struggle that typify this cultural work. A vision of teacher education that centers the role of teacher as cultural worker requires an attention to issues of

power and knowledge production that are central to understanding the position of educator inside and outside of the classroom. Further, the power associated with the position of teacher needs to be articulated in both its proximate and distant instantiations. Teachers as cultural workers are in a position to shape the individual experiences of small groups of students, but must also acknowledge that engaging in counterdiscursive curricular and pedagogical experiences with students at the individual level is insufficient for changing the larger structures that organize and shape people's lives. I believe that the work of this dissertation leads in two promising directions for the future of teacher education in relationship to the conception of teachers as cultural workers; the importance of visual culture in curriculum design, and the power of interdisciplinary and cross-site learning experiences for future teachers.

First, the introduction of critical visual culture studies into teacher preparation can provide a foundation from which to explore issues such as power, knowledge production, popular culture and political influence. As was articulated by the educators in this research, and echoed in the literature on the inclusion of photography into classroom experiences, pictures have the pedagogical potential to ignite conversations about authorship, historical perspective, storytelling, and argumentation. Presented through the lens of critical visual culture, these lessons can be shifted away from superficial critical thinking skill development and towards an understanding of the role of images in shaping public and popular sentiment around contested or controversial truths; toward challenging the apparent objectivity of photography; and toward acknowledging the vulnerability and objectification of subjects in relationship to our own positional stance as viewers and consumers of those photographs. Finally, this perspective creates space in which educators can encourage students to think about and construct powerful

counternarratives for the images, using them as springboards for conceiving of and actualizing alternative versions of the collective future.

Some foundational skills are required for the enactment of this vision. First, future teachers need to be encouraged to think of the visual world as a necessary component of their disciplinary work. Interestingly, a curricular framework like Visual Thinking Strategies provides a way into this work with teachers through the introduction of a straightforward and relatively unintimidating method for introducing images as topics of inquiry and reflection in a classroom setting. To my mind, VTS then also provides a fertile ground for discussing the shortcomings of pedagogical experience that center the learners' beliefs and experiences at the expense of engaging with authorial intent, image content and other contextual variables helpful for ascertaining an images' meaning. At this juncture, an introduction of the close contextual looking skills foregrounded in much of the reviewed literature on historical photographs as primary source documents can provide applied strategies with which educators can experiment in their classroom. To my mind, the final turn in shifting these preexisting techniques towards critical and cultural work comes from introducing to future teachers the critical underpinnings of visual culture studies; specifically, how image are used by people across time and place to achieve particular social, political, and psychological outcomes in service of particular beliefs or in anticipation of particular cultural outcomes. Doing this work also requires an engagement with the affective experience of working with and looking at photographs, particularly difficult ones; the feelings of the teacher, and of the student, must be taken into consideration and discussed in frank and open ways.

The notion that teacher educators must willingly engage with the difficult, subjective, and personal nature of educational experience leads me to my second vision for a changed

teacher education. By introducing the idea that educational experiences are shaped in a multitude of ways outside of the teacher-student relationship, and by acknowledging the power of these other educational influences, future teachers might come to understand that the work of education inside the classroom is only one small of a much larger pedagogical picture. This leads to my second point; teacher education needs to be conceived of and enacted in much broader contexts. When Simon describes cultural work, he is careful to remind the reader that this is not work that happens in a closed classroom space, but rather a vision for a changed future that, in order to be achieved, must be taken up across the diverse cultural sites where individuals come to shape their opinions, beliefs, and identities. Well-known teacher educators have recently championed versions of this vision for teacher education. For example, Zeichner's (2010) argument in favor of deepening and diversifying preservice teacher education notes that a turn in teacher education towards truly integrating "different aspects of expertise that exist in schools and communities... [expands] opportunities for teacher learning as new synergies are created through the interplay of knowledge from different sources" (95).

The inclusion of out-of-school perspectives on teaching and learning should not simply be thought of as an exposure experience for preservice teachers, where they come to superficially acknowledge that children learn from teachers in their family and their community as well as in their classroom. A collaborative vision of teacher education centers the task as cultural work, employing different disciplinary and knowledge traditions, curricular materials and pedagogical strengths in service of the struggles outlined above and highlighted in the data this project has yielded. Given the thrust of this particular research, I am inclined to articulate a vision of this collaboration as it might exist between schools and cultural sites like museums, where visual and material cultural objects can become the curricular foundation upon which individual feeling and

thought are moved from the sphere of the personal, affective, and reactive to a place of critical engagement, advent, and hope through the instantiation of “sustained attention, concern, and corrective action” (Simon, 2014, p. 9).

