


2019

Photographic (Over) Exposures in the Nuclear Age in Joyce Carol Oates's *You Must Remember This*

Sonia Weiner
Tel Aviv University, Israel

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.usfca.edu/jcostudies>

 Part of the [American Literature Commons](#), [American Popular Culture Commons](#), [Literature in English, North America Commons](#), and the [Photography Commons](#)

Citation Information

Weiner, Sonia (2019) "Photographic (Over) Exposures in the Nuclear Age in Joyce Carol Oates's *You Must Remember This*," *Bearing Witness: Joyce Carol Oates Studies*: Vol. 5 , Article 1.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15867/331917.5.1>

Available at: <https://repository.usfca.edu/jcostudies/vol5/iss1/1>

For more information, please contact
southerr@usfca.edu.

[Creative Commons](#)
4.0



UNIVERSITY OF
SAN FRANCISCO

Gleeson Library |
Geschke Center

Photographic (Over) Exposures in the Nuclear Age in Joyce Carol Oates's *You Must Remember This*



Sonia Weiner
Tel Aviv University

The title of Joyce Carol Oates's 1987 novel, *You Must Remember This*, is a quote from the opening lines of the song *As Time Goes By*, featured in the popular film *Casablanca* (1942).¹ This intertextual phrase embodies the suggestive themes of memory, time, and nostalgia, topics enhanced by Oates through verbal descriptions of photographic images. A close examination of this verbal imagery in Oates's *You Must Remember This* will reveal discrepancies between surface appearances and embedded social and cultural contexts

¹ The song, "You Must Remember This," was written in 1931 by Herman Hupfeld.

within the text. Analysis of the photographic imagery undermines the overt conformity, conservatism, and consensus of postwar America by exposing its underlying ambiguities, hypocrisies, and tensions. Overall, photography contributes to the novel's critique of power and of postwar era constructions of gender.

Oates, whose work spans over five decades, has been heralded by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. as a socially conscious writer. "A future archeologist," he observes, "equipped only with her oeuvre could easily piece together the whole of postwar America" (27). Indeed, in conversation with David Germain, Oates has notably claimed to be "of the school of the writer as witness... to history and society" at large (177). The idea of witnessing establishes a link between writing and the medium of photography, a connection that finds full expression in *You Must Remember This*. Reading the novel through the prism of photography sheds light on Oates's stance as witness and critic of the postwar years and particularly on the problematic role of visual culture as a tool of control, especially for adolescent females. As Brenda Daly has noted, Oates often "borrow[s] techniques from photography" in her fiction for the purpose of challenging generic conventions that impinge on American democracy ("Art of Democracy," 460). Generic boundary crossing is echoed thematically in the novel through Oates's critique of gender construction and carries a decisive political edge.²

Oates's intense preoccupation with domesticity and violence and her discussions of coming-of-age female adolescents has

² In her analyses of *Because It Is Bitter, and Because It Is My Heart*, Daly illustrates how the novel is organized both visually and thematically through the democratizing concept of the photomontage, critiquing race, class, and gender.

garnered critical attention from feminist scholars which has not always been positive. Joanne Creighton views her portrayal of victimized, passively withdrawn female figures as creating quintessentially “unliberated women,”³ while Christine Elizabeth Atkins regards the sexual violence in her novels, often ending in rape, as “reify[ing] women's cultural status as victims” (viii).⁴ Brenda Daly's important work, *Lavish Self-Divisions: The Novels of Joyce Carol Oates*, shifted the focus to female narrators as agents striving to achieve authority in a patriarchal society, and set the stage for more positive evaluations of Oates as a feminist inclined writer. More recently, Tanya Horeck has explored “how certain ideological fantasies or myths of masculinity and femininity inexorably lead to tragedy” in the works of Oates, underscoring her contribution to the “formation of female subjectivity” (26). In a similar bend, this analysis exposes the work of postwar ideology, utilizing visual imagery to interrogate constructions of female gender and sexuality. Ultimately the adolescent female protagonist emerges as a strong and defiant individual.

The confusing messages surrounding gender, sexuality and independence directed toward young women during the fifties are probed through the coming-of-age protagonist Enid Maria Stevick. Anorexic and suicidal, Enid commits acts of explicit and implicit rebellion to contest the dominant social and cultural ideologies that find expression in the photographic imagery permeating her

³ As stated in the title of Creighton's essay, “Unliberated Women in Joyce Carol Oates's Fiction.” Gayle Greene also asserts in *Changing the Story* that Oates is “not feminist” (25).

⁴ Atkins further claims that rape in the work of Oates is “an inevitable rite-of-passage for girls” (Chapter I, and more specifically pp. 22-27).

environment. The photographic imagery in the novel is pervasive, and includes images of death, violence, and sexuality. Laden with postwar patriarchal ideology, the images defy and stifle Enid's budding desire for individuality and creativity, causing her to rebel against their dictates.

Photography critics such as Susan Sontag, Stuart Hall, and Alan Trachtenberg, have addressed the way photographs conceal the mechanisms of their production.⁵ The fact that photographs are part of a wider discursive formation is precisely what is obscured in the production of images that covertly work to secure the dominant ideology. Critics such as John Berger and Alan Sekula have theorized the ways photography shapes social and political memory.⁶ Building on Berger, visual culture critic Laura Wexler emphasizes the need to explore the gap between the image and the hidden discourses that go into its creation. Following Sekula, she offers a mode of "reading within and alongside and through photographs" (Sekula ix). In doing so, she aims to "expose the cracks in the mirror of history" so as to create a space where "democratic counter-memory" can emerge (Wexler 6). Reading *You Must Remember This* through its photographic images aims to lay bare not only the postwar ideology, but also the

⁵ Hall writes that the image "cannot be completed within the text as a self-sufficient entity. It is always part of, and constructed across, a wider discursive formation" (309-10). Trachtenberg observes the lacuna created "[b]etween an exposed photographic plate and the contingent acts whereby people read that inscription and find sense in it" (6).

⁶ See in particular John Berger's *A Seventh Man* (1979). Alan Sekula has uniquely looked into the way the static photograph suppresses its "dialogical social origins" by exposing how photographic meaning oscillates in a commodity based society (x, xv).

ways in which it (in)visibly permeated the culture. Such an examination encourages the emergence of counter-memory.

Oates's novel, as noted, does not include actual representations of material photographs but rather verbal evocations of images which I term "prose photos." While not tangible, these images nonetheless embody attributes ascribed to photographic images and "behave" in the novel like photographs. Articulated, and hence interpreted by Oates, the prose photos play an important analytical function as they facilitate and promote critical engagement with the image and with the cultural forces that constructed it. This can be seen for example in the newspaper photograph showing "President Eisenhower admiring Rocky Marciano's enormous balled fist. Both men were in fact admiring the fist" (392).⁷ In this prose photo, based on a well-known existent photograph, the symbol of physical might and that of political power come together through the forceful image of the fist. The fist, by means of its energy and shape, recalls the nuclear bomb and functions as a phallic symbol hinting at male dominance.⁸ The gazes of both men are directed admirably toward the balled fist, legitimizing Marciano's physical force and masculinizing the aging and somewhat frail President. Fetishized by American men, Marciano's fist seems to commend unmitigated, raw aggression in the nuclear age.

