Composite Congress

On Dispersal Patterns in Mathew Brady's Political Imagery[1]

Ulrich Meurer

1. Patchwork—The difference between Europe and America, between their historical and topographical formations, is the difference between embroidery and patchwork. In the penultimate chapter of the *Thousand Plateaus*, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari delineate the story of the quilt through »a short migration sequence« (the settlers leaving the Old World) and detect a transition from embroidered to ›appliqué‹ or ›pieced‹ quilts. In contrast to the formers' central theme or motif and dependence on a woven, i.e., striated underlay, the patchwork is characterized by a missing center, by the indistinguishability of top and bottom, and by infinite, successive additions with their affinity to smooth space.[2] Expanding horizontally, it is the epitome of a particularly ›American‹ combinatorics: a collection of samples or heterogeneous parts—not only in textiles, but also in philosophy, politics, aesthetics….

As a trans-discursive concept, the patchwork marks the renunciation of Europe's principle of ancestry. It dismisses the family tree and root and all institutional verticals (kingship and its administration) which descend from, and can always be traced back to, a ›One.‹ While the tree dominates the dynastic successions of Judeo-Christian history, oedipal family structures, political hierarchies, and the philosophical concept of origin, America lets the horizons flee.[3] It shifts frontiers, forms rhizomes and replaces consanguinity with a loose gathering and voluntary oath of fatherless individuals. Deleuze's essay on Herman Melville's *Bartleby* identifies the American as »one who is freed from the English paternal function, the son of a crumbled father, son of all nations.«[4] Against the monarch,

1 This paper is an abridged version of the article »Patchworking the Union,« to be published in German in: Martin Doll and Oliver Kohns (eds.): Die zwei Körper der Nation, 2 volumes, Paderborn 2014.

2 Cf. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari: A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia, translated by Brian Massumi, Minneapolis/London 1987, p. 477.

3 Cf. ibid., p. 19.

4 Gilles Deleuze: Bartleby; or, The Formula, in: Id.: Essays Critical and Clinical, translated by Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco, London/New York 1998, pp. 68–90: 85.

America introduces a utopian society of friends, a general assembly with its belief in relations.

This, then, is a central aspect of the patchwork: the principle of relations not being subordinate or the mere attributes of entities, but existing outside and independent of them. Such a displacement of ›substances‹ by seams and ruptures, gaps and intersections, attractions and repulsions also implicates the loss of any guiding principle. The assemblage or *agencement* does not constitute a whole, it has no ›general‹, it is neither representation nor symbol. Deleuze calls this peculiar joining a harlequin's coat, a spinal column without a brain, a wall of uncemented stones, an archipelago….

And according to his reading of Walt Whitman, the adhesive force between all the patches and elements is *sympathy*. As a relational agency, sympathy provides for both contact and separation; it initiates the encounter or »co-functioning«[5] of the various physical, social, verbal bodies, and at the same time, it ensures their difference and distance, since the elements perceive each other only in passing—as D. H. Lawrence highlights in Whitman: »Meeting all the other wayfarers on the road. And how? […] With sympathy, says Whitman. Sympathy. He does not say love. He says sympathy. Feeling with. Feeling with them as they feel with themselves. Catching the vibration of their soul and flesh as we pass. […] Accepting the contact with other souls along the open way, as they lived their lives.«[6] Operating as a connector and spacer, sympathy arranges for that precarious balance between random disintegration and metaphysical merging, anarchy and state apparatus, while the patchwork is in constant danger of drifting towards one of these poles. (In fact, since he cannot hold his horses, Walt Whitman eventually allows the ideal of sympathy to turn into one great Christian love: no more relational particles, but the fusion of everything in the universe, as Lawrence laments: »All those lists of things boiled in one pudding-cloth!«)[7]

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5 Cf. Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet: Dialogues II, translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, London/New York 2002, p. 39.

