increasingly frequent natural disasters and terrorist attacks are processed through the newsfeed, a purgatory whose duration is measured in fractions of a second; what has long characterized the euphemistic language used to describe the horrific activities of war to civilians has come to characterize the actual means by which war is carried out: the translation from the visceral to the cerebral to meaningless images and empty language now precedes the event—enemy or other as image, information, datapoint. Meanwhile, one hears all the time about being "empowered" by technology—by being represented, by having a voice, an outlet, and so on. It is possible that that does happen, though it is not the main thing that happens; mostly we program machines to govern our lives as we become more and more dependent, more and more helpless. But that is beside the point. The rhetoric of empowerment is not much different from the misconceived fantasies of the worker who dreams of becoming the boss. Perhaps instead of seeking to occupy and multiply positions of power and all the while semiconsciously surrendering decision-making to automatons, we could all consciously aspire to less power, to the disappearance of power all round. Perhaps "if we were more tolerant of each other's weaknesses, we would be less alone."

RE: HOW DO YOU SURRENDER TO A DRONE?

CRAIG RODMORE

YYZ

We also talk about an armored division.

That's no coincidence. We don't say "armored multiplications," even though armored divisions are responsible for multiple crimes.

–Interview with Jean-Luc Godard

Armatures made out of blackened rebar—normally encased in the cast concrete structures it is meant to reinforce, once the building process is complete it is only revealed through destruction. We see its reappearance in images of disaster (earthquake, IED, civic failure). Semaphore flags—obsolete language, obsolescence of language in general—made from coarse burlap and photographed, the photographs then printed on smooth plastic which is heated so that it "relaxes" and hangs over metal armatures, the photographic image intact and undistorted. Large-scale photographs of shaped and perforated cast-concrete blocks. Fortification or brise-soleil.

Photographs and sculptures with a photographic character—everything is made, and yet everything has an air of reproduction or reconstruction. Moreover, repeated translation dissolves the distinction between source and representation and between one form of representation and another (in pictures it is possible to mistake the photographed flags for the fabric they document). At the same time, this translation gives the objects their form: the flags are draped, the cement blocks are rendered in impossible perspectives that only with effort become apparent, so accustomed are we to the manipulations of photography. Poverty is equated with truth, while deception is the domain of the rich image—burden of truth, luxury of illusion.

Tension between specificity and approximation, individual and collective. Rather than a selection of discrete works, the elements form a complex or an environment. Impulse to connect, consolidate. Photographs pasted to the wall evince a desire to renounce isolation, to merge with the surrounding space, to be attached, to become indistinct, indiscrete.

██

Vision is closely connected with destruction and with the power to destroy—"concern with the line of view," we are told, "was one of the primordial parameters of fortification." The camera in particular is linked to the fantasy of annihilation, and the photographic act has often been understood as "an act of disappearance. An act in which you eclipse yourself at the same time as you capture things" (Baudrillard). Some of its most astute practitioners have regarded photography as a medium for disappearing. Moriyama, who decades ago abandoned his young family and dedicated himself to drifting aimlessly down the same Tokyo streets and blocks photographing the loneliness of the collective, has spoken of photography in terms of self-immolation: "Once Shuji Terayama asked me, 'What do you burn by using a camera?' By the existence of the camera, I try to burn myself, and by burning myself, I have to keep changing myself. I think that's it. But I cannot find stylish words for that." Often his photographs are of photographs (images of lips, legs, car accidents not appreciably different than if they had been photographed "directly") and screens; early on he printed discarded negatives found on the darkroom floor. Winogrand similarly said that photography was "the closest I come to not existing . . . which to me is attractive"; he also admired Evans for coming so "close to not existing."

These lonely men are extreme cases, but then again Western culture is in a state of extreme loneliness. Multiplication, repetition, and mass distribution characterize the electronic social networks that have largely supplanted human interaction. Newspeak is a reality. Pets are selected according to how photogenic they are, while algorithms make decisions for us in every other arena. Certain surveillance drones, autonomous once airborne, just fly away and never come back. When Kirstein praised the finest photographs that had been produced for seeming to be "the creation of the unaided machine," he did not know that eighty years later unaided machines really would be the producers of many of our most and least significant images.

Winogrand's jerky movements in old film footage—habitual twitches and ticks perhaps devised to deceive the photographed (the looks of consternation directed at camera and lens, the gaze just past the subjects into the distance, etc.)—evoke the automatic movements of Poe's "man of the crowd," which is to say the movements of a machine or machine operator transposed to the city street. (Benjamin: "The invention of the match around the middle of the nineteenth century brought forth a number of innovations which have one thing in common: one abrupt movement of the hand triggers a process of many steps. . . . Of the countless movements of switching, inserting, pressing, and the like, the 'snapping' of the photographer has had the greatest consequences.") Negating the ostensible privilege of being outside, living "within that day" (Frampton), the camera intercedes between the photographer and the world. Araki has said "I feel as if I am taking photographs from a hearse." Winogrand said that when he was photographing he saw life, but elsewhere spoke of life, other people, as "nothing but light on surface—that's all we ever know about anyone"; his ex-wife described their relationship as "like being married to a lens." Unfortunately, being inordinately captivated by such *appareils* is no longer exceptional. Image and screen mediate or substitute for experience, but also occasion it—"photos or it didn't happen," but much happens just for the photos. Everything is reduced to light on surface and nowadays to backlit surfaces that offer respite from the loneliness of which they are the quintessence and which, perhaps, they have been largely responsible for producing.

When we produce and view technological images we align ourselves with technological means of reproduction and distribution, our minds and bodies, like those of factory workers in mechanized production facilities, habituating themselves to the behaviour of machines. This occurs whether we are authors or receivers, albeit in differing ways. Bresson, from the point of view of the practitioner, speaks of how the "camera and tape recorder carry me far away from the intelligence which complicates everything," Pagnol of "one audience which sees and hears exactly as the camera and microphone do." In much the same way, not only through the repetition of intolerable images but also through the modulation of everyday life by electronic "devices," empathy gradually slips away as we acquire the indifference of the machine, the "coldness" that, as Adorno observed, makes it possible to go on living after the illusion of civilization has been incinerated along with the dead. (There is now such a thing as "empathy camp" for adolescents whose technologically mediated socialization has resulted in a sort of autistic inability to read the emotional responses of others.) It is no accident that Benjamin wrote his letters "by hand whenever possible, long after the typewriter had prevailed."

Twenty-five years ago the kinds of images that characterized the "era of shock" were replaced by the bloodless "images of the techno war" (Sontag), and since then images in general have replaced everything else. Barthes spoke of the way the photograph heralds the "return of the dead"; now the living exist for and in images on screens. Young people in North America who were toddlers during its production run are fascinated by the TV show Friends because it portrays people whose private lives are not simultaneously public and professional, and who communicate with one another face-to-face. (In the old-fashioned language of the show's title, "friends" are people who actually know and like each other.)

This disconnection can be traced from the scale of trivial distractions to the scale of global catastrophes. The casualties of