The photograph is presented in the novel as a prose photo, dependent upon the verbal to write it into existence. While the prose "reproduction" draws on the original for context, is also open to a

⁷ The photo documents Rocky Marciano's visit to the White House (with Joe DiMaggio). June 6, 1953.

⁸ In *On Boxing*, Oates presents the boxer as a phallic symbol.

process of revision and revisualization. “Turning actual photographs into literary descriptions,” according to Timothy Adams, enables them “to overcome one of photography’s inherent characteristics, a fixed point of view,” thereby opening them up to a variety of interpretive possibilities and to the work of culture (73). Prose photos in Oates’s text work to destabilize fixed points of view as a means to critique postwar America, a decisive era in American culture.

Oates weaves both real and imaginary prose photos into the narrative. By granting equal weight to descriptions of real, existent photographs as well as those that depict fictional and imaginary events, Oates intentionally blurs the distinction between them, lending reliability to the fictional photographs while simultaneously fictionalizing the real. As a result, their constructed nature is exposed, facilitating a process of re-visualization. While prose photos depicting fictional moments do not rely on actual photographs, Oates places them within the dominant photographic culture and ideology of their period, where they operate as additional commentary and critique of the postwar zeitgeist.

Living Skeletons

The most disturbing and powerful photographic images, those of Holocaust victims and survivors, occur at the outset of the novel and provide a prism through which we enter into its world. Enid encounters these images by chance, as she leafed through a mildewed copy of *Life* magazine that she had stumbled upon in her father’s used furniture store when she was but eight or nine. The warm and familiar environment of her father’s store could not shield

Enid from the content of these photos, forcefully exhibiting how an ordinary daily incident is intensified through encounters with photographic images. The prose photos that emerge are Enid's perception of them:

she saw photographs of extermination camp victims, emaciated men in uniforms that were comical, striped, "living skeletons" of Bergen-Belsen they were called, Buchenwald prisoners staring at the camera through barbed wire looking so calm, so quiet. There were piles of the dead along a country lane, there was a little boy in short pants her age squinting at the camera looking as if he might smile hello, it was all so calm and ordinary. (10-11)⁹

The descriptions are brief, but read carefully, reveal an unconscious optics¹⁰ at work: the "piles of the dead along a country lane" suggest a deep incongruity; the "'living skeletons' of Bergen-Belsen" are seen in painful juxtaposition to their "uniforms that were comical, striped"; the "Buchenwald prisoners staring at the camera through barbed wire looking so calm, so quiet" are emblems of dignity; and the little boy "squinting at the camera looking as if he might smile

⁹ Oates's description of the boy in the "country lane" is based on a photograph taken by the American photographer, George Rodger on April 20, 1945. It first appeared in *Life* magazine on May 7, 1945 (p. 32). In *The Temptation of Despair*, Werner Sollors analyzes the changing reception of the image, initially understood to represent a German boy, but later identified as Sieg Maandag, a Dutch Jewish seven and a half year old survivor of the camp ("Malevolent Rectangles of Spectral Horror," 57-82).

¹⁰ The camera, for Walter Benjamin, with "its interruptions and isolations, its extensions and accelerations, its enlargements and reductions," became a tool that penetrated reality to reveal a "different nature" ("Mechanical" 230). Benjamin perceived this psychological realm as "a space held together unconsciously" or the "optical unconscious" ("History" 202).

hello” points to the senselessness of the Nazi death machine which targeted children as the enemy.¹¹ Enid is particularly receptive to the image of the child victim, and her observation that the boy is “her age” suggests her identification with him.¹²

Enid’s identification with child victims is solidified and becomes central to her consciousness when she turns the page of the magazine and is confronted with the image of “the face close up of a boy who had died trying to squeeze beneath a barn door through a space of—was it three inches or so? so small!—a face smudged and broken yet beautiful in sleep, in death ...” (II).¹³ This grotesque parody of birth, which delivers the child from the horrors of his existence to what Enid understands to be the bliss of non-being, exerts a powerful, punctum-like,¹⁴ influence over her: she “could not look away from the dead boy until he released her” (II). Rather than reacting in horror, Enid identifies with the child victim, sensing that he “meant her no harm” (II). In discussing the complex processes involved when children become witnesses to images depicting child victims, Marianne Hirsch has found that the distance separating

¹¹ See Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews* for a discussion on how children victims became “the face of the enemy” (166).

¹² Identification was not based on ethnicity or religion, as victims of the German camps were rarely referred to as Jews in 1945 reportage (Sollors 62-3).

¹³ An image similar to the one described here also appears in the volume of *Life* from May 7, 1945, on the page following the George Rodger image. One of several images on pages 34-5 taken by the American photographer William Vandivert in Buchenwald, it depicts the head of a person of undetermined age squeezed under a door.

¹⁴ Roland Barthes’s articulation of the punctum in *Camera Lucida* suggests a visceral, rupture-like response to an image, initially relating to a detail and ultimately to the temporal vertigo of time which signifies death (CL 97).

them is reduced to the point where disturbance is replaced by internalization, which corroborates Enid's response.¹⁵

The intensity of Enid's identification with the victimized child is crystalized though a dream that plagues her: she was "pushing pushing herself squeezing herself by inches beneath a door, or was it a wall . . . through a tiny space at the bottom squeezing herself to get through to get out her eyes shut tight with the effort her jaws locked together to get out, to get out, to get out" (24). Not only does the image evoke in Enid an intense response of identification, it also provides insight into the abuse of power and "brought with it the conviction simple as a lock clicking into place that the human world was wrong, she'd been born into it by error" (11). The dream implies that Enid's affinity with the child causes her to construe death as a desirable escape from her environment, a desire she put into practice several years later by attempting to commit suicide, as described in the prologue.

While Enid maintains that "no she wasn't crying, no she wasn't upset," the density and intensity of the language, as well as its near-hysterical pitch—"That head—that human head—so improbably forced beneath a door! Those shut eyes, that dirt-smudged mouth!"—indicate otherwise (11). Therefore when her father "snatche[s] the magazine out of her hands" (11) forcing her back into reality, into what she will increasingly come to see as the male dominated world of postwar America, she does not run into his seemingly protecting and comforting embrace, but rather remains distant and aloof. Her

¹⁵ In "Projected Memory" Hirsch writes, "even the image of the child victim of incomprehensible horror, displaces 'the appetite for alterity' with an urge toward identity" (16).

encounter with the photograph becomes a formative moment, raising her awareness to her own vulnerability and lack of power in a power driven society. It also initiates her stance of non-compliance with authority; her first act of resistance is to consider death as an alternative to the burden of being a female adolescent in patriarchal postwar U.S.

