



Forum 3

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Civil War Photography

by Joe Escobar - Sunday, January 25, 2015, 10:16 AM

After studying the required materials, address the various questions. Make your initial posts by the Wednesday deadline (if not sooner) in order to start the discussion. Then, continue your discussions until the Sunday deadline.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, such as which case study you are addressing. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Civil War Photography

Sum of ratings: -

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Re: Case of the Moved Body

by Linda Hall - Monday, January 26, 2015, 10:06 AM

Well, to start out I found this to be one of the most interesting forums yet. I chose the Case of the Moved Body because I think to me it is the most calculating of the two articles. It was the most reprehensible of the two, I was amazed that back in 1865-1866 that they would have even thought of "staging" a photograph. I have to say that to answer the question "can we discover the historical truth when photographs' have been altered" is no, I don't think we can, this is just horrible. How do we know that any of the photos' from that era are right. As to the difference between visual and or comprehension I really don't think or see a difference. Yes we rely on the written word and to change it is very bad, but also finding out that the photos' are altered is just as bad, and in some cases you have the photos' along with the written word , so both of them would be wrong. I was really disappointed when I read, actually, all three of the articles, Gardner definitely was playing with history because he was shooting photos' and I guess depending on who was either looking at them or going to buy them he kept changing uniforms which to me is not right.

After reading all of this article and the other two articles, it just has to make you wonder what other "staging" was done to enhance the photos' of that period. I guess I was just really disappointed to find out that everything is not as it looks.

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

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Re: Case of the Moved Body

by Andrew McGarry - Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 1:16 PM

Hello Linda! I definitely agree with you, this weeks forum was a very interesting one. It allows for a little bit of research and analysis of our own. I was rather interested with the way they altered the first case photo by just using a different angle. I as well thought staging of photos in that time was shocking. But it definitely went one step further in the case of the moved body! I couldn't believe they had that much of a mind to carry a deceased soldier up the hill just for a photograph! That really stood out to me and made me wonder at what point can we fully trust any ONE source.

Andrew

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Confused identity or moved boy



by [Katelyn Rasmussen](#) - Tuesday, January 27, 2015, 12:49 PM

After watching the video and reading the articles accompanied by pictures you feel like you can truly understand something and how it truly happened. To later find out that somethings were exaggerated or changed around slightly can actually greatly alter the truth. You would think that back in the day there wouldn't have been such a thing or "version" of photoshop but they had in fact come up with their way of doing so. I think that the case study of the moved body had my attention more so than the confused identity case study. This case study got me wondering what all these photographers have changed in other pictures and scenes as well as in other historical times that are so important for us to learn about. It really affected me when they talked about moving a dead body and posing it in such a way it would tell a story. That there were specific people out there strictly for the photos and not fighting. They too put themselves at risk by doing so and trying to record history but it also made me feel more confused about the situation. Im sure many photographers died as well in the many different battles that occurred but what happened to the photos they had captured, were they ever found?

I don't know if it is worse to change what is written or to change what is seen.. Many people learn and visualize differently. Some by hearing and picturing it or some by actually seeing what is going on. If both ways are altered in a way that is different than what happened than either way you try and learn about the historical war you aren't getting the full truth about what had happened in present time back then. I feel altering images would be worse for me because I feel I understand better that way and comprehend a scene better by actually seeing it but the fact that some pictures could have been staged changes what scene I am able to picture in my head.

Sum of ratings: **3 (1)**

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Re: Confused identity or moved boy

by [Linda Hall](#) - Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 7:32 AM

Hi, Katelyn

I have to really agree with you, I was just disappointed to find out that all or most of the photographs were being staged . So how do we know whether any of the photos in the video were accurate or not? I am both a reader and a visual learner, when I am reading I like to get a picture in my mind of what the scene might look like, then like to look at the photographs to see "what kind of picture they portray" Now I find myself questioning all of the pictures that I see in both the textbook and the video. I just think it is a shame that the photographers like Gardner may have distorted the pictures just so that they could sell them.