Limitations and Challenges

As a small-scale qualitative research project, the generalizability of these findings is limited. As a case, the inclusion of other voices from the perspective of the museum, including board members involved in deciding to install the Parrish show to offset the impact of *Witness to History*, veterans involved in the advisory council, and the artist himself would lend texture and complexity to the story being told. Additionally, and particularly as it relates to the idea of a public curriculum, perspectives from those who viewed the show could serve as point of triangulation, supporting or complicating the vision described from the relatively unified perspective of museum workers.

A similar set of critiques could be leveraged against the teacher population. What might have been different if the teacher participants had all hailed from social studies disciplines, rather than English? I think it’s fair to say that much of what might be read here as a critique of these teachers’ engagement with the more difficult stories that *Witness to History* might have to offer may have been more relevant or accessible when reached through a social studies curriculum. That line of reasoning bends towards another question, which is not answered in this inquiry but is essential to understanding the relationship between cultural workers: why is it that only English teachers made use of this particular set of images? What, if anything, does that say about the ways that teachers in other disciplines see the role of museum learning in their own curriculum development, or perhaps the ways that other disciplines might be uniquely challenged to make pedagogical sense of this exhibit when the content was the focus, rather than the development of critical thinking skills?

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this project does not take into consideration the perspectives of the people about whom much talking, speculation, and planning is occurring. Though, as described in the introduction, work with students and their written work exceeds the scope of the current project, an understanding about whether these curricular and pedagogical choices had the intended impact would be impossible without data along these lines. I find this line of inquiry particularly important to take up given the way that teachers and museum workers describe adolescents, the audience of primary concern in this project.

Looking Forward

Though I have avoided engaging these thoughts in writing throughout this document, areas for future research seems like the appropriate place to re-contextualize this project against the broader political climate. At the beginning of this process, a Trump presidency was only a possibility, and seemed a far-flung one at that. Perhaps unsurprisingly, mentions of him lurked on the periphery of many of my conversations on and off tape for this project. In the intervening months, we have seen direct evidence of why cultural workers made these connections way back in the summer. Talk of border walls, implementation of travel bans, and the demonization of refugees, largely from countries impacted by the repercussions from this “single story” have echoed all around me and pressed in as I finished this work.

I believe that teachers, museum workers, and others in similar positions need to see themselves as cultural workers, able to support both the development of student critical thinking and the development of student engaged critical consciousness about their individual and identity-based relationships to the wider world. I believe that one way to do this is to support the development of these identities as individuals prepare themselves to take on these careers; in particular because of my position as a teacher educator, I believe this work needs to be

undertaken as a part of teacher development. I am sure this work is already being done; as such, establishing an understanding of how becomes an important first step in building upon existing structures to deepen and strengthen teacher preparation that positions teachers as cultural workers. I am particularly interested in investigating how this might be done amidst the tensions described by Apple and Giroux in the introduction to this project, and experienced by my participating teachers in their daily choices about curriculum design and instruction.

Our current cultural moment can also be characterized by a fear and anxiety from the arts community, whose sources of public funding are under threat by the new administration's largely military priorities. Public educators, too, suffer a similar and very reasonable set of fears. I believe that promoting solidarity between these communities under the guise of our shared cultural work can contribute personal, professional, and curricular strength. In this vein, I am interested in pursuing further research that explores ways in which community partnerships that include formal and informal educators, are working together to teach and learn about difficult and potentially controversial subject matter. Questions such as whether the public curriculum and the school curriculum have to align to achieve desired social outcomes, and how those outcomes are conceived of and measured are interesting, and worthy of study.