Enid's encounter with the Holocaust images is strikingly reminiscent of Susan Sontag's now iconic description of her first encounter with images from Bergen-Belsen and Dachau which she discovered by chance in a Santa Monica bookstore in July 1945 when she was only twelve years old. The experience impacted her strongly: "Nothing I have seen—in photographs or in real life—ever cut me as sharply, deeply, instantaneously," Sontag recalls. "When I looked at those photographs, something broke. Some limit had been reached, and not only that of horror; I felt irrevocably grieved, wounded, but a part of my feelings started to tighten; something went dead; something is still crying" (OP 20). The failure to comprehend the images (not only for lack of context), led Sontag to a lifelong critical engagement with photography, in which she theorized the ethics of viewing images portraying the pain of others. While such images can shock and titillate, a surfeit of images ultimately creates apathy, while neither of these responses lead to understanding or action.¹⁶ Oates's verbal revisualization of these same images through Enid's vantage point neutralizes the problematic dimensions of regarding the pain of others, thereby enabling the reader to examine their emergence (and withdrawal) within the cultural moment.

¹⁶ For a full discussion of the various ethical complications, see the now iconic *On Photography* (1977) and the more recent *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003).

Furthermore, Enid's encounter with the images is based, as Maria Torgovnick explains, on a biographical event in the life of Joyce Carol Oates: "In my novel *You Must Remember This*, the young heroine is appalled by an issue of *Life* magazine, and I think this was probably my personal memory, but it was a confused and ahistoric vision (of death camp survivors), with no context to explain it..."¹⁷ In the same anecdote Oates reveals that her "father's mother was the daughter of German Jews who'd come to the United States in the 1890's and assimilated," revealing an additional incentive for Enid's identification with the victim. The fact that "the very words 'Jew'—'Jewish'—were never uttered in [her] household" suggests a repressed content which Oates explores through Enid's identification with the child victim (Torgovnick 80). Oates's inability to contextualize what she saw, combined with the fact that the Holocaust was not spoken of in her home, suggests "that knowledge of the death camps became a resonant fact in her imagination, one that helped to form her often-scary image of the human mind and sympathy with the outsider's point of view" (Torgovnick 80). The experiences of Oates and of Sontag heighten the price of publishing and then suppressing these images in postwar America.

Images of Holocaust survivors and victims came to the attention of the American public in the spring of 1945 when the camps were liberated by Allied forces. Peter Novak explains that the images, not initially perceived to depict mainly Jewish victims, served as proof of the horrors of the Nazi regime: "Reports, and especially photographs, from the liberated concentration camps underlined [the] perception" that "Nazi Germany was widely

¹⁷ Oates as cited in Torgovnick, 80.

regarded as the apotheosis of evil and depravity” (85). However, these images were but a segment of the larger war picture. The high death toll of American GI’s, the war still raging in the Pacific and the ramifications of the use of Atomic weaponry overshadowed what would eventually be defined as the genocide of European Jewry.¹⁸ When the war was eventually won, Alan Mintz points out, the emphasis in the public arena shifted to focus on the heroic Victory of the American nation, and within this discourse “the murder of European Jewry was consigned to the category of evils that had been decisively crushed” by the victory (5).

Furthermore, the change in the international power balance and alignments required America to undergo an ideological overhaul. To block what was perceived as “the Soviet threat,” America needed to convert the German foe into a formidable ally (Novick 85). In the effort to establish West Germany as an ally in the battle over communist aggression, symbols that aligned Germany with evil, such as the Holocaust, were displaced to pave the way for public acceptance of the new worldview (Mintz 5). Images depicting the horror of the Holocaust hindered this process and seldom appeared in postwar American media and culture. And when evoked during the Cold War era, the Holocaust was taken out of its specific German related context, and used as a tool to prove the need for a strong, united, and forceful America, one that could ensure that acts like this would never happen again (Novick 12).¹⁹

¹⁸ The full impact of the atrocity for the Jews was not evident at liberation, as the camps included other persecuted minorities.

¹⁹ Jewish Americans, who sought to fully integrate into American society, were also reluctant to raise the issue of the holocaust in the post war years, contributing to the general amnesia (Mintz 7).

Oates's novel, which takes place in the 1950s (and early 1960s) addresses the postwar unease surrounding the Holocaust, yet written in the late 1980s it also taps into the assurgency of the Holocaust in American culture and imagination in the late twentieth century. The Holocaust became "the ultimate analogy for reflecting on the evils humans have afflicted upon other humans" (Mintz 12), enabling Oates to utilize it as a tool with which to explore postwar American ethics. Furthermore, feminists have turned a critical eye to "the dominance of 'patriarchal values'" during the Holocaust in order to underscore the devastating implications of patriarchal systems at large,²⁰ making it possible for Oates to use the Holocaust as a tool to critique the victimization of women in postwar America. Her innovative use of prose photos enables Oates to tap into the horror without desecrating or trivializing its memory.

In the novel, the relegation of the Holocaust images to a forgotten shelf of a used furniture store can be seen as symbolic of the willed amnesia surrounding the Holocaust in postwar America. In stumbling across the raw, un-mitigated images that appeared in *Life* several years earlier, Enid discovers "living skeletons" in America's closet, skeletons which could serve America as a reminder of the dangers implicit in the emergence of conservatism alongside

²⁰ The Nazi war mechanism, construed by men and largely (though not exclusively) carried out by them, suggests the patriarchal basis for the Holocaust (Novick 241). Novick's discussion is informed by Judy Chicago's *Holocaust Project*, partially motivated by her "enquiry into some of the consequences of male power" and "her long-standing interest in issues of power and powerless" (Website).

excessive power.²¹ Endorsing unity as conformism and strength as the need to contain “aberrations” from the norm, such as Communism, homosexuality, and female aspirations to power, postwar conservatism eventually gave rise to mechanisms that impinged on the democratic nature of government.

Picking up on the phrase “living skeleton,” it is possible to see how it creates a disturbing link between the bodies of emaciated survivors and those of female Americans. The opening paragraphs of the novel, which describe several cases of violence randomly inflicted by men upon women, identify a female victim of sexual abuse as a “living skeleton,” potently linking sexuality, abuse and undernourished bodies (10). Contemplating the notion of a “living skeleton,” Enid observes her emergent adolescent body “in the bathroom mirror, naked, regarding with clinical distaste the jutting collar bones, the knobby shoulder bones, the thin pale envelope of skin rippling over her ribs” (10). Her anorexic proclivity is solidified as we see her at age fifteen standing “five foot three inches tall” and “weigh[ing] eighty nine pounds” (13). Enid becomes a “living skeleton” and can be identified with female victims of abuse, as well as with Holocaust victims who are introduced in the text in the subsequent paragraph.

While significant differences exist between anorectic female bodies, sexually abused female bodies, and bodies of Holocaust victims, their juxtaposition in the opening pages of the novel requires that we consider their possible similarities. Most noticeably,

²¹ Brenda Daly has similarly noted that Oates’s turn to this earlier era in her writing is not motivated by nostalgia, but by warning readers that America is “coming dangerously close to repeating [its] ‘innocent’ age of McCarthyism” (“Art of Democracy,” 459).

they are linked by their association to male dominated hegemonic manifestations of aggression. However, while sexual abuse and racial persecution are normally not a function of choice, anorexia has been diagnosed as a self-inflicted condition, albeit alongside deeper unconscious motives. By inscribing her body with the pathology of anorexia, Enid exhibits her identification with victims of abuse and her subsequent desire to fade away, while at the same time, her anorexia carries within it the seeds of rebellion against the very structures of power that desire her submission.

