“A war after a war, a war before a war”
Traumatic Testimonies in E. L. Doctorow’s *The March*

“‘The real war will never get in the books.’
Walt Whitman

In his 1977 essay “False Documents,” E. L. Doctorow states that “All history is contemporary history,” before adding (quoting Benedetto Croce): “‘However remote in time events may seem to be, every historical judgment refers to present needs and situations.’ That is why history has to be written and rewritten from one generation to another. The act of composing never ends” (24).

In light of this essay, Doctorow’s almost entire oeuvre can be read as an attempt to “recompose” history by deconstructing previously accepted notions of historical truth while, at the same time, the assumption of truth is preserved in the act of storytelling. By considering traumatic events in history as testimonial fragments framed around the necessity to be told, Doctorow reveals history to be unpredictable and open-ended rather than closed and cohesive. What is more, his compulsive return to eminent moments of American history reflects his unflinching commitment to challenge our “acquired knowledge or doxa” of the past (Jameson 24) and to make us confront our ideological and political dilemmas in the present.

However, *The March*, I will submit, is significantly different from the author’s previous postmodernist writings. It ought not to be seen as a reassessment of Doctorow’s postmodern aesthetics, as yet another discursive evidence of Fredric Jameson’s “crisis in historicity” (1991: 25) or of Linda Hutcheon’s “historiographic metafictional” paradigm.¹ Drawing on recent trauma theory and photographic discourse, I will show how in *The March*, Doctorow revisits the devastated lands of Georgia and the Carolinas in the aftermath of General Sherman’s march of 62,000 soldiers and 20,000 to 30,000 newly freed slaves, not only to challenge historical and fictional representations of the Civil War, but – by imaginatively reenacting the theme of war trauma – to make us bear witness, albeit belatedly, to the human cost of war whose impact exceeds the boundaries of place (the South) and time (1864-5). Moreover, taking into consideration Doctorow’s persistent belief in historical events not as encapsulated in the past but as evolving in today’s historical, political and artistic scene, we can read the present novel as a traumatic

¹ Linda Hutcheon labels “historiographic metafiction” those “novels that are intensely self-reflective but that also both re-introduce historical context into metafiction and problematize the entire question of historical knowledge” (285-286).
testimony (Felman and Loeb 5) that not only resists closure but whose sig-
nificance is powerfully enhanced by the open wound of 9/11. Therefore, by
making the Civil War the novel’s constitutive principle, Doctorow introduces
a historical parallel between a crucial period in American identity formation
and a post-9/11 time in which questions of national identification, politically
as well as culturally and ethically, resurface.\(^2\) After examining narrative acts
of telling from the position of authority granted by an eye-witness and a
survivor, in the second part of the essay, I concentrate on Doctorow’s use of
imaginary pictures rather than visual images of the civil conflict as more
accurate evidence to represent the traumatic reality of war. The fact that in
*The March* the intermedial reference to images is hidden (verbal) rather than
manifest (visual) does not counter their emergence or diminish their crucial
role as witness and evidence.

As with earlier novels – *Ragtime, The Book of Daniel, Billy Bathgate*, for ex-
ample – in *The March*, Doctorow interpolates historical figures and events
seamlessly into the fictional narrative of the novel. As suggested above, the
author’s apparent disregard for historical authority is the subject of many
critical writings. More recently, as Matthew A. Henry has pointed out, Docto-
row’s novels “are filled with historical circumstances and personages fleshed
out to meet the standards of his fiction and facilitate interrogation and subse-
quent rewriting of the past” (32-33). In *The March*, Doctorow weaves together
a variety of narrative strands, often subordinating historical events and per-
sonages to fictional narrative in order to give agency and voice to what may
have been silenced and ignored or rendered invisible in those accounts that
have dominated national and cultural points of view. For example, there is
Emily Thompson, the Southern-born sheltered daughter of Judge Thompson
who, after the death of her father and brother, crosses over into Union lines,
volunteering to help the Union field surgeon, Wrede Sartorius. Her decision
to move on is dictated by her witnessing of the random burnings and pillage
in her hometown of Milledgeville by Unionists and Confederates alike. She
concludes that this was not a war, but “an infestation” (26).\(^3\) Then, there is
Pearl, a mixed-race slave-child who passes for white and is disguised as a
drummer boy in the Union army so that she does not get “sent back” with
the rest of the newly freed slaves. There are also Arly Wilcox and Will Kirk-
land, the Confederate privates, who pull the uniforms off of two dead Union
soldiers in order to escape prison and avoid being killed.

