DOREEN B. TOWNSEND CENTER OCCASIONAL PAPERS • 26

MIGRATIONS

THE WORK OF SEBASTIÃO SALGADO

SEBASTIÃO SALGADO
T.J. CLARK
ORVILLE SCHELL
NANCY SCHEPER-HUGHES
CANDACE SLATER
MICHAEL WATTS

Migrations

The Work of Sebastião Salgado

THE DOREEN B. TOWNSEND CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES was established at the University of California at Berkeley in 1987 in order to promote interdisciplinary studies in the humanities. Endowed by Doreen B. Townsend, the Center awards fellowships to advanced graduate students and untenured faculty on the Berkeley campus, and supports interdisciplinary working groups, lectures, and team-taught graduate seminars. It also sponsors symposia and conferences which strengthen research and teaching in the humanities, arts, and related social science fields. The Center is directed by Candace Slater, Professor of Spanish and Portuguese. Christina M. Gillis is the Associate Director.

MIGRATIONS: THE WORK OF SEBASTIÃO SALGADO was one of several important events scheduled by the Townsend Center in celebration of Sebastião Salgado's residency as Avenali Lecturer for academic year 2001–2002. Planned to complement the Berkeley Art Museum exhibit, Salgado's lecture—reproduced here in a slightly edited form—was followed the next day by a panel of commentators whose remarks are also included in this Occasional Paper. The Avenali Lectures are made possible by an endowment established by Peter and Joan Avenali.

Funding for the OCCASIONAL PAPERS of the Doreen B. Townsend Center for the Humanities is provided by the Dean of the Graduate Division, and by other donors. Begun in 1994-95, the series makes available in print and on-line some of the many lectures delivered in Townsend Center programs. The series is registered with the Library of Congress. For more information on the publication, please contact the Doreen B. Townsend Center for the Humanities, 220 Stephens Hall, The University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720-2340, http://ls.berkeley.edu/dept/townsend, (510) 643-9670.

OCCASIONAL PAPERS SERIES
Editor: Christina M. Gillis
Assistant Editor & Production: Jill Stauffer
Cover Photo: Sebastião Salgado
Proofreading: Catherine Zimmer
Printed by Hunza Graphics, Berkeley, California

ISBN 1-881865-26-6
OCCASIONAL PAPERS OF THE DOREEN B. TOWNSEND CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES, NO. 26.

Contents

Preface

Shock, bemusement, sorrow, anger—these are some of the looks on the faces in the photographs in Sebastião Salgado's *Migrations*. They are the same emotions that were mirrored on the faces of the unusually silent viewers in the University Art Museum gallery on the first day that I went to the exhibit. Were I a photographer myself, I would have caught the young, very Berkeley-looking mother with her infant whose look of incredulity mirrored that of the Rwandan mother in a photo.

Sebastião Salgado is a thoroughly international figure. A resident of Paris for the last thirty years, he moves around the world from Bombay to Chimborazo. Having arrived in Berkeley via Mexico, he will touch down in France before flying back again to the U.S. His global stature is obvious in his collaborations with any number of international humanitarian organizations, in the long list of his exhibitions throughout the world, and in the equally unwieldy list of prestigious prizes showered on him.

It's precisely because the universal aspects of the exhibit called *Migrations* presently in the University Art Museum would be so hard to miss that I—as a professor of Brazilian literature here at Berkeley—found myself asking where Brazil might be in these photos. This was not a question I'd asked myself about his famous photos of Amazonian gold miners and Northeast Brazilian peasants.

However, it was hard not to ask of a project including forty countries on five continents. In what ways does the Earth ("terra") on whose basic unity Sebastião Salgado so forcefully insists interface with the "terra" which in Portuguese also means one's native land?

Sebastião Salgado himself gives an initial indication of the Brazilian aspects of this exhibit when, in a preface to the photos, he talks about how he left Brazil in 1969 as part of a larger exodus of young intellectuals fleeing the military dictatorship.

The impact of migration in Brazil is obvious in the huge numbers of human transplants who make São Paulo—the metropolis where Sebastião Salgado studied Economics—Brazil's largest Northeastern city. It is equally apparent in the tens of thousands of peasants whom the military dictatorship moved into the Amazon in the 1970s.

Migration in Brazil, however, is by no means new. Periodic Tupi-Guarani migrations in search of "The Land Without Evil" were underway long before the arrival of the Europeans in 1500. These migrations had practical causes—the food supply was running out, competing groups were getting too close—but they also had a utopian strand that reappears in Brazilian messianic movements over the centuries.

It's this sort of utopian glint that is tempting to see in Sebastião Salgado's photo of the Indian child who holds a drinking gourd brimming with a radiant sunlight, or the photo of the refugee children playing in the midst of a squalid camp. It's there in the face of the woman who stares out in disbelief from amidst the crowd of Rwandan refugees lined up for a bit of water.

Migrations in Brazil have not always been utopian. The prospecting parties called *bandeiras* moved of their own volition into Minas, Sebastião Salgado's home state, in search of gold and gemstones. But the waves of Black slaves who later followed to work in mines and on cattle ranches certainly didn't volunteer.

Likewise, there was nothing utopian about the migrations undertaken by the native peoples of Minas—known collectively as the Aimorés—to escape the settlers. They were fleeing for their lives. Although eventually exterminated, these natives live on in the various place names throughout Minas, including that of the district with in the Mata Atlântica, or Atlantic Forest, where Sebastião Salgado was born. It's tempting to see a lingering shadow of the Aimorés in the Yanomami Indians whose frail bodies contrast with the corpulence of a smiling pilot, or in the forest dweller far away in India who holds an arrow in his mouth.

A second major theme that runs throughout all of the work of Sebastião Salgado is that of injustice. Hardly unique to Brazil, injustice nonetheless takes

particularly visceral forms there. The whipping posts to which slaves were tied still stand in some Brazilian marketplaces, for instance. It's easy to see the deep hollows worn into long flights of hand-hewn stone stairs by the feet of slaves in former gold mines.

Despite these symbols of a harsh past and often equally harsh present, poor Brazilians have not been known for their passivity. Rather, they remain famous for their resilience, their forbearance, and their dignity in the face of often glaring wrongs.

I think back, for instance, on a scene from *Os sertões (Rebellion in the Backlands),* by Euclides da Cunha. This famous book describes how government troops supposedly representing Order and Progress march on a backlands messianic community which the government sees as the epitome of ignorance and fanaticism. In the scene of which I'm thinking, a short white soldier decides to strangle a black prisoner with a rope. However, he is too short and can't reach the man's neck. The black man therefore takes the rope and places it around his own neck with a dignity—indeed, a grandeur—that leads Euclides—and the reader—to demand: "But what is civilization? What is savagery?"

Euclides' urgent questions seem to reappear in the eyes of the ragged lines of Rwandan refugees who stare at the camera, in the open mouth of an emaciated washerwoman in India. "What is civilization? What is savagery?" the homeless couple who hold a tiny baby on a shattered doorstep seem to demand of the viewer.

Environmental injustice—the destruction of the land on which people depend for a deep sense of their own identity ("É minha terra"—"That's my birthplace," people always say in Brazil) as well as for a livelihood—is occurring today around the globe. However, in Brazil it takes on a particular urgency. There is probably no single greater symbol of global environmental destruction than the Amazon Rain Forest, much of which is located within Brazil.

The sense that violence to the land is inextricable from violence to people is clear in a multitude of Salgado's photos that show burnt hillsides, garbage-clogged reservoirs, and the stumps of trees that jut up between corpses. These photos take on added force and meaning when one knows that Sebastião Salgado spent his early childhood on a ranch surrounded by Atlantic forest that has been denuded and that

he is seeking through an environmental education and reforestation program to restore.

While it's easy to rattle off examples of injustice, it's hard to talk about particular art forms that portray it. It's much easier to give a name to the artistic vocabulary of bodily suffering in Brazil. This name is "the Baroque." Although Brazilian Baroque art assumes a variety of forms in different times and places, it is associated above all with the eighteenth century religious sculpture and architecture of Minas Gerais, again Sebastião Salgado's home state.

The Baroque of Brazil and of Minas is almost always religious in content, unashamedly theatrical, and resoundingly public. The majority of Baroque masterpieces are either larger-than-life statues or else soaring churches that dominate colonial towns. Sculpture and architecture come together in the figure of Aleijadinho, the most famous of all Brazilian Baroque artists, whose churches display a dramatic play of light and shadow.

Ask yourself whether this insistent corporeality, this intense play of light and shadow reminds you of anyone whose photographs you've looked at lately. Seen any darkly swirling skies above a refugee camp in Tanzania? Think about the ruined walls that seem like an extension of the crippled people in Sebastião Salgado's photos of Afghanistan or the larger-than-life triad of Rwandan refugee girls who form a living column. Think about the flights of the white birds who crowd a darkened sky.

The Baroque sets out to blur the boundaries between art and experience. Saints often wear real clothes, have human hair, and display wounds that have been swabbed with real blood. Their agony is meant to shock, to actively confront, and to move the viewer—a little, perhaps, like the corpse with the gash in its chest that lies upon a field in one of Sebastião Salgado's photographs of Zaire or the peasant with the blood-caked faced whom he has photographed in an open coffin in the small town of El Dorado.

Although the Baroque art of Brazil has clear roots in Portugal, it is much more than a replay of Europe. The churches that dot the gold region of Minas have unexpected Chinese and Japanese touches—the pagoda-like curl of a roof bears witness to Portugal's far-flung trading empire. The Black saints who stand beside the pale Christs and rosy Virgins attest to the presence of Africa within Brazil.

The characteristically Brazilian fusion of elements drawn from many different places reappears, I would suggest, in the photo of the glazed-eyed Rwandan refugee who lays across his wife's lap. In the background, there is a cardboard box of medical supplies, to his right what looks like a coffee cup. A woman stands behind him. Precisely at the level of the man's head, the starburst on her print skirt resembles one of those many-pointed haloes one sees on the heads of saints in colonial churches or on the heads of plastic saints for sale in dime stores throughout Brazil today. (You can even buy a replacement plastic halo if you lose one.)