The series of references to acts of violence arbitrarily inflicted upon the disempowered in general, and women more particularly in the form of physical and sexual abuse, set the tone for the entire work. In postwar America, defined by the cold war and the atomic threat, male anxiety in relation to loss of power and control was exemplified through men's need to dominate women (and other minorities). Wini Breines argues that "postwar culture was a culture of containment" in which "American politics and culture were structured by a defense of masculinity and whiteness" (10). The loss of separate spheres and the relaxing of gender roles during the war resulted in a postwar backlash, reinforcing traditional domestic femininity.²² While women continued to enter the labor force and to push for equality, the 1950s are renowned for their political and cultural conservatism, particularly regarding gender. Breines identifies the fifties as a difficult and paradoxical period especially for young, white, middle-class women, who matured in an era that extended new opportunities, yet tantalizingly denied them to

²² For a similar argument, see Elaine Tyler May, "Containment at Home: Cold War, Warm Hearth" (10-29), *Homeward Bound*.

women under a veneer of respectability. In response to these “exaggerated contradictions” Breines offers, “girls rebelled and explored” (11).

The phenomenon of female anorexia as a form of rebellion was initially theorized by feminist critics. Susan Bordo writes that anorexia can serve as a form of rebellion against a society that construes female desires for self-nurturance and self-feeding as greedy and excessive. The construction of femininity, especially at times of cultural backlash like the 1950s, maintains “that female hunger—for public power, for independence, for sexual gratification—be contained, and the public space that women be allowed to take up be circumscribed, limited” (171). Enid’s anorexia can be interpreted as a form of embodied protest against the constraints of patriarchal society. Distinguished by unconscious motives and often achieving opposite results, this embryonic protest lacks “effective language, choice or politics, but [is] protest nonetheless,” Bordo asserts (175). In refusing nourishment, Enid condemns a culture “that disdains and suppresses female hunger, makes women ashamed of their appetites and needs, and demands that women constantly work on the transformation of their body” (Bordo 176).

Minimizing the space her body takes up by circumscribing her physical presence, Enid exaggerates society's expectations from women, taking to an extreme the curtailing of female “appetite” and the containment of their desires which culminates in her suicide attempt. Surviving the ordeal requires her to devise new modes of resistance and physical rebellion. Following this vein, it is possible to see Enid’s skeletal body in dialogue with another stereotype of postwar female sexuality, that of the “sex bomb.”

Sex Bomb

Growing up in a lower middle-class neighborhood in Port Oriskany,²³ New York, Enid is surrounded by potent photographic images typical of her era. These images serve as a further source of anxiety for Enid, who resists their content or the uses to which they have been put. The narrative, incorporating events from the masculine domain such as Enid's brother's military service and subsequent injury in the Korean War and her step-uncle's boxing career, provide backdrops against which these photographs are viewed.

An image that looms large over Enid, exacting from her a mixed response, is that of the atomic bomb: "Enid had studied photographs of atomic bomb detonations, the famous mushroom cloud the sky ablaze" (61). The mushroom cloud, a symbol of the Cold War, is a multifold image, signifying fear and power, despair and pride, and has been manipulated by various groups to serve different motives.²⁴ Today, Paul Boyer attests, the mushroom clouds over Hiroshima and Nagasaki "stand as signposts marking both a gash in the living flesh of [American] historical consciousness and a turning point in [American] ethical history" (182). The prose photo of the

²³ Port Oriskany is "an amalgam of two cities in upstate New York—Buffalo, the first large city of my experience, and Lockport, the city of my birth..." (Oates Interview with Jay Parini, 154).

²⁴ In her survey of the mushroom cloud in Cold War-era imagery, Peggy Rosenthal concludes that it is "remarkabl[y] receptive[e] to projections upon it," and that "whether fetus or phallus or smiling face, brain or tree or globe, the mushroom cloud projects back the array of human responses to all that it stands for: responses of pride, parochial possessiveness, creative resistance, denial, [and] despair" (88).

mushroom cloud, echoed in Rocky Marciano's balled fist, triggers familiar debates surrounding production and uses of Atomic weapons which influence our reading of this photo in the context of narrative. Yet, at the time, public preoccupation with the implications of the use of nuclear weapons on the Japanese was short-lived and was soon directed toward the possibility that these weapons, in the wrong hands, could be used upon Americans themselves.²⁵

American scientists of the Manhattan Project who developed the weapons were instrumental in raising the nation's awareness to the threat of nuclear warfare and actively instigated a "campaign of fear" in order to promote international control and cooperation to prevent further development and use of the destructive device. However the campaign of fear boomeranged, achieving the opposite results: manipulation of the fear factor by pro-bomb supporters "actively encouraged the very reliance on atomic weapons the scientists hoped to avoid" (Boyer 93). The unleashed fear "created fertile psychological soil for the ideology of American nuclear superiority" to take root and was then effectively harnessed (by President Truman in his address to Congress in March 1947) to "an all-out crusade against communism" (Boyer 106). The opportunity to foreclose the nuclear arms race was rejected by the policy makers in Washington, who manipulated public sentiment to make their choice seem like a necessity.

²⁵ John Hersey's *Hiroshima*, initially published in *The New Yorker* on August 31, 1946, and later that year in book form by Alfred A. Knopf, described the aftermath of the bomb and was a best seller. However, as Michael J. Yavenditti notes, "one of the most striking features of the American reception of 'Hiroshima' is how little, rather than how much, protest it inspired against the atomic bombings" (42).

While Enid is disturbed by the prospect of the A-bomb, she dismisses the attempts issued by the authorities to turn it into a controlling and fear provoking tool: “she asked her homeroom teacher what good it would do to follow the drill if the bomb had already fallen, and if it hadn’t yet fallen how would anybody know to do the drill? And her teacher said vaguely, a little impatiently, that these were standard procedures, precautions everybody should take” (61). Enid’s persistent questioning undermines the patriarchal discourse through which, Bryan Taylor demonstrates, “the weapons acquire their value and utility,” and through which they are legitimated (53). The atomic threat emerges through Enid’s perspective as patriarchal hype which is employed to reassert control over the public.

The Cold War tensions in the late 50s to early 60s caused the nuclear hysteria to peak. In 1957, the Gaither Report backed the building of fallout shelters, devoting an entire section to civilian “passive defense.”²⁶ On July 25, 1961, in a televised speech, President John F. Kennedy appealed to Americans to protect themselves, saying, “I hope to let every citizen know what steps he can take without delay to protect his family in case of attack. I know you would not want to do less.”²⁷ His phrasing implies that citizens were necessarily men, and that women and children were in need of protection. Following his speech, photo-essays of fallout shelters were disseminated broadly in the media, as for example in *Life*

²⁶ See especially, “Passive Defense,” 18-22.

²⁷ As quoted in Lawrence J. Vale, 64. Vale notes that Kennedy had spoken before Congress in May about the rationale for a fallout shelter program as “an insurance for the population,” but with little effect.

magazine, on September 15, 1961.²⁸ In 1962 Eugene Feingold summarized the debates surrounding the construction of fallout shelters, concluding that the president did not necessarily believe the shelters would protect the public from a nuclear threat, but rather he backed the shelters because they enhanced “the credibility of our asserted determination,” and granted a sense of emotional assurance (282). Enid saw through the discourse, understanding that it served an ulterior motive.