The idea that curatorial decision making is of interest to teachers does not surprise me. Thoughtful curriculum design and museum exhibit curation are similar processes in my estimation. Teachers' interest in museum curatorial decision-making provides another avenue through which to explore both the possibility for collaboration, and the opportunity to strengthen the design work of both teachers and curators through the sharing of different bodies of knowledge and design perspectives. What might a teacher stand to gain from thinking about their curriculum design the way a curator thinks about establishing the public curriculum of orderly

images? What might a museum stand to gain from learning to articulate outcomes that vary by audience experience and type, and that can be understood using some systematic type of assessment and evaluation? How can this work happen in concert without sacrificing what makes each participating institution's way of thinking and being unique and important?

Finally, I think it is important to take seriously the competing conceptions of adolescents that emerge in this study. Questions at the conceptual and curricular levels about what it means to be an adolescent student in a visual and political world need to be explored. Of utmost importance, I believe this work needs to be done in collaboration with adolescents, as a way of troubling narratives that simultaneously characterize them as emerging and important future citizens and inherent, technology obsessed narcissists. One way to begin this exploration is to build on the small body of research, cited in the second chapter that considers what adolescents think, infer, feel, and want to know about the visual culture with which they are surrounded. This work could be done equally well in formal and informal learning contexts, and a comparison between the two might prove to be particularly interesting.

In Closing

As a human being, an educator, and a researcher, museums are special places to me. In them, I feel a particular kind of exploratory freedom that does not characterize my experience in a classroom. That being said, I understand these experiences as being necessarily intertwined. I take my classroom learning, my formal education, with me into each interaction I make out of school, just as my out of school life deeply informs who I am in front of a group of students or sitting at a participant at a seminar table.

As an American, the child of a (European) immigrant and a Republican, a political progressive and a citizen deeply anxious about our current democratic moment, this project has

provided me with some solace. I see in the teachers and museum workers who were so generous with their time and their reflections on their own thoughtful teaching practice the hope that Simon describes as characterizing a pedagogy of witnessing and possibility. With them I see a future in which we can shift away from “looking” at schools and cultural institutions as corrupted, wasteful and thus disposable, to “seeing” them as places where identity and the future is shaped and can be bent toward a broader and deeper understanding of what may be both experientially unknowable and yet foundational to our understanding of ourselves and of the world (Zandy, 2008).

I close with Susan Sontag, who in reflecting on the events of 9/11 in the New Yorker reminded her readers, and here reminds us, both of who we are and who we might become. “Our country is strong,” we are told again and again. I for one don’t find this entirely consoling. Who doubts that America is strong? But that’s not all America has to be” (Sontag, 2011).

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APPENDIX:

Interview Questions

Teacher Interview Questions

Interview 1: Focused Life-History Interview

- Describe your teaching career.
 - What did you study as a college student?
 - Did your teacher preparation process include teaching/learning outside of school?
 - Did you learn about designing curriculum around photography (primary source texts)? Museums?
 - Describe what you learned.
 - Have you taught in schools other than XX? Grades or subjects other than XX?
 - How did you come to teach at XX high school?
- Tell me about other times you've brought your students out of school to learn?
 - Have you taken field trips with other classes/teachers?
 - Describe another trip you've designed for your students?
 - How did you decide to take the trip?
 - What was the aim of that trip?
 - What did your curriculum plan look like before, during, or after the trip?
 - What was the experience like for you?
- How have you taught difficult or controversial topics in your courses?
 - Tell me about another time that you've taught students a subject that was difficult (traumatic/controversial). What made it difficult (traumatic/controversial)?
 - How did you design the curriculum around the topic?
 - What did you have students do?
 - What documents/texts did they explore?
 - What was the experience like for you?
 - Can you describe a lesson or moment that stands out to you?

- How do you remember interacting with these topics as a student?
 - Describe a class (topic/lesson) that stands out to you.
 - How did your teachers prepare or introduce you to the topic?
 - What was the aim of the lesson?
 - What was your first reaction/were your subsequent reactions to learning about this topic? How did it feel in the classroom?
 - Have you taught a similar lesson in your course? How was it informed by this experience?
 - How were you prepared in your own learning about teaching to teach difficult topics with your students?
- How do you remember your own experiences learning about 9/11, Iraq, or Afghanistan?
 - Are there images, voices, or stories that stand out in your memory?
 - Can you tell me about your own memories of learning about this/these event(s)?
 - How did/does this memory/experience impact your life/teaching?

Probe Questions (general):

- Can you tell me more (about _____)?
- You said _____. How did this impact your life (your teaching)?
- You mentioned _____. Tell me what that was like for you.
- Can you describe _____ in more detail for me?
- What was going on in your mind when _____?