Set against the worlds of these fictional characters that have all expe-
rienced some war-related loss is the historical General William Tecumseh
Sherman, the novel’s most self-reflexive character, endowed as he is with the
ability to meditate on the act of large-scale slaughter for which he is mainly
responsible. Toward the end of the novel, as the General watches his victori-

\(^2\) Cf. Jaap Kooijman, “Are We All Americans? 9/11 and the Discourse of Multicultural-

\(^3\) Subsequent references to the novel are given parenthetically in the text and are from


ous but tired and somewhat disoriented army march through the Southern streets, he speculates on the absurdity of the Civil War, which he sees as “a war after a war, a war before a war” (359). For Sherman, “this unmeaning inhuman planet” needs his “generation’s warring imprint” in order to acquire a “redemptive sense of value” (Hales 147). Although he is aware that “our civil war” consists of “the devastating manufacture of the bones of our sons” (359), Sherman has eradicated in himself all appreciation for human life in order to victoriously survive the war. For him, the “death of one soldier” is “first and foremost, a numerical disadvantage, an entry in the liability column” (89). To this he adds proudly: “It is a utilitarian idea of death – that I am reduced by one in my ability to fight a war” (89).

In many ways, Doctorow’s depiction of the fictional Sherman as a controversial character, oscillating between authoritarianism and indulgence, control and compassion, rashness and hesitation, cynicism and idealism relies on Sherman’s own Memoirs and is therefore to a large extent accurate to the historical figure. Apart from rendering The March different from his previous, more playful or subversive engagements with history, Doctorow’s careful mediation of historical documents in this particular novel seems important to me in two ways: on the level of artistic production, the precise designation of the historical Sherman operates powerfully to reify the character and to make it impossible for the reader to receive his interpretation without the interception of already acquired knowledge – something which, as Jameson has pointed out, “lends the text an extraordinary sense of déjà vu and a peculiar familiarity one is tempted to associate with Freud’s ‘return of the repressed’” (24).

The uncanny effect of the historical penetrating the fictional, challenges the reader to reassess the heroic ideals of the Civil War and to confront the issues whose lack of resolution has haunted Americans ever since. But, also, on the level of historiographic formulation of the past, Doctorow’s “too faithful” citing of Sherman’s own memoirs, especially when they come from an author criticized for turning “the historical novel into a gravity-free, faintly sadistic game” (Updike 98) seems like an invitation to open our ears and listen to the testimonial speech of an eye-witness to the war. Doctorow’s descriptive and exacting references to the controversial Memoirs (1875) of the real, historical Sherman invoke the ethical, moral and political “imperative that compels someone to take up the position of the witness” (Marder 4) of a traumatic war experience, even when, or perhaps, especially when, this is done from the perspective of “the old man who unhappily commanded” war action (Sherman 5). “I wish my friends and enemies to understand that I disclaim the character of historian, but assume to be a witness on the stand before the great tribunal of history,” Sherman stated in his Memoirs to defend himself.

4 Jameson’s reference is to Ragtime but applies equally well to The March.
5 For a more detailed analysis of Doctorow’s direct quotations and references to Sherman’s Memoirs, see Hales’s “Marching Through Memory” and Stephen F. Criniti’s dissertation chapter “‘It’s Always Now’: History as Analogy in E. L. Doctorow’s The March” (45-67).
from “the swarm of criticism” aroused from “traduced veterans” (Fellman vi-vii). Like the historical Sherman, who put a “version of facts in [a] truthful narration” (Sherman 5), the fictional Sherman, too, acts as witness, illustrating Shoshana Felman’s argument that testimony must go beyond the personal experience of the individual and that “the history of trauma, in its inherent belatedness, can only take place through the listening of another” (11).

