

enough to see, for instance, what differences there are between the lunisolar cycles of Meton, Callippus and Hipparchus (pp. 45–49), especially in terms of the lengths of their years. But how they each discovered these data, and in the service of what aim is not at all clear. Steel creates a sense of “science for science’s sake,” which simply begs the question, “So what?”

One is also left at times with an uneasy doubt about Steel’s detailed grasp of the historical and social context of his subject — his comments on the name of Augustus (p. 51), the religious affiliation of Clavius (p. 163) and papal infallibility (p. 164) are instances of misleading oversimplification at best, and undermine one’s confidence. Early Modernists will read (Chapter 14) with (uneasy?) fascination of the notion that the English initially settled the east coast of North America for the secret

purpose of laying hold of land on the longitude on which the equinox would always be on the same day, so that they could establish the perfect Christian calendar. One wonders why Galileo was still bothering to work out a method of discovering longitude in 1616, if the English had it down to such a fine art.

Steel also seems unaware of continued interest by the Catholic Church in the definition of the length of year and its impact on the timing of Easter in the centuries immediately after the establishment of the Gregorian calendar, an interest illustrated by the setting of the meridian line in the floor of the right transept of the Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Rome in 1703 (a simple explanation is given, in Italian, at: <http://www.quipo.it/internetscuola/ipertesti/terra/guida.htm>, (5 July 2000)).

Bruce Bernard, *Century: One Hundred Years of Human Progress, Regression, Suffering and Hope*

DAVID HARRIS

Bernard, Bruce. *Century: One Hundred Years of Human Progress, Regression, Suffering and Hope*. London: Phaidon Press, 1999. 1120 pp., cloth \$49.95, ISBN: 0-7148-3848-9.

In 1980, Bruce Bernard, then picture editor of the London *Sunday Times* magazine, published *Photodiscovery: Masterworks of Photography 1840–1940*. This anthology celebrated the first century of photography through the display of 213 images, drawn from photography’s various uses and applications — as reportage, as surrogates for foreign travel, as instruments of colonial ideology, as family mementos, as pornography, and as art. The sequence and often startling juxtaposition of images mirrored photography’s ubiquitous presence as both witness and consciousness of an aggressively middle-class materialistic culture. Equally, it conveyed the beauty and presence of photographs as aesthetic objects, through the decision to treat each image individually and to reproduce it in full colour. Bernard hoped to stimulate interest in the medium by delighting, seducing, astonishing, and intriguing his readers. Sadly, the book has been long out of print, but remains one of the seminal introductions to the medium of photography.

Almost twenty years later, Bernard conceived of and edited another anthology of photographic images, also spanning a century, but with quite different ambitions and purposes. *Century: One Hundred Years of Human Progress, Regression, Suffering and Hope*, runs to over 1100 pages, and contains almost as many photographs. While the earlier book was more modestly concerned with demonstrating the astonishing variety and beauty of images made during photography’s formative period, *Century* sets itself the daunting task of visually chronicling the seminal events and dominant personalities of the entire twentieth century, as these have been recorded by the camera. In its purposes, *Century* strives for comprehensiveness in its selection of its subjects, and dispassionate fairness in their presentation. It reads as a public summing-up, as the necessary attempt to bring order and clarity to the relentless rush of events and the equally bewildering occurrence of natural disasters. From the vantage point of the end of the millennium, it seeks a perspective from which to contemplate the events and to identify underlying patterns in the seemingly uncontrollable, often cyclical eruptions of violence that have marked this century.

Century draws upon photography's social function as the public trace and shared visual memory of past events. The twentieth century is the first to be recorded in its entirety through photography and photographically-derived media, including film and video. How these hundred years will be visually remembered and imagined rests largely with photography. In constructing a suitable framework for this historical narrative and in seeking to epitomize the century's aspirations and ideals, Bernard utilizes three devices — a chronological sequence of images, brief and extended contextualizing captions, and the double-page-spread layout.

All of the photographs are organized into a strict chronological sequence so that, in reading *Century*, one progresses inexorably forward through time. Because of the enormous number of photographs that threaten to overwhelm the reader, Bernard has wisely sub-divided the book into six chapters. Each corresponds to a distinctive period, and centres upon certain watershed events and emphasizes specific social and cultural concerns. The first chapter, "1899–1914, High Hopes and Recklessness," for example, is prefaced by eight images from 1899, which introduce the major themes that pervade the succeeding fifteen years and, indeed, characterize the whole century: the material values of bourgeois life, the priorities of economic forces, the presence of the United States as a looming, if reluctant, world power, and the racial tensions and pressures for social equality and political emancipation. The following 129 photographs considerably expand the geographical framework to include Russia, China, Japan, and the Balkans, and concentrate upon delineating, on the one hand, the economic, technological, and cultural achievements, and, on the other, the persistent political tensions and the unrestricted military build-up that inevitably led to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

Within the framework of each chapter, Bernard differentiates each year by treating the relevant photographs as a thematically-coherent group, distinctive in their concerns from the preceding and succeeding years. A reliance upon a chronological presentation creates a temporal structure within which to place and relate political, social, and artistic events. Cataclysmic events, such as Hitler's rise to power in the 1930s, are signalled by individual photographs that, scattered over many pages, gradually coalesce into a concentration of images.