Interview 2: Central Events Interview

- Think back to your experience preparing for this visit, and describe it in as much detail as possible.
 - Talk about how you prepared or developed the related curriculum.
 - Did you visit the exhibit before going with your students? Describe that experience.
 - What reading/material/research did you engage with in preparation for the trip/in development of the relevant unit?
 - Talk about how you prepared for the trip to the Currier with the students.

- What unit/lesson was this trip embedded in/an extension of?
 - What material did you cover in preparation for the *WtH* visit?
 - What texts did you engage students with?
 - What work did students complete before attending the exhibit?
- What did you expect students would learn from the trip?
- Describe your experiences in the exhibit.
 - What was going on in your mind as you entered with your students?
 - Where did you go (were you brought by the guide)? How did you/your students interact with the exhibit overall?
 - Did you look at all of the images? Together/ in small groups/ as individuals?
 - What was your first/were your subsequent reactions to seeing the photographs?
 - Does any one image/any one reaction stand out in your mind? Describe.
- How did you interact with students during the exhibit?
 - How did the students interact with the images?
 - Describe an interaction/interactions that stand out for you.
 - Describe your role as a teacher in the exhibit.
 - What were you doing?
 - What were you thinking?
 - What were you feeling?
- Describe your classroom after the trip.
 - How would you describe student's reactions after returning to XXX school?
 - Can you recall student comments or descriptions of their experiences?
 - How would you describe your own experience/reaction after returning to school?
 - What work did you give your students after the trip?
 - What work did you provide them when they returned immediately from the trip?
 - Did you have individual or class discussions with students?
 - How did students integrate their experiences into the coursework?
 - Did you reference the trip later lessons? Did you use *WtH* in other lessons later in the semester? If so, how?

- What was the purpose of this experience for students?
 - Did they learn what you expected they would learn?
 - Why/why not?
 - How do you know?
- Have you taught this unit/lesson previously? Was this experience different? How so?

Interview 3: Reflection & Meaning Making

- Given what you’ve said about your previous experiences, and how you’ve described your work with *Witness to History*, how do you understand the use of traumatic photography in your curriculum?
 - What is the purpose of showing these images to students?
 - Could that purpose be achieved in another way?
 - What is the value in working with these pictures? What are the challenges/draw backs?
- How do you understand the difference, if any, between looking at these images in the museum and looking at them in the classroom?
 - How do you think the museum understands the purposes of traumatic photography?
 - Why might they choose to host an exhibit like *WtH*?
- How do you understand the purpose of integrating museum learning into your curriculum?
 - What preparation do you (do you think others) would need in order to best do this work with students?
- Given what you’ve reconstructed in these interviews, what do you see yourself doing in the future?
 - Given the opportunity to do this again, what would you do differently?
 - In regards to designing the curriculum?
 - In regards to planning for and with students?
 - In regards to planning/collaboration/communication with the museum?
 - In regards to follow-up?
 - How will you address this topic with future students?
 - (questions will vary based on the “topic” of the lesson)

- What about the “topic” of the photos—9/11, Iraq, Afghanistan? What is the role of this content in your curriculum?

Museum Staff Interview Questions:

- Describe your role in the design of *Witness to History*.
 - What were your responsibilities in relationship to the exhibit?
 - What work did you do to prepare for your role?
 - What research did you do?
 - What did you read? Did you visit other, similar exhibits? What were your points of reference?
- Describe your experiences the first time you viewed the completed installation of the exhibit. What did you think/feel?
 - What was your first/were your subsequent reactions to seeing the photographs?
 - Describe one or two images from the exhibit that stand out in your memory.
 - Why do you think these images are the ones that stand out for you?
 - If you were to share one of these photos with another person, what would you want them to know about it?
 - How would you describe it (the image)?
- Who is the intended audience for this exhibit?
 - How do you/does one make that determination?
 - What might different audiences gain from this exhibit?
 - Is there anyone you think shouldn’t see these images? Why or why not?
 - What should a visitor know before coming to this exhibit, if anything?
- Think back to your experiences talking to a visitor/visitors for whom this was a powerful experience.
 - What did they say about the photographs?
 - How did the images make them feel?
- If you think about the exhibit as a learning opportunity, what do you think the viewers learned from seeing it?
- Several high school teachers brought their students to the *Witness to History* exhibit.