Sum of ratings: **1 (1)**

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Re: Confused identity or moved boy

by [Kayla Janis](#) - Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 7:58 PM

I was mostly focused on Gardner's lack of regard for the truth. But, in reading your comment, I remembered that Burns used these photos, too. I wonder if he knew that the photos had been altered. If he did, can we still trust him as a reliable source? It seems like he's made quite a few "mistakes" or omissions at this point- and, we're only on Episode Three. But, if Burns was such a poor historian, would we really be using his documentary for this class? I keep going back and forth on trusting Burns and questioning everything.

Sum of ratings: **2 (1)**

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It is all I can think about

by [Jamie Mc Kinney](#) - Friday, January 30, 2015, 11:55 PM

Now, when I am watching Burns' film or just grazing the internet for other cool old photos...I am asking myself if it is an authentic photo or not. Especially the civil war photos that I have veiwed recently. I find it difficult not to think that the subjects were staged, or bodies moved about in order to set up a good shot. I know it is good to question sources, but now I feel more on the paraniod side.

Sum of ratings: **1 (1)**

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**Re: Confused identity or moved boy**

by [Andrew McGarry](#) - Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 1:23 PM

Hello Katelyn, I am a visual learner as well. So seeing the way those images were altered was kind of alarming. They staged photos back then almost as creatively as a photographer would now. It was also done with the intention of "selling a better story". That was something I did not see coming when I started reading each of the different cases.

Andrew

Sum of ratings: **1 (1)**

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**Altering History**

by [Andrew McGarry](#) - Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 12:05 PM

Andrew McGarry

Joe Escobar

HST209 Forum 3

January 28th, 2015

I thought it was much more shocking to find out that photographers back in the Civil War era were actually so broad with their creativity to notice when they see a good shot and are willing to move a body of a deceased soldier in order to get it. To me that is going into much more depth when it comes to manipulation of a shot, the other photographs may have been the same group of soldiers taken from different angles but at least the bodies weren't altered or shifted. After reading through these cases and watching the video it kind of makes me wonder what items can be trusted, historically speaking. These photos were taken from one of the more popular sources of Civil War photography and if there is now evidence of altering in the images it leads to the question of which sources can *truly* be trusted?

There is the old phrase "I'd have to see it to believe it!", to me this is something that I have always sort of followed. Being able to physically lay eyes on something has always helped us deem an item or event as "real". So in my personal opinion I believe that the altering of images is a larger problem than altering text. Text has always been used to put a description to something visually, but seeing a different perspective of the same photo can completely change the way you actually see something.

Sum of ratings: **3 (1)**

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**Re: Altering History**

by [Linda Hall](#) - Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 3:01 PM

Hi, Andrew

And I do agree with you about altering the photos, but because I think maybe in some respects maybe the writers were writing their reports and or newspaper articles based on the photos that they were handled, so wouldn't that also make the writing altered? I do agree with your statement that after reading through the cases and watching the video, how do we know what items can be trusted to be truthful. It was to me just mind-boggling that Gardner would go to those links just to sell the photos, and I was just really surprised to learn all of this. Has to make a person wonder if the rest of what we have seen in pictures of the era are truthful, or not.

Sum of ratings: **2 (1)**

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**Can the Sources be Trusted?**

by [Bethany Hunter-Lehman](#) - Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 11:35 PM

Andrew,

I see where you are coming from when you ask, "which sources can truly be trusted?" I feel the more forums that we do, the more evidence we are given to not trust the sources that we are learning from. It is almost as if the instructor wants us to take everything with a grain of salt and venture out on our own for the truth. For me, I had wanted to keep an open mind on the possibilities of different versions of history, but after analyzing each source, it really gets annoying. I just

want some truth!

I also agree about images being more "real". Seeing something hits the heart way more than words and it also leaves a lasting impression in your mind.

How are you feeling at this point in the sources that we are using?