6 D. H. Lawrence: Studies in Classic American Literature, London 1971, p. 181. In many ways, Lawrence's writings give direction to the Deleuzian interpretations of Anglo-American literature, culture and philosophy: e.g., he points to the »lines of flight« drawn by Lawrence and Herman Melville in order to escape from petrified subjectivity and personalized consciousness, from the rule of the signifier and rigid »faciality« (cf. Deleuze, Guattari: Thousand Plateaus (as note 2), pp. 186–191); furthermore, Lawrence opposes European morals and its concept of charity to an ideal of American »life« (cf. Deleuze: Bartleby (as note 4), p. 87), and criticizes Whitman for his unhealthy pantheism (cf. Gilles Deleuze: Whitman, in: Id.: Essays Critical and Clinical (as note 4), pp. 56–60: 58, note 12).

7 Lawrence: Classic American Literature (as note 6), p. 174.

To sum up, when we talk about ›patchwork‹ in a Deleuzian sense, we indicate a constellation characterized by the *elective affinity* of its elements (as opposed to familial structures), by a particular *relationism* which is independent of subjects or objects, by *horizontality* without a general or leading principle, and finally by the specific intervals or ›proximal distance‹ between sympathetic parts holding the position between diffusion and cementation.

2. The senate, 1859—Mathew Brady may not be the first photographer who wants to be recognized as the national historian of the United States (before him, Edward Anthony and John Plumbe had entertained the same aspirations). In any case, Brady is determined to document American antebellum politics and the Civil War experience in every detail, taking pictures of hundreds of socialites to »concentrate and embalm«[8] his epoch in images—a major example being his Gallery of Illustrious Americans from 1850, a series of twelve daguerreotypes of prominent politicians, scientists and artists, lithographed for publication by Francis D'Avignon. After twenty years as a famous portraitist in New York, ›Brady of Broadway‹ opens a branch studio in Willard's Hotel in Washington, D.C., known as the ›Residence of Presidents‹ and according to Nathaniel Hawthorne, »more justly called the center of Washington and the Union than either the Capitol, the White House, or the State Department. Everybody may be seen there. It is the meeting-place of the true representatives of the country […]. You exchange nods with governors of sovereign States; you elbow illustrious men, and tread on the toes of generals; you hear statesmen and orators speaking in their familiar tones.«[9] Situated at Pennsylvania Avenue and 14th Street, the gallery is not far from the White House, so that Brady's daguerreotypes and albumen prints can ›embalm‹ delegates, senators and—from Adams to McKinley—(almost) every person who, between 1825 and 1901, held the presidential chair. And in 1859 and 1860 Mathew Brady produces two elaborate collages of the 36th United States Congress: the first large-size salted paper print shows the members of the House of Representatives, the other one those of the Senate.

8 Cf. the article »M. B. Brady« by an anonymous author in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper 3.57 (January 10, 1857), p. 86, quoted in: Mary Panzer: Mathew Brady and the Image of History, Washington, DC 1997, p. 96.

9 Nathaniel Hawthorne: Chiefly About War Matters, By a Peaceable Man, in: The Atlantic Monthly (July 1862), under: http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/print/1862/07/chiefly-about-war-matters/6159/ (04.13.2012).

Fig. 1: M. Brady: *Composite of the Members of the United States Senate,* 1859, salted paper print, Princeton University Library, Graphic Arts Collection

It is a common saying in political theory that democracy has no images. The transition of sovereignty from the monarch to the people is accompanied by the abandonment of ceremonial and spectacular representations of rule; the new republican maxim of reason puts an end to all pictorial enchantments. In his ›po-

litical anatomy of democratic representations‹, Philip Manow delineates an extensive discursive tradition—from Habermas's post-metaphysical and iconoclastic democracy, Foucault's incorporality of the republic and Patrick Guineffey's transformation of subjects into quantities to Albrecht Koschorke's democratic unrepresentability and, perhaps most famously, Claude Lefort's empty place of power.[10] The sovereign is everyone, individuals are conceived as numerical values (of votes in proportional elections), the imaginary becomes symbolic. Nonetheless, Brady's composite seems to act as an even twofold instance of representation, namely as the collective portrait of the US-Senate which, in turn, is supposed to be the true image of the people.[11] Thus, the picture raises the question of whether, and how, its modality and mediality might perhaps disclose the basic régime of American politics as patchwork.