My claim here is not that what looks universal in Sebastião Salgado is secretly Brazilian or that he isn't half as global as he's been chalked up to be. On the contrary, the core of his work is a passionate rejection of national boundaries and narrowly regional identities. What I want to say is that the universal qualities which critics have heralded are necessarily rooted in very specific histories, places, and artistic traditions that make Brazil. And here I mean not Brazil as a nation with a flag, a national hymn, and an official passport, but as a particular set of human experiences and predilections.

It is these experiences and predilections, I would argue, that are as present in Salgado's photos of Vietnam, Poland, and Gibraltar as they are in other shots of the street children of São Paulo. As a result, while I'll confess that there is no way I would know that Sebastião Salgado were Brazilian if I simply saw the photos in *Migrations*, knowing that he is Brazilian helps to see much more within them. Whether or not the photographer is directly conscious of the traits I have identified as peculiarly Brazilian really doesn't matter. What matters is the ways in which these traits have almost certainly shaped and bolstered his particular, explicit vision of the universal.

I'm not sure if Sebastião Salgado would want to acknowledge his own particular *terra*'s role in his fierce commitment to that single, often unhappy *Terra* on which we find ourselves spinning about the sun. But before he lets us know what he is thinking, I have a few announcements.

First, I want to warmly thank Peter and Joan Avenali for so generously funding the Avenali Lecture Series.

Second, I thank our collaborators in the Salgado events at Berkeley—the University Art Museum and the School of Journalism—and all those involved in making possible his visit, including Kevin Consey, Connie Lewellen, Orville Schell,

Ken Light, Christina Gillis, Anne Uttermann, and all of the intrepid staff at the Townsend Center.

With these thanks, I invite you to join me in welcoming Sebastião Salgado. *Bemvindo a Berkeley, Sebastião.*

—Candace Slater
Director, Townsend Center for the Humanities
Marian E. Koshland Distinguished Professor in the Humanities

Migrations
Sebastião Salgado

Thank you, very much. I'll start by apologizing. My English is not very good. I'm afraid I must ask that you pay a little bit of extra attention. Sometimes I'll be using words that are not quite English, adapting them a little bit. A few years ago when Lélia, my wife, and I were doing this project together—she does the design for all my books and shows—she was learning English with a teacher, and I asked this teacher if it was possible for me to learn English also. He told me, "Sebastião, you don't need it because you speak perfect bad English." I probably speak fluently, but it's an odd kind of English.

I'm very happy to have this show at the Berkeley Art Museum, this museum linked with the university. The pictures that we will show in this exhibition are a bit of a cross-section of our life, the life of all of us as human beings. I was recently in a small reception in the museum, and I was looking at a few migrant workers there, you know, in the museum, serving, working. They reminded me of the many people I've met, crossing the borders, the border between Guatemala and Mexico, coming from South America, from Central America, and jumping the trains, travelling three thousand miles to arrive here in the U.S. They take many risks. For what? They come here just to work.

Once when I with a group of these migrants, we stopped in a town in Oaxaca, in Mexico, and waited for another train to jump. These were fourteen-year old boys, kids, sixteen years, nineteen years, the older ones were twenty-two, twenty-three years old. I asked them, "Why you are going to the United States? What are you expecting to find there?" And they said, "Well, we can have work.

We can probably work seven days a week. And who knows, once a month we can have some rest. And one day, maybe our girlfriends will come, and buy a used car, and we'll get a small house." To my mind, that's the minimum that every human being must have. That's the minimum. These guys were looking just for their dignity, they just wanted to get enough money or security to live their life. I respect them a lot because it was so hard for them to reach this land.

I also met many people crossing the border between Africa and Europe in Gibraltar, you know, in boats, taking huge risks with their lives to be in Europe, just to get a job. And why do we imagine that this is happening, in the scale that that it is on the planet today? Of course, migration always exists, but has not always existed at the level at which it's happening now.

My country, Brazil, in thirty years time moved from having 8% of the population being urban to today's statistics, where about 80% of the population is urban. The United States, by comparison, took about two hundred, three hundred years to become urban. Brazil did that in thirty years. Mexico, in the same number of years, about thirty years, changed in such a way that what was once a country with a 92% rural population, today is close to 75% urban population. It is important, then, to remember that when we speak of migration, most of the migration occurs within countries, from rural areas into the towns, in third world countries. And why has that happened? That's the question that thus far has not been raised. It didn't just "happen" like this. Something must have provoked all this displacement.

That's the point of my work. Prior to my current work I did a show called "Workers." That story was a kind of homage to the working class around the world. We also produced a book, named *Workers: An Archaeology of the Industrial Age* (Aperture 1993). Earlier in my life, as Candace Slater told you, I was an economist. I made my living in that way.

As I was skilled in photography, one day I made the decision to pay homage to this working class that was the center of my studies when I was an economist. I traveled around this planet photographing workers, because I feel that we are at the end of the first big industrial revolution. The arrival of new technologies and production methods geared towards the new needs of consumers has changed something about industry. Touring around the planet, I

started to see that this change was a much bigger revolution. All of society on this planet was headed for a big change, because what we now call globalization was happening and had been happening for a very long time. Now we have realized this, of course, and it has been named "globalization." We have changed the scale of value of the goods produced here in the northern part of the planet: the computers, the high technology products. They have a price, a very inflated price. And the prices of the goods produced in the southern part of the planet, they have another price, and that price keeps decreasing.

In the end, globalization—I came to understand during those years—is an incredible system that we have created in order to transfer wealth from one part of the planet to the other. It is not that you work in the U.S. more than the others, not that the French work more than the Africans, that's not true. I went to Rwanda, for example. In Africa, I saw these guys working hard, working twelve hours a day to produce. They produced a lot, they worked a lot, and what can they buy with their products or earnings? They can buy some clothes, bad clothes; they cannot even buy shoes. They cannot buy health services, they cannot buy a house, they cannot buy education. But they work as much as us. And when they export their products, they export a negative price. They pay us to consume their products. When you go to Sierra Leone, or to the Ivory Coast to see these guys produce the cocoa that we consume here—chocolate—or the guys producing coffee, it's exactly the same. The people who fix the prices of these goods don't produce one gram, one pound of coffee, of cocoa, of tea. The price is fixed in London, it's fixed in New York, it's fixed in Chicago, and the prices keep going down, and the prices here keep going up.

These people, whom I met on the road, whom I photographed on the road, who are pictured in my work, they worked as hard and long as any of us. And they don't understand why they've lost their houses, their jobs. They don't understand why there are so many wars going on. They were just on the road, headed elsewhere, looking for another point of equilibrium for their lives. In the past, they had worked hard and they had been living in equilibrium. They had a house, they had a job, they had their dignity. They had their children. They were poor, but they had these things. And now they have nothing. These young kids that I met on the train coming here, they were just looking for a way to defend

their dignity, a way to live. They had come just to be able to work. Ninety-nine percent of the people who arrive in this country come to work, to produce. It is the same with the migrants who arrive in France via Gibraltar. It is the same thing.

That, my friends, is globalization. The word "globalization" is big on this side of the planet. We speak of the globalization of finance, the globalization of the economy, the globalization of information, the globalization of any kind of thing that we want. But we never speak about globalized people. Globalized people don't interest us. But we must pay heed to the others.

In my country, Brazil, we have no tradition of producing oranges. Brazilians don't consume oranges, and never have. Orange juice for us means nothing. Yet in the last few years, Brazil has become the first producer of oranges on the planet. For what? For this country here. When you had oranges produced mostly in Florida, and unexpected cold weather killed Florida's orange trees, it was necessary somehow to guarantee some orange trees for this market. Where did that market look to? It looked to São Paulo, Brazil. The Brazilians took the land where they were producing rice, beans, potatoes, all that was necessary for the Brazilian people to eat, and sold it. This was a region of big colonization, of Italian and Japanese people. Big companies came and bought the land; they paid the market price. But Brazil's currency was hugely inflated. Those who sold their farms put the money aside. Six months later they couldn't buy a bicycle with that money.

While I was shooting *Workers,* I went to these orange-producing farms. I also visited farms where they produce sugar cane. Brazil has become the biggest exporter of sugar, too, and soy beans. Brazil is the second biggest producer of soy beans on this planet. Brazilians don't consume soy beans. These products are produced for a global lifestyle, an international lifestyle, but not a Brazilian one. Millions of small farmers were pushed out of their lands. They moved to towns not far away. These small towns, in a few years, became huge towns. Whenever the now large farms need workers, they send a truck to town. They employ people on a day by day basis. When they have no more jobs, they don't send trucks. And sociologists study the patterns. Sociologists and anthropologists conduct their studies as if this has always existed in Brazil. But thirty years ago, there was nothing like this. It is a product of globalization.

While doing these shoots, I met a lot of guys who work on what was once their own land—the land they lost to these big farms. And the orange juice keeps

coming. When you drink juice, you don't raise these kinds of questions, but you should. Because in the end, all the health that you have accumulated in this country is the health of the rest of the world. And if you want, in a sense, to live together, if you want to live in a society that's a society for all, we must find a way to remedy this. The immigrants who risk everything to come here would not even be coming if they could find a job at home, if they could keep a house and a way of life.

We are working, like Candace said, on a project in Brazil. When I was a kid, more than half of the land that is now farming land was rainforest, with crocodiles in the rivers, with monkeys. There were small farms, with thirty-five families working the land, producing any kind of produce; they created a society at equilibrium—a poor society, but they could sustain themselves. They were not unhappy. But slowly we cut down the forest for logging, for coal, and most often to plant grass for grazing land, for meat. The United States has 93 million head of cattle; Brazil has 170 million head of cattle. We have more cattle than we have people in Brazil. Brazil cannot consume all this meat. The meat is for export, for foreign markets.

And that is the point. It's not that I'm saying we can come back from globalization. But we probably can find a much more human, or humane, way to globalize the world. We can mine in a different way. And imagine how we waste resources in rich countries like this. I'm not saying it's only the United States, but rich countries in general. You see the new bombers that you have here, the B-1's and the B-2's, each plane worth $200 million. One tractor for agriculture costs about twenty thousand dollars. With the money it takes to build one of those bombers, we can build ten thousand tractors. My friends, with ten thousand tractors, we can begin a huge agricultural revolution in many countries around this planet, just by foregoing one bomber.