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Burns in question

by [Jamie Mc Kinney](#) - Saturday, January 31, 2015, 12:02 AM

I also feel like each week we find another fault line in Burns' film. I was hoping to keep an open mind as well, but Burns' has seemingly backed me into a corner with his lack of credibility lately. But this is a great example of not taking heart to everything you see on PBS 😊 Maybe I am a bit naive, but I thought PBS was not able to lie...the home of the documentary. I just find it so frustrating that these photos were included in the film.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Re: Burns in question

by [Agina Hale](#) - Saturday, January 31, 2015, 12:56 AM

Let's see what next form has for us. Maybe the music wasn't historic. :P

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Photographers

by [Katelyn Rasmussen](#) - Saturday, January 31, 2015, 6:50 PM

Andrew,

I like how you start with the photographers in a positive way and even back then their level of creativity and being able to see a scene and think to recreate it in a way that people might one day see and think greatly of it. I think that is an awesome way to see things and it's most definitely a perspective I had not thought of before or thought of in depth during this lesson. However, I find it frustrating that it now makes it hard for me to believe much of what I see or hear these days when reading articles and watching videos.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Case of the Moved Body

by [Kayla Janis](#) - Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 7:50 PM

I found the Case of the Moved Body to be the most egregious simply because Gardner moved the body. These soldiers, Union and Confederate, had been through enough. Their bodies should have been treated with respect, being moved to a burial site and not for a photograph. It's also frustrating that he just made it all up. You can't call this photograph history if it's posed. Fiction is more accurate.

Posed photographs make it incredibly difficult for modern-day historians to rely on photographic evidence to interpret history. Our understanding of Civil War battlefields is based on primary source material, whether that be photographs, letters home, diaries, or memoirs. As such, it's important that these sources are reliable. Faked photographs do no one any good.

I can't say that changing printed words is worse than altering photographs. To me, they are both equally bad. The mere fact that they are presented as truths when they're not makes it misleading, making neither the better or worse.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Respect

by [Katelyn Rasmussen](#) - Saturday, January 31, 2015, 7:03 PM

Kayla,

I greatly agree with your thoughts on how those soldiers have been through enough in their battle's and they should be treated with respect and kindness and should be properly treated. However, having this photographer drag them around and place their dead body's in positions and scene's that weren't real is not what so ever respectful. I think its a great point that you brought this up and to peoples attention. I personally think most soldiers wouldn't have agreed with this concept. I think most soldiers would have rather the true seen been exposed to public and recorded in history. The soldiers fought long and hard for their countries not to have people drag their dead bodies around the battle field staging scene's that weren't true to what really happened.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Respect indeed

by [Jamie Mc Kinney](#) - Sunday, February 1, 2015, 11:12 PM

I would be mortified if I knew one of my family members were moved or propped. The soldiers gave their life for their country/ principles, and to be treated as just subject matter for photograph is morally disturbing. Families now days would be furious, as would those families back then if they knew about it. There are just some lines you do not cross as a journalistic photographer.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Case of Confused Identity

by [Kayla Janis](#) - Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 8:21 PM

Based on what people are saying so far, everyone seems to be concerned mostly with the Case of the Moved Body. What do you all feel about the Confused Identity? When I first saw the photos (I hadn't yet read the text so I had no clue what it was about), I thought that the photos looked very similar, like they had been taken from different views.

After reading the text, I realized I was right. I thought it was pretty lazy to use the same picture but from different views. I can't imagine that it was really that difficult to find Confederate dead on the battlefield, considering Gettysburg was a larger, more well-known battle.

I did find some value in what Gardner wrote, though. In Plate 36, he wrote, "Such a picture conveys a useful moral: It shows the blank horror and reality of war, in opposition to its pageantry." This statement reminded me when Burns talked about citizens watching the Battle of Manassas. They brought picnic baskets and champagne and were excited to watch. But, it's war and it's gruesome and horrific. Champagne and picnics don't belong.

He also described the Union soldiers dying almost easily: "...but these were few in number compared with those who wore a calm and resigned expression, as though they had passed away in the act of prayer. Others had a smile on their faces, and it looked as if they were in the act of speaking. Some lay stretched on their backs, as if friendly hands had prepared them for burial." I think that Gardner was trying to make it sound like Union soldiers didn't die in agony. If I was a widow or a mother or sister of a Union soldier, I would've have found these words reassuring. It's easier to imagine a loved one dying peacefully and quickly than in the gruesome way that they most likely did. While historically inaccurate, I do think it provided comfort to many of those that who lost loved ones.

