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## The World is Not Vague: Nonfiction and the Urgency of Fact

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### 1. The Urgency of Fact

I am drawn to nonfiction for the same reason I am drawn to science: I like to know how things work. I like facts. I like their sharp definition, their substance, their heft; I like the noise that they make when you throw them at the wall, the onomatopoeia of the phrase *in fact*; it's tactile, you can test it with your teeth to feel its grit, the way you would a pearl.

But the most powerful nonfiction reaches beyond the facts of the matter to get at something like truth. As both readers and writers, we turn to nonfiction with the abiding hope that it will help us understand this particular reality, this peculiar world. Scott Russell Sanders writes, "Each person we meet, each place we visit, each event in our lives, and for that matter the universe itself in its far-flung glory, all confront us as bits of perception and memory, inklings and intuitions, and we seem compelled...to bind these scraps in to a whole that makes sense" (74).

Facts have edges; they don't bleed into one another, there's no penumbra of shadow where they overlap; one is never a little bit pregnant, or sort of dead, and there are no alternative facts. Truth isn't like that; it's not a fixed point, absolute zero, true north. It has dimension and angles and depth; it unfolds outward geometrically, like space; and like space, truth is expanding. We're not narrowing it down. The more we think we know of truth, the more complicated and vast it becomes.

In *The Nonfictionist's Guide*, Robert Root writes,

Nonfiction is not simply an option of style or format or attitude; it's a perspective on the world, and its texts are composed by writers animated by the nonfiction motive. The writer chooses nonfiction as a medium because of a desire or a need or a drive to understand a portion of the world and to record and respond to that understanding. Without the nonfiction motive, writers get no internal checks or balances on their own honesty, no incentive to investigate, explore, observe, compare witnesses, and analyze all the evidence, no commitment to comprehend and extend that comprehension to readers." (6)

Nonfiction implicitly argues that truth matters, that true stories matter, and that the individual author's perception of what is true carries some kind of weight; that the story she tells can and should be heard, its reverberations felt, beyond the echo chamber of her mind. And the individual reader must be able to trust that writer to take him on a journey, and not just a nostalgic spin through the writer's hometown. The reader must be able to trust that he too has a place in this story, that he is doing this for a reason, that he will emerge from the encounter enlightened, illuminated, moved—that he will be changed. And the reading public must be able to reasonably assume that writers act in good faith, that they have done their homework, that an investment of readerly trust is well placed—that the reader will not be fooled.

There is an urgency to facts, especially at this vertiginous moment in time. I'm not speaking of the manufactured sense of urgency created by bombardment news, but the philosophic or intellectual or perhaps call it spiritual human urgency we feel to make meaning, to find some sense somewhere in the rubble of facts that make up our world. In 1969, Adrienne Rich wrote in her journal, "Politics is the effort to find ways of humanely dealing with each other—as groups or as individuals—politics being simply process, the breaking down of barriers of oppression, tradition, culture, ignorance, fear, self-protectiveness" (24). Nearly thirty years later, Rich wrote in *What Is Found There: Notebooks on Poetry and*

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*Politics*, “This impulse to enter, with other humans, through language, into the order and disorder of the world, is poetic at its root as surely as it is political at its root” (6-7).

Nonfiction is innately political. It is a fundamentally activist form. Nonfiction writers have a responsibility to bring something to their audience, to offer them not merely a representation of ourselves, or our point of view, but our most honest representation of the world we see.

## 2. Observation

The word *author* is three letters shy of the word *authority*, and to claim authority on anything at all is hubristic in the extreme. Who is the rightful author of history? Who has a corner on truth? When we write nonfiction, we claim, at some level, that we do; we say: *I know it happened this way, I have evidence, proof. I lived through this, I saw and I felt this, I was an eyewitness—I was there.* The claim of authority, the claim of witness, are claims of power; as such, they can and should be questioned, examined, and balanced by the limitations of the claim.

