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## 12 Memory, Word, and Image in Sebald and Joyce

Towards a Transhistorical Ethics Communicated Through  
Minor Interventions in the Form of the Printed Book

*Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes*

### Abstract

The writers James Joyce and W.G. Sebald adhered to, but also manipulated in similar and often hardly perceptible ways, the typographical conventions within the institution of literature. Writing on either side of the Second World War, they sought to sensitize readers to both the connectedness and the fragility of human lives. Both authors, by humbly placing their characters' lives (micro-histories) at the outer edges of the maelstrom of catastrophic failures of regimes, ultimately make their readers hope against hope that remembering, connecting, and conceptualizing history through their word and image strategies can somehow modify the otherwise inevitable repetitions in and of history.

**Keywords:** Materiality of Books, Word and Image, Artists' Responses to Literature, Trauma and Colonialism, Iconology, Experimental Institutionalism, Connections

This chapter extends the above argument to the—related—ways in which contemporary artists give form and value to societal connectedness: Joseph Beuys, Tacita Dean, Louwrien Wyers, and Walid Raad. Lastly, such understated experiments with institutional and academic conventions are referred to the life and work of the research school Amsterdam School for Heritage, Memory and Material Culture (AHM), host of the symposium from which this volume emerged.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The author was Academic Director (with Ihab Saloul) of this School from February 2019 until January 2022. I would like to thank Ilse van Rijn for being the heart and soul of the editorial

Among James Joyce scholars, W.G. Sebald's death in 2001 prompted the comment that the "new Joyce" had passed away. Despite the fact that different predecessors have more frequently been associated with Sebald's oeuvre, I wish to ask how both writers' visual interventions in their texts can be compared. Some close readings of examples will reveal some surprisingly close connections in their use of imagery to accompany texts.

Subsequently, I will ask what one may learn from this, why vaguely iconographic similarity may be in any way interesting. My associations and speculations go in several directions: first to posit that it would be wrong to remain with iconography if a certain Warburgian iconology of changing, traveling images can be ascertained. That kind of a personally inflected ordering of the visual (and textual) world lets memory and a historical psychology enter, which is arguably quite close in art-historical terms to how Georges Didi-Huberman sees the political import of a Warburgian legacy.<sup>2</sup> I will touch on aspects of how contemporary artists Joseph Beuys, Tacita Dean, and Walid Raad perceive the connections between the personally experienced present and the historical, and between what is there and what is (already) absent. That one needs to attend to the past in order to envisage the future is not a surprising insight in the context of this volume that has emerged from a conference organized by the AHM.<sup>3</sup> The quality of connections ultimately appears to be what Joyce, Sebald, and some contemporary artists attend to. In conclusion, picking up on the topic of connections differently, I will ask how the material presented may help us to think about an academic community, to institute a School such as AHM in a way that is cognizant and respectful of what is being researched and created within it.

In the most obvious way, a comparison between Joyce and Sebald can easily be established in the sense in which Jacques Derrida has written about Joyce, namely that "all that happened to me, including the narrative that I would attempt to make of it, was already pre-dicted and pre-narrated, in its dated singularity [...] within *Ulysses*, to say nothing of *Finnegans Wake*."<sup>4</sup> Sebald, at least in my experience, appears similarly to predict and

team in shouldering the main organizational tasks of editing this book—and Jessica Lentz and Maya Dong for assisting me with formatting this chapter's references, as well as being involved in the overall editing process as BA research assistants.

2 Didi-Huberman, *The Surviving Image: Phantoms of Time and Time of Phantoms: Aby Warburg's History of Art*.

3 See Amsterdam School for Heritage, Memory and Material Culture conference site, Memory, Word and Image: W.G. Sebald's Artistic Legacies—AHM Conference 12–14 December 2019, <https://ahmsebaldmemorywordimage.humanities.uva.nl/>.

4 Derrida, "Ulysses Gramophone: Hear Say Yes in Joyce," 281.

enclose his readers' lives, experiences and memories, as he himself traces and connects his characters' lives, as well as his own. This feeling of being personally meant by Sebald has extended not least to artists like Tacita Dean.<sup>5</sup> And he, Sebald, has (to me) clearly incorporated his Irish colleague across space and time. This strangely concerns most prominently the visual field, but not exclusively so.