I also found it interesting that in Plate 36, which depicts supposed Confederate soldiers, you can clearly see a face (#3 in the analysis photos). But, from the opposite point of view depicting Union soldiers, you can't clearly see any faces. Gardner describes the Union soldiers dying peacefully, some with smiles. But, according to him, the Confederate soldiers died a traitor's death. I don't think it's coincidence that the only clear face and the description of a horrific death are put together. The soldier's face is grotesque and he looks like he died scared and in pain. It was probably easier for those left alive after the war to believe that the "enemy" died in agony.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Gardner Union Sympathizer

by [Bethany Hunter-Lehman](#) - Saturday, January 31, 2015, 10:10 PM

Kayla,

It was interesting to me that you picked up the details in how Gardner was relating to the Union and Confederate soldiers. At first I kind of noticed how he seemed to be biased towards the Union, but I just didn't think into it. I'm glad that you pointed that out. It really had me rethinking the photographs. In the end, I see that Gardner was a Union

sympathizer by the way he took the photos as well as the way he described what was happening in the image.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Civil War Photography and the Truth

by [Rebecca King](#) - Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 8:34 PM

For me, it's important that when learning about history, I actually learn what really happened. However, considering the nature of human beings, I don't believe that it's truly possible to get the whole truth. I wasn't surprised to see those images were edited. I wasn't surprised to learn that people would do something like that. If they can, they will. So, I don't think we can really learn the truth about this time. And not just because of the pictures. It's true that pictures can lie, but so can people. People will always tell their story in the way that best suits them and there's not a whole lot anybody can really do about that. I don't really think that either is worse, altering images or what's written. They're both accounts of things that happened. They can both be true or false, or even somewhere in between. I think it's just more important that the audience takes the time to think critically about what they're seeing and not take everything at face value.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Civil War Photography and the Truth

by [Katelyn Rasmussen](#) - Saturday, January 31, 2015, 7:07 PM

Rebecca,

I agree and think it is so true that after learning this and just knowing how most things operate now, its hard to believe you will ever be getting the full truth. It is just in human nature that most people slightly twist things and or change a story to make it more intriguing. It makes it very hard to believe anything anymore and believe it to be the whole truth. However, I feel as if since most people agree with this point we can start rearranging things in our own mind and playing out different scene's and visuals and for the most part getting the main point across. Although it would definitely be nice to be able to know the full truth and be able to visualize what really happened an how it happened.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Face Value

by [Jamie Mc Kinney](#) - Sunday, February 1, 2015, 12:05 AM

I couldn't agree more with you with the idea that written accounts can be just as edited as these photographs. It is incredibly important to question all sources of which ever media we are using. I used to think that just because it is written, a bio or within a history book, that is was credible. I mean, why would someone lie when they are telling the story of their life? I know if I were to write something about myself or someone that I thought was an incredible person in history, there might be some embellishments. I am sure throughout history books there are stories that came from a boring and dry origin and then brought to life by an author that wanted to make it more interesting and complementary to the subject.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Civil War Photography and the Truth

by [Marcelo Rodriguez](#) - Sunday, February 1, 2015, 6:18 PM

Rebecca,

I agree that both are equally as bad as the other they are both lies in some form or another, however depending on how you learn better one can be worse than the other. If you learn better looking at pictures the case of the Missing body may be worse, but if you learn better reading the case of the Confused Identity may be worse than the other case. For me the case of the Moved Body is worse to me because I learn better looking at pictures and watching videos because I understand things better when I can visually see things. I can't really reading some things because words can be changed and twisted into something completely different from the truth to fit someone else's agenda.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Photo History Suprise

by [Marcelo Rodriguez](#) - Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 9:21 PM

After watching to short video and reading the two cases I found it kind of shocking at that time that photos would be staged. It make you wonder how many photos for the Civil War era were staged in order to deceive people or make a story. Between the two cases I thought that the Case of the Moved Body was the most egregious when it came to manipulation the images because, you can tell Garner and O'Sullivan moved the body of the young soldier where as in the other photos of the dead men on the battlefield were taken at different angles. To be honest I don't really consider the photos from the case of the Missing Body a good source of photography history just because the body was moved and it's not honest.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Burns and the Photos

by [Marcelo Rodriguez](#) - Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 9:23 PM