- What do you think this particular audience would gain from the exhibit, if anything?
- If you knew a teacher was planning to bring their students to this exhibit, how would you suggest they prepare students?

Table: Interviews by participant

Participant	Interview Type	Date	Location	Duration
Teacher 1: Collin	Semi-structured phenomenological	7.11.16	UNH Library	1:08:00
		7.15.16		1:04:00
		7.29.16		1:09:00
		Total Interview Time		
Teacher 2: Samantha	Semi-structured phenomenological	8.9.16	Participant home	1:24:00
		8.16.16		1:16:00
		8.19.16		1:08:00
		Total Interview Time		
Teacher 3: Cecile	Semi-structured phenomenological	8.9.16	Participant home	1:18:00
		8.23.16		1:08:00
		8.26.16		59:00
		Total Interview Time		
Docent 1	Semi-structured	8.5.16	Currier	46:30
Docents 2 & 3	Semi-structured group interview	8.9.16	Currier	49:19
Docent 4	Semi-structured	8.18.16	Currier	57:20
Docent 5	Semi-structured	10.6.16	Currier	1:02:00
Museum Educator 1	Semi-structured	9.6.16	Currier	44:21
Museum Educator 2	Semi-structured	9.6.16	Currier	1:19:00
Curator	Semi-structured	9.6.16	Currier	58:51
Total Teacher Interview Time				10h 34m
Total Museum Interview Time				6h 37m
Total Interview Time				17h 11m

Table: Teacher Profile Development Process and Word Count

Teacher	Transcript #	Analysis/Revision Notes	Word #
Collin	V0- Direct transcription	None- word count does not include interviewer content	26,868
	V1- Line edits only	Omit characteristics of oral speech, “so,” “just,” “yeah,” – smooth transitions, eliminate redundancy in sentences, omit direct reference to previous interviews (i.e. “I think I said in the last interview”), replace pronouns with proper nouns where required for ease of understanding.	23,035
	V2- First analytic data	Highlight important and interesting passages; biographical information, story of influential philosophy	16,402

	set	professor, experience with “why” question in journalism, description of journalism courses and alternative readings, ethics of multimedia journalism, purpose of Nachtwey trip, purposes of museum learning (general).	
	V3- First draft profile	<p>First condensed profile; omit large parts of bio data (will be written in a separate 3rd person biographic introduction), redundant data around course descriptions, early student “why” question story, musings on Nachtwey. Shift additional pronouns to proper nouns where required.</p> <p>Some content from interview three moved into the otherwise chronological presentation of the narrative; esp. where the story of the girl in class is concerned.</p> <p>Include two “alternate” endings— each two paragraphs; one on the comparison between school and museum learning environments, one on Nachtwey’s perspective and Collin’s thoughts on curatorial vision. Alternate endings may be omitted in profile but considered in thematic analysis.</p> <p>Submitted to external readers for feedback on length, readability, and content.</p>	<p>5,420 (total) Alt ending 1- 465 Alt ending 2- 465</p>
	V4- Final draft profile	Member checked by collaborator; read for clarity by reviewers. Final redundancies removed.	4,162
	V0- Direct transcription	None- word count does not include interviewer content	27,299
Samantha	V1- Line edits only	Omit characteristics of oral speech, “like,” “you know,” “blah, blah, blah,” – smooth transitions, eliminate redundancy in sentences, omit references to interviewer or previous interviews (i.e. “When you said before...”), replace pronouns with proper nouns where required for ease of understanding.	21,873
	V2- First analytic data set	Highlight important and interesting passages; biographical information including clinical psych experience, emphasis on authentic learning and “real world” topics, focus on student age, extensive preparation and detailed experience description, connection of Nachtwey to year-long curriculum.	12,233
	V3- First draft profile	First condensed profile; omit large parts of bio data (will be included in biographic introduction, esp note about working in psych/PTSD; omit comparisons to film and theatre; descriptions of student intense emotion (keep in general attention to student emotional experience).	<p>6,684 (total) Alt ending 1- 367</p>