The beginning of *Rings of Saturn* is, like Joyce's *Dubliners*, characterized in terms of paralysis. *Austerlitz* reflects, like Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, on the circularity of life and is conceived of as a spiral. The title of *The Emigrants* plays in an almost ostentatious way (most clearly in German) with the title of Joyce's only play, *Exiles*—and the way of life described thus, obviously links both authors' lives. What is more, they both felt attracted to displaced people. In *The Emigrants*,<sup>6</sup> an old man from Trieste (where Joyce lived for over a decade) and called Giorgio like Joyce's son, spends Summers with the author's alter ego and leaves a lasting impression. *The Emigrants* contains a photograph of a peculiarly shaped (possibly animal-like) branch,<sup>7</sup> something that is almost too close for comfort to Joyce's *Fluviana*, photographs of driftwood pieces, published in 1929 "courtesy of James Joyce" in the Paris avant-garde magazine *transition* (where instalments of what was to become *Finnegans Wake* were serialized). In each case, these companion pieces arise out of a writerly discussion of flow (water and words).

Joyce's and Sebald's books are like a *Wunderkammer* with a profusion of archaic material, sometimes marvelous specimens. In my discussion, however, I would like to draw attention to the not-so-spectacular: Sebald's profusion of poor, often decidedly everyday or "uninteresting" images. Joyce's texts' visual accompaniments, often line drawings, are also restrained. Typography could be seen as the equivalent of contractual small print, that is, an important but deliberately understated element of the text, easily overlooked but ultimately rewarding, maybe even central. Concerning typographic deviations from the norm, a comparison with Joyce is relatively easily established: for literary texts, Joyce pioneered the absence of inverted commas, using hashes instead. Sebald goes a little further again and often begins a quotation without any announcement. He also preferred to drop other distinctions like paragraphs. But *Austerlitz*'s unparagraphed text has its most famous precedent in the last episode of *Ulysses*, "Penelope."

5 For the experience of other artists and readers see Patt, *Searching for Sebald: Photography After W.G. Sebald*.

6 See the German original: Sebald, *Die Ausgewanderten*, 316, 317.

7 Sebald, *Die Ausgewanderten*, 344.

Unannounced quotations can be said to amount to unorthodox, de facto interior monologues; they appear as such when first reading the text. We are unsure whose first-person statement has just crept into the narrative, until being told later (often much later). Interior monologues have long been identified as a means to let the (visual) imagination enter; as the closest technique for writers to approach visual thought processes, while not leaving the medium of the written text behind. Sebald thus pursues a two-pronged strategy: he utilizes aspects of the interior monologue and he introduces a wealth of images.<sup>8</sup>

There is also a clear “scientific” or scholarly aspect to Sebald’s use of many of the images. When there is an element of proof—incidentally, a section of *Finnegans Wake* also contains footnotes—Sebald often picks printed material: newspaper clippings and ads, tickets,<sup>9</sup> and cuttings from old books. Joyce provided evidence of research and local knowledge through the inclusion of minute detail of the Dublin cityscape of 1904, which was irretrievably historic at the time of writing due to the Civil War. However, there is a close Joycean parallel in the visual field also: it is the “Aeolus” episode that contains a large number of “headlines” and thus puts both content and form in the service of relating the goings on at the offices (with printing presses in the background) of the *Freeman’s Journal*. Similar self-referentiality can be found in Sebald’s photographs of the abandoned working space of his colleague Michael Hamburger in *Rings of Saturn*.<sup>10</sup> (This space features again in Tacita Dean’s film *Michael Hamburger*, the outcome of her own Sebaldian research.)

As early as *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce explored the typographical peculiarities of a diary or journal. *Ulysses* can then be said to be the “newspaper” of that one day, June 16, 1904. Sebald’s research is often based on diaries and he presents his own research and writing largely in journal format. And we must not forget that Joyce used that seafarer’s journal, the *Odyssey* as his model or scaffold. Sebald’s archaic turn of phrase and outdated vocabulary (belonging to an emigrant, removed from recent changes of his native tongue), let the whole Paul Bereyter section of *The Emigrants* appear as an illustrated journal or annotated photo album by

8 The long delay observed concerning the identification of first-person narrators also points to a Joycean means: the Irish writer included—like Sebald—long sentences in *Ulysses* that leave the reader waiting for a “solution.” These have Homeric origins and are also in Joyce’s and Sebald’s texts intentionally archaic. The German language facilitates this better than English.