I find it even more surprising that Burns used these photos in the film. I'm not really upset that Burns used the photos from the case of the Confused Identity mostly because the bodies weren't moved they were just taken at different angles, but in the case of the Missing Body the bodies were moved, which to me makes it fake because they altered what really happened by moving the body and rearranging what was around the man. I really hope he wasn't aware of the fact that the photos were staged if he did I wonder why he chose to use them knowing that. Even if he did know that the photos were staged I still believe that his film is a good source of history because a few bad photos doesn't make a huge difference I just question why he decided to use them.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Burns and the Photos

by [Kayla Janis](#) - Saturday, January 31, 2015, 6:06 PM

I agree with you. If Burns had portrayed the pictures and Gardner's statement with them as facts, it would take away considerably from the authenticity of the documentary. But, since he just uses the images, I don't think it takes away from his message as a whole. A picture of dead soldiers is pretty straight-forward. But, the moved body picture should definitely not be used as a reliable source of information because it's staged.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Media Then The Same as Today?

by [Trenton Bieker](#) - Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 10:00 PM

I think realizing the fact that manipulation is present in both photographs and written sources today and in the past is a huge necessity in being able to discern the truth in history and today. Without this knowledge we would be no better off describing the events of the Civil War than a blind person at an art show. Even today this happens when people get their news from one source not knowing that they too manipulate the stories to align with their political, social, or religious views. I think it is more crucial to be aware of this than blindly accept what is given. Though pressures to not question still are alive even today. I feel that this isn't the essence of the class, nor do I feel that this will be so strong of a force with future generations. Only if we keep the spirit of 1776 alive in all of us and press for questions to be ask more. Not as a skeptic for sake of skepticism, but as intelligent citizens, family, and friends ensuring that truth be given the highest honor. For anything less than truth is but a shame.

The biggest eye opener to me in the materials, was the video. The video states that people then look upon photographs the way we view television today. With this in mind you could see the motivation to manipulate photographs not only for fame, but for profit. I think again coming to the realization I had last week,when is false or twisted truth ok. only when there is no significant event or history changing impact felt from that manipulation. For example, if I use photography or a chapter in a book to fabricate a battle that never took place and pass it off as truth, this would not be a moral or honorable thing to do. However, if I manipulate a picture to catch the essence of what took place in a battle or in a letter depicting the mindset and feelings of a man to his wife, this would in my opinion be ok and just.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Photos vs. TV

by [Bethany Hunter-Lehman](#) - Saturday, January 31, 2015, 10:18 PM

Trenton,

Thank you for bringing up the video. I too watched it, but I kind of blew it off thinking that the articles were more important. What you brought up about the videos makes since. If we think about reality TV, how much of that is real? Whenever someone is trying to entertain the public for profit, rather it be photographs or TV, we should question the reality of it. They are trying to make money, so if they have an opportunity to exaggerate the truth to bring in profit, why wouldn't they? Thanks for bringing shining light on the video.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Capturing the essence

by [Jamie Mc Kinney](#) - Sunday, February 1, 2015, 11:23 PM

It is a fine line when you want to capture the essence of the event or era, and alter something in order to let it fully transfer to the audience. I am on the fence, too a certain extent. The saying "a picture is worth a thousand words," photographs have captured momentous events in history, and with some you can feel the emotion just by looking at the picture. But first and foremost, a photographer should always have their morals to guide them.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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gardner

by [Agina Hale](#) - Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 10:25 PM

I've known about people like Gardner, and I usually just keep it as part of how I look at old photos. Ideally of course, i'd like to know what pieces from a photo have been changed, and sometimes it's too bad. Overall it isn't every picture. Photography was a relatively new thing and it was very expensive for each of the slides. I could understand making every picture count.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Cost Per Slide

by [Trenton Bieker](#) - Sunday, February 1, 2015, 8:44 PM

Agina,

Yeah I never thought about cost per slide needed for a photo. At the same time i can't get over the thought that there were plenty of dead bodies around from both sides. I found the more I try to think of reason why it was ok, I further convince myself that its not. I honestly think it took more time to manipulate the photos and articles than to photograph what was really there.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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The photographers of the civil war

by [Peng Xu](#) - Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 11:14 PM

Multiple perspectives is an important aspect of this war. I feel that with the constant barrage of images of death, camp life, and life on the home front, you forget about the other view: the view from the headquarters. Although almost all of them had some first-hand combat experience, the generals of these massive armies saw this war from a very different, wider angle.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Respect for the Dead

by [Bethany Hunter-Lehman](#) - Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 11:27 PM