That his cataclysmic march to the sea inflicted pain and suffering upon the South he loved was a hard truth Sherman never evaded. “You cannot qualify war in harsher terms than I will,” he told the citizens of Atlanta before ordering the city’s evacuation. “War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it … .”6 However, Doctorow’s interest does not exhaust itself with Sherman and his narrative account of the senseless hideousness of war. As mentioned earlier, The March is a polyphonic novel, in which history is retold through multiple viewpoints and voices of ordinary people on whom the toll of war had left its scars but who, unlike Sherman, were unable to account for their trauma. “You can’t think seriously about this country without pondering the Civil War. The sin it expunged, the sin it became. It’s our DNA,” Doctorow asserts in a Time interview. And he adds: “[T]he fracture in our society widened. It’s still there – that crack still goes down the middle of it. You could call the war a trauma” (qtd. in Grossman 2006). In view of this authorial statement, one can offer a reading of The March as attempting to make visible and therefore intelligible the horrific consequences of the violation of America on its own soil, which reverberate more eloquently in the wake of 9/11 and the war in Iraq.

Throughout the novel, Doctorow foregrounds individual cases whose lives are left in shambles, unanchored from their traditional landscape and place: Pearl, the light-skinned former slave, Emily, the Southern aristocrat, Mattie Jameson, Pearl’s stepmother, Arly Wilcox, the Confederate soldier and Sherman’s would-be assassin, and many more individual characters, all suffer the impact of violence and loss and bear witness to a history that needs to be told.7 At the same time, the calamitous displacement of an entire culture which brought about the transformation of identity of anyone participating in the “nomadic life-worm,” as Doctorow has dubbed Sherman’s march, finds its correlative relationship in today’s post-traumatic, post-9/11 culture, a culture vulnerable to terror and other forms of victimization. “Any time you set a book in the past you’re inevitably writing about the present,” Doctorow declares and it is this conviction that informs his practice as a writer and a public man of letters.8

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7 In his “Marching Through Memory,” Scott Hales reads the lives of characters as stories of war related loss that “leave in their wake a trail of alienation and pain that is not easily reconciled” (153). This he takes as Doctorow’s subtle critique on reconciliatory approaches to the Civil War, whether fictional or historical.
In many ways, then, Doctorow’s narrative emanates from the attempt to vividly convey the damaging, tragic dimensions and unaccountable consequences in human, animal and material casualties procured by Sherman’s otherwise victorious military campaign. The reader watches the fictional characters trying to come to grips with a collective trauma whose full impact they are unable to assimilate contemporaneously. The language of rupture and fragmentation used by Doctorow to depict the incompressibility of their experience is coupled with the application of vivid imagery. For example, the endless pageant of the rapacious Union soldiers, homeless families, the wounded and dying, survivors of the dead, and confederate prisoners of war is represented as a mythical beast, “a great segmented body moving in contractions and dilations at a rate of twelve or fifteen miles a day, a creature of a hundred thousand feet” (61). Or, the sense of loss and accumulated fear of the Jameson household in the novel’s opening paragraph is evoked by a series of confused, disarrayed images which are articulated in a frenzied, disjointed language that disrupts/undercuts linearity. There are numerous scenes of this sort in which Doctorow employs a camera-eye method to enhance the illusion of realism relying as he is on the claim that photography is an accurate and hence truthful mode of representation. One might anticipate that – coming from a postmodernist novelist – the appeal to literary or visual realism is deceptive as its power to represent authentic experience is constantly undermined.

