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# Photographies, Representations, and Migrations



# The Figure of Migration

David Bate

*The theatre of emigration must start again at the beginning, not just its stage, but also its plays must be built anew.<sup>1</sup>*

Walter Benjamin

In 1938, Walter Benjamin argued that, in new situations, the old ways of doing things must be changed, not only in their content but also in their very form, they should be “built anew.” Times of transition demand a transformation in cultural form, at least, this is the thesis that Benjamin advances in relation to Bertolt Brecht’s theatre:<sup>2</sup> drama must be adequate to the new realities being confronted, to become contemporary in meaning (even if the material of the play is historical). It is a thesis equally at home in other new situations, not only in the dramatic form of theater but also across other forms of representation. All this, it seems to me, is the kind of setting in which we should locate a critical history of photography, that is to say, a view of photography as part of a historical struggle to enunciate something relating to new conditions, to establish a discourse on what it means to be modern.<sup>3</sup>

How and where is the experience of migration located, and in what representations? What cultures and histories are encoded there, and how are these included or excluded in the multiple discourses within which photographic images circulate? What effects do these representations have, and what are their ethical and aesthetic *affects*? What relations do these images have to the body of the migrant, the migrant’s location and place, the migrant’s social status and situations? Such are the questions that should inform a history of photography concerned with migration.

Migration is one of the most critical social, political, and economic issues in culture today, central to all our lives and cultures. Indeed, the “management” of migration is central to the politics of every nation-state. One way or another, migration affects us all and has done so for centuries: colonialism, slavery, war, persecutions (religious, ethnic, political, and sexual), social and cultural beliefs, and economic discriminations have all played their part in the gathering and scattering of diasporic groups and their identities. As refugees, exiles, émigrés, emigrants, immigrants, “foreigners,” strangers, and the newly displaced, there is a vast canvas,

with literally millions of stories and situations that, told or untold, have constantly shaped who we are today. This *we* is multiple, not singular. I want to insist on this multiple history of migration, because the speaking of any one story is inevitably a singularity among the many multiple histories of migration, diaspora and exile. What must be acknowledged here is that any story is sometimes faced with that unspoken look: “but that is not *my* story.” In this respect, the contemporary term most often used today, *migrant*, does little justice to the multiple vicissitudes of all the different *wes* that constitute the global migrations and all their diverse hybrid effects in and on human culture. I am reminded here—speaking from Dublin—of James Joyce, the Irishman who wrote in English, was sometimes criticized for using the language of the colonizer, and yet, in doing so, also changed it.<sup>4</sup> Or the opening of the National Museum of Migration in Paris in 2007 at the instigation of an Algerian immigrant, Zaïr Kedadouche, supported by French historians and the (right-wing) President Chirac, who officially announced and publicly endorsed France as “a nation of immigrants.” Yet, of course, emigration from one place to another also means the depopulation of the point of departure, “the old place,” which also has another set of social, economic, political, and cultural effects. Ireland, for example, lost half its population between 1841 and 1911.<sup>5</sup> As Eric Hobsbawm has noted, the statistics of migration from Europe to the United States in the period between 1860 and 1914 are staggering, some fifty-two million people left different parts of Europe for the continent of America.<sup>6</sup>

What kinds of representations have come to embody that experience? Whose experiences are represented in photographs? How and where are these experiences of the migrant located in any discourse? What discursive spaces do these photographic images enable or constitute? What kinds of people are included or excluded as subjects or objects of these discourses? And what effects do these images have? What role has photography played in producing spaces for migratory meanings? If a history of the relations between photography and migration is not fully articulated, or does not even exist yet, the traces of migration are nevertheless to be found everywhere in photography and its archives. Look carefully and the figure of migration can be found almost anywhere. I use this word *figure* in its most open and plural meaning: a figure is a statistic, the shape of a human body, a rhetorical form, an image; or something that features (*figures*) in a situation. Each of these overlapping senses relates to the question: What is the figural space of migration in photography? The answer to this question is not just a matter of collating photographic images of migrants and arranging them into chronological order (or some other taxonomic logic), but to consider the way that migration is encoded, embodied, rendered meaningful, or even uncoded in photographic images. That is to say, what, where, how, and why are the implicit and explicit figures of migration present in photography historically?

## Departure

My particular concern here is with the image of a passage between Europe and America. More than what happens *before* the departure, *after* the arrival of the migrant, or in the *beyond* of a “somewhere else” of settlement, it is the journey itself that signifies as a traumatic passage, from one culture to another. Even afterward, it is the journey that leaves its mark, its impression on those who made that journey. The passage is a journey, a temporal and spatial process of transition. Such moments of transition are already present in the history of photography, made perceptible, notably by the social photographs of Lewis Hine, pictures that he made during the first decade of the twentieth century (Fig. 1).

Hine’s early social portrait photographs signify the arrival of a new wave of migrants in the United States, and the dream of “America.” In these “interpretive photographs,” as Hine called his pictures, already acknowledging his intervention as a photographer, we are shown individuals, families, and small groups at “the” moment of their arrival.<sup>7</sup> The photographs, famously taken at the port of arrival on Ellis Island, New York, show us the faces, bodies, clothing, demeanors, and place of arrival of these migrants. These elements establish a key photographic trope of migration, productive of the figure of the migrant, their visibility as they “arrive.” In the very repetition of these different scenes, the pictures insist on the veracity of their identity, in representing what the viewer might expect to see. Such figures “arriving,” as individuals, families, and small groups, begin to establish an early twentieth-century photographic trope: the photograph as a document. The term *figure* here operates in its open and plural sense: a figure is a numerical statistic (this is one among many migrants), a rhetorical form (the cluster of faces, bodies, clothes, and spaces of transition, e.g., the port), and the actual figure of a person (the shape of the human body). The figure is an image, thus something that features (*figures*) the situation of migration. In each of these overlapping senses, the formative figure of the migrant image is at the heart of a whole discourse on migration and its visibility. What do we expect to see figured (Fig. 2)?

In Hine’s work is a repertoire of facial expressions: a direct stare at the camera (and thus to the imagined viewer); a cursive glance at the camera (perhaps as much in fright or apprehension of the camera as any shock of arrival in America); a look of dignity and apprehensiveness, mixed with the mutable expressions of fear, resignation, defiance, a smile (a modern photographic convention), or resistance to it. Hine’s figures are burdened with bundled clothes and possessions, hats, suitcases, and bags in their pause for the camera, sometimes with a clutched piece of paper in hand. A weary posture, a wary expression, a focused stare, the happy display of a baby, children lined up as if in a military parade, women burdened with heavy baggage: these images show a multiplicity of postures, exposed to the photographer’s