Inspired by a photographic essay in a journal, Enid’s father constructs a family fallout shelter in the backyard, in compliance with images depicting middle class white families snugly contained within a cozy underground space. As Enid’s father admires the images of the shelters and the masculine effort involved in building them, the fallout shelter is revealed as his attempt to restore patriarchal order and control: “the photograph of a tense smiling man of about his own age standing in his backyard in Iowa beside a great gaping hole in the earth, a mere pick and shovel at hand,” he observes, was “quite impressive” (215).²⁹ His thoughts echo the discourse as he finds “something eerily snug, attractive about [the shelters] . . . he saw the appeal, he saw the romance, a man showed his love for his family, perhaps even for the greatness of America, by

²⁸ The cover of the issue reads, “How You Can Survive Fallout”; the featured article begins with a quote from President Kennedy followed by the subtitle: “Fallout Shelters: You could be among the 97% to survive if you follow advice on these pages . . . How to Build Shelters . . . Where to Hide in Cities . . . What to do During and Attack” (95).

²⁹ In an interview, Oates shows her interlocutor “a postcard from that outwardly placid decade which features a man in a small-town setting who is hard at work digging his bomb shelter” (Parini 154).

building a cozy place of refuge by lining the walls with concrete and storing up provisions” (215). Significantly, it is in the protective shell of the shelter that Enid’s father who is largely impotent is able to make love to his wife for the first time in eighteen years. Enid, recognizing the shelter as a means for patriarchal control and containment, refuses to descend into it.

A prominent image, which is not to be separated from that of the nuclear bomb, portrays Rita Hayworth, whose overpowering presence dominates Enid and her sister Lizzie's shared bedroom space:

In a gold filigree frame on the girls’ bureau was a sexy black-and-white photograph of Rita Hayworth—*To Lizzie, love, Rita!* in Rita Hayworth’s own signature—with luscious wet pouting lips, sleepy seductive eyes, hair all frizzed crimped curled, the ends upturned, oh she was gorgeous wasn’t she? . . . Rita Hayworth was wearing black pearls it looked like, a half-dozen strands rippling over her big breasts straining tight in a silver lame blouse... (39)³⁰

Rita Hayworth’s highly sexual appearance was a symbol of femininity in postwar America, and can be attributed, according to Michael Wood, to the fact that she was “simultaneously too ordinary and too beautiful... She looked like thousands of American women, only better... Her beauty seemed not an exceptional gift but an accentuation of normal good features into an ideal form... She looked homegrown but classy” (57-8). An “American Princess,” Rita

³⁰ Rita Hayworth’s personal signature on the photograph in the novel seeks to authenticate identity as it provides a link between the body and the photographic referent through the hand that signed it. Yet this authenticity is conflated through the “written” prose photo, hinting at the illusionary and constructed nature of Hayworth’s identity.

Hayworth was idolized by young American girls who hoped to become Hollywood stars (Wood 58).

The image of Rita Hayworth yields a wealth of meaning when viewed through Susan Bordo's insights on the body as a culturally inscribed text. "The body," she suggests, "is a powerful symbolic form, a surface on which the central rules, hierarchies, and even metaphysical commitments of a culture are inscribed" (165). S. Paige Batty, discussing another famous star, takes this further, observing that there is no "real" Marilyn Monroe; she has become a metaphorical body upon which historical consciousness is inscribed; she "serves as both a reminder of the time in which she lived and an expression of the times that have followed" (58). The same case can be made for Rita Hayworth. Within the novel the invocation and interpretation of her photograph as a prose photo encourages us to practice its re-visualization and to find the cracks of in the mirror of history.

Under the various scrutinizing and idolizing gazes of both sexes, female figures such as Rita Hayworth were evacuated of agency. She is violated by the sexist photographic gaze, which portrays her as a product of male fantasy, as Laura Mulvey has famously theorized.³¹ The seductive availability of these over-sexed women, Wini Breines claims, implies that women's role is "to cater to, or enhance, a man's needs" (102). This erroneous point of view not only educates women to repress their own sexual needs, but is also demeaning insofar as it invites men to physically and intellectually dominate them. The heightened sexuality of Hollywood stars actively

³¹ See "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema."

displaces other, more meaningful possibilities for female self-expression.

The desire to become Rita Hayworth not only forces young women into sexist roles, but also drives a capitalist market in the girls' quest for accessories and beauty items. In the novel, Enid risked shoplifting to provide her sister Lizzie with must-have accessories; she however is more interested in the transgressive act of theft than in the stolen objects themselves. Contrary to most girls, the clothing item preferred by Enid was a jacket belonging to a juvenile delinquent friend of her sister. By wearing his jacket, Enid embodies his rebellious stance, and rejects the feminine roles suggested by Rita Hayworth.

Images of heightened sexuality which served as role models for young women, such as that of Rita Hayworth, in fact embodied a deep contradiction, or what has otherwise been termed "the double standard."³² While it was permissible for women to look sexy, postwar morals were obsessed with virginity and required that women act chastely. Virginity was valorized for various reasons, one being "the fear that sex might elude the male's control if it were not sanitized" (Breines 120). The teenage girl was expected to "charm and please without giving too much of herself" (Breines 112), to do the minimum necessary to remain popular without tarnishing her reputation. On the other hand, society set no limits on boys, and they were willing to go "all the way." These dualities, constant sources of anxiety for young women who often found themselves in confusing and compromising sexual situations, peaked in the postwar climate of containment. As Elaine Tyler May has shown,

³² See Breines, 110-15.

sexual energy unleashed by the upheaval of war, was now channeled through restrictive societal norms into marriage and family; expressions of female sexuality that did not conform with this were laden with negative connotations.³³

The 1930's gave rise to the term "bombshell" which was used in reference to provocative female behavior. However, the term gained popularity during and after the war, when female sexuality became increasingly likened to the eruptive power of bombs, conceiving it as an especially explosive issue in the atomic age. The connection between female sexuality and bombs, as May points out, was apparent during World War II, when "pilots named their bombers after their sweethearts and decorated their planes with erotic portraits" (110). Following the war, a photograph of Rita Hayworth was attached to the hydrogen bomb dropped on the Bikini Atoll (1946). In fact, the name for the newly designed skimpy two piece swimsuit was chosen merely "four days after the bomb was dropped to suggest the swimwear's explosive potential" (May 110-11).³⁴

Creating an analogy between unleashed female sexuality and atomic warfare rendered female sexuality particularly destructive when inappropriately used. Female sexuality outside matrimony was considered a threat to the moral fiber of the nation for it could lead to corruption and degeneration from within. Sexually liberated and independent women who threatened to destabilize patriarchal

³³ See May's chapter, "Brinkmanship: Sexual Containment on the Home Front," in *Homeward Bound*, 100-118.