I was there, for example, in 1977. The Iranian Revolution was underway; on the other side of the globe, in Berkeley, California, we tuned into the 6 o’clock news and listened to broadcast journalist Walter Cronkite tell us in stern tones that the Shah of Iran was kidnapping children. My understanding was that the Shah of Iran lived under my bed. I waited in the gas lines for hours, counting all the cars I could see from where I sat in the backseat of the mud-colored Datsun with broiling black vinyl seats and metal seat buckles that seared themselves into the back of your butt when it was hot. The world was vast, possibly infinite; the idea of infinity was new to me, and I understood “the infinite” to mean whatever lay beyond the far border of consciousness, which was, roughly speaking, Ygnacio Valley Road. This was when men had mutton-chop sideburns and even those Americans who considered themselves culturally alert called Iran “I-ran.” There were both morning and evening editions of the newspaper; we read about the war, the international oil crisis, the wildfires that raged just north of where I lived, caused by a years-long drought.

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Howard Nemerov, in his essay “On Metaphor,” writes, “If you want to see the invisible world, look at the visible one” (223).

The world is not vague. The world is extraordinarily precise. One of the tasks of nonfiction is simply to pay close attention to that world, and to record what we observe with precision and accuracy. It is part of the nonfictionist’s pact with the reader. As a reader, I don’t turn to nonfiction to hear, for example, that summer is hot. I turn to nonfiction to learn *how hot, what kind of hot? Are we talking California autumn hot, which smells of eucalyptus and fire? Or Minnesota August hot, which smells of melted road tar and fish? Which summer is this, hot to what degree, how does this writer know, why should I believe them, why should I care, what can they tell me about the world?*

Facts and memory share an edge, they overlap; they are not, of course, the same. They are, nevertheless, the raw materials with which the nonfictionist works, and each acts as a check on the other; memory inflects fact with sensory and associative detail—what Henry James called “felt life”—while fact places memory in context, pins it to the map that extends beyond my own limited awareness of what happened, what was, what is. As nonfiction writers, we need both the subjective and objective angles to give what we say dimension, texture, and depth. John McPhee said in an interview with Norman Sims, “The subjective moment is always there, and importantly there. Every word you chose in lieu of ten thousand words you might have chosen, the very subjects you choose, they’re all subjective” (304). Filmmaker Robert Coles writes in his book *Doing Documentary Work*, “Who we are determines what we notice and what we regard as worthy of notice, what we find significant. Each of us brings a particular life to the others being observed, and so to some degree, each of us will engage with those others differently, carrying back from such engagement our own version of them” (89-90). Nonfiction writers need to own—and perhaps more actively foreground—the subjectivity embedded in the foundations of their form; there are and always will be coexisting truths.

There is an inherent fallacy in the now-popular idea of “my truth,” if we see it as antipodal—or, for that matter, equivalent—to “yours.” While truth is, in some sense, like a particle, and can be in multiple places at once, quantum-mechanically speaking, “you” and “I” are both here, both perceiving, both subjective selves. Neither of us can claim authority; neither of us has uninflected access to the truth.

Then a necessary element of the act of observation—and a critical task for the nonfiction writer—is the exploration of perception itself. Philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz would tell you that my perceptions are all that I am; that I consist of all I perceive, and only of what I perceive; I am the sum of my perceptions. He would say, in fact, say that the only legitimate indicator of what I am would be a complete catalogue of my perceptions: the sights, sounds, scents, tastes, sensations, ideas, thoughts, the entire onslaught of information taken in by my body and mind; these perceptions make up the I. My perceiving consciousness, my perceptual acts, are the totality of my self. And that self, that I, is implicated in all that I see, and all that I say.

So we have to somehow navigate and map the connections between what Sven Birkerts, in *Changing the Subject: Art and Attention in the Internet Age*, wonderfully calls the “jostling subjectivities” that exist in this world (1). Our job as nonfiction writers is to find the points at which our individual experiences connect. There is a growing imperative for writers to connect their work not only to the individual reader, but also to that larger world.

We live in a time when language—for writers, a first love, trusted companion, and primary means of apprehending, comprehending, navigating, organizing, and responding to reality—is openly being used as a weapon against the many for the benefit of the few. There are people in positions of power who have a deep, perhaps desperate, investment in manipulating language for their own gain. Those who have the power to control the narrative—to control the widespread understanding of what is, in fact, going on, what is real, and what is true—also have the power to control the means by which information is conveyed, and the way in which information is understood. Those people, those parties, those interests,

that force—have claimed, certainly, our attention; they have infiltrated our language, our symbolic world, our ability to think and speak clearly; they have infected our ability to trust even our own word.