Before producing a ›likeness‹ or confirming the identity of any specific subject or substance, Brady's image emphasizes the spatial coherence of bodies, their relations, which actually prove to lie outside the figures. In the first place, the senators' heads constitute a collocation or cluster. The characteristic diversity and particularity of their faces opens out into a complex web of jaw-lines, forelocks, and shirt-fronts, rather than converging on distinct individuals. Nine years earlier, the twelve Illustrious Americans had still formed a collection of singular items: every month the subscribers received one sheet, every portrait was published as an oval vignette in the middle of the printed folio, every head centered in front of a mostly neutral background. These earlier portraits relied on the formula of classical paintings—focusing on the respective subject and thereby establishing paternal antetypes. Modeled after the prime father and avatar of national union, George Washington, the images formed a series of »second fathers.«[12] In contrast, Brady's composites of the US-Congress employ such representative and ›aristocratic‹ single components only to introduce them into a specifically ›democratic‹ constellation.

The image's production process alone accounts for the elements' undetermined status *between* reverential detachment and political fusion: in personal sittings with the various delegates, Brady and his assistants expose hundreds of glass plates; the prints are cut out individually, collaged in a three-by-five foot frame and then re-photographed—no group picture, but a composition; no communion, but a

10 Cf. Philip Manow: Im Schatten des Königs. Die politische Anatomie demokratischer Repräsentation, Frankfurt am Main 2008, pp. 8 sq and 18.

11 Philip Manow points to the fact that the topos of the people's ›representation‹ in parliament is not only wide-spread by the mid-18th century; moreover, the metaphors of an ›image‹ or ›portrait‹ of the people *en miniature* and of the parliament as a well-composed ›work of art‹ which ennobles its object are taken quite literally. Cf. ibid., p. 88 sq.

12 Alan Trachtenberg: Reading American Photographs. Images as History. Mathew Brady to Walker Adams, New York 1989, p. 51.

patchwork. This medial operation leaves its mark on the form. On the one hand, it seems obvious that Mathew Brady tries to present an ideal convention, sixty-eight senators who address and align themselves with a common subject—be it the observer of the picture as the legal initiator of this assembly, a virtual vanishing point in front of the image surface, a political aim, a national body.… Hence, the figures on the left turn to the right, and vice versa; they are all centered round a rather precise point of convergence or along a shared axis of attention. However, this common orientation is countered by the senators' diverging lines of sight. Like the Illustrious Americans, they have been photographed in individual sessions, aiming their sometimes introspective and sometimes visionary neo-classical gazes at diverse and distant objects (their own soul, historical events, the nation's future). While, according to Alan Trachtenberg, Brady's earlier portraits show »public figures in moments of abstraction, perhaps deep in thought—in any case, unaware of being seen,«[13] the two composites, by suggesting a collective, let the individual figures' timeless contemplation appear as somewhat tattered and silent confusion of the group. Although some of the senators return our gaze, most of them look here and there and seem distracted by random points in space. The *concentralization* of bodies is thus undercut by a peculiar dissonance of attention. Anticipating the coming events of 1861, Brady's composite may well evoke *amor patriae* and national unity, but on a more latent formal level its concomitance and intricate crossings of two differing directions—one centripetal and unionist, the other centrifugal and secessionist—seem to call into question the ›One‹ and ›synthesis‹. Beneath Brady's representation of a political bond, we can still discern the wall of uncemented stones….