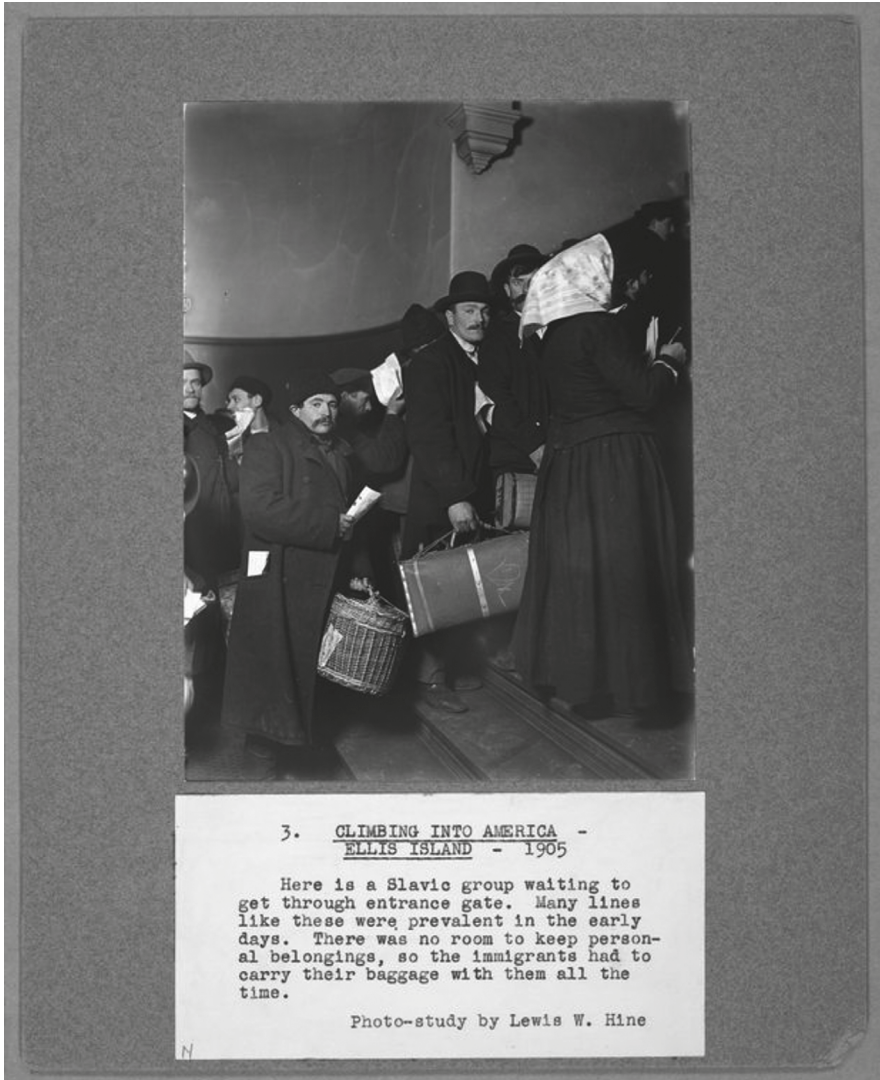


Figure 1: Lewis Hine, *Climbing into America, immigrants at Ellis Island*, 1905. The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Photography Collection, The New York Public Library. *Climbing into America, immigrants at Ellis Island*, New York Public Library Digital Collections. Accessed August 2020. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-4e76-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>



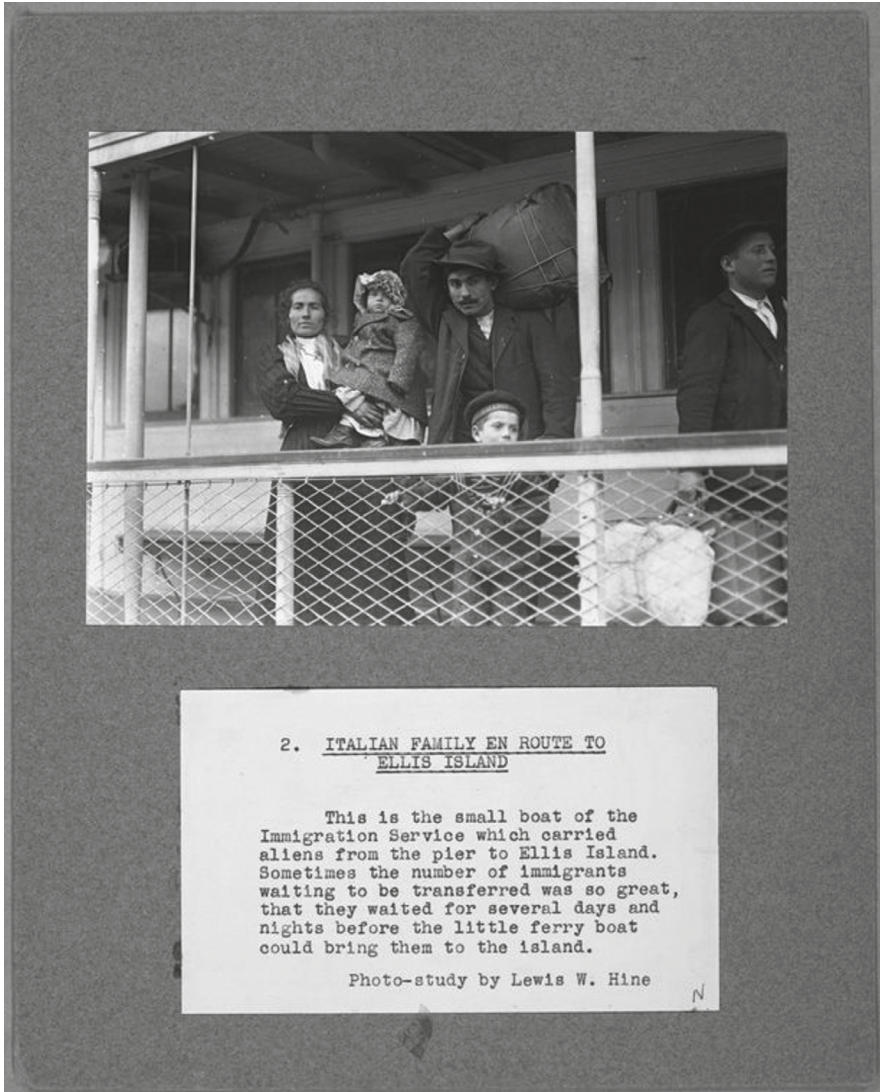


Figure 2: Lewis Hine, *Italian family enroute to Ellis Island*, (1905). The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Photography Collection, The New York Public Library. "Climbing into America, Ellis Island, 1905" New York Public Library Digital Collections.



camera at their “moment” of arrival. A process is turned into a moment, an image. These figures are illuminated in Hine’s photographs by either his harsh frontal flash or the natural light filtered through the skylights of the Ellis Island station buildings (now a migration museum).

What is not in question here is the status or the dignity of the figures or their incidental arrangement before the camera, but rather the effects of these pictures in their dissemination: as foundational of a certain image of Ellis Island and the immigrant peoples who passed through there. Of the millions who came through the Ellis Island port of entry, it is these pictures that establish the who, what, where, and why of the figures of arrival in migration photography. The pictures bestow a certain look, appearance, and legitimacy to the image of the European migrant arriving in America. Hine’s photographs open up an affective space of loss and belonging, or of yearning for an identity to which every person can feel as their experience too, especially those who have moved from one place to another. The disjunctive space of these images offers the spectator a place for the figures of migration to matter. These migrant figures, marked by the moment of arrival, show their determined movement toward somewhere else. These are not nomadic global travelers, at home in the restless homelessness of the wandering soul, seeking refuge in adventure and travel. No, these are the faces of a committed transition, a gritty displacement, as the move from one place to another (Fig. 3).