But this era has also equipped nonfictionists with incredibly powerful archeological tools. We have every opportunity, and I believe a serious responsibility, to dig below the surface of the stories we tell, tunnel through the shifting plates of perception, and get down to the bedrock of facts.

### **3. Investigation**

The 1980s were made of plastic and neon. They were less of a wholesale sensory onslaught than the 70s, and not nearly as tall. The history of the world, at least as I recall having learned it, went roughly thus: Industrial Revolution, Enlightenment, the names of cloud formations, the three types Greek columns, Latin declensions, typing, and tips for housewifery, including the correct technique for making martinis and Jell-O parfaits. Vietnam was an ear-splitting silence: gone, forgotten, erased. Children were feral. Everyone smoked. Mothers drank in the pantry; fathers were sullen and drank in the garage. At the Olympics, Mary Lou Retton, a tiny beaming sprite, dominated women's gymnastics, while Jackie Joyner-Kersey, a stunningly beautiful blur, broke records in track. Less significantly, perhaps, the Cold War was raging, and we folded ourselves into small packages of terror under our tiny metal desks. In fourth grade (c. 1983), Eric Anderson called me a Commie because I was Russian, so I stole his hat. Brezhnev died, then Andropov, then Chernenko, while Sting's "Dream of the Blue Turtles" looped on VH1.

Human perception is never to scale. As far as any of our lizard brains understand, the sun and the planets and all that exists revolves around us. It's essential to find the balance between the interior world and worlds beyond; to observe and perceive deeply, but keep perception in its place; and to use it ultimately in the service of building a path toward something outside of the self. As a nonfictionist, I have to constantly remind myself to turn my gaze outward, think associatively, link one thing to the next, and recognize that not all things loop back to me. The nonfiction that affects me least as a reader is that which

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errs too far in the direction of what the writing says about the author, and not far enough toward what the author has to say about the world.

The implicit contract I have with the nonfiction reader is that I will follow the story; the story is not required to follow me. As Robert Root writes,

In nonfiction, the writer has to deal with the real world, has to make an effort to come to terms with reality, with truth. The nonfictionist doesn't intend to take the information and shape it into whatever she feels like shaping it into or contriving a way to contort it to fit an agenda; instead, the nonfictionist's motive is always, at bottom, a desire to understand the information with which she's confronted, to uncover its shape, to follow where it leads. The challenge is not knowing where you'll end up and having to make sense of the information you uncover, whatever it is. (7-8)

Scientists use a term for this process—they say that true discovery rarely occurs, and when it occurs, it does so under conditions of “prepared serendipity.” This term serves as a reminder that writing is rarely a product of inspiration, but a product of a fortuitous chance encounter between the world and, when I'm paying attention, my mind.

The role of a nonfictionist is not static. The nonfiction writer can change form to adapt to the terrain she encounters as she goes: she is sociologist, ethnographer, historian, interrogator, eavesdropper, devil's advocate, scribe. This ability to shape-shift is crucial to the nonfiction project; the writer has to be able to capture the facts of the matter, and in the next instant question their veracity, weigh their importance, interpret their meaning, and eventually, and under deadline, select only those facts which most effectively, and accurately, convey the totality of what actually took place. To adequately play any of those roles, though, there must be movement, a sustained effort to step out of one's own fixed point of view and into a new position, where one no longer exists in isolation—where, perhaps, *I* am not even central, where I am just another a piece in the larger patchwork world.

The nonfiction writer's position is perhaps most often that of anthropologist, that of "participant observer." Journalist Ted Conover said in an interview that his motive for taking this stance is not merely literary but, ultimately, moral; he immerses himself in the world of his work, he says, "not for my amusement so much as to see things that interest me and to bear witness to them in some way. I see the distinction as between being a tourist and being a witness. It's a posture not just for a writer but for how you live your life."

#### **4. Contextualization**

As the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century dawned, a young black man named Rodney King was brutally beaten by the Los Angeles police. The officers were acquitted of the beating in the fall of 1991. I was a rookie reporter. As the news came over the wire, the newsroom went silent; the fog of smoke seemed to stop swirling; someone threw up in a trashcan; someone else started crying; and mayhem resumed. I learned to write quickly, on deadline, in short, declarative statements, answering who what when where why and, when relevant, how. The how and why were tricky; they were subjective, didn't offer up the easy answers of either/or fact. Why did the officers beat King nearly to death? Why did the jury acquit them? How did the riots get started, who threw the first rock through a window, who lit the first flame?