9 For an example in German original, see Sebald, *Schwindel. Gefühl*, 135, 135 and 80, 96, 97, respectively.

10 For German original, see Sebald, *Die Ringe des Saturn*, 218, 219.

quoting the text that he himself had apparently written under the reproduced photographs. “Dated” images confuse temporal allocations and add a transhistorical element, too. On the other hand, there is a great specificity in terms of both fictional and actual lives, locations, and times that carries into many aspects of the books that lends them a witnessing quality.

Both writers, certainly in their later years, shared an outlook on life that valued the old, conjured its return and also viewed technical innovation with some suspicion: to put it in the words of Constantin Brancusi, when speaking about Joyce: He is “something of a fogey like myself, deploring [...] the speed of modern trains.”<sup>11</sup> Joyce established correspondences between Dublin’s streets and blood circulation, the brain, and the universe, Sebald seems to stress less the relationship between microcosm and macrocosm than a material continuity, when Manchester dust echoes that emanating from the chimneys of Auschwitz. Both writers were primarily concerned with lines of connections, a re-cycling in and of history, and the humanity and roundedness of their characters: all things that we cannot but value more the closer we come to realizing just how destructive a neglect of these elements—the inherent connectedness of all things in time and space—is to human relations and the world’s ecological wellbeing.

Let me turn to the Euclidian diagram that Joyce reproduces in *Finnegans Wake* to indicate the female protagonist, Anna Livia. ALP, as she is otherwise called, is a river and her geometric form or letter is the (river) delta. This diagram is one of very few overtly visual features. With its zeros, spectacle lenses, and bicycle wheels, it serves many purposes. The most fundamental of which is to focus on the circularity of the book’s structure that in turn expresses a circular historical worldview, as mentioned and as borrowed from Giambattista Vico. Both writers seem to have worked with a small number of simple visual motifs or what one could call “sigla” as the basis for each of their works.<sup>12</sup> Each is then used within the writing process and the reading to establish coherence. Their simplicity enabled the writers to locate it again and again in their rather disparate material (like battlefield monuments, etc.) and insert it into the texts’ universe. In fact these visual motifs are even apt to stand for the writers’ method: how he integrated material within a larger context.<sup>13</sup> The three boards with silk-worm formations

11 Joyce, *Letters I*, 279.

12 Most recently, the PhD thesis of Yael Greenblatt supervised by Ruben Borg has attended to the typographic aspects and materiality of Joyce’s prose: Greenblatt, “The TypoGraphic Novel: Visual Materiality and the Joycean Image.”

13 For German original, see Sebald, *Die Ringe des Saturn*, 349.

that accompany the last pages of *Rings of Saturn* see the “rings” multiplied and are as striking a visual summary of the strategy just described as the text’s last few pages, which manage to pull together the many proverbial and actual threads it had woven over almost three-hundred-fifty pages.

This main theme of the book and its title is visually introduced with a diagram of a horse’s fall from a cliff. There are accompanying letters to identify the horse’s position, etc. All this serves its illustrative purpose well. However, it also takes a similar geometrical shape as the Euclidian diagram in Joyce—and the use of individual letters for identifying characters is continued: in the list of lovers illustrated also.<sup>14</sup> I could go on.<sup>15</sup>

I am here not explaining Sebald, using Joyce, nor does Sebald explain Joyce. Sebald may, however, extend Joyce’s work—something that Joseph Beuys thought he was doing as an artist. Incidentally, the Euclidian diagram is also central to Beuys’s universe. The artist used two cymbals that do not interlock for his last installation, anticipating his own death: he shows the absence of the life-affirming, life-giving two triangles that are created by the overlap of the circles. Another work, *Show your Wound* (1974/1975), features this non-intersecting presence of two circles in the context of death.<sup>16</sup>

Sebald appears to have learned from Joyce’s understated manipulations of the typographically set text: understated and yet stretched nearly to the maximum technically available at the time. And, as I hope to have argued here, many of Sebald’s images are an extension of Joyce’s technique to operate with sigla or visual ciphers, in order to construct the narrative strands and motifs. They also serve to retain relative clarity despite a high degree of opacity. That is what images can do, according to W.J.T. Mitchell: hold contradictions, exceed the sayable.<sup>17</sup> They act out a set of values that circles around links with other human beings, by way of connections or extensions. The affordances of the analog printing process, which is not what Sebald needed to follow any more in his later quasi-autobiographical fiction, but which he does not exceed there either, establish a visual similarity with Joyce, but also with potentially other authors, who paid attention to the materiality of the form in which their works were going to be received. In a very narrow spectrum of visual adjustments, deviations take on an air

14 Sebald, *Die Ringe des Saturn*, 32.

15 In *Joyce in Art*, I elaborate on visual artists, who have taken, e.g., visual elements of Joyce’s writings as a starting point for their own works. See Lerm Hayes, *Joyce in Art: Visual Art Inspired by James Joyce*.