In a similar vein, spatiality and flatness intersect in the composite. Again, everything seems to congregate in one extensive space as Brady detaches the busts from their original settings, removes their frames and surrounds them with so many neighboring shoulders and heads. According to the rules of monocular spacial perception and atmospheric perspective, the figures overlap, and those in the foreground have sharper contours and appear significantly richer in contrast than those in the background. Yet, none of them casts a shadow, which would indicate a shared presence in space; no ambient structure supports the illusion of spatiality. Moreover, the background figures' missing reduction in size creates the impression that the ground rises steeply like the tiers in an anatomical theater. And finally, a sometimes rough scissor-cut or too straight edge of a silhouette marks the handcrafted flatness of the composite. Thus, while space contains and scales

13 Ibid., p. 46. The impression of timeless abstraction is heightened by D'Avignon's lithographic smoothing and idealization of the previously detailed and true-to-life daguerreotypes.

the elements, they also appear evenly disseminated or strewn on a plane where, according to Deleuze, each one of them has, »a value in itself but also in relation to others: isolated and floating relations, islands and straits, mobile points and sinuous lines—for Truth always has ›jagged edges‹.«[14] This heterogeneous space with its peculiar dimensionality (greater than 2, smaller than 3; more than plane, less than space)[15] is of course an effect of the collage-technique. Without aiming for it, Brady's operation of joining one portrait to another implements a particular kind of politics; it is the pictorial realization of the patchwork. Owing precisely to its alleged medial and formal ›deficits‹ and to the awkwardness of the *dispositif*, the image—far from becoming a mere political metaphor—possesses a clandestine democratic excess value.

There is more to say about intersections of singles and multiples, for instance regarding the image's temporality: while it seems that the assembly has actually gathered in front of the lens, while it imitates the instantaneousness of the photographic moment, the extended and differentiated time of the diverse production steps is nevertheless inscribed in the image. It displays a specific asynchronicity, a feigned presence which seeks to conceal the extensive process and its various absences. For not only does the taking of so many photographs last several months; in addition, ten of the senators are expelled for their support of the confederate rebellion, twelve resign from office as their states leave the Union, senator Sam Houston's term ends in March 1859, senator David C. Broderick is mortally wounded in a duel with the Chief Judge of California's supreme court in September, Hannibal Hamlin leaves the senate to become Vice President under Lincoln. And when Brady is ready to sell prints of the composite, the senate is an entirely different one. The picture shows the paradoxical unity of an elaborately synthesized instant: no presence, not even a historical afterimage, but political fiction.

3. Leviathan—The composite of 1859 confronts the *unum* with the *pluribus*, it crosses the figures' concerted alignment, homogeneous spatiality and synchronicity with the divergence of their lines of vision, entropic flatness and asynchronic-

14 Cf. Deleuze: Bartleby (as note 4), p. 86.

15 Cf. Deleuze, Guattari: Thousand Plateaus (as note 2), p. 482 sqq. Deleuze and Guattari illustrate smooth space by means of mathematical sets whose dimension is represented by fractions or non-integral numbers; one example is the ›Von Koch's curve‹ (a line of the dimension 1,2618 which ›sprawls‹ through homothetic segmentation and recombination to approximate a surface) or the ›Sierpensky's sponge‹ (a cube whose infinite homothetic perforation produces a dimension of 2,7268 — between surface and space). »A smooth, amorphous space of this kind is constituted by an accumulation of proximities, and each accumulation defines a *zone of indiscernibility* proper to ›becoming‹ (more than a line and less than a surface; less than a volume and more than a surface).« (p. 488).

ity. This discrepancy in the pictured leads over to a fundamental indeterminacy of the picture itself: it is a photographic icon or index, i.e., it resembles the members of the US-Senate, and it depends upon their presence in front of the camera. But at the same time, and beyond all concrete resemblances, it visualizes the specific ›proximity‹ between collage and collective, between a medial and a political patchwork through the analogy of concepts determining their respective patterns (what Kant calls a »symbolic hypotyposis«).[16] Obviously, the image operates on multiple representational levels, it lacks a unifying structural and semiotic principle or ›general‹.