The forests we're trying to plant in Brazil, with the organization I work with, are very important; we need to get resources back into these forests. We are planting about 1.5 million trees, and we are creating an environmental school. At present we do not have enough resources to get all the trees we need. The organization runs on small amounts of money and donations that we get here and there. We have finally gotten some help from the surrounding community. They are putting ten percent of their budget into rebuilding the forest, because the

region has no more water. There are so many rivers that twenty or thirty years ago had crocodiles living in them and today have no more water. Because we cut down the forest, the rivers cannot retain the water during the rainy season, and big erosion kills the small rivers.

We are fighting with a lot of different institutions to get funds, in order to multiply the amount of money we are spending on this project. That means about $50–$60 million. In thirty years, if we keep at it, we will have planted sixty to seventy million trees. It would be a green revolution. And I assure you that in order to accomplish a green revolution, we would have to change completely the face of the planet down there. The cost of this is equal to one-quarter of one bomber plane, of which you are producing hundreds in this country. Congress just voted now at the end of October to approve a contract for $400 billion for producing new bombers—$200 billion will be for this country, and $200 billion will be for England, Denmark, Spain, Turkey. And that's just one kind of plane. Then there are the tanks, the weapons, the Star Wars program. How many billions of dollars are going to be spent? And for what? In thirty years, this all will be obsolete and will have to be rebuilt.

And sure we can point our fingers like this, at the American government. But the American government is all of you inside of this room; it's all of you who are in the streets. That's the point. How we can build the kind of society that will be a society for all? How can we become a planet that regrows its lost forests? How can we live on a planet such that every human community can live with dignity, including the communities of the future? It seems that we have forgotten that there is a future for Africa, though we speak all about starvation now. You remember, people of my age—I just turned fifty-eight a few days ago—we remember when we were kids the myth that surrounded Africa, with the jungle, the animals, the mysterious culture. Now we speak only about starvation in Africa. We speak only about the wars in Africa. But what planet are we building? Is this what we are working for? Is this what we will leave to our kids?

That is why I always hope that my pictures will provoke a debate. I know that these pictures alone are nothing. But these pictures, together with humanitarian organizations, with the newspapers, and with the children, all together, can probably build a new society. And the question is how to do so. I believe we can

do this by opening up a dialogue. We must open our minds to a discussion. We must start the discussion with our neighbors, in our streets, with our community. Maybe this would cause us to elect responsible people who compete to bring forth new, good ideas. The people want new ideas.

My first book is about workers, and the second is about migration. When I finished photographing the book on workers, I was very proud of humanity because I had shot photographs in ship-building factories, auto-making factories, big mines, and I was so moved by how humans are capable of transforming the world around them. We are an animal made to transform goods. It's incredible to see how we can produce a ship. We get flat steel—a square that's produced in a steel plant from material that comes from a mine. Then these small men inside the shipyard produce something the size of a great ship. They are capable of putting all this together. They tie this flattened steel, slice by slice, into an incredible ship that then tours around on this planet. The ship get shirts from Bangladesh and brings them to people here in San Francisco to consume. These shirts are made with a textile that came from India. It's incredible how sophisticated we are at producing things. So when I finished photographing the workers, I was one-hundred percent sure that humanity was in evolution. And for me this evolution was a positive one.

But now that I've finished photographing the work on migration, I've come to see that evolution can be a downward curve as well. We are going to the death. What's incredible in what I saw when shooting this is the capacity of adaptation that we have as humans. We have adapted to so many kinds of situations. When I came to photograph the refugee camps of people who had come out of Rwanda, it was incredible. I saw on one day thousands of dead people, a mountain of dead people, probably ten thousand or fifteen thousand dead people. There were so many it was not possible to bury them one by one. It was necessary to dig a huge hole and use a bulldozer to move a hundred bodies at a time into the ground. Total degradation.

A man walked up with a child in his arms, and discussed something with someone nearby. Then he walked up to the pile of bodies and threw the child on top. I ran up to him and said "Old man, who was this child?" And the man told me it was his child who had died the night before. He just threw him on the pile and left. He had completely adapted himself to this world of death.

This violence that we live with on this planet today, and the violence in my country, thirty years ago it didn't exist. Now Brazil is one of the most violent countries on this planet. This is what we have become. I'm not certain that we can survive this.

We need to understand two things: solidarity and community. If we have a real idea of solidarity and a real idea of community, we might survive. Brazil will probably disappear. The dinosaurs were stronger than us; they lived about 150 million years ago, they lived for a while, and they're gone. And probably if we don't pay attention, we will end that way too.

When I was on the road photographing people, they all had this in common: the hope of survival, the instinct of survival. If there is a god for us humans, it is our instinct of survival. I believe that it is in this sense that we must act, we must work together to protect ourselves. Our instinct of self-preservation should be one of protection common to us all. We cannot protect only the Americans, or only the French, we must protect all of us together. We cannot survive alone, we must live together.

Thank you very much.

Conversation

Sebastião Salgado and Orville Schell

Orville Schell: That's a pretty bleak view of things. And I'm kind of curious to know, what keeps you going?

Sebastião Salgado: That has been my life, where I come from. I was born on a farm, and moved to a small town when I was four or five years old with my family. I have seven sisters. When I grew up I moved to a bigger town—Vitória, the capital of the province—and started to work. There I met Lélia, whom I married. I went to college in economics and graduated, from the university in São Paulo. My wife and I were active in movements against the dictatorship in Brazil, and were pushed out of the country.

Today, thirty years later, we live in France part of the time and in Brazil part of the time. We are in France most of the time; we too are migrants or refugees, who have had to live in a foreign country. So I understand this way of life.

But I don't work alone. When we see pictures, we tend to make the photographer into the sole creator, some heroic person, because it's only his name on the photo. But no one works alone. We have a team. I work with Lélia, and with a group of people in the laboratory, who edit the shots. We also work with a number of humanitarian organizations, that use these pictures. I had a meeting recently in Oakland with the Tides Foundation, who had arranged to show my photographs, and that means we do not work alone. I work with friends and with strangers all over the world.

We are all working at pushing this debate, provoking discussion. With the environmental project in Brazil, we are probably the biggest employers in our region. We employee ninety-two people. Lélia and myself represent the group, and go around the world speaking and begging for money to support this project, telling the world that we must plant these trees. That's what Lélia and I do for the organization. But we also have the guys there planting, we have the biologists taking care of the ecosystem, monitoring it. That means we are not alone. That's the point. Not being alone gives us power to keep going; even when the situation is not easy, we retain hope.

Orville Schell: Do you think in the last ten years, fifteen years, you've become less hopeful or more hopeful?

Sebastião Salgado: To be honest, I have become less hopeful. I have become less hopeful, in the sense that I have traveled a lot. I've probably been to more than a hundred different countries on this planet, and revisited many countries multiple times. It is rarely the case that the countries in the Third World are in a better situation on the second visit, or the third. As time passes, the situation only gets worse. Each time I see more degradation, more difficult situations.

Orville Schell: Did you ever think of just giving up?

Sebastião Salgado: No. I'm not giving up. I worked for seven years shooting the pictures for *Migrations*. The people that I met all over the world, they were distressed, but they were not depressed. They were hopeful, full of energy to get to a new point of equilibrium. Seeing that gives you a lot of hope.

But it's very complicated. We've just come back from Mexico City. In the 1990's, I went to do a story in Mexico. I went to Oaxaca to shoot a group called the Mixes [pronounced MEE-hays]. These are incredible people. These Mixes, they were musicians. For the people in this society who were supposed to play an instrument or to sing, it was not necessary to work in a hard job. Music is their work. And they had incredible songs, incredible music. In 1998, I went back to Mexico to work with the Zapatistas movement, and to work with migrants

crossing into this country. I based the story out of Mexico City. While I was there I went to the Mixes' country, but they weren't there anymore. They had abandoned their land.

We did a book about the landless movement in Brazil, a book named *Terra: Struggle of the Landless* that can be found in this country because it was published in England by Phaidon (1997). We had a lot of shows, and Lélia designed a series of posters for the exhibition. The landless movement is about peasants who do not have land or citizenship. Despite their hardships they create cooperatives, and fight for citizenship and land. When I met with the leaders of the landless movement, they told me that we are probably losing the fight because they are able to help about fifty thousand families a year, seventy thousand families maximum. But there are more than two hundred thousand families per year that abandon the land and go to the towns. This is a system that must be changed.

Orville Schell: Do you think it's really a system, or is it just sort of happening out of control? I mean, at the heart of this whole proposition is the question of globalization. Have you analyzed that? Is it hopeless? What's the alternative?

Sebastião Salgado: I don't believe that these things happen just because they happen. We live in a world where we provoke changes, and that those changes create big waves of reaction on the other side. Here is an example dealing with Europe: about a year and a half ago, European chocolate manufacturers changed the composition of the chocolate in order to consume more fatty material from European agriculture. They've added five percent more fat material to the production of chocolate. That's great for Nestle, who get to produce chocolate at a lower price for a larger profit. Their stocks go very high in the Dow Jones numbers, because they profit. But in the Ivory Coast and in Sierra Leone, that produces millions of unemployed workers, since the demand for cocoa decreases. These things are without a doubt related. Of course it is a complex problem that also has to do with local officials and government in Africa. But these things are related. We must look for a solution.

We are acting in a global order that is not profiting the majority of the people. And I believe that we must look at the full model, not just the profit

margin. When I was photographing *Workers,* I went into a small factory in Bangladesh. This factory is not producing goods for Bangladesh. It's importing globally. We are living in that kind of a system, completely integrated.

In my country we have the Workers Party, which possibly will gain power in next year's elections. But even so, even if we elect a Workers Party president, he will probably find it impossible to take Brazil out of that globalized system. If you take Brazil outside of that system, Brazil won't exist anymore. What can we do?

Orville Schell: Well, that's the question I want to ask you.

Sebastião Salgado: I can't have all the answers or the only answer. I'm just one factor in the equation. I take pictures and bring them here and try to provoke a discussion. The question you ask me is better put to the sociologists and the anthropologists here. This is a fabulous college, probably one of the best universities on this planet. You probably know where we are going. No?

Orville Schell: I'm not sure.

Sebastião Salgado: So that's the reality. And I try to link things together, to show people what I've seen, to get a discussion going. This work I do is the most important thing to me. But I have no solution. I don't know what the solution would be. I believe that we must work together to find the solution. Me, with you, and with all the people in the streets, all around, together. We must have debate, we must have discussion. I'm willing to bet that the solution will not be found only in Brazil, or only in Africa, but probably the solution is here, in the way that we live here. We can live differently. We can be less egoistic. That is probably the only solution.