Historically, Hine’s work occupies a role as the *de facto* truth of things in photographic discourse. It is through this route of veracity that Hine’s early photographic work is established as canonical in the history of photography.<sup>8</sup> The historian of photography Alan Trachtenberg suggests that the recognition of Lewis Hine’s work “depends upon an institutionalized community capable of conferring prestige upon photographers.”<sup>9</sup> This occurred, according to Trachtenberg, when Hine’s work was “rediscovered” later by a younger generation of American photographers, such as Berenice Abbott and Walker Evans, and the historian-curator Beaumont Newhall in 1938.<sup>10</sup> Trachtenberg argues, “Hine’s ‘rediscovery’ occurred”:

just at the moment when a quasi-official history appeared side by side with the introduction of photographs into museums of art. How to explain and justify this new public role of the photograph in exhibitions of art? To guide public responses and help cultivate public taste, categorical distinctions were in order, and Hine conveniently fit one of the bills.<sup>11</sup>

Trachtenberg claims Hine’s work “fitted the bill” for photography in art museum exhibitions. Hine himself called his work “Social Photography” as a form of “social document,” in which the use of photography was to be concerned with matters of social record.<sup>12</sup> Hine’s social photography work is constructed and given a place as



Figure 3: Lewis Hine, *Immigrant family looking for lost baggage, Ellis Island, 1905*. The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Photography Collection, The New York Public Library. *Immigrant family looking for lost baggage, Ellis Island*. New York Public Library Digital Collections.

a practice in the United States' history of photography within the art museum and within the general category of documentary. Lewis Hines's image-text-based social photography is re-situated within a tradition of art and documentary photography, and that is where it has rested ever since. The effect of this positioning within the history of photography is twofold. First, the images are colonized by a discourse on photography named *history*, in which the images establish a mode for the recognition of reality, the immigrant, child poverty, and so on, and which confers on them a certain type of veracity. Second, the culturally affective dimension of these photographic images is subjugated to the studiously thematic fact of *arrival*. We can surely now recognize a certain emotive force around these photographs, which remains suppressed in discourses surrounding them. We should admit here that alongside their relation to the perception of migration, the figure of the migrant also carries an emotive aspect, a dimension that is interlinked implicitly with what would conventionally be called its representational power. The critical discourse that surrounds a photographic image needs to interrogate the links between representation and affective power. Hine's migrant photographs are thus framed by these respective discourses of representation and affect, documentary and art.

Since Roland Barthes's *Camera Lucida*, it has been possible to recognize that an aspect of the affective, emotional dimension of any photograph, Barthes's *punctum* (or private affect), is both predicated on the photograph's initial social function, what Barthes calls its *studium*, and yet may be separated from it too.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the personal affective dimension of a photograph cannot be determined in advance. It requires a spectator's glance, look, or stare at an image and even then, the affect may remain unprocessed verbally, or even unconscious. In other words, the meaning of a still photograph is not passive or fixed inside the image rather, the meanings come partly from the way an image is animated by the spectator, who interacts with it to make a personal "cinema" out of the image. (As the French say about children acting out: *fait du cinéma*, they make their own film about something.) From the theoretical frame of *studium/punctum*, the role of representation and emotional affect is intertwined in the cultural space of an image and engagement with it. These issues of an affective relation within the power of representation are central to the question of migration.

## Passage

I want to consider these issues here within the space of transition itself, of travel from Europe to the Americas. It is the image of the ship, as Paul Gilroy suggests in his study *The Black Atlantic*, that relates to the "middle passage" of migration, the ship as a "living micro political system in motion."<sup>14</sup> The ship offers a beautiful

metaphor and tragic metonymy for the very threshold of transition and migration, the passage that highlights the contradictions in time and space that are the condition of all narratives of migration. That is to say, the ship is a space in which someone has not yet arrived, nor have they quite left the departure point.

The ship that I have in mind, or at least the photograph taken on it, is a famous photograph by Alfred Stieglitz, known as *The Steerage* (1907), a classic picture in the history of photography and photographic criticism. As it happens, the year Stieglitz took this photograph, 1907, was statistically the peak year of all European migration to the United States.<sup>15</sup> According to archive records, 1,200,000 emigrants were admitted to the United States that year, all carried on ocean liners.<sup>16</sup> What does this picture bring into being in its presence? What is the now of this picture *then*, that can mean something in our present *now* today (Fig. 4)?

In the history of photography, the account given of *The Steerage* (1907) is more or less the same one, repeated everywhere. It relates Stieglitz's heroic struggle to achieve a status for photography as a new *modern* art in the new-world metropolis of New York City at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>17</sup> *The Steerage* was Stieglitz's own favorite photograph, such that he later claimed: "If all of my photographs were lost and I'd be represented by just one, *The Steerage*, I'd be satisfied."<sup>18</sup> I will take him at his word and consider this one photograph.

A critical account of *The Steerage* in photographic criticism comes from a different axis, one that examines this picture's credentials as "art." Here, it is Allan Sekula who took up *The Steerage* as a basis for a critique of "the relationship between photography and high art."<sup>19</sup> Sekula's text is itself an influential one in photography theory; it was first published in *Artforum* in 1975, then in Victor Burgin's 1982 book *Thinking Photography*, and later referred to again by dozens of others.<sup>20</sup> Stieglitz's own written account of the photograph is cited by almost everyone in discussion of this picture. I will not deviate from this since his commentary is crucial for my subsequent discussion. It is worth quoting at length because it gives his version of "How *The Steerage* Happened." Stieglitz recounts:

Early in June 1907, my small family and I sailed for Europe. My wife insisted upon going on the Kaiser Wilhelm II – the fashionable ship of the North German Lloyd at the time. Our first destination was Paris. How I hated the atmosphere of the first class on that ship. One could not escape the *nouveaux riches*.

[...]

On the third day out I finally couldn't stand it any longer. I tried to get away from that company. I went as far forward on deck as I could. [...] As I came to the end of the deck I stood alone, looking down. There were men and women and children on the lower deck of the steerage.

[...]





Figure 4: Alfred Stieglitz, *The Steerage*, 1907 (Plate 1, p. 329). National Gallery of Scotland, presented by Mrs. Elizabeth Uldall in memory of her sister, Ruth Anderson, 1998.

On the upper deck, looking over the railings there was a young man with a straw hat. The shape of the hat was round. He was watching the men and women and children on the lower steerage deck. Only men were on the upper deck. The whole scene fascinated me. I longed to escape from my surroundings and join those people.

[...]