		<p>Some content from interview two adjusted outside of interview chronology—shift Fitchburg museum exp description into narrative about preparation for Currier (to reflect actual chronology of preparation for trip) Include three “alternate” endings of varying lengths—one detailing curricular connections throughout the year, one on the differences between school and museum learning, and one on the curatorial perspective/value [most interesting].</p> <p>Submitted to external readers for feedback on length, readability, and content.</p>	<p>Alt ending 2- 773 Alt ending 3- 565</p>
	V4- Final draft profile	Member checked by collaborator; read for clarity by reviewers. Final redundancies removed.	3.908
Cecile	V0- Direct transcription	None- word count does not include interviewer content	17,880
	V1- Line edits only	Omit characteristics of oral speech, “like,” “you know,” “I don’t know”— smooth transitions, eliminate redundancy in sentences and incomplete sentences, replace pronouns with proper nouns where required for ease of understanding.	15,297
	V2- First analytic data set	Highlight important and interesting passages; biographical information including extensive field trip experiences, emphasis on leaving the classroom/shortcomings of school, Currier trip and strong docent experience, on museum versus school learning and the museum’s teaching vision.	12,101
	V3- First draft profile	<p>First condensed profile; omit large parts of bio data (will be included in biographic introduction, esp notes about extensive field trip and early museum ed experience); omit early descriptions of intersections with difficult topics; omit parent controversy.</p> <p>Draft is almost exclusively chronological in presentation.</p> <p>Include three “alternate” endings of varying lengths—one detailing curricular connections, one on the differences between school and museum learning, and one on the curatorial perspective/value, and a few general comments on the value of risk in schooling design [most interesting].</p> <p>Submitted to external readers for feedback on length, readability, and content.</p>	<p>7,298 (total) Alt ending 1- 493 Alt ending 2- 327 Alt ending 3- 509</p>

	V4- Final draft profile	Member checked by collaborator; read for clarity by reviewers. Final redundancies removed.	4,891
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Table: Collage Primary Coding: Instances by Participant

Participant	Interview	# Quote references coded
Collin	1	1
	2	22
	3	7
Samantha	1	0
	2	31
	3	13
Cecile	1	1
	2	33
	3	4
Curator	1	11
Museum Educator 1	1	6
Museum Educator 2	1	17
Docent 1	1	9
Docent 2	1	4
Docent 3	1	2
Docent 4	1	12
Docent 5	1	39
Total Quoted Teacher References Coded		112
Total Quoted Museum Worker References Coded		100
Total Quoted References Coded		212

Table: Visual Methods Coding by Image

Image: “Sacrifice”		Number Participants: 9 (6 mw, 3 t)	
Sites/Modes	<i>Technological</i>	<i>Compositional</i>	<i>Social</i>
Museum Workers			
Production			
Image	2	6	4
Audiencing	1	6	12
Teachers			
Production			
Image		4	
Audiencing	1	4	2

Image: “Collapse of the South Tower..”		Number Participants: 8 (7 mw, 1 t)	
Sites/Modes	<i>Technological</i>	<i>Compositional</i>	<i>Social</i>
Museum Workers			
Production	1		11
Image	1	7	4
Audiencing			10
Teachers			
Production			5
Image		1	
Audiencing			4

Image: “Dying Taliban...”		Number Participants: 7 (4 mw, 3 t)	
Sites/Modes	<i>Technological</i>	<i>Compositional</i>	<i>Social</i>
Museum Workers			
Production	1		3
Image		3	2
Audiencing			4
Teachers			
Production			3
Image	1	10	5
Audiencing			23

Image: “A group of women...”		Number Participants: 6 (5 mw, 1 t)	
Sites/Modes	<i>Technological</i>	<i>Compositional</i>	<i>Social</i>
Museum Workers			
Production			
Image		4	1
Audiencing	2		5
Teachers			
Production	1		1
Image		2	2
Audiencing			1

Image: “In Kabul a sister...”		Number Participants: 6 (4 mw, 2 t)	
Sites/Modes	<i>Technological</i>	<i>Compositional</i>	<i>Social</i>
Museum Workers			
Production			1
Image		8	1
Audiencing			12
Teachers			
Production			
Image		4	
Audiencing	1		2

Image: “New life begins...”		Number Participants: 6 (5 mw, 1 t)	
Sites/Modes	<i>Technological</i>	<i>Compositional</i>	<i>Social</i>
Museum Workers			
Production			1
Image		7	2
Audiencing		3	5
Teachers			
Production			
Image		2	
Audiencing		3	2