We live in a cynical society, and that is a problem. Especially the press is cynical, and they create the news, no? Start with the journalists. I had a show in New York from June to September. A critic in the *New York Times*, the art critic who criticized my work, in the end, criticized himself. He told that me that I was not cynical enough. That judgment is a big problem, you know.

Orville Schell: And he also said your photographs were almost too beautiful.

Sebastião Salgado: They were almost too beautiful. Compare me to the American photographer, Walker Evans. In the end, Walker Evans has a kind of cynicism. So they think that it must also be necessary for me to have a little bit of cynicism inside my pictures, no? And this is a big problem in the society that we live in. I work with many journalists, and they are basically cynics. It's terrible this society that we are living in today. If we eliminate a little bit of the huge pretensions that we have, probably we can live in a better world.

Orville Schell: You're a real idealist, aren't you?

Sebastião Salgado: I'm a real what?

Orville Schell: Idealist.

Sebastião Salgado: Yes, I'm an idealist.

Orville Schell: It is interesting to hear you, who are one of the best known photographers in the world, and yet hearing you speak, you would hardly know you're a photographer at all. I mean, you're almost an evangelist for this global dilemma that you find yourself in. It's a rather striking comment.

Sebastião Salgado: Well, we can speak about my photography. I don't mind that. But consider this: I'm sure that inside this room there are many people of my generation who did what I did at a younger age and tried to learn Esperanto, no? In order to learn a language in which it would be possible to communicate with the entire world. We had this big illusion that that was possible. And we tried. And now that has disappeared as if it were not the truth. Then we began to think that English was the universal language. But in the end, finally, the photograph is, for me, the universal language. The image. Not only the photograph but the moving image. Photography is a universal language, a very powerful language. What you write in this language in Africa, we can read here with no translation. What you write in India, we can read in China. That's a very powerful language.

In that sense, I use this language. I am a writer in this language of photography. I have the passion of a photographer, which was, of course, the first motivation that made me begin taking photographs. I love photography. It's a pleasure to be close to people, to approach them with a camera. And the people love you to observe their life. They tell you their stories, and they accept you. And it's fabulous because I never pose people. I don't organize people into a frame for a picture. But when you approach with a camera, people act for you. People accept you. When I'm shooting I work mostly alone, and when you come alone, you are accepted. Humans are animals made to live in a community, made to live in a group. But they welcome others in, too.

This is photography. I write with this aesthetic language. It's a formal language. That means it must be aesthetic, of necessity. But it's very powerful. The photographer has this possibility to approach people, to live with people, to freeze a moment, a fraction of second. Each of the photographs in this show, if added up according to the time of their exposure, might add up to a second or two. It's a fraction of time. But it's powerful. You begin to understand the story of the people you see. You understand the distresses of this society we all live in. We understand a bit of the aesthetics. We understand something about photography.

It's a pleasure to be photographer. I can shoot from the morning to the evening. But, you know, these are not objects in the sense that I made them for this show. I speak about my photography, how I made a composition, how this aperture was set, how the light is there. These pictures, they are not objects. They are a history, and the subjects speak in these pictures about our history. For me, it would be difficult to come here and speak only about photography. It is more important to draw attention to the society that we are living in, the society that created these pictures. This is how I make my way of life.

Orville Schell: How do you view America? In this global society that we are evolving into, the United States figures very prominently. When you look at America, what do you see? And what would you say to our president if you were asked to say a few words?

Sebastião Salgado: Well, you know, for me it is simply unimaginable that I might say something to the President of the United States. Not that I'd never have

access to him, but, really, how could I speak to a person that represents an incredible machine, an incredible system? I'm not sure if I were to say something to the President of the United States, that the president would be capable of changing anything. There are so many powers—military power, industrial power, economic interests—that probably a president is just one point in a system. Maybe I could go to tell something to the House of Representatives; that would be incredible. Because in the end these are the guys that represent the people who are here, no?

At this point in time, there are so many things to say, so many things to discuss, you know, so many evident things. But the machine that we build—what are we to think when we see what happened in this country on September 11? It was terrible, terrible to see, to watch television and to see these planes crashing into buildings. To see the fire burning the buildings and the humans, hanging out of tiny windows, and there being no way to save them. This is such a powerful country, so rich in technology, and still there was no way to save these people. And so they jumped into empty space. I thought to myself, now it is truly time for a dialogue on this planet. Because now we must understand that this country is rich, very rich, that these two buildings in a way represent all of the wealth of all the planet, because this is the financial system that dominates the world economy. But we need to open a dialogue about *peace*.

But what happens when the President of this country can speak only of the vengeance of war? He went for bombing and very quickly we destroyed Afghanistan's already ailing infrastructure. What can happen now? I have no idea. It seems that the "terrorists" had more reasons to use force than they did to enter a debate or dialogue. And now the U.S. is thinking of bombing Iraq? We are not entering a dialogue: we are pushing a military situation. We are provoking more war. This is not a solution.

This country has so many economists, so many sociologists, so many anthropologists, who must know the truth of this. But instead we increase military spending. When you see the kinds of budgets that were passed by Congress after September 11, the warlike intentions become apparent. When the planes smashed into the World Trade Center, the Dow Jones average was not too high, and the NASDAQ was at its lowest level. The American economy was heading toward a depression, and now after September 11, we've seen a lot of investment in the

country. There are those new planes I spoke of a few minutes ago—the first agreement is $400 billion. Then there's the Star Wars system. The military systems are getting more and more power. That means you can't begin to come out of the recession. And these men who control the military industry do not think about ecology. They are not concerned with the health of the planet.

Orville Schell: But do you think photos might have the power to make people… Do you think your photographs...?

Sebastião Salgado: No, I'm not speaking about my photographs…

Orville Schell: Well, let's just say photographs, in general.

Sebastião Salgado: I don't believe that they are powerful... You know, the photographs alone are nothing. They are nothing, the photographs.

Orville Schell: I'm grappling here to know how… what's the answer?

Sebastião Salgado: Your question is the answer. The question: what's the answer? I don't have the answer. Because, you know, the photographs, as I said a few minutes ago, must be just one part of the whole. They are just one element of the full debate. And they are more a question than a reply.

Orville Schell: Well, maybe. There are many questions here. I have many more, but I would love to get to some questions from the audience.

Audience Comments

Audience Question: I'm a photographer, and I'm wondering whether you can tell me how you go about putting together your projects.

Sebastião Salgado: These projects I do need to be organized for the long term, so that they can work. You first need to build a project model, and you must do research in order to do this. It helps that I was an economist before I became a photographer. I also worked in investment banking for awhile, for the Diversification Fund of the International Coffee Organization. I earned a Ph.D. in Economics at University of Paris. It was because of my work in the coffee industry that I took my first trips in Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire and many different countries in Africa.

That is how I learned to plan projects, and to calculate the costs of things. When I put together this current project, I worked for about fourteen different magazines around the world. Here in the United States, I worked with the *New York Times Magazine* and with *Rolling Stone,* I worked with *Stern* magazine in Germany, *Paris Match* in France, *El Pais* in Spain, and many different publications in Brazil. So I shared the cost of this project with this group of magazines. We created a base group or home office in Paris from which to do the research, to get authorization or clearance to go inside the countries we wanted to shoot in. And so we put these stories together. We gave the collaborating magazines five or six stories per year, and the magazines published them, and that helped finance all the work. All in all it took about seven years to do.

I'm just finishing another story now, a story on polio. I've worked for about one year with UNICEF and the World Health Organization. As you know, this country was badly hit by polio forty or fifty years ago. But the current generation of Americans hardly knows that polio was real; it is a ghost in this country. Polio was wiped out in the U.S. probably about twenty years ago. But it is still a threat to countries like Zaire, Congo, Somalia, Egypt, Afghanistan. These are countries where there are conflicts, and it has been impossible to inoculate the children. To do this project it was necessary for me to work with various magazines again. For instance, *Vanity Fair* will be featuring my story on polio in April.

Only after that kind of collaborative work am I able to put together the travelling museum exhibitions that you have seen.

Orville Schell: How do you think the media is doing these days, in covering the whole question of globalization?

Sebastião Salgado: Well, they are covering it. There are so many debates in the media. But, you know, there is a kind of monopoly of the media these days. Most people get their news from television, and that is often a very compromised kind of reporting. Just look at how the major media covered September 11 and its wake. We could never tell what was the American government's position versus what CNN thought.

We need to have an independent media. But I do believe that the U.S. has good coverage.

Audience Question: Have you done any projects that relate to problems faced more directly by the U.S. and Europe, to capture the minds of those who aren't as closely hit by problems of the Third World?

Sebastião Salgado: You know, there is a group of photographers, documentary photographers, who have worked very hard on this, to show the American reality. It's very difficult for a photographer to cover such a huge topic. I've put my life into these two projects. It took me about sixteen years to do *Workers* and

Migrations. That's probably half of my life as a photographer spent on two stories. I've also worked here in San Francisco with Ken Light and other friends, in order to get grants for other photographers, for documentary photographers.

For me, it was important to show these pictures I've done here, too. We have about eight touring exhibitions, and they go all over the planet. We also have about three thousand smaller shows, done via kits of posters—we send these to humanitarian organizations and schools. We've also created a film that we will be showing here tomorrow. We have a DVD full of these images, that we have put together as a kind of educational program, for students of all ages.

It's the same with the polio project. We're creating a system of shows that can go to every school. We're also putting together a big Internet site. Lélia and I constantly try to envision a way that we can make these pictures as popular as possible, in the sense that every person can have access to them, to think about the issues they raise, so that they can enter the debate. But it is not easy, because there is a very traditional way of showing photography. I believe that there is a lot of research to do, to make photography more popular, to see if we can bring it closer to the people.

Orville Schell: This is an incredible operation you've launched. It must be extraordinarily taxing for you to keep it fed, keep it going.

Sebastião Salgado: Well, once the shows are set up, they can tour on their own. I don't always have to be there. But I do have to employ the six people who make my work possible. So I take commercial assignments, to pay the bills, etc. You can't live on social commentary photography alone. It is a lot of work, but that is my life.

Audience Question: What would you say to the comment that documentary photography is dying?