16 Lerm Hayes, *Post-War Germany And “Objective Chance”: W.G. Sebald, Joseph Beuys And Tacita Dean / Nachkriegsdeutschland und ‘Objektiver Zufall’: W.G. Sebald, Joseph Beuys und Tacita Dean*.

17 Mitchell, “Word and Image,” 51–61.

of similarity to other authors. Few are likely to have read Sebald's works against Joyce's as pedantically as I have at the beginning of this paper. Yet, a connectedness emerges, a family resemblance in the forms that consciously, sensitively, meaningfully considered type takes in books. One could also call it an ethics of cross-reference or quotation: letting the voices of others still be heard through one's own stories, whether that may be the stories of friends, photographers, Homer, characters from history books or newspapers, or, especially, those absent from spectacular stories: individual holocaust victims, emigrants, or underdogs with an everyday humanity in still-colonial Dublin, or in nearly post-industrial/colonial Manchester.

The motif, its iconography is therefore not an aim in itself, it points to what I think we can identify as a Warburgian iconology of traveling images in changing contexts through time and space, which are characterized by repetitions with a difference. The borrowing and extending is personally inflected, charged with affect and memories. Elsewhere, I have sought to establish a politics of Aby Warburg's art-historical tools in analyzing whether a society was safe or not for potential scapegoats, such as artists or Jews.<sup>18</sup> His textual and visual world of frozen, affective memory apparently also needed to be ordered around a reading room that features two centers instead of one, like in the Euclidian diagram: thinking in between poles, complicating binary oppositions between magical thinking and enlightened rationality. He was instituting a space for such thought to develop: the Warburg Institute, KBW in Hamburg—which emigrated to London in 1933.

Sebald's ordering of the visual (and textual) world lets memory and a historical psychology enter. That is arguably close to how Georges Didi-Huberman has explained the sociopolitical import of a Warburgian legacy: through transhistorical image-and-text worlds connecting with one another. Didi-Huberman's privileged example in this context was Chris Marker's film *Grin Without a Cat* (1977), where a woman's gesture of wiping her eye, taken from *Battleship Potemkin* by Joyce-fan Sergei Eisenstein, is continued in footage from student protests in Paris, 1968. Traveling motifs are shown through time and space, as analytical instruments, as reminders of ethical, in this case revolutionary, principles. Joyce's use of Homer and Sebald's use of his own emigrant life as corresponding in some way to those who fled the holocaust can be placed into such a connection-focused modus

18 Lerm Hayes, "Das Jüdische Erbe in Aby Warburg's Leben und Werk" in *Menora 5: Yearbook for German-Jewish History* 1994, 141–69. See also Lerm Hayes, "Jüdische Themen in Warburg's and Joyce's Werken: Periphere Interessen" in *Denkbild Ellipse: Jüdische Identität in Kunst und Kunstwissenschaft*, 87–101.



operandi. Sebald's move in this regard has incensed some, particularly German commentators, who have continued to plead for the exceptionality and incomparability of the holocaust to other atrocities. That appeared to be the most respectful strategy vis-à-vis this unspeakable evil. It is a position in the so-called *Historikerstreit* in Germany in the 1980s.

Joseph Beuys has, similar to Sebald after him, followed a critical strategy in this regard, focusing instead on transhistorical connections: his so-called *Ulysses*-extension from the late 1950s and early 60s features not just commentary on Joyce's two mature works, but shows designs for an Auschwitz Monument (a competition entry for sculpture on the site of that extermination camp) that harks back to both Neolithic passage tombs (especially in Joyce's home country, one can assume). He also, during the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland and Martial Law in Poland, intervened by pointing out connections, linking people and places, by communicating during his visits to Ireland in 1974, his exhibition (*A Secret Block for a Secret Person in Ireland*) was the first to be shown in both North and South since the beginning of the violent clashes: as a peace gesture. He visited the passage tomb Newgrange, a site of prehistoric commemorations of the dead—and gave artworks with Irish themes to the Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź (near Auschwitz), as a gesture of connectedness with the Solidarity movement. He thus linked recent history (Auschwitz) with prehistory and the then current struggles against oppressive forces in both the Cold War and late British colonial legacies.