A round straw hat, the funnel leaning left, the stairway leaning right, the white draw-bridge with its railings made of circular chains-white suspenders crossing on the back of a man in the steerage below, round shapes of iron machinery, a mast cutting into the sky, making a triangular shape. I stood spellbound for a while, looking and looking. Could I photograph what I felt, looking and looking, and still looking. I saw shapes related to each other. I saw a picture of shapes and underlying that the feeling I had about life. And as I was deciding, should I try to put down this seemingly new vision that held me – the common people, the feeling of a ship and ocean and sky and the feeling of release that I was away from the mob called the rich – Rembrandt came into my mind and I wondered would he have felt as I was feeling.<sup>21</sup>

At this point, Stieglitz reports, he rushed back to his cabin for one of his Graflex film cameras (five-by-seven-inch plate) and returned to take the photograph of this scene. From his account, the scene was still exactly as it had been when he left it earlier. A few days after his arrival in Europe, he successfully developed the plate at a photographer's darkroom in Paris (the photographer was recommended by a Kodak laboratory).<sup>22</sup>

Four months later, on 24 September 1907, Stieglitz was back home in New York with a negative of *The Steerage*. Four years later, *The Steerage* first appeared in public, in a portfolio of his pictures in *Camera Work* magazine, accompanied by a text describing all the pictures as snapshots, mostly taken in New York and its harbor. *The Steerage* then began to appear repeatedly in exhibitions, publications and as a photogravure in *291* (1915). It was also printed as a separate 500 deluxe edition of prints on Japanese tissue, which did not sell well, and most were destroyed.<sup>23</sup>

The scene of the picture and what it represents for Stieglitz is well established in his text. Stieglitz has explicitly expressed his wish to escape his class and first-class status (although he unkindly blames his wife for this) and to be separated from this world. The title he gives to the photograph, *The Steerage*, refers directly to the cheapest and literally lowest class of travel on a ship. He found his own alienation expressed in the scene before him. Excitedly, he wanted to represent this scene as a photograph. The photograph that he then made thus also expresses this feeling, or at least, this is what his text says. Yet oddly, despite the title he gave the picture, this is not what he really *sees*. According to his text, he saw only “shapes related to each other.”<sup>24</sup> It is as though Stieglitz has a special filter for his vision, which translates

objects and people into symbols, as he calls them, or forms, as figures that signify his state of mind. How did Stieglitz come to be able to formulate such statements, and what are the conditions of this discourse that he initiates? What sense does it make?

## Metonymical meaning

Stieglitz understands the visible scene as a translation of his subjective feelings: “I saw a picture of shapes and underlying that the feeling I had about life.”<sup>25</sup> It is such a description of the photograph by Stieglitz that Allan Sekula regards as “pure symbolist autobiography.”<sup>26</sup> Sekula argues that, for Stieglitz, “the photograph is imagined to contain the autobiography.”<sup>27</sup> In Stieglitz’s discourse, Sekula suggests:

The photograph is invested with a complex metonymic power, a power that transcends the perceptual and passes into the realm of affect. The photograph is believed to encode the totality of an experience, to stand as a phenomenological equivalent of Stieglitz-being-in-that-place. And yet this metonymy is so attenuated that it passes into metaphor.

[...]

Instead of the possible metonymic equation “common people = my alienation”, we have the reduced, metaphorical equation “shapes = my alienation”. Finally, by a process of semantic diffusion we are left with the trivial and absurd assertion: shape = feelings.<sup>28</sup>

The straw hat and the funnel in the picture are metonymic substitutions in Stieglitz’s discourse, for man and ship respectively. These metonymical figures are then read as poetic metaphors for Stieglitz’s personal separation/alienation. Sekula demonstrates the rhetorical transition of meaning from the photograph to the written discourse of Stieglitz’s autobiographical text, which is then projected back on the photographic image as its meaning.

In Sekula’s view, Stieglitz’s writing constitutes a metalanguage, a type of discourse to speak *about* photographs without speaking photographically. Stieglitz’s “language” about seeing symbols, shapes, and feelings is precisely a manner of *not* describing the picture itself in terms of its content. This modernist (meta-) language of symbols constructs a theory of vision that is rhetorical; in other words, it replaces the visual codes of the photograph with another type of figurative language, literary synonyms that imply another language (for lack of a better word) that speaks about the photograph indirectly. In this division between picture and words, Stieglitz “speaks” the photograph within the features of North American modernism, otherwise called Western formalism.<sup>29</sup>



Allan Sekula's essay is a sophisticated critique of the closure given to photography as art (or as art for art's sake) in this discourse, and he demonstrates this by considering what different kinds of information and knowledge certain photographs provide, through quality, artfulness, or narrative capacity, and the effect on their positioning within a discourse.<sup>30</sup> To make this point clear, Sekula contrasts *The Steerage* with a photograph by Lewis Hine, taken two years earlier at Ellis Island, the New York port of entry for emigrants to the United States. The picture, from Hine's early social photography, shows two migrants on a gangplank (Fig. 5).

A contrast is made between Stieglitz's artful, aesthetic approach to photography, and the literal description of Lewis Hine's picture, which, Sekula argues, refuses to elevate itself much beyond the theme of arrival: a theme reiterated in the simple declarative title, *Immigrants on a Gangplank* (1905).<sup>31</sup> From this juxtaposition, Sekula sets up a series of more general binary differences between Stieglitz and Hine as two different approaches to photography, of art and documentary, respectively.

Lewis Hine's social photography belongs, Sekula insists, to a social-political discourse aimed at mobilizing public opinion, and at changing people's minds and legislation; in contrast, the high-minded aesthetics of Stieglitz's work is aimed at the spectator's imagination: social documentary evidence on one side and formalist aesthetics of art on the other. Sekula's essay culminates in a general summary of this "binary folklore" as a "misleading but popular" argument about "photographic communication."<sup>32</sup> We can list these binary categories by Sekula as: art/documentary, symbolism/realism, viewer/witness, expression/reportage, imagination/empirical truth, affective value/informational value, metaphor/metonymy. Sekula argues that "Stieglitz's reductivist compulsion is so extreme, his faith in the power of the image so intense, that he denies the iconic level of the image and makes his claim for meaning at the level of abstraction."<sup>33</sup> This was the idea Stieglitz presented when he says that what you see is not the depicted (literal) object, because it is nothing but "shapes in relationship to one another," and these shapes give rise to feelings. In Sekula's argument, it is precisely this type of linguistic discourse that provides the frame for Stieglitz's distinction between art and documentary photography. Yet, in his critique of this distinction, Sekula also appears to suggest these opposing values are embedded and intrinsic to the actual photographs:

While the *Steerage* is denied any social meaning from *within*, that is, is enveloped in a reductivist and mystical intentionality from the beginning, the Hine photograph can only be appropriated or 'lifted' into such an arena of denial. The original discourse situation around Hine is hardly aesthetic, but political. In other words, the Hine discourse displays a manifest politics and only an implicit aesthetics, while the Stieglitz discourse displays a manifest aesthetics and only an implicit politics.<sup>34</sup>



Figure 5: Lewis W. Hine, *Immigrants on a Gangplank*, 1905. Gift of the Photo League, New York: former collection of Lewis Wickes Hine, George Eastman House, Rochester, New York, United States.