Nevertheless, the emulation of the tools of photography is by no means accidental, as it serves as a reminder of the relation of the photographic to the literary. It is important to note that it is during the American Civil War that photography was used for the first time to capture a history-in-the-making. One name in particular comes to mind in reference to Civil War photography, that of Mathew Brady. Brady’s pictures of battlefields and ruined towns, generals and army officials, prisoners and prisons, civilians and refugees, gave the American people a view into the true nature of war, documenting the hardships the men endured and the devastation left behind. Doctorow draws on this photojournalistic tradition premiered by Brady, according to which photographs are thought to record reality, accurately and hence truthfully. However, the “photographic” which persistently intervenes within Doctorow’s prose through the use not only of illustrative and descriptive language but also by the invocation of narrativized pictures promises the authenticity of the reality portrayed – even though it is constantly undermined by the

The parallels between Doctorow’s portrait of a long gone American war and the war in Iraq was mentioned by reviewers of *The March*, such as Zach Baron.

9 “John, leaping out of bed, grabbing his rifle, and Roscoe … rous[ing] from the back house, his bare feet pounding: Mattie hurriedly pull[ing] on her robe, … fly[ing] down the stairs to see through the door open in the lamplight (…) the two horses, steam rising from their flanks, their heads lifting, their eyes wild, the driver a young darkie with rounded shoulders, showing stolid patience even in this” (3).

10 The cinematic qualities of *The March* have been pointed out by several reviews of the novel. See, for example, Walter Kirn in *The New York Times Book Review* (2005).
exposure of how reality is manipulated. By verbally recreating the circumstances of the “frozen moment,” or the “slice of time,” Doctorow aims at resuscitating the harrowing events of war while precluding the photographer’s manipulative intervention or the viewer’s interpretative response. Much in the way Sherman’s memoirs and Brady’s photographs bear witness to the atrocities of war, Doctorow’s verbal images give access to a direct encounter with the experience of trauma, breaking the silence of the photographic still and naming what has gone unnamed. Not surprisingly, Doctorow has admitted in an interview that The March was born out of two pictures whose evocative power aroused his imagination: the first was of a photograph of the destruction in Columbia, S.C. after the fire, and the second was a picture of Sherman and his generals seated, posing in front of a tent. In my analysis, I argue that while Doctorow relies on photography’s potential to capture traumatic experiences, he gives precedence to the authority of words over images because of language’s capacity to cut through the ambiguity that can surround photographs; rather, he uses words to retrieve the narrative buried in them.

Drawing on the rich resonances of the many visual images of the American Civil War, Doctorow introduces three and a half text-generated pictures in an attempt to direct our gaze toward what we normally would fail to see in a photographic still. The imaginary photographs introduced in the narrative bear witness to the carnage of war; they become agents of revelation, conveying the disturbing sense of being witness to a reality as it really might have been. By assuming a testimonial stance, these textual images make the photographed person or object seem more real than reality itself. They allude to the veracity of photographic representation at the same time that they remind the reader by their explicit construction of the narrative that these verbal photographs stage experiences that were never factually, or photographically, documented. Furthermore, Doctorow’s treatment of photography while conforming to the prevailing assumption of the medium’s authenticity, in effect undercuts its documentary character by raising questions of visual representation and mediation. In other words, as with his use of Sherman’s Memoirs, Doctorow’s reference to photography serves to provide for the “effect of the Real” and to simultaneously subvert its apparent truth-telling: he foregrounds the medium’s theatricality and manipulative tactics. Finally, through the irruption of narrativized photos rather than through an inclusion of photographic images themselves, Doctorow attempts to “encircle again and again the site” of trauma (Slavoj Žižek 272), whether it is the battlegrounds and ruined cities of the American Civil War or the suggested

11 Doctorow’s realistic representation combined with social and political commentary has been described as “postmodernist photo-realism” by David Cunningham, Andrew Fisher and Sas Mays (5).

violence of a city in the wake of 9/11; he thus privileges “the literary” over the photographic image or the imagined narrative over that of historical discourse.

