

When Al-Qaeda members hijacked passenger planes and decided to use them as missiles against the twin towers in New York, they probably did not look into the eyes of those that would be their victims. Likewise, when British and American soldiers bombarded Afghanistan, all they may have been able to see on their screens were white and green attack lights.

For terrorists and soldiers, victims are not scared or miserable men. Nor are they dangerous, inferior or even vile, or people that need to be reformed, locked up, tortured or punished. They are not even men to be annihilated. They are simply non-men.

The victims of the world that followed 11 September are non-human, in that they were regarded as something instrumental and ahistorical that could be used for a reason that survives on the basis of an extremely simple form of evasion: not looking them in the eye. Their acts are a form of nostalgia in a vertical world whose destinations are determined by something "beyond" the present, beyond the living, beyond any choice.

And looking into someone else's eyes, capturing a third party in the reflection of oneself, forces you to think.

According to Diderot, looking into the victim's eye forces you *"to torment yourself with other*

people's personas and the urgent need to soothe them."

. A fellow creature is therefore a creation of what we see of ourselves within a stranger, a result of the imagination, an invented third party that emerges in an irrefutable act of magic and of the illusion that we are bound by some form of similarity. Ethics would therefore be a more posthumous form of magic.

Ulises Castellanos' extraordinary photographs in both war zones in September 2001 are full of victims' eyes. The similarities he drew between the city of surgical face masks and that of burkhas restore the magical nature of the contemplation of other's pain. For Ulysses, New York and Afghanistan are not as far apart as one might think. Finding the imaginary third party is a task of his viewers and those who examine his photos with Diderot's eye.

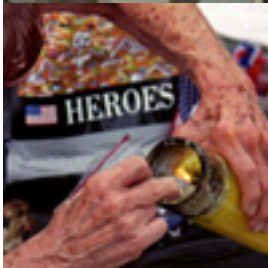
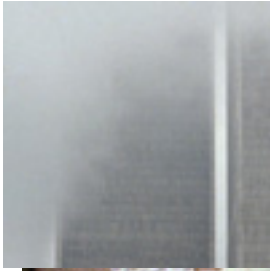
We can do nothing in the new world foisted onto us by the *"life beyond"* 11 September. Nothing except sympathize.

Fabrizio Mejía Madrid

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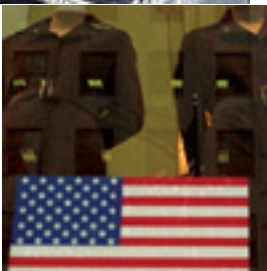
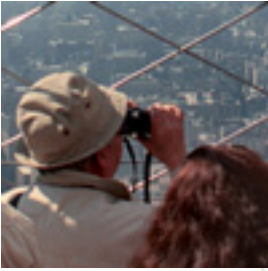
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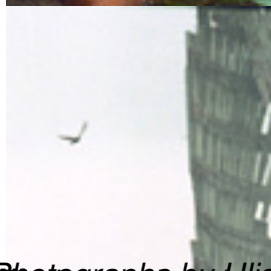
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