³⁴ See also Michael Wood's discussion of the bomb dropped on the Bikini atoll (*America in the Movies* 51).

structures were perceived as a means through which Communism could penetrate American society and conquer it from within. May underlines this point, stating that women who took their sexual desire out of the framework of marriage and used it “for power or greed, would destroy men, families, and even society”; alternately, “sexy women who became devoted sweethearts or wives would contribute to the goodness of life” (63).

Hollywood did its share in cultivating the stereotype of destructive female sexuality, and stars, including Rita Hayworth in the 1947 film *The Lady from Shanghai*, were often portrayed as sexy yet dangerous women who confirmed the importance of containing female sexuality for the safety of the nation. Film critic Molly Haskell claims that this type of female heroine was “a male fantasy,” whose “power to destroy was a projection of man’s feeling of impotence” typical to the *zeitgeist* of postwar America (190-91). On a similar note, Marjorie Rosen states that “it may be no coincidence that the plethora of [Evil Women] films coincided with female acquisition of economic and social power . . . signifying that woman were finally a threat to the status quo” (224). The treacherous woman who “used” men, “double-crossed” them, “lied” to them, “sold [them] out” or “sucked [them] down” with her, was in fact a male creation based on anxieties and fears over loss of control and power (Haskell 189-90). The construction of Rita Hayworth’s sexuality can therefore

be seen to serve male interests and desires and conveys a problematic role model from girls.³⁵

Enid's mother exemplifies the underside of a patriarchal value system that encouraged women to channel their sexual appetites into married life.³⁶ Hannah Stevick's sexuality, coveted and violated by Lionel Stevick *prior* to wedlock, was channeled into childrearing and wifely duties. Rather than flourishing in marriage, her sexuality was quelled by excessive pregnancies and physical fatigue. Looking at a photograph of her mother from years ago—slender, fresh face, healthy skin, shining hair—Enid seems unsure whether it really is her (15). Being young herself, the photograph disturbs Enid, for it exposes the process not merely of aging, but of erosion of the spirit. Relegated to the domestic sphere, the mother's vivacity is diminished, constituting for Enid another example of oppression of women. Enid's oldest sister, Geraldine, becomes a replica of her mother, and underscores Enid's desire to escape this predicament at all costs.

On a different level, Rita Hayworth's ample body overwrites other bodies, or the bodies of "others," displacing them from the cultural discourse altogether. Primarily, Rita Hayworth participated

³⁵ The private Rita Hayworth was a victim of her public success and could never live up to the "example" of her movie characters, as she confessed (to producer-writer of *Gilda*, Virginia Van Upp): "every man I've known has fallen in love with Gilda and awakened with me" (Rosen 212, Wood 56). Gilda, "glamour that couldn't be sustained in the morning light," left no room for a dynamic, multi-dimensional Hayworth, one who could serve as a more fulfilling role model for young women (Wood 56).

³⁶ Echoing Betty Friedan, who famously exposes the myth of the ideal wife in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963).

in the erasure of her own “otherness.” When embarking on a Hollywood career, Margarita Carmen Cansino adopted her mother’s maiden name (Volga Margaret Hayworth was of Irish-English descent) to mask her Spanish ancestry (her father, Eduardo Cansino, was born in Spain). It is therefore somewhat ironic that her “homegrown” American body displaces those of “others.” Hayworth’s robust, healthy and radiant American body suggests wealth, leisure and well-being and pushes the emaciated and diseased bodies of the Holocaust victims with which Enid identifies out of sight, dislodging them from the cultural arena as America sought to heal the wounds with Germany.

Other abnormal bodies that had little to no presence in the American public consciousness were those of the *hibakusha*, the survivors of the American atomic attacks on the Japanese. Cultural critics have documented the deliberate confiscation of footage of Japanese casualties and survivors by American authorities, and have pointed to the intentional erasure of such morbid bodies, which carry the potential to create anxiety among the population and to invite criticism.³⁷ The invisibility of these bodies provoked Manhattan Project physicist and later activist, Ralph Lapp, to question in 1982: “If the memory of things is to deter, where is that memory? Hiroshima... has been taken out of the American conscience, eviscerated, extirpated.”³⁸ By positing Rita Hayworth as a “sex bomb” whose image literally “decorated” a hydrogen bomb,

³⁷ See Robert Jay Lifton and Greg Mitchell's history of *Hiroshima in America*: “From the very start the visual record of the atomic bombing would be limited to structural effects, while the human dimension would be evaded or ignored” (59).

³⁸ Quoted in Paul Boyer, p. 182, footnote 2.

her body—manipulated by patriarchal discourse—becomes a symbol of repression of the actual survivors of nuclear warfare, underscoring the way the photograph signifies absence as well as presence.

Irradiated American bodies, also known as “downwinders,” who were unknowingly exposed to nuclear radiation spreading from testing sights in the US, were also systematically kept out of the American nuclear discourse to prevent criticism. Recent research has brought these distorted bodies to view, uncovering what the official discourse sought to repress.³⁹ In the novel, photos of a deformed “crouched and wizened child with bright dead eyes” are viewed by Enid’s brother (304-5). The child’s mother explains his deformities as birth defects caused by lack of oxygen. However, she resided at Fort Worth Military Base in Texas during her pregnancy, which raises questions about the validity of this analysis. The base, home to B-52 and B-29 bombers and an off-site weapons storage area, was in close proximity to nuclear testing sites. The possibility that the deformities were caused by nuclear contamination hovers uncomfortably in the background. The child’s deformed face and his grotesque gaze are in dialogue with the broken face of the dead child squeezed beneath the door, a dialogue which parallels that of Enid’s skeleton-like figure with the living skeletons of Bergen-Belsen, all concealed by Hayworth’s body; together they constitute a strong critique of nationalist aggression and nuclear power.

Finally, the ideal feminine beauty, as exemplified by Rita Hayworth, is not only robust, healthy, and desirable, it is also white. African Americans are nearly absent from the novel which could be a

³⁹ See for example Robert Del Tredici’s *At Work in the Fields of the Bomb* and Carole Gallagher’s *American Ground Zero: The Secret Nuclear War*.

function of their ongoing marginalization in American culture during the forties and fifties. One notable African American presence occurs in Oates's revisualization of a famous photograph of reigning heavyweight champion Jersey Joe Walcott's defeat by Rocky Marciano following his brutal knockout (1952). The iconic photograph, taken by Herb Scharfman, captures the "split second the punch connected" (227-8), freezing in time Marciano's powerful punch and Walcott's "hideously distended, misshapen" face, crystalizing the drive for white male supremacy in postwar U.S. (228).

A more positive, yet oblique trace of African American presence can be gleaned from the title of the novel which evokes the cinematic image of Sam (Dooley Willson) singing the lines "you must remember this" at Rick's Café Americain in the exotic atmosphere of Casablanca. Wilson was a victim of racial prejudice and discrimination in Hollywood, where for years he was only offered "Pullman porter" roles. His role as Sam, according to Thomas Cripps, departs from that of the conventional "Negro" character who serves merely as a black foil to define or enhance the status of white characters. According to Cripps, "within the world of new prospects for challenging white hegemony that World War II had provided, the role of Sam [was] a tentative departure from a past American racial culture" (23). In singing these lines Sam's voice unveils the glamour of Rita Hayworth, providing a glimpse of that which her image displaced, while also looking forward to a more promising future in which minority voices like those of Sam may be heard.