Sebastião Salgado: I don't believe that documentary photography is dying. There was an assumption that with the death of big magazines, such as *Life* magazine or *Geo* magazine, that documentary photography would disappear. But there are so

many uses of this kind of photography. There are many more humanitarian organizations now than there were twenty years ago. And most of them have magazines, publications, newspapers. Also there are the supplements of newspapers, the Sunday magazines, that didn't exist twenty years ago. And all of these use photography.

Also internet sites—they use much more photography than they use video, because when they use video, they need to use a lot more computer memory to show the movement. So they use pictures. The number of photographers in the world is growing, not shrinking.

So I don't believe that documentary photography, or the photography of reportage, is dying. Things have changed. I have a traditional approach, and maybe this is dying, because I am photographing with normal film. I must develop it. I must fix it. That means that I use a chemical system to develop these pictures. But now we have the digital camera; in a few years, all the people will probably be shooting digital pictures.

But for me that doesn't mean that documentary photography will die. It will simply adapt. There are so many stories. There are so many good photographers doing the stories.

Audience Question: Is your Brazilian nationality reflected in your photographs?

Sebastião Salgado: No, the nationality, no, but the Brazilian origin, yes. Because I come from probably the most baroque state in Brazil. And when we speak of the baroque, we speak about the Portuguese, and about Spain. This has a lot to do with my way of seeing, and thus with my way of photographing. When you see my photographs, you notice that they are very baroque pictures. This I bring with me from my Brazilian origin. Every one of us is influenced in this way by our origins.

It has helped me to be a Brazilian citizen and to have a Brazilian passport, to come from a country not involved in any extended conflicts, etc. That facilitated things. But I don't believe that being Brazilian is a privilege, and I don't think being Brazilian is an important fact.

Orville Schell: What are you thinking about working on in the future, your next project?

Sebastião Salgado: You know, I just finished the story on polio. It took about one year. We are getting ready to put that story out in the next year. And I'm getting older—I just turned fifty-eight. Sometimes it's not very easy to carry all this baggage and to travel so constantly. A photographer's life is havoc-filled. My body is aging and I have some health problems. So I have to assess these things; I may not do another large project. I'm planning to do a book about Africa. I have the stories I've shot from the colonization of Africa until now, and that I am still shooting now, a few months ago in Congo, in Somalia, in Sudan, and I'm probably going to put these pictures together and do a book about the last thirty years in Africa—that's my thirty years of photography.

I was recently reminded that there are a lot of photographers who after they disappear we begin to discover a lot of pictures they never published, unpublished pictures, and the unpublished history. And I want to have the pleasure myself of discovering what I've done all these years. I've traveled so much; now I want some time to sit back and look at what a photographer does. I am in discussion with a university about helping me put this project together. They are creating a Center of Documentary Photography in Santa Fe. And they have invited me to come to participate a little bit with them, to bring this experience of mine to young photographers, to show what we photographed, how we managed the prints, why we did one story and not another, and the various other choices we faced.

Of course I will not stop taking pictures. I constantly take photographs. But I believe it might be time for me to leave room for the younger generation of photographers. I have a son who is doing documentary film, a video. He was in a school with a group of younger photographers, about twenty-six, twenty-seven years old, who are on the road. They are shooting, they are out there. It's fabulous to see a new generation come in.

So now I'm planning to see if I can contribute a little bit, to give a little bit back of what I did, to explain it to the others, to see if what I did can be useful to others, in a sense.

I also want to devote some time to the environmental fund I spoke of earlier. If Lélia and I, and those who work with us, put some part of our lives into this project, then maybe we can leave this little slice of land more or less like I found it when I arrived there fifty-eight years ago.

Tomorrow night we will be showing a film that we made with Tim Robbins and John Berger. It's a discussion about globalization. We are selling tickets. It is very expensive, I understand. Twenty-five dollars is a lot of money to pay for a ticket to see one evening of film. But with twenty-five dollars, we can plant a mountain over the next five years, eighty trees for each ticket. That means that if you pay to see the film, you will have planted eighty trees. I invite you to come.

That is my way of life. None of these things are separate for me. Photography is not separate from my life.

Orville Schell: Maybe with that visionary commercial, we will end. I urge you all, if you have not had a chance, to go over to the Berkeley Art Museum, and also, I might add, to Northgate Hall, Graduate School of Journalism. There you will see Sebastiao's photographs. So thank you so much for coming, Sebastião.

Commentary

T.J. Clark

Will you forgive me, first, for writing out my response to your *Migrations?* I am a writer, basically, and I could not trust my speaking self to get what I wanted to say to you even roughly right. Partly this is because this is such an extraordinary opportunity—to express my thanks and admiration for a truly prodigious effort to tell part of the truth about the world we live in, an effort which has moved and shaken people, and altered our sense of the actual and possible. No one who comes upon your photographs of Serra Pelada will ever forget the shock administered to his or her notion of postmodernity, or "post-industrial society," or "the death of the manual working class" by the images themselves, and their quiet dateline, 1986. It is interesting that already I detect in the literature about you a wish to have even the gap between that date, 1986, and our date, 2002, be enough of a difference to push this image—this reality—into the past. That was 1986, this is now. It can't really still be happening. Or if it is happening—this is the second maneuver—it is happening peripherally, vestigially: it can't be *part of* the system that is spearheaded by Microsoft and Enron. It can't be part of Microsoft's ancillary conditions. These reaction formations—and as you know, they can be vehement and dismissive in your case—you should take as tribute. They show how much a simple and eloquent chronicling of our present horror can do—how much of a scandal it can be.

But you will guess that this is not all I want to say to you. You will guess I have worries, and doubts, and questions. Many of them you have heard before, I know; and you also know, I think, where they are coming from. They are the

doubts and questions of a Left intellectual in the U.S.A.—and I am not sure you realize how embattled and marginalized and *insignificant* a subject position that has become. I know your work is not addressed to us: that you chose (but of course it was not really a choice, it was a complex compulsion, it was something you evidently could not help doing) to reach over the embattled provisos and sophistications of the present day Left and aim again at a sense of humanity, and of human pain and human community, and mobilize the capacity for outrage and sympathy. You have done it—all the chatter about the "beautification of poverty" and Art Book liberal-humanism and the end of documentary voyeurism won't take away the simple fact that these projects of yours are some of the few—the very few—that have kept the idea of our modernity being an atrocity, an obscenity, alive.

But all the same I have doubts, I have questions. And I can only speak from where I am, which is, as I say, from inside a certain embattled and marginalized Left. I would be faking and shirking if I did not try to express to you how your work looks from that peculiar perspective.

I am conflicted about your work—"conflicted" is a jargon word, which has about it the tang of therapy sessions, but even that seems appropriate. I admire intensely your ability to give a *face* to globalization—to give it faces in the plural, but to have the plural so often stay obdurately particular—not to allow us to elide the individual outrage or instance of resistance into the mass. If we give a face to globalization, your photographs say, we shall surely not be able to tolerate the look it gives us. We shall not be able to look it back, in the face. We shall be ashamed.

Here's where my questions begin. Actually I do not think there is anything wrong about being made, by images, to feel shame or pity or sympathy. Shame, pity, and sympathy are in short supply—scandalously short supply, considering how much we in America have to feel ashamed at, or sympathy for. But hearing you speak, so directly and effectively, two nights ago, it was clear that you too thought that shame and sympathy were not sufficient as a reaction to the present horror. One wants also to understand how the horror works. One wants an account of causes, or structures, or relations of power. We need to know who or what is driving this—and indeed, whether it is, essentially, a who *or* a what that

is doing the driving—whether this vileness called globalization is powered by some structure or process that truly exceeds even the most privileged and ruthless human design, or whether still at the back of it lie the same old greeds, the same cheap calculations of profit off the backs of the vulnerable.

You see the questions that follow: could there be a photography of causes, not faces? Or, better, of intimations of causes in the faces—not of faces registering the appalling cost, and resisting the cost, with a sheer implacable will to live, but of faces caught in the moment of coming to understand—maybe coming to resent, coming to be angry. A photograph can only do so much, I know. You rightly thought that the necessary basis on which you could hope to get any kind of photographic truth was to win your subjects' trust. There is a price to be paid for this, of course. It means, as I understand it, that distrust, resentment, and rage very rarely register on your photographic plate. But we know that the anger and antagonism is out there. It has visited us, finally, and will visit us again. I think we need an imagery of it, as the other side of endurance and bewilderment. We know equally that in many of the situations you photographed the horror did not *happen*, did not come down from the skies as catastrophe; it was done by real armies, real police forces and border patrols, real foremen and *latifundia* managers and men with dollars and whips. I am not saying that these things are simply absent in your photographs, but they strike me as rare. I'd like very much to hear your reflections on why. Perhaps you will say that the problems here are essentially practical, or situational—that good photographs issue from a situation of mutuality, of recognition, and the moments of actual exertion of power, actual clashes or collective assertion, lie by and large beyond the camera's range. And I see the problem. Class struggle, when it is captured as it presents itself in full self-consciousness, can seem stagey—can seem to be quoting a long-past script. Because in a sense it is: it is trying out whether the same lines can be spoken again. Or perhaps you will say that the problems go deeper, and have to do with the nature of the medium. Photography is of appearances, instants, individualities, not of structures, causes, classes, forms or patterns of life. But I resist that. I believe in the visual image's power to disclose, or intimate, a pattern of causes. And cause is there, of course, in your work. Structure is there. You feel for a way to tell the story of the rural and the urban tearing at one another's exposed entrails,

in Jakarta or Istanbul. You show us occasionally the dream skyline of modernity, in Shanghai, in São Paolo, or the highrises behind the ribbon wire in Hong Kong. I will be honest with you and say that these are not the photographs from *Migrations* that tend to stick in the mind. You seem to me a photographer of faces—of faces emerging from the matrix of the crowd—as opposed to someone who feels always for the particular *social character* of space—of a site. Does that strike you as a misdescription? If you accept it, even partly, would you see this as a limitation of the medium, essentially—"listen, there are only so many things a camera can do!"—or a result of the nature of your own appetite for the world?