Despite foregrounding the written over the visual image, Doctorow offers a significant role to Josiah Culp, the photographer licensed by the United States Army to document the Civil War. Doctorow’s Culp is inspired by Mathew B. Brady, whose legacy is synonymous with the photographic legacy of the Civil War. Though Culp is a minor character, who dies fairly quickly, he is important to the narrative. As he himself puts it, he is set to make “a pictorial record of this terrible conflict”(173). Doctorow recreates in detail the circumstances (the wagon of photographic equipment followed by Calvin Harper, a black assistant to the photographer) and cumbersome conditions of the photographic process (171) while stressing the zeal and earnestness of Culp’s purpose to take advantage of his privileged medium to visually represent the carnage of war. As he surveys the scene of razed houses and burning farms, he spots two soldiers in Union uniform resting “in the quiet of the burned air under the blackened tree” (171) whom he considers an ideal subject to photograph. He soon finds out, however, that one of the two soldiers is not resting but is dead:

He’s dead? You hear that, Calvin? The other one is dead. Yes, I see the stains on his tunic. Of course. That’s even better. Sit back down there with your dead comrade, sir. The light this morning is not as good as I’d like it, but if you hold still for a few moments I am going to make you famous (172).

To be sure, Doctorow alludes here to the “first significant crisis in modern history to occur within the memorializing gaze of the camera.”13 If Civil War photographers had moved corpses to attain more successful compositions, if photographs can manipulate reality, how does this affect our notion that historical knowledge declares its true value by its “photographability”? Of course, Doctorow does not aim at undermining the value of “historicism-by-photography,” to use Alan Trachtenberg’s words (287). Rather, his intention is to empower fictional narrative to make “visible” what a picture in its putative unmediated actuality can hide or alter. If, to the historians in “False Documents” we must now add the photographers who refuse to acknowledge their mediating role in documenting truth, then, fiction writers are the only ones left to admit they lie and therefore are to be trusted in bearing witness to the legacy of war.14

13 See Trachtenberg’s “Albums of War: On Reading Civil War Photographs” and endnote 3 in the same article.
14 “Novelists know explicitly that the world in which we live is still to be formed and that reality is amenable to any construction that is placed upon it. It is a world made for liars and we are born liars. But we are to be trusted because ours is the only profession forced to admit that it lies – and that bestows upon us the mantle of honesty” (Doctorow 1983: 27).
Thus, what Culp’s picture hides from the putative viewer is not the face of death since the dead soldier, unbeknownst to him, played at being alive for the camera but that Arly Wilcox, the surviving soldier, is as much of a victim of war as his dead comrade. Although Arly is viewed by most critical reviewers of *The March* as “a clownish Rebel straggler” (Kirn) and “a canny con- man” (Kakutani), Arly epitomizes the survivor of war, exhibiting all signs of trauma. War atrocities affect him, making him demented as well as highly verbal. For example, the recognition that his friend was already dead when the picture was taken makes for a curious play here with Arly’s insistence on talking to it (201, 205, 322). The picture neither belongs to the same ontological sphere as he does, nor do he and his dead friend share, within the parameters of the picture, the same ontological status: death found only his friend while it missed him, and Arly seems totally unprepared to take in such a shock. As a matter of fact, this may be what Cathy Caruth, following Freud, has in mind when she maintains that what causes trauma is not “the literal threatening of bodily life, but the fact that the threat is recognized as such by the mind one minute too late” (25). In the aftermath of his friend’s burial, Arly experiences a messianic sense of purpose and invulnerability, once he conceives of his dangerous plan to assassinate General Sherman.

After Culp’s death, Arly puts on the photographer’s disguise and poses as the government’s hired photographer himself in order to approach the General and make an attempt on his life. Before this happens, however, Culp’s black assistant, Calvin Harper, having been initiated by his master not only to the technical details of the photographic practice but to the medium’s memorializing purpose, attempts to embrace the entire spectacle of war, taking pictures of the sites of the events, from desolate towns to civilian camps. As a consequence, Calvin “set up his camera to make a photograph of the old bell lying askew in the rubble of the spire that had held it.” But, as if the iconographic description of the picture is not adequate, Calvin feels obliged to turn visibility to legibility, to ascribe a narrative in his photograph:

> Whether it pleasures me or not, it is part of the historic record, Calvin said. This bell now fallen here in the dirt is like what has happened to the Confederacy. It is like the ruin of the old slaveholding South is laying there, so I got to photograph it, just like Mr. Culp would (198).