In current times, the *Historikerstreit* is largely overcome; rather than claiming exceptionality for one unmeasurable atrocity, one is more inclined to see connections: similarities in the ways in which the legacies of dehumanization cast their shadows, how they play out in different societies at different times—and what one may learn from that. Isabel Wilkerson's *Caste: The Origins of our Discontents* is a powerful account of enslavement in the US,<sup>19</sup> the caste system in India and Nazi Germany, employing such a current perspective. It also becomes abundantly clear that the Germans in the 1930s took their lessons from the US in terms of how to dehumanize. In wishing to overcome such still present, toxic legacies around the world, I agree with Wilkerson that highlighting connections is as good a way forward as is imaginable.

For both Joyce and Sebald, working in temporal proximity to a World War, there is an ethical drive at play in employing the strategies that have here been in the foreground: they seek to sensitize readers to both the connectedness and the fragility of human lives. Both authors, by humbly placing their

19 See Wilkerson, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*.

characters' lives at the outer edges of the maelstrom of catastrophic failures of regimes, ultimately make their readers hope against hope that remembering, connecting, and conceptualizing history in the ways they did (through their word and image strategies) can somehow modify the inevitable repetitions in and of history. Joyce's and Sebald's are minor histories in minor literatures (to use terminology from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari) that forcefully resonate today—especially with artists.

This is where contemporary artists enter: Tacita Dean and Walid Raad perceive certain transhistorical (and geographical) connections and, in unique ways, they present them to audiences in the here and now. Their works particularly bring to our attention what is anticipated to disappear and what is (already) missing. Dean has created a whole universe of what she calls “objective chance” connections. She has a knack for filming in places about to disappear (such as the Kodak film factory in France) and interviewing people, like Sebald's friend Michael Hamburger, shortly before they pass away. Accessing such “relics” demands skills of the previous generation: Dean wrote letters to Hamburger (real ones: on paper). I was able to conclude that her focus on the not so chancy way in which things and people are connected communicates that she sees merit in belonging to a flawed, but at least connected humanity.<sup>20</sup> Retaining the old (such as the film medium) grounds us—and reminds us of the ground on which we stand, ecologically speaking and in terms of comparability of experience—and (hopefully) resulting in empathy.

Walid Raad takes a differently Warburgian, a historically psychological, stance: increasingly, the collision or derangement between the personally experienced (often violent) present and the historical has come to the fore: a break between what is there and whom we are missing. Raad is an activist in the real world, a member of the Gulf Labour Coalition, which protested the building practices at the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi that involved what can be called the contemporary enslavement of workers. In his artwork, however, he has also explored less directly instrumental and logical forms. It includes both poetic and fictionalizing or magical ways in which things and people are (dis-)connected. That makes him relevant here, as Sebald's images are also not only logically or illustratively relating to the text.

From Beirut, now living in New York, Raad's work is similar to Dean's in the sense that disappearing things feature: the exact car model and color of vehicles used for car bombs are cut out of magazines and deceptively “unprofessionally” (in a topsy-turvy way) collaged alongside descriptions

20 See also Lerm Hayes, *Post-War Germany*.

(in Arabic) of information pertaining to the event. What by definition no longer exists (the car used for a car bomb) is conjured, researched—and yet nothing solid emerges, a mere mirage: war defies logic, yet humans will research, try to find reasons. The work is evidence of both necessity and futility of such psychological labor. This, I argue, he shares with Sebald—and with Joyce to the extent that, by the time *Ulysses* as a portrait of his home city was published, Dublin was unrecognizable in many places, following the Civil War.

I would like to introduce two more works from Raad's 2019 retrospective at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. On flowery wallpaper that purports to be a family heirloom, Raad mounted (on pins) cut-out portraits of politicians, financiers, and cultural figures in a loose arrangement: the heads trace real-life connections that show how the (art) world works in quite a straight-forwardly enlightening way. The wallpaper makes all this look a little comical, however—or maybe it is the archaic background that connotes that not much has changed in terms of how extractive, abusive, and chauvinistically hierarchical the world used to be in the nineteenth century. The apparent solidity and longevity of this status quo now looks ridiculous, and the viewer is tempted to pull the wallpaper away like a table cloth.