So although a documentary photograph may be treated by art criticism as *aesthetic* (i.e. as formal, without its content), or an art photograph can be given a political critique, these photographs are, for Sekula, already positioned and limited by the original discourse in which they were produced.<sup>35</sup> Yet if we follow this path along the significations already set out by Stieglitz (or Hine), we are condemned to tread the same weary path of photography criticism, the eternal cul-de-sacs of meaning as *modernism* versus *realism*. Curiously, Sekula's own reading is in a manner that itself seems unable or unwilling to explore the path of rhetorical substitutions of meaning, of one thing for another, which he himself introduced. Sekula's discourse of criticism in effect fetishizes the authorial producer so that Stieglitz *is* the source of meaning for the image, resulting in a critical position that more or less inevitably condemns Stieglitz's photograph to the same values and reading as Stieglitz's own reading as author and, as a consequence, *fixing* the image's meaning.<sup>36</sup> It is no longer adequate, as it perhaps was in 1975 when Sekula wrote his article, to simply condemn the photograph as "mystical," for it is indeed within the nature of visual rhetorical figures such as metaphor and metonymy for shapes to slide along chains of signifiers to signified meanings that are not necessarily via the rational thought processes of consciousness.<sup>37</sup> My aim here is not specifically to critique Sekula's argument and analysis, which did much to disinvest photographic criticism of its

romanticism, but more to reconsider what we can do with such a celebrated photograph today, given its obvious yet suppressed reference to migration.

What would it mean to return to the photograph, not as the matter of its provenance as an art object, but precisely as an *image*, symbolically trapped by its own place in photographic history and discourse? What might be the *implicit* politics—that neither Stieglitz nor Sekula mention—involved in this image, whether considered via the affective intention of its author or the social-historical context of the picture? It is worth pausing here to take up these points of authorial intention and social history, because they both impinge on the discussion of the picture in intersecting ways.

### Historical narratives

Firstly, the authorial account that Stieglitz gives of *The Steerage* was written long after the picture was made. Stieglitz's text was published in 1942, some thirty-five years after he actually took the photograph.<sup>38</sup> What took him so long? Why wait? (Stieglitz was never known for his shortness of words.) Then it is also clear that Stieglitz's text, poured over by historians, is full of inaccuracies. Anyone can see the obvious discrepancy between the actual photograph that he describes in his text and what we can see with our eyes. For instance, he claims that “[o]nly men were on the upper deck.” This is patently wrong. Even in a poor reproduction of the picture, women are clearly visible on the right side of the upper deck. Why does he not see or remember this? Then, what he claims to be a “funnel” is actually a mast. This boom arm acts like a visual border, a line that hems in the people at the top of the frame to visually separate them from the sky. Why does Stieglitz make such basic errors in his text?<sup>39</sup> After all, if this is the one photograph he claimed meant so much to him, why would he have forgotten the very formal components that make it the image that it is, an iconography that he would surely have known by heart? One obvious answer would be that Stieglitz had simply made a mistake, accounted for perhaps by old age or a foggy memory. Whether these are errors in Stieglitz's memory or alterations he made in his mind about the picture we cannot know. Memory has a habit of leaving out details of a scene less relevant to the specific valued memory. Perhaps the duration of time is a factor in the memory, or not, but let's leave this question of memory errors in abeyance; it may return later within a different frame. Nevertheless, this text does something that Sekula does not really remark on. Stieglitz's text *narrates* the photograph; it animates the image and turns it into a story. The text links the scene of the picture to Stieglitz's *before* and *after* what the photograph depicts and adds his feelings about all this (as *discontent* and *satisfaction*), which locates the image squarely within the temporality of his experience. Stieglitz

weaves his personal feelings into the narrative context, which has come to determine how the photograph is seen. Thus, the image turns us to the second question about its moment in history: What might the photograph have to say about this?

As a matter of history, we know *The Steerage* photograph was taken on a ship, whose destination was Europe, the journey departing from New York. Although this fact is obvious from Stieglitz's account of the picture, since he says he is traveling from the United States to Europe, no one seems to have noticed its significance. It means the people in his photograph, those of the steerage class, are all returning to Europe, not migrants on their way to the United States. (It has been suggested that the photograph was likely taken while docked in Plymouth, England where it had stopped en route to France.<sup>40</sup>) If these people had once intended to migrate to the United States, they were now certainly on their way back to Europe. Strangely, the discursive myth of the picture has always inverted this idea, so the figures in the photograph appear to be new migrants to the American continent. As was customary at that time, the steerage-class passengers were brought up on deck at that moment in the day—everyday—when all the steerage passengers were herded up to the well decks so that their quarters could be cleaned.<sup>41</sup> The scene that Stieglitz photographed is what was called the third-class promenade. As one account puts it:

If it was cold they brought with them the grey company blankets that were, by the turn of the century, included in the price of their fare. They perched on winches or in the lee of the hatches, the old people huddled about the steam pipes. Sometimes there were impromptu concerts or dances on the hatch covers that would attract a gallery of spectators from the second cabin. Slumming from above, they would lean over their promenade deck railing and throw candy and pennies down to the steerage children.<sup>42</sup>

It was the privilege of first-class passengers such as Stieglitz to have the luxury of a *choice* on such trips about whom they mixed with in their leisure time. The upper-class passengers could choose to join “common people” in the steerage class, in what was called “slumming.”<sup>43</sup> *Slumming* meant going down and actually mixing with the steerage passengers, as portrayed, for example, in James Cameron's 1997 love disaster film, *Titanic*, a Hollywood version of the actual Titanic disaster of 1912.<sup>44</sup> “Slumming from above” meant to just *look* down at the steerage class, as Stieglitz did for his photograph. As an upper-class passenger, he could have joined them, as many did.

Robert Louis Stevenson, the Scottish novelist and travel writer, for example, had traveled by steerage class to immerse himself in their ways, to research for his writings and infuse his writing with a sense of authenticity for his readers. He published a book on the different “Steerage Types,” recounting with enthusiasm

his negative racist stereotypes, for example, of the Irish American as “for all the world like a beggar in a print by Callot,” and so on.<sup>45</sup> This period spawned new literature about Atlantic migration and a new language about everyone in it, even about first-class passengers. The word *posh*, for instance, is popularly linked to the acronym of “Port Out, Starboard Home” (POSH), assumed to describe the best location and most desirable preference for (first- or second-class) cabins on outward and return stages of the journey.<sup>46</sup>

In this view, Stieglitz was a posh person who slums from above. The photographer, from his position on the upper deck, can see those below as a whole scene, a bird’s-eye view of these other classes. It is this viewpoint of Stieglitz’s camera that every viewer also inherits as the primary point of view, a position that, when looking at his photograph, invites us to also look down at these same people below: we are given this experience of slumming from above. From the first-class passenger’s privileged viewpoint, the picture gives a visibility to these steerage migrants who make up the cheapest ticket of steerage passage.