I've said enough. Let me end, not by retracting a single one of these questions—they are the ones that pressed in on me at the exhibit, and I had to present them—but by reflecting for a moment on the strangeness, and also the predictability, of my asking them in the first place. Why is it, I wonder, that suddenly, when we are confronted with the work of an artist of the Left, our demands become absolute and maximalist, and our suspicions almost total? Suddenly we are *moralists* in front of Salgado, after all our long training in amoral deadpan. We say we are being asked to wallow in misery; I wonder why the usual invitations—proffered by the imagery we live with—to wallow in celebrity, or in the bright outsides of the chic or the hip or the cheaply outrageous, don't bring on the same access of self-scrutiny. We are as sensitive to the least sign of primitivism or condescension or beautification in Salgado as we were previously anaesthetized to the most flagrant signs of idiotic gloating at whatever our corporate masters want to persuade us is "cool." Beautification of poverty is suddenly the ultimate sin. I wonder why the beautification of wealth, which surrounds us constantly, or the endless celebration of the commodity world's slick outsides—for which one part of the American academy acts as cheerleader—fails to raise the same hackles. I am in a dilemma here. I know that some of my questions to you duplicate these strange hyper-sensitivities, which I too ultimately despise. But there's no way out for me from this double bind. As the Trotskyist groups used to say, in my youth, about the latest liberation struggle with whose contradictions they wrestled: "We shall offer unqualified support; but also unconditional criticism." I hope you'll accept my response as offered in the same spirit.

Commentary

Nancy Scheper-Hughes

Ash Wednesday: a good day to think about migrations and transience, about vanity and futility, ashes and death, but also to think about transcendence and crossings, comings-over and over-coming—all of which come to mind in reflecting on Sebastião Salgado's *Migrations* project. On Monday evening Candace Slater referred to the particularly Brazilian sensibility of Sebastião—especially the baroque feel of his monumental, massified images—visions, really—of human collectivities jutting up out of the earth, filling and dominating the landscape, like the immense several story high gold cathedral of São Bento, Olinda that was recently and amazingly reassembled in the great hall of the Simon Guggenheim Museum in New York City. In viewing some of Sebastiao's images of unremitting human misery reassembled and displayed on the walls of the Berkeley Art Museum I experienced some of the same vertigo and disorientation as on seeing (just last week) the ornate golden altar of the cathedral ripped from its semi-tropical, post colonial context and squashed between the concrete walkways of the Guggenheim. But *dis-location* is, after all, what this project and Salgado's juxtaposition of dialogical images is all about.

In addition to the baroque I see traces of the Brazilian "carnavalesque" in Sebastiao's canvases—in the various leaps and dances against death of survivors of genocides, civil wars, dirty wars, land expulsions, and famines, each jockeying for a place in the sun, a place on the train, a place in the life-boat. The boat people even wave to the camera. The images reflect not only misery, of course, but the self-affirmation of those who demand, after all, their right to exist, to take up

some finite piece of space and time as they pass through this world in constant motion, on foot, on bicycles, packed into trucks, hanging off trains and busses and finally—and here I am thinking of the coffin-filled truck side by side with a crowded bus—who will move out of this world in simple boxes artfully decorated with bits of cloth lining.

There is also in Sebastiao's images (and in his words) some of the classic moves and gestures of the Samba dancer—arms outstretched, inviting everyone to enter the circle. He makes frequent reference to entering into, and to bringing people in; there are references to enfolding and encircling—as if the world could in fact be contained and turned outside-in.

The Lie

But carnival and the *carnavelesco* are all about forgetting and anesthesia, while Sebastião insists on the opposite: that we look, that we acknowledge. His photos confront the illusion—the lie—that covers up everything we normally refuse to see. There are critics of Salgado's tendency to turn suffering into an aesthetic, an art form. But it is just because his images are so beautiful, so luminous, that we *can* bear to look at what he wants us to confront.

What exactly does he want us to feel in response to his complex images, his particular vision of the state of the world? Shock? Wonder? Repulsion? Pity? Grief? Anger? He invites us to gaze at a world where *nowhere* is the human condition very good nor free from pain or suffering for the greatest number. So, what *in the world* (literally) does he want us to do? What do his images demand? Here he retreats a bit and says "My poor pictures, don't expect too much of them.…"

And what of the people whose suffering—and whose terrifying little accommodations to it—is being made into a public spectacle? What is our obligation to them? The rules of our living-in and living-with peoples on the verge of extermination remain as yet unwritten, perhaps even unspoken. What, during periods of genocide or ethnocide, is an appropriate distance to take from our subjects? What kinds of "participant-observation," what sort of eyewitnessing are adequate to the scenes of genocide and its aftermath ? When the photographer is witness to crimes against humanity, is mere empathy sufficient? At what point

does the photographer or the ethnographer as eyewitness become a bystander or even a co-conspirator?

Sebastião wants us to act as well as to react. But the overwhelming nature and weight of the suffering can just as easily invoke fatalism more than resistance. As my post-peasant Czech mother used to say in the face of catastrophe (driving my brother and I crazy with her passivity): "Well, what can you do?"

We who make our living observing and recording the misery of the world have a keen obligation to reflect critically on the impact of the harsh images of human catastrophe that we foist on a politically naïve and not always sympathetic public. One effect of the multiplication, the piling up of stark images of unnatural and premature deaths—of chronic hunger, of dislocations, of mass murder and genocide—is a blunting of the senses, producing in the viewer the very same self-defensive passivity of the sufferers. The sheer volume and extent of the catastrophe renders the viewer impotent.

My years observing chronic hunger and child death in Northeast Brazil show that the more frequent and ubiquitous the images of hunger, sickness, and death, the more likely are people are to accept these as routine, average, expected (see Scheper-Hughes 1993). The shock reaction is readily extinguished and people everywhere have an enormous capacity to absorb the hideous and go on with life and business and the terror and misery it reproduces as usual. It is next to impossible to remain continually aware of "the state of emergency" in which most of the world lived (Benjamin 1969). This is true with respect to the rain forest emergency, the AIDS emergency, the refugee emergency, the world hunger emergency. Sooner or later the graphic images—whether literary or visual—meant to evoke shock and resolve, evoke blank stares, the shrug of the shoulders, the disinterested nod, and finally the acceptance as somehow routine, everyday, and *normal* "—the chronic state of impending catastrophe under which so many of the world's populations live. As the surrealist anthropologist Mick Taussig once noted, all humans seem to have an uncanny ability to hold terror and misery at arm's length (1992). And, on the other hand, to normalize it.

Suffering at a Distance

Sebastiao's universalizing images of global suffering are a bit problematic for they suggest an almost timeless, spaceless quality to human experience. Where are the cultural politics of these images? Sebastião has said that in his own travels he sometimes forgets whether he is in Manila or Bombay. The boundaries between discrete cultural histories and differing political economies are hardly acknowledged here. Sebastião insists that we grasp a singular, universal world of man and woman and child. But these radical juxtapositions gives the anthropologist—let alone, I would imagine, the geographer—some reason for pause. The specificity of evil and of suffering is lost. Classical Aristotelian tragedy suggests to the contrary that not all suffering (and not everyone who suffers) is equal. And anthropologists know that there are human communities in which suffering and death are not endowed with deep cultural value or significance and other communities where the art of suffering is highly elaborated.

One might want to ask just what the Yanomami and their ongoing genocide in the Amazon have in common with factory workers in Bombay or with border-crossing refugees in Tijuana, Mexico? What are the specific historical links between economic globalization and the Rwandan genocide? I don't think that Sebastião can safely leave this analysis to the anthropologists or political scientists. At least not since the postmodern turn in the social sciences. He needs to give us more text to help us understand, read, and interpret his complex images.

If Sebastião will forgive me, in the end, I sense something missing in these incredible images. We see the faces of the victims—individually and collectively—but we never confront the faces of the killers, the perpetrators. They are invisible: assumed, depersonified, institutionalized, systematized and thereby both hidden (and protected) within the anonymous everyday structures of economic, social, and structural violence. Consequently, the face of evil has no face and is left up to mere abstractions—"globalization"—the North, the post industrial robber barons, the indifferent, uncaring, affluent world.

Where in all these fantastic images is the face of evil, the face of the killer? If all the miseries, open veins and bleeding wounds of the Third World is going to be exposed, I want Sebastião to expose the face—individually and collectively—of the human beings that demand or that create such suffering. This means that we may have to come face to face with what Primo Levi called the gray zone: those

social spaces where everything is not quite so black and white, where victims become killers and survivors become sadists, and where even the innocent sufferers become co-conspirators and participants in their own execution. And walking through these luminous images, I wonder where the ugly, mean, and brutish—sometimes even despicable—victims and survivors of the misery of the world reside?

Why are all the victims so beautiful, so good? Where is the ugliness that I, at least, so often encounter in the slums, and native yards, and squatter camps of the world. Are these a projection of my own tortured soul? Is Sebastião a little bit tempted by the medieval theologies of noble suffering, of suffering as the path of saints and martyrs, of suffering as useful, *for* something, and as meaningful in its own right? I think we have to resist the temptation to sanitize and idealize suffering—and to see it, instead (following Emmanuel Levinas) as irredeemably useless, worthless, for nothing, as pure undergoing, as something only to be gotten through.

Resilience

What is most striking in many of the portraits of post holocaust-like human catastrophes are the signs of human resilience. Or are we seeing the accommodations to suffering? To this day, I don't know quite how to separate the two. Perhaps resilience and the "survival machine" require accommodation. To experience the full measure of suffering—one's own and the suffering of one's intimates—would be unbearable. Portraits and images of *resistance* are few and far between, and those capturing the scenes of Movimento Sem Terra and the revolution in Chiapas are ambivalent at best, since they are joined with scenes of viscous retaliation.

Meanwhile, the sense of "hope" to which Sebastião alluded in his remarks on Monday remains for me more hypothetical than expressed in his photos, although it is clearest in the triumphant faces of the political refugees returning from transit camps to their Angolan homeland.

The Children

One can well imagine the multitude of ruffian and loose children who gathered around Sebastião and his camera as he tried to get his work done—grabbing,

pushing and pulling, jostling for his attention, saying, "Don't forget me; I want my turn to be seen, admired, desired, heard.... That one over there has had your attention long enough!" Or, saying some version of "'Tá vendo? 'Tá ouvindo?": are you listening, really understanding me? Seeing, listening, recording can be—indeed they must become—acts of fraternity, sisterhood, and of solidarity. Above all, Salgado's portraits are the work of recognition. Not to look, not to record can be the hostile act, an act of indifference and of turning away.