That something is missing is unmistakably indicated by a rather insistent blank spot: a hole in the heart of the image, as if someone had not yet arrived or already left. This empty center cannot be adequately explained by the compositional dynamics, for example as the characteristic hub which forms when the direction of the senators turning right meets those turning left—like a hair whorl or the eye of a cyclone around which the substance organizes itself. Moreover, this gap is no isolated case; it recurs in Mathew Brady's collage of the House of Representatives and therefore appears as a constitutive and consciously introduced part of the represented political body.

A veritable icon of political theory may offer a clue for this empty place: the frontispiece of Hobbes' *Leviathan* is the hypotypotic representation of a state in which the sovereign is no longer dependent on the grace of God, but on the plurality of the subjects who constitute his creatural and mortal body *from below*. But the place of authority remains undivided; the privileged metonymical organ of the head or brain (obviously no Deleuzian spinal column) is intact and inaccessible for the people.[17] This head piece guarantees the stability of the whole system, a circumstance which is already implied in the mythical name of the political organism: the Book of Job describes the Leviathan as not only immensely powerful, but also as dense and impenetrable: »His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal. One is so near to another, [sic] that no air can come between them. They are joined one to another, they stick together, that [sic] they cannot be sundered.«[18]

16 Kant characterizes a »symbolic hypotyposis« by a twofold operation of the power of judgment, firstly to combine a concept of reason, »to which perhaps no intuition can ever directly correspond,« with an object of a sensible intuition, secondly to apply »the mere rule of reflection« on that object of intuition to the non-sensible concept of reason. »For between a despotic state [or: US-American collectivity] and a handmill [or: the imaging technique of a collage] there is, of course, no similarity, but there is one between the rule for reflecting on both and their causality.« Immanuel Kant: Critique of the Power of Judgment (part 1, section 2, § 59), ed. Paul Guyer, translated by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews, New York, NY 2000, p. 226.

17 Cf. Friedrich Balke: Figuren der Souveränität, Munich 2009, p. 42.

18 Job, 41; 15–17.

Fig. 2: Thomas Hobbes, Abraham Bosse (?): Detail from the frontispiece of *Leviathan, Or: The Matter, Forme and Power of A Commonwealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil*, 1651

Accordingly, the head generates a concentric arrangement of the surrounding elements of state and with it their consolidation or fusion. It produces tight political and aesthetical structures without blank positions. Consequently, the beheading of the state (in 1649, also in 1793) must involve a loosening of connections. Some eighty years after the War of Independence, this might motivate the lack of rigid closeness in Brady's republican composite and the void in the midst of the senators. One place remains empty; it is no longer occupied by the monarch, but can serve as position for *everybody*, an opening for the direct entry of always another citizen into the state's representational structures. »The statue of the father gives way to a […] portrait that could be of anybody or nobody.«[19]

One might of course argue that precisely this gap proves to be a relic of obsolete monarchal imaging strategies. In the composite of the Senate it clears the view for the central portrait of John Cabell Breckinridge, president of the chamber, and in the House it is the speaker and chairman William Pennington who, owing to the breach in the assembly, dominates the picture's center in his elaborately graven armchair. The deliberate arrangement of portraits, the distinct *cordon* of respect around the place, or person, of authority and the theatrical direction of our gaze appear as traces which monarchy has left in the codes and practices of democracy. However, the full potential of the image's empty space ensues only from the *interplay* of concrete personality and abstract composition. The center of the assemblage acts as a ›reversible figure‹ combining concentration and dispersal, elevation and equalization. As a representation of historical persons, the collage may well expose

19 Deleuze: Bartleby (as note 4), p. 77.

the most important among them, but as a hypotyposis of American collectivity, it exhibits a gap that functions as democracy's unoccupied locus of power. It permits to view the leading entity or authority, and at the same time, its place is vacant and—according to Claude Lefort—can neither be filled nor completely represented, »as it is such that no individual and no group can be consubstantial with it.«[20] What is more, precisely because this gap can be identified as a residue of the sovereign's severed head, it points all the more to his democratic successors: It is the place where the imaginary rule of the king and the symbolic republic oscillate.