Steerage-class immigration was a massive economic component of the shipping industry until the First World War. The Cunard Line even paid a fee to the then Austrian-Hungarian government for a regular supply of migrants to transport to the United States.<sup>47</sup> In this way, emigrants became a kind of commercial freight, a human commodity, to be transported from one place to another. Over time, the big German companies built small villages, with “emigrant buildings” as collection points where they would disinfect, cleanse, and check the health of emigrants entering on one side, before allowing them through and on board a ship.<sup>48</sup> Such were the improvements to healthcare on these routes and ships that, it was rumored, poor emigrant families would try to time a child’s birth to coincide with their travel, so as to have the best possible conditions for the birth.<sup>49</sup> The port area of Hamburg, Germany became a massive gathering point for emigrants, gathered from different parts of Europe, to migrate to the United States. Areas such as this one in Hamburg were like small towns with their own railway stations, separate churches (for different religions), and various facilities for processing emigrants to make sure they met the strict Ellis Island medical and immigration checks. (Medical inspections were automatically *not* applied to first or second-class passengers.<sup>50</sup>) These precautions directed at steerage migrants were instrumental to ship owners, to avoid the expense and trouble of dealing with them as “returned cargo,” because the shipping companies were held responsible if emigrants were refused entrance. Advance medical inspections were also aimed to avoid outbreaks of disease on the ship, which risked spreading across all the classes and crew during the seven to eight-day voyage across the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>51</sup> Despite all these improvements to the conditions of steerage travel, the trip was far from romantic, even by 1907.

The liner that Stieglitz and his family traveled on was one of the fastest ships of the period,<sup>52</sup> the German-owned *Kaiser Wilhelm II*. Built in 1903, it was one of four new Atlantic-crossing ships with a capacity of some fifteen hundred passengers, four hundred and sixty-eight in first class and almost double that, eight hundred, in steerage.<sup>53</sup> The first-class facilities were opulent; the spaces and quality among different classes of travel were far from equal. The garish first-class dining room, designed by Johann Poppe, was derided as “Bremen Baroque.”<sup>54</sup> In effect, the luxurious spaces of the first-class passengers, who were smaller in number, were financed and subsidized by the larger numbers of people in steerage class, who were all squeezed into much smaller and lower deck spaces with minimal facilities allocated to them—in a fraction of the space allotted to the upper decks.

Such information on the history of migration is not contained in *The Steerage*, but this photograph opens out onto that history, as a historical referent of the picture. We might say that the value of this picture as a historical image is its depiction of these people from the steerage class during 1907, shown as they are returning to Europe for whatever reason, whether they were refused entry to the United States (for supposed poor health, undesirable characters, etc.) or they were returning voluntarily to Europe to live. However, the picture is structured around these first-class–steerage-class relations, of a first-class passenger looking at the steerage-class people depicted in the photograph.

We might say that the old modernist art discourse imposed on this photographic image could be undone by returning it to a social-historical framework, to a discussion of shipping and migration, and to a discourse on social history, from which Stieglitz clearly wished to hide or distance this image. Yet this would be to repeat and simply reverse the binary opposition set out by Sekula between art and documentary discourses, rather than to undo them. I want to argue that these two discourses are not mutually exclusive, but are intertwined. One of the key features of photography is that it can offer both a point of social identification, and also a space for subjective imagination (whether as a dream or as a nightmare). In other words, it is not that an art photograph has to be simply put back into a historical context to fulfill its “full” social, cultural, historical, political, or economic meaning, but to consider and acknowledge that the emotive productivity of the image is part of these other dimensions too. These so-called contextual meanings (what, in semiotics, would be called the connotations) of an image are themselves produced, informed, and understood through the aesthetic *affect* and imagination involved in the social production of the image. How might such a process proceed?

## Affective memories

We know that images can evoke feelings, even abstractly. This is indeed the direct aim and ambition stated by Stieglitz in his essay on making the photograph. It is the man's straw hat, Stieglitz says, that triggers a feeling in him, although he does not say what this feeling actually is. What feeling, what was it about? The hat catches the light. If the hat is a symbol, what is its meaning? The man who is wearing this hat (which is singular among the cloth and bowler hats of the other men) is looking down to the deck below. In a sense, he is doing exactly what Stieglitz is himself doing: looking down at the people below. The figure in the straw hat thus offers a point of identification for Stieglitz (and the viewer of the photograph). This man, who inhabits the same position and point of view that we do, acts as a kind of witness inside the scene. He looks down on the people below him, just as we look down on him. The light shines down on this man in the hat, although this same light also touches other things too, notably the baby to his left (on the viewer's right), the gangplank, and, importantly, the women and children on the deck below—where he seems to be looking. In fact, this scene is at the apex of Stieglitz's camera viewpoint given to us. Like Stieglitz we also look at the young man who looks at women and children below. There is a chain of formal signification: the hat, the man, his look, the gangplank, and the mothers/women figures below. (This associative chain might also explain why Stieglitz's written account of the scene erases the women on the upper deck in his essay on the image.) On the lower deck, the lighter tones of the clothes hanging there help to pick out the women's heads and shoulders, especially the woman standing with a company blanket, worn like a shawl, and the seated woman next to her. This seated woman with light hair and light falling on her shoulder is directly in line with the look of the man in the straw hat. The light dances across these figures—mothers, babies, and children in the lower part of the scene—to form a rhythm of light tones. Like vertical marks, figures are picked out against the darkness by the light falling on them. The viewer's eye is led across this lower part of the picture and back up the staircase on the right-hand edge, which takes us back to the upper deck again.

The gangplank cuts across our vision of this look, if not that of the man in the straw hat, and it offers a dynamic intervention in the design of the picture. A gangplank enables passengers to go from one place to another, from land to ship, from ship to land, and thus from one continent to another. The gangplank metaphorically marks the moment and space of transition, a passage from one place to another, but here it also links one deck to another. Yet the gangplank also clearly divides the picture into two parts, splitting the people in it into two groups, even though they are all steerage class. This is perhaps also why Stieglitz was so offended when he first showed a print of the picture to his friend Joseph Keiley,



who responded by saying “you have two pictures there, Stieglitz, an upper one and a lower one.”<sup>55</sup> Stieglitz privately noted that Keiley had not understood the picture. Thus, for Stieglitz, the gangplank in the steerage picture figures not to *separate*, but to *link* one part of the ship in the photograph to the other, to join one deck to the other. Perhaps Stieglitz’s affront at his friend’s remark of this as a separation of two parts of the image is because the idea of division in the picture reminds him of his own alienated separation, his own longing, that he might belong down there too. Either way, Keiley and Stieglitz are both right; their viewpoints are two sides of the same coin: the gangplank graphically divides the two parts of the image, but also links them together like a bridge. Curiously, the chain railing on the gangplank curve in a wave pattern along the length of the plank, echoing the poetic idea of waves of the sea, the gangplank as a figurative metaphor for the whole voyage from one place to another. Stieglitz makes no attempt to offer any interpretation of the picture; he is content with the suggestion of feelings and separation from his own class. Yet why would he wish to belong to this crowded deck, to be jostled among these poor people crammed into these decks below his own first-class one? Is it not curious that a man expressing claustrophobia at being in first class, which was completely spacious, should nevertheless, in his essay at least, wish to be amid this crowded space, full of poor people? Is his wish a literal one to actually be among this crowded multitude? Is it a metaphorical yearning, linked to this scene by what it triggers, something as already in his mind? It is tempting to suggest a different biographical reading of this scene.<sup>56</sup>

Stieglitz, fed up with his lot and stuck in the dreary first class, wanders out on the balcony and sees this scene. Does he not see himself here as this young man, distinguished by his boater hat, as an identification with someone clearly looking down at the young women, babies, and children there? Does he, perhaps, see himself, in another time and space, as this younger man? Does he imagine himself as this younger man journeying to Europe like these passengers are? What other space and time is populated by these people below, apparently unfettered by the woes of his own position, his family, his class, his world? We know from Stieglitz’s biography that he had traveled to Europe many times before. A child of first-generation German Jewish immigrants to the United States, Stieglitz had been taken by his parents to be educated in Germany at the age of seven. He had then returned again frequently, in numerous voyages to Europe, doing the grand tour route to Italy, Vienna, Venice, Sicily, and so on. It was on these trips to Europe that he had learned, practiced, and refined his eloquent pictorialist art photography, before returning to live and work in New York.