Commenting on museum lending practices globally—and specifically on the now built Guggenheim Museum, Abu Dhabi, and other franchises by Western museums in other parts of the world—Raad presents fusions of objects: in the series of *Scratching on Things I Could Disavow* (2007, ongoing), a stone head has the outer shape of a bowl, an ivory relief now appears as a vase-shaped object... The story that Raad told in his lecture-performance within the exhibition presents objects as sentient beings, getting confused on their high-security journeys back and forth between museums, crates, depots, cultures, and climates. The travel of images and motifs that Warburg sketched now appears to be affected by forces akin to quantum physics: what Einstein called “spooky action at a distance.” Connections are irrefutable, but logic is not all that governs them: both global capital and individual psychology, untranslatable cultural specificity and comparable, relatable human and more-than-human angst pervade. Raad's work hopefully clarifies—takes further than the other protagonists of this investigation—the search for ways in which to address, show and make experienceable the kinds of connections that govern our lives.

At the beginning, I said that one needs to attend to the past to envisage the future and that—at a conference organized by the AHM—this is not a surprising insight. The quality of the connections appears to be what Joyce, Sebald, Beuys, Dean, and Raad focus on. Attending to the connections, as

these artists and writers propose, it appears to me, implies care and empathy: through attending to the past, work toward a better future.

I propose that the material presented may help to imagine, to institute a School like AHM in a way that is cognizant and respectful of what is being researched and created within it. What hints do the protagonists of my paper give to us? I have on occasion argued that the reading group format that Joyce's late works necessitate implies a coming together as groups of differently socialized, differently knowledgeable readers: his works make community, imply both high erudition and human tendencies to treat personal associations as relevant for all (with attendant epiphanies and frustrations).<sup>21</sup> In any case, such groups relate to what universities do, but in asking more than module-sized engagement, they are also more commonly found at the fringes of educational institutions—and that often, and certainly in this case, means fodder for the art context. It is a specific kind of caring, thoughtful instituting that is happening then.

One could compare such activities to the symposium, the ancient idea of the conference that has as its core activities not just discussing but eating and drinking together. The conference from which this book has emerged and that took place as the first cases of Covid-19 were detected in Wuhan, remains in my mind as such a pretty ideal symposium. We shared our conference dinner in a university building in Amsterdam's heart, by its three-canal corner. This let my workplace literally appear in different (dimmed and candle) light.

Joseph Beuys's "project of mourning," as Gene Ray has put it, has also brought many people together, such as when Beuys instituted the Free International University for Interdisciplinary Research (FIU).<sup>22</sup> It was first intended to be housed in brick and mortar (since Beuys had been dismissed from the Düsseldorf Academy in 1973, owing to too radical intra-institutional "instituting": he refused to admit only the standard number of students to his class, thinking that everybody who wanted should have the chance to study with him). The FIU became a loose community of international people, friends, ecological activists, etc. One of them was (or is) the artist Louwrien Wijers, who carried out long interviews with Beuys, asking him future-oriented, systemic questions. He suggested she should also ask these

21 Lerm Hayes, "Mad, Marginal, Minor (Artistic) Research," 120–133, 298–312. See also Lerm Hayes, "The Finnegans Wake Reading Group as a Model for 'Stealth Activities' Between Art and the University," 278–87.

22 Ray, "Mourning and Cosmopolitics: With and Beyond Beuys," 22–48; see also Lerm Hayes, "Beuys's Legacy in Artist-Led University Projects," 31.

questions of certain others. Eventually, she brought the Dalai Lama into contact with Beuys. After his death in 1986, she carried the project further, made films and, in 1990, at another historical threshold, she organized a series of panel discussions in Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum: *Art Meets Science and Spirituality in a Changing Economy*. Nobel-prize-winning scientists, the Dalai Lama, and other inspirational figures (such as artists Robert Rauschenberg and Lawrence Weiner) debated issues of great consequence, exceeding their narrow specialisms, but very much based on their deep insights. If such a simplistic summary is permitted, the speakers focused more than anything on the connections between people, events, and things in the world: physicist David Bohm highlighted that economy comes from the word household, which is nothing extraneous, no environment, but something concerning all inhabitants of the world equally;<sup>23</sup> the de-monetization of culture and food were advocated. Instituting such visionary thought—with art's word- and image-based imagination, its systemic ways of thinking and attention to connections unmissable in the mix—such insight may today be more important than in 1990. This was certainly the contention of audience members at an AHM and Institute of Advanced Studies ArtScience theme event with Louwrien Wijers, commemorating those 1990 gatherings.<sup>24</sup>