We have seen that outwardly innocent images of femininity embody patriarchal designs and were employed to serve the

postwar agenda which sought to curtail female independence, restore patriarchal ideals and strengthen male authority under the pretense of national security. Enid's act of inflicting her body with anorexia can be understood as her rejection of the various forms of female oppression surrounding her. Furthermore, Enid's anorexic body signifies upon other, less visible bodies that were displaced by Rita Hayworth's image and marginalized by the social discourse. Rita Hayworth's visibility, both as an iconic presence in Enid's bedroom and as an ideological concept, is perceived as a dominating threat to her independence and growth, one that she overcomes by adopting nonconformist behavior, which includes unconventional physical appearance as well as academic excellence and acts of transgressive sexuality.⁴⁰

Fade Away

The themes explored in the novel—patriarchal power and oppression, nuclear families and weapons, present and absent bodies, memory and nostalgia—come together in a snapshot of Enid and her brother taken in 1939: “Enid stole the snapshot out of Mrs. Stevick's broken-backed album where most of the older snapshots dating back to the early years of the Stevicks' marriage had long since come unglued” (272). The disintegrating album with the loose and fading photographs is an echo of the nuclear family blown apart by the nuclear age. A remnant from presumably happier times, Enid hides the snapshot “away in her desk to contemplate when she wished” (272). By allowing herself “to linger over the single

⁴⁰ Enid engages in an illicit sexual relationship with her step-uncle, a former boxer and WWII veteran.

moment” as long as she liked,” Enid keeps the moment, normally erased by the flow of time, “open to scrutiny” (Sontag, *OP* 81, III). The frozen photographed moment reveals to Enid “a corner of material reality that the eye doesn’t see at all or can’t normally isolate” (Sontag, *OP* 90), enabling her to discern the invisible structures dominating it, to see the crack in the mirror of history.

The “dog-eared” black and white snapshot portrays “Warren and his baby sister Enid” (271). Enid fails to identify herself in her brother’s arms, not only because she was “hardly more than a year old,” but also because she was “blurred” due to the “flailing” and “kicking” of her legs (271). While the blurring is a factor of the infant’s movement, the choice of the violent verbs suggest Enid’s perception of the baby as already protesting her restricted circumstances (encircled in male arms, trapped by the male gaze).

Adding to the general distortion of the figures of the children is the deficient exposure. Enid notices that “the snapshots had been overexposed and sunlight poured in a fiery flood from above” (271). Exposure and overexposure are terms that can be equally applied to photography and to nuclear radioactivity. In both instances, overexposure eradicates human beings. In the snapshot, the overexposure that threatens to erase the figures of the children is not merely the photographer’s technical error; it also functions as a critique of the destructive threat of the nuclear climate. The “fiery flood from above” that pours down threateningly upon the figures adds to this effect, especially since the phrase “fiery flood” has already been used in the novel in reference to a photograph of an atomic detonation.

Enid observes that “the children themselves were bleached, ghostly in so much light . . . They might have been about to fade away into nothing” (272). The power of the prose photo is also “exposed” in this image: the dim, ghostly figures of the children fade away, while the words which write them into existence remain vivid in their black print on the page; yet as the words create the fading image, they simultaneously recede to allow it to form. Enid’s perception of her and Warren being “ghostly” relates to the problematic and haunting dimension of memory, yet also places the children in dialogue with the erased bodies of “others,” as discussed above. Furthermore, other objects in their immediate environment, such as “the latticework of the porch directly behind Warren’s head” and “the chopped looking grass at Warren’s feet,” remain “vivid in [their] detail,” reinforcing the notion that children in particular were victims of the Cold War and its ideologies of containment and conformity (272). Enid’s sensation of “fading away into nothing” suggests that she reads the image in the Barthian sense, as a harbinger of death. The entire scene is transformed from a nostalgic sibling portrait to a menacing threatening one, dense with connotations of doom, destruction, alienation and oppression.

A key element to unraveling the invisible structures operating within the photograph is the seemingly imperceptible presence of the photographer whom Enid experiences as oppressive: “Who had taken the picture? Enid wondered. Well, it must have been Mr. Stevick—there was a gnomish hunched shadow on the grass that must have been his . . .” (272). Enid imagines her father orchestrating the entire scene on a “Sunday morning after ten-thirty mass,” when they were wearing their best clothes, “teasing,

pretending to scold, giving them all commands” until he was pleased with the result (272). Marianne Hirsch has analyzed the role of photography in constructing the parameters of the ideal family and explores how the family, in turn, is framed by the ideology that photography perpetuates. Hirsch observes that photographs “locate themselves precisely in the space of contradiction between the myth of the ideal family and the lived reality of family life” (*Family Frames II*). Enid’s analysis of the image reveals tensions that exist between family members, as well as those that arise from the “familial gaze,” the dominant cultural construct of the family in a given time. The photograph exemplifies the father’s authoritarian familial gaze, which aims to portray “a mythic world of domestic perfection” one that helped to create what John Pultz has established as “the notion of superiority of straight, white men within American culture” (104). This superiority is undermined by Enid’s re-reading of the image.

Enid, who “remembered nothing of that moment, that day, that time in what was said to be ‘her’ life,” questions the construction of memory and the relation between the present and the past (272). The more Enid cannot remember this moment, the more she realizes that what she is seeing is her father’s contrived production of a non-existent sibling affection: her brother may not have “really wanted to hold his baby sister” and may have been forced to do so by “the shadow hunched in the grass . . . issuing its commands which must be obeyed” (272-3). Enid lays bare the ideology underlying the image, and in the process extracts herself from the family frame in a conscious effort to regain control over her narrative: “BABY ENID . . . might have been anyone’s baby held aloft in Warren Stevick’s arms” (272).

Enid's re-reading of her father's photograph also underscores the ideological analogy between the private and public spheres. The same patriarchal male gaze constructs, controls, and determines meaning in both arenas. The absence of freedom that characterizes the father's gaze and his commanding imperatives in the family context exist on a larger scale in the public arena, or vice versa. Significantly, no one but Mr. Stevick was allowed to touch the mechanism of control, the Kodak Brownie box camera.⁴¹ Ultimately, the same patriarchal finger pushes the button, whether that of the bomb or that of the camera.

Enid's radical dis-reading of the photo of Warren holding baby Enid enables her to regain a sense of self that is not dependent on prescribed masculine perspectives and does not incorporate the internalization of their gaze or authority. Freeing herself from the power of the images enables Enid to reclaim her agency; she gains a scholarship to a prestigious music school based solely on her merit and talent and embarks on a musical career. Suspicious of words and images, Enid's turn to music, a non-verbal and non-visual form of representation, suggests that she has found some solace in this disembodied and transcendent creative approach. Oates, on the other hand, has masterfully manipulated both words and images to form a harsh critique of postwar American paternalism and conformity.

⁴¹ The first model of the Kodak Brownie camera (1890), made photography accessible and affordable to the masses. Kodak manufactured not only a camera for the middle class, but altered the discourse on memory, nostalgia and the meaning of family. See Nancy Martha West, *Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia*.