I love Sebastiao's image of the camera as microphone. I cannot help but think of some of my own anthropological subjects for whom observation is not a hostile gaze, but rather an opportunity—often the only one they ever had—to tell a part of their life story, to render themselves visible, out of the shadows, those who are invisible and sidelined by the wealth of the world, or silenced by genocide, or by famine and hunger, by drought and by thirst. Perhaps I shall start thinking of my tape recorder as camera.

But here's the rub. There is a touch of fetishization in these portraits. The children are bold and bright and sassy and innocently seductive. I had to stop myself from imagining which child I would like to pluck out of their misery and bring home with me, to possess. The children are a kind of supermarket of what Lawrence Cohen calls "bio-availability"—these children seem terribly available: available equally to the child protectors and savers of the world as to the child *slavers* of the world. How many of these children of the refugee camp, of the streets, of the *favela* would readily agree to work in Gap- and Disney-owned sweatshops making hip-huggers in Bangladesh or Mouseketeer ears in Haiti for seventeen cents an hour. How many could be enticed to run away to work as virtual slaves on plantations in the Ivory Coast in exchange for a *real* pair of shoes: "Not flip flops or plastic sandals but something that looked like a type of house… a miniature house, one for each foot" (see the *NY Times Magazine* piece by Mike Finkel).

On Representation and Revelation

Description is revelation. It is neither
The thing described, nor false facsimile

It is an artful thing that exists
In its own seeming, plainly visible,

Yet not too closely the double of our lives
Intenser than any actual life could be.

—Wallace Stevens

Many of our Berkeley students, overly sensitized by the writings of Michel Foucault, have come to think of any kind of field work—with a camera or with a tape recorder or even with a notebook and pencil—as a kind of invasive, almost inquisitional search for fundamental "truths" to be extracted from Indios and peasants, squatters and boat people, reduced to mere objects of our discriminating, incriminating, Western gaze. But given the perilous times in which we and our subjects live, these clichéd critiques seem petulant—an excuse for doing nothing. If Sebastião did not view his craft as a tool for human liberation, what kind of perversity would keep him on the move and in search of the miseries of the world?

I see Sebastião Salgado as an alarmist, as a shock-trooper, a producer of aesthetically and politically complicated, and morally demanding images (and texts) that he hopes will sink through the thick layers of indifference, acceptance, complicity, and bad faith that allow the suffering and the mass deaths to continue without even "Massa" Kurtz's belated cry of recognition: *"The horror! The horror!"*

He is a fortunate man, endowed with the shaman's gifts, the gifts of the seer, the visionary, the gifts of the healer. He has an awesome ability to enter, and for a time at least, to become part of the suffering world, to absorb some of the trauma, and to return with incredible stories about what he has seen. He is a natural historian of the excluded and Third World people so often seen (in Eric Wolf's words) as having no history at all. He is able to see beauty and a kind of Aristotelian order in the chaos of the world and in the ebb and flow of lives dismissed as so much flotsam and jetsam.

Finally, Sebastião Salgado represents what Franco Basglia called a "negative intellectual worker"—a species of race and class traitor—one who puts

his elite knowledge and his talents at odds with the common-sense world. His photos are a potent site of resistance. As John Berger put it in the film we saw yesterday, his images elicit *both* a resounding *"Yes!*," an affirmation of all human existence; and a cry of resistance, a resounding *"No!"* against the demand to live life under such abysmal conditions and limitations.

Sebastião is inviting us to disrupt business as usual, to live and work and to think and write against the everyday violence of global poverty, to refuse the "fanaticism" of economic globalization, and to resist the perverse logic of the *global market* and to search , instead, for a *global society*. In short, he is asking us to put ourselves squarely on the side of humanity, and to imagine with him a new world in which, quite simply put, there can be a seat for everyone at the banquet table.

Commentary

Michael Watts

One of the many admirable qualities of Sebastião Salgado's marvelous exhibition *Migrations*—and the source, I think, of its great power and appeal—is the reach, the sheer ambition, and the political vision contained within it. Seven years in the making, as he told us a couple of nights ago (and made with the eye and the dedication of an ethnographer), it is self-consciously multinational and transnational in scope and vision, and prepared to take on (if I may invoke *Star Wars)* the "dark side" of globalization. The sheer scale of *Migrations* is somehow congruent or isomorphic with the vastness and the complexity of the problem it seeks to address.

Let me speak plainly: how bloody refreshing it is to engage with a project that does not shy away from, but tackles head-on, the pressing questions of imperialism, class, the proletariat, the excluded and footloose at a moment when we are all bombarded with the clap-trap of market triumphalism and the banalities of democracy for all and national security for the homeland.

And to embark upon a project which provides no easy answers or solutions and yet remains rooted in a ferocious, and infectious, combination of idealism and practicality. The very fact that Salgado sees his photographs as a "slice" (his word) of a complex life's work embracing humanitarianism, forest conservation, school-building and popular education, and collaborative solidarity work with other committed photojournalists, makes his life's *oeuvre* all the more remarkable and compelling.

I was struck by listening to Sebastião on Monday night in his remarks on globalization and his visual history from below, how resonant is his world view with the terribly important Marxist-inspired work on development theory which emerged during the 1960s from Latin America (and from Brazil and Chile in particular) under the banner of dependency theory. It represented an attempt to understand the class relations linking metropole and periphery in a capitalist world system characterized by unequal exchange and super-exploitation. Very few of the Latin American Left, or indeed the Left in general, look back to dependency theory now, but this was a project that Salgado's own Brazilian President, Henrique Cardoso, at one point shared in. No more, I suspect.

I had read somewhere that Sebastião said: "You photograph with all your ideology," and I wasn't exactly sure what he meant by this turn of phrase. But now I see clearly that he is one of the last *dependistas,* armed with a Leica.

The power of this *Migrations* project operates of course on a number of levels. There is the long essay itself, the entire vision of movement and displacement in a global setting: of exodus, survival, disorder and so on, as he describes it in the framing text. More than anything it strikes me as a narrative of the *creation of a global proletariat*, of dispossession and the release of "free" labor. *Migrations* is the twin sister, then, of his earlier compendium *Workers*. One expression of this making of a working class, and it courses through *Migrations*, is the disappearance of the peasantry—in Ecuador, in India, in Angola—hurled into the ranks of the propertyless and the dispossessed. What we have on offer is a visual account of a sort of gigantic world enclosure driven as Marx noted long ago by famine, violence, blood and fire.

But there is a second level seen in the moments—the case studies, so to say—that compromise the larger whole: Palestine, Yugoslavia, Rwanda and so on. Here I must take particular note of the images devoted to the plight of the Vietnamese "Boat People" which seems to me to capture one aspect of this world enclosure so brilliantly: namely, the dialectics of migration, between movement and mobility as a type of freedom and liberation, and its twin face, for the poor, of incarceration, confinement, surveillance and deracination.

And not least there are those images which stand alone, compelling and overwhelming in their own right, capable of transcending the problematic

synchrony of the photograph and of becoming what John Berger has called the "expressive image," the long quotation from appearance (he is referring of course to the discontinuity that is intrinsic to the photography, that it quotes from appearance without a context and meaning). If you'll indulge me, I want to mention two images that are exemplary in this respect. The first is the image of Beddawi, the Palestinian refugee camp in northern Lebanon, in which a woman (a mother?) commands attention by her dignified and militant bearing, standing in the hallway of what is presumably her impoverished dwelling. But there is the startling, looming presence in the foreground of a young child, fist clenched, defiantly standing behind the door lintel out of the watchful eye of his elder. So much of the dignity and the intergenerational struggle of the *Intifadah* is captured here. And then the deeply unsettling picture of the money changer in Rwanda. A Brechtian nightmare: the lethal coupling of war, famine and profit.

All of this makes my task here as an intellectual *provocateur* all the more difficult if not impossible. I speak as a man of the Left and I suppose a Sixties person to boot—and is there not a *soixante huitard* mentality at work in *Migrations*?—and here Salgado's work and life, and his political vision (with which I have enormous sympathy and solidarity), stands as a sort of model that many of us might aspire to and yet few achieve or indeed come close to achieving. (Parenthetically, and in the interests of full disclosure, let me say that I went to Africa first, as Salgado did in 1971, and I having been going back ever since, and his images of the Sahelian and Ethiopian famines of the 1970s and 1980s, were foundational to my own attempts to grapple with mass starvation and survival in West Africa.)

But you are not here to listen to me give you twenty reasons why this is an extraordinary exhibition. So I must take seriously Salgado's injunction that the photos are meant to provoke, to sustain a dialogue. So here goes. I would like to address three related matters, that I will refer to first as the relation between image and text (and here I shall refer in particular to the images of Africa especially), second to what I shall call the problem of coherence (and here Asia and Latin America figure centrally), and finally to the problems of a visual history of globalization from below.

Image and Text

My concern here is to question of the relation between the images—understood as an essay, as a narrative—and the text provided by Sebastião as captions of the photographs, and as themes (exodus, urban disorder, survival and so on) that discursively frame the exhibition.

In the film *Spectres of Hope*, Salgado referred to the fact that all of the images in the *Migrations* book represent about one second in the complex lives and histories of the people and places depicted. This truncated quality of the images endorses the idea that pictures do not provide a context but "quote from it," as Roland Barthes would have it. Indeed John Berger who interviewed Sebastião in the film, long ago noted in his collaborative work with the photographer Jean Mohr that images of suffering provide a "diffuse sense of causality," blaming everyone and no one. The fact that Sebastião notes in the film that the displaced and migrants do not understand their suffering or plight—"why is this happening to me?"—seems to substantiate precisely a diffuse sense of causality, of the precise relations between something called globalization and incarceration in Hong Kong or mass slaughter in Kigale.

Obviously Sebastião is fully aware of the discontinuity exacted by the photograph and this is why the text provided has a particular weight for me, and why I want to push him a little.