Image: “A sign in Times Square...”		Number Participants: 5 (4 mw, 1 t)	
Sites/Modes	<i>Technological</i>	<i>Compositional</i>	<i>Social</i>
Museum Workers			
Production	1		4
Image		6	3
Audiencing			6
Teachers			
Production			3
Image		2	1
Audiencing			1

Image: “Afghan man at Red Cross..”		Number Participants: 4 (3 mw, 1 t)	
Sites/Modes	<i>Technological</i>	<i>Compositional</i>	<i>Social</i>
Museum Workers			
Production			
Image		2	2
Audiencing		3	1
Teachers			
Production			
Image		2	1
Audiencing			2

Image: “Boys sit astride		Number Participants: 4 (3 mw, 1 t)	
Sites/Modes	<i>Technological</i>	<i>Compositional</i>	<i>Social</i>
Museum Workers			
Production			1
Image		4	1
Audiencing			10
Teachers			
Production			
Image			
Audiencing		2	1

Image: “Man mourns the loss...”		Number Participants: 4 (3 mw, 1 t)	
Sites/Modes	<i>Technological</i>	<i>Compositional</i>	<i>Social</i>
Museum Workers			
Production			2
Image		2	1
Audiencing		1	7
Teachers			
Production			
Image		2	
Audiencing			2

Image: “Family members at the burial”		Number Participants: 4 (4 mw, 0 t)	
Sites/Modes	<i>Technological</i>	<i>Compositional</i>	<i>Social</i>
Museum Workers			
Production			
Image		8	2
Audiencing		1	6
Teachers			
Production			
Image			
Audiencing			

Image: “Injured soldier Private...”		Number Participants: 4 (2 mw, 2 t)	
Sites/Modes	<i>Technological</i>	<i>Compositional</i>	<i>Social</i>
Museum Workers			
Production			
Image		4	1
Audiencing		1	1
Teachers			
Production			1
Image		2	1
Audiencing		1	3

Image: “Ruins of Kabul...”		Number Participants: 4 (3 mw, 1 t)	
Sites/Modes	<i>Technological</i>	<i>Compositional</i>	<i>Social</i>
Museum Workers			
Production			
Image	1	6	2
Audiencing		1	4
Teachers			
Production			
Image		2	
Audiencing		2	2

Image: “Surfer...”		Number Participants: 4 (3 mw, 1 t)	
Sites/Modes	<i>Technological</i>	<i>Compositional</i>	<i>Social</i>
Museum Workers			
Production			
Image		2	3
Audiencing		1	2
Teachers			
Production			
Image			
Audiencing		1	

Image: “Firefighter searching...”		Number Participants: 3 (1 mw, 2 t)	
Sites/Modes	<i>Technological</i>	<i>Compositional</i>	<i>Social</i>
Museum Workers			
Production			
Image	1	2	
Audiencing		1	2
Teachers			
Production			1
Image	1	2	
Audiencing	1		4

IRB Approval Letter

University of New Hampshire

Research Integrity Services, Service Building
51 College Road, Durham, NH 03824-3585
Fax: 603-862-3564

01-Jul-2016

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Education, Morrill Hall
1048 Hayward Street
Manchester, NH 03103

IRB #: 6502

Study: Sites of Difficulty- Museums, Teachers, Traumatic History

Approval Date: 29-Jun-2016

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB) has reviewed and approved the protocol for your study as Exempt as described in Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 46, Subsection 101(b). Approval is granted to conduct your study as described in your protocol.

Researchers who conduct studies involving human subjects have responsibilities as outlined in the document, *Responsibilities of Directors of Research Studies Involving Human Subjects*. This document is available at <http://unh.edu/research/irb-application-resources>. Please read this document carefully before commencing your work involving human subjects.

Upon completion of your study, please complete the enclosed Exempt Study Final Report form and return it to this office along with a report of your findings.

If you have questions or concerns about your study or this approval, please feel free to contact me at 603-862-2003 or Julie.simpson@unh.edu. Please refer to the IRB # above in all correspondence related to this study. The IRB wishes you success with your research.

For the IRB,



Julie F. Simpson
Director

cc: File