In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag argued that “In contrast to a written account – which, depending on its complexity of thought, reference, and vocabulary, is pitched at a larger or smaller readership – a photograph has only one language and is destined potentially for all” (20). Yet, Doctorow seems to believe that visual images are “irredeemably mute” (Burke 34) if they are not subjected to interpretation. Thus, Culp endows his image with the ennobling meaning of the Union’s crusade against slavery. But, contemporary putative viewers of the ruined “old” tower bell might “read” the image as evidence of the massive loss and large scale disaster that war, any war, causes. Ruins are what is left of cities in the path of war. Buildings in shambles speak visually of the ruptures in normal life during war time. They also invoke the future and the extent to which the vanished past is implicated...
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in the present. “Time goes on, things change from moment to moment, and a photo is all that remains of the moment past” (203), Calvin muses as he and Arly, wearing Mr Culp’s coat, are approaching the Union forces.

The third textual photo interpolated in the narrative is of Emily Thomson with the orphans. Again, it is Calvin who gives stage directions with meticulousness and attention to detail in order for Arly, who is already waiting with his head under the dark cloth of the camera on the sturdy tripod, to take a picture of them:

[Emily] was looking straight at him, her arms around the children at her sides. Behind her on the porch steps rose more ranks of orphans, standing stiffly according to Calvin’s instructions. You must stand perfectly still, Calvin said in a loud voice. Like soldiers at attention. And up at the back was a black woman, with one of the meal sacks on her shoulders. That, too, was Calvin’s idea (208).

The charred church of the previous narrativized picture has now been given over to the innocent victims of the conflict. That the camera eye simply pretends neutrality does not diminish the shock from the host of torments these children have suffered. Or, it does not weaken Emily’s dignity as she faces an increasing expanse of corpses and destruction. In fact, Emily’s return of Arly’s gaze constitutes a “fundamental upheaval,” to use Lacan’s phrase. The self-reflexivity of the gaze, the passing from Arly to Emily and back to Arly, the “entry of the gaze itself into the secret, the intimate” completely unsettles Arly. It is also the “moment necessary for the entry of the voyeur” according to Lacan (qtd. in Žižek 38). “He was disturbed to see, miniaturized on the glass, a woman looking into his eyes so as to negate all his operative calculations of self-interest” (208). Yet, another feeling, unnameable because unregistered by consciousness, troubles Arly: “An unaccountable feeling rose in him, that had he been able to understand it, he would have recognized it as compassion” (208). Despite their differences in gender, status and function in the war, Emily and Arly are bound together in their shared victimization.

The final photograph, which determined the photo wagon’s itinerary from the start, is the photograph that is never taken, and for that I consider it a partially completed task. As I have mentioned, Arly’s purpose all along the photographic wagon’s route was, in his disguise as a US photographer, to gain access to General Sherman so as to assassinate him. As a result, when Arly states that he is going “to shoot General Sherman’s picture” (321), he has literally loaded the camera to aim and shoot at him. Because, “[p]oking through the socket where a lens should have been, … was the barrel of Mr. Culp’s pistol” (324). Arly’s murderous act evokes Sontag’s remark in her collection of essays *On Photography*. “To photograph someone is sublimated murder” (14-15), Sontag asserts, referring to the photographer as violator of privacy. In Arly’s case, however, the photographer turns literally into an aggressor and a would-be-assassin reflecting the excessive violence of war. His depiction as a “hysterical” soldier, a psychologically disabled war victim does not permit the erasure of the traumatic effects of war or the denial of responsibility for
its human costs. In fact, the infliction of psychological damage caused by direct experiences of conflict is considered as legitimate a wound as any other among war survivors.