All this—the composite's empty center, its concurrence of unity and diversity, its undecided dimensionality and temporality—does not so much add up to a list of shortcomings attesting to a basic medial or political deficiency. Instead, these patchwork-effects deterritorialize the image and its claim of presence. They produce a *utopian topography* that no longer *re*-presents an assembly of subjects, but presents an experimental constellation of societal elements in ›friendly‹ connection … but now the scales are no longer »shut up together as with a close seal,« and the Behemoth of civil war can find its point of attack in the body of the nation-state.

4. Hospital—The empty place in the midst of the 36th US-Congress refers back to at least three of the above-mentioned central aspects of the patchwork. It implies the autonomy of *relations* (since the place predominates the placed entity), the *rejection of synthesis* and unity (since something is always missing), and the *interval* which untightens all connections. But as America dreams of overcoming the consolidations of the Old World by inventing such loose assemblies, it is constantly facing either dissolution or cementation—and the Civil War will bring first the one and then the other.

Out of the studio (where the dreamy, constant light and iron posing stands always result in paternal portraits) Brady goes to war to continue his documentation of history. However, he hardly abandons the ›posing figure against unspecified backdrop‹. Mary Panzer, Brady's most prominent exegete, asserts that even afield, Civil War photography often complies with the conventions of portraiture: »Sitters assumed the heroic postures they had learned to hold […], groups are posed and organized in the same rhythmic, symmetrical clusters that studios required.«[21] The increasing fragmentation of the nation and body may interfuse some of Mathew Brady's orderly panoramas of field camps, army hospitals and landscapes only as a subliminal trait. Meanwhile, his employees Timothy O'Sullivan and Alexander

20 Cf. Claude Lefort: Democracy and Political Theory, translated by David Macey, Minneapolis 1988, p. 17, quoted in: Bernd Herzogenrath: An American Body|Politic. A Deleuzian Approach, Hanover, NH 2010, p. 11 sq.

21 Mary Panzer: Mathew Brady (as note 8), p. 103.

Gardner begin taking pictures of battlefields strewn with corpses. Here, the killed soldiers appear not so much as previously alive, but as the result of a violent interference with human flesh: Mary Panzer calls these images of nameless Confederate bodies a »grim, inverted form of portraiture,«[22] so far removed from the individual and its self-manifestation, so close to mere organic matter, that ›anonymity‹ gives way to the decomposition of the very idea of identity. The photos of the dead of Bull Run, Antietam, Gettysburg, Wilderness, Petersburg replace the person with a material state and recognizable features with almost abstract ›faciality‹—*white wall/black hole*.[23] And towards the end of the war, Reed Brockway Bontecou abandons the face altogether. The director of the Harewood U.S. Army General Hospital is the first to use photography for clinical studies and produces hundreds of images of wounded soldiers. While most of his plates depict the patients in classical posture, his famous 1865 photograph A Morning's Work shows the result of several busy hours in his surgery. It substitutes all individuality and cohesion for the randomness of a heap of amputated body parts.

The corporeal disintegration coincides with the political: in contrast to the official rhetoric calling for the heroic sacrifice of a limb to save the nation's body,[24] this dismemberment does not emerge from, or refer to, an antecedent organic unity. Instead, it visualizes what Gilles Deleuze describes as Walt Whitman's disenchantment after he had exuberantly greeted the conflict and then seen it turn into a fratricidal catastrophe: »its acts of destruction affect every relation, and have as their consequence the Hospital, the generalized hospital, that is, the place where brothers are strangers to each other, and where the dying parts, fragments of mutilated men, coexist absolutely solitary and without relation.«[25] The radical disruption of all ties and political adhesion, the fragmen-