We can begin to imagine a complex temporality involving personal memory and various different times in this snapshot photograph taken in 1907 on a ship—a trip he had already made many times before. Stieglitz was forty-three when he took

*The Steerage* and seventy-eight when he published the essay (in 1942) and finally had his photography exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The work of memory is often seen in its “afterwardness.”<sup>57</sup> In going back over the past by Stieglitz, we can recognize the implicit migratory experience in its disjunctive temporal form, the to-and-fro of the past in the now of the photograph. The youthful man in the hat, the potential of his future before him, the future of these women and children: a multitude of different narratives. The past intrudes into the present, the photograph, at once a spectacle and a juxtaposition of different movements, can be oriented toward questions of the experience of migration.

Stieglitz does not own the memory of this photograph because the very image opens out—literally—onto the history of other migrations, the transitional space of the migrant, and myriad multiple memories. Stieglitz acknowledges this much in the naming of the picture as *The Steerage*, a class and category linked to migration, yet his discourse around it, like that of Sekula, in effect also disavows the figures of migration. I suggest this silence is linked to the ambivalence at the heart of migration, sometimes perceived as a threat to the very stability of knowing oneself. It is this push and pull of belonging and loss, presence and absence that the history of photography has to be attentive to in the question of migration. Such questions are important, not as a form of nostalgia or politics (migrants as victims or active agents of their own doing), but of the very figural logic in visual forms of representation and their unspoken affects, whether they are encoded or uncoded. Walter Benjamin was right, we must start again at the beginning to rethink here again the writing of the history and criticism of photography.

## Notes

1. The emigration that Benjamin refers to is that of the refugees from the Third Reich in Nazi Germany. Brecht’s plays were called *Terror and Misery of the Third Reich*. See Walter Benjamin, *Understanding Brecht* (London: New Left Books, 1977), 37.
2. See also John Willett (ed.), *Brecht on Theatre* (London: Methuen, 1964) and Walter Benjamin, *Understanding Brecht* (London: New Left Books, 1977).
3. To be *modern* is to invoke a term here that many may be suspicious of, in that many today would probably wish to be *contemporary*. The contemporary here would mean being “out of joint” with time, as Giorgio Agamben proposes, though I see no real fundamental difference from the term *modern*, as I use it here in this sense. See Giorgio Agamben, “What is the Contemporary?,” in *What is an Apparatus? And Other Essays* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

4. Colin McCabe argues that James “Joyce is very much the prototype of the post-colonial artist.” Colin McCabe (ed.), *Futures for English* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 12.
5. Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987), 41.
6. *Encyclopedia of European Social History*.
7. The reverses of Lewis Hine’s Ellis Island photographs were stamped with the label “INTERPRETIVE PHOTOGRAPHY.”
8. In Beaumont Newhall’s foundational book, *The History of Photography*, for example, Lewis Hine’s work features in Chapter Ten, which is simply called “Documentary.” See Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1964).
9. Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs: Images as History, Mathew Brady to Walker Evans* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1989), 165.
10. Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs*, 190–191.
11. Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs*, 190–191.
12. See Lewis Hine’s description of his work in his essay “Social Photography,” reprinted in Alan Trachtenberg (ed.), *Classic Essays on Photography* (New Haven: Leete’s Island 1980), 109–113.
13. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (London: Fontana, 1980).
14. In his text, Paul Gilroy is talking more generally about the historical passage of artifacts and ideas, cultural traditions and values between continents and places, and not just people or the early trade and traffic in slave exploitation. The point made is that it is *the ship* that is the transport for all these things. See Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic, Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993), 4.
15. As is often the case, the influx of “foreigners” to the United States caused anxiety about them and their impact on the existing (immigrant) populations. The Dillingham Commission (1907–1910) and the US Immigration Commission helped to put a cap restricting immigration during the 1920s, with laws such as the Emergency Quota Act of 1921. In the earlier 1900s and 1910s, the bulk of passengers on ocean liners were migrants.
16. “About 52 million migrants left Europe between 1860 and 1914, of whom roughly 37 million (72 per cent) travelled to North America, 11 million (21 per cent) to South America, and 3.5 million (6 per cent) to Australia and New Zealand. About one third of the emigrants to North America returned home.” *Encyclopedia of European Social History*, Volume 2, ed. Peter Stearns (New York: Charles Scribner, 2001), 137.
17. See for example: Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1980), 111–113; Mary Warner Marien, *Photography: A Cultural History*, 2nd edition (London: Lawrence King, 2006), 182–183; Jean-Claude Lemagny and Andre Rouille, *A History of Photography: Social and Cultural Perspectives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 106–108.