Doctorow’s depiction of Sherman and his generals posing to be photographed serves yet another purpose. Patterned after a historically verifiable picture of Sherman and his staff taken by Brady at his studio, the embedded image calls into question the historic picture’s authenticity and foregrounds its factiousness. To that end, while the historic picture features only eight generals (Glatthaar qtd. in Criniti 57), Doctorow increases the number of generals to eleven, so as to include historically based characters who were not truly present (such as General Kilpatrick) as well as fictional characters (such as General Teack) in the same picture. Doctorow’s imaginative manipulation of the real picture, however, adds up to an earlier manipulation of the original picture. According to historical evidence, General Francis P. Blair, an important member of Sherman’s staff, could not attend the photo shoot. Nevertheless, the group picture was taken. At a later date, the image of his head was then attached to the group picture with his name already printed (Pollack qtd. in Lester).15 Doubly removed from reality, this picture then cannot be considered a “miniature of reality,” to quote Sontag (1977), but as a “constructed image” which clearly undermines the authenticity of the photographic image that hides the actual, lived experience. It becomes obvious that Doctorow’s preoccupation with photography, though brief in The March, is twofold: it provides a basis to address the question of the construction of historical reality and, to the extend that photographs record only what occurs, to inscribe a traumatic event in language, to bear witness to a history that remains untold, forgotten, or cast aside.

The events of September 11 caused “shock and awe,”16 to re-contextualize the Bush administration’s war slogan, in the American nation as well as in the global community. The need to make sense, to incorporate in some way the traumatic “absolute event” (Derrida 2003), triggered a great number of public responses, among them Doctorow’s Lamentation 9/11, a collection of the writer’s thoughts coupled with photographs of posters for the missing

15 “In 1865, shortly after the war ended, Mathew Brady offered to photograph William Tecumseh Sherman along with all of his generals. According to Brady, Sherman doubted that his staff would remain in Washington for the picture, but with characteristic energy the photographer appointed an hour and notified all seven men (Oliver Otis Howard, John A. Logan, William B. Hazen, Jefferson C. Davis, Henry Warner Slocum, Joseph A. Mower, and Francis P. Blair). Blair alone missed the sitting, and he is missing from the first set of photographs … . But Brady arranged to photograph him separately and added him to later versions of the portrait by pasting Blair’s image onto an existing photograph … . Brady then photographed the new, complete picture in order to make a negative that recorded Sherman’s entire staff, and used it to print many copies of Sherman and His Generals.” “Sherman and His Generals.” Mathew Brady Portraits. The National Portrait Gallery. Smithsonian Institution. http://www.npg.si.edu/exh/brady/gallery/57gal.html.

16 Officials in the United States armed forces described their plan of intervention in Iraq as employing “shock and awe.”
following the dreadful attack. Unlike *The March*, where we find an implicit evocation of the visual, in *Lamentation 9/11* visuality is incorporated in the narrative. This is done on the account that visual representation of the atrocities of war or other incidents of crimes against humanity can play an important role as witness and evidence of trauma (Sontag). Especially in the case of September 11, photography was crucial in the commemoration of the thousands of individuals who were killed but also those missing without leaving a trace (Kroes).

As if visual imagery was not enough to provide a voice to silent victims, a testimonial narrative had to accompany the photos of *Lamentation 9/11*. As Doctorow said in an interview after looking at the pictures of the photographer David Finn, he felt that he had “to translate into words what these people were saying,” to put down what was unwritten out of the victims’ silence.17 Accordingly, Doctorow wrote *The March* to commemorate an “unprecedented event” that “marked” a period in American history. If every collective trauma bears the trace of another, then, *The March* is more than a fictional account of the brutal facts of the American Civil War. In my reading, the novel is about traumatic experiences – whether inflicted from war or terrorism – that disrupt reality with the haunting force of persistent returns. Like *Lamentation 9/11*, *The March* is a testimonial lament for the trauma victims whether they survived the actual war or not, who are, according to Doctorow, “an endowment” to “our richness” which is our humanity (Simon 2002).

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Works Cited