Context, in nonfiction, is always part of the story; it is often the most interesting part.

Contextualization is the act, maybe the art, of writing to scale, placing events within the larger scope of their influence and impact, showing causality and effect. Journalism professor Tom Connery has said, "Nonfiction that captures the felt quality of life at a particular time and place addresses same question cultural historians pose: 'How did it feel to live and act in a particular period of human history?'" (qtd. in Sims and Kramer 4). Contextualization is about more than telling "both sides of the story"; it is rather an attempt at a three-dimensional reconstruction of a place, a world, an event, as it was, as it occurred.



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Nothing happens in isolation, outside a multi-dimensional context; to write accurately, we have to show the depth and breadth of the world that created and will in turn be affected by our subject, whatever it is.

Scholar Shelley Fisher Fishkin argues that groundbreaking works of nonfiction “bear witness to social and cultural realities that cannot and must not be ignored.” In her essay “The Borderlands of Culture,” Fishkin examines works by four authors—W.E.B. du Bois, James Agee, Tillie Olson, and Gloria Anzaldúa—whose specific goal, she says, was to tell “the stories of the powerless, their pain invisible, their cries inaudible, their membership in the human community implicitly denied.” She writes, “Their agenda was clear: make the reader feel what you have felt, even if you have to break rules, customs, and conventions to do so. The passionate cultural reports they produced transcended and stretched the boundaries of our culture in enormously rich and fruitful ways” (134). These writers had several goals in common. Fishkin writes, “They wanted to disrupt patterns of perception familiar to the reader. They wanted to defamiliarize the familiar, explode conventional expectations, break down the reader’s sense of equilibrium, surprise, challenge, and throw the reader off guard. In short, they wanted their readers to approach the text in ways that had never been required of them before, and to be changed, profoundly, in the process” (135).

I have been changed, profoundly, by lots of books. But the one that sent me on this mission to try to tell true stories was James Agee’s *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. “The nominal subject of this book,” Agee writes in his Preface, “is North American cotton tenantry....Actually the effort is to recognize the stature of a portion of unimagined existence, and to contrive techniques proper to its recording, communication, analysis, and defense. More essentially, this is an independent inquiry into certain normal predicaments of human divinity” (xlv). But as Norman Sims says in his analysis of Agee’s flawed, passionate effort to tell a tale truly, “Agee the narrator wasn’t sure: he didn’t have solutions, didn’t know what should be done. He wasn’t even sure what he had witnessed” (153). Expanding on this, Agee’s biographer Genevieve Moreau writes, “On a level deeper than his anger at the oppression of a social class,

his denunciation of abuses and defense of the oppressed, Agee wanted to demonstrate that the very issue of human existence was involved. It was necessary, in the end, to place the Southern tenant Farmer in the wider context of humanity as a whole” (165).

In his Preface, Agee writes: “This is a *book* only by necessity. More seriously, it is an effort in human actuality, in which the reader is no less centrally involved than the authors and those of whom they tell.” (xi). A few pages later, he picks up this thread: “If I could do it, I’d do no writing at all here. It would be photographs; the rest would be fragments of cloth, bits of cotton, lumps of earth, records of speech, pieces of wood and iron, phials of odors, plates of food and excrement... A piece of the body torn out by the roots might be more to the point” (10).

The nonfiction impulse pushes the writer beyond observation, perception, investigation, past the satisfying but ultimately inadequate statement of fact. This impulse leads the writer not to an endpoint of answers but into the infinite regress of questions that point toward but do not—and do not need to—finally locate the truth. John Berger, in *Keeping a Rendezvous*, speaks to the need for not knowing in this way: “Authenticity in literature does not come from a writer’s personal honesty. Authenticity comes *from a single faithfulness: that to the ambiguity of experience* . . . If a writer is not driven by a desire for the most demanding verbal precision, the true ambiguity of events escapes him” (216, emphasis added).