- Elizabeth Anne McCauley has recently added a more historical contribution to the literature in her essay “The making of a Modernist Myth,” in a finely detailed forensic account of the picture. See *The Steerage and Alfred Stieglitz* (London: University of California Press, 2012).
18. Alfred Stieglitz, “How *The Steerage* Happened,” *Stieglitz on Photography: His Selected Essays and Notes*, ed. Richard Whelan (New York: Aperture, 2004), 197. This remark supersedes the earlier one made by Stieglitz in 1899, when he was still a Pictorialist, that his “favourite picture” was his own *Mending Nets*, 1894. Also see *Stieglitz on Photography*, 60–61.
  19. Allan Sekula, “On the Invention of Photographic Meaning,” in Victor Burgin (ed.), *Thinking Photography* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1982), 88.
  20. Allan Sekula, “On the Invention of Photographic Meaning,” *Artforum* 13, no. 5 (1975); *Thinking Photography*, ed. Victor Burgin (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1982); and *The Contest of Meaning*, ed. Richard Bolton (London: MIT Press, 1986). Sekula’s essay was central in banging a final nail into the theoretical coffin of modernist photography, even if it has taken the corpse longer to accept death. In 1984, Abigail Solomon-Godeau noticed a renewed interest in Stieglitz, which she dubbed it a “Stieglitziana.” See Abigail Solomon-Godeau’s essay on the Stieglitz myth, “Back to Basics: The Return of Alfred Stieglitz,” *Afterimage*, vol. 12, nos. 1 & 2 (Summer 1984), 21–25. See also Katherine Hoffman, *Stieglitz: A Beginning Light* (London: Yale University Press, 2004), 237–238.
  21. Alfred Stieglitz, “How *The Steerage* Happened,” *Stieglitz on Photography: His Selected Essays and Notes*, ed. Richard Whelan (New York: Aperture, 2004), 194–195.
  22. The photographer is unnamed in Stieglitz’s account, but he adds, in a typically immodest comment: “I wanted to pay the photographer for the use of the darkroom, but he said, ‘I can’t accept money from you. I know who you are. It’s an honor for me to know you have used my darkroom.’” See Alfred Stieglitz, *Stieglitz on Photography: His Selected Essays and Notes*, ed. Richard Whelan (New York: Aperture, 2004), 196.
  23. See Sarah Greenough, *Alfred Stieglitz: The Key Set, Volume One: 1886–1922* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art/Harry Abrahams, 2002), 190–194. Stieglitz’s account of the 291 prints can be found in his essay “The Magazine 291 and *The Steerage*,” reprinted in Alfred Stieglitz, *Stieglitz on Photography: His Selected Essays and Notes*, ed. Richard Whelan (Aperture, 2004), 215–221.
  24. Stieglitz, “The Magazine 291 and *The Steerage*,” 215–221.
  25. Stieglitz, “The Magazine 291 and *The Steerage*,” 215–221.
  26. Allan Sekula, “On the Invention of Photographic Meaning,” *Thinking Photography*, 99.
  27. Sekula, *Thinking Photography*, 100.
  28. Sekula, *Thinking Photography*, 100.
  29. *Formalism* here is to be distinguished from Russian formalism, for instance, which developed a different relation of form to content, in which one is not subordinated

- to the other, but they are instead mutually productive. See, for example, Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "The Armed Vision Disarmed: Radical Formalism from Weapon to Style," *Photography at the Dock* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 52–84; Victor Burgin, "Looking at Photographs," *Thinking Photography*, ed. Victor Burgin (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1982).
30. Allan Sekula, "On the Invention of Photographic Meaning," in *Thinking Photography*, ed. Victor Burgin (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1982), especially 90–92.
  31. Sekula uses the phrase "mindless straightforwardness" to describe Hine's photograph. Sekula, *Thinking Photography*, 91.
  32. Sekula, *Thinking Photography*, 108. Alan Trachtenberg has since made a similar comment: "Largely through Stieglitz's influence, a polarised language entered photography criticism: factual reporting versus personal expression, art versus document." Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1990), 174.
  33. Sekula, *Thinking Photography*, 100.
  34. Sekula, *Thinking Photography*, 103, original emphasis.
  35. To put the argument in semiotic terms, Sekula argues that the signified discourse of the photographer begins to determine not only the reading of the signifier (the picture) but also the actual production of photographs.
  36. A similar criticism can be made of Alan Trachtenberg's essay argument on Stieglitz and Hine, "Camera Work/Social Work," in his book, *Reading American Photographs* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1990).
  37. In linguistics, the figures of metaphor and metonymy constitute two poles for the selection and combination of units of meaning. Metaphor is based on notions of similarity, one thing is connected to another, while metonymy is based in contiguity; both can be found interacting in semantic systems other than that of language. See, for example, the now classic essay by Roland Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image," in *The Responsibility of Forms* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991). In Roman Jakobson's famous paper on the topic, Cubism is a "manifestly metonymic orientation," whereas Surrealist painting is predominantly a "metaphoric attitude." Eisenstein's cinema uses synecdoche "close-ups and metonymic setups, which are 'overlayed by a novel, metaphoric montage.'" See Roman Jakobson, *On Language*, eds. Linda R Waugh and Monique Monville-Burston (London: Harvard University Press, 1990), 130–131.
  38. Stieglitz died four years later, in 1946.
  39. Elizabeth Anne McCauley has pointed to other errors, for example, relating to the dates of Stieglitz's voyage. See her "The Making of a Modernist Myth," in Anthony W. Lee, *The Steerage and Alfred Stieglitz* (London: University of California Press, 2012), 21–22.
  40. The presumption is that there is no wind, so the ship was not sailing mid sea. See Beaumont Newhall, "Alfred Stieglitz: Homeward Bound," *Art News*, 87, no. 3 (March 1988), 141–142.

41. John Maxtone-Graham, *The Only Way to Cross* (London: Patrick Stephens, 1983), 159.
42. Susanne Wibourg and Dr. Klaus Wibourg, *The World is Our Oyster, 1847–1997* (Hamburg: Hapag-Lloyd, 1997), 159.
43. Cited in R.A. Fletcher, *Travelling Palaces* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman, 1913), 159.
44. In *Titanic* the character called Rose, played by Kate Winslet, goes slumming with her steerage-class friend to experience the “community” down there.
45. Robert Louis Stevenson, “Steerage Types” [1895], *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*, vol. XVI (London: William Heinemann, 1925), 30.
46. Lee Server, *The Golden Age of Ocean Liners* (New York: Todtri, 1996), 10. The origin of this term is disputed but nevertheless often assumed as right in the literature on the period.
47. The Cunard line paid a stipend for the government to supply twenty thousand emigrants to the port annually. See Susanne Wiborg and Klaus Wiborg, *The World is Our Oyster: 150 years of Hapag-Lloyd* (Hamburg: Hapag-Lloyd, 1997), 155–156.
48. Wiborg and Wiborg, *The World is Our Oyster*, 151–152.
49. Wiborg and Wiborg, *The World is Our Oyster*, 155–156.
50. Rob McAuley, *The Liners* (London: Macmillan, 1997), 62.
51. See Wiborg and Wiborg, *The World is Our Oyster*, 152.
52. According to this author, the ships of this class were already built with military purposes in mind. See P. Ransome-Wallis, *North Atlantic Panorama, 1900–1976* (London: Ian Allen, 1977), 178.
53. The *Kaiser Wilhelm II* ship, built in 1903, had 1535 passengers in total: 468 first-class passengers, 268 second-class passengers, and 799 third-class or steerage passengers. The crew numbered 650. See Arnold Kludas, *Record Breakers of the North Atlantic Blue Riband Liners, 1838–1952* (London: Chatam, 2000), 87; Wiborg and Wiborg, *The World is Our Oyster*, 145–146.
54. Wiborg and Wiborg, *The World is Our Oyster*, 145.
55. Alfred Stieglitz, *Stieglitz on Photography: Selected Essays and Notes*, ed. Richard Whelan (New York: Aperture, 2000), 196–197.
56. Of the various attempts at this, Elizabeth Ann McCaulay’s more recent historical discussion of the picture broaches this in a surprising concluding comment on Stieglitz’s sexuality: “The impotence that he often commented upon in his letters found its compensation in the ‘feeling of release’ that he got from photographing.” Elizabeth Ann McCaulay, *The Steerage and Alfred Stieglitz*, 65.
57. *Afterwardness* is the term used to translate Freud’s concept of “Nachträglichkeit,” as found in the work of French psychoanalyst Jean Laplanche. See Jean Laplanche, “Notes on Afterwardness,” *Essays on Otherness* (London: Routledge, 1999), 260–265.