The main question was which article was more egregious to you, when it came to manipulating the data/image. Even though that is the main question, I can not help but think more of how disrespectful it is to take someone's body and remove it from

its resting place as well as possibly re-identifying who they were. I find it unsettling that photographers were just moving bodies around to fit the image that they wanted to create. I wasn't really surprised that the photographers did that, it was just more disturbing. The fact that they would also re-identify someone to fit the part also is disturbing. It is hard for me to grasp that concept of re-identifying someone because it takes away their story and experiences. Not only does that manipulate our history but to me it is so disrespectful.

Images are more powerful to me as a tool, mainly because it is easier to understand what the photographer is trying to say. Words can easily be misunderstood and twisted to mean different meanings. You can also find several meanings from an image but I feel that it has a more impact on someone's thoughts and reactions. Overall though, either changing an image or words to alter history isn't okay, because you are distorting the truth.

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

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Re: Respect for the Dead

by [Linda Hall](#) - Friday, January 30, 2015, 12:29 PM

Hi, Bethany

You are so right, it is and was like you said so disrespectful to remove the body and then placing it somewhere else, and really how do we know that they in fact put the right identification on that body. It was hard for me to accept that the photographers would do that, I know that is it done today, but who would have thought that they would do that back then. I am both a visual person and I also like to read, so to me I think that both of them are bad, it just has to make a person wonder what else they lied about during the writing of our history. I also have to wonder if Burns knew all of this and still chose to use them in his videos'

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Re: Respect for the Dead

by [Bethany Hunter-Lehman](#) - Saturday, January 31, 2015, 10:21 PM

Linda, I don't mind too much about the photos being in the videos. I think that it does add more depth to the content of the material that we are learning because it is an image that holds value. As long as Burns doesn't specifically identify the people in the photos something that they are not, I am okay with him using the images as an emotion grabber.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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Re: Respect for the Dead

by [Rebecca King](#) - Friday, January 30, 2015, 10:32 PM

I absolutely agree that it was disrespectful to move the bodies, just to get the picture that the photographer wanted. It reminds me of stories I've heard about war photography in the Middle East, where images or video will be similarly altered or even staged. I think that despite how disrespectful it is, the most dangerous consequence is that the people who see it will often not question whether or not it's real. Images can be a very powerful tool (think WWII or the Vietnam War and the effect of images).

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Re: Respect for the Dead

by [Agina Hale](#) - Saturday, January 31, 2015, 12:54 AM

That is the interesting part. I think that it depends on perspective. Why is it so taboo to move a dead body considering it has no self awareness after death. It all depends on the culture that you are a part of, I suppose.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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Re: Respect for the Dead

by [Marcelo Rodriguez](#) - Saturday, January 31, 2015, 3:04 PM

Agina,

I agree with you, I think that it was disturbing to learn that Garner or any other photographer would move a body to fit what they want to photograph. I think it is disrespectful to move a body unless you are going to get it ready to bury it. I am more of a visual learner so it is easier for me to understand photos more than words; like you said words can be easily misunderstood or twisted, however as we have learned this week pictures can also be twisted and changed to what the photographer wants people to see especially in today's world of technology like Photoshop and such. To be honest I didn't really think that photos like Garner's were staged back then. It does make you stop and think, what photos from history are staged and which ones aren't?