Each chapter is prefaced by a relatively brief introduction that succinctly identifies the principal events, personalities, and concerns. This is followed by twelve written excerpts, drawn from novels, poems, and political speeches, which encapsulate major cultural and political pre-occupations, and establish a distinctive tone for the period being treated. Each photograph is accompanied by a brief caption, often more interpretative than purely informational in nature and, in a section following the chapter's images, by a far more extended commentary that provides the larger historical context for the subjects recorded in the photograph. These two levels of captioning anchor the photographs in time and place, supply them with background information and factual details, and connect them to the larger themes being traced throughout the book.

Bernard relies upon the double-page-spread as the basic unit for ordering the photographs and creating historical meaning. It is, of course, impossible to insure that readers will read a picture book as it was intended; rather than proceeding systematically through such books from beginning to end, readers characteristically open them randomly, frequently jump forward over several pages, flip backwards, linger over particular images, skip entire sections, and generally ignore the carefully researched and written extended captions. What Bernard, as a seasoned picture editor, could fully control was the organization of each double-spread. Through the deliberate placement of one to four images, often of different sizes, across two pages, Bernard had a flexible tool with which to create visual relationships between different images. He could bring alternative perspectives to the interpretation of a single event, such as the three photographs devoted to the 1917 Passchendale offensive (pages 166–67); describe several phases in a quickly evolving drama, such as the three photographs reproduced over two contiguous page-spreads covering President Kennedy's assassination on 22 November 1963 (pages 638–41); or, to cite one further instance, symbolically distill a complex situation, such as the two haunting photographs documenting the birth of a child and the death of a famine victim in Sudan in 1998 (pages 1052–53).

In addition to spreads devoted to a single event are those in which Bernard deliberately juxtaposed concurrent but seemingly unrelated events. Here the links are more suggestive and mysterious, where meaning is hinted at and gradually teased out. A photograph of Hitler

reviewing a guard of honour in Berlin and one of an unidentified British Liberal candidate campaigning, both taken in 1935, allow Bernard to contrast opposing political ideologies (pages 342–43); images of the first UFO sighting and the explosion of the first hydrogen bomb, both made in 1952, touch upon deeply felt anxieties over the fragility of human existence during the cold war period (pages 532–33) while, in a pair of images that are deliberately polemical, Don McCullin's image of a starving Biafran girl and Irving Penn's "Nubile Young Beauty of Diamoré, Cameroon," both taken in 1969, Bernard underlines the persistence of contradictory Western attitudes towards the

post-colonial world (pages 738–39). Such provocative juxtapositions invest historical events and societal values with an inherent richness and complexity.

Century squats massively on one's desk, a dark, obdurate presence. In the sheer number of images, it is staggering and overwhelming; in the accumulated record of violence and sorrow and the seemingly unresolvable conflicts, it is tireless and without remorse. As a commentary on the legacy of the twentieth century, this book stands as a painful yet fascinating memorial and ironic monument, and reads as a Pandora's box of misery and anguish.

Daniel Wojcik, *The End of the World as We Know It: Faith, Fatalism, and Apocalypse in America*

PAUL NATHANSON

Wojcik, Daniel. *The End of the World as We Know It: Faith, Fatalism and Apocalypse in America*. New York: New York University Press, 1997. 281 pp., 43 illus., cloth \$50, ISBN 0-8147-9283-9.

In *The End of the World as We Know It*, Daniel Wojcik explores one very "timely" aspect of American popular religion: apocalyptic traditions as they are interpreted at the turn of the second millennium. Most (but not all) of these predict global catastrophe in the immediate future. This "apocalypse" is to be followed in most (but not all) cases by some form of redemption or renewal (at least for initiates). Although some scenarios involve natural catastrophes, such as comets or meteors, the ones of most interest to readers of this journal involve technological catastrophes such as ecological degradation and nuclear war. Wojcik shows how myths of technology have become deeply embedded in both traditional religion (new versions not only of Protestant millenarianism but also of Catholic pietism) and "secular religion" (new communities based on myths about either benevolent or malevolent use of technology by extraterrestrial beings).

The book consists of eight chapters. The first two, "Approaching Doomsday" and "The American Apocalyptic Legacy," discuss the relation between traditional and modern forms of speculation about the "endtimes." Traditional

speculation has usually focussed attention on an era of rampant evil, a cataclysm of cosmic proportions, Christ's return (or Rapture), and the ultimate salvation or damnation of human beings. Contemporary speculation often adds additional features. A common one is the conspiracy of international bankers, multinational corporations, prototypes of world government, united churches, and so on; this is said to have been made possible by those who control the Internet and other advanced forms of communication.

In the third and fourth chapters, Wojcik discusses two case studies drawn from traditional religion. The first is an offshoot of Protestant fundamentalism. In "The American Apocalyptic Legacy," Wojcik discusses Hal Lindsey, author of *The Late Great Planet Earth*. His prediction of approaching doom for all but the chosen few, an event completely beyond human control or even influence, features technological disasters such as Chernobyl and the continuing likelihood of nuclear war. The book has been attacked repeatedly by liberal Christians, among others, for fostering passivity in the face of major environmental and other problems. Nevertheless, he and his followers have never been stronger. One reason for that is their ability to interpret news events, especially those involving the Middle East and Russia, in the light of ancient prophecy. The second case study is an offshoot of Catholic