Let's begin with the themes themselves: exodus, survival, instinct, adaptation, evolution, urban disorder. This framing seems to me to run the risk of reading into globalization a lethal mix of Darwin, Malthus and the Bible; of the overbearing forces of nature, of instinct and religiosity. Indeed, a very influential book was published a few years back by Robert Kaplan, *The Coming Anarchy* which recapitulates these themes as a way of describing an apocalyptic view of Africa and elsewhere—and which it needs to be said recapitulates a long history of how Africa is represented by the West to the West. My discomfort was deepened further in the series of images on Africa and Rwanda in particular. An "African Tragedy," and a "Continent Adrift." But in what sense a tragedy? As calamity perhaps, but surely not as destiny in the classical sense. And is the metaphor of a massive continental landmass adrift—battered by natural forces or unshackled from social control—congruent with Sebastiao's own account of the forces of global-

ization? Is it really helpful? Or how does it sit with the images themselves and the other sorts of representation from which they stand apart? I do not want to deny the indisputable fact of violence or poverty in Africa of course—this is not an argument about photographs and the social construction of mass poverty. But do the pictures and text provide some sort of *alternative* to the long history—which Salgado knows well—of representing Africa in particular sorts of ways? Do the images and text provide an essay—his term—that distinguishes it from the conventional Western account of a "continent on fire" as African novelist Armah puts it?

And here the Rwanda images have a particular weight because as he says it was an instance that challenged his prior optimism, the sense of evolutionary betterment that characterized his *Workers* book. The images are unquestionably powerful and difficult but do they, with the text, allow us to answer in some way Simone Weil's "always inaudible question…why am I being hurt" (quoted by John Berger in the film). Sebastião is properly concerned with truth, with what we as social scientists might call cause or explanation, with the relation of human misery to the violence of globalization; with Weil's why question. My provocation is simply this: do these images and text as an essay provide some sort of answer to the why question (and hence provide some sort of service to the solutions that his work ultimately speaks to)? The relation between image and text seems to me to be especially important in Rwanda because we are dealing after all with genocide: 800,000 slaughtered in ten weeks. And what was at stake in my view in these events was an organized fascist movement with a long and complex history, what has been called organic nationalism, and the creation of particular ethnic identities attached to a political logic of extermination in which there were all manner of global and local complicities. I know Sebastião knows this—he has been going to Rwanda since 1971. My point is: what account do we have on offer in this image-text? What did he want to convey in these images, in the experience of reading and seeing, above and beyond the fact that "it happened"?

I felt the same tension between text and image in the presentation of the children portraits. The text invokes innocence, purity and hope (and their victimhood). They *are* strongly declarative, as Sebastião says in the film: they scream: "I am, I exist!" Yet what is astonishing to me is that the children appear

as diminutive adults, ferocious, all-knowing, and self-conscious. The same might be said about the Yanomami and the loss of an Arcadia. The point is that I feel the text and the images—and what was said by Sebastião the other night—are at cross-purposes, or somehow go against the grain.

Let me be perfectly clear what I am *not* saying. I am not accusing Sebastião—as some have (Michael Kimmelman in his review of *Migration*s in the *New York Times)*—of "aestheticizing poverty," of "sentimental voyeurism," and of the "exploitation of compassion" (as if, incidentally, things of beauty could or should not depict pain and suffering). Neither am I saying that his images need a good dose of cynicism; I took to heart his comments on Monday night. I am posing the question of the burden of the photograph—its quotation—and how he has struggled with the task of linking images and text to address the diffuse sense of causality in the photograph, and how he might capture the complexities of *histoire* and *terroire.*

Coherence

The question I briefly want to pose here really turns on the Asian megacities, on cities as sites of "urban disorder," and their relation to migration and displacement. In the interest of brevity let me simply put the matter starkly. Firstly, cities have always been seen from certain vantage points as loci of disorder and danger (for example nineteenth century London or Paris) and without denying the obvious hardships of the *favella*s and the *bidonville*s, one must carefully steer between the world view of privilege among those occupying the gated communities and the abjection of those in the urban slums and metropolitan peripheries. Second, the experience of the Asian megacities obviously speak to migration but in China quite specifically there is a parallel story of extraordinary economic growth and transformation of living standards; a major part of this growth is located in rural and small town China. The towering highrises of Shanghai and the sleeping construction workers—is there not something of a modernist cliché here?—does not seem to me at least to unequivocally endorse a picture of enduring urban disorder, decay and poverty, and neither does it rest easily with a text devoted to instinct and survival. And third, do not the cities have their own life histories of maturation, consolidation and improvement? Some of the great Latin American

scholars of contemporary urbanism have explored such questions, seeing cities as crucibles and theatres of improvement even if the migratory experience is largely outside of, and in opposition to, systems of formal urban governance. To take one example that Sebastião is obviously familiar with, the extraordinary experiments in Brazil in Puerto Alegre and elsewhere with participatory budgeting. I do not want to sound as though I am sort of Dr. Pangloss of the urban poor, or a booster for Chinese capitalism, or a supporter of the notion that Bombay *should* grow to twenty-five million by 2015, as some demographers predict. It seems to me that the urban disorder and migration/displacement do not fit quite so comfortably into the globalization vision, at least in parts of Asia.

Globalization From Below

Finally, let me address the question of representing globalization from below through its displaced, its dispossessed, its victims and casualties. It would be churlish of me to say that Sebastiao's visual history of the victim is somehow partial or incomplete. This is self-evidently true, as he knows, but in any case who else has taken up the challenge? It would also be intellectually cheap to say that his vision in *Migrations* is simply "bleak"; there are after all glimpses of alternatives and spaces of liberation, however fragile and transitory, in the courage of the MST, the tenacity of the Zapatistas, and the stubborn energies of the Mozambiquan poor. But is there not a danger in its inclusivity of telling a story that universalizes the refugee or the displaced? Of constructing a class of victims for whom as John Berger says in *Spectres of Hope* "they can only look at the sky"; an army of lumpens and outcasts who cannot grasp the circumstances of their own oppression; a global dispossessed dependent upon the global humanitarian business(the medicants of globalization as Hardt and Negri note in *Empire*). I was thinking here of what Roland Barthes had to say of Steichen's infamous *Family of Man* exhibition, on the ambiguous myth of human community. Everything in the exhibit, he observed:

> Aims to suppress the determining weight of History; we are held back at the surface of an identity, prevented precisely by sentimentality from penetrating into this ulterior zone of human behavior where historical alienation introduces some "differences" which we shall simply here call "injustices"….This myth of the

> human "condition" rests on a very old mystification, which always consists in placing Nature at the bottom of History.

Now this is not a charge that can be easily laid against *Migrations* or Sebastiao's work in general. But I am wondering whether there is a sort of humanism at work that invokes a community of casualties and victims which can obscure history and culture, sociopolitical circumstance, and retreats to a register of suffering and documentation.

All of my remarks ask a great deal of photographs and of the photographer. And perhaps I run the risk of both asking to much and imposing upon the image more than it can possibly bear. But my only defense is that we always ask most of our most gifted.

And this leads me finally to a request, a preposterous request, of my own. Might the next big book by Sebastião be entitled *Capital,* depicting the great clanking, grinding gears of global capitalism? Might he not return to those investment banks where he began his career, to those snotty twenty-five year Bond raters and traders who now determine the economic futures of Ecuador and Bangladesh? Might he stalk once again the corridors of the IMF and World bank, and the Wall Street/Treasury complex? And not least might we fantasize a series of portraits in such a book? Not of children but of the agents of capital. Perhaps Ken Lay and his weeping wife outside their Aspen ski lodge. And Gary Winnick, former CEO of now defunct Global Crossing, clutching his $734 million check, the profit from his pre-collapse buy-out. And of course Secretary of the Treasury Paul O'Neil standing before the Enron offices in Houston holding a poster emblazoned on which are his own hallowed words: "the genius of capitalism."

I can't wait.

Contributor Biographies

Brazilian photographer Sebastião Salgado is one of the most respected photojournalists working today. He has dedicated himself to chronicling the lives of the world's dispossessed, work that has filled ten books and many exhibitions and for which he has won numerous awards in Europe and in the Americas.

Educated as an economist, Mr. Salgado began his photography career in 1973. His first book, *Other Americas,* about the poor in Latin America, was published in 1986. From 1986 to 1992 he documented manual labour world wide, resulting in a book and exhibition called *Workers,* a monumental undertaking that confirmed his reputation as a photo documentarian of the first order. From 1993 to 1999, he turned his attention to the global phenomenon of the mass displacement of people, which resulted in the internationally acclaimed books *Migrations* and *The Children,* published in 2000.

T.J. Clark, George C. and Helen N. Pardee Professor in the Department of History of Art, joined the Berkeley faculty in 1987. The recipient of numerous prizes and fellowship awards, his most recent book is *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism* (Yale University Press 1999; revised paperback edition 2001). His earlier work includes *Jackson Pollock: Abstraktion und Figuration* (1994), *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers* (Knopf 1985), and *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (Thames and Hudson 1973).

Orville Schell, Dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at Berkeley, studied Far Eastern history at Harvard and Chinese history at Berkeley and has devoted the major part of his professional life to reporting on and writing about Asia. The author of fourteen books-including *Virtual Tibet, Mandate of Heaven* and *Discos and Democracy,* Schell has also written widely for national magazines including *Wired, The New York Review of Books, The New Yorker,* and *Harper's*. In addition, he has served as correspondent and consultant for several PBS "Frontline" documentaries.

Nancy Scheper-Hughes is Professor of Medical Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, where she directs the graduate program in “Critical Studies in Medicine, Science and the Body.” She is the author or editor of several award-winning books and many

controversial articles. Her book, *Death without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil* (University of California Press 1993), has received several awards, most recently the 2000 J.I. Staley Prize for ethnographic writing.

CANDACE SLATER, Marian E. Koshland Distinguished Professor in the Humanities, is a member of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese with special interests in Brazil. Among a long list of publications that connect literature, folklore, and environmental studies, she is the author, most recently, of *Entangled Edens: Visions of the Amazon* (2001) and *Dance of the Dolphn: Transformation and Disenchantment in the Amazonian Imagination* (1994). Professor Slater has served as Director of the Townsend Center for the Humanities since 2000.

MICHAEL WATTS has taught at UC Berkeley for almost twenty-five years. He is currently Director of the Institute of International Studies and the Class of '63 Professor of Geography. Watts is a scholar of African development and is currently completing a book on oil and violence in Nigeria.

Extra Copies can be requested with a donation to cover postage and handling.

Doreen B. Townsend Center
for the Humanities
220 Stephens Hall
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720-2340

(510) 643-9670

ISBN 1-881865-26-6