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Manipulated Images

by [Jamie Mc Kinney](#) - Thursday, January 29, 2015, 12:33 AM

I found "confused identity" to be the one most easy to spot, but "moved body" was more disturbing. When looking at images that are supposed to be legitimate, I believe they are there simply to put add perspective to whatever words are written. In a sense, so we can see for ourselves and truly commit to what we are choosing to believe. When images are manipulated, as these were, I don't think it makes the event that they are trying to capture any less meaningful historically speaking. With "confused identity" it would be understandable, but not morally agreeable, for a photographer only getting a few good shots of fallen men, and then making as much profit as he could by manipulating the location, angles and the subjects. Regardless of which side of the war those men were on or the exact location, the photos would provoke the same emotion from a viewer if the right narration or written words were with it. We would be listening or reading, and believe the story surrounding that particular image. As for "moved body," it is troubling that the photographer would move the bodies and set up props in order to get his "shot." Of course, I find this case to be more of an issue of morals than of historical accuracy. The historical truth would be jeopardized though by the photographer in this case because he was adding props that were not true to the soldiers. It is one thing to change an angle of a shot, or location (if the location was not terribly different); but adding items that do not belong can give the viewer the wrong idea of what the soldiers had as advantages or disadvantages. All in all, I think it is worse to change what is written because as we read we are creating our own images as we go, and when we see photos that accompany them, well it is just for verification of what we have already read. Manipulating photos may be a little deceitful, but from my perspective photos that are of historical content are really there to express what has been written but never witnessed...so to a certain extent manipulation can be beneficial if it gives the audience a sense of the time.

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

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Re: Manipulated Images

by [Agina Hale](#) - Friday, January 30, 2015, 11:55 AM

I'm not sure if I can really answer as to which I feel is more egregious. I like the insight that you get from reading these analysis's from the researchers as well as what Gardner wrote for the pictures. When Gardner describes the sharpshooter, he has an artistic way of trying to illuminate what the last scenario of this soldier's life was like. He took this one spot where he obviously imagined a very stoic battle, and used his imagination.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Re: Manipulated Images

by [Kayla Janis](#) - Saturday, January 31, 2015, 6:22 PM

I think Gardner's description for the photos in "Mistaken Identity" were awful. I think he used his own creative license to elaborate on an image. He took his prejudices and clearly imposed them onto the photography (as I mentioned in another comment). That, in and of itself, doesn't bother me. In my opinion, it's just propaganda. You see it in any war. WWI and WWII had images of Germans terrorizing women, Jews depicted as rats, or posters with mottos like, "Loose lips sink ships." Looking back on them, you can use them to understand attitudes and beliefs of the time-Americans villainizing the German enemy; Germans turning the Jewish population into vile creatures. Gardner's descriptions in Mistaken Identity, in my opinion, fall under wartime propaganda. If you see it as that, I think we can use it as a valuable tool to understand the attitudes of the Union population during and after the war. It'd be interesting to see if there was a Confederate photographer who did something similar. I'd like to see what comments he'd make about the dead Union soldiers.

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

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Once Again!

by [Bethany Hunter-Lehman](#) - Saturday, January 31, 2015, 10:26 PM

Kayla, Once again you have me thinking more in depth! Its awesome that you compared what the photographers did to propaganda techniques that have been used in the past. The only differences I see is that it seems most propaganda from other war eras used cartoons to depict their images, while these photographers used dead people which is a little more disturbing. Either way, it must have gave out a strong emotion for that era.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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Re: Once Again!

by [Kayla Janis](#) - Sunday, February 1, 2015, 8:11 PM

That's a really good point! I saw it all as "art" and a propaganda tool. But, using real people does make a difference. I agree that it's more disturbing. I think it's much more manipulative, really. An actual corpse is a stronger image than a cartoon, in my opinion. If it were me, I feel like it'd be easier to associate a loved one with Gardener's images than with a WWI poster.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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Propaganda

by [Trenton Bieker](#) - Sunday, February 1, 2015, 9:04 PM

Kayla,

That is a great way of looking at these photos, as propaganda. You made me think about the fact i haven't seen much propaganda material about the Civil War. I did a quick search on youtube and the web, to find any propaganda materials. I found a video that goes through various posters and artwork here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uo-HOjRChpc>. It would be noted I didn't do any checking on authenticity, just thought these were refreshing and added to your posted in a visual way. On the web I found a site that has an archive of propaganda materials <https://ideologicalart.wordpress.com/war/american-civil-war-gallery/>. Some of the propaganda is strong and can only imagine it's impact in the 1860's. Selling a Mother From Her Child had to of been a powerful tool during Emancipation Proclamation.