Works Cited

- Adams, Timothy Dow. *Light Writing & Life Writing: Photography in Autobiography*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
- Adorno, Theodor. "Cultural Criticism and Society." *Prisms*, translated by Samuel and Shierry Weber, MIT Press, 1967, pp. 17-34.
- Atkins, Christine Elizabeth. "Don't Walk Alone": *Twentieth Century American Women Writers and Narratives of Violence*, 2000, Purdue University, PhD Dissertation, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.
- Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. Translated by Richard Howard. Fontana Paperbacks, 1982.
- Benjamin, Walter. "A Short History of Photography." *Classic Essays on Photography*, edited by Alan Trachtenberg. Leete's Island Books 1980, pp. 199-216.
- . "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." *Illuminations*, edited and with an Introduction by Hannah Arendt, translated by Harry Zorn, Pimlico, 1999, pp. 211-44.
- Berger, John. "Uses of Photography." *About Looking*, Pantheon, 1980, pp. 52-69.
- Bordo, Susan. *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. University of California Press, 1993.
- Boyer, Paul. *By the Bomb's Early Light. American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*. The University of North Carolina Press, 1994.
- Breines, Wini. *Young, White and Miserable: Growing Up Female in the Fifties*. University of Chicago Press, 2001.

- Casablanca. dir. Michael Curtiz. perf. Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman. Warner Bros. 1942.
- Chicago, Judy. *Holocaust Project: From Darkness into Light (1985-93)*.
www.judychicago.com/gallery/holocaust-project/hp-artwork/
- Creighton, Joanne. "Unliberated Women in Joyce Carol Oates's Fiction." *World Literature Written in English*, vol. 17, no. 1, 1978, pp. 165-175. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449857808588516>
- Cripps, Thomas. "Sam the Piano Player: The Man Between." *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, vol. 27, no. 4, 2000, pp. 16-23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01956050009602811>
- Daly, Brenda. *Lavish Self-Divisions: The Novels of Joyce Carol Oates*. University Press of Mississippi, 1996.
- . "The Art of Democracy: Photography in the Novels of Joyce Carol Oates." *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 38, no. 4, 2006, pp. 457-477.
- Dawidowicz, Lucy. *The War Against the Jews*. Penguin Books, 1987.
- Del Tredici, Robert. *At Work in the Fields of the Bomb*. Harper & Row, 1987.
- Feingold, Eugene. "Nuclear Attack and Civil Defense: A Review." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 6, no. 3, 1962, pp. N/A.
- Flanzbaum, Hilene, "Introduction." *The Americanization of the Holocaust*, edited by Hilene Flanzbaum, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999, pp. 1-17.
- Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. W.W. Norton & Co., 1963.
- Gaither Report: "Deterrence & Survival in the Nuclear Age." *Security Resources Panel of the Science Advisory Committee*, Washington, November 7, 1957.
- Gallagher, Carole. *American Ground Zero: The Secret Nuclear War*. MIT, 1993.

- Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. "Murder She Wrote: Review of *Because It Is Bitter and Because It Is My Heart*." *The Nation*, 2 July, 1990, pp. 27-29.
- Germain, David. "Author Oates Tells Where She's Been, Where She's Going." *Conversations with Joyce Carol Oates*, edited by Lee Milazzo, University Press of Mississippi, 1989, pp. 173-80.
- Green, Gayle. *Changing the Story: Feminist Fiction and the Tradition*. Indiana UP, 1991.
- Hall, Stuart. "Introduction to Part Three: Looking and Subjectivity." *Visual Culture: The Reader*, edited by Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall. SAGE Publications, 1999, pp. 309-14.
- Haskell, Molly. *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Woman in the Movies*. The University of Chicago Press, 1973.
- Hersey, John. *Hiroshima*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1946.
- Hirsch, Marianne. *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*. Harvard University Press, 1997.
- . "Projected Memory: Holocaust Photographs in Personal and Public Fantasy." *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*, edited by Mieke Bal, Johathan Crewe and Leo Spitzer, University Press of New England, 1999, pp. 2-23.
- Horeck, Tanya. "Lost Girls: The Fiction of Joyce Carol Oates." *Contemporary Women's Writing*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2010, pp. 24-39.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/cww/vpp002>
- Life Magazine*. "Atrocities," vol. 18, no. 19, May 7 1945, pp. 32-7; "Fallout Shelters," vol. 51, no. 2, September 15, 1961, pp. 95-107.
- Lifton, Robert Jay and Mitchell, Greg. *Hiroshima in America: A Half Century of Denial*. Quill, 1996.
- May, Elaine Tyler. *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*. Basic Books, 1988.

- Mintz, Alan. *Popular Culture and the Shaping of Holocaust Memory in America*. University of Washington Press, 2001.
- Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Screen*, vol. 16, no.3, 1975, pp. 6-18. <https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/16.3.6>
- Novick, Peter. *The Holocaust in American Life*. Houghton Mifflin, 1999.
- Oates, Joyce Carol. *You Must Remember This*. (1987) Plume, 1998.
- . *On Boxing*. with photographs by John Renard. Ecco Press, 1995.
- Paige Baty, S. *American Monroe: The Making of a Body Politic*. University of California Press, 1995.
- Parini, Jay. "My Writing is Full of Lives I Might Have Led." *Conversations with Joyce Carol Oates*, edited BY Lee Milazzo, University Press of Mississippi, 1989, pp. 152-60.
- Pultz, John. *Photography and the Body*. G. Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1995.
- Rosen, Marjorie. *Popcorn Venus: Women, Movies and the American Dream*. Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1973.
- Rosenthal, Peggy. "The Nuclear Mushroom Cloud as Cultural Image." *American Literary History*, vol. 31, no. 1, 1991, pp. 63-92. <https://doi.org/10.1093/alh/3.1.63>
- Sekula, Allan. *Photography Against the Grain: Essays and Photo Works 1973-1983*. The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1984.
- Sollors, Werner. *The Temptation of Despair: Tales of the 1940s*. Harvard University Press, 2014.
- Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. Dell Publishing Co., 1973.
- . *Regarding the Pain of Others*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003.
- Taylor, Bryan C. "Nuclear Pictures and Metapictures." *National Imaginaries, American Identities: The Cultural Work of American*

- Iconography*, edited by Larry J. Reynolds and Gordon Hunter. Princeton UP, 2000, pp. 52-82.
- Torgovnick, Maria. *The War Complex: World War II in Our Time*. The University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Trachtenberg, Alan. *Reading American Photographs: Images as History, Mathew Brady to Walker Evans*. Hill and Wang, 1989.
- Vale, Lawrence J. *The Limits of Civil Defense in the USA, Switzerland, Britain and the Soviet Union: The Evolution of Policies Since 1945*. Palgrave Macmillan, 1987.
- West, Nancy Martha. *Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia*. University Press of Virginia, 2000.
- Wexler, Laura. *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
- Wood, Michael. *America in the Movies or 'Santa Maria, It Had Slipped My Mind'*. Basic Books, 1975.
- Yavenditti, Michael J. "John Hersey and the American Conscience: The Reception of 'Hiroshima.'" *Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 43, no. 1, 1974, pp. 24-49. <http://doi.org/10.2307/3637589>