With the Gulf Labour Coalition, Raad's attention is directed more at institutional critique. He alerted me to his friend Jalal Toufic for his directorship of ALBA, the Art Academy in Beirut, and the "Notification" that is still on this institution's website: an inspirational perspective on "instituting" within art and beyond.<sup>25</sup> I would like to echo the importance of an:

autonomous zone [enabling] intelligent and subtle incomprehension  
[, making] students keenly aware that artists collaborate in an untimely

23 David Bohm in *Art Meets Science and Spirituality in a Changing Economy: 5 panel dialogues 1990* at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, <https://www.louwrienwijers.nl/amssegodvd.html>.

24 This event was listed among worldwide programming for Beuys's centenary celebrations (<https://beuys2021.de/en/weltweit>). It should be remembered that Wijers took her enabling, caring inspiration in this from Beuys, whose centenary is being celebrated, as I am editing this text: the media seem—by contrast—to be intent on headlining Beuys's past as a German soldier, as if research (some of it quoted in this text already) had not been carried out to refute the prejudice that he had always remained a Nazi. In Lerm Hayes, *Post-War Germany*, 33, I address such allegations. Mario Kramer and Gene Ray could be added to those whose conclusions about Beuys's engagement with his past are drawn from evidence in the work. On Wijers see <https://ias.uva.nl/content/events/events/2021/04/artscience-interview-louwrien-wijers.html?origin=5stlxoO%2BSgu6vwzHnf7uPg&amp%3Bcb>.

25 Lerm Hayes, "Sometimes you need help from other people's ghosts: Alastair MacLennan's Multi-Disciplinary and 'Instituting' Practice as Civil Action," 97–108.

manner with future and past artists and thinkers [, that they need] intuition [and a] “shit detector”. [Culminating in the assertion that:] The real artist and the real thinker are not cultured, but countercultured [, whereby] tradition consists of that part of counterculture that continues to be counterculture, perennially.<sup>26</sup>

What remains to be done in this essay is to return the argument to W.G. Sebald. His archaic prose may gesture to the “untimely” collaboration in Toufic’s quote, but what I am really aiming at is institutionally critical and instituting work at the University of East Anglia by the academic W.G. Sebald. Had Thomas Elsaesser lived to give a keynote lecture at the conference from which these thoughts originate, he would have spoken about how his colleague Max Sebald, the German Literature scholar, responded to the introduction of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) at UK universities in the late 1980s with an evasive move: the turn to semi-autobiographical fiction, something that for some time remained not “returnable.” He also made the case—and a successful case it was in institutional / RAE terms—to render literary translation research, as such “returnable” to the RAE and thus valued in the system that has since become the Research Excellence Framework and that is responsible for the funding of academic institutions. Creativity may be more fun outside of institutions, but it also has a vital place within them, often in spite of them and then still, of course, for their intellectual and other benefit, often profit. This was also Sebald’s contention.<sup>27</sup>

Both W.G. Sebald and James Joyce shared concerns for the traumas of history (a “nightmare” from which Joyce’s alter ego Stephen Dedalus wished to awake), make them both fruitful case studies of cultural memory—and traditions (in Toufic’s countercultural way) that have proven to be fruitful points of departure for visual artists like Beuys, Dean and Raad, interested in connections, in systemic / experimentally instituting thinking and acting. Joyce’s and Sebald’s works shared a focus on the subtle, materially sensitive inclusion or manipulation of typesetting or visual elements, such as placing advertisements, musical scores, footnotes, and diagrams in the text. Such word-and-image combinations can break the linearity and the speed of the narrative, while establishing particularly poignant links to historical occurrences and sites. These elements are constrained by analog printing conventions yet interpret this restriction as an opportunity to engage in a subtle way: mostly connecting visually and linguistically to the store of

26 Toufic, “Jalal Toufic’s Notification / Notice de Jalal Toufic.”

27 Lerm Hayes, “Minor Literature in and of Artistic Research,” 49–62.

language and the book's visual form that have been and are used by writers before and after: the institution of literature. The adherence, the connections are as important as the countercultural deviations: it is from within that (silken) web that they cast their net to envelop or inspire us to widen our circles/cycles/rings, experiment with our institutions, and attend to the nature of the systemic connections that we forge.

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