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

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National Inquirer for the 19th Century

by [Agina Hale](#) - Friday, January 30, 2015, 11:11 AM

There is an article that I read, which I think is from the same source about Grants head being superimposed on the head of someone else. Once you actually spend the time to focus on the photo and know what you are looking for it becomes obvious. I really can't fault anyone for doing this. Photography was a pretty remarkable instrument, and still in it's infancy. I could empathize with wanting a picture to really captivate the moment.

I also like to think about the way pictures were taken back then. My father was really into photography and actually had a camera that was similar to the type they would use in this era. He showed me how to use his camera, which was pretty complicated. The process they would have to go through during the war was even more intense.

- A clean sheet of glass was evenly coated with collodion.
- In a darkroom or a light-tight chamber, the coated plate was immersed in a silver nitrate solution, sensitizing it to light.
- After it was sensitized, the wet negative was placed in a light-tight holder and inserted into the camera, which already had been positioned and focused.
- The "dark slide," which protected the negative from light, and the lens cap were removed for several seconds, allowing light to expose the plate.
- The "dark slide" was inserted back into the plate holder, which was then removed from the camera.
- In the darkroom, the glass plate negative was removed from the plate holder and developed, washed in water, and fixed so that the image would not fade, then washed again and dried.

- Usually the negatives were coated with a varnish to protect the surface.
- After development, the photographs were printed on paper and mounted

Knowing what we do about the process, is why I do empathize with trying to get the right shot for a newspaper, book or selling them for family of soldiers.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Getting the shot

by [Jamie Mc Kinney](#) - Sunday, February 1, 2015, 12:13 AM

That process sounds truly monotonous. I can understand the aspect of getting a good shot for whom ever might be buying the photograph. I bet it was hard work for a photograph to pack all of their equipment, traveling from their home to the site. It surely must has been their motivation for doing what ever necessary to the soldiers, using props and moving them. I would think that it would have been incredibly uncomfortable for the photographers, especially if they were of the religious type, but if it meant putting money in their pocket and food on the table it must have been worth it to them.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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If Only They Had Digital

by [Trenton Bieker](#) - Sunday, February 1, 2015, 9:22 PM

Agina,

Yeah the process sounds extensive and I think is the best argument for the photos being manipulated. I think I found the site you found <http://www.civilwar.org/photos/3d-photography-special/photography-and-the-civil-war.html> . To add to the extensive process of photography I read this "Photographers had to carry all of their heavy equipment, including their darkroom, by wagon. They also had to be prepared to process cumbersome light-sensitive images in cramped wagons." Thinking about the risk being on a battle field with a huge target of a wagon and trying to take a picture of the enemy, makes since why they found a safe place to take a photo and even move bodies to get this done. It just doesn't sit very well in my stomach. That sounds like a ton of work for a photo. We really have it so easy today with digital photography.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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To Move or To Confuse

by [Trenton Bieker](#) - Sunday, February 1, 2015, 8:27 PM

When I sat here and thought about the two photos, the first thing I thought was how could you disgrace the soldiers by claiming they were from the opposite side. I mean all that they had sacrificed on both side to then being used as a puppet presented as the enemy? I mean the battle field was huge and so many died on both sides, why couldn't they find the real soldier from the real army. I almost wonder if it was a inside joke, like "hey look that photo I took....They didn't even notice". Again I highly doubt that any soldier from either side would what to be representing the enemy, even if they were dead. I will give Gardner credit for doing a good job with positioning himself for those shots. Even looking at it now, with the evidence exposing its fraud, it is hard to tell its the same group of men. I wonder how long someone stared at those photos to figure this out.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: To Move or To Confuse

by [Rebecca King](#) - Sunday, February 1, 2015, 11:40 PM

I agree that it was really disrespectful of the photographer to move the bodies like that. I was thinking of it in the sense that their corpses were being used as puppets for the gain of the photographer. I didn't even think about the fact that those soldiers would most likely hate the idea of viewers thinking they fought for the opposite side. I also agree, even if it sounds bad, that you have to admit there was some skill behind it. To be willing to do anything to get the best shot and that nobody even knew for so long.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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