Fig. 3: Reed Brockway Bontecou: *A Morning's Work* [a.k.a. Field Day], 1865, Otis Historical Archives, National Museum of Health and Medicine

22 Ibid., p. 109.
23 Cf. Deleuze, Guattari: Thousand Plateaus (as note 2), p. 167 sqq.
24 Cf. Herzogenrath: American Body|Politic (as note 20), p. 199 sq.
25 Deleuze: Whitman (as note 6), p. 59.

tation of man and patchwork becomes evident in the image of severed body parts. Thus, »a house divided« does not only refer to the Union, the Confederacy (and the few neutral states); it refers to an absolute secession that is reflected in the transition from Brady's composite of the US-Senate to throwaway legs and feet.

But to avert the ultimate dissociation of the collective body, a father is required who speaks from childhood, colonial and antebellum times: »I do not expect the house to fall. […] It will become *all* one thing.«

5. Abraham—In essence, there are two fathers. The first is Laius, usually just a villain and pederast whose only task it is to tragically victimize his son Oedipus. However, Aeschylus reminds us that Laius abandons the son in order to save the polis, thus becoming a tragic figure himself who loses his offspring, the kingship, and his life. Laius teaches us about the inevitable decision between, and incompatibility of, fatherhood and politics. The other father is Abraham who submits to his God and learns from him that the price for founding a nation is the life of his son. He does not hesitate; he does not doubt patriarchic authority so that the real sacrifice is no longer necessary. In this way, Abraham installs the father in politics and establishes the stable hierarchy of God the Father, father of the people, and the people.[26]

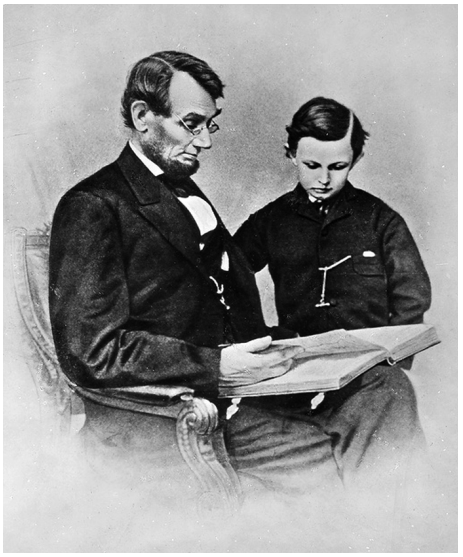

Fig. 4: A. Berger / M. Brady: *President Abraham Lincoln and Tad Lincoln*, 1864, National Archives and Records Administration

Abraham is of course Abraham Lincoln as portrayed by Anthony Berger, one of Mathew Brady's associates, on February 9, 1864, together with his son Thomas or ›Tadpole.‹ He becomes the nation's and people's father; he heals the rupture by sacrificing the sons of the Union as both symbolic and concrete substitute for his own son Isaac. Other than the Greek father who must always be eliminated, Abraham is the instance in which patriarchy merges with the divinely planted rule of the state. He epitomizes the consolidation of the collective, he reinstalls representation and signification in the previously formless and non-symbolic assemblage, he stands for the abolishment of those loose relations without synthesis, of the De-

26 Cf. Silke-Maria Weineck: The Laius Syndrome, or the Ends of Political Fatherhood, in: Cultural Critique 74 (winter 2010), pp. 131–145.

leuzian patchwork which tried to establish »a function of universal fraternity that no longer passes through the father, but is built on the ruins of the paternal function, a function that presupposes a dissolution of all images of the father.«[27]