The pursuit of clarity, precision—the effort to get to the heart of the matter—is in fact a pursuit of ambiguity, complexity, of the ineffable and unknown. In *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, James Agee articulated the moral question embedded in the entire nonfiction premise when he interrogated the reader with this: “Who are you who will read these words...and through what cause, by what chance, and for what purpose, and by what right do you qualify to, and what will you do about it?” (7).

## 5. Construction/Creation

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In the end, as in the beginning, we face the task of creation. Observation, investigation, contextualization—all of these are central to nonfiction. But ultimately, if we are going to call ourselves writers or artists of any kind, and if we are going to do the work that perhaps we're called to do, we are faced with the task not merely of reporting the facts but of working with them, transforming them into more than the sum of their parts, making something entirely new. I agree with the playwright Bertolt Brecht, who wrote, "Art is not a mirror held up to reality, but a hammer with which to shape it." It's important for us to know the nature of our tools.

On New Year's Eve of 1999, instead of doing my job, which was to attend and cover the "party of the century," which was taking place across town at the home of the artist who was newly known as the Artist Formerly Known As Prince, I sat under an afghan on my mother's couch—a detail which renders this entire memory suspect, as my mother does not own an afghan and never has. I watched TV till midnight Eastern Time, watched the ball drop on Times Square, saw the gathered crowd's collective exhaled breath and heard their tinny broadcast cheer. I, like many already technologically dependent people, was consumed with fear that my computer clock and the cosmic clock and the Greenwich Mean and the equatorial tides and what existed of the World Wide Web and perhaps the world itself would crash when 11:59 p.m. clicked over to 12:00 a.m. But what happened at the turn of the millennium was weirder; there was a pause, a blip, a tiny slippage of time; it was 11:59, and then it was 12:01, and I still do not know, nor will I ever, whether it would have been better to have gone to Prince's house and partied like it was 1999, or whether watching those two minutes slip off unaccounted for into the void was worth it after all.

That was the easy story. That's my story, and I know pretty well how it went; that's where I was when time hiccupped and began again. After that, stories got more difficult; facts got harder to verify; the idea of truth grew cloudy. It became apparent that this was not only a new era but a new world, where things really did move more quickly, where truth was even more relative and uncertain

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than it had been. Everything seemed to drain of substance; the overall velocity of things increased, but simultaneously lost density, impact, gravity, weight. There was a rigged presidential campaign with racist underpinnings, which was turned into an argument about hanging chads. There was an illegal war, which was the same thing as a lawn sign, which was the same thing as patriotism, which was the same thing as reality TV. There was lots of talk of branding, and needing to have a brand, which turned quickly, as social media evolved, into the need to *be* a brand, signaling a fundamental perceptual collapse and the loss of our ability to distinguish between who we are and how we seem, between artifice and reality, between the mirage and the real. There was 9/11, and on 9/12, the smell of flame and ash was thick across the bridge in Brooklyn, people wore masks over their noses and mouths so as not to inhale what particulate matter remained of the buildings, the bodies, the paper, the bones, that had burned when the Twin Towers came down.

Nonfiction is constructed; it reports, it records, it replicates, but no matter how realistic, how true to life, or how beautifully wrought, it is also a creation, an invention, and perhaps that renders it a fiction after all. Without fully exploring the many elements of craft traditionally associated with fiction that have been employed for generations by nonfiction writers—such as scene, characterization, dialogue, etc.—it's important to note at least two central fictions that nonfictionists cannot avoid. First, whether the authorial fingerprint of the *I* is stamped all over the page or the work is told from a distant third person point of view, the perceptions presented in a work of nonfiction are those of the author, and that author is responsible for his rendering of the world. While we are often exhorted to listen to and find and write in our own voice, it is equally incumbent upon nonfiction writers to seek out and gather voices other than our own, to find the different tones and truths those voices, woven together and set in counterpoint, create. There are times at which a single voice will prove the truest representation of a given thing; there are times—more of them, I think—when a polyphony or even a cacophony are called for, if the thing is to ring true.

And there is the inherent fiction of narrative arc, of structure itself. The decisions we make about structure are actually decisions we make about meaning; our best structures are those that most effectively convey meaning—i.e., the meaning we perceive, and wish our reader to perceive. Decisions we make about sequence and arrangement are de facto impositions of our interpretation, our sense of causality, relationship, patterning, echo, and whatever we can make out of truth. The power to shape perception, the power to invest events with our understanding of what they mean, is not inconsequential; and it is a power we must increasingly wield with care.