Just like the re-United States, Brady's studio returns from the patchworked composite and the subsequent decompositions of battlefields to the portrait which is in many ways congruent with restoration and patriarchal unity: Abraham Lincoln himself confirms this congruence by ascribing the outcome of the presidential elections to his own transformation, accomplished by Brady, into a photograph distributed nationwide (*his image becomes politics*). Conversely, a deleted passage of Nathanial Hawthorne's war report identifies Lincoln's angular, but benign features as outline and model of the entire country and its spacial and temporal layout (*politics becomes his image*).[28] Certainly, every image, prototype, or pattern is »an image of the father par excellence,«[29] and in a mimetic and identificatory urge, the subject models itself after this image. Yet, Brady's double portrait not only stands for the recurrence of identity and imitation. Its very subject exposes unmistakably the formula of filiation, the return of the father and the image: father and son who contemplate a picture book filled with portraits by Mathew Brady himself.[30] The photo invokes the copy, the whole state apparatus and its institutions, the ›One‹, the cement between the stones. It declares the time of the patchwork ended—»the Civil War already sounded the knell.«[31]

Here, a peculiar discrepancy appears between the deeply longed for deposition of the patriarch and the fear of fragmentation: Alan Trachtenberg certifies for Brady—and this also holds true for the entire country—that his social ambition »breaks with fathers and then mourns to recover what it has lost.«[32] But after its reconstitution, the regained unity seems unsteady and full of doubts. While, time and again, it is celebrated in narratives of relief and salvation, such ceremonial confirmations of the nation's wholeness also practice the clandestine exorcism of secession and are intended for protection against its ghastly return: just like Derrida's account of the magical expulsion of Marxism from liberal democracies, this

27 Deleuze: Bartleby (as note 4), p. 78.

28 »He saw Lincoln's ›aspect‹ as that of the ›pattern American.‹ Eventually the whole history of the nation and its most typical character traits came to seem inscribed and indexed by the face of Lincoln.« Rob Kroes: Photographic Memories. Private Pictures, Public Images, and American History, Lebanon, NH 2007, p. 83.

29 Deleuze: Bartleby (as note 4), p. 76.

30 The bibliographical inventory Lincoln Lore states that the album »belonged to Brady and was available to his patrons while they were waiting for their appointments. It was a sort of ›Who's Who‹ in pictures.« Lincoln Lore (No 392, October 12, 1936, Lincoln and Son ›Tad‹), under: http://www.everythinglincoln.com/articles/TadLincoln.html (15.04.2013).

31 Deleuze: Bartleby (as note 4), p. 88.

32 Cf. Trachtenberg: Reading American Photographs (as note 12), p. 43.

»secretly worried«[33] invocation of the Union wants to assert that all is well, that the fatherless and fragmented society is now buried and will not come back. However, this is only achieved *thanks to* the incessantly circulating magic formula of the nation-state's reliable victory in exactly that »manic, jubilatory, and incantatory form that Freud assigned to the so-called triumphant phase of mourning work. The incantation repeats and ritualizes itself, it holds forth and holds to formulas, like any animistic magic.«[34] It cannot stop intoning the same old refrain: *The fissure is mended!* Recently, it was Steven Spielberg who recited this formula by transforming the disagreement about (and among) human freedom, separation, and unity into a family history about the survival of father, mother, son—a narrative arc from a heap of amputated limbs to the son on his father's lap.[35]

Fig. 5

Picture credits:

Fig. 1: Mathew Brady: Composite of the Members of the United States Senate, 1859, salted paper print, Princeton University Library, Graphic Arts Collection

Fig. 2: Thomas Hobbes, Abraham Bosse (?): Detail from the frontispiece of *Leviathan, Or: The Matter, Forme and Power of A Commonwealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil*, 1651

Fig. 3: Reed Brockway Bontecou: A Morning's Work [a.k.a. Field Day], 1865, Otis Historical Archives, National Museum of Health and Medicine

Fig. 4: Anthony Berger / Mathew Brady: President Abraham Lincoln and Tad Lincoln, 1864, National Archives and Records Administration

Fig. 5: Fig. 5: Lincoln (USA 2012, Steven Spielberg)

33 Jacques Derrida: Specters of Marx. The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International, translated by Peggy Kamuf, New YorkLondon 1994, p. 56.

34 Ibid., p. 52.

35 Lincoln (USA 2012, Steven Spielberg).