Before fake news, before the inherently oxymoronic concept of virtual reality, before we had divorced our lives online from “in real life,” long before the symbolic and referential were switched out for a pointillist’s pixelated nightmare of incessantly shifting fractals of light, Friedrich Nietzsche wrote, “What, therefore, is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms . . . which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people: truths are illusions of which one has forgotten that they are illusions.” This is the version of truth that concerns me—the canonical truth, the institutional truth, the manufactured truth, the party line, the spin. This is the manipulation of perception by the powerful for the benefit of the few. The agreed-upon reality in which we currently live is a construction, an illusion, a shared delusion in which we are invested, from which we benefit, by which we suffer, and which we continue to create.

Shelley Fishkin writes, “While conflicts over physical territory are usually resolved by force or by negotiated treaty, few comparable mechanisms have been devised for resolving conflicts over cultural territory—of choosing whose realities become reified and whose will get ‘redlined.’ He who wields political and economic power usually manages to control the power to name and narrate as well” (133). As writers, especially writers of nonfiction, we are by definition claiming the power to narrate and name. We have a platform, a venue, a voice. Every time we set down words, we enter into the political forum. We are playing with an enormously volatile substance when we write. It seems evident right now that there is an

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enormous need for us to more seriously consider the tools we have to counterbalance official efforts to shape the narrative, control the facts, control access to multiple points of view, to torque, reframe, misrepresent, take out of context, and otherwise change the facts, and in doing so, to try to shape and actually control the perceptions and subsequent actions of a society at large.

## 6. The Responsibility of Fact

Adrienne Rich writes in *What is Found There*, “One is free to become artistically most complex, serious, and integrated when most aware of the great questions of her, of his, own time.” Rich writes of a time, in her life and in American life, when she felt that “politics could be an expression of the impulse to create, an expanded sense of what’s ‘humanly possible’... This scrap of private vision suddenly connected—and still connects—with a life greater than my own.”

I would say that we are badly in need of such a time, such a politics, such a vision, again.

Michael Herr spoke to the urgent need for a new approach to the facts in a 1967 letter to Harold Hayes, his editor at *Esquire*. Herr wrote, “If standard journalism really worked, if all the sophistication of our communications could really engage and purge, there would be no need for the kind of work I want to do now” (cit. Sims 248).

But there was a need for it; and I would argue there is still.

In the opening pages of *Dispatches*, Herr wrote, “I went [to Vietnam] behind the crude but serious belief that you had to be able to look at anything, serious because I acted on it and went, crude because I didn’t know, it took the war to teach it, that you were as responsible for everything you saw as you were for everything you did” (20). It is easy, as writers, to think about narrative responsibility in the abstract, to think of the contract with the reader as a theoretical construct. But Herr describes a deeper authorial responsibility, one that extends from the writer to the reader to the world. If we listen again to his words and place them in the context of our time, what are the

implications for us? Who will claim responsibility for the world we perceive, the world in which and upon which we act? And what are we going to do about it?

With only a very slight slanting of a word this way or that, with the incantation of a loaded phrase, by the evasion of inquiry, by omission of detail, by the disregard of inconvenient facts, by the blatant use of flat and outright lies, the language we rely upon to represent reality is being manipulated, shaped, and ultimately controlled by people who seek, first and foremost, not to govern but to profit, not to represent the will of what we once might have called “the American people,” fraught as that concept has always been, but to exert their own will toward power.

The Yiddish poet Irena Klepfisz wrote, “I see the rubble of this landscape, see that the city, like the rest of this country, is not simply a geographic place, but a time zone, an era in which I, by my very presence in it, am rooted. No one simply passes through. History keeps unfolding and demanding a response” (193).

Is it nonfiction’s presumption that if the reader is made aware of a fact, if their consciousness is broadened or deepened or in some way altered, their behavior and its impact will subsequently be changed? And is that, then, enough to bring about larger cultural change? Is simply “saying something,” reporting on what we see, enough? Is plain testimony adequate to the task? Maybe not. But the choice to write is a choice to respond, to engage, to participate in a conversation much larger than perhaps we know. It is a choice against silence; it is a choice to act.

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